I Dig A Pony

(Lennon/McCartney)

```
False start:
    A-one-two-three HOLD IT!        Intro (also use as ending
|----------------------------||--G----------------D---------------|
|----------------------------||---------------------------------- |
|----------------------------||-----------------------------4--7--4-|
|----------------------------||-----------2--5--2-----4--7----------|
|----------------------------||-----2--5-----------5----------------|
|------------------------3-||--3----------------------------------|


 -|--A-----------------------------------------|
 -|--------------------------------------------|
 -|---------------------------2----------------|  (repeat)
 -|--5--5--5---------2--h3--h4-----4--2---------2--|
 -|--0--0--0--3--h4--------------------3--h4-----|
 -|--------------------------------------------|


Verse:
    I                          dig a pony
    A       F#m
 -|--5--5----5--5----5--5----5----------2-|
 -|--2--2h3--2--2h3--2--2h3--2----------2-|
 -|--2--2----2--2----2--2----2----------2-|
 -|--2--2h4--2--2h4--2--2h4--2----------4-|
 -|--0--0----0--0----0--0----0----------4-|
 -|----------------------------------2-|


        Well you can celebrate any thing you want (*)    yes
                        Bm            G
|-----------------------------------------------3--5--5/7--5--
|------------------------------------------------------------
|-----------------------------------------------4--5--5/7--5--
|-2h4--2-----------------------------------------------------
|-------------4-------2--------------------------------------
|------------------------------------------------------------


    You can celebrate any thing you want         oh
            Bm            G            E7            A
 -|--3--------2-----------3------------0--2--4--5--7--8--9-------
 -|----------------------------------------------------------
 -|--4--------4-----------4------------1--2--4--6--7--8--9-------
 -|----------------------------------------------------------
 -|----------------------------------------------------------
 -|----------------------------------------------------------


A        F#m
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I do a roadhog
                Bm                  G
Well you can penetrate any place you go
                Bm                  G
Yes you can penetrate any place you go


           I told you so
      E7
-|--9--7-----4----2--0----
-|-----------------------
-|--9--7-----4----2--1----
-|-----------------------
-|-----------------------
-|-----------------------


    All   I  want  is you
     G         D         A
-|----------------------------------------------------------------
-|----------------------------------------------------------------
-|----------------------------------------------------------------
-|--------------------------------------------2-------------------
-|-----2--5--------5--5--5--5---------2--h3--h4-----4--2---------2--
-|--3--------2--5-----0--0--0--3--h4---------------------3--h4-----


    Everything has got to be the way you want it to ... because
     G                 D
-|-------------------------------------------------
-|-------------------------------------------------
-|---------------------------------4---7----4------
-|------------2---5---2-----4---7--------------5---
-|-----2--5--------------5----------------------0---
-|--3----------------------------------------------



Verse:
I pick a moondog
Well you can radiate every thing you are
Yes you can radiate every thing you are
I wrote a story
Well ou can imitate everyone you know
Yes you can imitate everyone you know
I told you so
All I want is you
Everything has got to be the way you want it to.
Because...
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Guitar solo:
    A                                                            F#m
-|-------------------------------------------------14--------------
-|----------------10--12--p10------12b(14)--12b(14)------b(14)12------
-|--9--11--p9------------------11----------------------------------11--
-|------------11--------------------------------------------------
-|----------------------------------------------------------------
-|----------------------------------------------------------------


          Bm             G
-|----------------------------------------------------------------
-|--10--12--12b(15)--(15)--b(15)12---------------------------------
-|-------------------------------10--12b(14)12--10-----------------
-|----------------------------------------------------------------
-|----------------------------------------------------------------
-|----------------------------------------------------------------


     Bm             G             E7
-|----------------------------------0------14------16--14--12-------
-|--12b(15)--(15)--b(15)12-----------------------------------------
-|------------------------12--12/13-----14------16------14--13-------
-|----------------------------------------------------------------
-|----------------------------------------------------------------
-|----------------------------------------------------------------
```

Verse:
I fell the wind blow
Well you can indicate everything you see
Yes you can indicate anything you see
I wrote a lorry (??? you tell me ???)
Well you can syndicate any boat you row
Yes you can syndicate any boat you row
I told you so
All I want is you
Everything has got to be the way you want it to.
Because...

Ending is same as intro:

Miscellaneous info:

Note this figure played over the A chord in the verses.
John was really into this around the "Let It Be" years.
This is also the basis of the intro and main rhythm part
for "I've Got A Feeling."

