

THE ULTIMATE MUSIC GUIDE

# PINK FLOYD

CLASSIC INTERVIEWS  
IN-DEPTH REVIEWS  
OF EVERY ALBUM  
FLOYD'S 30  
GREATEST SONGS

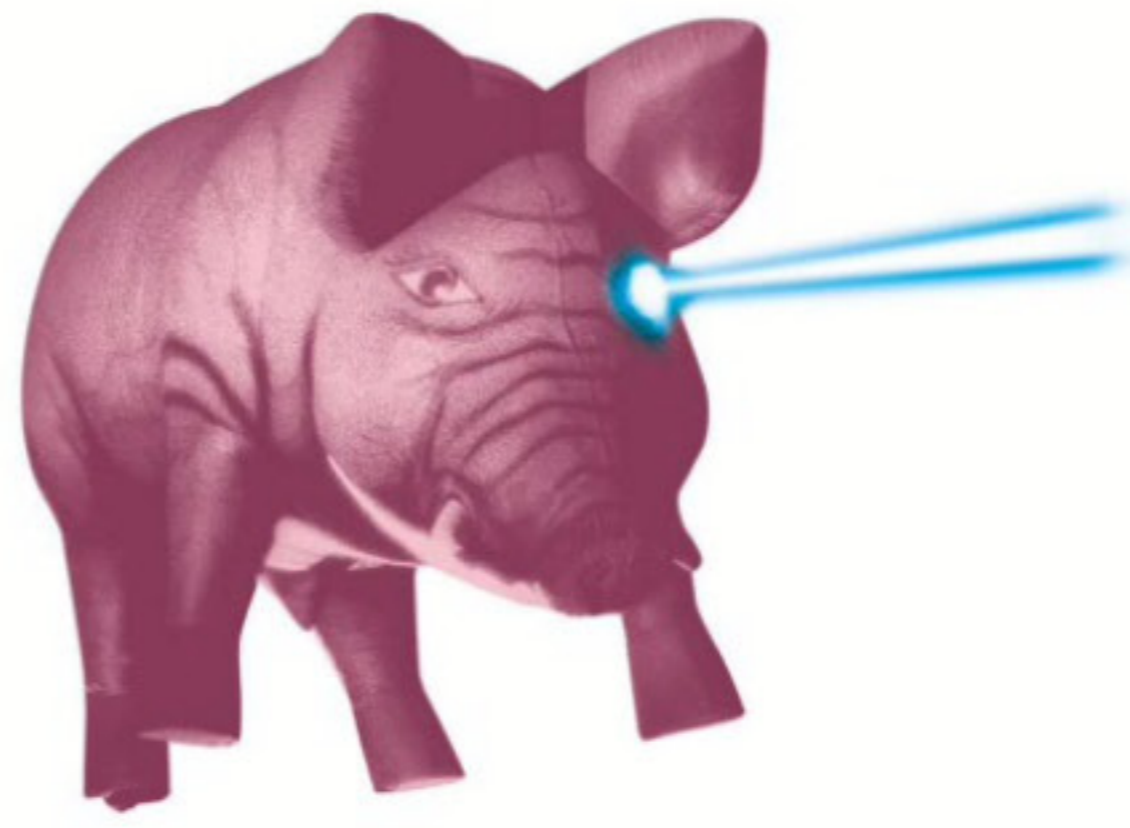
DELUXE  
REMASTERED  
EDITION



THE DARK SIDE | THE WALL | THE ENDLESS RIVER  
THE COMPLETE STORY

FROM THE MAKERS OF **UNCUT**





# Speak to me...

**W**HERE DOES THE endless river begin, and where will it ever end? Time and again, the story of Pink Floyd seems to have reached some kind of informal conclusion, only for a new chapter to magically open up. As David Gilmour sings on “Louder Than Words”, the closing track of what was presented, in 2014, as their valedictory album; “*Let’s go with the flow, wherever it goes/We’re more than alive...*”

On May 12, 2011, for instance, Gilmour finally honoured an auspicious promise. The 85th night of Roger Waters’ solo tour of *The Wall* saw Gilmour appear at the top of the wall, towering over Waters as he launched into “Comfortably Numb”. Gilmour, characteristically, had not arrived at London’s O2 Arena alone. For the closing “Outside The Wall”, he and Waters were joined by Nick Mason, on tambourine. The three surviving members of Pink Floyd had once again reunited – not, perhaps, for the last time in a career which has now survived the best part of five decades.

What happens next in the Pink Floyd saga is, as ever, hard to predict beyond the arrival of Gilmour’s fourth solo album in the autumn. In the wake of *The Endless River*, however, the time feels right to examine, in depth, the story so far. It is the legend of a great, sometimes oracular British band – a band so potent, in fact, that even their tribute bands play arenas.

There’s a persuasive idea that those tribute bands have been so successful because Pink Floyd themselves are, in a way, anonymous. Who cares about the identity of the musicians playing these awe-inspiring songs, goes the argument: just check out the light show!

*Uncut’s Ultimate Music Guide* to Pink Floyd proves, we think, that this is nonsense. The tale of Pink Floyd is one as human, passionate and compelling as any in the rock canon. It encompasses epic power struggles, intimate confessions, preposterous experiments and, of course, madness.

These dramas were played out in the pages of *NME*, *Melody Maker* and *Uncut*, and in this lavish special edition you’ll find unexpurgated, revelatory interviews conducted with the band between 1967 and 2014. We begin with the brief psychedelic flowering of Syd Barrett, and chart the band’s years of questing until they arrive at *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. We dive into the intensely personal psychodramas of Roger Waters and the more becalmed stewardship of David Gilmour before, finally, reaching an evocative finale with last year’s salute to Richard Wright. We also analyse in detail the remarkable music of the band, with extensive reviews of every album, from *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* to *The Endless River*.

“Looking through the Pink Floyd songbook surprises me sometimes,” David Gilmour told *Uncut* in 2008. “There are hundreds of songs, we go through lots of different styles of music, three different leaders and at least three different singers, and dozens of guests. But everything’s linked by this collective psyche.

“You have a sound in your head and you try to replicate it. I’m always looking for new sounds.”

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The Floyd dawning, 1967:  
(l-r) Richard Wright, Syd  
Barrett, Roger Waters,  
Nick Mason



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# The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn

From a Cambridge meadow, via London's exotic underground, The Pink Floyd achieve lift-off, with Syd Barrett – fleetingly – at the controls. *By Neil Spencer*

RELEASE DATE 05 AUGUST 1967

**I**T ARRIVED AS the Summer Of Love was flaming to its peak, just in time for its 11 tracks and 42 minutes to become part of the era's dizzy soundtrack. Swiftly, the fractured guitars and hammering tom toms of "Astronomy Domine" joined the cosmic clang of Hendrix's "Third Stone From The Sun", while the whimsical "The Scarecrow" sat snugly alongside The Beatles' "Fixing A Hole" and daffy hippy hits like The Purple Gang's "Granny Takes A Trip". *Piper* charted immediately. The Pink Floyd's mothership had touched down.

In truth, the group were already established as defining agents of pop's new mood – 'psychedelic' to some, plain 'weirdo' to most – thanks to "Arnold Layne" and "See Emily Play", the hit singles with which the Floyd had announced themselves in spring. Around London – and the band's live orbit rarely strayed far from the capital – they further gloried in their role as house band to the self-styled 'Underground', a nexus of artists, scene-makers, and pranksters centred on the free press of the *International Times*.

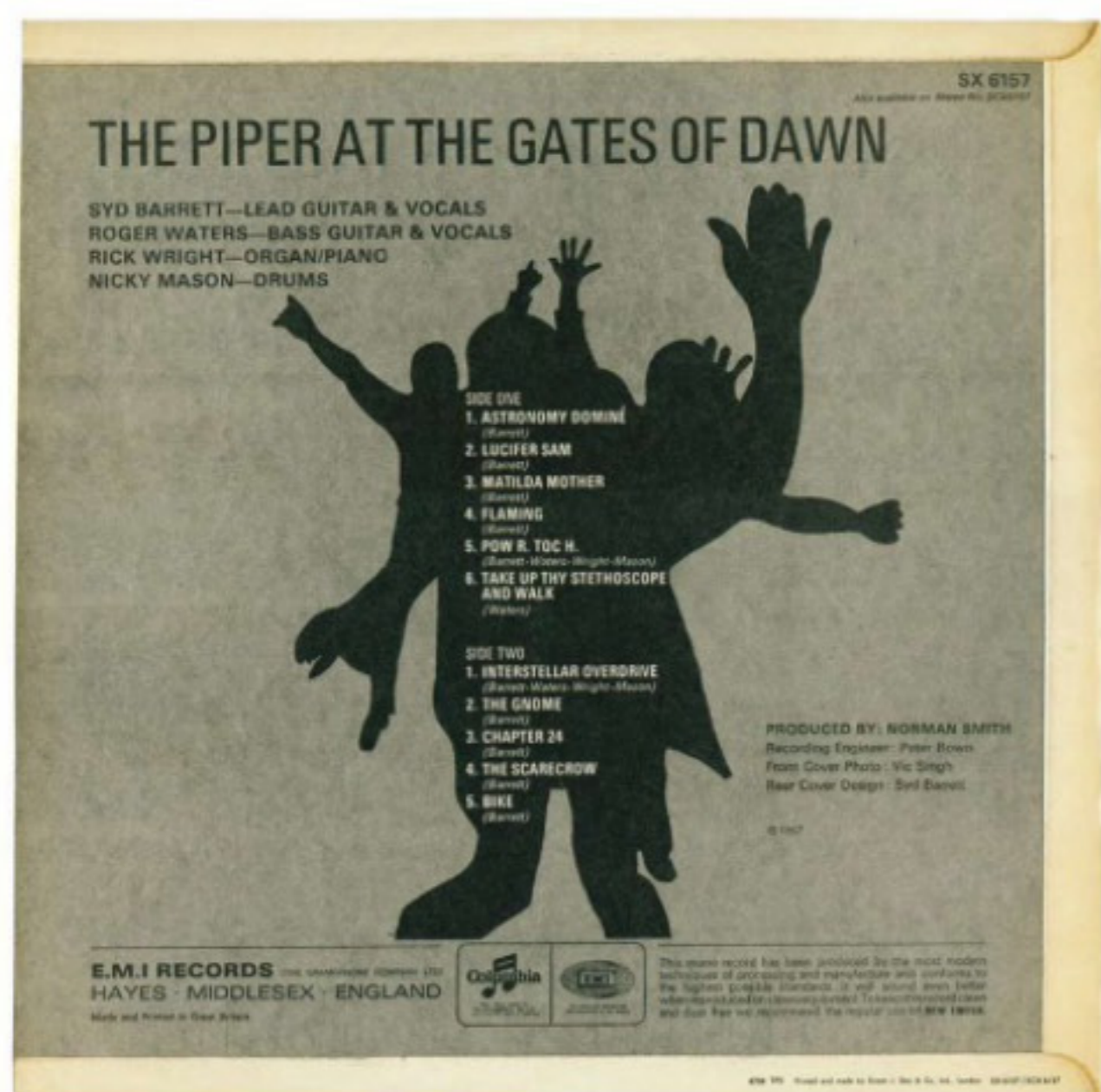
Those who had seen the Floyd play, notably at the UFO Club where the band held a semi-residency, knew that the singles were just chart-friendly

capsules of the far more challenging experience that was The Pink Floyd live. Onstage, where the group performed in the Technicolor blizzard of their own light show, "Arnold Layne" regularly came in at 15 minutes, its course swollen by improvisation; swirling keyboards, octave swooping bass runs, tinkling hiatuses, feedback-laden guitar solos.

Presiding over proceedings was Syd Barrett, a puckish and charismatic figure in kaftan and King's Road velvet, the epitome of hippy chic, alternately attacking the frets of his Telecaster with a Zippo lighter and raising his robed hands like a pagan priest leading a psychedelic mass.

The Floyd's reputation as the hippest act in town did not stop with the heads at the UFO club or the 7,000 people who attended the 14 Hour Technicolor Dream at Alexandra Palace in April, where the group played at dawn as climax to a happening that also included Yoko Ono having her clothes snipped away. After the Floyd had brought their light show and space rock to the august classical venue of the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Barrett and Roger Waters were interviewed by a BBC arts show with an earnestness usually reserved for playwrights and painters. Like The Beatles, Floyd weren't just pop, they were art.

CONTINUES OVER »



FOR A GROUP THAT had been knocking out R'n'B standards a scant 12 months previously, the journey from "Louie Louie" to *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* had been quite a trip, one fuelled in great part by Roger 'Syd' Barrett. It was Barrett who came up with the band's unusual name, an amalgamation of two obscure bluesmen, Pink Anderson and Floyd Council, though the group he joined had been assembled by Roger Waters, a school friend from Cambridge who had recruited Rick Wright and Nick Mason, fellow architecture students at London's Regent Street Polytechnic.

With Barrett on board (original guitarist Rado 'Bob' Klose was soon displaced), the Floyd morphed from Rolling Stones copyists into something more experimental, twisting their Bo Diddley covers into odd, electronic shapes. The formally trained Wright, a jazz buff with an interest in Karlheinz Stockhausen, needed no encouragement to stretch out. On bass and drums, Waters and Mason kept up gamely. Meanwhile Barrett began to write his own songs, a mix of 'space anthems' like "Interstellar Overdrive", which soon became their signature number, or quirky pieces like "Candy And A Currant Bun" whose 'look at that girl' sentiments were more conventionally rooted in pop tradition.

Barrett, who had won a scholarship to Camberwell Art School, was the mid-'60s hipster incarnate. Among his arty, middle-class Cambridge set he was the undisputed star; 'Syd The Beat', a polymath painter, actor, musician, literary devotee and religious seeker blessed with Byronic good looks and limitless enthusiasm. Cambridge was essentially a sleepy shire town, but the presence of its famous university brought an early influx of cannabis and high-quality LSD, of which Syd and friends like future Floyd designer Storm Thorgerson became eager consumers. There is even footage (available on YouTube) of a 1966 acid trip amid the Cambridgeshire countryside whose pastoral spell would shimmer through *Piper* and, later, the likes of "Grantchester Meadows".

A further catalyst for the emergent The Pink Floyd Sound, as they were at first called, was manager Peter Jenner, who had got involved after seeing the group at London's Marquee in spring 1966. As co-founder of the Notting Hill Free School (his day job was lecturing at the LSE), Jenner was a mover and shaker in the Underground alongside the likes of UFO Club organiser Joe Boyd, who was drafted in as

## THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"A new-sound-socking album, which varies the music from outer space ('Astronomy Domine') to Arabic ('Matilda Mother') to jazz ('Pow R. Toc H.').... The rasping guitar is much to the fore, and the vocals are largely distorted. Shouts and raving laughs come in suddenly, and there is some raving organ."

ALLEN EVANS,  
NME, SEP 2, 1967

the Floyd's potential producer.

When Jenner and co-manager Andrew King raised the funds to enter Sound Techniques studio – the idea was to entice EMI into signing the group – it was Boyd at the console overseeing "Arnold Layne", Barrett's droll cameo of a closet cross-dresser and washing-line thief. The song was drawn from real-life Cambridge, where the laundry lines of the Barrett and Waters homes (their mothers both took in female student lodgers) had been plundered by a mystery raider who, unlike Arnold, was never caught. The single's cavernous production and swirling, mysterious organ came topped with facetious vocals delivered in a distinctively English accent that

hovered between cockney and art school posh – tones that would prove highly influential on early Floyd fans David Bowie and Marc Bolan.

EMI took the bait and signed the Floyd, though the company's insistence on using in-house producers meant Joe Boyd was made to "walk the plank" as he later put it, and a threatened re-recording of "Arnold Layne" was scuppered only by Barrett's lack of interest in repeating himself.

The Floyd's new producer, Norman Smith, who'd engineered for George Martin and The Beatles up until *Rubber Soul*, had pushed EMI to sign the group after seeing them at the UFO Club. Floyd's music was too unconventional for Smith, a trad jazzier at heart, but he recognised talent, and brought much-needed technical skills to the sessions at EMI's Abbey Rd, where The Beatles were coincidentally recording *Sgt Pepper* in the adjacent studio. There was even a cursory introduction between the Fab Four and EMI's new signings, recalled as "a bit like meeting the royal family" by Nick Mason, though a matey Paul McCartney assured the band they were in good hands.

It quickly became apparent that Smith would need all his expertise to capture the ideas of his new charges, and to handle the mercurial Barrett, who by spring 1967 was already showing signs of the breakdown that would see his departure from the group a few months hence. "Working with Syd was sheer hell and there are no pleasant memories," Smith brusquely summarised later. Particularly galling was Barrett's unwillingness, or inability, to play even the smallest part the same way twice. By then Barrett's ingestion of LSD had escalated into a daily event. The smiling charmer encountered by

An odd mix: the Pink Floyd in 1967, with Syd Barrett (second right)



Joe Boyd a few months earlier, a young man with "a real joyous energy about him", presented an increasingly shambolic figure, alternating between manic enthusiasm and glassy-eyed vacancy.

The sessions at EMI focused initially on the Floyd's live freakout stand-bys, "Interstellar Overdrive" and "Astronomy Domine", their length judiciously honed down. "Overdrive" was recorded in two takes, with one version overdubbed onto the other. For the group's second single, however, a return to Sound Techniques studios was deemed necessary to capture the "Arnold Layne" sound. "See Emily Play" proved even more striking than its predecessor, soaring to sixth spot on the UK charts. Its dreamy verses and frisky chorus made a perfect fit for the unfolding summer, conjuring a portrait of childhood innocence straight out of... *Alice In Wonderland*, a place where you "lose your mind" and where you might "float down a river forever and ever" – sentiments that would prove sadly prophetic for their creator.

Yet The Pink Floyd considered themselves primarily "an albums group", a status confirmed instantly by the release of *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*. The title was, like so much else, Barrett's doing, plucked from a favourite childhood read, Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind In The Willows*, describing an episode when Mole and Ratty hear the great god Pan welcoming the new day on his reed pipe.

Like *Pepper*, the Floyd's debut seemed to herald a new era in consciousness, one where William Blake's "doors of perception" were

## TRACKMARKS | The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn

1. Astronomy Domine ★★★★★
2. Lucifer Sam ★★★★★
3. Matilda Mother ★★★★★
4. Flaming ★★★★★
5. Pow R. Toc H. ★★★★★

6. Take Up Thy Stethoscope And Walk ★★★★★
7. Interstellar Overdrive ★★★★★
8. The Gnome ★★★★★
9. Chapter 24 ★★★★★
10. The Scarecrow ★★★★★
11. Bike ★★★★★

**RELEASED:** August 5, 1967  
**LABEL:** EMI  
**PRODUCED BY:** Norman Smith  
**RECORDED:** Abbey Road Studios  
**PERSONNEL:** Syd Barrett



(guitar, vocals); Roger Waters (bass, vocal); Richard Wright (organ, piano); Nick Mason (drums)  
**HIGHEST CHART POSITION:** UK 6; US 131



flung open to reveal splendour, magic and possibility, where the outer world of nature, from the starry realms of deep space to the humblest dandelion, joined the inner space of the individual psyche. Even for those who hadn't taken the plunge into LSD (like Barrett's bandmates, for a start), *Piper*'s mix of cosmic voyaging and childlike delight offered an equally instant, and way less dangerous, sensory derangement.

In common with "See Emily Play", the album came steeped in allusions to childhood, most explicitly on "Matilda Mother", whose crepuscular mood and echo-heavy vocals evoked fairytales told in a room filled with "doll's house darkness, old perfume".

"Matilda Mother" was not itself a child's song, however, whereas "The Scarecrow", "The Gnome", "Bike" and "Flaming" all had the sing-song larkiness of infancy to them. Indeed, their nursery rhyme simplicity should have fallen flat on what was widely described (though not by The Pink Floyd) as a 'psychedelic' album. Instead, led by Barrett's carefree vocals, they beguilingly conjure up childhood experience.

Other pop acts were on the same path. Whether it was the sensory overload brought on by hashish and acid, or the baby-boom generation's realisation that their 1950s childhoods were history, there was a widespread nostalgia for what was seen, in the manner of Wordsworth's *The Prelude* or Blake's *Songs Of Innocence*, as a purer state of being.

John Lennon had reminisced on "She Said She Said", that "*when I was a boy everything was right*", later hymning the "Strawberry Fields" of boyhood, while on "Hole In My Shoe" Traffic had recalled "*a place where happiness reigned all year round*".

Hippy whimsy – "buttercup sandwiches" in Peter Jenner's shorthand – would soon get out of hand but, on *Piper*, Syd Barrett pulled it off.

## Like The Beatles' *Sgt Pepper*, the Floyd's debut seemed to herald a new era in consciousness

Infectious melodies are one reason why, together with an instinctive feel for the cadence of language in lines like "*And then one day, hooray*". The Cambridge countryside is never far away, whether it's Barrett "*lazing in the foggy dew*", or the scarecrow in a barley field unmoving "*except when the wind cut up rough*". The group and Norman Smith played their part, Wright's Eastern-tinged organ curling around "Scarecrow" in a hailstorm of clip-clopping, tick-tocking time signatures.

In complete contrast is the sonic assault of "Astronomy Domine" and "Interstellar Overdrive". Introduced by Jenner barking star names through a megaphone, the former is a storming opener, its power chords arriving in a furious bleep of morse signals from Wright's

keyboards before the number lifts off, its constellations and planets entangled with "*the icy waters underground*" on planet Earth. Even here childhood pops up in the figure of Dan Dare, *Eagle* comic's fabled "pilot of the future".

Among the other elements in play, Waters' "Take Up Thy Stethoscope And Walk" is little more than a riff-based jam centred on Wright's keyboards. "Pow R. Toc H.", named after the

World War I 'Toc H' refuges, suggests a walk through night-time fenlands, Mason's drum patterns (muted with tea towels, a trick Smith had learned from Beatles sessions) overlaid with jazzy keyboards, Barrett's ringing guitar and sound effects like Waters' "paranoid" chants.

"Lucifer Sam" is another stalking, nocturnal piece, an ode to Barrett's Siamese cat rooted in a downbeat bluesy coda that harks back to Barrett's Bo Diddley infatuation, descending and ascending chords being one of *Piper*'s trademarks. "Chapter 24" is its opposite, stately and sunlit, its lyrics lifted almost intact from the 24th hexagram of the I Ching – ancient China's 'book of changes' – with whose prophetic powers Barrett, ever the seeker, had developed a fascination.

"Bike" closes *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* on a note of glee, careening round an eight-year-old's world of bikes, pet mice and gingerbread men, its chorus of "*You're the kind of girl that fits in with my world*" arriving from Barrett's current, grown-up world. Zany but irresistible, much like its creator. 🐭



# 'WE'RE PLAYING SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE'

1967, and a few tenacious journalists venture into London's underground to meet The Pink Floyd. Frontman SYD BARRETT strives for artistic freedom. Bassist ROGER WATERS claims he lies and is "rather aggressive". But as the year goes on, and the polite veneers of the psychedelic architects begin to slip, it becomes clear that, already, all is not quite right with the band...



BEING ASKED TO interview The Pink Floyd is an ordeal I would have wished only on my worst enemies. I was shaking like a leaf an hour before our first midday appointment. The thought of having to talk to a psychedelic group brought me out in sugarcube-shaped goose pimples. What language do these musical Martians speak? Would their hallucinatory gaze turn me into an orange? What would be the horrible

consequences of freaking out with a bunch of transvestites in Cambridge Circus? Preconceptions flooded my already busting mind. This was going to be 16 hours of terrifying, heart-halting experiences.

Nervously, I tiptoed to the door of lead guitarist Syd Barrett's house just off busy Cambridge Circus in the middle of London's vice-ridden West End. The front door was painted an ominous purple. Why wasn't I being paid danger money? Was this one trip on which all expenses weren't going to be paid? Oh, to be golf correspondent on *International Times* and forget these blasted astronomic, hippy rebels.

Syd Barrett tumbled out of his bed and donned his socks. I peeked around the small attic room looking for women's clothing that The Pink Floyd say Arnold Layne tries on in front of the mirror. Instead his girlfriend materialised at the door and brought in a cup of coffee.

Well, so far there was little evidence of the terrible Arnold Layne being in the vicinity – The Pink Floyd were covering

up well. I'll shoot Barrett a few quick questions while he's still half asleep.

Syd, why did you write such a dirty, filthy smutty, immoral and degrading song as "Arnold Layne"?

Syd blinked blankly: "Well, I just wrote it. I thought 'Arnold Layne' was a nice name, and it fitted very well into the music I had already composed."

"But isn't it true," said I, "that Radio London, quite rightly, banned the record because they thought it was 'smutty'?"

Instead of reeling into the wardrobe and revealing a cupboard full of feminine clobber, Syd began to explain: "I was at Cambridge at the time I started to write the song. I pinched the line about 'moonshine washing line' from Rog, our bass guitarist – because he has an enormous washing line in the back garden of his house. Then I thought, 'Arnold must have a hobby,' and it went on from there.

"'Arnold Layne' just happens to dig dressing up in women's clothing. A lot of people do – so let's face up to reality. About the only other lyric anybody could object to, is the bit about, 'it takes two to know,' – and there's nothing 'smutty' about that!

"But then if more people like them dislike us, more people like the underground lot are going to dig us, so we hope they'll cancel each other out."

Organist Rick Wright walked in and said: "I think the record was banned not because of the lyrics, because there's nothing there you can really object to – but because they're against us as a group and against what we stand for."

"It's only a businesslike commercial insult anyway," thought Syd, "it doesn't affect us personally." **CONTINUES OVER»**

Alien sounds: Pink Floyd  
at the UFO Club,  
December 1966



Roger the bass, and Nick Mason the drummer joined the happy throng. Maybe they were the evil people, I thought.

"Let's face it," said Roger seriously, "the pirate stations play records that are much more 'smutty' than 'Arnold Layne' will ever be. In fact it's only Radio London that have banned the record. The BBC and everybody else plays it. I think it's just different policies – not anything against us."

That sounds like sense. Syd got up and moved stealthily to the tape recorder. Ah-hah, they're going to try subliminal brainwashing! They're going to lock me in a revolving echo chamber full of laughing gas and pipe Stockhausen through the portholes while Suzy Creamcheese writhes on the transparent roof in a Matey bubble bath, being watched intensely by the inmates of the Asylum of Charenton under the direction of the Marquis de Sade.

Syd put on one of the new Pink Floyd album tracks instead. And, Gadzooks, it's foot-tapping stuff. Quite interesting pop music actually. "Avant garde", I think it's called. Warming to the Floyd's tapes of numbers like "Interstella" and "Flamin'" I began to think that maybe I was wrong – maybe beneath the hustle and bustle of the in-crowders and newspaper reports, here was a group not quite as weird as everyone makes out.

"Let's go for a drink," they said. A drink?

Surely hippies don't drink? But sure enough there we were in the pub downing good old-fashioned brown beer. And another, and another. And then it was off to EMI Studios for the group's recording session. Quite a normal affair. No kaleidoscopic lighting, no happenings or freaking – just a lot of hard work.

Where does the group think they fit in the pop music structure?

"We would like to think that we're part of the creative half in that we write our own material and don't just record other people's numbers, or copy American demo discs," said Nick Mason. "Our album shows part of The Pink Floyd that haven't been heard yet."

"There's parts we haven't even heard yet," chipped in Roger.

"It's bringing into flower many of the fruits that have remained dormant for so long," added Nick.

"It all comes straight out of our heads," says Syd, "and it's not too far out to understand. If we play well onstage I think most people will understand that what we play isn't just a noise. Most audiences respond to a good set."

And despite those terrifying premonitions and the misinterpreted facts, and the blown-up rumours, interviewing this so-called "psychedelic" group was an enjoyable experience. They were very normal people. *Nick Jones*



THE PINK FLOYD burst onto the London club scene in a kaleidoscope of colours some months ago. Literally, because colour, shapes and light gave impact to the staggering, tumultuous waves of sound which made up their act. Pop – or pop in Britain, at least – was never like this before. Pre-Pink

Floyd groups were content to go onstage and grind out a succession of old hits or bad copies of American records.

The Floyd have denounced this visually boring performance. "Our lighting man is the fifth member of the group," they say – and engulf the audience in a symphony of weird shapes and violent colours which confound the senses as much as their driving, 30-minute-long songs. But are they just a brief bubble on the pop scene, or have they the ability to last?

Offstage and collectively they could be just another group; individually they're obviously intelligent. Well, what are they like?

For a start, there's the lead guitarist, **SYD BARRETT**. Born 21 years ago in Cambridge, Syd is the best looking of a rather ordinary bunch. His interest in music began at seven with piano lessons and ended abruptly

after two weeks. Afterwards it was art school in Cambridge, closely followed by art school in London. He became a part of The Pink Floyd because he lived next door to bass player Roger Waters.

The Pink Floyd have a definite place in pop society despite the apparent swing to the squares, he says. "Teenagers in Britain are great. Possibly, they are not buying the bulk of records, but they come to life as audiences. Just because Humperdinck, closely followed by the Ken Dodds, is doing so well is not indicative of apathy on the part of teenagers."

Syd himself is the most colour-conscious of the colourful Pinks. He dresses in clothes like black corduroy jackets, wine-red pants and white shoes. "Freedom is what I'm after," he comments. "That's why I like working in this group."

"There's such freedom artistically."

**RICK WRIGHT** plays organ. He is also 21, rather quiet, very easy-going and exceedingly absent-minded, which explains why he locked the group's car and left the keys inside. He went for education to Haberdashers' and talks like it, too. "Then I went to Regent Street Polytechnic to study

architecture and gave up in boredom after a year. So I started going abroad, to places like Greece. Then came home to earn a bit of money in jobs like interior designing and private decorating. But I was very unhappy and turned to studying music. I gave that up two months ago, but only because The Pink Floyd had become a full-time occupation."

He still hopes some day to complete his musical studies "and write a symphony or something." Pink Floyd-ing it, however, is quite enough compensation for his future plans. "We're playing something completely different from what has gone before. Like jazz musicians, we improvise all the time, both vocally and instrumentally."

A bit of a drifter, with his scarf stuffed untidily into his shirt, but pretty content at present with being a part of The Pink Floyd.

**ROGER WATERS**, 22 and the bass player, says "I lie and am rather aggressive," and attempts to act the part by shooting down questioners if he can.

Why don't The Pink Floyd try to expand as personalities? "We give the public what they can see for themselves – we don't want to manufacture an image. We don't want to be involved in some publicity build-up."

Not even a dress image?

"We dress as we feel at the time."

How did the concept of the stage act come about?

