

LET IT BE



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UK Release: 8 May 1970; 6 November 1970

US Release: 18 May 1970

Intl CD No: CDP 7 46447 2

Running Time: 35:07

Apple PXS 1: PCS 7096

Apple AR 34001

Producers: George Martin and Phil Spector

SIDE ONE: Two Of Us; Dig A Pony; Across The Universe; I Me Mine; Let It Be; Maggie Mae.

SIDE TWO: I've Got A Feeling; One After 909; The Long And Winding Road; For You Blue; Get Back.

It is interesting to note that *Abbey Road* was recorded after this album. Originally *Let It Be* was called *Get Back* and was intended as the soundtrack for a television film of the same name. It was to have been the official follow-up to the double album, *The Beatles*.

The idea came from John, who wanted to record an album that was not necessarily reliant on technical tricks, overdubs or electronic wizardry. What he wanted was an album of up-to-date but basic Beatle music without studio effects. Paul suggested that they make a film showing The Beatles in the studio recording the album and so recording and filming began on 2 January 1969 and finished on 30 January 1969 with the now famous concert on the roof of the Apple Office in London's Savile Row.

The album and film were not released until a year later, they were delayed by Allen Klein, The Beatles' financial adviser. When released, the title was changed to *Let It Be*.

Klein had been called in by John against Paul's wishes to manage The Beatles' affairs, but initially proved valuable when he re-negotiated the contract with EMI to give The Beatles a higher royalty payment from their records. Now, with his eye on a better commercial proposition, he suggested that the proposed television film made in 16mm should be blown up to 35mm and marketed as a new Beatles cinema film.

As this would take time, and as the 'Get Back' single had already been released in April 1969, Klein suggested that film and album be re-scheduled and retitled 'Let It Be' and that a single of the same name be issued to promote both.

The *Get Back* album, that got as far as being pressed and sent to radio stations in the USA and Canada, was never released to record stores because Klein felt that it could be improved. Originally it

consisted of: 'One After 909', 'Rocker', 'Save The Last Dance For Me', 'Don't Let Me Down', 'Dig A Pony', 'I've Got A Feeling', 'Get Back', 'For You Blue', 'Teddy Boy', 'Two Of Us', 'Maggie Mae', 'Dig It', 'Let It Be', 'The Long And Winding Road', and 'Get Back' (reprise).

Klein also wanted the live recordings of 'Get Back' and 'Don't Let Me Down' scrapped and replaced with studio recordings although the first made it through to the *Let It Be* album.

Because of the delay between recording and release of the final album, The Beatles lost interest in improving the original album, so John invited Phil Spector, who had worked with him on *Instant Karma*, and who was to work with both John and George later, to produce the album as *Let It Be*. Spector sifted through 24 hours of recorded material in which there were many different versions of each song. Eventually he salvaged the album, remixed it, and overdubbed strings on 'Let It Be', 'Across The Universe' and 'I Me Mine', and strings and a heavenly choir on 'The Long And Winding Road' to the apparent dissatisfaction of Paul McCartney who had envisioned the recording with only himself on vocals and piano, and John on bass guitar.

This was the first album since The Beatles signed with EMI for which George Martin did not have complete responsibility. Although he had produced the original recordings, the final production was left to Spector whose syrupy technique did little to hide The Beatles' sloppy playing. One wonders if he really did choose the best possible versions of each track because the inevitable bootlegs, such as Sweet Apple Tracks, include far better alternatives.

The album was packaged as a boxed set complete with book, exactly as had been planned for *Get Back*. It was also given the catalogue number held for the original *Get Back* album package (PXS 1). It went on sale in Britain on 8 May 1970 at £1 more than other albums, and sold poorly. After six months the album was re-issued on 6 November 1970 without the book (as PCS 7096), but because of the time lag it did not sell well although it picked up sales at Christmas.

From 96 hours of recorded film, *Let It Be* finally emerged as a 90-minute semi-documentary, about the recording of the *Get Back* album. The film is as embarrassing to watch as the album is to listen to. It shows four rather unhappy-looking individuals involved in petty squabbles. After one scene, where Paul and George are seen arguing over a guitar riff, George left for three days and filming had to be halted until he returned. It is a sad spectacle, showing the public break-up of one of the world's greatest pop groups. One can only hope that one day sufficient will be salvaged from the remaining 94½ hours of footage to make a second movie. Certainly The Beatles were captured on film performing many rock'n'roll standards and reworkings of a number of their old songs. The most exciting surviving part of the film, shown at the end of the movie, is the impromptu concert on the

roof of the Apple office in London's Savile Row. This shows the stunned and excited reaction of lunchtime shoppers and office workers in the area to the unbelievable noise of a Beatles concert drifting down from the roof to the streets below. The Beatles manage to perform five songs 'I Dig A Pony', 'I've Got A Feeling', 'One After 909', 'Don't Let Me Down' and 'Get Back' before the arrival of the police to stop the concert.

