

= The Inner Light (song) =

" The Inner Light " is a song by the English rock group the Beatles , written by George Harrison . It was released on a non @-@ album single in March 1968 , as the B @-@ side to " Lady Madonna " . The song was the first Harrison composition to be featured on a Beatles single and reflects the band 's embrace of Transcendental Meditation and his continued interest in Indian classical music . It is the last of three Indian @-@ style tracks he wrote for the Beatles , after " Love You To " and " Within You Without You " . The lyrics are a rendering of a poem from the Taoist Tao Te Ching , which Harrison set to music on the recommendation of Juan Mascaró , a Sanskrit scholar who had translated the passage in his 1958 book Lamps of Fire . The song became a comparative rarity among the Beatles ' recordings in the decade following its release ; it has subsequently appeared on compilation albums such as Rarities , Past Masters , Volume Two and Mono Masters .

Harrison recorded the instrumental track for " The Inner Light " in India in January 1968 , during the sessions for his Wonderwall Music soundtrack album . The only Beatles studio recording to be made outside Europe , the song introduced instruments such as sarod , shehnai and pakhavaj to the band 's sound and features contributions from Indian classical musicians including Aashish Khan , Hanuman Jadev and Hariprasad Chaurasia . Aside from Harrison 's lead vocal , recorded in London , the Beatles ' only contribution came in the form of group backing vocals at the end of the song .

Among music critics , " The Inner Light " has received praise for its melodic qualities and for its evocation of the meditation experience . Jeff Lynne and Anoushka Shankar performed the song at the Concert for George tribute in November 2002 , a year after Harrison 's death . An alternative take of the 1968 instrumental track was released in 2014 on the remastered Wonderwall Music CD . Screenwriter Morgan Gendel named a 1992 episode of the television series Star Trek : The Next Generation as an homage to the song .

= = Background and inspiration = =

In his autobiography , I , Me , Mine , George Harrison recalls that he was inspired to write " The Inner Light " by Juan Mascaró , a Sanskrit scholar at Cambridge University . Mascaró had taken part in a debate , televised on The Frost Programme on 4 October 1967 , during which Harrison and John Lennon discussed the merits of Transcendental Meditation with an audience of academics and religious leaders . In a subsequent letter to Harrison , dated 16 November , Mascaró expressed the hope that they might meet again before the Beatles departed for India , where the group were to study meditation with their guru , Maharishi Mahesh Yogi . Mascaró enclosed a copy of his book Lamps of Fire , an anthology of religious writings , including from Lao @-@ Tzu 's Tao Te Ching . Having stated his admiration for the spiritual message in Harrison 's composition " Within You Without You " , Mascaró enquired : " might it not be interesting to put into your music a few words of Tao , for example no . 48 , page 66 of Lamps ? "

Harrison wrote the song during a period when he had undertaken his first musical project outside the Beatles , composing the soundtrack to the Joe Massot @-@ directed film Wonderwall . When writing " The Inner Light " , he made minimal alterations to the translated Lao @-@ Tzu text and used the same title that Mascaró had used . In I , Me , Mine , Harrison says of the changes required to create his second verse :

In the original poem , the verse says " Without going out of my door , I can know the ways of heaven . " And so to prevent any misinterpretations ? and also to make the song a bit longer ? I did repeat that as a second verse but made it : " Without going out of your door / You can know all things on earth / Without looking out of your window / You can know the ways of heaven " ? so that it included everybody .