"There is no concept about it. Our music just comes from the fingers – there's no

## CAREFUL WITH THOSE FACTS, EUGENE

The UFO Club – founded by John 'Hoppy' Hopkins and Joe Boyd – is part of the Floyd legend, but the band's tenure at the venue, located in the basement of 31 Tottenham Court Road, was brief. They played just 10 shows between December 12, 1966 (UFO's first-ever night) and September 1, 1967.

preconceived arrangement. Perhaps there was an idea dreamed up in as much as we use images as well as sound, but otherwise it's all improvisation."

Roger, for the record, was born at Great Bookham in Surrey but moved to Cambridge when he was still a baby. After Cambridge schooling, he studied architecture at the Regent Street Polytechnic before drifting into the group.

Was there any musical background in his family?

"Well, my mother's stone deaf, my father's dead and my grandmother bought her first pop record last week. It was a disc called 'Arnold Layne'."

**NICK MASON**, the 22-year-old drummer from Birmingham, describes himself as a "very mediocre, ordinary youth" and thinks his arrival in The Pink Floyd was possibly remotely connected to his grandfather once

## "ON THE CLUB SCENE WE RATE ABOUT TWO OUT OF TEN AND 'MUST TRY HARDER'..." ROGER WATERS

penning a "fine, regal march" entitled "Grand State March".

Being the grandson of such a composer, Nick says sadly: "I take life easy but I am bit paranoid. I feel everyone has a down on me. I want to be successful and loved in everything I turn my hand to."

He may succeed. He is, for one thing, the easiest to talk to. Joining the group came

largely because he hated working in an office. "I had studied architecture for three years at the Polytechnic and then spent a year working in an office. It's only just lately, in fact, that The Pink Floyd have been doing much work. In the past we played about one date a fortnight and spent the rest of the time sitting in pubs and saying how nice it would be to be famous. Only when we got a manager who started organising us did we get beyond just dreaming."

He hopes, naturally, things will get bigger and better for the group. *Disc And Music Echo*



AS THOUSANDS IN ballrooms and assorted hell-holes across the country are deafened and blinded nightly by The Pink Floyd, the well-known psychedelic group, thousands might be forgiven for thinking: "What the 'ell's it all about?" Are The Pink Floyd being quite honest when they make coy and attractive records like "See Emily Play"

then proceed to make the night hideous with a thunderous, incomprehensible, screaming, sonic torture that five American doctors agree could permanently damage the senses?

The Floyd do not wish to appear dishonest, but they are worried. They appreciate the contrast between their records and live performances, agree the latter

might not be all that they should be, and are taking steps to rectify the situation.

Roger Waters, bass player, with rather aesthetic good looks, and a taste for frequent pints of bitter, grappled frankly with Floyd problems this week.

"We're being frustrated at the moment by the fact that to stay alive we have to play lots and lots of places and venues that are **CONTINUES OVER**"

The Floyd in '67: (l-r) Mason, Wright, Barrett and Waters, making music "not too far out to understand..."



not suitable. This can't last, obviously, and we're hoping to create our own venues."

Roger accepted a government-approved cigarette and warmed to his theme. "We all like our music. That's the only driving force behind us. All the trappings of becoming vaguely successful, like being able to buy bigger amplifiers - none of that stuff is really important."

"We've got a name of sorts now among the public, so everybody comes to have a look at us, and we get full houses. But the atmosphere in these places is very stale. There is no feeling of occasion. There is no nastiness about it, but we don't get re-booked on the club or ballroom circuit. What I'm trying to say is that the sort of thing we are trying to do doesn't fit into the environment we are playing in. The supporting bands play 'Midnight Hour' and the records are all soul, then we come on."

"I've got nothing against the people who come, and I'm not putting down our audiences. But they have to compare everybody. So-and-so's group is better than everybody else. It's like marking exercise books. Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick And Tich get a gold star in the margin, or 'Tick - Very Good'. On the club scene we rate about two out of ten and 'Must try harder'. We've had problems with our equipment and we can't get the PA to work because we play extremely loudly. It's a pity because Syd writes great lyrics and nobody ever hears them."

"Maybe it's our fault because we are trying too hard. After all, the human voice can't compete with Fender Telecasters and double drum kits. We're a young group, not in age, but in experience. We're trying to solve problems that haven't existed before. Perhaps we should stop trying to do our singles onstage. Even The Beatles, when they worked live, sounded like their records. But the sound of records we make today are impossible to reproduce onstage, so there's no point in trying."

Isn't this being dishonest?

"This is the point. We don't think so. We still do 'Arnold Layne' and struggle through 'Emily' occasionally. We don't think it's dishonest because we can't play live what we play on records. It's a perfectly OK scene. Can you imagine somebody trying to play 'A Day In The Life'? Yet that's one of the greatest tracks

# Life-lines of PINK FLOYD



Real name:  
Birthdate:  
Birthplace:  
Personal points:

Parents' names:  
Brothers'/sisters' names:  
Present home:  
Instruments played:

Where educated:

Musical education:

Age entered showbusiness:  
First public appearance:  
First professional appearance:  
Biggest break in career:

TV debut:  
First important public appearance:

London theatre dates:  
Biggest influence on career:

Former occupations before showbusiness:  
Hobbies:

Favourite colour:  
Favourite food:

Favourite drink:  
Favourite singer:  
Favourite actor/actress:

Favourite band/instrumentalists:  
Favourite composers:  
Favourite groups:

Car:

Miscellaneous dislikes:

Miscellaneous likes:

Tastes in music:

Pets:

Personal ambition:

Professional ambition:

## Rick Wright

Richard William Wright  
July 28, 1945  
London  
5ft. 10ins.; 11st.; blue eyes, brown hair  
Bridie and Cedric  
Selina, Guinivere  
Richmond, London  
Organ, piano, cello, phonofiddle  
Haberdashers' and Regent St. Polytechnic

London College of Music piano tuition for two weeks

18  
My first bath  
Powis Gardens  
Queen Elizabeth Hall concert

Look Of The Week—(BBC) Roundhouse

Saville  
Can't think of anything, probably everything

Student of music and architecture  
Travel, writing songs, dreaming, lazing in the sun, beautiful music

White  
I don't have one

Gin with anything  
John Lennon  
James Coburn, Claudia Cardinale

Ellington, Ayler, Coltrane, Monk, Ornette Coleman, Bach, Beethoven, Bartok, Beatles, Cream, Hendrix, Who, Soft Machine

Drunks, crowded pubs, violence, difficult situations

Freedom, silence, Greek islands, sun, beautiful girls  
Anything that is beautiful  
Great Dane

To have complete freedom  
To hear my own symphony performed at Festival Hall

## Nick Mason

Nicholas Berkeley Mason  
January 27, 1945  
Birmingham  
5ft. 10ins.; brown eyes, brown hair  
Bill and Sally  
Sarah, Melanie, Serena  
Fulham, London  
Drums, tambourine, triangle, blocks, etc.  
Frensham Heights and Regent St. Polytechnic (Architecture)

Piano and violin at a tender age

18  
Regent St. Poly dance  
London Roundhouse  
Giving up piano lessons, moving to drums

Scene—Granada  
Queen Elizabeth Hall

Saville  
Fear and rum

Student  
Sailing, riding, sports cars, rebuilding Aston Martins, driving Lotus Elans

The spectrum  
Avocado pears, cordon bleu cooking

See biggest influence on career  
Mose Allison  
James Booth

Cream, Ginger Baker, Beatles, Theonolius Monk  
Monk, Lennon and McCartney  
See above, plus Soft Machine

Red Lotus Elan and Aston Martin International

Nasty people, terrifying experiences, being tortured, the big dipper at Southport  
Everything else nice

Banal  
Parrot called Bicycle  
Rule the world  
Making a good scene for myself and people I'm with

## Roger Waters

George Roger Waters  
September 9, 1944  
Great Bookham, Cambridge  
6ft. 1in.; 11st. 6lbs.; green eyes, brown hair  
Mum and Dad  
John, Duncan  
London  
Bass guitar, piano, beat frequency oscillator

Cambridge High School for Boys; Regent St. Polytechnic

12 years tuition on the spoons

18 semi pro, 22 pro  
Cambridge C.N.D. meeting!  
London Roundhouse

Look Of The Week

Saville  
Architectural student

None  
Multi!  
Cream doughnuts

Gin  
Billie Holliday  
James Coburn, Rod Steiger

Beatles, Cream, Hendrix, Stones  
White Lotus Super 7

Hotel meals, Alice Bacon, The Fuzz, lemon peel

Pussy cats

Two half Siamese cats

## Syd Barrett

Roger Keith Barrett  
January 6, 1946  
Cambridge  
5ft. 11ins.; green eyes, black hair  
Winifred  
Rosemary  
London  
Lead guitar

Cambridge High School for Boys; Camberwell Art School, Peckham

None

Look Of The Week

Saville  
Art student

None  
Haven't got one  
Everything

Campari and soda  
Too many to list

Various  
Cat called Rover

## CAREFUL WITH THOSE FACTS, EUGENE

The architect of Floyd's early light shows was Syd Barrett's former flatmate Peter Wynne Willson, who originally trained as an electrician at Buxton Rep. An award-winning lighting designer, his inventions have since graced live shows by U2, REM, Radiohead, and Prince as well as American Idol and five Eurovisions...

ever made. A lot of stuff on our LP is completely impossible to do live. We've got the recording side together and not the playing side. So what we've got to do now is get together a stage act that has nothing to do with our records, things like 'Interstellar Overdrive' which is beautiful, and instrumentals that are much easier to play."

Are the group depressed when they fail to communicate with an audience?

"It's sometimes depressing and becomes a drag. There are various things you can do. You can close your mind to the fact you're not

happening with the audience and play for yourself. When the music clicks, even if it's only with 10 or 12 people, it's such a gas. We're trying to play music of which it can be said it has freedom of feeling. That sounds corny, but it is very true."

What is the future of the Floyd?

"We can't go on doing clubs and ballrooms. We want a brand new environment, and we've hit on the idea of using a big top. We'll have a huge tent and go around like a travelling circus. We'll have a huge screen 120ft wide and 40ft high inside and project films and slides. We'll play the big cities, or anywhere

and become an occasion, just like a circus. It'll be a beautiful scene. It could even be the salvation of the circus!

"The thing is, I don't think we can go on doing what we are doing now. If we do, we'll all be on the dole." Chris Welch



GIVING POP JOURNALISTS a hard time is the blood sports of groups. It's one of the occupational hazards of the job, as anyone who's ever been on the receiving end of The Beatles' rapier remarks will tell you.

Last week, it was The Pink Floyd's turn, which was surprising, for their latest

record, "Apples And Oranges", isn't exactly setting the chart alight. Still, I managed to penetrate their initial unreceptive attitude and asked how they felt about the record bombing after "Arnold Layne" and "See Emily Play" had been so well received.

"Couldn't care less," is Syd Barrett's answer. For the Floyd don't really regard themselves as primarily a record group. Barrett is an advocate of musical anarchy. He believes all the group can do is make a record which pleases them. If it's not commercial - too bad.

"All we can do is make records which we like. If the kids don't, then they won't buy it."

# 'THE LABEL IS A PRETTY COLOUR...'

## Syd Barrett reviews the week's singles

Ideally, believes Barrett, groups should record their own music, press their own records, distribute and sell them. He feels that the application of commercial considerations is harmful to the music. He'd like to cut out the record company and the wholesalers and retailers. "All middle men are bad," he said.

Co-manager Peter Jenner said that, anyway, the groups have far more idea of what the kids want than the record companies. Barrett said that the reason the kids dig The Beatles and Mick Jagger is not so much because of their music, but because they always do what they want to do and to hell with everyone else. "That's why the kids dig them – because they do what they want. The kids know this."

I met Barrett and guitarist Roger Waters with managers Jenner and Andrew King at the Central Office Of Information in Lambeth. They had been viewing a colour film insert of the group for a magazine programme on Britain networked across the US and Canada.

The number they filmed was "Jug Band Blues", written by Barrett, which manager Jenner said he had wanted to release as their single instead of "Apples And Oranges". He said he was pressing for it to be their next single in the New Year. It is almost a poetic recitation by Barrett, with avant-garde sound effects by the group. The centre passage is almost freeform pop, with six members of the Salvation Army on the recording session told to "play what you like".

After the filming, we retired to a nearby coffee bar where Jenner said: "The group has been through a very confusing stage over the past few months and I think this has been reflected in their work. You can't take four people of this mental level – they used to be architects, and artists and even an educational cyberneticist – give them big success and not expect them to get confused."

"But they are coming through a sort of de-confusing period right now. They are not just a record group. They really pull people in to see them and their album has been terrifically received here and in America. I think they've got a lot of tremendous things ahead of them. They are really just starting."

The Floyd's entry into the pop arena was as a psychedelic group. They came in on the surge of lights and psychedelia, which is dwindling rapidly today. Were they still using lights or had they made any decision to abandon them?

"Not at all," said Roger Waters. "With us, lights were not, and are not, a gimmick. We believe that a light show enhances the music. Groups who adopted lights as a gimmick are now being forced to drop them, but there's no reason why we should. In this country, groups were forced to provide their own light shows, whereas in the States, it was the clubs who provided the lights."

"Really," said Barrett, "we have only just started to scrape the surface of effects and ideas of lights and music combined; we think that the music and the lights are part of the same scene; one enhances and adds to the other. But we feel that in the future, groups are going to have to offer much more than just a pop show. They'll have to offer a well-presented theatre show." *Alan Walsh*



### ART: "What's That Sound (For What It's Worth)" (ISLAND)

Good, I don't recognise it and I've no idea who it is, but it drives along. Liked the instrumental sound. A medium hit. I suspect it to be American. I dug.

### GENE LATTER: "A Little Piece Of Leather" (CBS)

It's a great song. That's nice.

It's on the soul scene and I think people will go on digging the soul scene. I hope the people who listen to us will listen to this as well. The new wave of music is all-embracing. It gets across and makes everybody feel good. I don't think this will do well in the chart but it'll be OK for the clubs. I nearly guessed who it was – Gene Latter?

### ALEX HARVEY: "The Sunday Song" (DECCA)

Nice sounds – yeah. Wow. Lots of drums, but it avoids being cluttered. The people in the background seem to be raving a bit more than the people in the front. English? One of those young groups like John's Children? It moved me a little bit, but I don't think it will be a hit. Very snappy.

### TOM JONES: "I'll Never Fall In Love Again" (DECCA)

I detect a Welsh influence in the strings. I feel it's one of those numbers you should play at slow speed, or backwards, or upside down. It's Sandy McPherson. Everyone knows who it is.

It won't be a hit because it's too emotional. It'll sell a lot, but I won't buy one.

### BLUES MAGOOS: "One By One" (FONTANA)

It's got a message, but it didn't seem to branch out anywhere. It's nice, and I dig it, but it won't do anything. No idea who it was. You're going to tell me it's The Byrds. I really dig The Byrds, Mothers Of Invention and Fugs. We have drawn quite a bit from those groups. I don't see any reason for this record being a big flop or a big hit. It was a nice record.

### OLIVER NORMAN:

### "Drowning In My Own Despair" (POLYDOR)

Crazy – yeah. If pressed to think about it, I would suggest it was The Four Tops. So, it's not The Four Tops. If you want to make a hit, it's best to make your own sounds. The label is a pretty colour.

### DAVID BOWIE: "Love You Till Tuesday" (DERAM)

Yeah, it's a joke number. Jokes are good. Everybody likes jokes. The Pink Floyd like jokes. It's very casual. If you play it a second time it might be even more of a joke. Jokes are good. The Pink Floyd like jokes. I think that was a funny joke. I think people will like the bit about it being Monday, when in fact it was Tuesday. Very chirpy, but I don't think my toes were tapping at all.

### JIM REEVES: "Trying To Forget" (RCA VICTOR)

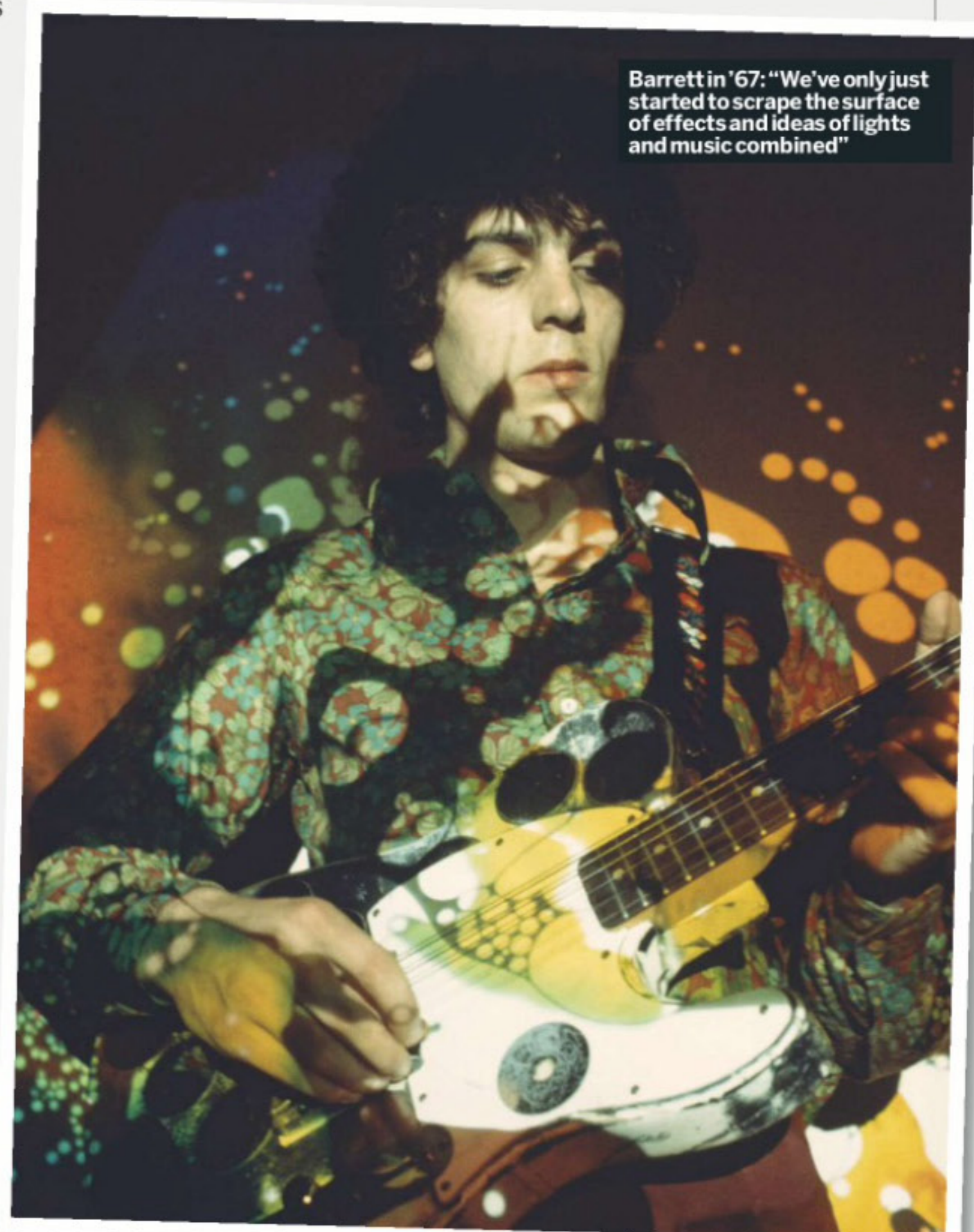
Very way out record. I think I tapped my foot to that one, I don't know who it was. Well, let me think – who's dead? It must be Jim Reeves. I don't think it will be a hit. It doesn't matter if an artist is dead or alive about records being released. But if you're trendy, this doesn't quite fit the bill. It's another that would sound better at 33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub>.

### BARRY FANTONI: "Nothing Today" (COLUMBIA)

Very negative. The middle jazzy bit was nice. Apart from the saxophone bit, it was morbid. I don't know what it was all about. It seemed to be about somebody kissing somebody's feet. I don't want to hear it again. Maybe it should be played at 78.

### VINCE HILL: "When The World Is Ready" (COLUMBIA)

Fade it out. Vince Hill. I didn't understand the lyrics at all. It's very well produced and very well sung. It may be a hit, but I shouldn't think so, because the lyrics are so unconvincing. 🐶



ANDREW WHITTUCK/REDFERNS

# A Saucerful Of Secrets

Explorers in transition, as Syd Barrett departs, David Gilmour arrives, and the unlikely figure of Richard Wright takes centre stage. *By Jon Dale*

RELEASE DATE 29 JUNE 1968

**F**OR A CERTAIN kind of Pink Floyd fan, 1968's *A Saucerful Of Secrets* marks the beginning of a slow but steady decline in the group's output. They're a hardcore bunch, headed up by the world's most dedicated Barrettophiles, but they also touch on a significant point. With Syd Barrett only appearing on three of *Saucerful*'s seven songs, you can hear his trademark combination of surrealism, childlike poesy and pastoral languor slowly disappearing from the group's collective voice.

That's not to say Barrett's presence is completely erased. But how Floyd got here from their first three singles, their classic debut *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* and one brilliantly unhinged, unreleased, 'great lost' 45, "Scream Thy Last Scream"/"Vegetable Man", is a tale that bears repeating.

"Scream Thy Last Scream"/"Vegetable Man" is a complicated beast itself. Recorded as a projected third single, it was rejected in favour of "Apples And Oranges". "Vegetable Man" was at one point mooted to appear on *A Saucerful Of Secrets*, but was again rejected; the master tape of the single, languishing in the vaults, bears the legend 'not to be used for LP'. And listening to bootlegs of the intended 45, you can hear why – it reveals Barrett close to the end of his tether, the wry wordplay and dream-logic of "Arnold

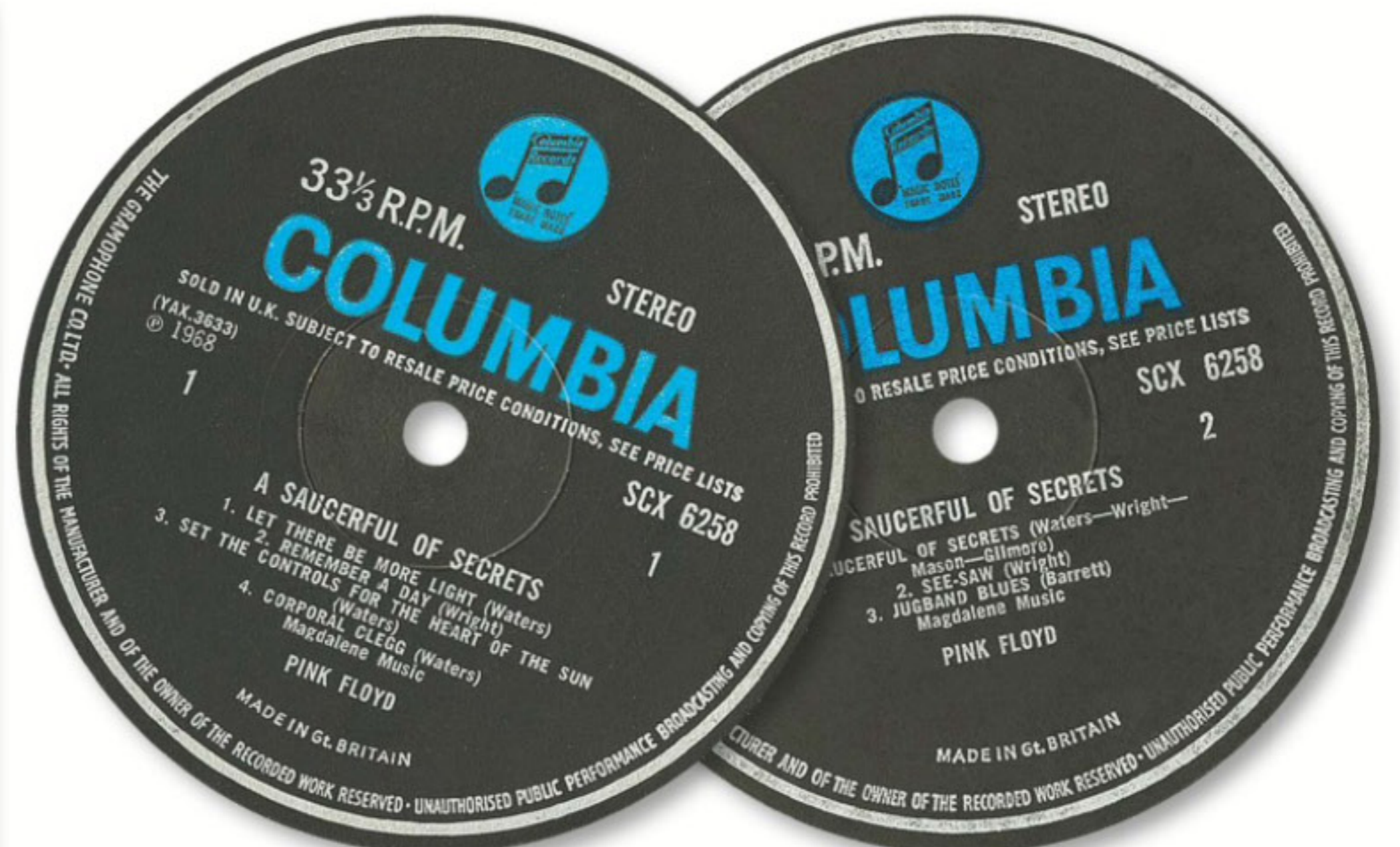
Layne" and "Chapter 24" giving way to a far more unstable dose of surrealist-paranoiac vision.

"Apples And Oranges" is, if anything, more unwieldy, though it's backed with "Paint Box", one of Richard Wright's most affecting melodies.

Barrett's excessive LSD intake was blasting apart an already frail personality, and his behaviour became increasingly erratic. An antagonistic sense of humour came to the fore during the rehearsals of "Have You Got That Yet?", whose song title, shouted by Barrett, was met by the band members with a chant of "No, no", as the song seemed to mould and morph like play-putty. The sessions for *A Saucerful Of Secrets* were similarly disjointed, spread across several months in 1967 and '68. It was during this period that Barrett was quietly ousted from the Floyd, first under the auspices of becoming their Brian Wilson-esque 'silent songwriter', while David Gilmour was inducted into the band as a shield for Barrett's non-compliant behaviour.

A fundamental change came in the group dynamic and aesthetic soon enough, but *A Saucerful Of Secrets* is individual in the Floyd discography in that it shows the group still unable to move out of Syd Barrett's shadow. For while Barrett only appears on three songs on the

CONTINUES OVER »



album, his wayward spirit casts a peculiar pall over the entire proceedings, appearing to steer songs he doesn't appear on, not least the psychedelic freefall of "Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun". Tellingly, the closer *A Saucerful Of Secrets* gets to the idyllic pantheism of Barrett, the dosed visionary, the better the songs. By 1969's *More* and *Ummagumma*, the Floyd had made fairly clear moves toward the tone-floats and prog-rock that crystallised, if such a word can be used, on *Meddle* and *Atom Heart Mother*. On *Saucerful*, they sound gloriously confused and unsure.

If there's anything decisive about *A Saucerful Of Secrets* at all, it's more to do with personnel and business decisions. It would be the first album to feature David Gilmour (or David Gilmore, if you believe the original credits for the album). And it was the first time Pink Floyd used Hipgnosis for their cover design, initiating an idiosyncratic and aesthetically rigorous set of album covers that established Hipgnosis director Storm Thorgersen as the go-to cover artist of the progressive rock generation. The blurred, hazy collage of *A Saucerful Of Secrets'* cover, its orbiting solar system adrift alongside Marvel Comics bricolage and phased-out colourisation, both hints at the complex disjuncture of the music within, and looks like a still from a particularly florid underground, experimental film – the orbit from which the Floyd had emerged, the UFO Club and its hangers-on. It would be the last time they would appear remotely tethered to a particular scene.

*A Saucerful Of Secrets* opens with Roger Waters' stalking epic, "Let There Be More Light", where cyclical bass and organ figures and staccato phrasing build ominously toward the great release in the chorus. Here, Wright and Gilmour share vocal duties, with Wright the pensive architect of the verse, Gilmour soaring across the chorus' majestic tenor. But there's something slightly awkward about the performance, too, as though Waters is still figuring out how to write a great song, rather than cobble together riffs and phrases into a kind of 'exquisite corpse'. Its lack is shown up by being immediately followed by Wright's "Remember A Day", the album's first classic, and a beautifully dreamy slice of psychedelic pop. Barrett contributes some typically astringent slide guitar, while Wright adds sighs and vocal clicks to the spiraling wig-out in the

## THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"There are increasing instances of good tracks being ruined by now-mandatory bits of psych... as corny as Italian suits"  
**NME, AUG 10, 1968**

middle of the song. "Remember A Day" is so effective because it never forgets that psychedelia often works best in service to melody, remembering that naïve tunes of skipping and nursery rhymes work oddly well as a launchpad for boundless, Peter Pan possibility.

Waters' one great contribution to the album is "Set The Controls For

The Heart Of The Sun", a low-slung maze of snakecharmer bass, droplets of vibraphone, and some of Wright's most elevated organ, all steeped in reverb. Waters' vocal simmers deep in the mix, pitched as another instrumental element, and even the addition of corny bird-call samples can't undo the song's haunted magic. That it's followed by "Corporal Clegg", a slight, yet demonstrative piece of pro-forma psychedelia, also written by Waters but sung by the other members of the group, rather undoes the magic of "Set The Controls..." Yet it casts a shadow over much of the second side of *A Saucerful Of Secrets*, placing the listener at a different altitude.

Half of side two is swallowed by "A Saucerful Of Secrets" itself, whose length gifts it the position of 'album centrepiece' by default. Opening with Wright's skirling organ

Rotterdam on October 12, 1967) is a very pointed response to the pop demands of their audience. So it's a little ironic that *A Saucerful Of Secrets'* highlight, the following "See-Saw", manages somehow to feel even more vague and sleepy-eyed than their free-form moments, while containing one of the most hypnotically lachrymose pop melodies of their entire career.

Hallucinatory and drifting, "See-Saw", alongside "Remember A Day", suggests Rick Wright was the secret beating heart of this Pink Floyd. It makes perfect sense that it's one of Robert Wyatt's favourite Floyd songs – its aquatic weightlessness is a template for Wyatt's own *Rock Bottom*. Tellingly, *A Saucerful Of Secrets* finds Wright closer to the spotlight than on any other Floyd album, taking the majority of vocal performances. In some ways, it's his record, and it's a curious experience to find out what he's all about.

