

= My Sweet Lord =

" My Sweet Lord " is a song by English musician and former Beatle George Harrison that was released in November 1970 on his triple album All Things Must Pass . Also issued as a single , Harrison 's first as a solo artist , " My Sweet Lord " topped charts worldwide and was the biggest @-@ selling single of 1971 in the UK . In America and Britain , the song was the first number 1 single by an ex @-@ Beatle . Harrison originally gave the song to his fellow Apple Records artist Billy Preston to record ; this version , which Harrison co @-@ produced , appeared on Preston 's Encouraging Words album in September 1970 .

Harrison wrote " My Sweet Lord " in praise of the Hindu god Krishna , while at the same time intending the lyrics to serve as a call to abandon religious sectarianism through his deliberate blending of the Hebrew word hallelujah with chants of " Hare Krishna " and Vedic prayer . The recording features producer Phil Spector 's Wall of Sound treatment and heralded the arrival of Harrison 's much @-@ admired slide guitar technique , which one biographer described as being " musically as distinctive a signature as the mark of Zorro " . Preston , Ringo Starr , Eric Clapton and the group Badfinger are among the other musicians appearing on the recording .

Later in the 1970s , " My Sweet Lord " was at the centre of a heavily publicised copyright infringement suit , due to its similarity to the Ronnie Mack song " He 's So Fine " , a 1963 hit for the New York girl group the Chiffons . In 1976 , Harrison was found to have subconsciously plagiarised the earlier tune , a verdict that had repercussions throughout the music industry . He claimed to have used the out @-@ of @-@ copyright " Oh Happy Day " , a Christian hymn , as his inspiration for the song 's melody .

Harrison performed " My Sweet Lord " at the Concert for Bangladesh in August 1971 , and it remains the most popular composition from his post @-@ Beatles career . He reworked the song as " My Sweet Lord (2000) " for inclusion as a bonus track on the 30th anniversary reissue of All Things Must Pass . Many artists have covered the song including Andy Williams , Peggy Lee , Edwin Starr , Johnny Mathis , Nina Simone , Julio Iglesias , Richie Havens , Megadeth , Boy George , Elton John , Jim James , Bonnie Bramlett and Elliott Smith . " My Sweet Lord " is ranked 460th on Rolling Stone magazine 's list of " the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time " . The song reached number 1 in Britain for a second time when re @-@ released in January 2002 , two months after Harrison 's death .

= = Background = =

George Harrison began writing " My Sweet Lord " in December 1969 , when he , Billy Preston and Eric Clapton were in Copenhagen , Denmark , as guest artists on Delaney & Bonnie 's European tour . By this time , Harrison had already written the gospel @-@ influenced " Hear Me Lord " and " Gopala Krishna " , and (with Preston) the African @-@ American spiritual " Sing One for the Lord " . He had also produced two religious @-@ themed hit singles on the Beatles ' Apple record label : Preston 's " That 's the Way God Planned It " and Radha Krishna Temple (London) ' s " Hare Krishna Mantra " . The latter was a musical adaptation of the 5000 @-@ year @-@ old Vaishnava Hindu mantra , performed by members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) , colloquially known as " the Hare Krishna movement " . Harrison now wanted to fuse the messages of the Christian and Gaudiya Vaishnava faiths into what musical biographer Simon Leng terms " gospel incantation with a Vedic chant " .

The Copenhagen stopover marked the end of the Delaney & Bonnie tour , with a three @-@ night residency at the Falkoner Theatre on 10 ? 12 December . According to Harrison 's 1976 court testimony , " My Sweet Lord " was conceived while the band members were attending a backstage press conference and he had ducked out to an upstairs room at the theatre . Harrison recalled vamping chords on guitar and alternating between sung phrases of " hallelujah " and " Hare Krishna " . He later took the idea to the others , and the chorus vocals were developed further . Band leader Delaney Bramlett 's more recent version of events is that the idea originated from Harrison asking him how to go about writing a genuine gospel song , and that Bramlett demonstrated by scat singing

the words " Oh my Lord " while wife Bonnie and singer Rita Coolidge added gospel " hallelujah " s in reply . British music journalist John Harris has questioned the accuracy of Bramlett 's account , however , comparing it to a fisherman 's " It was this big " -type bragging story .

Using as his inspiration the Edwin Hawkins Singers ' rendition of an eighteenth @-@ century Christian hymn , " Oh Happy Day " , Harrison continued working on the theme . He completed the song , with some help from Preston , once they had returned to London .

= = Composition = =

The song 's lyrics reflect Harrison 's often @-@ stated desire for a direct relationship with God , expressed in simple words that all believers could affirm , regardless of their religion . Author Ian Inglis observes a degree of " understandable " impatience in the first verse 's line , " Really want to see you , Lord , but it takes so long , my Lord " . By the end of the song 's second verse , Harrison declares a wish to " know " God also and attempts to reconcile the impatience :

I really want to know you

Really want to go with you

Really want to show you , Lord , that it won 't take long , my Lord

Following this verse , in response to the main vocal 's repetition of the song title , Harrison devised a choral line singing the Hebrew word of praise , " hallelujah " , common in the Christian and Jewish religions . Later in the song , after an instrumental break , these voices return , now chanting the first twelve words of the Hare Krishna mantra , known more reverentially as the Maha mantra :