After " Within You Without You " , " The Inner Light " was the second composition to fully reflect Harrison 's immersion in Eastern spiritual concepts , particularly meditation , an interest that had spread to his Beatles bandmates and to the group 's audience . The lyrics espouse meditation as a means to genuine understanding . Theologian Dale Allison describes the song as a " hymn " to quietism and comments that , in their attempt to " relativize and disparage knowledge of the external

world " , the words convey Harrison 's enduring worldview . Author John Winn notes that Harrison had pre @-@ emptied the message of " The Inner Light " in an August 1967 interview , when he told New York DJ Murray Kaufman : " The more you learn , the more you know that you don 't know anything at all . " Writing in his study of Harrison 's musical career , Ian Inglis similarly identifies a precedent in the song " It 's All Too Much " , where Harrison sings : " The more I learn , the less I know . "

= = Composition and musical structure = =

" The Inner Light " was Harrison 's third song in the Indian musical genre , after " Love You To " and " Within You Without You " . While those earlier songs had followed the Hindustani (North Indian) system of Indian classical music , as sitar- and tabla @-@ based compositions , " The Inner Light " is closer in style to the Carnatic (or South Indian) temple music tradition . Harrison 's progression within the genre reflected his concept for the Wonderwall soundtrack ? namely , that the assignment allowed him to create an " anthology " of Indian music and present a diverse range of styles and instrumentation .

The composition is structured into three instrumental passages separated by two sections of verse . The buoyant mood of the instrumental sections ? set to what author Peter Lavezzoli describes as " a raucous 4 / 4 rhythm " ? contrasts with the gentle , meditative portions containing the verses . The contrast is reflected in the lead instruments that Harrison would use on the recording : whereas sarod and shehnai , supported by pakhavaj , are prominent during the musical passages , the softer @-@ sounding bansuri (flute) and harmonium accompany the singing over the verses , as the sarod provides a response to each line of the vocal . In the last instrumental section , Harrison incorporates the conclusion of Lao @-@ Tzu 's poem , beginning with the line " Arrive without travelling " .

The melody conforms to the pitches of Mixolydian mode , or its Indian equivalent , the Khamaj thaat . Musicologist Dominic Pedler writes that the tune features unusual tritone intervals , which , together with the musical arrangement , ensure that the song is far removed from standard " pop tunes " . In a further departure from Harrison 's previous forays into Indian music , both of which made extensive use of single @-@ chord drone , the melody allows for formal chord changes : over the verses , the dominant E ? major alternates with F minor , before a move to A ? over the line " The farther one travels the less one knows " .

In the opening words (" Without going out ") , the melody uses what Pedler terms a " hauntingly modal " G @-@ B ? -D ? tritone progression as , within the song 's tonic key (of E ?) , the 3rd note heads towards the flat 7th . Musicologist Walter Everett likens this ascending arpeggiation of the diminished triad to a melodic feature in " Within You Without You " (over that song 's recurring phrase " We were talking ") . " The Inner Light " is an example of Harrison creating ambiguity about the tonic key , a technique that Pedler recognises as a characteristic of Harrison 's spiritually oriented songwriting .

= = Recording = =

= = = Bombay = = =

Having used London @-@ based Indian musicians from the Asian Music Circle on " Love You To " and " Within You Without You " , Harrison recorded " The Inner Light " in India with some of the country 's foremost contemporary classical players . In early January 1968 , he travelled to HMV Studios in Bombay to record part of the score for Wonderwall , much of which would appear on his debut solo album , Wonderwall Music . The day after completing the soundtrack recordings , on 13 January , Harrison taped additional pieces for possible later use , one of which was the instrumental track for " The Inner Light " . Five takes of the song were recorded on a two @-@ track recorder .

The musicians on the track were Aashish Khan (sarod) , Mahapurush Misra (pakhavaj) ,

Hanuman Jadev (shehnai) , Hariprasad Chaurasia (bansuri) and Rijram Desad (harmonium) . In Lavezzoli 's estimation , although these instruments are more commonly associated with the Hindustani discipline , the performers play them in a South Indian style , which adds to the Carnatic identity of the song . The recording features tabla tarang over the quiet , vocal interludes . Author Simon Leng refutes the presence of the oboe @-@ like shehnai , however , saying that this part was played on an esraj , a bow @-@ played string instrument . As with the Wonderwall selections recorded at HMV , Harrison directed the musicians but did not perform on the instrumental track .