*Saucerful's* last track, meanwhile, remains one of the greatest puzzles in the Floyd's storied career. "Jugband Blues", the sole Syd Barrett song to appear on the record, ends things on an unsettling note, with Barrett's songwriting by this stage almost modular in its approach, his off-hand melodic wisdom collapsing into aleatory rhythm and phrasing. Lyrically it's a puzzle, too: while it's easy to

psychoanalyse lines like "And I'm wondering just who is writing this song", given Barrett's state of mind, there's an odd sense of double-play around lyrics like "I don't care if nothing is mine." Is it a Zen state, or a cryptic allusion to being

## On *A Saucerful Of Secrets*, the Floyd sound gloriously confused and unsure

explorations, the group pulls in the full complement of instrumental near-chaos – sea-sick, lolling slide bass, cymbals that spray fine wash across the audio spectrum, prepared piano, wordless sirens – building to a crescendo that cuts out, leaving Mason to plough through a section of jagged, spiky guitar and extemporised, free improv piano. Alongside "Flaming" and "Interstellar Overdrive" from *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*, "A Saucerful Of Secrets" best indicates the formative influence that British free music outfit AMM had on Pink Floyd's early explorations.

The group would regularly protest at live requests for their hit singles and respond with these kinds of formless improvisations. The song "Reaction In G", which sometimes turns up on live bootlegs from the Barrett-era Floyd (such as *Aloy Hallen*, recorded live in

frozen out of the group he co-formed?

If the front cover of Barrett's first solo album *The Madcap Laughs*, photographed in his barren living room, is anything to go by, at least he took his lyrics to heart. The song is rent apart by the Salvation Army Brass Band, who end up playing at cross-purposes to both the song and each other, as if Barrett had been channeling the maverick spirit of the recently deceased American composer, Charles Ives. With a quiet coda of solo acoustic guitar and voice, disappearing into the folds of his own song, Barrett all but signs off from the Floyd story.

If *A Saucerful Of Secrets* is a curate's egg, then, it's a bloody good one. Often, the second Pink Floyd album is referred to as documenting a group in transition, and there's something of the patchwork quilt about the way the album is constructed – it lacks the holistic splendour of *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*, or the pop smarts of "See Emily Play"/"The Scarecrow" and "Arnold Layne"/"Candy And A Currant Bun".

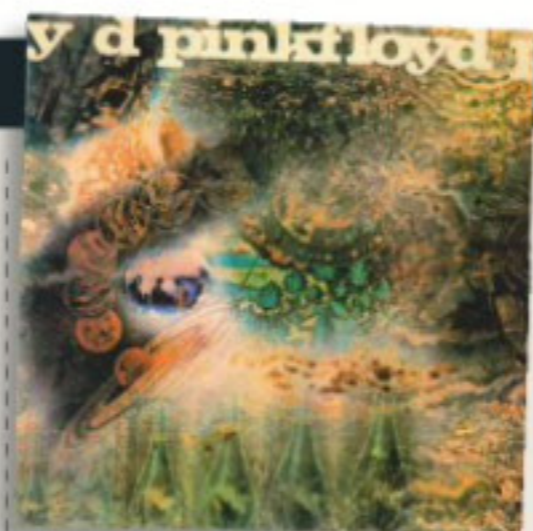
But perhaps it works best if you stop listening after "See-Saw", treat "Jugband Blues" as an honorary solo Barrett side, and wallow in what Simon Reynolds and Joy Press called the "pure nostalgia for the halcyon daze of infancy, with its easy spirit of play". That's *A Saucerful Of Secrets*: a consolidation of the Floyd's exploratory spirit, and of their ability to transform bad situations into great music, alchemically. 🍷

## TRACKMARKS | *A Saucerful Of Secrets*

1. Let There Be More Light ★★★★★
2. Remember A Day ★★★★★
3. Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun ★★★★★
4. Corporal Clegg ★★★★★
5. A Saucerful Of Secrets ★★★★★
6. See-Saw ★★★★★
7. Jugband Blues ★★★★★

**RELEASED:** June 29, 1968  
**LABEL:** EMI  
**PRODUCED BY:** Norman Smith  
**RECORDED AT:** Abbey Road Studios  
**PERSONNEL:** Syd Barrett (guitar, acoustic guitar, vocals); David Gilmour (guitar, vocals, kazoo); Nick Mason (drums, percussion, vocals); Roger Waters (bass guitar, percussion,

vocals); Richard Wright (piano, organ, mellotron, vibraphone, vocals); Norman Smith (drums, bk vocals on "Remember A Day"); The Salvation Army International Staff Band (on "Jugband Blues"); Ray Bowes (cornet); Terry Camsey (cornet); Mac Carter (trombone); Les Condon (E-flat bass); Maurice Cooper (euphonium);



Ian Hankey (trombone); George Whittingham (E-flat bass)  
**HIGHEST CHART POSITION:** UK 9; US –



And then there were four: the Floyd, circa *Saucerful*

# More

## (Original Soundtrack)

For £600 each, the Floyd dash off their first soundtrack – and discover which one of them will steer their next momentous phase.

*By Stephen Troussé*

RELEASE DATE 27 JULY 1969

**A**LTHOUGH HE WAS born in Tehran to German and Swiss parents, by the late '60s Barbet Schroeder certainly behaved like a classic Parisian blend of playboy, philosopher and charismatic cultural entrepreneur. In his early twenties, he had founded Films Du Losange, the production company which supported the early nouvelle vague of Eric Rohmer and Jacques Rivette; indeed, Schroeder's enduring cinematic achievement may be his spectral appearance in Rivette's *Celine And Julie Go Boating*. In 1968, though, he felt the need to start directing movies of his own, beginning with one called *More*.

*More* is, by most standards, a terrible movie. The tale of an earnest German student who falls in love with an American in Paris, pursues her to Ibiza and follows her descent into heroin addiction and death, it's at best prettily vacant (cinematographer Nestor Almendros, the light of Ibiza and the breasts of Mimsy Farmer work a reliable magic), and at worst so turgid and inane it's excruciating to sit through. You can only presume that, for all Schroeder's spiel of classical subtexts – it was his interpretation of the Icarus myth, supposedly – he had astutely sensed the moment of *Easy Rider* (the films eventually opened two weeks apart) and concocted the whole

enterprise as a lucrative exercise in freaksploitation. Mimsy Farmer had recently graduated from a leading role in the shameless US exploitation pic *Riot On Sunset Strip*, playing a girl who takes LSD and is promptly gang-raped. In a cynical frame of mind, who better could Schroeder commission for a soundtrack to draw in the freaks, the heads and stray *soixante-huiters* than – as they were credited onscreen – The Pink Floyd?

Still apparently rudderless in the wake of Syd Barrett's departure, Pink Floyd's motives were scarcely more noble. "We would have done almost anything in terms of films," said David Gilmour, looking back. "We wanted to break into big-time movie scores so we said 'OK' and he gave us 600 quid each or something and off we trotted and we did it." Roger Waters, meanwhile, was supposedly still smarting that the band hadn't got the nod from Stanley Kubrick to soundtrack *2001*, despite the fact that the band had only released a couple of singles at the time the film was in production.

Soundtracks had always been key to the development of the Floyd. They famously appeared in Peter Whitehead's 1967 psychedelic souvenir *Tonite Let's All Make Love In London*. They contributed stray tracks to Peter Sykes' **CONTINUES OVER »**



paranoid curio, *The Committee*. And the 1966 recording of "Interstellar Overdrive" ended up inspiring and soundtracking Anthony Stern's delirious short film, *San Francisco*.

But Stern himself suggested the more profound way in which Pink Floyd had always made soundtrack music, regardless of the presence of moving pictures. Detractors might have suggested that, in the London psychedelic scene, music was always secondary to the drug experience and the extravagant visuals. Stern, though, believed that multimedia was key: "It was my desire to make permanent the Pink Floyd lightshows created at the UFO club by Peter Wynne Willson. The LSD-triggered psychedelic experience found its ultimate expression in this fusion of sight and sound, which achieved a visceral effect on the audience."

Accepting Schroeder's commission offered the band a chance to forget the loss of Syd Barrett in the pragmatic exercise of creating a score. It also gave them an opportunity to take a time-out from the pained exercise in democracy that *Ummagumma* was turning out to be. EMI didn't consider the project a "proper" album, so Pink Floyd were able to produce themselves, with help from engineer Brian Humphries, in something like private, away from Abbey Road and producer Norman Smith. And because *More* was a very different type of film to the conceptual space opera they seemed typecast for, it also suggested a possible way ahead for the Floyd: no longer astral voyagers, but a group embarking on some more intimate interior journey.

"I wanted to live. I wanted to burn all the bridges, all the formulas, and if I got burnt that was OK too," says *More*'s protagonist Stefan in voiceover, as he hitchhikes down the rain-drenched Autobahn from Lübeck in the film's opening shot. "I wanted to be warm. I wanted the sun and I went after it." You might take this as a sensational cue for "Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun", but instead the album begins with "Cirrus Minor", with birdsong—a nightingale sampled from an HMV sound effects single—and David Gilmour murmuring of churchyards, riverbanks and willows over spare acoustic picking and Richard Wright's stately Hammond, on a dreamy drift to some Swiftian cloudland that feels rather like Grantchester Meadows.

It's immediately clear that the album bears only a passing relationship to the film it supposedly soundtracks—in fact, all the songs

## THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"Weird, out of the world music... there are Spanish sounds, folk sounds and jazz sounds—all interesting..."

ALLEN EVANS, *NME*,  
JUNE 21, 1969

used in the film were re-recorded in different versions for the album. A couple of songs featured in the movie, "Seabirds" and "Hollywood", aren't included on the album. Gallingly for the band, Schroeder elected largely to use their music incidentally, diegetically; that is, emerging organically from bedroom radios or divebar soundsystems, rather

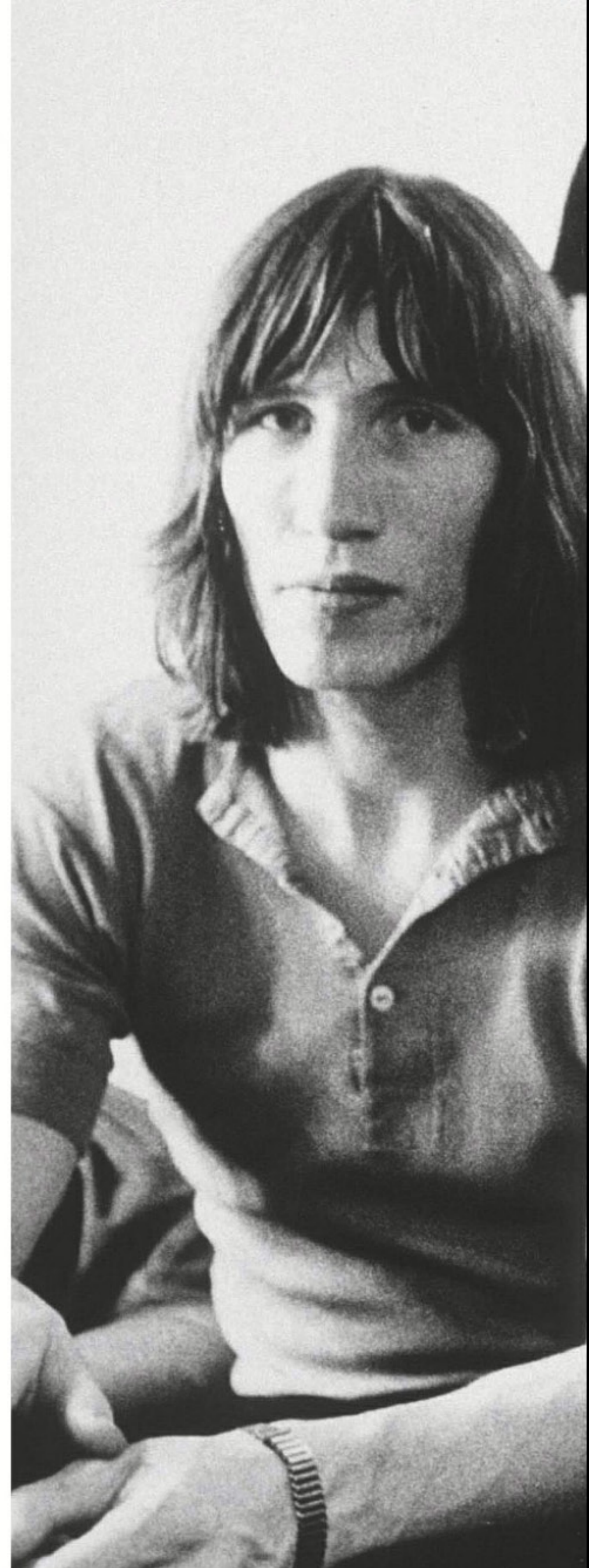
than in any more profound or integral dramatic fashion. Thus the proto-Zeppelin stomp of "Nile Song" is the soundtrack to a debauched Parisian party, and "Ibiza Bar" is, as the title implies, simply background music.

But it's in the album's favour that it doesn't rigorously chart the banality and bathos of the characters' demise. Instead, the Floyd's *More* is more accurately and interestingly the soundtrack to Roger Waters' ascent to the helm of Pink Floyd and emergence as an authentic songwriter. Written and recorded in little over a week in the spring of 1969, in the midst of the ongoing sessions for *Ummagumma* and fitted in between live shows, the album is almost entirely Waters' work. Though the band are jointly credited for the instrumental tracks, Waters receives sole credit for the five songs on the album's first side—among the finest things the band ever produced.

Waters' emergence is remarkable for being so unexpected. In the absence of Barrett, and following key *Saucerful...* tracks like "Remember A Day" and "See-Saw", it had seemed like Richard Wright would lead Floyd's second phase, with Gilmour as able deputy.

Up to this point, Waters' songwriting credits amounted to "Take Up Thy Stethoscope And Walk" from *Piper...*, and a motley trio on *Saucerful*, of which "Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun" displayed a talent for simmering atmosphere (and a genius for titles), and "Corporal Clegg" signalled a weakness for psych-pop pastiche. None really indicated that Waters was about to casually knock off a handful of the band's best songs in the space of a week. How to explain this sudden outpouring? It's like some very English version of the Robert Johnson myth, where instead of selling one's soul to the devil at some midnight crossroads, you sense an opportunity, sit down, apply yourself and work bloody hard. "Roger has always known how to work," Mason later demurred. "Which is quite unusual in rock'n'roll."

Though the sequence is interrupted by the crude Hendrix pastiche of "Nile Song", and the Mason/Wright instrumental "Up The Khyber",



there's a unity of mood to the first side of the album. "Crying Song" is another beautifully lazy meander, drifting on Richard Wright's vibes and Gilmour's acoustic guitar. "Green Is The Colour", aided by some charmingly wonky tin whistle by Nick Mason's then-wife Lindy, is like a superior take on Donovan's "Colours", dazzled, by some high noon rapture. It's also, in the lines "Heavy hung the canopy of blue/ Shade my eyes and I can see you/ White is the light that shines through the dress that you wore" (and the hints of dissolution in the reference

"moonshine beat her blind every time"), one of the few songs that conjures something of the atmosphere of the film, capturing the fleeting Ibiza bliss the doomed couple briefly find.

Finally "Cymbaline", though hobbled by some self-consciously clunky lyrics ("Apprehension creeping/ Like a tube train up your spine/ Will the tightrope reach the end/ Will the final couplet rhyme?"), captures a perfect balance between immaculate late-'60s pop construction—the chorus could be something

## TRACKMARKS *More*

1. Cirrus Minor ★★★★★
2. The Nile Song ★★★★★
3. Crying Song ★★★★★
4. Up The Khyber ★★★★★
5. Green Is The Colour ★★★★★
6. Cymbaline ★★★★★
7. Party Sequence ★★★★★
8. Main Theme ★★★★★
9. Ibiza Bar ★★★★★
10. More Blues ★★★★★
11. Quicksilver ★★★★★

12. A Spanish Piece ★★★★★
13. Dramatic Theme ★★★★★

RELEASED: July 27, 1969

LABEL: EMI

PRODUCED BY

Pink Floyd

RECORDED AT:

Pye Studios, London

PERSONNEL: Roger

Waters (bass guitar, guitar, tape and birdsong

effects, bongos, gong, backing vocals); Nick Mason (percussion, drums, bongos); Richard Wright (Hammond and Farfisa organs, piano, vibraphone, bongos); David Gilmour (acoustic, electric, slide, and Flamenco guitars, tape effects, bongos, vocals).

HIGHEST CHART

POSITION: UK 9; US 153





Floyd the soundtrack  
artists: architects of  
"stoned English liberation"

from The Zombies' *Odessey And Oracle* - and creeping dread. "Cymbaline"'s original title was "Nightmare", and already, in the references to broken butterflies, agents and managers there are hints of Waters' weariness with the starmaker-machinery behind the popular song.

If Waters is the auteur of *More*, then Gilmour is its star. The inessential (and casually *Mind-Your-Language* racist) flamenco sketch "Spanish Piece" may have been his first Floyd solo credit, but his singing and playing is all over the album, decisively moving the band from fractured English psych-pop and creepy astral jams to some mellow, blissful, West Coast-tinged folksiness. In the way it divines some stoned English liberation via an Ibiza of the mind, you could even make a case for *More* being the very first Balearic album.

This shift towards the Waters-Gilmour axis

was helped by Wright's apparent lack of interest in the whole project. He contributed to the instrumental "Main Theme" and

and only a few places below *Ummagumma*. It also proved hugely popular in France, where the film was received as enthusiastically as

*Easy Rider*, and ensured the band received further soundtrack commissions from Antonioni (for *Zabriskie Point*), and Schroeder again, for his more successful *La Vallée*.

But the lasting significance of the album is in the shift of power it marked and the future it promised. Knocked off

opportunisticly in eight days, and amounting to not more than one side of truly significant work, *More* was nevertheless the first real fruits of an authentically post-Syd Barrett incarnation of Pink Floyd. Already in 1969, before *Ummagumma* and *Atom Heart Mother* and *Meddle*, with the defining emergence of Roger Waters, *More* was pointing the way to the Floyd of the '70s and *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. 🐉

## More is the soundtrack to Roger Waters' ascent to the helm of Pink Floyd – and his emergence as an authentic songwriter

"Quicksilver", but his vocals are almost completely absent, and there were even rumours that he was thinking of leaving the band.

*Soundtrack From The Film More* was eventually released at the end of July 1969, orphaned from its parent movie which, predictably, couldn't pass the British censors. Nevertheless, it sold well enough, reaching the same position – No 9 – as *A Saucerful Of Secrets*,

# Ummagumma

Are four heads better than one? Still searching for the way forward, Waters, Gilmour, Wright and Mason head off on radically different paths. *By Rob Young*

RELEASE DATE 25 OCTOBER 1969

ON APRIL 14, 1969, audience members at London's Royal Festival Hall were treated to an arty rock performance entitled – with equal measures of pomp and whimsy so typical of late British psychedelia – The Massed Gadgets Of Auximenes: More Furious Madness From Pink Floyd. The event comprised two LP-length suites of music, punctuated by carnivalesque interludes including band members pausing for a cup of afternoon tea onstage and a table sawn in half with a magically flourish. The two musical halves of the piece were separately titled 'The Man' and 'The Journey', and were effectively semi-improvised medleys of tracks from recent albums *More*, *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* and *A Saucerful Of Secrets*, plus the Floyd's soundtrack for Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point*. They also incorporated elements of what would eventually be released, that autumn, as the double album, *Ummagumma*.

Whether, as is often reported, the title was a Cambridge underground slangword for what any scholar ought surely to have called coitus, or whether it was simply a bit of Barrett babytalk, *Ummagumma* was an important record for Pink Floyd. Ranged across four sides of vinyl, it was the group's first release after being shunted sideways onto the newly founded Harvest imprint – EMI's recognition of the progressive underground. Confusingly, though, what emerged was a tasting menu of four micro-solo projects rather than a cohesive group statement, with a side order of four live cuts from their spring 1969 UK tour. The four

cylinders were firing; it's just that they were all thrusting in different directions.

As on The Byrds' equally transitional *Untitled*, there's a bit of everything scattered around *Ummagumma*: new studio recordings on one LP, live recordings on the other. The bittiness is further enhanced by the fact that not one of the studio tracks features the band playing as a whole. Instead, it's divided up into four solo showcases recorded separately. A combination of squeezed schedules and 'who's weirdest?' competitiveness makes the whole thing feel enforcedly eclectic; a concept album with no discernible centre; something that constantly intimates portentous significance while rarely delivering on it. That's not to say there aren't great moments; it's just that the album's identity seems diffused.

Unsatisfying as a whole, the studio LP is best approached in short bursts. "There wasn't actually any attempt to connect them all," commented Rick Wright at the time. "We didn't write together; we just went into the studios on our own to record and then we got together to listen to them. We all played alone on our pieces, in fact. Again, we couldn't all agree on this... I thought it was a very valid experiment and it helped me."

The isolationist approach to the album's construction paints a picture of a group possibly avoiding the confrontational aspects of studio work. In band members' later recollections, *Ummagumma* has invariably been summarily dismissed; a cloud of embarrassment **CONTINUES OVER »**



and dissatisfaction seems to hover over it.

Ponderous synthesised brass and bludgeoned kettle drums introduce Rick Wright's "Sysyphus", a species of classical rock symphony in four 'movements'. In a 1970 *Beat Instrumental* interview, Wright was cited as currently listening to Beethoven and Berlioz, and the short preamble threatens belligerence and martial moods, but is swiftly succeeded by "Part Two", a rhapsodic, Debussy/Scriabin-esque piano piece that descends from rolling, painterly chords to deep-end plummets and Cecil Taylor-like splintered ivories.

The first half of "Part Four" is the most interesting and innovative, breaking away from vague classical allusiveness into a becalmed, proto-ambient drift of Mellotron streaks, slide guitar and distant birdsong from a rustic field. Halfway through, though, it's faded out in favour of a catastrophic *Phantom Of The Opera* organ blare and bully-beef timpani. At certain points, Wright's soundworld veers close to the then-current British free improvisation groups such as AMM and Spontaneous Music Ensemble – also a big influence on Syd Barrett in the late '60s – but sounds too self-conscious in its imitation of the 'avant-garde': the freedoms here are not hard-won but languidly engineered. Like *Ummagumma*'s front cover, with its Escher-like infinite mirror featuring subtly altered configurations of the quartet, it's trying too hard to be clever. And like the LP sleeve of Broadway musical *Gigi*, which Hipgnosis' Storm Thorgerson included in the image for no significant reason whatsoever – there are plenty of red herrings along the way that don't add up to much.

Coincidentally, the first of Roger Waters' two contributions picks up the outdoorsy feel of "Sysyphus". "Grantchester Meadows", one of the Floyd's most celebrated pieces, is an acoustic pastoral reverie, sung in a reverberant chamber to the accompaniment of a double-tracked guitar and a tape loop of a chattering skylark. Humming honey bees, honking geese and running water fade in and out, counterpointing Waters' solemn, chanted evocation of the glorious stretch of field by the

## THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"Waters' tranquil 'Grantchester Meadows' is a thing of permanent beauty, and the whole set can be recommended as an example of exploratory thinking at its best."  
**MELODY MAKER,**  
NOV 8, 1969

"Their individual offerings on the second album are still unmistakably Floyd, but presented in four different styles..."  
**DISC AND MUSIC ECHO,**  
NOV 11, 1969

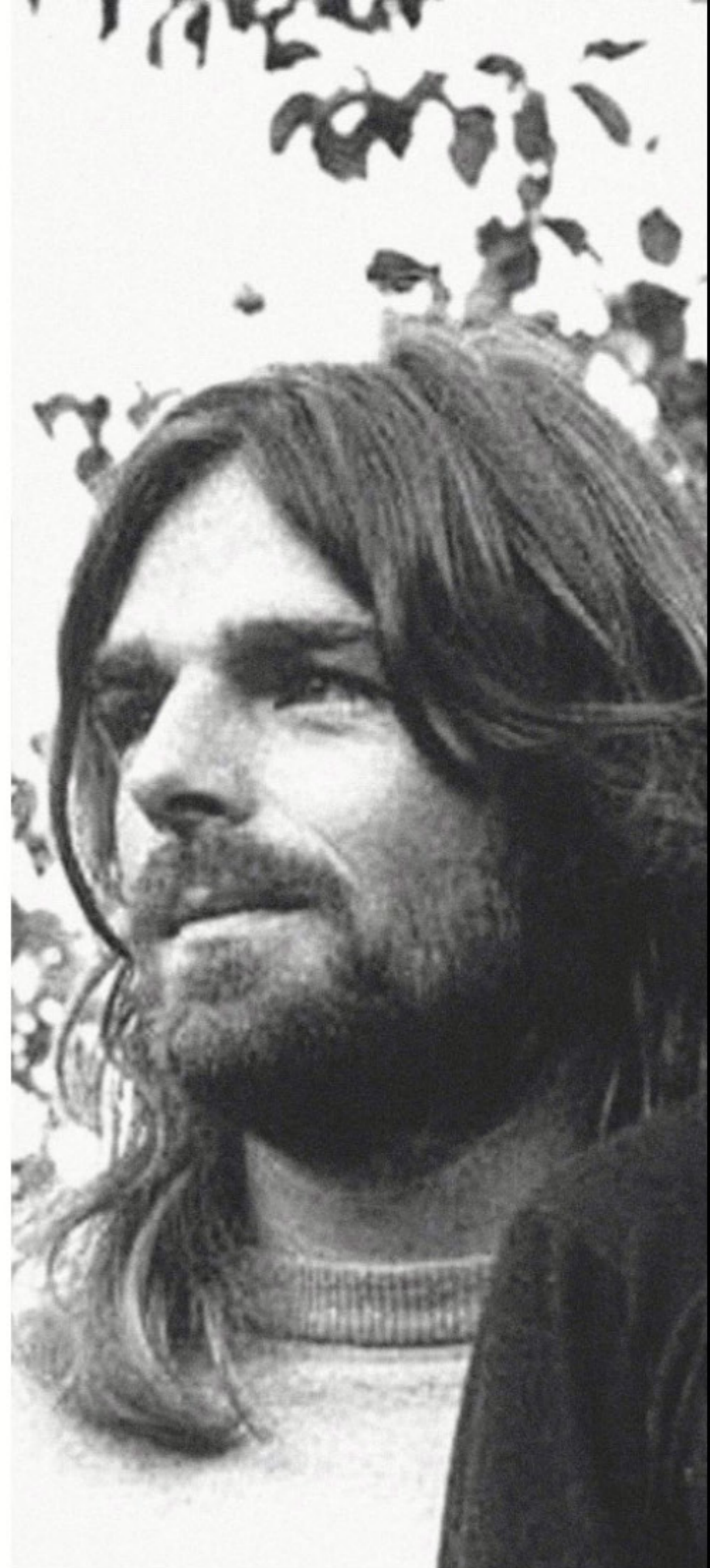
River Cam: Rupert Brooke puffing collyweed. Its rusticity is made stranger, though, by the dead, dry air around the field recordings: that tweeting is on a very short loop. And as the lyrics later reveal, this is only a meadow of the mind, recalled in the chill of an urban winter: "Basking in the sunshine of a bygone afternoon/Bringing sounds of yesterday into this city room." The dream is shattered by a thwacking fly-swatter.

Equal parts *Pinky & Perky* and *The Goon Show*, a five-minute assemblage of sped-up tape loops, microphone abuse and Caledonian wittering rejoices under the title "Several Species Of Small Furry Animals Gathered Together In A Cave And Grooving With A Pict". This slice of epically silly sound poetry – Waters

muttering about claymores in Pythonesque Scottish – helps fulfil the Floyd's eccentricity quota but doesn't repay repeat listening; four and a half minutes in, Waters' hyperventilated voice can be heard boasting, "That was pretty avant-garde, wasn't it?"

Gilmour's effort, "The Narrow Way", is one that he appeared perpetually embarrassed by in later years, before practically disowning it in 1983. The first of its three sections was titled "Baby Blue Shuffle In D Minor" on a John Peel session in 1968; a John Fahey-esque strum, good natured, is accompanied by high-pitched slide swoops and sweeps with occasional punctuations of treated electric guitar rasps on sped-up tape. "Part Three" is the most appealing, with Gilmour singing about weary travellers following a path through the dark – anticipating the shattering journey undertaken by the characters in Barbet Schroeder's *La Vallée*. Its lumbering rhythm certainly looks forward to *Wish You Were Here* and onward. But the three sections don't really cohere and Gilmour has never put up any kind of a fight to defend this particular work.

It's perhaps unfair for Gilmour's rather lumpen drumming, which closes the coda of "The Narrow Way", to be followed immediately by Nick Mason's piece, "The Grand Vizier's Garden Party". The opening section ("Entrance") finds



Mason prestidigitating with his array of Chinese-hat cymbals, tuned tom-toms and exotic woodblocks to create a clattering, lysergic gamelan. Mason's latent theatricality is let off the chain: running amok with Abbey Road's selection of orchestral components, he constructs a rumbling noise drone from the reverberant aftershock of tympani and chops it into a musique concrète battlescape of bursters and flares. Studio boffin Ron Geesin – soon to become a vital presence on *Atom Heart Mother* – had a hand in composing the first and third parts, which include multi-layered flute parts for Mason's wife Lindy.

Mason used to perform the opening section of "Grand Vizier" at Pink Floyd's *The Man And The Journey* live shows, where it was often referred to as "Doing It!". Culled from two of those same spring 1969 gigs, *Ummagumma*'s live album offers a crowd-pleasing reprise of the Floyd's most cosmic Barrett-era material. Wright commented: "The live part of the album we had to record twice. The first time, at Mothers in Birmingham, we felt we'd played really well, but the equipment didn't work so we couldn't use nearly all of that one. The second time, at Manchester College of Commerce, was a really bad gig but as the recording equipment was working well, we had to use it... parts of "Saucer" on *Ummagumma* came from the Birmingham gig which we put together with the Manchester stuff... but the

## TRACKMARKS | Ummagumma

1 Astronomy Domine

★★★★

2 Careful With That Axe, Eugene

★★★★★

3 Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun

★★★★

4 A Saucerful Of Secrets

★★★★★

5 Sysyphus Part One

★★★★

6 Sysyphus Part Two

★★★★

7 Sysyphus Part Three

★★★★

8 Sysyphus Part Four

★★★★

9 Grantchester Meadows

★★★★★

10 Several Species Of Small Furry Animals Gathered Together In A Cave And Grooving With A Pict

★★★★

11 The Narrow Way Part One

★★★★

12 The Narrow Way Part Two

★★★★

13 The Narrow Way Part Three

★★★★

14 The Grand Vizier's Garden Party Part One (Entrance)

★★★★

15 The Grand Vizier's

Garden Party Part Two (Entertainment)

★★★★

16 The Grand Vizier's Garden Party Part Three (Exit)

★★★★

RELEASED:

October 25, 1969

LABEL: Harvest

Produced by: Norman

Smith (Studio),

Pink Floyd (Live)

RECORDED AT:

Abbey Road, London,

various home studios

(Studio); Mother's Club,

Birmingham, Manchester

College Of Commerce,



Manchester (Live)

PERSONNEL: Roger

Waters (bass guitar, vocals,

acoustic guitar, tape

effects); David Gilmour

(guitars, vocals, drums,

etc); Richard Wright

(keyboards, vibraphone,

vocals, etc); Nick Mason

(drums, percussion, etc)

HIGHEST CHART

POSITION: UK 5; US 74



The four heads: distinct in the studio, but locked-in and unified live

stuff on the album isn't half as good as we can play." That's as may be, but if the studio sides portrayed the group as a fragmented and fumbling towards altered states, the Floyd rarely sounded so unified and locked-in as on these live cuts.

