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Preview of new deluxe CD set 'George Harrison — The Apple Years 1968-1975,' being released Tuesday

By James Grant of The News-Sentinel
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Hot on the heels of the recent release of "The Beatles in Mono" LP set comes another feast for Beatles fans ears – "George Harrison – The Apple Years 1968-1975," which is being released by Universal Music Group on Tuesday.

This deluxe CD set, also being made available to purchase as individual CDs, contains some of the most well-known and best-selling albums that George Harrison recorded outside of The Beatles as a solo artist. The set's price is listed as \$124.98 on Harrison's website and \$105.98 on Amazon.com.

The set, which contains seven CDs plus an exclusive 40-minute DVD, contains the following albums:

- *"Wonderwall Music" (featuring soundtrack music from the film "Wonderwall")
- *"Electronic Sound" (an experimental Moog synthesizer sound-effects CD)
- *"All Things Must Pass" (a two-CD set of Harrison's best-selling, No. 1, critically acclaimed album featuring the smash hit "My Sweet Lord")
- *"Living in the Material World" (another No. 1 album from 1973 featuring the No. 1 hit "Give Me Love (Give Me Peace on Earth)")
- *"Dark Horse"
- *"Extra Texture (Read All About It)"

The albums in this set represent Harrison's studio output that was recorded and released on The Beatles' own record label, Apple Records, which was active from 1968 to 1975.

Dhani Harrison, George Harrison's only son, was the executive producer of this set and, along with renowned engineer Paul Hicks (son of Tony Hicks from The Hollies), remastered the sound on each CD from the original analogue tapes.

Fans familiar with the recent CD releases of Beatles and solo Beatles albums will be interested to know the CDs contained in the new CD set look more like mini LPs with a heavier card stock than the glossy fold-out covers from The Beatles' releases.

Each CD in this set contains beautiful reproductions of the original LP covers and their inner sleeves as well as the original record labels, which are reproduced on the CDs themselves.

Informative booklets inside each CD also contain detailed liner notes on how each album was created along with lovely photos of Harrison from the time period in which the albums were recorded, as well as memorabilia.

There is also a 48-page, hardbound book that comes with the set that holds a 40-minute DVD.

At this time, the DVD is exclusive to the box set and contains a special short music film called "The Apple Years" put together by Harrison's second wife, Olivia Harrison, as well as videos and short documentaries about some of Harrison's albums featured in the set.

The small hardbound book from the set is printed on glossy stock paper and is filled with many wonderful photos of Harrison from those years as well as photos of records and master tape boxes from the albums featured in the set.

As for the sound of these CDs, Dhani Harrison and his team did a fine job as each album now sparkles with a clarity and punch that was missing on previous CD releases of this material.

"All Things Must Pass" in particular has never sounded better on CD. It's louder than previous versions but has a nice punchy sound and strong bass. It is as clear as this album will sound, seeing as how the original producer, Phil Spector, layered several songs with the heavy echo (the "Wall of Sound") he was well known for from his early 1960s hit productions such as "Be My Baby" and "Da Doo Ron Ron."

A special treat for fans who've loved these albums for years are a number of new bonus tracks that are sprinkled throughout the discs.

An early instrumental take of the song "The Inner Light," which became the B-side on The Beatles' single "Lady Madonna," is on the "Wonderwall Music" CD and is sure to thrill



More Information

Learn more

For more information on the new CD set "George Harrison — The Apple Years 1968-1975," go to www.georgeharrison.com.

hardcore Beatles maniacs.

There's also a wonderful early demo of the song "Dark Horse" that features Harrison alone on guitar in much stronger voice than the album version (from the "Dark Horse" CD), and a wonderful updated version of "This Guitar (Can't Keep from Crying)" from 1992 that features Ringo Starr, Dhani Harrison and Dave Stewart of The Eurythmics that's on the "Extra Texture (Read All About It)" CD.

Beatles fans who are not familiar with Harrison's solo material should really invest in at least a new copy of Harrison's seminal work "All Things Must Pass," which is not only one of the finest albums put out by an ex-Beatle but one of the finest albums of the 1970s.

Songs such as "My Sweet Lord," "What is Life," "Run of the Mill," "Beware of Darkness," "I'd Have You Anytime" (written with Bob Dylan) and the title song "All Things Must Pass" show Harrison as a superb songwriter on par quite often with John Lennon and Paul McCartney, his two genius songwriting bandmates from The Beatles.

Whether it's Indian music laced with the psychedelic pop sound from 1968 from "Wonderwall Music" to the majestic Spector-produced "All Things Must Pass" featuring Harrison's astonishing breath of great songs to the spiritual journey of "Living in the Material World" or rediscovering lost gems like "This Guitar (Can't Keep from Crying)" from "Extra Texture," this new box set is the perfect opportunity to re-access or discover the great songwriting talent of George Harrison as he stepped away from The Beatles' shadow.

He may have been known as the "Quiet Beatle" back in the day, but the music on this new set speaks volumes.