

Don't Let Me Down

Written by bluesever
Friday, 29 May 2015 12:55 -

Don't Let Me Down

"When you're drowning," John Lennon told Rolling Stone in 1970, "you don't say, 'I would be incredibly pleased if someone would have the foresight to notice me drowning and come and help me.' You just scream."



John Lennon

"Don't Let Me Down" is Lennon's anguished scream to his lover, Yoko Ono. When he and the Beatles recorded the song during the 'Let It Be' sessions in late January of 1969, Lennon asked Ringo Starr to hit the cymbal very hard at the beginning, to *"give me the courage to come screaming in."*

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Paul McCartney in his book 'All Those Years Ago' said that early 1969 was a tense period for The Beatles. John Lennon was now with Yoko Ono, and she was omnipresent in his and The Beatles life. Paul McCartney commented on the song also later saying that John and Yoko had

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escalated into heroin with all the accompanying paranoias. *"I think that as much as it excited and amused John, it secretly terrified him, and that Don't Let Me Down was a genuine cry for help"*.



John Lennon and Yoko Ono

"Don't Let Me Down" was one of the Beatles' most powerful love songs, used for the B-side of "Get Back," and fairly popular on its own merit, reaching the Top 40 under its own steam. As with other of Lennon's songs from the late '60s, "Don't Let Me Down" manages to harmoniously string together what sound like fragments that could have developed into two or three different songs. The tune's mainstay is its chorus, with its rich wailing harmonies, consisting of nothing but the title.



The Beatles - Get Back, single 1969

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The song is in the key of E and is in 4/4 time during the verse, chorus and bridge, but changes to 5/4 in the pick-up to the verse. It grew from the F \square m7- E changes ("like she does" [F \square m7] "yes she does" [A, Am] "yes she does" [E]) with McCartney arranging instrumental and vocal parts and Harrison adding a descending two-part lead guitar accompaniment to the verse and a countermelody in the bridge. Pollack (musicologist) states that *"the counterpoint melody played in octaves during the Alternate Verse by the bass and lead guitars is one of the more novel, unusual instrumental touches you'll find anywhere in the Beatles catalogue."*



The Beatles - Get Back/Don't Let Me Down

Billy Preston, who The Beatles met when he was on tour with Little Richard in 1962, played keyboards on this track. Preston was one of the few outside musicians (excluding members of orchestras) to play on any Beatles song. George Harrison brought him in to smooth tensions in the studio. He did the same thing during 'The White Album' sessions, when he brought in Eric Clapton. The presence of a musician The Beatles respected had a way of making them put aside their differences.



Paul, Linda, John and Yoko

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The vocal arrangement here is a bit less neat than usual. The Refrains are done with some consistency, but not so for the verses. In the first Verse, John starts off solo with Paul joining him for the second phrase; in the final verse John sings solo all the way through.



John Lennon

Paul McCartney: *"We recorded it in the basement of Apple for 'Let It Be' and later did it up on the roof for the film. We went through it quite a lot for this one. I sang harmony on it, which makes me wonder if I helped with a couple of words, but I don't think so. It was John's song."*



The Beatles- Roof Top Concert

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Nevertheless, "Don't Let Me Down" curiously failed to make the cut for the 'Let It Be' album. It appears in official release only as a lowly single B-side, taken no less, from a take that sounds peculiarly muddy, and in humble opinion is not necessarily the best take that was available to them.



The Beatles - Get Back/Don't Let Me Down

The Beatles - Don't let me down

Don't let me down, don't let me down. Don't let me down, don't let me down. Nobody ever loved me like she does, Ooh she does, yeah she does. And if somebody ever loved me like she done me, Ohh she done me, yeah she does. Don't let me down, don't let me down. Don't let me down, don't let me down. I'm in love for the first time. Don't you know it's gonna last. It's a love that lasts forever, It's a love that has no past. Don't let me down, please, don't let me down. Don't let me down, don't let me down. And from the first time that she really done me, Ooh she done me, she done me good. I guess nobody ever really done me, Ooh she done me, she done me good. Don't let me down, don't let me down. Don't let me down, don't let me down. Please! Please! Please! Please!



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John Lennon and Yoko Ono