Even if some of their presence is inevitably lost on tape – they were using a quadraphonic PA system at the time, controlled from the stage by Rick Wright with a custom-built apparatus that could circulate sounds spatially around the hall – the live album is a scintillating testament to their powers to reproduce and transcend their most psychedelic, spaced-out material in front of an audience.

"Astronomy Domine", taped at Birmingham's Mothers Club on April 27, features some beautiful keyboard passages from Wright, whose textures provide the background hum and squelch behind the greater proportion of these galactic voyages.

On a serpentine rendition of "Careful With That Axe, Eugene" (from Manchester College of Commerce on May 2), his organ dribbles mazily in similar manner to Ray Manzarek on "The End". Mason's jazzily swinging touch on the ride cymbal and rimshot keeps the motion slithery and lithe, before a diabolical screech from Waters tips the track into a blasted

improvisational wilderness. Gilmour's guitar solo is all crackle and phlegm and there's some demonic heavy breathing towards the end – Eugene rarely sounded this psychotically disturbed.

In "Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun", Wright's keys spin off into North African/Turkish modes and scales. War-hungry drummers from just beyond a desert ridge

Mason wrestles a monotonous, Cro-magnon thud-orgy on the toms. The final "Celestial Voices" passage is also expertly controlled, from its mournful, church-organ germ to the grand elegy in which Waters' bass notes jut in under Gilmour's wordless chant.

Despite the inconsistency of the studio LP, *Ummagumma* feels like a necessary interlude during a period of slippage and indecision. As

the '60s closed, the Syd-less Floyd remained a brilliant live outfit who were nevertheless increasingly sought after as sonic scientists and soundtrack suppliers – rock musicians thrust into the mould of 'proper' composers. Even when their experiments fail, they at least

serve to indicate the group's collective breadth of scope, their widely tuned radar systems beyond the worlds of rock and pop into improvisation, free jazz, avant-garde electronic music, field recording and ethnic rhythms.

Just as the album's back cover photo provided an exploded view of the band's instrumental arsenal, meticulously laid out in front of a Land Rover on a sunny evening at Biggin Hill Airport, so *Ummagumma* laid out the group members' individual wares and allowed them to work certain caprices out of their system. It pointed the way forward by, in part, showing them the paths not to follow. 🐉

## ***Ummagumma* pointed the way forward by, in part, showing the band the paths not to follow**

materialise in Mason's tribal pounding on slackened drum heads. When Mason drops out after five minutes, the music briefly gapes upon another dimension, as sparkling, ectoplasmic synthesisers pirouette and the guitar meddling approaches dog-whistle frequencies. Dark matter and cosmic dust whirl in roving eddies. The re-entry is beautifully piloted and fades out before any applause.

A spiky, 12-minute "A Saucerful Of Secrets" (again from Birmingham) is the cue for some astral guitar solos from Gilmour, jetting up the fretboard with a bottleneck slide during the "Syncopated Pandemonium" section while

# Atom Heart Mother

Or “Argument In E Minor For Band And Orchestra”... An ambitious triumph, or The Cud, The Bad & The Ugly?

By Rob Young

RELEASE DATE 10 | OCTOBER | 1970

**I**N 1917, WRITING about his contemporary Ralph Vaughan Williams, the critic and composer Peter Warlock sniped that his forebear was “chiefly remarkable for having portrayed, not in one work, but in nearly all, the peculiar state of mind engendered by prolonged contemplation of a cow in a field on a foggy evening... He aims at the sublime by sheer ponderosity, but where Handel achieved a colossus, Vaughan Williams only manages a rather uncomfortable rhinoceros with flabby legs.”

Well, there’s that cow in the field again. This one goes by the name of Lulubelle III, and stands on the Hipgnosis sleeve of one of Pink Floyd’s most contentious albums – the one that tends to separate the bulls from the heifers among Floyd’s fan-herd. In the mid-’70s, some might say, Floyd began aiming at the sublime by sheer ponderosity, and *Atom Heart Mother* is where the rhino began to put on weight.

An alternative hearing, though, would place *Atom Heart Mother* as an oasis in the middle of one of their most volatile periods, a joyous and gentle reconciliation between the group’s fervent jamming skills and their experimental impulses. As with *Ummagumma*, in later years band members seemed to squirm at the memory of this record. “If somebody said to me now: ‘Right... here’s a million

pounds, go out and play *Atom Heart Mother*’, I’d say, ‘You must be fucking joking... I’m not playing that rubbish!’” Roger Waters told a BBC radio interviewer in 1984. “I listened to that album recently,” averred Dave Gilmour in 2001. “God, it’s shit – possibly our lowest point artistically. *Atom Heart Mother* sounds like we didn’t have any idea between us...” With advocates like this, who needs critics?

Like *Ummagumma*, *Atom Heart Mother* splits down the middle: one side was given over to the continuous 25-minute “Atom Heart Mother (Suite)”; the other side featured three tracks, written one apiece by Waters, Gilmour and Wright, plus one free-range collage, all running the gamut from blissed-out psychedelic pop to overt tape experimentation. Side two contains some great songwriting and avant-gardisms, ably redeeming the Suite, which frankly is, from the circumstances of its creation to the finished product, a bit of a cow’s breakfast.

What is the “Atom Heart Mother (Suite)”, exactly? Like *Ummagumma*’s most self-consciously ‘out there’ moments, it appears to be an example of worthy boundary-crossing with no clear aim in sight, other than the satisfying of whims and the confounding of expectations. To get **CONTINUES OVER »**



the most out of it, it makes sense to hear it as a sketchpad, as only one of several potential outcomes. As a sequence of ideas half resolved but abandoned due to lack of energy and then handed to others for them to sand down the rough edges. Understanding how it came into being is the best clue to the odd twists and turns of this at times maddening piece.

Since unveiling it at a Paris gig in January 1970, Pink Floyd had been mucking around with a longform piece called "The Amazing Pudding". It began around a riff of Gilmour's which he dubbed "Theme From An Imaginary Western", but which ended up titled "Father's Shout". As Waters later put it, the motif sounded "like a theme from some awful Western; it had that kind of... slight pastiche, heroic, plodding quality to it... of horses silhouetted against the sunset." During March and April, in sessions snatched between hectic touring, the group blocked out the skeleton shape of the piece. But these works-in-progress really should have been left as dummy tryouts; instead, the recordings, riddled with tempo inconsistencies, became the groundwork used in the final product. Divided into six linked sections, the Suite lacked focus and chromatic diversity; Gilmour's 'Western' theme didn't come across in the way he intended. They decided to call in a fixer.

Ron Geesin had already collaborated with Nick Mason on *Ummagumma* the previous year, and had since taken up golfing with Roger Waters. The 26-year-old Scotsman was already a Peel favourite and occupied an odd niche – as a Dixieland pianist who specialised in avant-garde tape manipulation and electronic composition, as well as being something of a comic, surreal raconteur. With his perspective as a sympathetic outsider, Dr Geesin was hired to give a creative second opinion on the "Atom Heart Mother Suite". He set to work writing embellishments for a 10-piece brass ensemble, 20-piece choir and a single cello, played by Caroline Dale. Members of the Abbey Road Session Pops Orchestra were teamed up with The John Aldiss Choir, a vocal ensemble who had made a speciality of singing the music of contemporary English composers. Geesin, acting as musical director, found the classical players recalcitrant and obstructive, resistant to the score's charms. At the session's most heated moment, Geesin threatened to take one of them outside for a punch-up. At that point,

## THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"The most mature and finished piece of music the group has yet produced... The work has plenty of shifts of texture, but maintains a mood of superb relaxation." **RICHARD WILLIAMS, MELODY MAKER, OCT 10, 1970**

"One of the Floyd's most grandiose compositions to date... [it has] funky soul, superb organ and tight guitar that would give Booker T a run for his money..." **NME, OCT 10, 1970**

John Aldiss himself was summoned to take over, and he acted as the conductor in order to get the job completed.

From Geesin's point of view, the whole endeavour ended in traumatic failure. In the Suite's final sections, "Mind Your Throats Please" and "Remergence", the brass and the drum rhythm become entirely uncoupled, as if they are two pieces accidentally stored on the same tape.

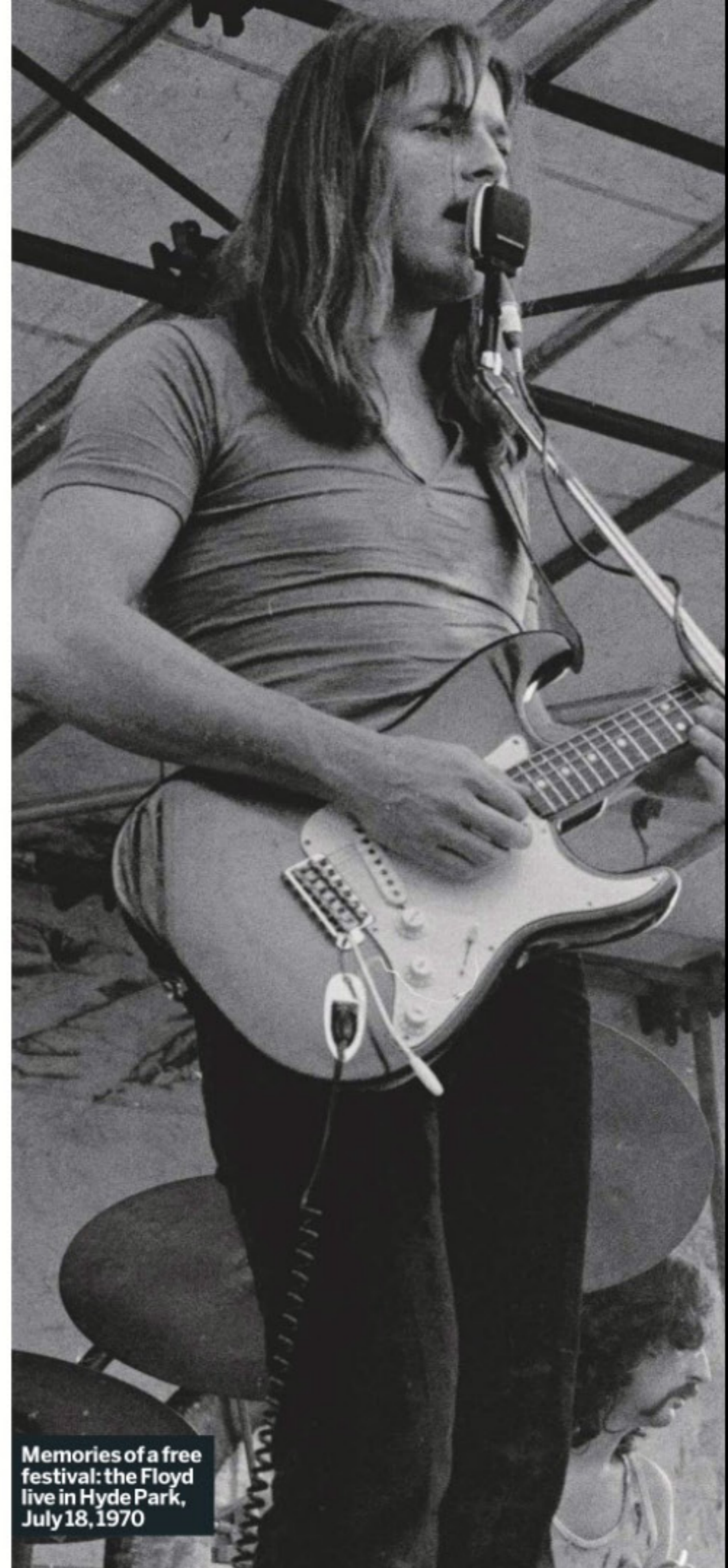
Apparently, Mason played this passage lagging behind the beat, which jarred with Geesin's hearing of the pulse. He was left uncredited as a composer on the outer sleeve of the resultant LP, although he was included as a co-writer on the centre label copy. At the piece's English premiere with a full brass section and choir, at the Blackhill

Garden Party in July, Geesin left Hyde Park in tears. Decades later, he offered an alternative title for the Suite: "Argument In E Minor For Band And Orchestra".

The Suite went through several name changes before its final incarnation. Geesin scrawled "Epic" at the top of his first draft score. The group continued to use the 'away with the fairies' name "The Amazing Pudding" until they came to record parts of it for a *John Peel In Concert* programme on the BBC. After wracking their collective brains for a name with less teapot whimsy and more gravitas, Peel pointed out a story in the *Evening Standard* about a woman who had had a new, plutonium-powered pacemaker fitted while pregnant, headlined "Atom Heart Mother Named".

Despite its problematic conception, the Suite stands up as an intriguing and often entertaining musical oddity, a real one of a kind. Lacking the macho puffery of full-on progressive rock; gentler and funkier than any contemporary composition; too abstract and un-programmatic to work as a 'soundtrack to an imaginary film': there was nothing else quite like it at the time. The nearest equivalent was, perhaps, the orchestral work of David Bedford, a composer in the English tradition who straddled rock, prog and classical in his collaborations with Kevin Ayers and Mike Oldfield, still a couple of years off. Its segues between becalmed, beatless moods and funk interludes also provided a model for the colossal ambient odysseys of The Orb in the early 1990s.

Although it runs as a continuous 24-



Memories of a free festival: the Floyd live in Hyde Park, July 18, 1970

minute work, the sleeve subdivides the Suite into six sections, opening with "Father's Shout" (Geesin suggested the name in homage to his favourite stride pianist, Earl 'Fatha' Hines). The brass state the main theme – a widescreen establishing shot – and a secondary motif contains more than a whiff of Ennio Morricone's mariachi-like Spaghetti Western horn arrangements of the time. Around two minutes, whinnying horses, gunshots, sirens and a motorbike flash across the stereo picture, before the music draws a breath, changes down a gear and ploughs into "Breast Milky", the first of two titles to be directly suggested by Storm Thorgerson's bovine cover art. "Mother Fore" features oceanic, clear-watered choral layers from Geesin, while Wright, Waters and Mason chafe at its edges with a deep, laborious groove. Wright's damp Hammond organ bridges into "Funky Dung": slack-as-a-sack Ziggy Modeliste backbeat, porky organ and a Gilmour guitar solo that's cheek-suckingly tart. The "Father's Shout" riff is reprised briefly prior to "Mind Your Throats Please", a Brownian motion swirl of synth dischords, train whistles, cut-up cello and reverbed guitar abstractions. A dalek voice commands "Silence in the studio" as the main theme is repeated for the final time by the assembled company, signing off with a grand trumpet fanfare.

Far from attempting the complexities of prog, the Suite was "a very direct attempt at hitting emotions, touching off emotional reactions

## TRACKMARKS | Atom Heart Mother

1. Atom Heart Mother (Suite)
  - a) Father's Shout ★★★★★
  - b) Breast Milky ★★★★★
  - c) Mother Fore ★★★★★
  - d) Funky Dung ★★★★★
  - e) Mind Your Throats Please ★★★★★
  - f) Remergence ★★★★★
2. If ★★★★★

3. Summer 68 ★★★★★
4. Fat Old Sun ★★★★★
5. Alan's Psychedelic Breakfast ★★★★★

### RELEASED:

October 10, 1970

### LABEL:

Harvest

### PRODUCED BY:

Pink Floyd; executive producer

Norman Smith

**RECORDED AT:** Abbey Road, London

**PERSONNEL:** David Gilmour (guitars, bass guitar, drums, vocals); Nick Mason (drums, percussion, tape editing, tape collage); Richard Wright (keyboards, piano,



organ, vibraphone, orchestration, vocals); Roger Waters (bass guitar, acoustic guitar, effects, tape collage, vocals)

### HIGHEST CHART

**POSITION:** UK 1; US 55



with fairly ordinary sounds”, as Waters later explained. With that in mind, they instructed Hipgnosis’ Storm Thorgerson to come up with a cover that forsook the spacey imagery of *Saucerful* and the gratuitous visual games of *Ummagumma* for something as down to earth as possible. Responding fairly

literally and unthinkingly to the brief, Thorgerson drove out to Potters Bar and snapped a herd of grazing Friesians. In the event, *Atom Heart Mother*’s front cover – Lulubelle, presenting her ample arse and udders, gazing balefully at the viewer – has become an iconic, instantly memorable image: an enigmatic, eerie picture of the unchanging English landscape, an unconscious allusion to Warlock’s famous dig at Vaughan Williams, and the suggestion that the music within could be a mildly confrontational fart in your general direction.

As for the rest of the album, the second side holds a small nest-egg of fine Floyd songs. “If” is one of Waters’s intimate acoustic self-examinations, a series of metaphors detailing how he would be if he were a better man. Lines such as “Please don’t put your wires in my brain” and, especially, “If I go insane/Will you still let me join in with the game” may allude to the recent condition of Syd Barrett around the time of his exclusion from the group. “Summer 68” finds Wright at the piano, recalling a hollow

hotel-room encounter with a groupie. The arrangement is surprisingly upbeat psych-pop with a brassy sheen, with the whole group crashing in on the “How do you feel” chorus.

“Fat Old Sun” could be seen as Gilmour’s “Grantchester Meadows”. It paints a Samuel

descends successive rungs of jazz-tinged chords that recall Soft Machine or Caravan.

But “Alan’s Psychedelic Breakfast” achieved a perfect pitch between adventurous and rockist impulses. All self-consciousness about being ‘experimental’ has vanished. No-one is saying

“That was really avant-garde”, and there’s no attempt to be humorous or quirky. The piece is simply presented and left dangling; the musical sections are beautiful but work on a domestic, rather than cosmic scale – charming instead of dazzling. The original vinyl bade farewell to listeners with a

dripping tap in a locked groove: water torture for heads too stoned to change the record.

The last words heard on the album are “My head’s a blank”, spoken by Alan Stiles just before he slams the door and drives off after washing up his mind-expanding breakfast. That anticipated the ‘nothing’ state of mind with which they would embark on the following year’s *Meddle*. Meanwhile, they had the baffled public response to *Atom Heart Mother* to contend with. One particularly scathing piece by *Melody Maker*’s Michael Watts was answered by sending the critic a package containing a boxing glove on a spring. A reminder that cows, for all their ponderosity, are equipped with powerful teeth to chew that cud. 🐄

## A joyous and gentle reconciliation between the group’s fervent jamming skills and their experimental impulses

Palmer-like panorama of a blissful English summer evening: “Distant bells, new mown grass smells so sweet/By the river holding hands...”. Backing himself with some beautiful lap steel glides, Gilmour’s closing electric solo recalls Hendrix circa *Axis: Bold As Love*.

Which just leaves “Alan’s Psychedelic Breakfast”, a 13-minute compendium of sound effects and voices, linked by poignantly tuneful rock passages. Floyd roadie Alan Stiles is heard casually musing over his favourite cereals and spreads in the opening “Rise And Shine” section, and later can be heard shaking out and noisily munching his cornflakes, washing them down with some tea, and cooking a crackling fry-up. The final “Morning Glory” is a piano/organ driven slow jam that

# Syd Barrett

# The Madcap Laughs & Barrett

As his old bandmates wonder where to go next, Syd Barrett embarks on a brief, troubling, magical solo career. *"Please leave us here..."*

By Allan Jones

RELEASE DATES 23 JAN 1970 & 14 NOV 1970

**T**HE RECEIVED IMAGE of Syd Barrett at the time of his enforced departure from Pink Floyd in April 1968 was of a talent made haggard by lysergic excess, dishevelled by drugs. As far as the Floyd were concerned, the architect of their early triumphs had become a hindrance to their viable future, a liability, someone they could no longer count on or was useful to have around. He was, in the opinion of the band, you were given to understand, washed up, or something close to it.

His final contribution to the Floyd had been the eerily crepuscular "Jugband Blues" on *A Saucerful Of Secrets*, which sounded like it belonged to a different record entirely and had only been included to make publicly evident Barrett's fragmenting personality, the unbridgeable distance that now separated him from the group. This, the Floyd seemed to be saying via the song's strategic positioning at the album's end, is what Syd had become—withdrawn, too far out to reach, wholly askew. The LSD he'd taken to free his imagination, the hint was, had also unmoored his mind.

"It's awfully considerate of you to think of me here," Barrett sang with poignant formality, as if in apology to his soon to be erstwhile bandmates, for becoming such a nuisance, a bit of a burden. "And I'm much obliged to you for making it clear that I'm not here," he went on, in somewhat forlorn acknowledgement of his imminent displacement. It

was almost as if he knew there was no way back from wherever it was he now found himself.

Not everyone at the time, however, thought Syd was beyond recall. Peter Jenner and Andrew King, the band's managers since September 1966, didn't fancy the Floyd's future without him, saw them only floundering. They dropped the band and stuck with Syd, in the apparent belief his problems were temporary, that even as he was falling apart he might yet pull himself together. They duly had him back in the studio by May 6, 1968, for the first of six sessions at Abbey Road's Studio 3, produced by Jenner. The initial results were not discouraging, Syd recording a new song called "Silas Lang", inspired by Longfellow's poem "Hiawatha", and an instrumental backing track for what would become "Late Night", eventually a plaintive highlight of *The Madcap Laughs*, Syd's first solo album.

The following day was more dispiriting, yielding the rambling "Rhamadan", an 18-minute blues jam, the version of the unremarkable "Lanky Part One" that subsequently appeared on the *Opel* album of outtakes, and "Lanky Part Two", another aimless instrumental. Much more promising at subsequent sessions was an early pass at Syd's haunting musical setting of the James Joyce poem, "Golden Hair", and on July 20 two takes of another new song, "Clowns And Jugglers", dazzling even at this early stage.

The sessions, however, were

CONTINUES OVER »



increasingly fraught. Syd often didn't show up, and when he did was usually in a state that made recording pointless. Jenner and King's optimism for his rehabilitation faltered accordingly. The July 20 session was his last for almost a year, during which time he became further lost in the druggy fog friends now feared he would inhabit indefinitely.

In March 1969, however, 23-year-old Malcolm Jones, who'd just launched Harvest, EMI's bespoke underground label, was told that Syd wanted to go back into the studio. As he recalled in his privately published memoir, *The Making Of A Madcap Laughs*, Jones had heard much gossip about Barrett's ruinous state, his unreliability, how difficult he'd been to work with in his latter days with the Floyd. He was encouraged, however, by how together Syd seemed when they met to review the Jenner tapes and impressed enough by the new songs Syd played him to book studio time at Abbey Road. Jones originally wanted "See Emily Play" and *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* producer Norman Smith to run the sessions. But Smith was already prepping the Floyd's *Ummagumma* and unavailable. Jones later regretted not thinking of Joe Boyd, who'd helmed "Arnold Layne", and in the immediate absence of any other plausible candidates ended up producing Syd himself.

In his account of the eight sessions he supervised between April 10 and May 6, 1969, Jones dispels the popular notion of Syd as wayward, ill-disciplined or otherwise troubled, unstable and adrift. He remembers instead Syd's humour, enthusiasm, focus and application. With Jones in sympathetic attendance, he worked on improved iterations of "Silas Lang", now retitled "Swan Lee", "Clowns And Jugglers", "Golden Hair" and "Late Night" and eight new songs, all of which in more finished versions appeared on *The Madcap Laughs*.

For reasons that are unclear, Malcolm Jones was soon replaced by David Gilmour and Roger Waters, then at work at Abbey Road on *Ummagumma*. What became *The Madcap Laughs* was then completed in two sessions



Syd in the studio: "Wistfulness had given way to an awful melancholy..."

with Gilmour, on June 12 and 13, and Gilmour and Waters co-producing a final session on June 26, the three sessions producing a further four new songs. The Pink Floyd duo also reworked the versions Jones had produced of "Clowns And Jugglers", by now retitled "Octopus", and "Golden Hair".

It was now over a year since Barrett had first gone into the studio to work with Peter Jenner and it would be another four frustrating months because of the Floyd's own recording and touring schedules before Gilmour and Waters were able to deliver their final mix to

disappointed and disturbed many fans of Syd in his psychedelic pomp. The sound of the record was often a scrappy reduction of the blazing glories he had essayed with Pink Floyd, in places ramshackle and scruffy, reflecting its fragmentary, disjointed gestation. Malcolm Jones' production inexperience was also evident, as was the only partial attention Gilmour and Waters were able to devote to it. Nor were things much helped by the sometimes sketchy arrangements and the indifferent contributions of some of the backing musicians, including Soft Machine,

whose performances on "Not Good Trying" and "Love You" were notably under-rehearsed.

What people found most alarming, however, was what appeared to be distressing confirmation of Barrett's much-rumoured unravelling, the conspicuous unspooling of a spectacular songwriting talent,

lost to somewhere lonely, disturbing and strange. There'd always been something otherworldly about Syd, that interstellar stare, the saturnine look, sexy and slightly sinister, a vaguely dangerous stoned dandyism he shared with Jimi Hendrix, Keith Richards and Brian Jones. On *The Madcap Laughs*, Syd's otherworldliness has become in many ways positively extra-terrestrial, a voice reaching us from out there in a space Syd shares with things that shine in the dark but are already dead, their light reaching us from who knows where. This was an idea of Barrett much enhanced by Mick Rock's cover images of him, goblin-crouched on the bare floorboards of the unadorned Earls Cour flat he'd recently painted black and purple, a scary netherworld where he looked like he might live with only ghosts and spiders for friends.

Gilmour and Waters also inadvertently supported the idea that Syd had fully become the madcap of the LP's title by contentiously including in their final version of the album such upsetting instances as the false start to "If It's In You". Barrett's tuneless wailing is followed by an agitated conversation with his

## Madcap's sound was often a scrappy reduction of the blazing glories Syd had essayed with Floyd

Harvest, too late to meet the album's original pre-Christmas release date, which was rescheduled for January 1970.

When *The Madcap Laughs*, so long in the making, finally came out, it baffled,

### TRACKMARKS | Syd Barrett Solo Albums

#### THE MADCAP LAUGHS

1. Terrapin ★★★★★
2. No Good Trying ★★★
3. Love You ★★★★★
4. No Man's Land ★★★★★
5. Dark Globe ★★★★★
6. Here I Go ★★★
7. Octopus ★★★★★
8. Golden Hair ★★★★★
9. Long Gone ★★★★★
10. She Took A Long Cold Look ★★★★★
11. Feel ★★★★★
12. If It's In You ★★★
13. Late Night ★★★★★

RELEASED: January 23, 1970

LABEL: Harvest  
RECORDED AT: Abbey Road Studios

PRODUCED BY: David Gilmour and Roger Waters

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER:

Malcolm Jones

PERSONNEL: Syd Barrett (guitar, vocals); David Gilmour (bass, 12-string acoustic guitar, drums on "Octopus"); Roger Waters (bass); Jerry Shirley (drums); John Wilson (drums); Vic Saywell (horn); Robert Wyatt (drums on "No Good Trying" and "Love You"); Hugh Hopper (bass on "No Good Trying" and "Love You"); Mike Ratledge (keyboards on "No Good Trying" and "Love You")

HIGHEST CHART

POSITION: UK 40; US -

#### BARRETT

1. Baby Lemonade ★★★
2. Love Song ★★★

3. Dominoes ★★★★★
4. It Is Obvious ★★★★★
5. Rats ★★★★★
6. Maisie ★★
7. Gigolo Aunt ★★
8. Waving My Arms In The Air ★★
9. Wined And Dined ★★★
10. Wolfpack ★★★★★
11. Effervescent Elephant ★★

RELEASED: November 14, 1970

LABEL: Harvest

PRODUCED BY: David Gilmour and Richard Wright

RECORDED AT: Abbey Road Studios

PERSONNEL: Syd Barrett (guitars, lead vocals); David Gilmour (12-string acoustic guitar on "Baby Lemonade"),



bass, organ (on "It Is Obvious", "Gigolo Aunt", "Wined And Dined"), drums (on "Dominoes"), backing vocals; Richard Wright (keyboards, piano harmonium, Hammond organ); Vic Saywell (tuba on "Effervescent Elephant"); Jerry Shirley (drums and percussion), John Wilson (drums)

HIGHEST CHART

POSITION: UK -; US -



producers that makes you think of the tormented writhing of someone in a painting by Francis Bacon. It suggested such incoherence typified the sessions, something an appalled Malcolm Jones strongly contested.

Gilmour defended their inclusion to Rob Chapman in his illuminating biography, *Syd Barrett: A Very Irregular Head*: "Roger and I both thought some of Syd's state of mind should be present in the record – to be a document of Syd at that moment – and to explain why some of the songs had these, how should I say it, unprofessional moments."

Whatever the producers' intentions, there was still something ghoulish about these moments, which were also superfluous. The songs told you everything you needed to know about Syd and his state of mind. What's so uniquely unsettling about *The Madcap Laughs* was the sense that Syd was quite acutely aware of the awful emptiness opening up in front of him and found a language to describe it.

The wistfulness that had been an appealing aspect of, say, "See Emily Play", had given way to an eternal melancholy. The songs were inflected with the sadness attached to something precious passing, almost gone, the slipping away of a golden time, childhood's last

summer, uncomplicated happiness replaced by bleak uncertainty. "Inside me, I feel alone and unreal," Syd sang on "Late Night", his isolation something you could reach out and touch. The lyrics of many of the songs and the arch cadence of their delivery was often redolent of an ancient courtliness, through whose polite phrasings alone he might conjure a better reminiscent of more reasonable times, whose quaint etiquettes have been replaced by ruder banter, unruly voices, vulgar chatter, hoarse and disinclined towards the grace, innocence and beauty he clearly pined for but were now out of reach.

Occasionally, the songs were cryptic, defied logical interpretation, seemed randomly assembled from poetic scraps, extemporised clusters of associative phrases, sometimes surely meaningless. It would be a mistake, however, to confuse them even at their most abstruse with something scratched on an asylum wall. Rob Chapman's close reading of the remarkable "Octopus", for example, revealed the craft, wit, intelligence and imagination of which Syd was still capable. The

song's cleverly accumulated lyric drew on diverse literary sources, folklore, nursery rhymes, and the hallucinatory vernacular of dream states to create a wholly realised, enraptured universe, halcyon and unique.

As a former art student, Barrett would have been conversant with notions of spontaneous writing, Dadaist literary collage and cut-ups, techniques he fully and capably employed here. "What Syd Barrett created in his post-Pink Floyd output," Chapman claims without exaggeration, "was a mode of expression that simply has no parallel in the English pop song."

