

= Back Off Boogaloo =

" Back Off Boogaloo " is a song by English musician Ringo Starr , released as a non @-@ album single in March 1972 . Starr 's former Beatles bandmate George Harrison produced the recording , which took place in London shortly after the two had appeared together at Harrison 's Concert for Bangladesh shows in August 1971 . The single was a follow @-@ up to Starr 's 1971 hit song " It Don 't Come Easy " and continued his successful run as a solo artist . " Back Off Boogaloo " peaked at number 2 in Britain and Canada , and number 9 on America 's Billboard Hot 100 . It remains Starr 's highest @-@ charting single in the United Kingdom .

The title for the song was inspired by English singer @-@ songwriter Marc Bolan . Some commentators have suggested that the lyrics were directed at Paul McCartney , reflecting Starr 's disdain for the music McCartney had made as a solo artist over the previous two years . " Back Off Boogaloo " demonstrates the influence of glam rock on Starr , who directed a documentary film , Born to Boogie (1972) , about Bolan 's band T. Rex around this time . Described by one author as a " high @-@ energy in @-@ your @-@ face rocker " , the song features a prominent slide guitar part by Harrison and contributions from musicians Gary Wright and Klaus Voormann .

Starr re @-@ recorded " Back Off Boogaloo " for his 1981 album Stop and Smell the Roses , in a collaboration with American singer Harry Nilsson that incorporates lyrics from Beatles songs such as " With a Little Help from My Friends " , " Good Day Sunshine " and " Baby , You 're a Rich Man " . The original version has appeared on Starr 's compilation albums Blast from Your Past and Photograph : The Very Best of Ringo Starr , and as a bonus track on his remastered 1974 studio album Goodnight Vienna . Since his return to touring in 1989 , Starr has performed " Back Off Boogaloo " regularly in concert with the various incarnations of his All @-@ Starr Band .

= = Background and composition = =

Ringo Starr identified his initial inspiration for " Back Off Boogaloo " as having come from Marc Bolan , the singer and guitarist with English glam rock band T. Rex . In a 2001 interview with Mojo editor Paul Du Noyer , Starr described Bolan as " a dear friend who used to come into the office when I was running Apple Movies , a big office in town , and the hang @-@ out for myself , Harry Nilsson and Keith Moon " . Over dinner one evening at Starr 's home outside London , Bolan had used the word " boogaloo " so often that it stuck in Starr 's mind , after which the beat and melody for the song came to him overnight . When discussing the composition on VH1 Storytellers in May 1998 , Starr explained : " [Bolan] was an energised guy . He used to speak : ' Back off boogaloo ... ooh you , boogaloo . ' ' Do you want some potatoes ? ' ' Ooh you , boogaloo ! ' " Starr also recalled having to take the batteries out of his children 's toys that night , in order to power a tape recorder and make a recording of the new song .

The lyrics to the middle eight of " Back Off Boogaloo " came to Starr while watching London Weekend Television 's football show , The Big Match . The program 's host , Jimmy Hill , often referred to a footballer 's playing as " tasty " , a catchphrase that Starr incorporated into his song lyrics :

Get yourself together now
And give me something tasty
Everything you try to do
You know it sure sounds wasted .

Commentators have interpreted the song , and particularly this statement , as an attack by Starr on his former Beatles bandmate Paul McCartney . Starr has denied any such interpretation , instead " claiming that the song was inspired by Bolan and nothing more " , Beatles biographer Robert Rodriguez writes . Starr had publicly criticised McCartney 's solo albums McCartney (1970) and Ram (1971) on release , and author Bruce Spizer paraphrases the message of the middle eight as " a plea for Paul to produce better music " . The mention of " sound [ing] wasted " could also be a reference to McCartney 's overindulgence with cannabis , Rodriguez suggests . A further example of Starr 's allegedly anti @-@ McCartney message exists in the song 's first verse :

Wake up , meathead
Don 't pretend that you are dead
Get yourself up off the cart .

The same commentators suggest that here Starr could be referring to the 1969 " Paul Is Dead " hoax . The latter rumour circulated during September and October of that year while McCartney hid away on his Scottish farm , disconsolate after John Lennon had told him and Starr that he wanted a " divorce " from the Beatles .

