

= Behind That Locked Door =

" Behind That Locked Door " is a song by English musician George Harrison , released on his 1970 triple album All Things Must Pass . Harrison wrote the song in August 1969 as a message of encouragement to Bob Dylan , who was making a highly publicised comeback to the concert stage , accompanied by the Band , with a headlining performance at the Isle of Wight Festival . " Behind That Locked Door " is a rare Harrison composition in the country music genre and the second song dealing with the friendship between himself and Dylan , after their 1968 collaboration " I 'd Have You Anytime " . Its lyrics address Dylan 's elusive nature , and reflect the high regard in which Harrison held the American singer 's work . The same reluctance on Dylan 's part to re @-@ engage with a concert audience led to him retreating again from live performance until August 1971 , when he responded to Harrison 's request to play at the Concert for Bangladesh .

Harrison recorded " Behind That Locked Door " in London early in the summer of 1970 , shortly after taking part in a session for Dylan 's New Morning album in New York . Co @-@ produced by Phil Spector , the recording features a prominent contribution from Nashville pedal steel virtuoso Pete Drake , and twin keyboard parts from Gary Wright and Billy Preston in the tradition of the Band , whose sound influenced Harrison 's arrangement . With its understated performance , the track is a comparatively rare departure from the big production commonly associated with All Things Must Pass . On release , Alan Smith of the NME described the song as " a tremendous piece of country @-@ meets @-@ Hawaii " and recommended that it be sent to country singer Slim Whitman " without further delay " .

An alternate take of " Behind That Locked Door " appears on the 2012 Harrison compilation Early Takes : Volume 1 . Olivia Newton @-@ John , Jim James , the Felice Brothers and Norah Jones are among the artists who have covered the song .

= = Background = =

In mid August 1969 , Bob Dylan had confounded the media 's expectations by shunning the Woodstock Festival , an event he had helped to inspire . Instead , after three years in virtual seclusion with his family , Dylan decided to make his comeback a fortnight after Woodstock , by headlining the Isle of Wight Festival at Wootton , just off the south coast of England . Now a popular act in their own right , the Band agreed to back Dylan for the performance , just as they had ( as the Hawks ) on his controversial 1966 world tour . In a repeat of his UK concerts from 1966 , leading figures in the English music scene began to gather on the island to show their support for Dylan , the singer widely considered " the minstrel to a generation " .

Alone among the many celebrity guests , George Harrison had spent time with Dylan during his period away from the limelight , in Bearsville , near Woodstock . In between promoting Radha Krishna Temple ( London ) 's debut single on Apple Records , his own production of " Hare Krishna Mantra " , Harrison and wife Pattie Boyd stayed with Dylan 's family at Forelands Farm , near Bembridge , during the week preceding the festival . The two musicians strengthened the bond they had established in upstate New York and were heard performing near @-@ perfect impersonations of the Everly Brothers in the farmhouse .

In addition to a crowd estimated at 200 @,@ 000 , a group of 300 American journalists descended on the Isle of Wight , adding unwelcome pressure on Dylan . In the days leading up to his performance on Sunday , 31 August , the British press dubbed the event " D Day " , in reference to the Allies ' invasion of German @-@ occupied France in June 1944 ; in the words of music journalist John Harris , " Dylan 's show had by now been inflated into the gig of the decade . " As a further impediment to Dylan 's planned comeback , audiences in 1969 expected to hear the rock music associated with his and the Hawks ' 1965 ? 66 tours , a style that he had abandoned with his recent country album , Nashville Skyline . This contrast was encouraged by the organisers ' promotional campaign for the event , particularly in the design for the official festival posters . Referring to Dylan 's more conservative 1969 image , author Clinton Heylin writes : " There was little doubt that this was a different Dylan , even if the graphic on the fluttering posters advertising the festival was a

stark black @-@ and @-@ white shot of a beshaded Dylan in classic ' 66 pose . " The arrival of Harrison 's fellow Beatles John Lennon and Ringo Starr , on Saturday , 30 August , added to the heightened speculation that one or more members of the band might make a guest appearance with Dylan the following evening .