*The Madcap Laughs* barely made the Top 40. But enough people liked it for EMI to green-light a follow-up. Syd was back in the studio with David Gilmour and Rick Wright as early as February 26, 1970, for the first of 15 sessions that produced the *Barrett* album, work on which was again predictably interrupted by Gilmour and Wright's other commitments – the Floyd were simultaneously recording *Atom Heart Mother* and from late April through May were on tour in America.

The LP they finally made was less obviously fragmented than its predecessor, with a more uniform sound – Gilmour and Wright provided most of the instrumentation, with the heavy-handed Jerry Shirley, who'd appeared on *The Madcap Laughs*, on drums.

What it lacked, however, were enough songs

good enough to benefit from the greater musical continuity. Syd's writing on *Barrett* is often at best half-hearted. Even some of its better tracks – "Dominoes", "Wined And Dined", "Baby Lemonade" and "It Is Obvious" – offer jaded evidence of his palpably waning interest in both songwriting and performance. For most of the record, as Chapman pithily observes, Syd appears content to resort to what had become his "all-purpose lick, his underpass busker strum", which reached a desultory nadir on the somnambulant blues of "Maisie". There was a dented charm to some aspects of the album, but also an ill-suited galumphing jauntiness on tracks like "Gigolo Aunt" that was presumably the best Gilmour in the circumstances could come up with to somehow pep things up. The rest was merely drizzle and

damp, with the startling exceptions of the exclamatory "Rats" and the terrifying "Wolfpack", which offered tantalising if unsettling glimpses of Syd's fleeing genius.

*Barrett* was released in November 1970, to sales so miserable it didn't even show up on the charts. Since no-one was listening, Syd stopped making music. There was one more attempt to coax another album out of him in August 1974, when Peter Jenner booked studio time at Abbey Road, but one night he walked out of the studio and never returned.

The heart pales nearly 40 years on to be reminded that Syd was only 22 when he started *The Madcap Laughs* and not much older when he entered the twilight of the rest of his life. 🐉

## THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"There's a good dose of Floyd in [*The Madcap Laughs*] backings, but many other influences as well... It's the kind of LP you could develop a fondness for, but it sticks in the same mood too much..."

NME, JAN 24, 1970

"Barrett contains a good deal of gentle funk... even when the songs aren't that strong, and the majority are golden goodies, the atmosphere carries the burden."

NME, NOV 7, 1970



KODAK SAFETY FILM



KODAK TRI-X PAN

34A

34

33A

33

32A

32

31A

31



KODAK TRI-X PAN FILM



KODAK SAFETY FILM



30A

30

29A

29

28A

28

27A

27



M

KODAK SAFETY FILM



26A

26

25A

25

24A

24

23A

23



KODAK SAFETY FILM



KODAK TRI-X PAN FILM

22A

22

21A

21

20A

20

19A

19



KODAK SAFETY FILM



KODAK

18A

18

17A

17

16A

16

15A

15

14A



KODAK SAFETY FILM



KODAK TRI-X PAN FILM



# 'ONE THINKS OF IT ALL AS A DREAM...'

In his last published interview, a fading SYD BARRETT is gently encouraged by MICHAEL WATTS to reflect on art, his stalled musical career and "rather unexciting" old bandmates. Meanwhile, ROGER WATERS contemplates a turbulent world and tells CHRIS WELCH, "I work to keep my mind off a doomy situation."



STORIES ABOUT SYD Barrett are legion. That he became unbearably egotistical, impossible to work with. That he was thrown out of Pink Floyd. That he suffered a psychological crack-up. That he once went for an afternoon drive and ended up in Ibiza. That he went back to live with his mother in Cambridge as a part of a mental healing process. That occasionally he goes to the house of Richard Wright, the Floyd's organist, and sits there silently for hours without speaking.

Some of the stories are true.

Roger Waters: "When he was still in the band in the later stages, we got to the point where any one of us was likely to tear his throat out at any minute because he was so impossible... When 'Emily' was a hit and we were third for three weeks, we did *Top Of The Pops*, and the third week we did it, he didn't want to know. He got down there in an incredible state and said he discovered the reason was that John Lennon didn't have to do *TOTP*, so he didn't."

In the past two years he has made a couple of albums. One of them was called *Barrett*. The other was *The Madcap Laughs*. The cover of *Madcap* has a picture of him crouching watchfully on the bare floorboards of a naked room. A nude girl stretches her body in the background. The picture encapsulates the mood of his songs, which are pared-down and unembellished, unfashionably stripped of refined production values, so that one is left to concentrate on the words and stream-of-consciousness effect. His work engenders a sense of gentle, brooding intimacy; a hesitant, but intense, awareness.

Syd Barrett came up to London last week and talked in the office of his music publisher – his first press interview for about a year. His hair is cut very short now, almost like a skinhead. Symbolic? Of what, then? He is very aware of what is going on around him, but his conversation is often obscure; it doesn't always progress in linear fashion. He is painfully conscious of his indeterminate role in the music world – "I've never really proved myself

wrong, I really need to prove myself right," he says.

Maybe he has it all figured. As he says in "Octopus", "*The madcap laughed at the man on the water.*"

**What have you been doing since you left the Floyd, apart from making your two albums?** Well, I'm a painter, I was trained as a painter... I seem to have spent a little less time painting than I might've done... you know, it might have been a tremendous release getting absorbed in painting. Anyway, I've been sitting about and writing. The fine arts thing at college was always too much for me to think about. What I was more involved in was being successful at art school. But it didn't transcend the feeling of playing at UFO and those sorts of places with the lights and that, the fact that the group was getting better and bigger... I've been at home in Cambridge with my mother. I've got lots of, well, children in a sense. My uncle... I've been getting used to a family existence, generally. Pretty unexciting. I work in a cellar, down in a cellar.

**What would you sooner be – a painter or musician?**

Well, I think of me being a painter eventually.

**Do you see the last two years as a process of getting yourself together again?** No. Perhaps it has something to do with what I felt could be better as regards music, as far as my job goes generally, as I did find I needed a job. I wanted to do a job. I never admitted it because I'm a person who doesn't admit it.

**There were stories you were going to go back to college, or get a job in a factory.** Well, of course, living in Cambridge I have to find something to do. I suppose I could've done a job. I haven't been doing any work. I'm not used to doing quick jobs and then stopping, but I'm sure it'd be possible.

**Tell me about the Pink Floyd – how did they start?**

Roger Waters is older than I am. He was at the architecture school in London. I was studying at Cambridge – I think it was before I had set up at Camberwell (art

CONTINUES OVER »



## CAREFUL WITH THOSE FACTS, EUGENE

college). I was moving backwards and forwards to London. I was living in Highgate with him, we shared a place there, and got a van, and spent a lot of our grant on pubs and that sort of thing. We were playing Stones numbers. I suppose we were interested in playing guitars—I picked up playing guitar quite quickly. I didn't play much in Cambridge because I was from the art school, you know. But I was soon playing on the professional scene and began to write from there.

### **Your writing's always been concerned purely with songs rather than long instrumental pieces like the rest of the Floyd, hasn't it?**

Their choice of material was always very much to do with what they were thinking as architecture students. Rather unexciting people I would've thought, primarily. I mean, anybody walking into an art school like that would've been tricked—maybe they were working their entry into an art school.

But the choice of material was restricted, I suppose, by the fact that Roger and I wrote different things. We wrote our own songs, played our own music. They were older, by about two years, I think. I was 18 or 19. I don't know that there was much conflict, except that perhaps the way we started to play wasn't as impressive as it was to us, even, wasn't as full of impact as it might've been. I mean, it was done very well, rather than considerably exciting. One thinks of it all as a dream.

### **Did you like what they were doing—the fact that the music was gradually moving away from songs like “See Emily Play”?**

Singles are always simple... all the equipment was battered and worn— all the stuff we started out with was our own property. The electronic noises were probably necessary. They were very exciting. That's all really. The whole thing at the time was playing onstage.

**Was it only you who wanted to make singles?** It was probably me alone, I think. Obviously, being a pop group one wanted to have singles. I think “Emily” was fourth in the hits.

**Why did you leave them?** It wasn't really a war, just a matter of being a little offhand about things. We didn't feel there was one thing which was gonna make the decision at the minute. I mean, we did split up, and there was a lot of trouble. I don't think Pink Floyd had any trouble, but I had an awful scene, probably self-inflicted, having a Mini and going all over England and things...

### **Did the glamour go to your head at all?**

I dunno. Perhaps you could see it as something went to one's head, but I don't know that it was relevant.

### **There were stories that you'd left because you'd been freaked out by acid trips.**

Well, I dunno, it doesn't seem to have much to do with the job. I only know the thing of playing, of being a musician, was very exciting. Obviously, one was better off with a silver

*“I think of me as being a painter eventually...” Syd's artwork attracted much interest at the auction of his private effects in November 2006, shortly after his death. *Still Life With Lemons*, one of the last of Syd's signed paintings, sold for £9,500, while his painted artist's stool made £4,400.*

guitar with silver mirrors and things all over it than people who ended up on the floor or anywhere else in London. The general concept, I didn't feel so conscious of it as perhaps I should. I mean, one's position as a member of London's young people's—I dunno what you'd call it—underground wasn't it—wasn't necessarily realised and felt, I don't think, especially from the point of views of groups.

I remember at UFO—one week one group, then another week another group, going in and out, making that set-up, and I didn't think it was as active as it could've been. I was really surprised that UFO finished. I only read last week that it's not finished. Joe Boyd did all the work on it and I was amazed when he left. What we were doing was a microcosm of the whole sort of philosophy and it tended to be a little bit cheap. The fact that the show had to be put together: the fact that we weren't living in luxurious places with luxurious things around us. I think I would always advocate that sort of thing—the luxurious life. It's probably because I don't do much work.

### **Were you not at all involved in acid, then, during its heyday among rock bands?**

No, it was all, I suppose, related to living in London. I was lucky enough... I've always thought of going back to a place where you can drink tea and sit on the carpet. I've been fortunate enough to do that. All that time...

you've just reminded me of it. I thought it was good fun. I thought The Soft Machine were good fun. They were playing on *Madcap*, except for Kevin Ayers.

**Are you trying to create a mood in your songs, rather than tell a story?** Yes, very much. It would be terrific to do much more mood stuff. They're very pure, you know, the words... I feel I'm jabbering. The whole thing is based on me being a guitarist and having done the last thing about two or three years ago in a group around England, Europe and the US, and then coming back and hardly having done anything, so I don't know what to say. I feel, perhaps, I could be claimed as being redundant almost. I don't feel active, and that my public conscience is fully satisfied.

**Don't you think people still remember you?** Yes, I should think so.

**Then why don't you get some musicians, go on the road and do some gigs?** I feel, though, the record would still be the thing to do. And touring and playing might make that impossible to do.

**Don't you fancy playing live again after two years?** Yes, very much.

**What's the hang-up then? Is it getting the right musicians around you?** Yeah.

**What would be of primary importance—whether they were brilliant musicians or whether you could get on with them?** I'm afraid I think I'd have to get on with them. They'd have to be good musicians. They'd be difficult to find. They'd have to be lively.

**Would you say, therefore, you were a difficult person to get on with?** No. Probably my own impatience is the only thing, because it has to be very easy. You can play guitar in your canteen, you know, your hair might be longer, but there's a lot more to playing than travelling around universities.

**Why don't you go out on your own playing acoustic? You might be very successful.** Yeah... that's nice. Well, I've only got an electric. I've got a black Fender which needs replacing. I haven't got any blue jeans... I really prefer electric music.

**What records do you listen to?** Well, I haven't bought a lot. I've got things like Ma Rainey recently. Terrific, really fantastic.

**Are you going into the blues, then, in your writing?** I suppose so. Different groups do different things... one feels that Slade would be an interesting thing to hear, you know.

**Will there be a third solo album?** Yeah. I've got some songs in the studio, still. And I've got a couple of tapes. It should be 12 singles, and jolly good singles. I think I shall be able to produce this one myself. I think it was always easier to do that.

Michael Watts

# 'I'D LIKE TO HELP THE REVOLUTION, WHEN IT COMES'

## From an Islington garden, ROGER WATERS plans for the future...



WHITHER THE WAY of the world? As the rock generation get older, if they don't get wiser, they get sadder. Roger Waters of the ancient and venerable Pink Floyd occasionally emerges from his VC3 synthesiser, stares about in disbelief and returns hastily to the inhuman and therefore clean world of sound. Like many marching through the twenties to thirty, violence, intolerance and sheer incompetence, instead of receding in the face of progress, seem to be expanding. Thus the intelligent and sensitive grow more despairing, even in England, quiet backwater of world events.

Says Roger: "I work to keep my mind off a doomy situation. All over the globe it gets crazier every day. And the craziness seems to be accelerating at a fantastic rate. But it might just be that as you get older your perception gets faster, until the whole thing seems unreal, as I leaf through my *Guardian* every morning.

"It's running a series at the moment on the new taboos. I read the piece on Lord Longford, which seemed quite a laugh. One gets the impression everything has got out of control and nobody is in control of anything."

Roger lives with his wife Judy in a beautifully cosy house in one of the broad, seedy streets of Islington. In the garden, in the soundproofed studio that Roger has assembled, was a synth, a mixer, tape recorders, drums etc, all crying out to be switched on, fiddled and beaten.

But the crumpets were ready and we adjourned to the morning room, there to discuss the future of Floyd and the world.

"There is so much going on, it's hard to evaluate anything specific. That whole Festival Of Light business. It's hard to evaluate how important it is. From my standpoint it is of very little importance. But you can't tell its effect on other people. They are trying to 'clean up the country'. But the whole thing is pathetic. So many important things need doing... But why get worried about the odd pubic hair on TV and the growth of dirty bookshops when they could put their energies into something that clearly needs reforming? What about housing? And a job here and there would be nice. The whole tenor of their movement is repression, on the basis that people are corruptible and need protecting, which I don't believe. A lot more harm is done through repressing people's sexual attitudes, than by public displays of pornography.

"We actually went to a live show in Denmark which was extraordinary. It went on too long, and certainly before the end we were ready for

hamburgers and chips. Let's go now. It was all very schoolboyish and patently obvious it was for people who didn't have the right schooldays. The shows are just a tourist thing anyway. I can't imagine the Danes going. It's only for old geezers of about 50. It's all unreal."

What are Roger's own plans for a better, saner world?

"Well, I'd like to help the revolution, when it comes. It would be nice if somebody could visualise the revolution, so we could have a slight idea of what to do."

Hadn't all the revolutionary theories been written?

"The trouble is, they all smell a bit. I'd sooner live here than in Russia and I'm not really into Soviet Marxism. The double bind is that people who tend to involve themselves in politics do it for strong personal motives. Some have a social context, but largely it's an ego thing and the people who should be running the country are just pottering about in their gardens and reading *The Guardian*! Altruism and power politics just don't go together."

What was the nature of the pottering Floyd had been doing lately in the garden of rock?

"We've been rehearsing a John Peel show and recording. We go to America this week for our fifth tour. We'll be playing Carnegie Hall. The first time we went in 1967 we played the Scene Club, in New York. We've got three new pieces and as much stuff as before. We've just started to rehearse again. I can't remember the last time we had a rehearsal. I think that often the cause of groups splitting up is when people freak and can't come up with new stuff, which has nearly happened to us. The Who flipped once and did that New Vic thing, which fell through. But no—we're very healthy now.

"We'd like to get into a theatre thing. We'll do it sometime, but I can't see it happening yet. It's really back to the old mixed media trip. The logistics of it are so complex. You have to get quadraphonics and projectors and you need a clear vision rather than a vague idea that it'd be nice to do something different. Creating something like that would be bloody hard."

One of the problems of Floyd and their special music is the space their equipment takes up. It cost them thousands to ship their six tons of equipment to Australia this year.

"We're trying to cut it down," says Roger, without much conviction. In January we'll be doing a whole tour of England, about 12 days, and we may do the Festival Hall again."

But what of the future of Floyd music, that weird revolutionary sound that set the rock world back on its ears in the mid-'60s?

"I dunno really, I have no idea what is going to happen next. We're just going to be much lighter and more efficient." Chris Welch

# Meddle

Ping! The stars align, “Echoes” comes from “Nothing”, and the sonic architects finally reunite in unusual harmony.

By John Robinson

RELEASE DATE 30 OCTOBER 1971

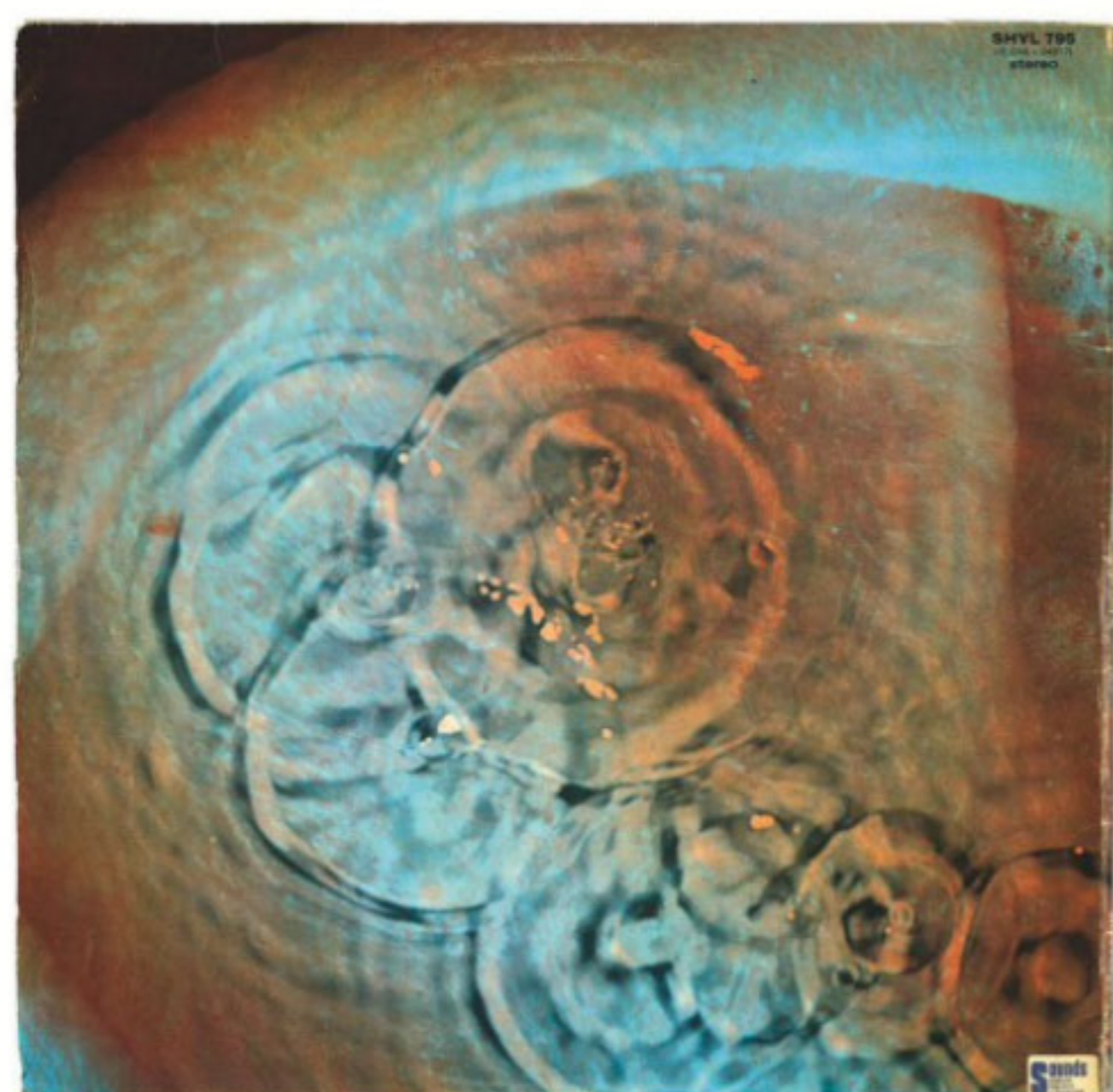
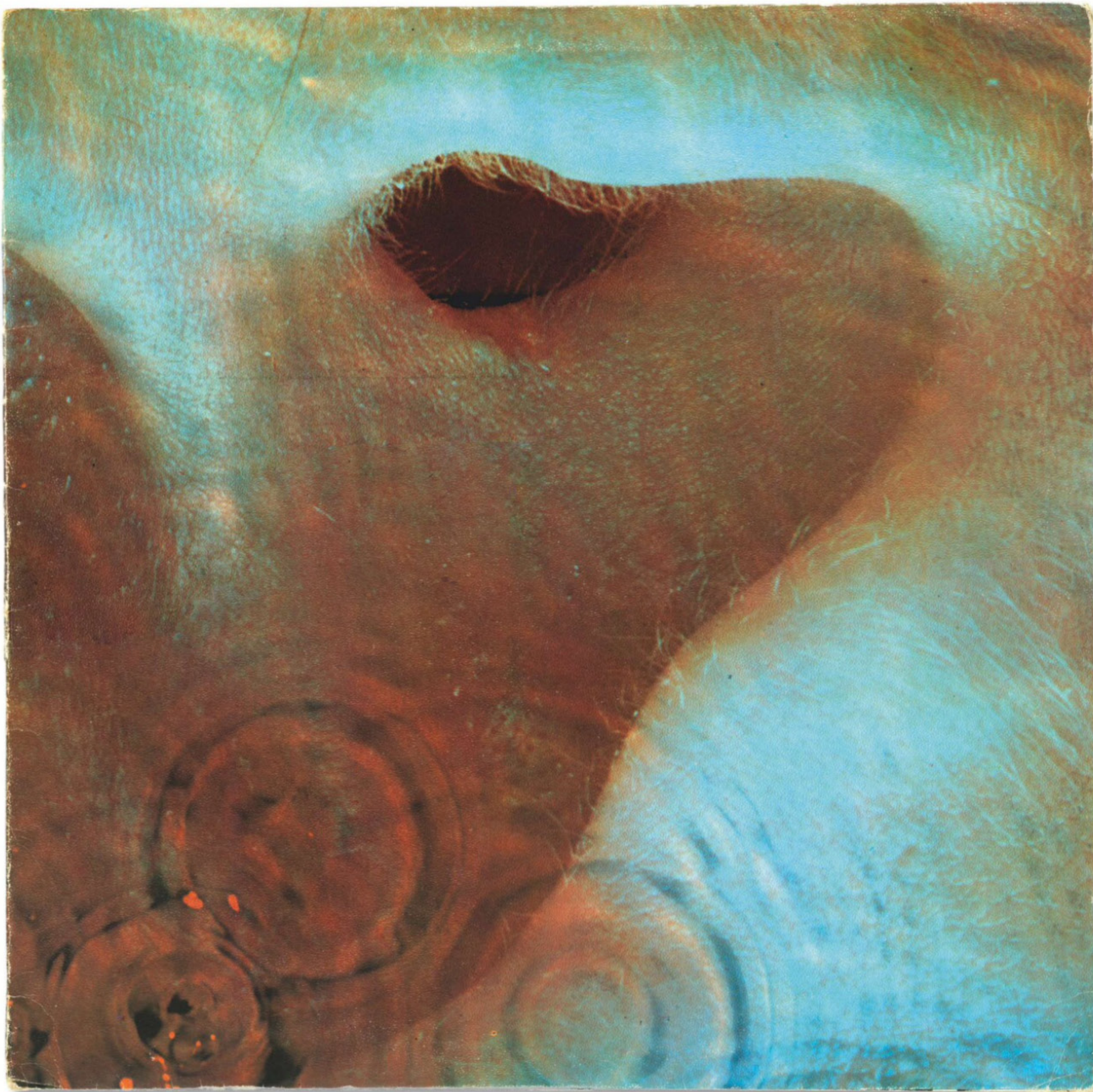
**I**N MAY 1971, while Pink Floyd were at work writing and recording material for what would become their new album, *Meddle*, EMI's budget release arm, Starline, released a compilation album of their earliest work, called *Relics*. If it was strange as a marketing strategy, *Relics* was oddly successful as a measure of Pink Floyd's situation in the first part of that year. It was neither one thing, nor the other: it contained music from the Syd Barrett era that they were increasingly distancing themselves from. But it also featured “Careful With That Axe, Eugene”, a number the band were still playing live. On the cover, drummer Nick Mason had neatly summarised the band's character: he had drawn a curious machine that puffed smoke, and – almost incidentally – played music.

With hindsight, we have come to applaud Floyd's searching nature, their longform compositions, their imaginative soundworlds, and their break from traditional songforms. As 1971 began, however, the only thing the band seemed to be searching for, in the absence of a songwriter of any stature, was an idea of how to proceed next. With *Ummagumma* they had experimented with democracy, and demonstrated the continued power of their live show. On *Atom Heart Mother*, they had tried *musique concrète*, and a sidelong composition

with brass orchestra, and had had to be rescued by their friend, Ron Geesin. What could they do next? A blues band, said Rick Wright in 1972, could simply get better at playing the blues. A band like Pink Floyd, however, was “completely in the dark. We're forever searching for what we're going to do.”

Certainly, at the start of 1971, the band had no idea what that might be. When we think of 1970s recording studio excess, we probably have in mind a scenario not unlike that in which Pink Floyd began work at Abbey Road studios that January. Kit, the band had in abundance: David Gilmour, acquainted with Jimi Hendrix, had seen the worlds beyond that might be accessed by guitar technology and came armed with a combination of fuzz and wah-wah that he would incorrectly assemble to novel effect. A Syd-era contraption, the Binson Echorec, would add an ominous reverb. A rotating Leslie speaker would flange their sounds.

Only at the start of the Abbey Road sessions, Pink Floyd had no sounds to distort, not even any snippets to flange. Whether you choose to call it a spectacular failure of pre-production or a democratic approach to collective composition, at the start of the *Meddle* sessions, Pink Floyd had few ideas and no actual songs at all. Instead, the band embraced strategy. They attempted a **CONTINUES OVER »**



kind of blindfolded composition, wherein they recorded their parts separately to see if they sparked anything when put together (they didn't). When things didn't work out, the band discussed their next move. The sessions, from 2pm to 4am, engineer John Leckie remembered later, found accommodation for sustained periods of unrelieved boredom.

"It was like a Monty Python skit," recalled Mike Butcher, an engineer at Morgan, another of the three studios used for the LP. "One of them would have an idea, present it to the band, then someone would say, 'No, we can't do that.' And that was it. The idea was dead."

If anything, the material which was gathered from the first *Meddle* sessions relished in how bereft it was of inspiration. The working materials for the album came from a collage of 30 or so song fragments and sketches, each called, in what would seem to be the band's customary deadpan tone, "Nothing". This material, worked and reworked, would then heap itself into a Golem-like aggregate composition, with a title to befit a monster movie: "Return Of Son Of Nothing".

The eureka moment, that turned this into the side-long *Meddle* piece "Echoes", was apparently arrived at after many hours recording and treating a single Rick Wright piano note through a Leslie speaker. If the band were seeking a signature for the album, they had found one. Some were reminded of the chilly mensuration of a sonar pulse. To the naked ear, it sounded, in the distance, like a noise that went "ping".

While it may have been absurd that this one note should have been the sum of the band's breakthroughs, it was a springboard for *Meddle*'s unifying conceptual heaviness. Wright's pinging sound provided a focus for a lot of adjectives that had previously floated rather cloudily around Pink Floyd. Even if the band were beginning to shy away from "space" as a catch-all trope for the exploratory journey their music was making into the unknown, it had a celestial power to it. It sounded antique and curiously nostalgic, a message from a star that had long ago collapsed, but whose light could be still be seen. It was ghostly, remote, and unaccountably sad.

At this time, no less remote, Syd Barrett was found and interviewed for a piece in *Melody Maker* [reprinted on pp36-39]. It makes for sad, if charming, reading, as Michael Watts attempts to keep an increasingly vaporous

## THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"Interesting, even aesthetic, they may be, but superficial ultimately, like background noises in a Radio 3 play. When there is little real musical substance to sustain those effects, how can the result be anything but a soundtrack to a non-existent movie?"

**MICHAEL WATTS, MELODY MAKER, NOV 13, 1971**

"Floyd have created dramatic music without having to draw off the strength of full brass and a choir... an exceptionally good album." **ALLEN EVANS, NME, NOV 13, 1971**

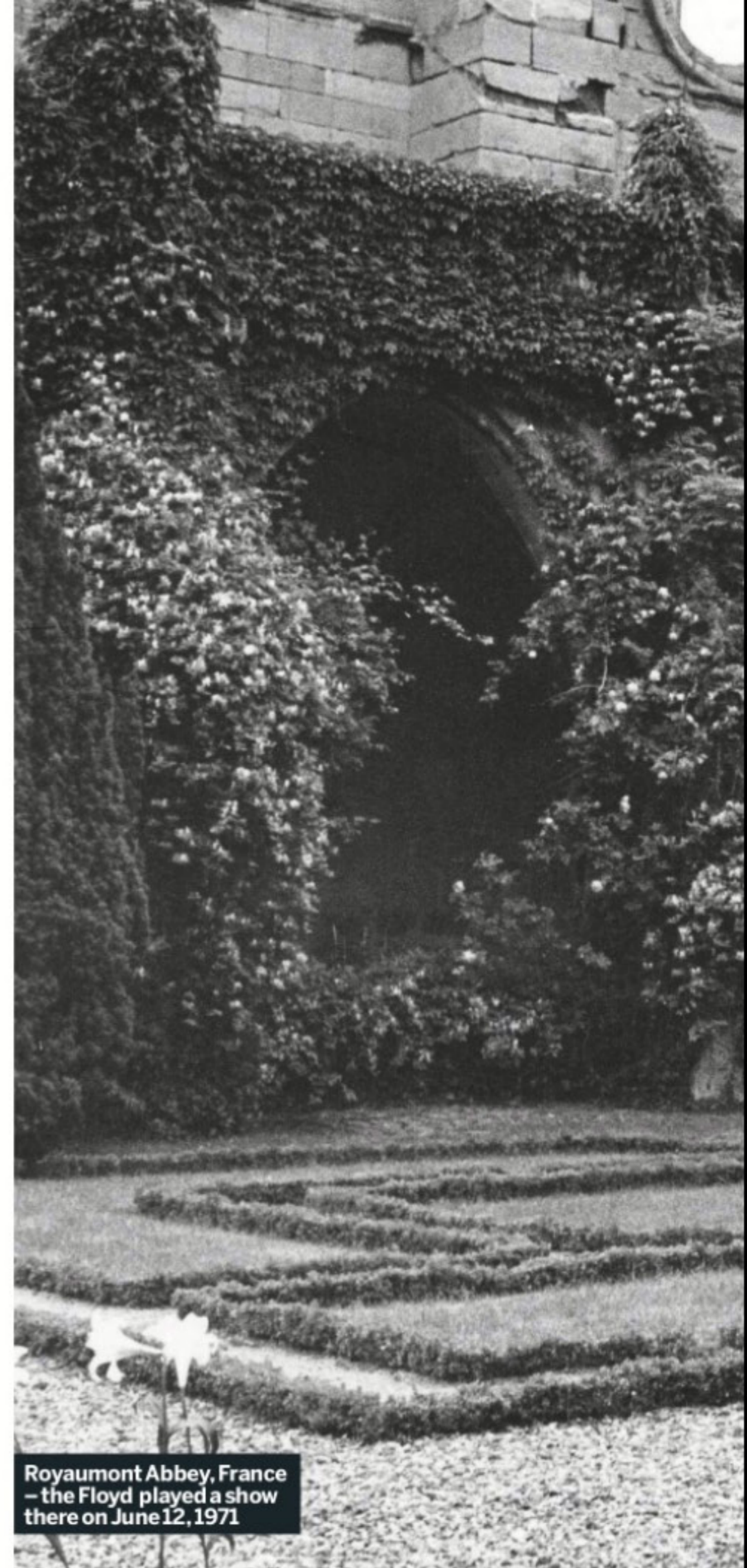
Syd on the conversational straight and narrow. If there's a positive note to draw from it, however, it would be to say that by virtue of mental illness, Syd had effortlessly achieved what his former bandmates were struggling long hours in the studio to accomplish: blocking out the memory of a Syd Barrett-fronted Pink Floyd. As Syd distractedly told Watts, his own talent was more a mercurial art school kind of thing. The current Pink Floyd, meanwhile, were making work that was very much more in the line of what one might expect from "architecture students".