In addition to these supposed messages in " Back Off Boogaloo " , observers have viewed the song title as Starr 's rebuke to McCartney to abandon his legal stand against the Beatles and Apple Corps , which was placed in receivership in March 1971 after a High Court judge found in McCartney 's favour . Author Keith Badman writes that " Boogaloo " had " long been cited as Paul 's nickname " from his former bandmates Starr , Lennon and George Harrison . While acknowledging that in subsequent years Starr might have chosen to minimise any ill @-@ feeling towards McCartney , Rodriguez notes that the lyrics " just happened to fit perfectly into the ' us vs. Paul ' mindset " following the Beatles ' break @-@ up , to the extent that " Back Off Boogaloo " was " as damning as ' Early 1970 ' had been conciliatory " . When tailoring his 1970 composition " I 'm the Greatest " for Starr to record on the album Ringo (1973) , Lennon referenced the song title with the lines " Now I 'm only thirty @-@ two / And all I want to do is boogaloo " .

Although " T Rex devotees " , in the words of Starr biographer Alan Clayson , claimed that Bolan had ghost @-@ written " Back Off Boogaloo " , Starr later acknowledged that Harrison co @-@ wrote the song by adding some chords and finishing the melody . As on Starr 's 1971 hit single " It Don 't Come Easy " , Harrison was not credited for his songwriting contribution . Starr originally offered " Back Off Boogaloo " to fellow Liverpoolian Cilla Black to record , but she declined , hoping instead to record another new Starr ? Harrison composition , " Photograph " .

= = Recording = =

Having earmarked the song as his next single , Starr recorded " Back Off Boogaloo " in September 1971 , following his appearance at the Harrison @-@ organised Concert for Bangladesh in New York . The sessions took place at Apple Studio in central London , with Harrison producing , as he had on " It Don 't Come Easy " . The recording reflects the influence of glam rock on Starr through what authors Chip Madinger and Mark Easter term " its big drum sound and repetitious nature " , with a line @-@ up comprising Starr (vocals , drums , percussion) , Harrison (guitars) , Gary Wright (piano) and Klaus Voormann (bass , saxophone) .

Rodriguez describes Starr 's " martial @-@ sounding opening " as a rare " showcase for his own drumming " , while Harrison biographer Simon Leng writes of " a roaring series of Harrison slide breaks that brought to mind Duane Allman " . Further overdubs included contributions from three backing vocalists , led by American soul singer Madeline Bell .

= = " Blindman " = = =

For the single 's B @-@ side , Starr had already written and recorded " Blindman " , the theme song for the Ferdinando Baldi @-@ directed Spaghetti Western of the same name , filming for which Starr had interrupted in order to perform at the Concert for Bangladesh . Starr produced the track with Voormann . The sessions for " Blindman " took place at Apple on 18 ? 19 August , with Badfinger guitarist Pete Ham assisting Starr and Voormann . Like the film Blindman (1971) , the song is held in low regard by critics ; Spizer describes it as " a muddy @-@ sounding dirge with little to recommend " .

= = Release and reception = =

Apple Records issued the single on 17 March 1972 in Britain , as Apple R 5944 , with a US release taking place three days later , as Apple 1849 . It was Starr 's first release since " It Don 't Come

Easy ", a year before . During this period , his priority had been to develop a career as an actor in films such as 200 Motels (1971) and Blindman . Further aligning himself with Britain 's glam rock movement , Starr made his directorial debut with Born to Boogie (1972) , a film starring Bolan that included Starr 's footage of a T. Rex concert held at Wembley on 18 March . With " Back Off Boogaloo " , NME critic Bob Woffinden noted Starr 's success in establishing himself in the two years since the Beatles ' break @-@ up , and wrote that the single " confirmed that he and Harrison , dark horses both , were the ones who had managed their solo careers more purposefully and intelligently " compared with McCartney and Lennon .

The song was a hit in the US , reaching number 9 on the Billboard Hot 100 , and achieved Starr 's best position on the UK Singles Chart , where it reached number 2 . A promotional video for " Back Off Boogaloo " was shot on 20 March at Lennon 's Tittenhurst Park residence while Starr was looking after the property . The video , which shows Starr walking around an outdoor structure and followed by a Frankenstein @-@ like monster , was directed by Tom Taylor and financed by Caravel Films . A similar monster appeared on the single 's picture sleeve , holding a cigarette .

Alan Clayson writes of reviewers criticising " Back Off Boogaloo " for being repetitious , leading Starr to respond in a 1973 interview : " Play me a pop song that isn 't . " On release , Chris Welch wrote in Melody Maker : " A Number One hit could easily be in store for the maestro of rock drums . There 's a touch of the Marc Bolans in this highly playable rhythmic excursion ... It 's hypnotic and effective , ideal for jukeboxes and liable to send us all mad by the end of the week . " Woffinden described the single as " every bit as ebullient " as " It Don 't Come Easy " , although " slightly inferior " , while Mike DeGagne of AllMusic views it as a song where " [t] he jovial spirit of Ringo Starr shines through " . In a 1974 article for the NME , Charles Shaar Murray highlighted " Back Off Boogaloo " as a " great radio and juke @-@ box tune " .