An interesting postscript is that *Get Back* was not the only album to be planned from the material that never reached the shops. There were two more that, although taken to the final stages, were never given working titles. The second was to have been re-recordings of old Beatles tracks. 'Love Me Do', 'Norwegian Wood' and 'She Said, She Said' were announced as prospective tracks. The third album was to have consisted of 14 old rock'n'roll standards without any Beatles-written songs. Tracks recorded for this included 'Shake Rattle and Roll', 'Lawdy Miss Clawdy', 'Blue Suede Shoes' and 'Tracks Of My Tears'.

It is also interesting to document the events that followed *Let It Be*. After the recording sessions for *Abbey Road* finished in August 1969, Paul and Ringo began work on their first solo albums. John and George had already done so. Ringo's first solo album, *Sentimental Journey*, a run-through of 12 standards, was issued on 27 March 1970 and Paul McCartney's album, *McCartney*, a selection of left-over Beatles songs and instrumentals, was issued on 17 April 1970, a few weeks prior to the release of the *Let It Be* album. John, George and Ringo were not pleased that Paul was about to issue a solo album in competition with a Beatles album. He could not be persuaded otherwise even though Ringo was sent by John to try to change his mind. On 10 April 1970, exactly one week prior to the release of the McCartney album, Paul announced that he was leaving The Beatles, a statement that shook and saddened all Beatles fans. Many also thought that Paul's statement was a little too well timed to tie in with the release of his first solo album.

After Paul left the group John, George and Ringo considered recruiting bass player Klaus Voormann and forming The Ladders. This line-up did get together once in 1973 with Billy Preston when they recorded the track 'I'm The Greatest' for Ringo's solo album *Ringo* (Apple PCTC 252).

SIDE ONE

Two Of Us (Lennon-McCartney) 3:33

John Lennon: Acoustic Guitar and Lead Vocal

Paul McCartney: Acoustic Guitar and Lead Vocal **George Harrison:** Lead Guitar

Ringo Starr: Drums

Just before this track begins a snatch of studio conversation is included and John proclaims 'I dig a pygmy by Charles Hawtrey and the Deaf Aids – Phase one, in which Doris gets her oats.' 'Two Of Us' was written by Paul as a duet for himself and John, possibly as a reaction to the arrival of Yoko Ono who was claiming all of John's attention. When the song was originally recorded it was called 'On Our Way Home'. After the *Get Back* album was scrapped Paul gave the song to one of Apple's latest signings, a New York trio called Mortimer, who recorded the song under its original title in May 1969. The recording, produced by Paul, never appeared and nothing has been heard of Mortimer since.

The track is a close harmony duet between John and Paul who also play acoustic guitars with Paul soloing in places. George adds lead guitar with Ringo on drums and revives memories of the three-guitars-and-drums sound of the early 60s. The song is featured twice in the film *Let It Be*; first, in rehearsal, slightly up-tempo when John and Paul ad-lib the lyrics, and secondly when they play the complete song that is the version issued on this album.

Dig A Pony (Lennon-McCartney) 3:55

John Lennon: Lead Guitar and Lead Vocal

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar and Harmony Vocal

George Harrison: Rhythm Guitar

Ringo Starr: Drums

Billy Preston: Organ

The first of the four live recordings taken from the 30 January 1969 rooftop concert included on the album, this was written by John as two separate songs, 'All I Want Is You' and 'Dig A Pony'. When the track listing for the *Get Back* album was announced, this track was called 'All I Want Is You', but when the album was compiled the title was changed to 'Dig A Pony'. It has a false start then a lead vocal from John with harmonies from Paul. The lyrics sound as if they could have been made up on the spot. John makes references to the Rolling Stones and Johnny and The Moondogs – one of The Beatles' earlier names. At the end of the recording John can be heard complaining that his hands are cold. The recording sounds rough both in instrumentation and in the falsetto harmonies from John and Paul.

It should be noted that the album's American sleeve lists this track as 'I Dig A Pony'.