As ungracious as it might have been (David Gilmour, Roger Waters and Richard Wright had worked on Barrett's solo albums as recently as four months before), Barrett had hit on something. His own recordings had been a kind of fortuitous, if hard-won capturing

of thoughts and moments as they came tumbling out. The activity the Floyd were now engaged in genuinely was more like building: creating an edifice from the smallest unit parts. Rather as the Victorians made pumping stations beautiful as a testament to the soundness and modernity of their engineering, so Floyd made statuesque music – as a hard-to-shift record of their time on earth.

The band's interest in technology, however, was both a blessing and a curse. In Adrian Maben's film, *Pink Floyd Live At Pompeii*, we observe the band doing several things: playing live in the Roman Amphitheatre three weeks before the October release of *Meddle*, at work on *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, but also, for long segments of stoned conversation, opposing the idea that Pink Floyd was a band that needed no real members, and that could happily operate on autopilot, their many machines simply running themselves. "We've spent five years mastering them," Waters contended, hotly. Still, when the machines crashed, as they often did live, the band would fall back on material of several years' vintage – like the faithful "Careful With That Axe, Eugene".

The comfort of the familiar versus the desire to embrace the future... Man's quest for technological advances that ultimately only make him smaller... These, and a strange blues song accompanied by the baleful moans of Steve Marriott's dog, are the materials with which *Meddle* was built. Their progress was tentative making



Royaumont Abbey, France – the Floyd played a show there on June 12, 1971

it, but hindsight has rightly conferred on *Meddle* an epochal importance: a kind of velvet revolution, a changing of the guard. "There was a point when we sat about not knowing what to do," said Wright to *Disc And Music Echo* in 1972. "Then *Meddle* came along and since then we've been quite excited about what we've been doing."

Wright didn't mention *Atom Heart Mother* (as time went on, fewer and fewer people did), but there were still strong links between it and *Meddle*. Both had compositions taking up a whole side of the record, while the other side was largely given over to more traditional song forms. Unlike *Atom*, though, *Meddle* made impressive steps towards integrating the band's experimental music with its more lyrical compositions, where formerly they had been isolated from one another. On "Fearless", the mellow acoustic reverie is augmented by the inspired use of crowd noise, the Liverpool FC "Kop" singing "You'll Never Walk Alone". "One Of These Days", meanwhile, is thought to have its origins in an "Alan's Psychedelic Breakfast"-style collage piece malevolently directed at DJ Jimmy Young.

More significantly perhaps, *Meddle* found Pink Floyd bringing down some of the barriers between the group's members. Aside from songs that self-evidently had their origins in improvisations ("Saucerful"; "Eugene") the band's post-Syd songs had all been individually credited to either Wright, Gilmour or Waters. *Meddle* changed all that, with all of the songs



## TRACKMARKS | Meddle

1. One Of These Days ★★★★★
2. A Pillow Of Winds ★★★★★
3. Fearless ★★★★★
4. San Tropez ★★★★★
5. Seamus ★★★★★
6. Echoes ★★★★★

**RELEASED:** October 30, 1970  
**LABEL:** Harvest  
**PRODUCED BY:** Pink Floyd  
**RECORDED AT:** Abbey Road Studios, Morgan Studios,

AIR Studios London  
**PERSONNEL:** David Gilmour (guitar, bass on "One Of These Days", lead vocals, harmonica on "Seamus"); Roger Waters (bass, lead vocals and guitar on "San Tropez"); Richard

Wright (Hammond organ, piano, vocals on "Echoes"); Nick Mason (drums, percussion, vocal on "One Of These Days")  
**HIGHEST CHART POSITION:** UK 3; US 70



appearing as co-writes. All co-writes with Roger Waters, admittedly, but all co-writes nonetheless. “One Of These Days”, that begins the album with the synthetically generated sound of a raging storm, and features the twin bass guitars of Waters and Gilmour, with the manipulated vocals of Nick Mason was, David Gilmour later stated, the most genuinely collaborative work the group had ever done.

It was an important step. While a progressive group like Yes could happily give over part of an album – as they did with 1971’s *Fragile* – to individual compositions that boosted the band’s reputation for virtuosity, their individual work on *Ummagumma* and *Atom* had shown Floyd couldn’t work in quite the same way. The middle-class holiday song “St Tropez”, the slyly catchy “Pillow Of Winds”, and “Seamus” (the title of this widely disliked blues was, incidentally, canine-specific: when Seamus was unavailable, as at Pompeii, it became “Mademoiselle Nobs”), all bore some stamp of *Meddle*’s collaborative spirit. It’s not until you flip the record, though, that you experience quite how far this collaboration could take Pink Floyd.

“Echoes” had been a long time in the making, but over its 23 graceful minutes, you wouldn’t necessarily know it had been painstakingly assembled from small segments. Instead, the song creates an unfolding landscape whose

prominent features one can note in successful Floyd recordings to follow. An unhurried building of atmospheres (11.24). An unembarrassed funk (7.05). An otherworldly release of tension via David Gilmour’s guitar (at 18.14). “Echoes” is a place for soundscapes both lyrical and scientific, its covert topic man and

Nonetheless, *Meddle*, though born from the collective musical mind, was a very long way from the chaotic improvisations in purple sunglasses of The Pink Floyd. Rather, it proposed a new type of collective music, a paradigm shift wherein one stopped thinking of Pink Floyd as a group with a singer, who

fronted the band and wrote their hit songs, but instead proposed Pink Floyd as a mysterious and powerful entity, something a bit like MI6. You could see it had a employees and a corporate headquarters – but only a very select few know what was going on inside.

After *Meddle*, photographs of Pink Floyd’s members vanished from its album sleeves, as they retreated into the anonymity of the umbrella organisation. It was as if they had simply come to realise that what they worked for was far more influential than who they were as individuals. This was their new boss: the power of the unifying concept.

In this new incarnation of Pink Floyd lay the means for creating the band’s most successful LPs, but also the seeds of their later problems. This was a strange, evolving organisation: it began as something like a happening, but ended up as something more like a government. Those involved shared a great many common ideas and began the enterprise as equals. As time went on, however, some would prove to be more equal than others. 🐞

## At the start of the *Meddle* sessions, Pink Floyd had few ideas and no actual songs at all...

machine, and its ripples would be felt all the way to *Dark Side*, *The Wall* and beyond.

Ironically, for those who have skipped ahead in the group’s history, the predominant tone of “Echoes” is one of reconciliation. Gilmour and Wright softly intone lyrics of pacific calm and good omen, expressing an omniscient awareness of the past, but looking forward to a future of meaningful human contact.

The song was a monument to the experience that had given rise to it: much as they had done in their earliest experimental pieces, with “Echoes” Pink Floyd had found a way forward working together. “Our best music comes from that method of working,” Wright said at the time. “Everyone is throwing in ideas and rejecting ideas; *Saucer* was done the same way.”

# Obscured By Clouds

A Piece For Assorted Lunatics is in the works.  
But first, the Floyd take a detour to New Guinea,  
and David Gilmour languidly leads the  
expedition. *By David Cavanagh*

RELEASE  
DATE 03 JUNE 1972

**V**IVIANE IS FRENCH. She's an ambassador's wife, one of those aesthetes who come straight to the point. We see her buying indigenous artefacts from a trader in New Guinea ("30 dollars is my final offer... and don't forget this one!"). She hears of an expedition to a remote valley, a lost paradise in the bush, where exotic birds grow peach-coloured feathers. Oh! Feathers! She must have them. But you know these ambassadors' wives. A search for feathers can so easily become a search for *quelque chose plus sauvage, plus... primitif*.

Meanwhile, *en Angleterre*, Pink Floyd are satisfied, for once, with their latest album, *Meddle*, feeling they've turned a corner and banished their recent bouts of confusion and lethargy. "After the doldrums we had encountered around the time of *Atom Heart Mother*, we had a revitalised sense of purpose," Nick Mason will later write. As hi-fi and headphone buffs excitedly evangelise about "Echoes", the Floyd end 1971 in second place to Emerson, Lake & Palmer in *Melody Maker*'s Readers' Poll, which is a bigger compliment than it sounds. Vis-à-vis their future plans, however, the band appear rather in the dark. "I really have no idea what is going to happen next," Roger Waters tells *MM*, "but we're going to be much lighter and more efficient."

Days after his words are published, Floyd begin work on the famously light *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, which will efficiently take them 14 months.

It was at this point, in February 1972, that they accepted a commission to travel to France to write soundtrack music for Barbet Schroeder's film *La Vallée*, starring his wife Bulle Ogier as the feather-fixated Viviane. If it seems bizarre that the Floyd should take a furlough from... *Moon* almost as soon as they'd started recording it, the decision makes more sense when seen in context. Not yet catapulted into super-wealth, Floyd regarded themselves as "active, professional musicians" (Mason) who were open to offers of work. They were curious to investigate ways in which their music might suit (or complement) other art forms, and it was no coincidence that they were particularly receptive to approaches from France. Adrian Maben, the young director of *Pink Floyd: Live At Pompeii*, was a Frenchman. David Gilmour spoke the language. In November, the band would interrupt work on... *Moon* once again to perform five concerts with Roland Petit's Ballets de Marseille (a sequence of music known as the 'Pink Floyd Ballet'). They'd already made the acquaintance of Franco-Swiss filmmaker Schroeder in 1969, finding

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him “an easy man to work with” (Mason) on his directorial debut, *More*. “The French have a more emotional, more intellectual edge to the arts,” Floyd’s drummer explained to an interviewer. It was an observation one couldn’t imagine coming from John Bonham or Ian Paice.

In the last week of February, the four Francophiles checked in at Château d’Hérouville, an 18th-century castle to the north of Paris, where a 16-track residential recording studio had been installed. The mood within the band was upbeat, conducive to creativity. This was just as well, because T. Rex were due at the Château in March to make *The Slider*, so the Floyd’s project had a two-week time limit. Having left ‘Dark Side Of The Moon, A Piece For Assorted Lunatics’ (as it was still called) on a slow simmer back in St John’s Wood, they were thrown into a much more rigorous regime on *La Vallée*. Schroeder had given them a rough cut of the film; they’d brought along a stopwatch to calculate where the music cues should go. “We sat in a room, wrote, recorded, like a production line,” Gilmour later recalled, and he wasn’t necessarily being critical of the process. The tight deadline stimulated rather than paralysed them. At the end of the fortnight, they presented Schroeder with ten pieces – six songs and four instrumentals – which EMI planned to release as a soundtrack album, a semi-official hyphen between *Meddle* and the *Assorted Lunatics*. This, then, was the “lighter and more efficient” Floyd that Waters had foreseen. After the recording was over, and prior to a week of post-production, they even found time to squeeze in a short tour of Japan.

VIVIANE, OLIVIER, Gaëtan and the other explorers are sitting in their Land Rover, deliberating whether to abandon it and continue their journey on horseback. Viviane hesitates. She is no longer the self-composed metropolitan ice-maiden. She’s sleeping with Olivier – which won’t prevent her from sleeping with Gaëtan in a few minutes – and she has eccentrically taken to wearing a poisonous snake as a necklace. We hear rock music. Is it a radio? Can Land Rovers in the New Guinea bush pick up local FM stations? But if it isn’t a radio, why does it sound so faint, so tinny?

Floyd fans who come to *La Vallée* expecting an extended promo video, a sort of *Live At*

## THE CRITICS’ VERDICT

“There are still examples of those soaring whirling Floyd numbers, just to dispel any doubts they’re ‘becoming too commercial’. The title track blasts through your head with a penetrating burring bass background and aural sunbursts, synthesised for some dark sinister corner of the solar system.”  
**PETER ERSKINE, DISC, JUNE 17, 1972**

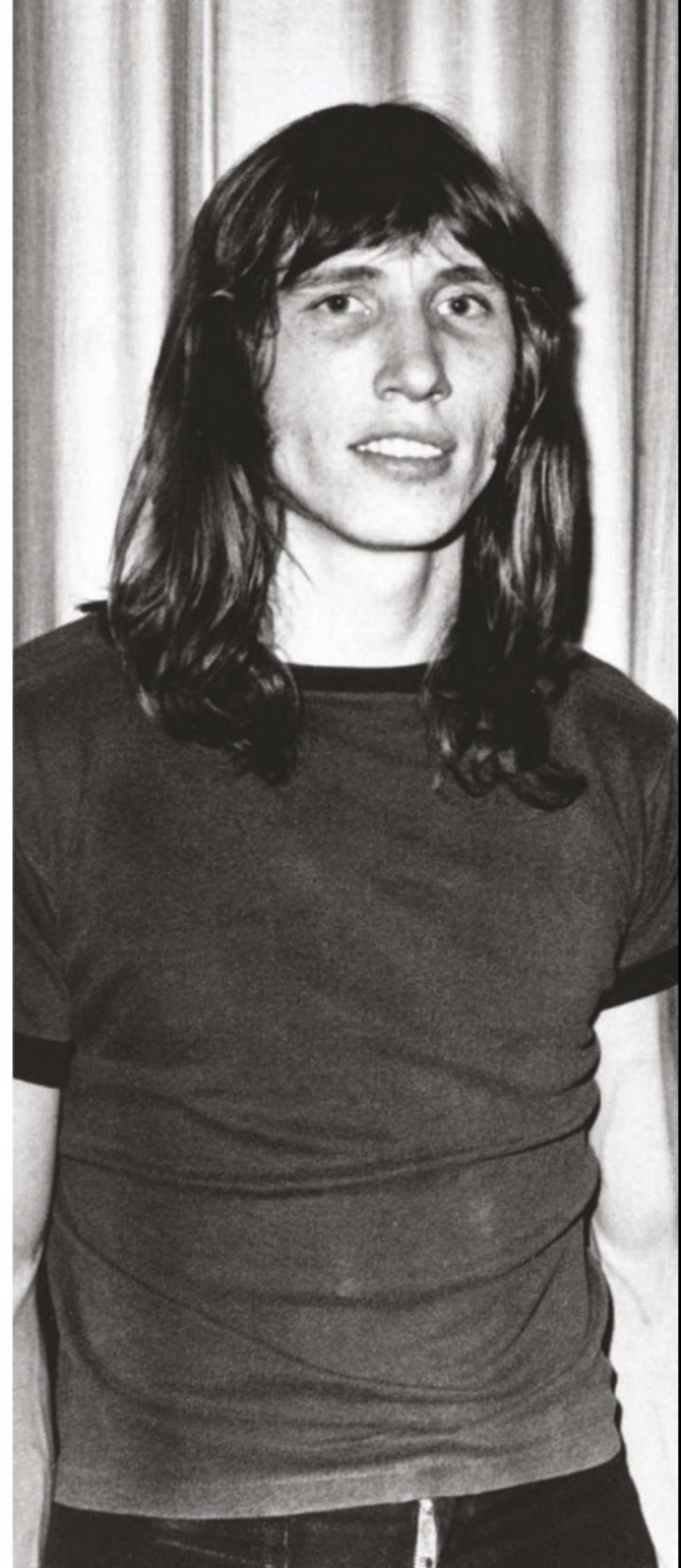
“It contains some of the most aggressive instrumentals the Floyd have recorded!”  
**ANDREW MEANS, MELODY MAKER, JUNE 17, 1972**

*Pompeii* transplanted to the jungle, inevitably find the use of music in the film disappointing. After all the efforts with the stopwatch, the cues fade in and out in apparently random fashion (sometimes midway through a verse) and the excerpts of Floyd are generally brief and, worse, barely audible. With a rainforest full of animals to legislate for, the sound mix of *La Vallée* was probably a tricky balance to get right, but it’s to nobody’s credit that two of the songs are almost drowned out by grasshoppers. Video and audio are operating with separate agendas here; history has borne that out. *La Vallée*, available as a French DVD with German subtitles, is a hippy picnic in which the central dilemma (are western materialists missing the point of life?) is underlined with scenes of an unspoiled Eden populated by New

Guinea’s Magupa bushmen, who dance around naked and carefree. By contrast, the soundtrack album, *Obscured By Clouds*, lacking any message except music, falls back on the western materialistic device of putting 10 tracks on a disc and charging money for it, and ends up being the more profound proposition by far. What do the Floyd like to say? “Music that will move people.” Move, not patronise.

At times, *Obscured By Clouds* shares an English churchyard meditateness with the 1969 *More* LP, hardly surprising since stoned tranquility and slow-shifting late-evening shadows were the bedrock of the Floyd’s sound in the late ’60s and early ’70s. At other times it’s on an abstract plane, and now and then it’s a bit sentimental, deliciously laidback and decidedly West Coast. The dominant Floyd member is Gilmour, who sings and solos as though he feels he’s thoroughly grasped the exact measurements of melody, tension, sensuality and drama that the band require from him. On an album where the subtlety of the keyboards is vital, Rick Wright is at his modest, sensitive best, but when he does step forward – and the charming piano solo on “Wot’s... Uh The Deal” is one of the sweetest things he ever played – we can almost see him smile as his hands design Michel Legrand butterfly trills, pushing the beat.

Crucially, whereas *More* has ‘film soundtrack’ written all over it, *Obscured By Clouds* goes for a tighter, more song-orientated structure that makes it less of an atmospheric mélange, more of a fully rounded album. And,



yes, admittedly, that wasn’t enough to secure it a reputation as a cutting-edge Floyd meisterwerk; and yes, it got buried under several tonnes of conceptual rubble by the four mighty polemics that followed. But let’s not do it a posthumous disservice: *Obscured...* was no mere stopgap. Wonderful passages abound. The handover from Gilmour to Wright as lead vocalist in “Burning Bridges”. The elegant gear change in “Wot’s... Uh The Deal” when Mason moves from rimshots to sticks, just as Gilmour sighs the line “Let me in from the cold”. The way, on “Stay”, that Gilmour’s wah-wah miaows like a cat as Wright urges the girl to stick around for a glass of wine. The sudden, startling entrance of the Magupa bushmen’s voices on “Absolutely Curtains”, turning a half-decent psychedelic instrumental into something quite awe-inspiring.

*Obscured By Clouds* has an interesting deception at its heart. The lion’s share of the material is written, or co-written, by Roger Waters – yet it bears all the hallmarks of ‘a Gilmour album’. Gilmour is the principal vocalist, the central identity in the music, the chief soloist. He plays more solos on *Clouds* than he does on some of his solo albums. He rocks, he aches, he paints skies and women and country roads, he presses a pedal with his foot and off he goes again. Supported by Wright, the

## TRACKMARKS | Obscured By Clouds

1. Obscured By Clouds ★★
2. When You’re In ★★★★★
3. Burning Bridges ★★★★★
4. The Gold It’s In The... ★★★★★
5. Wot’s... Uh The Deal ★★★★★
6. Mudmen ★★★

7. Childhood’s End ★★★★★
  8. Free Four ★★★★★
  9. Stay ★★★★★
  10. Absolutely Curtains ★★
- RELEASED:** June 3, 1972  
**LABEL:** EMI  
**PRODUCED BY:**  
**RECORDED AT:** Strawberry Studios,

Château d’Hérouville, France  
**PERSONNEL:** David Gilmour (guitars, synthesiser vocals); Roger Waters (bass, synthesiser, vocals); Richard Wright (keyboards, synthesiser, vocals); Nick Mason (drums, percussion).  
**HIGHEST CHART POSITION:** UK 6; US 46





"Deliciously laidback and decidedly West Coast" – and even Roger Waters manages a smile

other dreamer in the band, Gilmour builds *Obscured By Clouds* in his own image – an emotional Floyd rather than a didactic one – or at least this is what appears to be happening.

But what of Waters, the writer who put the words in Gilmour's mouth? Waters, as the Floyd's lyricist and ideas man, is *still not quite there* yet. There's some cynicism, but not much, and no mention of brutal schools or cold steel rails in his vocabulary. We must remember he was writing lyrics to a two-week deadline, so unless he had them prepared, his sentiments on *Obscured By Clouds* are straight from his head. What makes the album so likeable – and historically significant in Floyd terms – is that Waters, for the last time, is writing lyrics that are tailored to Gilmour's voice and Gilmour's personality, instead of using Gilmour's voice as the conduit for Waters' own personality. Their personae clash only once, when the excellently funky but lyrically woolly "Childhood's End" (which Gilmour wrote himself) is followed by Waters' "Free Four", a mordant swipe at life's futility that tramples Gilmour's Seven Ages Of Man platitudes into the dirt. "Free Four" is the album's woebegone aberration ("You shuffle in

the gloom of the sick room and talk to yourself till you die"), partly because of the Eeyore tone of Waters' voice, but also because the song is so stunningly at odds with the album's harmonious mood. It's as if Waters couldn't help himself. He'd met Gilmour halfway on the romantic stuff; now he simply had to get some

was "buried like a mole in a foxhole" can only be one person, Eric Fletcher Waters, Roger's late father, who was to reappear as an influence on his son's writing many times afterwards.

*Obscured By Clouds* takes its title from a map consulted by the explorers in *La Vallée*, which denotes their destination – the lost valley – as being 'obscured by cloud' (and therefore impossible to chart from the air). One of the explorers is half-glimpsed on the album's cover, climbing a tree, obscured not by clouds but by heavy blurring caused by the film slide getting jammed in the Hipgnosis projector. The cover has been criticised over the

years for being one of Hipgnosis' laziest, but the original LP sleeve did have one advantage: its fabricky texture made it the one Floyd album that could be located in the dark.

Of the album itself, Gilmour, for one, is a fan – and surely not just because his guitars are all over it like a rash. It's a pure, natural pleasure to put on *Obscured By Clouds*, to tilt the head back in the general direction of a strategically placed cushion, and to realise that sometimes a graceful tune can emotionally override a career-defining concept or a pig above a power station. 🐷

## ***Clouds* goes for a tighter, song-orientated structure that makes it less of an atmospheric mélange**

bleakness and vitriol off his chest.

Imaginatively arranged to include synthesiser, handclaps and a glam-rock middle section, "Free Four" proved a prescient song for three reasons. Firstly, Mickie Most would use the glam-rock parts as the basis for his production of Suzi Quatro's No 1 hit "Can The Can" in 1973. Secondly, Waters inserts a verse about the Floyd joylessly touring America ("and maybe you'll make it to the top"), which took on a different slant when... *Moon* topped the US album charts 11 months later. And thirdly, the "dead man" in the next verse, who

# The Dark Side Of The Moon

*"I think I need a Learjet"... How Pink Floyd eclipsed their competitors, and Roger Waters left his bandmates in the shadows.*

*By Stephen Dalton*

RELEASE DATE 10 MARCH 1973

ON THE CUSP of turning 30, Roger Waters appeared to suffer a kind of early midlife crisis. He was no longer rehearsing for adulthood, he grasped, he was already deep into it. As Pink Floyd emerged from *Meddle*, and especially from "Echoes", in uncharacteristically harmonious shape, Waters approached his bandmates with the idea of basing their next album (*Obscured By Clouds* would prove to be a fruitful diversion) around the guiding themes of madness, mortality and the need for universal human empathy. He proposed writing emotionally direct lyrics in suitably simple language.

"It's driven by emotion," Waters reflected in 2003, during a *Classic Albums* documentary on *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. "There's nothing plastic about it, nothing contrived." Somehow, these naïve, nakedly earnest sentiments – a bit "Lower Sixth", he conceded in 2003 – coalesced into a loose concept album, "an expression of political, philosophical, humanitarian empathy that was desperate to get out."

On *Meddle*, Pink Floyd had worked out a way to

become a kind of anonymous supergroup, a band in which individual members seemed to have been absorbed into a shadowy conceptual hivemind. With *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, the essential paradox of '70s Pink Floyd came to the fore: how could a band – one of the biggest bands on the planet, in fact – seem to be amorphous, faceless, while at the same time being driven by the anguished confessions of one member?

For Roger Waters had quietly begun to assert himself as the group's alpha-male musical director. The first signs of his ascendancy had come as far back as the soundtrack to *More*, but now Waters was dictating the overall themes and writing all the lyrics himself. *The Dark Side Of The Moon*'s sessions were generally positive and creatively fertile. But in their wake, the Floyd, or at least the Floyd featuring Roger Waters, would never collaborate so closely again.

In a smart early example of focus-group marketing, the band roadtested a prototype live version of *The Dark Side Of The Moon* during a short UK tour in early 1972. Initially titled

CONTINUES OVER »



'Dark Side Of The Moon: A Piece For Assorted Lunatics', the name was briefly switched to 'Eclipse' thanks to a clash with a Medicine Head album, but then restored in time for the tour. Although several tracks were still in gestation, early press reviews were mostly positive.

By the time recording sessions began at Abbey Road studios in May 1972, *The Dark Side Of The Moon* was already halfway to becoming a living, breathing, full-bodied piece of work. Pushing the limits of studio technology in the 16-track analogue era, the Floyd augmented their usual guitar-heavy sound with two primitive but groundbreaking EMS keyboard-sequencers, the Synthi A and VCS3. Abbey Road's in-house engineer Alan Parsons, a Beatles veteran who would later form his own prog-rock vehicle The Alan Parsons Project, helped assemble the album's bedrock of sound effects, *musique concrète* collages, quarter-inch tape loops and pre-digital samples.

Waters also enlisted Parsons for one of his more inspired leftfield ideas: flash-card interviews of studio staff, band employees and passing strangers on the themes of the album. His questions included: "When was the last time you were violent?", "Do you ever think you are going mad?", "Are you afraid of dying?" Among the interviewees were Abbey Road doorman Gerry O'Driscoll, Floyd roadie Roger 'The Hat' Manifold and tour manager Peter Watts, father of actress Naomi.

Paul and Linda McCartney also consented to be interviewed, as they were recording the Wings album *Red Rose Speedway* in the studio next door. Waters later rejected their replies as too guarded and "trying too hard to be funny". But McCartney's bandmate Henry McCullough did pop up in the ghostly scattering of vocal soundbites that pepper the album, lending extra credence to the underlying lyrical themes of collective empathy and universal humanity.

These interviews are woven into the brief opening track "Speak To Me", which introduces some of the recurring sonic motifs ahead. As a gentle bass drum mimics a human heartbeat, fragmentary voices float through a fog of treated noise. This slender preface soon expands into the languorous "Breathe", which grew out of a pre-existing soundtrack piece that Waters had composed for Roy Battersby's 1970s science documentary, *The Body*. David Gilmour adds vast treacle-slicks of slo-mo guitar, while Richard Wright inserts a suspended jazz chord borrowed from Miles Davis. The vocal, drenched in drowsy ennui,

## "IT'S NOT PARTICULARLY ARTISTIC"

Storm Thorgerson on designing *Dark Side's* iconic sleeve



"*The Dark Side Of The Moon* was our seventh collaboration [Thorgerson had been a school friend of Waters and Barrett]. The cover image was one of seven or eight ideas, some of which were more photographic and pictorial. My favourite was 'The Silver Surfer', after a comic character, which I wanted to do for real with big waves. They turned it down and I tried to persuade them to have one of the others, but they wanted the prism. They were probably relieved to be able to make a decision together.

"It's very simple. It didn't take long. It's a cool graphic rather than a hot photo - maybe a bit too cool and dry. It's not particularly artistic or challenging. I don't dislike it. It may be one of the most identifiable sleeve images ever, but the cover for *Wish You Were Here* is a lot more interesting. The triangle is the symbol for ambition. It's also about being more ordered in their work. Since pyramids are a similar shape, we had them on the inner sleeve to go with the lyrics about madness and greed. What's more greedy than a king who thinks he can take it with him?

"The iconography, the cleanliness of line and simplicity is hard to change. For the 20th birthday reissue, I photographed a real prism. For the [2003] remix, I made a stained glass window - ideal because it's all about light coming in."

a warm-blooded surge of gospel voices wells up behind him. The album's four female backing singers - Lesley Duncan, Barry St John, Liza Strike and Doris Troy - were all London session regulars whose credits included John Lennon, Elton John and Rod Stewart. Their soulful, honey-blended voices help boost the album's overall sense of humane uplift, even on the most lyrically bleak tracks.

Imploring us to shake off our soul-deadening rat-race blinkers, Waters coins another eminently quotable line (albeit drawing heavily on a passage from Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*), "*Hanging on in quiet desperation is the English way*," confirming "Time" as a loose sister piece to "Breathe". This may explain the earlier song's slight return here as "Breathe Reprise", a pastoral sketch of village-green England with its comforting religious superstitions. But far from being critical of stuffy old ways, the achingly tender tone faintly echoes poet Philip Larkin's elegy "Church Going", yearning for lost certainties in an age of alienation.

Wright's clattery jazzoid instrumental on the theme of mortality, "The Great Gig In The Sky", closes the first song cycle on the original vinyl album. After multiple unsatisfactory incarnations, the final version only coalesced in January 1973 when the 22-year-old session singer Clare Torry was called in to slather the track in emotionally charged vocal gobbledygook. Torry left with a princely £30 and a sneaking fear that her contribution had been "screechy screechy" and unusable. In fact, her orgasmic exertions would later emerge as one of the album's experimental peaks.

Three decades later, she sued for a co-writing credit on the track, settling for an undisclosed sum in 2005.