= = = London = = =

Harrison completed the song in London during sessions for a new Beatles single , which was intended to cover their absence while the group were in Rishikesh , India , with the Maharishi . Once the Bombay recording had been transferred to four @-@ track tape , Harrison recorded his vocal part for " The Inner Light " on 6 February , at EMI 's Abbey Road Studios . Lacking confidence in his ability to sing in so high a register , he had to be coaxed by Lennon and Paul McCartney into delivering the requisite performance . Two days later , McCartney and Lennon overdubbed backing vocals at the very end of the song , over the words " Do all without doing " .

" The Inner Light " was held in high regard by Harrison 's bandmates , particularly McCartney , and was selected as the B @-@ side for the forthcoming single . It was the first Harrison composition to appear on a Beatles single , in addition to being the only Beatles studio recording made outside Europe . Everett writes that Lennon 's admiration for the track was evident from his subsequent creation of the song " Julia " through " a very parallel process " ? in that instance , by adapting a work by Kahlil Gibran . Although Harrison had served as the producer at the Bombay session , only George Martin received a production credit for " The Inner Light " .

= = Release and reception = =

The song was issued as the B @-@ side of " Lady Madonna " on 15 March 1968 in the UK , with the US release following three days later . While Chris Welch of Melody Maker expressed doubts about the hit potential of the A @-@ side , Billboard magazine 's reviewer commented on the aptness of " The Inner Light " , given the band 's concurrent " meditation spell " . In America , the B @-@ side charted independently on the Billboard Hot 100 for one week , placing at number 96 . In Australia , it was listed with " Lady Madonna " , as a double A @-@ side , when the single topped the Go @-@ Set national singles chart .

Among Beatles biographers , Nicholas Schaffner wrote in 1977 that " The Inner Light " " proved to be the best ? and last ? of George 's attempts to incorporate Indian music into the context of the Beatles " . Schaffner paired it with " Within You Without You " as raga rock songs that " feature haunting , exquisitely lovely melodies " , and as two works that could have been among Harrison 's " greatest achievements " had they been made with his bandmates ' participation . Bruce Eder of AllMusic describes the same tracks as " a pair of beautiful songs ? that were effectively solo recordings " . Ian MacDonald likens the song 's " studied innocence and exotic sweetness " to recordings by the Incredible String Band and concludes : " ' The Inner Light ' is both spirited and charming ? one of its author 's most attractive pieces . "

Writing for Mojo magazine in 2003 , John Harris similarly admired it as Harrison 's " loveliest addition of Indian music to The Beatles ' repertoire " . In Ian Inglis ' view : " it is the extraordinary synthesis of separate musical and lyrical traditions (in this case , Indian instrumentation , Chinese philosophy , and Western popular music) that distinguishes the song . Harrison 's uncharacteristically warm vocal weaves in and around the delicate , almost fragile , melody to deliver a simple testimony to the power of meditation ... " With regard to the song 's influence , Inglis recognises Harrison 's espousal of Eastern spirituality as " a serious and important development that reflected popular music 's increasing maturity " , and a statement that prepared rock audiences for later religious pronouncements by Pete Townshend , Carlos Santana , John McLaughlin , Cat Stevens and Bob Dylan .

Nick DeRiso of the music website Something Else ! considers " The Inner Light " to be one of its composer 's " most successful marriages of raga and rock " and , through Harrison 's introduction of instruments such as sarod , shehnai and pakhavaj , a key recording in the evolution of the 1980s world music genre . While admiring the song 's transcendent qualities , Everett quotes the ethnomusicologist David Reck , who wrote in 1988 : " Most memorable is the sheer simplicity and straightforwardness of the haunting modal melody , somehow capturing perfectly the mood and truth and aphoristic essence of the lyrics . "

= = Later releases = =

A stereo mix of " The Inner Light " was created at Abbey Road on 27 January 1970 for what Beatles recording historian Mark Lewisohn terms " some indefinable future use " . On this later mix , the opening instrumental section differs slightly from that on the original , mono version .

