

George Harrison's inspiration will keep us rocking forever

In 1970, George Harrison sang the words "My sweet Lord/I really want to see you/I really want to be with you/I really want to see you, Lord, but it takes so long, my Lord."

For Harrison, the wait is finally over. His dream has come true. Last Thursday, the lead guitarist for The Beatles, solo artist, spiritual seeker, mystic and humanitarian, died of cancer at age 58.



Dave Depper
In Stereo

To say that I love The Beatles is an understatement. To say that I am obsessed with The Beatles is equally incorrect. The Beatles are my religion. The Beatles are life.

My parents were hippies, and I grew up on a steady diet of classic rock from the 1960s. Which means that I was singing "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" and "All You Need Is Love" long before I knew anything about "modern" music.

I've been a guitarist since before I was a teenager. Who taught me to play? What better place to start

than Harrison's dazzling leads throughout "Abbey Road"?

One of the first movies I ever remember seeing was "Yellow Submarine," a cartoon classic that's great for kids as well as their parents. I can probably still quote every line from that movie.

In my freshman year of college, I was infatuated with a girl who lived in the dorms next to me. I was really shy, but I knew that playing her a song on the guitar could certainly help my odds. So, one sunny day in May, I sat her down and played Harrison's classic ballad "Something." She was my girlfriend for the next year.

I heard about Harrison's death this morning while at work. A fellow employee told me about it, and I went numb. My lip started to tremble. For the next hour or so, I attempted to do my job the best I could, but I couldn't concentrate. My heart was broken.

I finished what I had to do and walked out the front door, and instantly the tears came pouring down. I had lost more than a rock star, more than a face on a record album, more than an idol. I had lost a friend — and a very close one at that. Maybe now I can understand an inkling of what my parents felt on Dec. 8, 1980, when John Lennon died.

I ran outdoors and called my dad from a pay phone. We talked for quite awhile about what Harrison had meant for us, and for the world. The Beatles have always been a vital link between me and my parents. When we start talking about them, the generation gap just melts.

My dad pointed out that Harrison and Lennon are probably rocking out somewhere in the cosmos. I've never been much of the religious type, but this thought brought the first smile of the day to my face.

Throughout my life, The Beatles have been a vital support system to me. This past term has been a difficult one for me, scholastically and emotionally. But no matter how down and out I get, I can always play a Beatles album to make me feel better.

But listening to The Beatles isn't going to make me feel better today. I think that I'm going to go home, put on the "White Album," and celebrate all that Harrison gave to the world.

Wherever you are, thank you, George. Your kindness, good nature and indomitable spirit have been an inspiration to us all.

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George Harrison

Former lead guitarist of The Beatles died Thursday at age 58

Personal

Born, 1943, in Liverpool, England

1966 Marries Patti Boyd; divorced in 1977

1978 Marries his former secretary, Olivia Arias, with whom he has a son, Dhani

Career

1958 Joins The Quarry Men, a band led by John Lennon and Paul McCartney

1960 Band changes name to The Beatles

1962 Ringo Starr joins the group

1970 Beatles break up; Harrison is the first Beatle to record a No. 1 solo record ("My Sweet Lord")

1971 Introduces concert fund-raising with his benefit for Bangladesh

1987 Releases hit album "Cloud Nine"

1988 Forms The Traveling Wilburys with Bob Dylan, Tom Petty, Roy Orbison, Jeff Lynne

Health

1998 Diagnosed with throat cancer

1999 Suffered punctured lung in stabbing by a psychotic

2001 Undergoes treatment for cancer, but dies in Los Angeles



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