Hare Krishna , Hare Krishna

Krishna Krishna , Hare Hare

Hare Rama , Hare Rama

These Sanskrit words are the main mantra of the Hare Krishna faith , with which Harrison identified , although he did not belong to any spiritual organisation . In his 1980 autobiography , I , Me , Mine , Harrison explained that he intended repeating and alternating " hallelujah " and " Hare Krishna " to show that the two terms meant " quite the same thing " , as well as to have listeners chanting the mantra " before they knew what was going on ! "

Following the Sanskrit lines , " hallelujah " is sung twice more before the mantra repeats , along with an ancient Vedic prayer . According to Hindu tradition , this prayer is dedicated to a devotee 's spiritual teacher , or guru , and equates the teacher to the divine Trimurti ? Brahma , Vishnu and Shiva (or Maheshvara) ? and to the Godhead , Brahman .

Gurur Brahm? , gurur Vi??ur

gurur devo Mahe?vara?

gurus s?k??t , para? Brahma

tasmai ?r? gurave nama? .

Former Krishna devotee Joshua Greene translates the lines as follows : " I offer homage to my guru , who is as great as the creator Brahma , the maintainer Vishnu , the destroyer Shiva , and who is the very energy of God . " The prayer is the third verse of the Guru Stotram , a fourteen @-@ verse hymn in praise of Hindu spiritual teachers .

Some Christian fundamentalist anti @-@ rock activists objected that chanting " Hare Krishna " in " My Sweet Lord " was anti @-@ Christian or satanic , while some born @-@ again Christians adopted the song as an anthem . Several commentators cite the mantra and the simplicity of Harrison 's lyrics as central to the song 's universality . The " lyrics are not directed at a specific manifestation of a single faith 's deity , " Inglis writes , " but rather to the concept of one god whose essential nature is unaffected by particular interpretations and who pervades everything , is present everywhere , is all @-@ knowing and all @-@ powerful , and transcends time and space ... All of us ? Christian , Hindu , Muslim , Jew , Buddhist ? can address our gods in the same way , using the same phrase [' my sweet Lord '] . "

= = Billy Preston 's version = =

With the Beatles still together officially in December 1969 , Harrison had no plans to make a solo album of his own and reportedly intended to offer " My Sweet Lord " to Edwin Hawkins . Instead , following the Delaney & Bonnie tour , he decided to record it with Billy Preston , for whom Harrison was co -@-@ producing a second Apple album , Encouraging Words . Recording took place at Olympic Studios in London , in January 1970 , with Preston as principal musician , supported by the guitarist , bass player and drummer from the Temptations ' backing band . The Edwin Hawkins Singers happened to be on tour in the UK as well , so Harrison invited them to participate ; Hawkins ' gospel group also overdubbed vocals onto the Harrison ? Preston collaboration " Sing One for the Lord " at this time .

Preston 's version of " My Sweet Lord " differs from Harrison 's later reading in that the " hallelujah " refrain appears from the start of the song and , rather than the full mantra section , the words " Hare Krishna " are sung only twice throughout the whole track . With the Vedic prayer likewise absent , Simon Leng views this original recording as a possible " definitive ' roots ' take ' " of the song , thanks to its " pure gospel groove " and Hawkins ' participation . In his review of Encouraging Words , Bruce Eder of AllMusic describes " My Sweet Lord " and " All Things Must Pass " (another Harrison composition originally given to Preston to record) as " stunning gospel numbers ... that make the Harrison versions seem pallid " .

Preston 's " My Sweet Lord " was a minor hit in Europe when issued as a single there in September 1970 , but otherwise , Encouraging Words made little impression commercially . The album and single releases were delayed for at least two months in the United States , where " My Sweet Lord " would climb to number 90 on the Billboard Hot 100 by the end of February 1971 , helped by the enormous success of Harrison 's version .

= = Recording = =

Five months after the Olympic session , with the Beatles having now broken up , " My Sweet Lord " was one of 30 or more tracks that Harrison recorded for his All Things Must Pass triple album . It was a song he had been reluctant to record , for fear of committing himself publicly to such an overt religious message . " I was sticking my neck out on the chopping block because now I would have to live up to something , " Harrison explained in I Me Mine , " but at the same time I thought ' Nobody 's saying it ; I wish somebody else was doing it . ' "

With Phil Spector co -@-@ producing the sessions at Abbey Road Studios , Preston again played on the track , along with Clapton , Ringo Starr , Jim Gordon and all four members of Badfinger . The identity of the remaining musicians has traditionally been open to question , with drummer Alan White once claiming he played on the song , with Carl Radle on bass , Starr on tambourine and John Lennon among the rhythm guitarists . The common view , following research by Simon Leng , is that Harrison and Spector chose from a number of rhythm tracks before selecting the master take , which featured , among others , Klaus Voormann on bass and Gary Wright on a second keyboard ; Bruce Spizer suggests that Peter Frampton may have added acoustic guitar after the main session . Harrison 's original vocal appears to have been acceptable , according to notes written by Spector in August , but the chorus vocals (all sung by Harrison and credited to " the George O 'Hara @-@ Smith Singers ") , his harmonised slide guitar parts , and John Barham 's orchestral arrangement were overdubbed during the next two months , partly at Trident Studios in central London .