Another milestone Floyd track, "Money", opens the album's second half with slap-in-the-face directness.

Bedded in a percussive tape-loop of clattering cash registers and jangling coins, the most lyrically barbed tune on *The Dark Side Of The Moon* is also the most instantly infectious, despite mostly adhering to an unorthodox, lopsided, shuddering 7/8 time signature. With its raunchy saxophone and vaguely R'n'B feel, David Gilmour once described the track as "nice white English architecture students getting funky". The Roger Waters lyric, an acerbic attack on greedy rock superstars, would later come back to haunt the entire band.

Picking up where "Breathe" and "Time" left off, the expansive "Us And Them" returns to the album's broader themes of alienation, social division and madness. It was based on "The Violent Sequence", a rejected instrumental originally composed in 1970 for Michelangelo Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point*. Between crashing gospel-style peaks, the dreamy vocal manages to link the horrors of war, injustice and homelessness. In its closing stages the track morphs into "Any Colour You Like", an instrumental two-chord psychedelic jam and the closest thing to

## Roger Waters had quietly begun to assert himself as the group's alpha-male musical director

condenses the album's key message into five compact words: "*Don't be afraid to care*."

A sharp gear-change then follows with "On The Run", an instrumental keyboard throb inspired by Wright's fear of flying that could still just about pass as a contemporary piece of Krautrock-influenced techno - like Radiohead remixed by Underworld, perhaps.

Parsons recorded the clashing cacophony of chiming clocks which opens "Time", another cautionary reflection on missed opportunities and wasted lives. As Gilmour lays reverb-heavy blues riffs over a white-reggae rhythm,



Dick Parry (saxophone on *Us And Them* and *Money*); Lesley Duncan, Barry St John, Liza Strike, Doris Troy (backing vocals).  
**HIGHEST CHART POSITION:** UK 2; US 1

### TRACKMARKS | The Dark Side Of The Moon

1. *Speak To Me* ★★
2. *Breathe* ★★★★★
3. *On The Run* ★★★★★
4. *Time* ★★★★★
5. *The Great Gig In The Sky* ★★★★★
6. *Money* ★★★★★
7. *Us And Them* ★★★★★
8. *Any Colour You Like* ★★

9. *Brain Damage* ★★★★★
10. *Eclipse* ★★★★★

**RELEASED:** March 10, 1973  
**LABEL:** Harvest  
**PRODUCED BY:** Pink Floyd  
**RECORDED AT:** Abbey Road Studios

**PERSONNEL:** David Gilmour (guitar, vocals, VCS3); Nick Mason (percussion, tape effects); Roger Waters (bass, vocals, VCS3, tape effects); Richard Wright (keyboards, vocals, VCS3); Clare Torry (vocal on *The Great Gig In The Sky*);



makeweight filler on *The Dark Side Of The Moon*.

These themes reach an emotional crescendo on the climactic confessional "Brain Damage", the lyric to which gives the album its title, and pays poignant homage to Syd Barrett. "It's obviously a bit to do with Syd," Waters admitted in the 2003 *Classic Albums* documentary, "and defending the notion of being different". The line "*the lunatic is on the grass*" even locates Barrett on a specific Cambridge green, while another ponders what happens "*if the band*

*you're in starts playing different tunes*." The Floyd would pay more direct tribute to Barrett two years later with "Shine On You Crazy Diamond", but his shattered mental state is arguably better reflected by many tracks on *The Dark Side Of The Moon*.

Momentum then builds for the short final piece "Eclipse", once considered as the title for the entire album. This thunderous gallop to the finish line is styled like an accusatory charge sheet aimed at a topsy-turvy universe,

signing off with the cautionary yin-and-yang riddle: "*And everything under the sun is in tune/But the sun is eclipsed by the moon*." The closing fade-out features another flurry of heartbeats and interview fragments, including studio doorman Gerry O'Donnell's priceless snippet of folk wisdom: "*There is no dark side in the moon really. As a matter of fact it's all dark...*"

Towards the end of recording, the former Beatles and Roxy Music co-producer Chris Thomas was brought in to finesse the album's mix, sequencing it into two seamless symphonic movements to fit the vinyl format. Some biographers claim this "fresh pair of ears" also served as a cool-headed referee between the Waters-favoured option of a dry, upfront mix and Gilmour's preference for a softer, more liquid soundscape. Thomas later denied there was any friction, but the band still remember it as a minor power struggle – the first of many.

In a final stroke of marketing genius, Floyd's regular design team Hipgnosis clothed *The Dark Side Of The Moon* in one of the most iconic sleeve designs of all time, a triangular prism refracting a beam of light into a rainbow. This striking graphic radiated vaguely mystical hippy overtones, but also felt like a cool corporate logo: band becoming brand.

*The Dark Side Of The Moon* was released to almost universally positive reviews in March 1973, including weeks of rave coverage in the *NME*. A pessimistic Gilmour bet the band's manager Steve O'Rourke that the album would not crack the US Top 10, but it became their first ever American chart-topper, and climbed to No 2 in Britain. This was partly down to an unprecedented promotional push from their record label, who even persuaded Floyd to release their first US single in years, a cleaned-up radio edit of "Money".

The band cemented this breakthrough hit by touring America with the kind of blockbuster stadium spectacle that later became a Floyd hallmark. *The Dark Side Of The Moon* eventually spent 741 weeks – 14 years – on the US *Billboard* charts. Boosted by various

remasters and reissues, sales now stand at 45 million, making it the best-selling British album of all time. The irony of "Money", a snide attack on wealthy celebrities, catapulting them into the mega-rich rock-star superleague was not lost on these politically conflicted hippy capitalists. As Waters later admitted, "We still had a common goal, which was to become rich and famous." 🌈

#### THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"Floyd's most successful artistic venture. Not only are the lyrics statements of opinion, usually quite discernible, but they're enhanced by some clever tape and sound effects."

TONY STEWART, *NME*, MARCH 17, 1973

"It took nine months to make at Abbey Road and is worth every second of studio time. A spacey trip, continuing the formula set by *Atom Heart Mother...*"

MELODY MAKER, APRIL 7, 1973



‘OUR MUSIC  
IS ABOUT  
NEUROSES,  
BUT THAT  
DOESN’T  
MEAN WE’RE  
NEUROTIC’

*As **The Dark Side Of The Moon** looms large over the music world, CHRIS WELCH manages to locate DAVE GILMOUR in his Hertfordshire pile. There, Gilmour reveals his home improvements, confesses his fear of an encroaching council estate, recalls Syd – “one of the great rock’n’roll tragedies” – and his early days in the Floyd, and takes aim at his band’s many detractors.*



OH FLOYD—WHEREFORE art thou? What lies yonder—on the dark side of the moon? Madness they do say, and present death. In their seventh year together, paranoia and fear seem to haunt their music, despite, or perhaps because of, success. Much of the Pink Floyd's latest album

(actually over a year old in terms of studio time) reflects the pressures and obsessions that afflict the itinerant rock musician. Without the lifestyle, there would not be music; and without the music, the lifestyle could not be supported.

Mad laughter and sane voices intermingle in the Floyd's measured, timeless compositions, and it would be easy to read into the characters of the men who make up one of the most original and fulfilling of groups, a kind of omniscience. Fans—and journalists—can and have been disappointed, or surprised to find that the Pink Floyd are but human. Their output is not prolific, they have been known to repeat material at concerts, they have yet to announce details of any plan to save the world, and what is more, they operate and enjoy taking part in a moderately successful football team.

Time wasted, the curse of money, ambitions unfulfilled, these are all matters that concern the Floyd, and form the basis of many of their musical ideas. They are not esoteric subjects and should be easily assimilated without recourse to mystical interpretation.

Yet even today, the Floyd occasionally feel misunderstood. But they can also feel a tremendous satisfaction in the knowledge that the band said to be "finished" when Syd Barrett left them all those years ago has reached a peak that is impressive even in this age of supergroups. Acceptance of the Floyd's poised and delicate music has never been greater. On their last American tour they casually sold out massive venues from coast to coast; *The Dark Side Of The Moon* has taken world charts in its stride, while their forthcoming London concerts at Earls Court—for charity—sold out as quickly as tickets could be passed over the counter.

The Floyd have doubtless earned an attractive penny in their time, but unlike many other successful artists, they do not wallow in riches. Roger Waters lives in a modest house in Islington, where his wife bakes pots in the garden shed. And while David Gilmour lives on a farm in the country, it is through his own efforts that the establishment has been made habitable. He might boast an ornamental pool in the garden,

stocked with gaily coloured fish, but he dug it himself.

It was to this rural retreat that I drove one sunny day last week, wending through the fields of Hertfordshire, made fearful by juggernauts wallowing on S-bends and locals driving dented grey Cortinas at speed.

Arriving at the village at the appointed hour, a further 60 minutes were spent following the conflicting directions of rustics pushing bicycles. Still lost, I consulted a map that seemed to have been drawn up in 1932.

Hurling this aside, my gaze perceived a fissure

jukebox here, wood-carvings there—since taking over the abandoned Victorian farmhouse a couple of years ago, the guitarist had worked hard at improvements. When he moved in there was no electricity or heating, and he lived rough as he created an open-plan living area, constructed a music room, dug the aforementioned pool and cleaned out stables for Vim, his retired brewers' dray horse. He had even permitted himself the luxury of a swimming pool, following the satisfactory sale of many of the Pink Floyd albums.

Then came Nemesis, not in the shape of a

writer to Mailbag, but a man from the council, only minutes before my arrival. He had presented a copy of the council's plans to build a housing estate on the surrounding greenbelt land, and to compulsorily purchase great chunks of the Floydian paradise.

"We'll have to pack our bags and move," he said with

hopeless resignation.

Our eyes turned to megalopolis creeping over the horizon, the threatening blocks of Harlow, poised ready to march. We toyed with ideas to build a wall of fire around the premises, to be touched off at an instant the bulldozers arrived, and I suggested sowing landmines in Vim's meadow. Eventually we decided it would be more cheering to speak to the Pink Floyd.

FOR THE BENEFIT of new reader George Loaf (12), it should be explained that the group was born in 1967 during the heady days of flower

power and UFO. Mr Gilmour replaced the legendary Syd Barrett on guitar, who had written such chart hits as "See Emily Play". The Floyd went through a bleak period when they were written off but quietly drew about them an army of fans, and went about their creative work, wholly unmoved by the shifting fortunes and fashions that affect their contemporaries. They are a proud, pioneering and somewhat detached group who sometimes look upon the cavortings of some of their fellow groups with faint dismay, not out of sour grapes, but from purely aesthetic considerations.

But first, what had the Floyd been doing these last few months, and how long had it taken them to conceive *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, which I believed was their best yet?

"We did the American tour," said Dave. "We only ever do three-week tours now, but that one was 18 dates in 21 days, which is quite hard. We started recording the LP in May last year, and finished it around January. We didn't work at it all the time, of course. We hadn't had a holiday in three years and we were determined to take one. On the whole, the album has a good concept..."

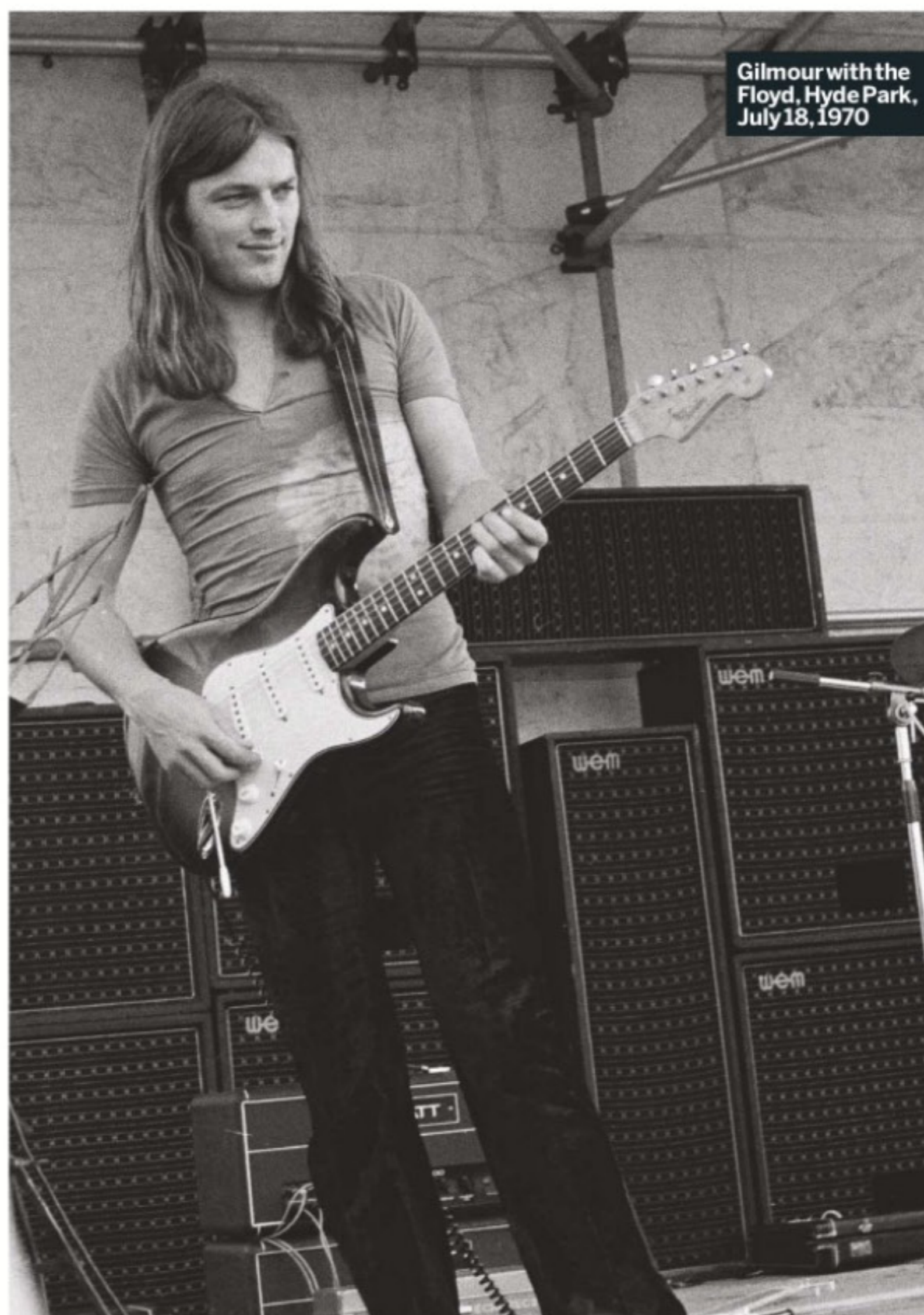
## "I'M SURE OUR PUBLIC IMAGE IS OF 100 PER CENT SPACED-OUT DRUG ADDICTS, OUT OF OUR MINDS ON ACID..."

in the hedge opposite. It seemed scarcely possible I was parked outside the Gilmour estate and had passed it innumerable times in the last hour.

Such was the case. In a secluded courtyard an alsatian stood guard and a venerable old horse clomped about. A youth in faded blue jeans and straggly black hair appeared like Heathcliffe at the cottage door. "Mr Gilmour's abode?"

"Yes indeed. Come in and have a cup of tea. It will calm you."

My motorist's fury began to abate, as I drank in the ornate but tasteful décor. Low beams, a





Floyd, circa *Saucerful*: "People were down on us after Syd left – even our management. They were hard times"

Isn't it their best yet?

"I guess so. A lot of the material had already been performed when we recorded it, and usually we go into the studio and write and record at the same time. We started writing the basic idea ages ago, and it changed quite a lot. It was pretty rough to begin with. The songs are about being in rock'n'roll, and apply to being what we are on the road. Roger wrote 'Money' from the heart."

Money seemed to be a touchy subject for musicians and fans alike. Were the Floyd cynics?

"Oh no – not really. I just think that money's the biggest single pressure on people. Even if you've got it, you have the pressure of not knowing whether you should have it, and you don't know the rights and wrongs of your situation. It can be a moral problem, but remember the Pink Floyd were broke for a pretty long time. We were in debt when I joined and nine months afterwards I remember when we gave ourselves £30 a week, and for the first time we were earning more than the roadies."

For a band that relies on creating moods, good sound was essential for the embryonic Floyd.

"We hardly had any equipment of our own. We had a light show, but we had to scrap it for

two years. We've had lights again for the last couple of years, but in the meantime we developed the basic idea of the Azimuth co-ordinator. We did a concert at the Festival Hall with the new sound system, and none of us had any idea what we were doing. I remember sitting on the stage for two hours feeling totally embarrassed. But we developed the ideas, and it was purely down to setting moods and creating an atmosphere."

To digress, what did Dave think of Hawkwind, the newest prophets of the UFO tradition?

"I don't ever listen to them, but they seem to be having jolly good fun," said Dave without the trace of a smile.

What about The Moody Blues?

"I'm not too keen on The Moody Blues. I don't know why – I think it's all that talking that gets my goat. It's a bit like poets' corner."

Dave did not want to be drawn on the subject of rivalry, but he did admit to hearing with pleasure that an expensive piece of equipment belonging to another group had collapsed. The group in question had

## CAREFUL WITH THOSE FACTS, EUGENE

While covering the 1969 moon landing, the BBC broadcast a show called *But What If It's Made Of Green Cheese?* It featured "Moonhead", an instrumental Floyd track, also known as "Trip On Mars", which remains unreleased.

The band also occasionally played the song live, under the title "Corrosion".

recently tried to poach the Floyd's road crew.

Looking back over his six years or so with the group, what milestones did he see in their development?

"There haven't been any particular milestones. It's all gone rather smoothly. We've always felt like we have led some sort of cult here, but in America it's been slow but sure. This year in the States it's been tremendous, but I can't say why – specifically. We have been able to sell out 10- to 15,000 seaters every night on the tour – quite suddenly.

"We have always done well in Los Angeles or New York but this was in places we had never been

to before. Suddenly the LP was No 1 there and they have always been in the 40s and 50s before.

"No – success doesn't make much difference to us. It doesn't make any difference to our output, or general attitudes. There are four attitudes in the band that are quite different. But we all want to push forward and there are all sorts of things we'd like to do. For Roger Waters it is more important to

CONTINUES OVER»

Boarding a plane for a 12-date tour of Japan, March 3, 1972



do things than say something. Richard Wright is more into putting out good music and I'm in the middle with Nick. I want to do it all, but sometimes I think Roger can feel the musical content is less important and can slide around it.

"Roger and Nick tend to make the tapes or effects like the heartbeat on the LP. At concerts we have quad tapes and four-track tape machines. So we can mix the sound and pan it around. The heartbeat alludes to the human condition and sets the mood for the music, which describes the emotions experienced during a lifetime. Amid the chaos there is beauty and hope for mankind. The effects are purely to help the listener understand what the whole thing is about.

"It's amazing... at the final mixing stage we thought it was obvious what the album was about, but still a lot of people, including the engineers and the roadies, when we asked them, didn't know what the LP was about. They just couldn't say – and I was really surprised. They didn't see it was about the pressures that can drive a young chap mad.

"I really don't know if our things get through, but you have to carry on hoping. Our music is about neuroses, but that doesn't mean that we

## "IT TOOK A LONG TIME FOR ME TO FEEL PART OF THE BAND AFTER SYD LEFT. IT WAS SUCH A STRANGE BAND..."

are neurotic. We are able to see it, and discuss it. *The Dark Side Of The Moon* itself is an allusion to the moon and lunacy. The dark side is generally related to what goes on inside people's heads – the subconscious and the unknown.

"We changed the title. At one time, it was going to be called 'Eclipse', because Medicine Head did an album called *Dark Side Of The Moon*, but it didn't sell well, so what the hell. I was against 'Eclipse' and we felt a bit annoyed because we had already thought of the 'Dark' title before Medicine Head came out. Not annoyed at them, but because we wanted to use the title. There are a lot of songs with the same title. We did one called 'Fearless' and Family had a single called that."

Did the Floyd argue among themselves much?

"A fair bit, I suppose, but not too traumatic. We're bound to argue because we are all very different. I'm sure our public image is of 100

per cent spaced out drug addicts, out of our minds on acid. People do get strange ideas about us. In San Francisco we had a reputation from the Gay Liberation Front: 'I hear you guys are into Gay Lib'; I don't know how they could tell..."

As a guitarist Dave had been somewhat overshadowed by the Floyd's strong corporate image. But

his virile, cutting lines are one of their hallmarks and a vital human element. Did he ever fancy working out on a solo album, or forming a rock trio?

"I get all sorts of urges but really nothing strong. Put it down to excessive laziness. No, I don't do sessions. I don't get asked. Any frustrations I might have about just banging out some rock'n'roll are inevitable, but are not a destructive element to our band. I have a lot of scope in Pink Floyd to let things out. There are specially designated places where I can do that."

In the past the Floyd have been subject to criticism, not the least appearing in the *Melody Maker*. How do they react to that?

"React? Violently! People tend to say we play the same old stuff – that we do the same numbers for years. We don't. We are playing all new numbers now, except for 'Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun'. The Who are still playing 'My Generation' and nobody

complains about that. We can take criticism when it's valid, but we are only human and we can only do so much. Sometimes it surprises me when we play really well, and spend some time on presenting a special show, like we did at Radio City in New York, and we get knocked.

"Some people dislike the basic premise of what we are all about. Then their criticism is a waste of time. For someone to criticise you who understands you, and can say where you have fallen down – that's valid. There are some people who come to our shows with no real interest in what we are doing, don't like the group, so don't like the concert. We put all the bad reviews into a little blue book."

This time Dave was smiling. (George Loaf, please note. Musician's joke: Gilmour does not really have a 'little blue book'. He was speaking lightly, in fun).

"I remember after Mick Watts did his piece on us, we all gave him a complete blank in an aeroplane. It wasn't deliberate. We just didn't recognise him. But he made some snide remark in the *MM*, so we sent him a box with a boxing glove inside on a spring. Nick got them specially made. But it wasn't taken in good humour. Syd Barrett would never have done a thing like that. All very childish really.

"We don't get uptight at constructive reviews, but when somebody isn't the smallish piece interested in what you are doing, then it's no help to them or to us. We did get uptight at what Mick Watts said – it was very savage. But you can't stay angry for long. We tried to turn the feud into a kind of joke with the boxing glove. You've got to have a sense of humour," said Dave scowling into his tea. "There's humour in our music, but I don't know if any of it gets through."

As a key member of a band with its gaze fixed firmly on the future, it seemed unlikely Dave would want to reminisce, yet he was happy enough to recall their origins.

"Nick Mason had got a date sheet 10 yards long with all the gigs in red ink – every one since 1967. It's quite extraordinary when you look at the gigs we got through – four or five a week. We couldn't do that now, not when you think of the equipment we carry. The roadies have to be there by eight in the morning to start setting up. It's a very complicated business. Things still go wrong, but we virtually carry a whole recording studio around with us all the time.

"In 1967 no-one realised that sound could get better. There was just noise, and that's how rock'n'roll was. As soon as you educate people to something better, they want it better – permanently. PAs were terrible in those days – but we've got an amazing one now.

"Before we do a gig, we have a four-page rider in our contract with a whole stack of things that have to be got together by the promoter. We have to send people round two weeks beforehand to make sure they've got it right, otherwise they don't take any notice.

"There have to be two power systems, for the lights and PA. Otherwise the lighting will cause a buzz through the speakers. Usually a stage has to be built – to the right size. We've got 11 tons of equipment, and on our last American tour it had to be carried in an

articulated truck. Oh yes, it's the death of rock'n'roll. Big bands are coming back.

"There was a long period of time when I was not really sure what I was around to do, and played sort of back-up guitar. Following someone like Syd Barrett into that band was a strange experience. At first I felt I had to change a lot and it was a paranoid experience. After all, Syd was a living legend, and I had started off playing basic rock music – Beach Boys, Bo Diddley, and "The Midnight Hour". I wasn't in any groups worth talking about, although I had a three-piece with Ricky Wills, who's now with Peter Frampton's Camel.

"I knew Syd from Cambridge since I was 15, and my old band supported the Floyd on gigs. I knew them all well. They asked me if I wanted to join when Syd left, and not being completely mad, I said yes, and joined in Christmas '68. I later did the two solo albums with Syd. God, what an experience. God knows what he was doing. Various people have tried to see him and get him together, and found it beyond their capabilities.

"I remember when the band was recording 'See Emily Play', Syd rang me up and asked me along to the studio. When I got there he gave me a complete blank. He was one of the great rock'n'roll tragedies. He was one of the most talented people and could have given a fantastic amount. He really could write songs and if he had stayed right, could have beaten Ray Davies at his own game.

"It took a long time for me to feel part of the band after Syd left. It was such a strange band, and very hard for me to know what we were

## CAREFUL WITH THOSE FACTS, EUGENE

**Dark side of the desk!** Nick Mason produced Robert Wyatt's *Rock Bottom* (1974), Gong's *Shamal* (1975) The Damned's *Music For Pleasure* (1977) and Steve Hillage's *Green* (1978), while Gilmour worked on Kate Bush's *The Kick Inside* (1978), Doll By Doll's *Grand Passion* (1982) and two LPs each for Dream Academy and Unicorn.

doing. People were very down on us after Syd left. Everyone thought Syd was all the group had, and dismissed us. They were hard times. Even our management, Blackhill, believed in Syd more than the band. It really didn't start coming back until *A Saucerful Of Secrets* and the first Hyde Park free concert.

"The big kick was to play for our audiences at Middle Earth. I remember one terrible night when Syd came and stood in front of the stage. He stared at me all night long. Horrible!


"The free concerts were really a gas. The first one had 5,000 people, the second 150,000. But the first was more fun. We tried to do two

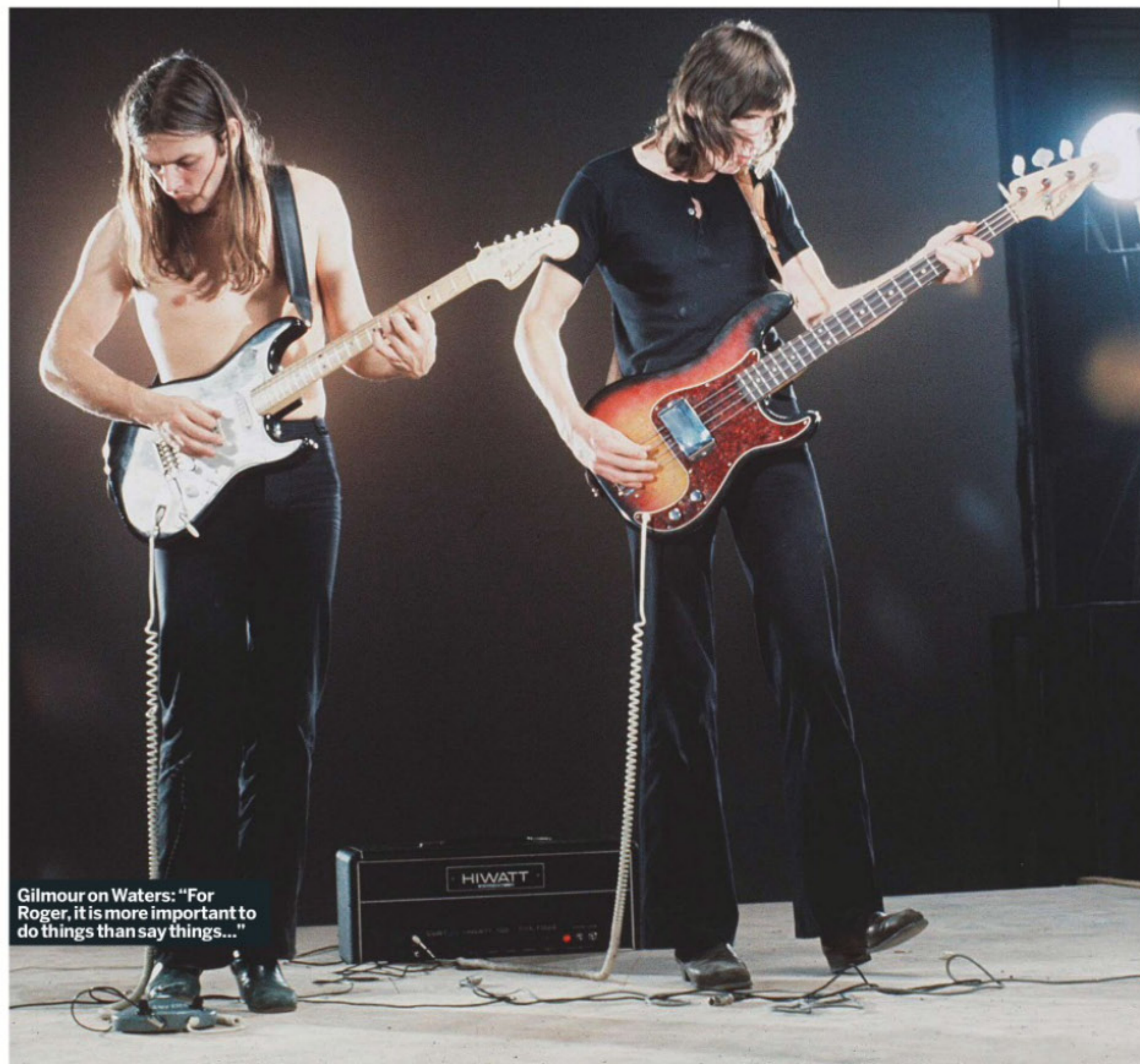
more singles around this time, but they didn't mean a thing. They're now on the *Relics* LP."

Where lay the future for Floyd?

"God knows, I'm not a prophet. We have lots of good ideas. It's a matter of trying to fulfill them. It's dangerous to talk about ideas, or you get it thrown at you when you don't do it. We have vague ideas for a much more theatrical thing, a very immobile thing we'd put on in one place. Also we want to buy a workshop and rehearsal place in London. We've been trying to get one for some time.

"No we don't want our own label – but we do have our own football team! We beat Quiver 9-1 recently, and now there's talk of a music industry cup. Oh – and we played the North London Marxists. What a violent bunch. I bit my tongue – and had to have stitches."

So that's what lies on the dark side of the moon – a pair of goalposts. But the Floyd will be all right – as long as they keep their heads. 



Gilmour on Waters: "For Roger, it is more important to do things than say things..."



# 'IF WE PUT OUT AN ALBUM OF PURE TRIPE IT'D SELL VASTLY MORE THAN LOTS OF OTHER BANDS!'

This time, it's war! *NME* unleashes the big guns on Pink Floyd and DAVE GILMOUR fights back. In two tense encounters with PETE ERSKINE, Gilmour – in his last interviews for years – confronts his band's failings and takes issue with *NME*'s criticisms. Beginning with the state of his hair...