Harrison gifted Dylan his vintage Gibson J @-@ 200 acoustic guitar before the show and was then taken aback that Dylan arranged for " Hare Krishna Mantra " to be played over the PA minutes before he and the Band went on stage . Mukunda Goswami , one of the six pioneer devotees who founded the Hare Krishna movement 's London temple and played on the recording , has identified this exposure as reflective of how the ancient Maha Mantra " penetrated British society " as a result of the Harrison @-@ produced single . Harrison watched Dylan 's performance from the VIP enclosure , an experience that informed the lyrics to a new composition , " Behind That Locked Door " .

= = Composition = =

John Harris describes " Behind That Locked Door " as a " sweet acknowledgement of Dylan 's shyness " . According to Harrison 's recollection in a December 2000 interview for Billboard magazine , he began writing the song the night before Dylan played . Further to the statement of friendship in their 1968 collaboration " I 'd Have You Anytime " ? which Harrison began as a way of getting Dylan to let down his guard and " Let me in here " ? in " Behind That Locked Door " , he urges Dylan to confide in a friend and " let out your heart " .

Author Ian Inglis notes the Isle of Wight performance as having been a " hugely important and anxious occasion " for Dylan and views Harrison 's opening verse as a " personal plea " for him to " pull out of his depression , to face the world again , and to look to the future " . After asking " Why are you still crying ? " , Harrison assures Dylan that " The love you are blessed with / This world 's waiting for ? " .

In the second verse , Harrison sings of how he values Dylan 's friendship , together with " the tales you have told me / From the things that you saw " . For much of his career , Harrison repeatedly identified Dylan as one of his biggest musical influences , along with Ravi Shankar . To Inglis , these verse @-@ two lines reflect the level of Harrison 's respect for his work , since " while millions of others may look to the Beatles for guidance , he looks to Dylan " .

Harrison musical biographer Simon Leng observes that , in the " counseling " Harrison gives Dylan in " Behind That Locked Door " , he anticipates his own " slough of despond " during 1973 ? 75 . This self @-@ styled " naughty period " of Harrison 's coincided with the failure of his marriage to Boyd and a fall from grace with music critics following his 1974 " Dark Horse Tour " ? a tour on which , similar to Dylan in 1969 , Harrison defied public expectation and attempted to break from his Beatle past . In the final verse to " Behind That Locked Door " , he asks for Dylan 's support in such a scenario :

And if ever my love goes  
If I 'm rich or I 'm poor  
Come and let out my heart , please , please  
From behind that locked door .

Musically , the song is set in a slow , country @-@ waltz time signature with , as Leng observes , melody and lyrics working " in tandem " . Within each couplet , a rising musical figure presents the " problem " ( " Why are you still crying ? " ) , while the second line consists of a " falling melodic consolation " ( " Your pain is now through " ) . In his 1980 autobiography , Harrison offers little comment about " Behind That Locked Door " , aside from identifying the inspiration behind the song and admitting : " It was a good excuse to do a country tune with pedal steel guitar . "

= = Aftermath to the Isle of Wight Festival = =

Dylan 's set at the festival was roundly viewed as anticlimactic , if not a " Midnight Flop ! " , in the opinion of one British tabloid . Having recently told Rolling Stone editor Jann Wenner that he would

return to touring that autumn , Dylan abandoned the idea and also cancelled the proposed live album from his Isle of Wight performance . Showing support for Dylan in the fallout from his comeback , in a late 1969 interview Harrison included the American singer in his personal list of essential contemporary rock artists , saying : " The Beatles , [ the ] Stones , Bob Dylan , Eric Clapton and Delaney & Bonnie , and that 's it . Who needs anything else ? "