Leng describes the recording as a " painstakingly crafted tableau " of sound , beginning with a bank of " chiming " acoustic guitars and the " flourish " of zither strings that introduces Harrison 's slide @-@ guitar motif . At close to the two @-@ minute mark , after the tension @-@ building bridge , a subtle two @-@ semitone shift in key (from E major to the rarely used key of F @-@ sharp major , via a C # dominant seventh chord) signals the song 's release from its extended introduction . This higher register is then complemented by Harrison 's " increasingly impassioned " vocal and the subsequent " timely reappearance " of his twin slide guitars , before the backing vocals " deftly " switch to the Sanskrit mantra and prayer . Leng also notes the Indian music aspects of the production , in the " swarmandal @-@ like " zithers , representing the sympathetic strings of a sitar , and the slide guitars ' evocation of sarangi , dilruba and other string instruments . In an interview for

Martin Scorsese 's 2011 documentary on George Harrison , Spector recalls that he liked the results so much , he insisted that " My Sweet Lord " be the lead single from the album .

This later , rock version of the song was markedly different from the " Oh Happy Day " -inspired gospel arrangement in musical and structural terms , aligning Harrison 's composition with pop music conventions , but also drawing out the similarities of its melody line with that of the Chiffons ' 1963 hit " He 's So Fine " . Spizer suggests that this was due to Harrison being " so focused on the feel of his record " , while Record Collector editor Peter Doggett wrote in 2001 that , despite Harrison 's inspiration for " My Sweet Lord " having come from " Oh Happy Day " , " in the hands of producer and arranger Phil Spector , it came out as a carbon copy of the Chiffons ' [song] " . Chip Madinger and Mark Easter remark on the " sad " fact that Spector , as " master of all that was ' girl @-@ group ' during the early ' 60s " , failed to recognise the similarities .

= = Release = =

Before arriving in New York on 28 October to carry out mastering on All Things Must Pass , Harrison had announced that no single would be issued ? so as not to " detract from the impact " of the triple album . Apple 's US executive , Allan Steckler , together with business manager Allen Klein and Spector all pushed for " My Sweet Lord " to be released immediately , however , even though Billy Preston 's version was already scheduled for release as a single in America the following month . Film director Howard Worth recalls a preliminary finance meeting for the Raga documentary (for which Harrison would provide emergency funding through Apple Films) that began with the ex @-@ Beatle asking him to listen to a selection of songs and pick his favourite , which was " My Sweet Lord " .

Harrison relented , and " My Sweet Lord " was issued as the album 's lead single around the world , but not in Britain ; the release date was 23 November 1970 in the United States . The mix of the song differed from that found on All Things Must Pass by featuring less echo and a slightly altered backing @-@ vocal track . Both sides of the North American picture sleeve consisted of a Barry Feinstein photo of Harrison taken through a window at his recently purchased Friar Park home , with some of the estate 's trees reflected in the glass . Released as a double A @-@ side with " Isn 't It a Pity " , with Apple catalogue number 2995 in America , both sides of the disc featured a full Apple label .

Public demand via constant airplay in Britain led to a belated UK release , on 15 January 1971 . There , as Apple R 5884 , the single was backed by " What Is Life " , a song that Apple soon released elsewhere internationally as the follow @-@ up to " My Sweet Lord " .

Harrison 's version of " My Sweet Lord " was an international number 1 hit by the end of 1970 and through the early months of 1971 ? the first solo single by a Beatle to reach the top , and the biggest seller by any of the four throughout the 1970s . Without the support of any concert appearances or promotional interviews by Harrison , the single 's commercial success was due to its impact on radio , where , Harrison biographer Gary Tillery writes , the song " rolled across the airwaves like a juggernaut , with commanding presence , much the way Dylan 's ' Like a Rolling Stone ' had arrived in the mid @-@ sixties " . Elton John recalls first hearing " My Sweet Lord " in a taxi and names it as the last of the era 's great singles : " I thought , ' Oh my God , ' and I got chills . You know when a record starts on the radio , and it 's great , and you think , ' Oh , what is this , what is this , what is this ? ' The only other record I ever felt that way about [afterwards] was ' Brown Sugar ' ... " In his 40 @-@ page Harrison tribute article for Rolling Stone in 2002 , Mikal Gilmore credited " My Sweet Lord " as being " as pervasive on radio and in youth consciousness as anything the Beatles had produced " .

The single was certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of America on 14 December 1970 for sales of over 1 million copies . It reached number 1 on the US Billboard Hot 100 on 26 December , remaining on top for four weeks , three of which coincided with All Things Must Pass 's seven @-@ week reign atop the Billboard albums chart . In Britain , " My Sweet Lord " entered the charts at number 7 , before hitting number 1 on 30 January and staying there for five weeks . It was the biggest @-@ selling single of 1971 in the UK and performed similarly well around the world ,

particularly in France and Germany , where it held the top spot for nine and ten weeks , respectively . In his 2001 appraisal of Harrison 's Apple recordings , for Record Collector , Doggett described Harrison as " arguably the most successful rock star on the planet " over this period , adding : " ' My Sweet Lord ' and All Things Must Pass topped charts all over the world , easily outstripping other solo Beatles projects later in the year , such as Ram and Imagine . "

The single 's worldwide sales amounted to 5 million copies by 1978 , making it one of the best @-@ selling singles of all time . By 2010 , according to Inglis , " My Sweet Lord " had sold over 10 million copies . The song returned to the number 1 position again in the UK when reissued in January 2002 , two months after Harrison 's death from cancer at the age of 58 .

