

## column

Scott  
PrudenFREE LANCE WRITER  
E-MAIL: COMMENTS@METRO-PHILLY.COM

## Despite the silence, Harrison's legacy felt

It had to be hard being the quiet one. John was the intellectual. Paul, the cute one. Ringo, the clown. And George, dear under-appreciated George, was just ... quiet.

His quiet is permanent now, his wry asides falling upon the ears of the angels or whatever beings inhabit the afterlife of the yogis and transcendental meditators. Given his adherence to Eastern thought, we can only hope a child will be born today in which a bit of his consciousness might be passed along.

But during life, his quiet was deceptive. His guitar, his songwriting and his love for humankind spoke for him.

Pictures of the early years show a boy standing no more than two-thirds the height of John and Paul, his baby face already intense as he fingers a chord along the frets of his guitar. The men who would later become a two-headed songwriting force look gregarious compared to George's penetrating gaze. The youngest of the four, he looked thoughtful beyond his years.

Later, he would continue to be overshadowed by John and Paul, who belittled his writing and paired him and Ringo forever as underdog brothers. But amidst the Lennon/McCartney

onslaught, he would quietly carry on. His songwriting catalog with the Beatles and beyond, while low in output, is considered quality work. His was the first post-Beatles single to go No. 1.

George's contributions belie his quiet. He brought us the magical pairing of the sitar and tabla, until "Rubber Soul" largely unfamiliar to Western ears. He brought to wider awareness the sitar master Ravi Shankar, who with an acoustic instrument did at the Monterey Pop Festival perhaps what only Jimi Hendrix, with his electrified wails, could surpass. Every time the distinct vibrations of a sitar groan through a pop song, George is no longer quiet.

It was George who led his band mates to India, all of them initially seeking peace, but three returning having had what they called "a nice holiday." Among the band, it was George who realized early on that one's inner spiritual life mattered more than outward material possessions.

Fame stalked him and attacked him, leaving him with deep physical wounds. Disease haunted him, ravaging his body. And in the end, it wasn't fame that killed him, as it had done with John, but his own physical being. He knew his body would one day wear out, so he set upon maintaining a healthy soul.

George brought us the multi-performer benefit concert, showing us he was a man of action rather than word. Though bedeviled by technicalities, his Concerts for Bangladesh paved the way for like-minded rockers to do their part later in raising money for the needy. In the echoes of Live Aid and Farm Aid and all the rest, in the voices of all the formerly hungry who live now because of his legacy, George is no longer quiet.

George, who tired of fame early, would likely frown upon the fuss we've all made about his passing. He'd likely prefer we take this moment to look around and feel at one with each other in joy rather than mourning, to remember that spiritually he was prepared for death and the new adventure it brings.

"Life goes on within you and without you," he said, and amidst the quiet he leaves behind, such words will echo through the ages.