



George Harrison's 1963 Maton Mastersound MS-500

Date

1963

Primary Maker

George Harrison

Medium

Wood; Metal; Plastic

Description

George Harrison's 1963 Maton Mastersound MS-500 guitar, in natural finish. The guitar's body has a bound flame maple top and a tobacco burst back, with a Bigsby vibrato and bridge. It features a mahogany neck with bound rosewood fretboard and dot inlays. George Harrison borrowed this guitar from Barratt's Music Store in Manchester England when his Gretsch Country Gentleman needed to have the machine heads repaired. He left the

Gretsch with the shop for repairs and Neil Aspinall borrowed this guitar for Harrison to use in place of the Gretsch. Harrison played the Maton during concerts at the Winter Gardens in Margate July 8-13th; at the Grafton Rooms in Liverpool August 2; at a photoshoot at the Cavern Club on August 3rd; and when the Beatles played Guernsey in the Channel Islands on August 6-10th. When Harrison returned the Maton to Barratt's it was subsequently purchased by Roy Barber, guitarist with Dave Berry and the Cruisers. Barber, aware of the guitar's history, used it for several years until he retired it to storage where it remained until his death in 2000. His widow subsequently lent the guitar for public exhibitions. George Harrison (1943-2001) was an English guitarist, singer, and songwriter who rose to international fame as a member of The Beatles. Harrison met future Beatle Paul McCartney while riding the school bus at age 14. McCartney introduced him to John Lennon, who were playing together in a band called the Quarrymen, of which Harrison later became a member. The Quarrymen changed their name to The Beatles and brought in Ringo Starr as their drummer. The Beatles released their first album *Please, Please Please* (1963) and the cultural impact of their music was immediate. Harrison and The Beatles ushered in a new wave of popular music, with "Beatlemania" first sweeping through the United Kingdom before arriving in the United States in 1964 when the Beatles appeared on The Ed Sullivan Show. During the rest of the 1960s, The Beatles dominated popular music and Harrison, McCartney, Lennon, and Starr became cultural icons. Although Harrison had released two solo albums while still a member of The Beatles, his third solo album, *All Things Must Pass* (1970), was his first release after the band's breakup. It was an influential

album for the sound of rock music in the 1970s and is considered one of the best solo releases of the former Beatles. Harrison went on to release 12 solo albums, mostly during the 1970s and 1980s. Harrison also was a frequent collaborator with other musicians, including Eric Clapton, Jeff Lynne, Bob Dylan, and his former Beatles bandmates. Through his record label Dark Horse Records, Harrison produced albums for musicians such as Ravi Shankar, Splinter, and the Stairsteps. While a member of The Beatles, Harrison's guitar playing and songwriting was often overshadowed by Lennon and McCartney. As time has passed, his reputation for innovative guitar work and complex songwriting has been heralded. Harrison grew interested in Indian music, specifically the sitar, in the 1960s, and is often credited with popularizing "world music" in Western culture. Harrison died on November 29, 2001, after a battle with cancer.