= = Reception = =

Peter Lavezzoli , author of The Dawn of Indian Music in the West , has written of Harrison 's first solo single : " ' My Sweet Lord ' was everything that people wanted to hear in November 1970 : shimmering harmonies , lustrous acoustic guitars , a solid Ringo Starr backbeat , and an exquisite [Harrison] guitar solo . " Reviewing the single for Rolling Stone , Jon Landau called the track " sensational " . In an era when songs by Radha Krishna Temple and adaptations of the Christian hymns " Oh Happy Day " and " Amazing Grace " were all worldwide hits , Ben Gerson of Rolling Stone observed that the substituting of Harrison 's " Hare Krishna " refrain for the trivial " Doo @-@ lang , doo @-@ lang , doo @-@ lang " s of " He 's So Fine " was " a sign of the times " . (As John Lennon famously told a reporter around this time , " Every time I put the radio on , it 's ' Oh my Lord ' ? I 'm beginning to think there must be a God ! ") In his December 1970 album review for NME , Alan Smith bemoaned the apparent lack of a UK single release for " My Sweet Lord " and noted that the song " seems to owe something " to " He 's So Fine " . To Gerson , it was an " obvious re @-@ write " of the Chiffons hit , and within two months US music publisher Bright Tunes had served a writ on Harrison citing unauthorised copyright infringement . In a January 1971 review for NME , Derek Johnson expressed surprise at Apple 's delay in releasing the single in the UK , before declaring : " In my opinion , this record ? finally and irrevocably ? establishes George as a talent equivalent to either Lennon or McCartney . "

More recently , AllMusic 's Richie Unterberger explains the international popularity of Harrison 's single : " ' My Sweet Lord ' has a quasi @-@ religious feel , but nevertheless has enough conventional pop appeal to reach mainstream listeners who may or may not care to dig into the spiritual lyrical message . " Added to this was a slide guitar riff that Simon Leng describes as " among the best @-@ known guitar passages in popular music " . Ian Inglis highlights the combination of Harrison 's " evident lack of artifice " and Spector 's " excellent production " , such that " My Sweet Lord " can be heard " as a prayer , a love song , an anthem , a contemporary gospel track , or a piece of perfect pop " .

Due to the ensuing plagiarism suit , " My Sweet Lord " became somewhat stigmatised by association , to the point where no mention of the song was complete without a reference to " He 's So Fine " . " My Sweet Lord " was ranked 460th on Rolling Stone magazine 's list of " the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time " in 2004 , yet the accompanying text only briefly mentioned the success of the single and Harrison 's " teardrop slide licks " before concentrating on the controversial lawsuit . While acknowledging the common ground between the two songs , music critic David Fricke describes Harrison 's composition as " the honest child of black American sacred song " . Writing around the time of All Things Must Pass 's 2001 reissue , again for Rolling Stone , Anthony DeCurtis described " My Sweet Lord " as " capturing the sweet satisfactions of faith " , while to Mikal Gilmore , it is an " irresistible devotional " .

At the end of 1971 , " My Sweet Lord " topped the Melody Maker reader 's polls for both " Single of the Year " and " World 's Single of the Year " ; in the US publication Record World , the song was also voted best single and Harrison was honoured as " Top Male Vocalist of 1971 " . In June 1972 , Harrison won two Ivor Novello songwriter 's awards for " My Sweet Lord " . In 2010 , AOL Radio listeners voted " My Sweet Lord " the best song from George Harrison 's solo years , ahead of " Blow Away " and " What Is Life " . Mick Jagger and Keith Richards have both named it among their

personal favourites of all Harrison 's songs , along with " While My Guitar Gently Weeps " . According to the website Acclaimed Music , " My Sweet Lord " has also appeared in the following critics ' best @-@ song lists and books , among others : The 7 @,@ 500 Most Important Songs of 1944 ? 2000 by author Bruce Pollock (2005) , Dave Thompson 's 1000 Songs That Rock Your World (2011 ; ranked at number 247) , Ultimate Classic Rock 's " Top 100 Classic Rock Songs " (2013 ; number 56) , the NME 's " 100 Best Songs of the 1970s " (2012 ; number 65) , and the same magazine 's " 500 Greatest Songs of All Time " (2014 ; number 270) .

= = Copyright infringement suit = =

= = = Initial action = = =

On 10 February 1971 , Bright Tunes filed suit against Harrison and associated organisations (including Harrisons , Apple Records and BMI) , alleging copyright infringement of the late Ronnie Mack 's song " He 's So Fine " . In I Me Mine , Harrison admits to having thought " Why didn 't I realise ? " when others started pointing out the similarity between the two songs ; by June that year , country singer Jody Miller had released a cover of " He 's So Fine " incorporating Harrison 's " My Sweet Lord " slide @-@ guitar riffs , thus " really putting the screws in " from his point of view . On Harrison 's behalf , manager Allen Klein entered into negotiations with Bright Tunes to resolve the issue , by offering to buy the financially ailing publisher 's entire catalogue , but no settlement could be reached before the company was forced into receivership .