Inglis highlights " Behind That Locked Door " as an example of how Harrison 's songwriting reflects his " fondness " for family and close friends . Dylan 's reluctance to perform live again was only broken by his friendship with Harrison , when the latter persuaded him to play at the Concert for Bangladesh shows in New York in August 1971 . Although Dylan had been noncommittal about playing at that event until the last minute , a mutual friend of his and Harrison 's , journalist Al Aronowitz , had assured Boyd , " Bob wouldn 't let George down " ; another performer at the shows , drummer Jim Keltner , has said that Dylan felt a special closeness towards Harrison as a result of the Concert for Bangladesh . Four years later , while Harrison was dejected following what author Elliot Huntley terms the " tsunami of bile that the Dark Horse album had unleashed " , he spent considerable time with Dylan in Los Angeles . According to Mukunda Goswami , speaking in a 1982 interview with Harrison , Dylan became a regular visitor to the Los Angeles Radha Krishna temple and embraced the practice of chanting .

= = Recording = =

Following the Beatles ' break @-@ up in April 1970 , and shortly before beginning work on All Things Must Pass , Harrison participated in a recording session in New York for Dylan 's New Morning album . Among the many tracks they played were " Working on the Guru " , Dylan 's " gentle prod " at Harrison 's association with the Hare Krishna movement , Harris writes , and " If Not for You " , a new Dylan song that Harrison decided to cover on his own album . Dylan also supplied him with a phone number for Pete Drake , the Nashville @-@ based pedal @-@ steel guitarist and record producer whose work had graced " Lay Lady Lay " and other songs on Nashville Skyline . Harrison later praised Drake 's pedal steel playing as " the bagpipes of country & western music " .

Working at Abbey Road Studios in London with co @-@ producer Phil Spector , Harrison recorded " Behind That Locked Door " during the first batch of sessions for All Things Must Pass , between late May and early June 1970 . Drake 's pedal steel features strongly on the recording , providing a commentary to Harrison 's vocal in the verses , as well as a mid @-@ song solo , supported by Hammond organ from Billy Preston , and Gary Wright on piano . The arrangement for " Behind That Locked Door " reflects the enduring influence of the Band 's sound on Harrison ? through the use of two keyboard players , acoustic guitars , and a restrained backing from the rhythm section , comprising Klaus Voormann on bass and , in Huntley 's description , Alan White 's " shuffle beat " drums . For some years after the song 's release , rumours claimed that it was the Band themselves backing Harrison on the track .

Leng credits all three acoustic guitar parts to Harrison , although other sources suggest that Peter Frampton may have participated at the session . Harrison also overdubbed all the backing vocals ( credited on the album to " the George O 'Hara @-@ Smith Singers " ) , a feat much admired by Spector , who has noted Harrison 's willingness to " experiment upon experiment " with his harmony singing on All Things Must Pass .

= = Release and reception = =

" Behind That Locked Door " was released as the third track on side two of Harrison 's All Things Must Pass triple album , in November 1970 . Ian Inglis writes of its position in the track order : " In the middle of an album whose songs sweep across the grand themes of history , religion , love , sex , and death , [ ' Behind That Locked Door ' ] is a surprising and touching gesture of simple friendship from one man to another . " The release followed speculation in the music press regarding the Dylan ? Harrison joint session in May , and conversely , the critics ' lambasting of Dylan 's Self Portrait double album , released in June 1970 . In his review of All Things Must Pass , the NME 's Alan

Smith declared " Behind That Locked Door " a " standout " and " a tremendous piece of country @-@ meets @-@ Hawaii , which should be sent to Slim Whitman without further delay " . Less impressed , Ben Gerson of Rolling Stone dismissed the song as " an inexplicable bit of C & W schlock " , although he conceded that it had a " lovely , lilting background vocal " . Later in the 1970s , Beatles Forever author Nicholas Schaffner highlighted " Behind That Locked Door " and the other Dylan @-@ influenced songs on All Things Must Pass as being " far more intimate , both musically and lyrically , than the rest of the album " .