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```
-|--5---5----
-|--2--h3----
-|--2---2----
-|--2--h4----
-|--0---0----
-|----------
```

(*) Note this little parallel 6ths figure played over the
     first G chord in each verse. George had an endless
     set of variations on this theme throughout the recording
     which are not transcribed here.]\\

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       Key: A Major
     Meter: 3/4
      Form: Intro | Verse | Verse | Refrain |
                  | Verse | Verse | Refrain |
                  | Verse (instrumental) | Verse |
                  | Verse | Refrain | Outro (with complete ending)
        CD: "Let It Be", Track 2 (Parlophone 0777-7 46447-2)
  Recorded: 22nd, 24th, 28th, 30th January,
            5th February 1969, Apple Studios
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General Points of Interest

Style and Form

⦿The amount of non-routine musical detail in this song is all the more surprising and impressive because of its intentionally candid, rough presentation. An admittedly non-scientific poll of my acquaintances reveals that some people just don't like this song because of this sloppy while over the top intensity.

⦿Tough nuggies is all I can say. If the composer/performer's willing to take a risk it's only polite for you cutting him some slack for it. I'll grant that the Platonically ideal rendering of this song by the Beatles is something we're not privileged to hear, but I'll stick by my first point, that the risk element of hyperintensity (if not the sloppiness, per se) is germane.

⦿This is one of the truly scarce entries in the Beatles catalog with a clear and strong ternary backbeat. "Baby's In Black" and "I Me Mine" surely belong on this short list. Those song with a pulse of rapid triplets, such as "Norwegian Wood" and "She's Leaving Home", do not make the cut because in each of them the higher-order binary meter asserts itself over the triplets, placing the latter in the metrical background.

⦿The form is dominated by the verse/refrain pattern of a folk ballad, but also includes the doubled up verses and the half-time instrumental break of a pop song.

⦿The "Let It Be" album track of this song is taken from the Rooftop Concert of 1/30/69, though Phil Spector misguidedly opted to edit out the same complete musical phrase from both the Intro and Outro sections. I don't get his motive: if he felt the track runs too long (which might be a point well

taken, I'll grant), then the cut is not sufficiently large enough to make a difference. And in the meanwhile, he winds up eliminating an element from the original that helps reinforce set the obsessional tone of the piece.

◦Seek out either the unedited Rooftop Concert tape for the complete performance, or opt for the different take of the song that would have appeared on the "Get Back" album. The latter is an earlier but still complete version from 1/24. It has the added virtue of containing John's "go straight into 'I've Got A Fever'" remark which for my money is not only funnier than the corresponding "I Dig A Pigmy" but also at least appears in its proper place on the album master, as opposed to the Pigmy's having been flown in from elsewhere.

Melody and Harmony

◦The verse tune tries its damnedest to be purely pentatonic, but the prevalence of the flat-VII chord throughout the song (which contains both non-pentatonic scale steps 4 and flat-7) forces the mold to be eventually broken.

◦The tune makes broad and spicy gestures of contour. The verses starts off with a balanced arch that covers a full octave but ends up with a second upward sweep of that arch left hanging in air, just begging for some release or relief from the refrain. The refrain obligingly picks up where the verse had left things and proceeds to blow the roof off in terms of range; the downbeat of the refrain momentarily establishes a new melodic highpoint just above where the verse tops out, but then, in the second phrase, the tune jumps up practically a full octave to top out in falsetto on the C# eight and a half steps above middle C.

◦Harmonically, six out of the possible total of seven chords diatonically indigenous to the home key appear; only iii is absent. The lineup is further extended by the large amount of airtime given to flat-VII, particularly in context of the so-called double plagal cadence, VII -» IV -» I.

Arrangement

◦The backing track may be described as suitable for live performance by a live quartet of two electric guitars, one bass guitar, and drum kit.

◦John's lead vocal carries most of the song with some minor yet carefully placed backing help from Paul. For example, Paul reinforces the "Because I" transition between paired verses, and following the instrumental section (which after all, is another verse section) he bothers to do his thing on both verses of the following pair. The refrain is vocally harmonized the whole way through.

Section-by-Section Walkthrough

Intro

◦The intro has an AAB phrasing pattern that could-have-been made into twelve measures long instead of eleven, except that its final measure overlaps with the start of the first verse:

```
-------------------------- 2X --------------------------
 |G              |D              |A              |-              |
```

```
    flat-VII          IV                    I

|G                |G#              |A                      |
 flat-VII          VII half dim.   I
```

[Figure 168.1]

◦Everything but the specific harmonic content hints at the blues. The B phrase is the one Spector blue lined, by the way.

◦The extent to which all three phrases converge on the home key from the offbeat starting point of flat-VII makes the I chord at the end of this section feel less authoritative than you'd expect.

◦The chromatically rising bassline harmonized in the middle by the half-diminished seventh chord is a cliché that you somehow won't find very often in a Beatles song. Even in other music, you'll more often find it used as an approach to V instead of I.

◦The first two phrases of the intro are an instrumental version of what turns out to be the refrain section. The aggressive ostinato riff played an octave apart by both bass and lead guitar must have been a challenge for them to execute from the get go judging from the consistent pattern of false starts on the various session outtakes.

◦The flexible handling of the riff bears study. The riff's pattern is as essentially pentatonic as the verses's tune, and it is repeated on all three chords in this section, but they make a couple of foolish consistency-avoiding adjustments for the third (i.e. final) iteration of the riff, on A: the first note is sustained for close to a full measure before the rest of the riff is played out, and when it is played, they sneak a nice bluesy B# neighboring tone beneath the C#.

    Verse

◦The verse makes a curiously rhetorical free-verse effect, with its unusual thirteen measure length and ABB' phrasing pattern; the latter made interesting by the fact that all three phrases are of different length even though the last two of them are closely related in content:

```
        |A          |-        |-        |-        |f#        |-        |
  I                                                  vi

|b              |G          |-        |
 ii              flat-VII

|b              |G          |E        |-        |
 ii              flat-VII V
```
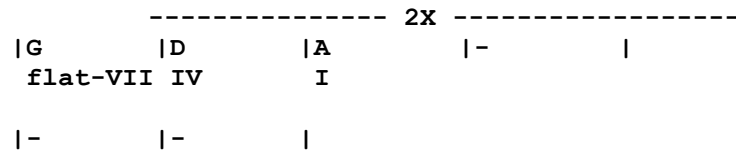
[Figure 168.2]

◦Phrases B and B' create a vivid feeling of taking two steps forward from a starting line, then going immediately back to the starting point to repeat those same two steps with the goal of accelerating through them, this time, to a more farther objective. Compare this with a similar gesture found in, of all things, "I'm Looking Through You".

⊙The chord progression of phrase B' is a Lennon favorite, the earliest example of which I can think of is the intro to "Help!"

Refrain
⊙The refrain has an AA' phrasing pattern in which the exact number of measures in the section is impossible to count because of the "dramatic pause" which extends the A' phrase to an indeterminate length. I count about ten measures in all, but your mileage may vary:

```
          --------------- 2X ------------------
  |G        |D        |A        |-          |
   flat-VII IV         I


  |-        |-          |
```

[Figure 168.3]

⊙The backing arrangement cleverly varies from that of the intro. In place of jumpy riff, the G and D chords are executed as a simple root triads played squarely on the beat. The familiar riff does reappear for the A chord, but in this case is performed by only the lead guitar; no bass doubling at the octave.

⊙The drums deftly reset your sense of tempo before the next verse begins, a strategy preferable to resetting the tempo right on the downbeat of the verse. Run that alternative in your head and see what I mean.

Outro
⊙The outro is a symmetrical booken repeat of the intro.

Some Final Thoughts
⊙Two of John's most familiar and effective musical personae are, for lack of better labels, the "Exhorting Prophet" and the "Love Obsessed Screamer". We're used to encountering these one at a time, in separate pieces. One of the most unusual aspects of "Dig A Pony" may be the way it makes a special effect out of alternating the two of them in real time within the same song.

⊙The exhorter speaks with encouraging authority (e.g. "The Word", or "All You Need Is Love"), but also sometimes in Dylanesque/surreal/mystically difficult imagery (e.g. "I Am The Walrus", or "Across The Universe").

⊙The screamer expresses a euphoria of pleasure/pain over love's true desire, whether fulfilled yet or not, and he doesn't give a damn who overhears his ranting; e.g. "... Monkey", "Don't Let Me Down", "I Want You (She's So Heavy)", even the relatively early "I Feel Fine".

⊙Considered in this light the protagonist of our "Pony" sounds like the Exhorter in the verses, and the Screamer in the refrains. The emotional focus of those two respective parts of the song is distinct to the extreme that you find yourself thinking of the person addressed in second person during the verses ("You can imitate ...") as not necessarily the same one so badly "wanted" in the refrain.

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⦿This shift of focus represents not just a clever cross cutting alternation, but infinitely more compelling, the playing out of a struggle: of the prophet who in spite of himself is distracted and torn away from delivering his parable by all consuming desire.

⦿And that phrase which Spector so cavalierly expunged turns out to helpful if not outright necessary to drive the fully drive the point home. Without those bookend iterations of the working title phrase, "All I Want Is You," the song is reduced to a rote AB, AB ... alternation of moods in which prophecy is predictably succeeded by desire. Not bad as far as it goes.

⦿But each bookend adds something: At the end it confirms desire's upper hand by coming on the heels of a refrain, and at the very place where every other time in the song you'd get a new verse, reiterating the message of need.

⦿The bookend at the beginning accomplishes two things:

- It presents the protagonist to us in the throes of desire right in the first slate.
- Best of all, the overlap between the Intro's end and the start of the first verse conjurs up the musical equivalent of a rude awakening from a daydream, as if someone had given the protagonist an offstage heads up during the last seconds to indicate, "sorry to startle you, Mr. Prophet, but you're on the air, scheduled to deliver your sermon right now." Ooops.

Regards,
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