While comparing the two compositions , author and musicologist Dominic Pedler writes that both songs have a three @-@ syllable title refrain (" My sweet Lord " , " He 's so fine ") followed by a 5 @-@ 3 @-@ 2 descent of the major scale in the tonic key (E major for " My Sweet Lord " and G major for " He 's So Fine ") ; respective tempos are similar : 121 and 145 beats per minute . In the respective B sections (" I really want to see you " and " I dunno how I 'm gonna do it ") , there is a similar ascent through 5 @-@ 6 @-@ 8 , but the Chiffons distinctively retain the G tonic for four bars and , on the repeat of the motif , uniquely go to an A @-@ note 9th embellishment over the first syllable of " gonna " . Harrison , on the other hand , introduces the more complex harmony of a relative minor (C # m) , as well as the fundamental and distinctly original slide @-@ guitar motif .

While the case was on hold , Harrison and his former bandmates Lennon and Starr chose to sever ties with Klein at the end of March 1973 ? an acrimonious split that led to further lawsuits for the three ex @-@ Beatles . Bright Tunes and Harrison later resumed their negotiations ; his final offer of 40 per cent of " My Sweet Lord " ' s US composer 's and publisher 's royalties , along with a stipulation that he retain copyright for his song , was viewed as a " good one " by Bright 's legal representation , yet the offer was rejected . It later transpired that Klein had renewed his efforts to purchase the ailing company , now solely for himself , and to that end was supplying Bright Tunes with insider details regarding " My Sweet Lord " ' s sales figures and copyright value . In the build @-@ up to the case going to court , the Chiffons recorded a version of " My Sweet Lord " , with the aim of drawing attention to the lawsuit . Beatles author Alan Clayson has described the plagiarism suit as " the most notorious civil action of the decade " , the " extremity " of the proceedings provoked by a combination of the commercial success of Harrison 's single and the intervention of " litigation @-@ loving Mr Klein " .

= = = Court hearing and ruling = = =

Bright Tunes Music v. Harrisons Music finally went to the United States district court on 23 February 1976 , to hear evidence on the allegation of plagiarism . Harrison attended the proceedings in New York , with a guitar , and each side called musical experts to support its argument .

After reconvening in September 1976 , the court found that Harrison had " subconsciously " copied the earlier tune , since he admitted to having been aware of the Chiffons ' recording . Judge Richard

Owen said in his conclusion to the proceedings :

Did Harrison deliberately use the music of He 's So Fine ? I do not believe he did so deliberately . Nevertheless , it is clear that My Sweet Lord is the very same song as He 's So Fine with different words , and Harrison had access to He 's So Fine . This is , under the law , infringement of copyright , and is no less so even though subconsciously accomplished .

= = = Damages and subsequent litigation = = =

With liability established , the court then recommended an amount for the damages to be paid by Harrison and Apple to Bright Tunes , which Owen totalled at \$ 1 @, @ 599 @, @ 987 ? amounting to three @-@ quarters of the royalty revenue raised in North America from " My Sweet Lord " , as well as a significant proportion of that from the All Things Must Pass album . This figure has been considered over @-@ harsh and unrealistic by some observers , since it both underplayed the unique elements of Harrison 's recording ? the universal spiritual message of its lyrics , the signature guitar hook , and its production ? and ignored the critical acclaim his album received in its own right . Elliot Huntley observes : " People don 't usually hear a single and then automatically go and buy an expensive boxed @-@ set triple album on the off @-@ chance . " The award factored in the royalty revenue raised from " My Sweet Lord " ' s inclusion on the recent Best of George Harrison compilation , though at a more moderate percentage than for the 1970 album .

The ruling set new legal precedents and was a personal blow for Harrison , who admitted he was too " paranoid " to write anything new for some time afterwards . Early reaction in the music industry saw Little Richard claim for breach of copyright in a track recorded by the Beatles in 1964 for the Beatles for Sale album , as well as Ringo Starr credit songwriter Clifford T. Ward as the inspiration for his Ringo 's Rotogravure song " Lady Gaye " . In the UK , the corresponding damages suit , brought by Peter Maurice Music , was swiftly settled out of court in July 1977 .

During the drawn @-@ out damages portion of the US suit , events played into Harrison 's hands when Klein 's ABKCO Industries finally purchased the copyright to " He 's So Fine " , and with it all litigation claims , after which Klein proceeded to negotiate sale of the song to Harrison . On 19 February 1981 , the court decided that due to Klein 's duplicity in the case , Harrison would only have to pay ABKCO \$ 587 @, @ 000 instead of the \$ 1 @. @ 6 million award and he would also receive the rights to " He 's So Fine " ? \$ 587 @, @ 000 being the amount Klein had paid Bright Tunes for the song in 1978 . The court ruled that the former manager 's actions had been in breach of the fiduciary duty owed to Harrison , a duty that continued " even after the principal ? agent relationship ended " . The litigation continued through to the early 1990s , however , as the finer points of the settlement were ironed out ; in his 1993 essay on Bright Tunes v. Harrisongs , Joseph Self describes it as " without question , one of the longest running legal battles ever to be litigated in [the United States] " . Matters would not ultimately be concluded until March 1998 .

Subsequent charges of plagiarism in the music industry have resulted in a policy of swift settlement and therefore limited damage to an artist 's credibility : the Rolling Stones ' " Anybody Seen My Baby ? " , Oasis ' " Shakermaker " , " Whatever " and " Step Out " , and the Verve 's " Bitter Sweet Symphony " are all examples of songs whose writing credits were hastily altered to acknowledge composers of a plagiarised work , with the minimum of litigation .