Reviewers and biographers in the 21st century invariably recognise its place among Bob Dylan 's work on his John Wesley Harding ( 1967 ) and Nashville Skyline albums . Writing in Goldmine magazine in 2002 , Dave Thompson remarked : " indeed , this tribute to Dylan 's famous reticence sounds so close to a lost Zim original that His Bobness ' own ' Baby , Stop Crying ' ( from 1978 's Street Legal ) is all but reduced to tributary status itself in comparison . "

Alan Clayson approves of the more " understated production aesthetic " next to what he views as an at @-@ times " bloated " sound found elsewhere on All Things Must Pass . Simon Leng also acknowledges Harrison 's success in " temper [ ing ] Phil Spector 's taste for the extreme " and describes " Behind That Locked Door " as one of its composer 's " more attractive " songs , with a fine lead vocal . " [ It ] is refreshing to hear Harrison singing about another 's pain , " Leng adds , " suggesting that , unlike some of his contemporaries , he was able to displace himself as the center of his universe for a moment or two at least . " In his book Phil Spector : Out of His Head , Richard Williams identifies " Behind That Locked Door " as an example of " how sympathetic to the performer " Spector could be as a producer , in this case , by giving the recording a " mellow , autumnal mix " that " beautifully display [ s ] " Drake 's pedal steel .

Elliot Huntley writes that the track provides a showcase for Harrison 's " melodic flair " , as well as a reason to wonder why the ex @-@ Beatle did not record more songs in the country @-@ music genre , since " certainly he seems perfectly at home in these comfortable surroundings " . Huntley speculates on the " interesting " possibility of a whole LP side of similar " ersatz country and western " tracks , as the Rolling Stones would do on their Exile on Main St. double album in 1972 . Harrison biographer Joshua Greene describes the song as a celebration of " love 's victory over pain " .

= = Alternative version = =

In November 2011 , an early take of " Behind That Locked Door " , featuring Harrison 's vocal backed by just two acoustic guitars and Drake 's pedal steel , was included in the British deluxe @-@ edition CD / DVD release of Martin Scorsese 's Living in the Material World documentary . This version appeared worldwide on the Early Takes : Volume 1 compilation in May 2012 . Giles Martin , who went through Harrison 's musical archive at Friar Park while compiling the album , notes the " folk @-@ tinged spoken word quality " of Harrison 's singing on this take , an example of " a kind of conversational intimacy " that he brought to his recordings .

Rolling Stone critic David Fricke describes this version of the song as a " sweet Nashville reading " . The Independent 's album reviewer finds it a " [ p ] articularly engaging " inclusion on a compilation that allows " the sweeter side of George Harrison 's character to shine unencumbered by studio blandishments " .

= = Cover versions = =

Among the country artists who have covered the song , Olivia Newton @-@ John released a version on her Olivia album in 1972 . Drake himself recorded " Behind That Locked Door " , as well as Harrison 's " Isn 't It a Pity " and " Something " , although the recordings remained unissued until the release of the Pete Drake album , nine years after his death in July 1988 . Christian alt rock band the Choir covered the song on their 1989 album Wide @-@ Eyed Wonder .

Following Harrison 's death in November 2001 , Jim James recorded " Behind That Locked Door " for what became a six @-@ song Harrison covers EP , released as Tribute To in August 2009 . Tying in with the release of Scorsese 's George Harrison : Living in the Material World , a version by

the Felice Brothers appeared on the multi @-@ artist tribute Harrison Covered , a CD accompanying the November 2011 issue of Mojo magazine .

Singer Norah Jones performed " Behind That Locked Door " on the TBS television show Conan on 25 September 2014 . Her appearance was part of the show 's " George Harrison Week " , celebrating the release of the Harrison box set The Apple Years 1968 ? 75 .

= = Personnel = =

The musicians who performed on " Behind That Locked Door " are believed to be as follows :

George Harrison ? vocals , acoustic guitars , backing vocals

Pete Drake ? pedal steel

Gary Wright ? piano

Billy Preston ? organ

Klaus Voormann ? bass

Alan White ? drums