Following its initial release in 1968 , " The Inner Light " became one of the rarest Beatles recordings . Although it appeared on Por Siempre Beatles , a 1971 Spanish compilation album , the song was not available on a British or American album until its inclusion on Rarities , which was originally issued as a disc in the 1978 box set The Beatles Collection before receiving an independent UK release . The 1980 US compilation titled Rarities also featured " The Inner Light " , again in its mono form . The stereo mix was first released as the opening track on a bonus EP , titled The Beatles , issued in the UK in December 1981 as part of the Beatles EP Collection box set . The song was issued on CD in 1988 , in stereo , on Past Masters , Volume Two . The mono mix was subsequently included on the Beatles ' Mono Masters compilation .

For the Beatles ' 2006 remix album Love , created for the Cirque du Soleil stage show , the song was segued onto the end of " Here Comes the Sun " . This mashup begins with Harrison singing " Here Comes the Sun " over the tabla part from " Within You , Without You " and ends with Indian instrumentation from " The Inner Light " .

In 2014 , an alternative instrumental take of the song was issued as a bonus track on Harrison 's Wonderwall Music remastered CD . The recording begins with a short studio discussion , as Harrison instructs the Bombay musicians .

= = Cover versions and popular culture = =

Having covered " Within You Without You " in 1967 , the Soulful Strings included " The Inner Light " on their album Another Exposure the following year . Junior Parker recorded the song , releasing a version on his 1971 album with Jimmy McGriff , The Dudes Doin ' Business . Later in the 1970s , the song 's title was appropriated for one of the first international Beatles fanzines .

= = = Concert for George performance = = =

Jeff Lynne , who worked frequently with Harrison after the Beatles ' break @-@ up , sang " The Inner Light " at the Concert for George tribute , held at London 's Royal Albert Hall on 29 November 2002 , a year after the former Beatle 's death . In what Simon Leng describes as " a wonderfully eloquent duet " , Lynne performed the song with Anoushka Shankar , who played the original sarod part on sitar . Lynne and Shankar were accompanied by Harrison 's son Dhani (on keyboards and backing vocals) and an ensemble of Indian musicians that included percussionist Tanmoy Bose (on dholak) , Rajendra Prasanna (shehnai) and Sunil Gupta (flute) .

The song appeared partway through the concert 's opening , Indian music segment , which was performed by Shankar and otherwise composed by her father , and Harrison 's friend and former sitar tutor , Ravi Shankar . Inglis comments that , in its context at the Concert for George , " [' The Inner Light '] does not appear at all out of place among the Indian folk and classical compositions that surround it . " Reviewing the Concert for George film for The Guardian , James Griffiths admired Lynne 's reading of the song as a " particularly sublime version " .

= = = Star Trek : The Next Generation episode = = =

In June 1992 , the American television series Star Trek : The Next Generation aired an episode titled " The Inner Light " , which went on to win the Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation . The plot centres around the show 's main character , Captain Jean @-@ Luc Picard , temporarily living in a dream @-@ like state on an unfamiliar planet , during which decades elapse relative to a few minutes in reality . An avowed fan of the Beatles , screenwriter Morgan Gendel titled the episode after Harrison 's song .

In an email to the Star Trek blog site Soul of Star Trek , Nick Sagan , another of the show 's screenwriters , suggested that the song 's lyrics express the " ability to experience many things without actually going anywhere ? and that 's what happens to Picard " . In his subsequent post on the same site , Gendel confirmed this similarity , saying that the Beatles track " captured the theme of the show : that Picard experienced a lifetime of memories all in his head " . When discussing the episode on the official Star Trek website in 2013 , Gendel concluded : " If you Google ' Inner Light + song ' you ? ll get the Beatles tune and an acknowledgment of my TNG homage to it back @-@ to @-@ back ? that might be the best gift my authorship of this episode has given me . "

= = Personnel = =

According to Peter Lavezzoli :

George Harrison ? lead vocals , direction

John Lennon ? harmony vocals

Paul McCartney ? harmony vocals

Aashish Khan ? sarod

Hanuman Jadev ? shehnai

Hariprasad Chaurasia ? bansuri

Mahapurush Misra ? pakhavaj

Rijram Desad ? harmonium

uncredited ? tabla tarang