Shortly before the ruling was handed down in September 1976 , Harrison wrote and recorded a song inspired by the court case ? the upbeat " This Song " ? which includes the line " This tune has nothing ' Bright ' about it " . The 1960s soul hits " I Can 't Help Myself (Sugar Pie Honey Bunch) " and " Rescue Me " , as well as his own composition " You " , are all name @-@ checked in the lyrics , as if to demonstrate the point that , as he later put it , " 99 % of the popular music that can be heard is reminiscent of something or other . "

In a 1980 interview with Playboy magazine , John Lennon expressed his doubts about the notion of " subconscious " plagiarism , saying : " He must have known , you know . He 's smarter than that ... He could have changed a couple of bars in that song and nobody could ever have touched him , but he just let it go and paid the price . Maybe he thought God would just sort of let him off . " Ringo Starr 's reaction was more charitable : " There 's no doubt that the tune is similar but how many

songs have been written with other melodies in mind ? George 's version is much heavier than The Chiffons ? he might have done it with the original in the back of his mind , but he 's just very unlucky that someone wanted to make it a test case in court . "

Speaking to his friend and I , Me , Mine editor Derek Taylor in 1979 , Harrison said of the episode : " I don 't feel guilty or bad about it , in fact it saved many a heroin addict 's life . I know the motive behind writing the song in the first place and its effect far exceeded the legal hassle . "

= = Re @-@ releases and alternative versions = =

Since its initial release on All Things Must Pass , " My Sweet Lord " has appeared on the 1976 compilation The Best of George Harrison and 2009 's career @-@ spanning Let It Roll : Songs by George Harrison . The original UK single (with " What Is Life " as the B @-@ side) was reissued on Christmas Eve 1976 in Britain ? a " provocative " move by EMI , given the publicity the lawsuit had attracted that year for the song .

= = = 1975 ? " The Pirate Song " = = =

On 26 December 1975 , Harrison made a guest appearance on his friend Eric Idle 's BBC2 comedy show Rutland Weekend Television , sending up his serious public image , and seemingly about to perform " My Sweet Lord " .

As a running gag throughout the half @-@ hour show , Harrison interrupts the sketches , trying to land an acting role as a pirate (and dressed accordingly) , but gets turned down each time by RWT regulars Idle and Neil Innes , who simply want him to play the part of " George Harrison " . He then reappears at the end in more normal attire , strumming the well @-@ known introduction to " My Sweet Lord " on an acoustic guitar , and backed by the house band ; instead of continuing with the song , Harrison finally takes his chance to play " Pirate Bob " by abruptly segueing into a sea shanty ? to the horror of the " greasy " compère , played by Idle . The other musicians follow Harrison 's lead , after which a group of dancers appear on stage and the show 's closing credits roll .

This performance is known as " The Pirate Song " , co @-@ written by Harrison and Idle , and the recording is only available unofficially on bootleg compilations such as Pirate Songs . Observing the parallels with Harrison 's real @-@ life reluctance to play the pop star , Simon Leng writes , " there was great resonance within these gags . "

= = = 2001 ? " My Sweet Lord (2000) " = = =

In January 2001 , Harrison included a new version of the song as a bonus track on the remastered All Things Must Pass album . " My Sweet Lord (2000) " featured Harrison sharing vocals with Sam Brown , daughter of his friend Joe Brown , backed by mostly new instrumentation , including acoustic guitar by his son Dhani and tambourine by Ray Cooper . The track opens with a " snippet " of sitar , to " emphasize its spiritual roots " , Leng suggests . On release , Harrison explained that his motivation for remaking the song was partly to " play a better slide guitar solo " ; he also cited the " spiritual response " that the song had traditionally received , together with his interest in reworking the tune to avoid the contentious musical notes , as further reasons . Of the extended slide @-@ guitar break on " My Sweet Lord (2000) " , Leng writes : " [Harrison] had never made so clear a musical statement that his signature bottleneck sound was as much his tool for self @-@ expression as his vocal cords . " Elliot Huntley opines that Harrison 's vocal was more " gospel inflected " and perhaps even more sincere than on the original recording , " given his deteriorating health " during the final year of his life .

This version also appeared on the January 2002 posthumous release of the " My Sweet Lord " single ? a three @-@ song charity CD comprising the original 1970 ? 71 hit , the acoustic run @-@ through of " Let It Down " (with recent overdubs , another 2001 bonus track) , and Harrison 's reworking of the title song . Proceeds from the single went to the Material World Charitable Foundation , set up by Harrison in April 1973 . For some months after the single 's release , a

portion of " My Sweet Lord (2000) " played on Harrison 's official website , on a constant loop , over screen images of lotus petals scattering and then re @-@ forming . The song also appears on the 2014 Apple Years 1968 ? 75 reissue of All Things Must Pass .

= = = 2011 ? Demo version = = =

In November 2011 , a demo of " My Sweet Lord " , with Harrison backed by just Voormann and Starr , was included on the deluxe edition CD accompanying the British DVD release of Martin Scorsese 's George Harrison : Living in the Material World documentary . Described as an early " live take " by compilation producer Giles Martin , and an " acoustic hosanna " by David Fricke of Rolling Stone , it was recorded at the start of the All Things Must Pass sessions and was later released internationally on Early Takes : Volume 1 in May 2012 .