Across The Universe (Lennon-McCartney) 3:51

John Lennon: Acoustic Guitar, Lead Guitar and Lead Vocal

Paul McCartney: Piano

George Harrison: Tamboura and Maracas

Ringo Starr: Drums and Tomtoms

Session Musicians: (Overdubbed) 35-Piece Orchestra and 14-Piece Choir

The original recording of this song that appeared on the charity album *No One's Gonna Change Our World* (Regal Starline SRS 5018) and that now appears on *Past Masters – Volume Two* (Parlophone BPM 2), is a far superior version. Unfortunately Phil Spector's heavenly choir and slushy orchestra, overdubbed on to this version in April 1970, have destroyed the original simplicity of the song. This recording is slightly slower than the original, as if it has been deliberately slowed down from its recorded speed, and unfortunately this gives John's voice a whining quality. The original recording featured backing vocals from Paul and George and two female singers (see *Past Masters – Volume Two*); these are not included on this version.

I Me Mine (Harrison) 2:25

John Lennon: Not Present

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar, Electric Piano and Backing Vocal

George Harrison: Acoustic Guitar, Lead Guitar, Organ and Lead/Backing Vocal

Ringo Starr: Drums

Session Musicians: (Overdubbed) 35-Piece Orchestra

Recorded on 3 January 1970 at the first of two final recording sessions by The Beatles. Although John Lennon was absent this was the last song ever recorded by them. Bearing a distinct resemblance to Harrison's earlier 'Savoy Truffle' on *The White Album*, it opens with a dramatic organ from George who also plays acoustic guitar, Paul on electric piano and Ringo on drums. The vocals are mainly a solo from George but are supplemented by backing from Paul on the chorus. This track, like the preceding 'Across The Universe', also has an overdubbed 35-piece orchestra, but thankfully Phil Spector has not mixed them too far forward.

SIDE TWO

I've Got A Feeling (Lennon-McCartney) 3:38

John Lennon: Lead Guitar and Lead Vocal

George Harrison: Rhythm Guitar

Billy Preston: Organ

The second live recording on the album taken from the rooftop concert on 30 January 1969 sounds as rough as the previous live track, 'Dig A Pony', on side one. George's heavily distorted rhythm guitar provides the intro. The verses are split between John and Paul with Paul on lead vocal for the first two. John leads on the second two and finally there is an interesting interchange between stereo channels, with Paul on the left, repeating the first two verses, and John on the right-hand channel, repeating the third and fourth verses.

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar and Lead Vocal

Ringo Starr: Drums

One After 909 (Lennon-McCartney) 2:52

John Lennon: Lead Guitar and Lead Vocal

George Harrison: Rhythm Guitar

Billy Preston: Organ

This is one of John's earliest songs that he revived especially for the *Get Back* project. Again this is a rough-sounding recording, also taken from the rooftop concert. The vocals are a duet between John and Paul with John singing solo for one verse.

At the end of the track John goes into an off-the-cuff rendition of 'Danny Boy', not credited on either record label or sleeve.

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar and Lead Vocal

Ringo Starr: Drums

The Long And Winding Road (Lennon-McCartney) 3:40

John Lennon: Bass Guitar

George Harrison: Lead Guitar

Session Musicians: (Overdubbed) 35-Piece Orchestra and 14-Piece Choir

Paul McCartney's ballad is overlaid with Spector's choirs and orchestras. Originally, Paul backed himself on piano while John, George and Ringo supplied a gentle accompaniment.

Paul McCartney: Piano and Solo Vocal

Ringo Starr: Drums

For You Blue (Harrison) 2:33

John Lennon: Steel Guitar

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar and Piano

George Harrison: Acoustic Guitar and Solo Vocal

Ringo Starr: Drums

Prior to this track another snatch of studio chat can be heard from John: 'The Queen says no to pot-smoking FBI members.' Musically this is quite good, but at the same time it still seems like a rehearsal recording. It features a lead vocal from George, who also plays acoustic guitar, with John on a steel guitar, Paul on bass and Ringo on drums. Although The Beatles' music changed between 1962 and 1970 the return to a basic four-instrument sound is quite evident on this recording. Curiously, although this track is called 'For You Blue', the title is not mentioned anywhere in the lyrics.

Get Back (Lennon-McCartney) 3:09

John Lennon: Lead Guitar and Harmony Vocal

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar and Lead Vocal

George Harrison: Rhythm Guitar

Ringo Starr: Drums

Billy Preston: Organ

The recording starts with Paul saying 'Rosetta, Oh Rosetta' that prompts John to launch into 'Sweet Rosetta Fart, she thought she was a cleaner, but she was a frying pan'. Although this is a live recording, the quality is comparable with the studio version that was issued as a single instead of this one as planned. The track features a lead vocal from Paul, who wrote the song, with harmonies in places from John. This recording omits the final verse of the song that is included on the studio version. The track ends with John saying poignantly 'I'd like to say "thank you" on behalf of the group and ourselves. I hope we've passed the audition.'