Among Beatle biographers , Simon Leng terms it " a rocking , soccer crowd chant that suited Starr 's talents well " , and Bruce Spizer praises the track as a " high @-@ energy in @-@ your @-@ face rocker propelled by Ringo 's thundering drums and George 's stinging slide guitar " . In the 2005 publication NME Originals : Beatles ? The Solo Years 1970 ? 1980 , Paul Moody listed " Back Off Boogaloo " first among Starr 's " ten solo gems " and described it as " Good time rock 'n'droll to match the Faces " . Guitar World editor Damian Fanelli includes the song on his list of Harrison 's ten best post @-@ Beatles " Guitar Moments " , saying of the recording : " the main event is clearly Harrison 's slightly wild , wacky ? and very bouncy ? slide guitar solo , which includes an alternate melody line that 's even catchier than the melody Ringo is singing . "

Re @-@ releases for " Back Off Boogaloo " include Starr 's 1975 greatest hits album , Blast from Your Past , and , along with " Blindman " , as a bonus track on the 1992 reissue of his Goodnight Vienna album (1974) . " Back Off Boogaloo " also appeared on his 2007 compilation Photograph : The Very Best of Ringo Starr , the collector 's edition of which included his 1972 video for the song .

= = Stop and Smell the Roses version = =

Starr recorded a new version of " Back Off Boogaloo " for his 1981 album on Boardwalk Records , Stop and Smell the Roses . The song was produced by Starr 's friend , singer Harry Nilsson , and features a musical arrangement by Van Dyke Parks . Similar to Nilsson 's 1968 cover of the Beatles ' " You Can 't Do That " , the remake incorporates lyrics from a number of the band 's songs ? in this case , " With a Little Help from My Friends " , " Help ! " , " Lady Madonna " , " Good Day Sunshine " and " Baby , You 're a Rich Man " , as well as Starr 's " It Don 't Come Easy " . In a further reference to his past , the 1981 version of " Back Off Boogaloo " opens with the same guitar riff that Harrison had played on " It Don 't Come Easy " ten years before .

Starr taped the basic track at Evergreen Recording Studios in Los Angeles on 4 November 1980 , with additional recording taking place on 1 ? 5 December at Nassau 's Compass Point Studios . Among the large cast of musicians supporting Starr were Nilsson (vocals) , Jim Keltner (drums) , Jane Getz (piano) , Dennis Budimir and Richie Zito (guitars) , and a four @-@ piece horn section led by saxophonist Jerry Jumonville .

Starr overdubbed his vocals on 4 December , four days before the murder of John Lennon , who

had been due to record his contributions to Stop and Smell the Roses in January 1981 . Contrasting with his success as a solo artist in 1971 ? 73 , the album continued Starr 's run of commercial and critical failures since 1976 ; Rodriguez writes that " [m] ost people either love or hate the revamping " of " Back Off Boogaloo " .

= = Live performance = =

Starr has performed " Back Off Boogaloo " in concert with his All @-@ Starr Band , beginning with the band 's debut tour of North America in July ? September 1989 . The song was dropped from the concert setlist early in that tour , however , in favour of the 1963 Lennon ? McCartney composition " I Wanna Be Your Man " . Live versions of " Back Off Boogaloo " have appeared on the multi @-@ disc compilation The Anthology ... So Far (2001) and King Biscuit Flower Hour Presents Ringo & His New All @-@ Starr Band (2002) . The latter version was recorded during a US tour in August 2001 , at which point the All @-@ Starr line @-@ up was Starr (vocals) , Mark Rivera (saxophone) , Ian Hunter (guitar) , Roger Hodgson and Howard Jones (keyboards) , Greg Lake (bass) and Sheila E. (drums) .

Starr also played the song live with Ringo and the Roundheads , a band he formed to promote his 1998 studio album Vertical Man . A version recorded on 13 May that year at Sony Music Studios , New York , appeared on Starr 's VH1 Storytellers live album and video , released in October 1998 . The personnel on this performance included Starr (vocals) , Joe Walsh and Mark Hudson (guitars) , Jack Blades (bass) and Simon Kirke (drums) . Another live version with the Roundheads , recorded for PBS Television 's Soundstage in August 2005 , was issued on Ringo Starr : Live at Soundstage (2007) .

= = Personnel = =

The following musicians played on the original version of " Back Off Boogaloo " :

Ringo Starr ? vocals , drums , percussion , backing vocals

George Harrison ? slide guitars , acoustic guitar

Gary Wright ? piano

Klaus Voormann ? bass , saxophone

Madeline Bell , Lesley Duncan , Jean Gilbert ? backing vocals

= = Chart performance = =