= = Live versions = =

Harrison performed " My Sweet Lord " at every one of his relatively few solo concerts , starting with the two Concert for Bangladesh shows at New York 's Madison Square Garden on 1 August 1971 . The recording released on the subsequent live album was taken from the evening show and begins with Harrison 's spoken " Hare Krishna " over his opening acoustic @-@ guitar chords . Among the 24 backing musicians was a " Soul Choir " featuring singers Claudia Linnear , Dolores Hall and Jo Green , but it was Harrison who sung the end @-@ of @-@ song Guru Stotram prayer in his role as lead vocalist , unlike on the studio recording (where it was sung by the backing chorus) ; the slide guitar parts were played by Eric Clapton and Jesse Ed Davis .

During his 1974 North American tour , Harrison 's only one there as a solo artist , " My Sweet Lord " was performed as the encore at each show . In contrast with the subtle shift from " hallelujah " s to Sanskrit chants on his 1970 original , Harrison used the song to engage his audience in the practice of " chanting the holy names of the Lord " , or kirtan ? from " Om Christ ! " and Krishna , to Buddha and Allah ? with varying degrees of success . Backed by a band that again included Billy Preston , Harrison turned " My Sweet Lord " into an " R & B @-@ styled " extended gospel @-@ funk piece , closer in its arrangement to Preston 's Encouraging Words version and lasting up to ten minutes . The performance of the song at Tulsa 's Assembly Center on 21 November marked the only guest appearance of the tour when Leon Russell joined the band on stage .

Harrison 's second and final solo tour took place in Japan in December 1991 , with Clapton 's band . A live version of " My Sweet Lord " recorded at the Tokyo Dome , on 14 December , was released the following year on the Live in Japan album .

= = Personnel = =

The following musicians are believed to have played on Harrison 's original version of " My Sweet Lord " :

George Harrison ? vocals , acoustic guitar , slide guitars , backing vocals

Eric Clapton ? acoustic guitar

Pete Ham ? acoustic guitar

Tom Evans ? acoustic guitar

Joey Molland ? acoustic guitar

Billy Preston ? piano

Gary Wright ? electric piano

Klaus Voormann ? bass

Ringo Starr ? drums , percussion

Jim Gordon ? drums , percussion

Mike Gibbins ? tambourine

John Barham ? harmonium , string and woodwind arrangements

uncredited ? zithers

= = Cover versions = =

Andy Williams covered " My Sweet Lord " on his 1971 Love Story album , backed by members of the choir of the Wee Kirk o ' the Valley of Reseda , California .

Ronnie Aldrich , British easy listening pianist , covered the song , as well as Harrison 's " What Is Life " , on his 1971 album , also entitled Love Story (after the equally popular theme song to the 1970 movie Love Story , by Francis Lai) .

Tony Orlando and Dawn performed the song on their television series in the 1970s .

Homer Louis Randolph III recorded a version of " My Sweet Lord " for his eponymous 1971 album .

Peggy Lee recorded " My Sweet Lord " in April 1971 for her album Where Did They Go , arranged by Don Sebesky ; it was issued on CD in 2008 .

Phil Allen covered the song on his 1971 album The Happy Hammond Goes Pop .

Ray Coniff 's version was released on another 1971 album titled Love Story .

Bola Sete 's version was released on his 1971 album Shebaba .

Johnny Mathis covered " My Sweet Lord " on his Love Story album .

Edwin Starr recorded a version in 1971 , produced by Norman Whitfield , which was released as a single and appeared on his Involved album .

A version by Eddy Arnold appeared on his 1971 album Welcome to My World .

Also in 1971 , John Holt recorded a reggae version of " My Sweet Lord " , without the background chorus of " hallelujahs " and Krishna references .

Another 1971 easy listening version of " My Sweet Lord " was recorded by Stu Phillips & The Hollyridge Strings , for their Beatles tribute album The George , John , Paul & Ringo Songbook .

Marion Williams covered " My Sweet Lord " on her 1971 album Standing Here Wondering Which Way to Go ; the song was later released on Daytrippers : Songs of the Beatles .

French orchestral leader Franck Pourcel recorded the song for his Friends album in 1971 .

Swedish jazz singer Monica Zetterlund recorded the Swedish @-@ language cover " Du mitt liv " in 1971 .

Another French orchestrator , Paul Mauriat , recorded " My Sweet Lord " for his 1972 album Le Grand Orchestre de Paul Mauriat Joue Les Beatles .

Italian singer Iva Zanicchi covered the song on her album Fantasia n . 2 : The Beatles in 1972 .

Nina Simone performed an 18 @-@ minute gospel reworking of " My Sweet Lord " at Fort Dix before a group of African @-@ American soldiers , a version released on her 1972 album Emergency Ward ! (along with her cover of Harrison 's " Isn 't It a Pity ") . She interspersed the song with the David Nelson poem " Today Is a Killer " , at the end of which , God is accused of being a killer , giving the otherwise exuberant atmosphere of the performance an apocalyptic ending . No references to Krishna appear in Simone 's version .

Richie Havens covered the song on his 1972 live album Richie Havens on Stage , a version later released on the 1987 album Sings Beatles and Dylan .

