

remained a devotee of early rock and roll's elemental character, but he often strayed far beyond that territory when writing. He went to a place of his own making, populated by Elvis and Big Bill Broonzy but also Hoagy Carmichael and Ravi Shankar. The end result is unique to Harrison and, more importantly, never parades its own complexities. There's a natural character, an ease to the music's feel and delivery, no matter the twists and turns Harrison often takes as a writer. 1981's *Somewhere in England*, produced with Ray Cooper, yielded another such Harrison gem and a major hit in "All Those Years Ago," a tribute to John Lennon featuring the three living Beatles. But *Somewhere's* follow-up, *Gone Troppo*, would be the last release before Harrison finally took a break from the studio, for the first time since he was a teenager.

After recording nine albums between 1970 and 1982, George embraced a five-year hiatus from recording. But, again, it wasn't a break from songwriting. And when he came back, he did it in remarkable form with 1987's *Cloud Nine*, an album co-produced with Jeff Lynne. Lynne proved a vital partner, and the album made the Top Ten in both the US and the UK. The singing was Harrison at his best. The slide guitar work, which is everywhere present in the solo efforts, seemed more lyrical than ever. Songs like "This Is Love" and a cover of James Ray's recording "Got My Mind Set On You" stand as being among Harrison's best. Energized by his return, it was in this same period that he formed the Traveling Wilburys, calling on his