Also in 1972 , The Tribe recorded the song for an album titled Bangla Desh , which included cover versions of other highlights from The Concert for Bangladesh .

In 1973 , The Violinaires covered " My Sweet Lord " on their album Groovin ' with Jesus .

Marjorie McCoy released her version of the song on the 1973 album The Other Side .

In 1975 , Julio Iglesias covered the song on his album El Amor , singing it in English even though the song was retitled in Spanish as " Mi Dulce Señor (My Sweet Lord) " .

The Chiffons ' version of the song was released as a non @-@ album single in 1975 .

Larry Norman covered " My Sweet Lord " on his 1977 album Streams of White Light into Darkened Corners , and like John Holt , omitted the " hallelujah " refrains and references to Krishna .

On her 1978 Christmas TV special , Dolly Parton performed the song as part of a spiritual medley , with guest Cher and a choir , with only " hallelujah " being chanted .

The song was briefly included in Stars on 45 's medley of songs , released as a single in May 1981 .

For his 1981 Don 't Give In album , Leon Patillo recorded a heavily revised version of " My Sweet

Lord " . (Among other things , because this was a Christian release , the entire background " hallelujah " section is replaced with the refrain " Jesus " .)

Five Thirty covered the song for the anti @-@ poll tax album Alvin Lives (In Leeds) , released in 1990 .

Boy George recorded a version of the song in 1992 for the Ruby Trax : The NME 's Roaring Forty compilation album .

Spanish house music band PCA released their version of " My Sweet Lord " as a single in 1995 .

Stacey Q covered " My Sweet Lord " on her 1997 album Boomerang .

Swedish band Brainpool recorded the song as a medley with " He 's So Fine " and released it as a single in 1997 , titled " My Sweet Lord (She 's So Fine) " .

In December 1997 , Megadeth played the song live (with modified lyrics) at their concert at the Centro Cultural Recoleta in Buenos Aires .

The Wailing Souls covered " My Sweet Lord " for their 1998 album Psychedelic Souls .

In 1999 , an instrumental version of " My Sweet Lord " was included on Aretha Franklin 's Amazine Grace : The Complete Recordings collection , a repackaging of her bestselling album Amazing Grace , recorded live in a Los Angeles Baptist church in January 1972 .

David Young recorded the song for his 2000 covers album Songbook .

At the American Music Awards in January 2002 , soul singer Luther Vandross performed a medley of " Something " and " My Sweet Lord " in tribute to Harrison , among others who died in 2001 .

In April 2002 , Elton John , Sting , James Taylor , Ravi Shankar , Anoushka Shankar and others performed " My Sweet Lord " to close the Harrison @-@ tribute opening portion of the Rock for the Rainforest benefit concert , held at Carnegie Hall in New York City .

Crown of Thorns covered this track on their 2002 album Karma .

Richard Clayderman recorded a cover of " My Sweet Lord " for his 2002 album Everybody Loves Somebody Sometime .

At the Concert for George on 29 November 2002 , the song was performed by Billy Preston , with Sam Brown joining on backing vocals .

In 2003 , Brazilian artist Emmerson Nogueira included a cover of " My Sweet Lord " on his album Versão Acústica 3 .

BeBe Winans recorded a version with specifically Christian , additional verses (and without Krishna references) on his album My Christmas Prayer .

Girlyman also covered this song , released on their 2003 album Remember Who I Am .

Danny Colfax Mallon included " My Sweet Lord " on his album George : Harrison 's Compositions Interpreted on Piano in 2004 .

Reggae artist Little Roy (Earl Lowe) , a Rastafarian , recorded the song for his 2005 album Children of the Most High , replacing the background chorus with sung references to Rastafari .

Les Fradkin 's cover was released in 2005 on his Something for George tribute album , featuring guest appearances from Richie Furay and former Apple recording artist Lon Van Eaton .

Joel Harrison covered " My Sweet Lord " on his album Harrison on Harrison : Jazz Explanations of George Harrison , released in October 2005 .

Nina Hagen recorded a version of " My Sweet Lord " (with Loka Nunda) in 2008 .

John Mayer performed the song live throughout 2008 , notably during his performance at that year 's Glastonbury Festival .

A version by Gary Christian & Desa Basshead appeared on the 2008 charity album Liverpool : The Number Ones Album .

Osibisa covered this track on their 2009 album Osee Yee .

Jim James (under the name Yim Yames) covered six of Harrison 's songs , including " My Sweet Lord " , on his 2009 EP Tribute To .

Klaus Voormann , who had played bass on Harrison 's studio version and on the Concert for Bangladesh performance of the song , included a cover of " My Sweet Lord " on his 2009 solo album A Sideman 's Journey ; Bonnie Bramlett supplied lead vocals on the track .

Kevin Max has covered this song , with no references to Krishna , for Christian audiences .

Elliott Smith performed " My Sweet Lord " live with Grandaddy .

Jose Feliciano has also played this song live .

Hurray for the Riff Raff contributed " My Sweet Lord " to Harrison Covered , a tribute CD accompanying the November 2011 issue of Mojo magazine .

In 2014 , Brian Wilson played this song with his band (including Al Jardine) live during a tribute to George Harrison .

= = Accolades = =

= = = Grammy Awards = = =

= = Chart performance = =

= = = Weekly singles charts = = =

= = = Year @-@ end charts = = =

= = = Certifications and sales = = =