*In their November 23, 1974 issue, NME ran two pieces on Pink Floyd. One was a review by Nick Kent of the band's November 14 and 15 shows at the Empire Pool, Wembley. Kent was not impressed, to put it mildly, slating everything from the band's technique and motivation to Dave Gilmour's "stringy unwashed hair". "I can't think of another rock group who live a more desperately bourgeois existence," he wrote, unmoved by The Dark Side Of The Moon in its entirety and a premiere for "Shine On You Crazy Diamond". Pink Floyd, he argued, made "facile, soulless music" that would be "touted as fine art in [Orwell's] vision of 1984." "No other [band]," he concluded, "quite sums up the rampant sense of doomed mediocrity in this country's current outlook right now."*

*Following this assault, NME ran an interview with Dave Gilmour, conducted by Pete Erskine between the two shows – when, of course, Gilmour was*

*unaware of the substance of Kent's review. When he did discover the extent of the vitriol, he granted Erskine a second, furious interview; the last he would give the British music press for many years.*



DAVID GILMOUR IS almost by accident probably the most proficient musician in the Floyd – without, in terms of his guitar work, ever imposing any kind of "personality" on the group. Past history reveals his style and approach as being, to say the least, malleable.

Gilmour joined the band in '67 as replacement for Syd Barrett.

They'd all known each other from the band's embryonic Cambridge days. Prior to this, Gilmour had been gigging in France and was, **CONTINUES OVER »**



"We're capable of blowing a gig, and we're capable of doing a great gig..." Pink Floyd, Los Angeles, 1975

on his own admission, a fairly stock rock guitarist whose roots extended no further than Hank Marvin. "At the time," reports the Floyd's then co-manager, Pete Jenner, "Dave was doing effective take-offs of Hendrix-style guitar playing. So the band said, 'play like Syd Barrett'."

The familiar slide and echo-boxes were purely of Syd's invention.

Subsequently, in an interview conducted last year, Gilmour stated that his joining such an apparently disparate unit as the Floyd was in no way anything more than a minor wrench for him. Which is possibly why he finds it so easy to fit in with such other apparently disparate elements as Unicorn, Sutherland Brothers, Quiver and Roy Harper. Hence the term "malleability" may also imply (a) a lack of personality in musical style and therefore (b) a suspicion of an "it's-only-a-gig" philosophy.

In a way, you could say that Gilmour was a geezer who struck lucky – which is why, I've always felt, he's regarded the band, and his role within it – with a certain tinge of cynicism. It's almost as if the Floyd, having loafed about half-seriously in the beginning as "The Architectural Abdabs" (sic), garnered their persona from Barrett and, when he dropped out, for want of anything better to do clung on to the momentum he provided. Until – in a

## "I'VE ALWAYS FELT, RIGHT FROM THE WORD GO, THAT THE MUSICAL SIDE OF *DARK SIDE* WASN'T THAT HOT IN SOME PARTS"

manner of speaking – success crept up from behind and goosed them.

Sometime in between, of course, they must have realised, that they were On To A Good Thing. The Floyd are nothing if not shrewd. More, even, than Brian Eno, they're well aware of the benefits of concocting a low-profile Emperor's New Clothes syndrome – which is why, I'd guess, Roger Waters makes no little show onstage of his apparent disdain for their audiences. And why, too (you'll have noticed) that the band do few interviews and, when they do, try and avoid discussing the intrinsic grits of their music too much...

They like, you see, for you to make your own deductions – and with intellectual paranoia in the ascendant (possibly as a result of *The Rise Of The Reefer*) how can they fail?

Thus confronted, Gilmour's attitude remains uniformly *laissez-faire*.

"Cynical?" he says querulously. "So. I mean, last night onstage I was just so hung up.

Because it wasn't very good."

At one point – the night before the Thursday gig, the first of the Wembley shows – he'd raised his eyebrows as if to say, "Let's pack it in and piss off home." But now it's Friday morning and we're camped down in the bedroom of his recently renovated Notting Hill townhouse.

Concert licks first, please Dave, how about the gaps between numbers – Roger stalling over lighting a cigarette with his "well-we-can-do-this-we're-artists" attitude?

"Oh yeah. But I don't really think that's what it's down to. It's just... ah... well, I dunno... Roger likes smoking cigarettes. He can't get through a gig without a few straights."

He is, however, more than willing to admit that Thursday night's gig was "probably the worst we've done on the whole tour".

"The first half..." he continues languidly "...when that wasn't very good it didn't particularly worry me because they're all new things and we're not doing them very well yet. But we have done them better than that. I thought the second half would click into place because it has done on a couple of other nights when the first half wasn't good."

The standard of musicianship was very low – for example Rick Wright's solo on the end of "Us And Them" which didn't approximate to

the recorded version in any way. Yes?

"In the first half... the sound wasn't very good and the vocal mics were pretty terrible – which makes it that much harder to sing and that much harder to work. And also it didn't sound as if there was any bass and drums. Unless there's a bit of that 'oomph' you can't really get off... it was one of those nights where you bumble around and don't get anything together. It sounded ragged all the way through. It doesn't worry me particularly, it just happens. Just chemistry really, innit?

Mmmm. Well, OK, was the audience's response an accurate one, then?

"I think they enjoyed it reasonably – but I think a lot of people didn't think it was very good. There's a difference between going home and thinking it was pretty good and going home thinking 'wow'. And I know we do get that pretty often. More nights than not I know most of the people there are going to go home and say 'what a groove!' They probably want to convince themselves they had a groove just so that they don't think they hit on a bad one... and wasted their money."

Right. On to the Big Picture. The band has reached a level now – with ...*Moon* – where, inevitably, when you're at a party, someone will put it on and everyone will say 'Jeepers, THE FLOYD!' – almost as a conditioned reflex, ie, whatever-the-Floyd-do-is-hallowed. How do you feel about it?

"It's a drag."

It's almost as if the band could put out a double LP of Roger tuning his bass and it'd sell.

"I'm sure there would be people who'd react that way – but I'm sure sales figures would reflect a bad album in the end. But I don't mean that 100 per cent. I'm sure that if we put out an album of pure tripe it would sell vastly more than lots and lots of other band's records. But in relation to our sales, a bad record would sell badly. It has done in the past.

With what?

"Well, *Atom Heart Mother*. I'd say that was the worst record we've made. I didn't like it and I don't like it much now. I'm not very keen on *Ummagumma* either."

Well, how about ...*Moon*? Did its musical content really merit its universal popularity – or was it the Floyd album that coincided with the peak of interest in the band?

"Quite possibly. You may be right. But it certainly was a very good all-round... uh... package. Everything about it was very well done. It was one continuous idea. It was recorded well, it was pretty well mixed, had a good cover and all that sort of stuff.

"But I've always felt, right from the word Go, that the musical side of it wasn't that hot in some parts. And I still feel that. Some parts are a bit weak. We'd have a lyrical idea but no real idea of a musical piece to put to it, so we'd just make something up and take the first thing that came – rather than being critical about the musical side as it was being done. But then some of those bits got knocked out during the months we were playing it onstage before we recorded it. The original travel section we played for months onstage and even recorded it before deciding to scrap it and start again."

Yes. But getting back to this bland

acceptance thing... surely the band is to blame? Onstage the music is almost moving towards a kind of Automation Rock, towards a kind of non-participatory, non-thinking music – where all the audience has to do is walk in, sit down and watch it all exploding in front of them. In terms of presentation you could be getting to the point where you walk onstage, throw a few switches and walk out. Will it come to that?

"No. I don't think the audience have a great participation in what we do but I don't think that's a bad thing necessarily."

Don't you think it promotes Bland Acceptance?

"No. Listen," he says (perhaps beginning to get a little riled), "we still have to get off. I mean you know what the difference is between a good gig and a bad gig. And it's not mechanical. We're quite capable of blowing a gig and we're also capable of doing a great gig."

But in the main it tends to glut the listener's faculties, promoting a glazed 'OK feed-it-to-me' attitude, which, taken to its fullest extent, I might add, is positively somnambulist. I noted four people sound asleep in my row.

"You think so?" he replies (perhaps stalling a little). "I think it's up to them. I think they're free to take it any way they want. A lot of people don't, though. We had someone the other night who must've known that we're football fans who was shouting 'cyyyomon you Floyd!!!' just like they do on the North Bank."

The new material sounded a bit recycled – like some of the more tangible stuff on ...

*Moon*. Does that mean you're having trouble sorting out new ideas?

"Umm, yeah. I don't know... uh... 'Raving And Drooling' – the middle one of the three – sounds a bit recycled, but they're not there yet. I'm not very keen on that one at the moment... but, I dunno, these things get worked into shape. I know one or two of them are gonna sound great recorded. The last one, 'Gotta Be Crazy', is very different to a lot of stuff we've done, but I don't think the words go right at the moment. I mean, the singing thing's been worked out a bit quickly. Roger wrote the words to fit over a certain part and I'm not sure that we did it quite the right way."

But how can you equate doing something like "Gotta Be Crazy" – or "Money", even – from the relatively secure position you're in as a band?

"Well, 'Money' is obviously a satire on... money. And it is a self-satire. Obviously. It's easy to tell that because a lot of the lyrics relate specifically to things that various of us have done, but I mean, I don't think we're as capitalist as... I think it mocks us, the song says that we're more than we are, in fact. It just keeps us aware of it all.

"'You Gotta Be Crazy' is about business pressure really. It does relate to us – I'm sure – you'll have to ask Roger, he wrote it. The way I understand the words is that you have to harden yourself up to, you know, Make It in this world, if that's what you call Making It..."

## CAREFUL WITH THOSE FACTS, EUGENE

David Gilmour was a guest on BBC Radio 4's *Desert Island Discs* in 2003, choosing songs by – among others – Dylan ("Ballad In Plain D"), Leonard Cohen ("Anthem") and The Lemonheads ("Rudi With A Flashlight"). His 'luxury item' was a Martin D35 guitar, while his 'book' was an English translation of *The Koran*...

The other thing about the new material is that it sounds "safe". It's years since the band's taken any musical risks which, for a group that claims its main appeal is that it "sounds different" from any other, is a little incongruous.

"Ah well," replies Mr G. "I think that's all down to what you want to do. I mean, I certainly don't want to do a lot of things we did earlier on. I'm just interested in actually writing music and getting the music done that we do."

Ahem.

"You know, I think everyone's interests have gone more towards that sort of thing rather than some of the old rubbish we used to do.

Like we used to do an encore

where we'd just go on and not decide what we were going to do until we'd started..."

How long ago was that?

"Oh, four years ago, at least. But I don't really want to go through that thing of doing five loads of rubbish and just once getting something that's pretty good and new. Or getting a half-hour number with about three minutes of worthwhile music on it."

But don't you think that if you'd have kept on progressing from the original improvising basis that by now you could've achieved a personal empathy that would alleviate most of those duff patches?

"I don't know. I really don't know... I've just got memories of standing onstage farting about, plonking away on stuff and feeling terribly embarrassed for long periods of time – and looking across at everyone else realising they were all obviously feeling the same way.

"Maybe guaranteeing that what you play is something that you'll enjoy is 'playing safe'. But I don't think we've got an intentional play-safe policy."



A SHORT WHILE ago, Pink Floyd, darlings of the intelligentsia, the stereo-minded and lots of others, were victims of two NME hitmen – Benedicto Nicolini (aka Nicky the K) and Sneaky Pete Erskine, who stabbed Floyd viciously in the hair, the musical integrity and in the dry ice.

An inquest took place this week.

There's no dandruff on this band, claims guitarist Dave Gilmour (no split ends either) before delivering key evidence as to the merits and defects of Pink Floyd, defending their music, and denying all rumours that they were killed in the attack.

Hi Dave, have you washed your hair?

"No." Gilmour flashes a thin-lipped grin as he takes his seat, "and if he can find any split ends in here (lifting a clump of hair), then..."

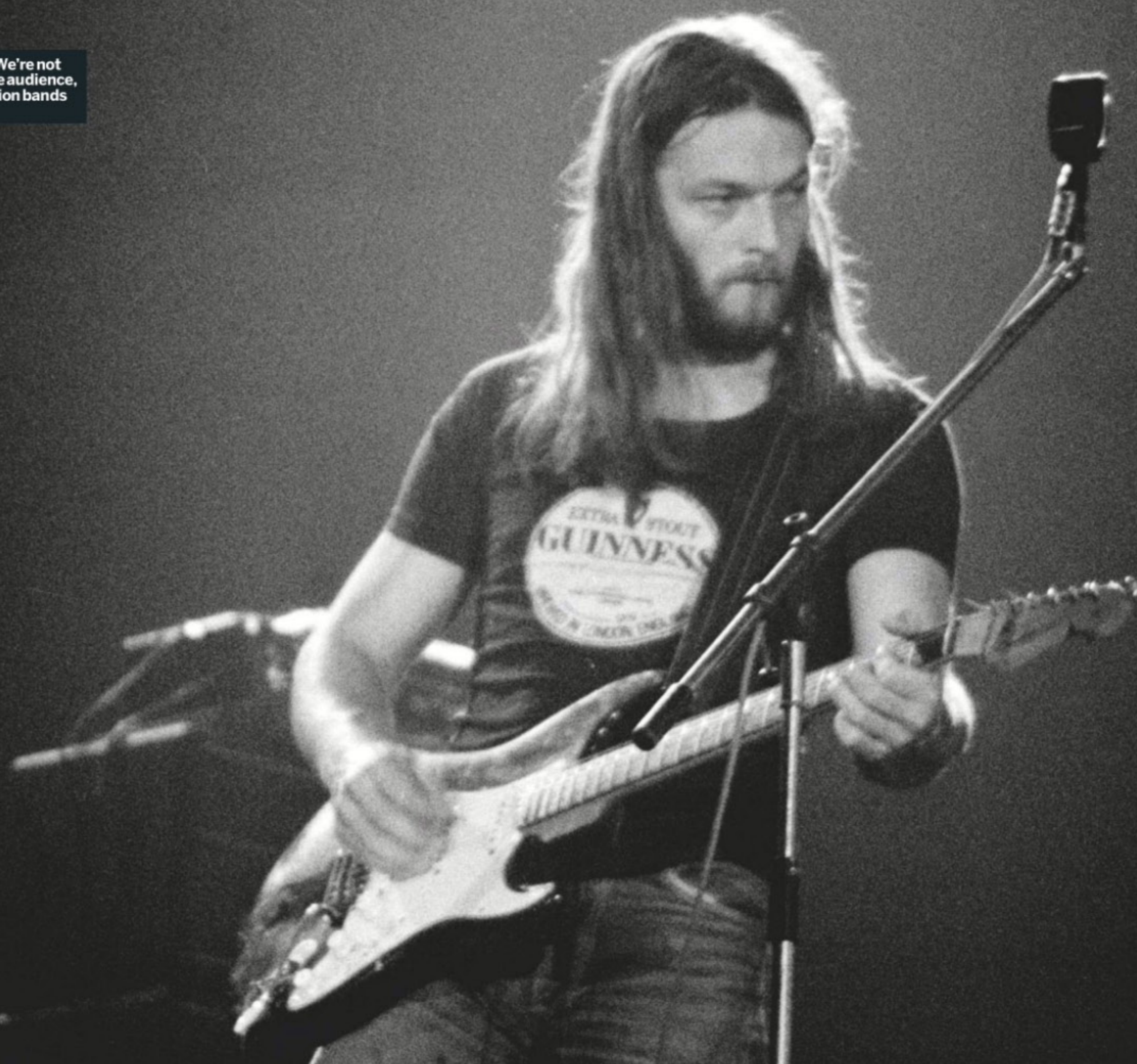
Then what, DAVE?

But he's already scanning the menu and doesn't hear. His free hand, however, is worrying over a plastic teaspoon.

Unconsciously, he gradually

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Live in 1974: "We're not sneering at the audience, but the adulation bands like us get..."



crushes it, letting the pieces slip through his fingers and fall onto the tabletop. Gilmour is nothing if not self-controlled. Placid even. But not quite.

His anger is of the sullen, smouldering variety and yet, the weird thing is that even during such moments he'll often make way for a broad smile which can be utterly disarming because it might be a harbinger of doom, the herald for a personal close-up of one of the robust Gilmour flails. Although I can't imagine it ever happening.

He is angry, though. He told me so by phone a couple of minutes after he'd read the piece.

"I've just read the piece," he said, "and I'm very angry about it."

The 'piece' in question – an action replay for those who missed it – appeared on the 24/11/74 *NME* issue, written by myself and Mr Kent in direct response to our witnessing of the Floyd on the first two nights of their four-day residency at Wembley. I'm afraid we were a little rude about them.

Mr Kent wrote an extended review cum critique, and I, through the back door, managed to secure an audience with Gilmour in which I confronted him with the accusations to be aired in the piece. The overall intention, see, had been, in the words of the introductory blurb, "to get the Floyd back into perspective", a sentiment which Gilmour himself says he thoroughly condones. It was the approach that riled him.

Ultimately the phone call resulted in myself inviting Gilmour to lunch – partly as a placatory gesture, partly to prove that Mr Kent and myself could, and would, stand by what'd been written, and mainly because a rematch might prove to be interesting.

The axis of the criticism in the piece lay upon the fact (self-confessed by Gilmour) that on two consecutive nights the Floyd made music of such low quality that it cast rather anvil-like aspirations on (a) their motivation (b) their overall musicianship (c) the feeling engendered by them in their audiences (both short and long-term) and admirers – one of whom, *Sunday Times* critic Derek Jewell, pulled out some florid prose in an appraisal of the debut Thursday night gig (described subsequently by Gilmour as "probably the worst we've done on the whole tour").

Jewell wrote: "Richly they merit their place among the symphonic overlords of today's popular hierarchy... they reeled off, apparently effortlessly, a performance with musical textures so ravishing and visual accompaniments so surprising that, for once, the thunderous standing ovation was completely justified."

Such bland acceptance irritates the band, says Gilmour, equally, if not more so, than its denigrators. "I don't think anyone on our level feels deserving of that superhuman adulation number," he claims, hacking at a piece of steak. "But a lot of them probably dig it. Sure, I'm

cynical of our position. I don't think we deserve it. But I'm no more cynical of our position than I am of anyone else's on our level. I mean... to try and maintain your own perspective on what you are is totally different."

The lyrics of "Gotta Be Crazy" – as Nick Kent pointed out – reveal a very great deal of cynicism, particularly the line "gotta keep people buying this shit", which is tantamount to a sneer at the audience.

"Mmm. Yeah. It is possibly a sneer... but not at the audience as a whole, but at the type of adulation bands like us get. I mean, I think there is something wrong with that... people needing hero-figures like that, thinking that rock musicians have all the answers."

But don't you think that while not being responsible for that element, the fact that it hasn't been challenged means that bands like the Floyd, through neglect, are helping compound it?

"Yes. Probably. But I think we're less guilty than most. I mean, we've made conscious attempts at fighting it."

Such as?

"In things we've said in interviews... We've always said that we don't believe in that whole number, but it's very hard to get away from the image people put on you."

How large a proportion of record-buyers and concert-goers buy music papers, though? A question I did in fact neglect to add. Still seems a bit lame though, eh? One would've thought

that a couple of finely honed satires would at least help... But then, really, how concerned are bands about these kind of things? Motives schmotives. It helps sell records. And you don't gnaw the digits that feed you.

Anyway, we're messing around here. To the specifics. Gilmour is raking through the apposite issue as he eats. He's inclined towards the John Peel reaction (thinly disguised in his mildly self-congratulatory *Diary Of The Domestic* unfolded each week in *Sounds*) that the piece was 'hysterical', overly-personal, laced with supposed inaccuracies.

The first 11 of Kent's opening paragraphs make Gilmour particularly mad. He claims that description of his personal appearance and that of a member of the audience (and his attitudes) is totally superfluous.

The offending words ran thus: "On November 14, 1974, approximately 7,000 people washed their hair and travelled down to the Empire Pool, Wembley, to witness the Pink Floyd live. Almost everyone, that is, except Dave Gilmour – his hair looked filthy there onstage, seemingly anchored down by a surfeit of scalp grease and tapering off below the shoulders with spectacular festooning of split ends..."

This led on to a description of a Floyd lookalike in the audience, held up as a Floyd fan archetype who smokes dope, prattles on about the cosmos and gets off on the stereo production quirks inherent in all Floyd albums.

"I don't see any of it being in any way relevant," says Gilmour in that sullen/placid tone of voice that could be either. Or both. "So there's a guy like that in the audience. So what? There were probably others like him, but you find people like that at any concert – but then Kent probably set out to find one and he did."

I assure him that our approach was in no way premeditated. There was no question of a pre-planned axe-job on anyone's part.

"Well, I just don't believe it of Nick Kent. I really don't. He's still really involved with Syd Barrett and the whole 1967 thing. I don't even know if he saw the Floyd with Syd. He goes on about Syd too much and yet, as far as I can see, there's no relevance in talking about Syd in reviewing one of our concerts."

But one of the new songs is about him.

"Yes, but that's all. In the beginning the songs were all his and they were brilliant. No-one disputes that. But I don't think the actual sound of the whole band stems from Syd. I think it stems just as much from Rick (Wright). I mean, Syd's thing was short songs."

As for hair washing. Well, the subject got short shrift. I think, though, that dressing for a gig is something that Gilmour subconsciously associates with 'showbusiness' – about which, more later. Meanwhile, in subsequent conversation with Carlena Williams, one of The Blackberries, the two black backup chicks they hired for the tour, Carlena expressed delight at the opening paras.

"Sheeet!" she observed daintily, "when ah saw that bit about Dave's hair ah jus cracked

up. Ah had t'read it, y'know?"

Back to Syd.

"The band just before Syd departed had got into a totally impossible situation. No-one wanted to book them. After the success of the summer of '67 the band sank like a stone; the gigs they were doing at the time were all empty because they were so bad. The only way out was to get rid of Syd, so they asked me to join and got rid of Syd..."

This, by the way, is also Gilmour's comeback to my assertion that:

"It's almost as if the Floyd, having loafed about half-seriously as the Architectural Abdabs (sic), garnered their persona from Barrett and, when he dropped out, for want of anything better to do, clung on to the momentum he provided."

Says Gilmour: "By the time Syd left, the ball had definitely stopped rolling. We had to start it all over again. *A Saucerful Of Secrets*, the first album without him, was the start back on the

## CAREFUL WITH THOSE FACTS, EUGENE

According to Gilmour's official website, [www.davidgilmour.com](http://www.davidgilmour.com), David is an Arsenal fan, counts *It's A Wonderful Life* and *Life Is Beautiful* among his favourite films, is conversant in French, German and Italian, still gets stage fright, and is a rather handy cook, with Chinese dumplings a particular speciality...

the interview?" he asks, righteously indignant. "The facts of the matter are that I was using an echo-box years before Syd was. I also used slide. I also taught Syd quite a lot about guitar. I mean, people say that I pinched his style when our backgrounds are so similar... yet we spent a lot of time together as teenagers listening to the same music. Our influences are pretty much the same – and I was a couple of streets ahead of him at the time and was teaching him to play Stones riffs every lunchtime for a year at technical college. That kind of thing's bound to get my back up – especially if you don't check it.

"I don't want to go in print saying I taught Syd Barrett everything he knows, 'cos it's patently untrue, but there are one or two things in Syd's style I know came from me."

In the original, I'd prefaced these suggestions by intimating that as a guitarist Gilmour appears to lack any immediately identifiable personality. The word I'd used was 'malleable'. He says he feels that such a word applied to his style(s) is a compliment. Most guitarists, he claims, are pretty narrow-minded, restricting their range of operations. In that case he could be accused of spreading himself too thinly – ie, capable of most things, but not

CONTINUES OVER »

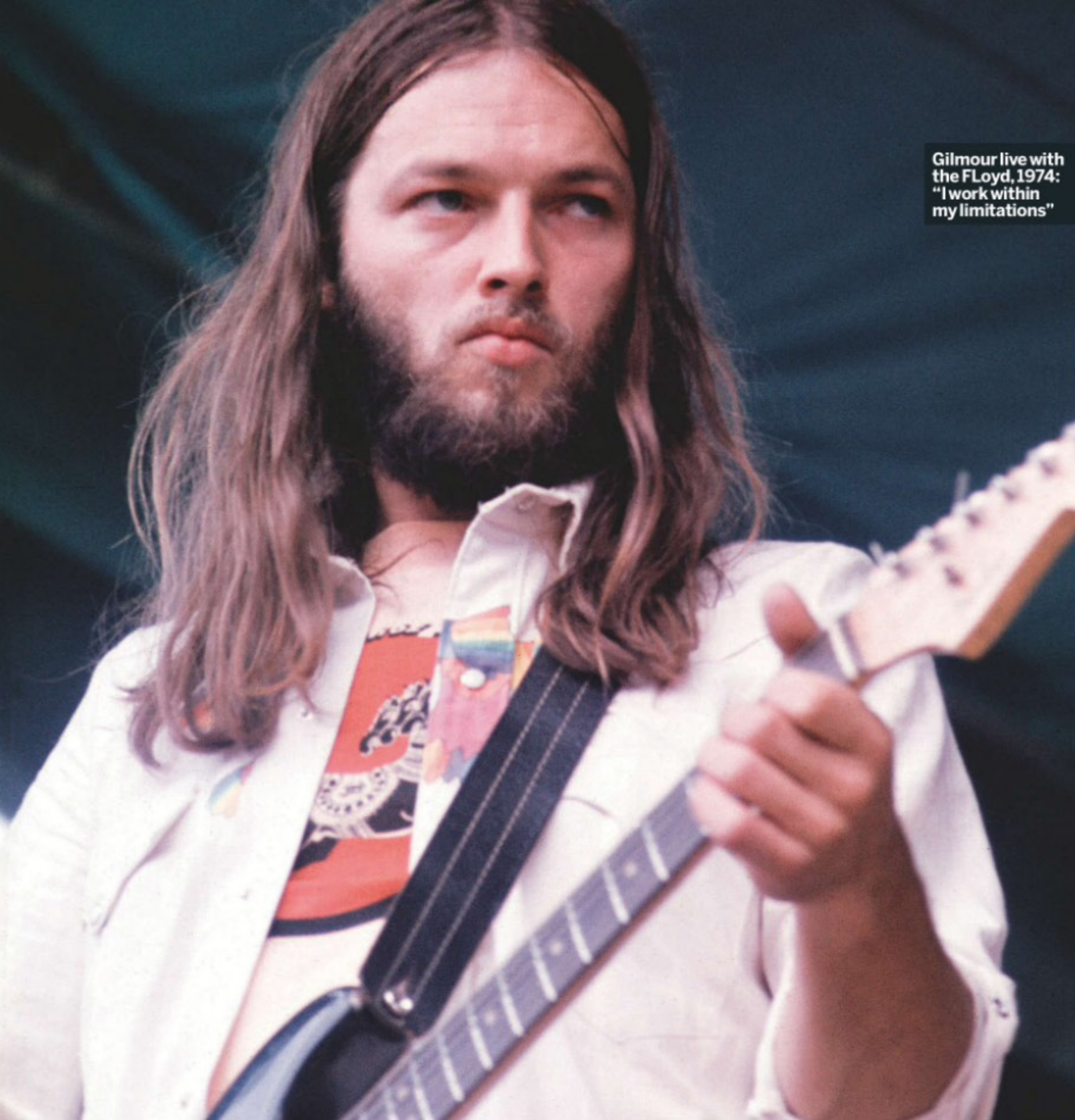
## "BY THE TIME SYD LEFT, THE BALL HAD DEFINITELY STOPPED ROLLING. WE HAD TO START IT ALL OVER AGAIN WITH SAUCERFUL..."

road to some kind of return. It was the LP we began building from. The whole conception of *A Saucerful Of Secrets* has nothing to do with what Syd believed in or liked.

"We continued playing some of his songs because none of us were getting good enough material fast enough to be able to do without them. Which also, therefore, meant that I had to fit in with his style to an extent because his songs were so rigidly structured around it. Oh, and by the way, the band, when I joined, never ever said 'play like Syd Barrett'. That was the very last thing they wanted!"

Backstage in Edinburgh, 1974





Gilmour live with the Floyd, 1974: "I work within my limitations"

## “BY THE WAY, THE BAND, WHEN I JOINED, NEVER EVER SAID ‘PLAY LIKE SYD BARRETT’. THAT WAS THE VERY LAST THING THEY WANTED!”

particularly outstanding at any one thing. Or is that the way he's intended it?

"No. But I work within my limitations. But then, whether I'm a good or bad guitarist isn't really relevant. If I try my damndest to do my best, although for the first half of that tour I was, well—rusty. I hadn't played for a long time and my fingers were really stiff. But also I would say that I got very good by the time we were halfway through."

And the accusation that from where you all stand it's impossible for you to relate any more to the thoughts of the average punter?

"If you're referring to that bit which says something about out 'desperately bourgeois existences'?... (The original quote—Kent's—runs, "I can't think of another rock group who live a more desperately bourgeois existence in the privacy of their own homes.") Well, I mean, how do you or he know how we live our lives? Apart from you marginally—about me? Do you? Does Nick? He hasn't been to any of our houses. He's absolutely no idea of how I spend my life apart from what you might've told him—and you don't know how the others live. Do you think my life is so desperately bourgeois?

"My house is not particularly grand. Have you seen Roger's house? He lives in a five grand terraced house in Islington. So I really can't see how Kent can sit there and say things like that. He's no idea of what he's talking about."

He does admit to a kind of laziness in the band, though. He's also realistic about their individual instrumental prowess.

"In terms of musical virtuosity we're not

really anywhere, I think; individual musicianship is below par."

And no, they're not 'bereft of ideas'—just resting. And worrying about a follow-up to *Dark Side...*, which has, he claims, "trapped us creatively". In passing, he says the lyrics are obvious intentionally. "We tried to make them as simple and direct as possible yet, as we were writing them, we knew they'd be misunderstood. We still get people coming up to us who think '*Money—it's a gas*' is a direct and literal statement that 'we like money'."

The point—a good one I thought—about the appeal of Floyd (and similar bands) being associated with the rapid sophistication in stereo equipment is tossed out entirely.

"Six years ago," says Gilmour impatiently, "we still sold albums yet hardly anyone in this country had a stereo. It was all Dansettes..."

And yet, from random sampling of friends with Floyd albums, invariably the first thing said is, 'Oh such and such track sounds great on my stereo.' Surely this is a case of packaging to some extent taking priority over contents?

"No. That's ridiculous. I suppose the same criticism would apply to Stevie Wonder..."

Well, as it happens...

To Kent's rather brilliant summing up. The

para, which starts, "OK boys, now this is really going to hurt". If I may remind you: "What the two Floyd shows amounted to in the final analysis was not merely a kind of utterly morose laziness which is ultimately even more obnoxious than callow superstar 'flash', but a pallid excuse for creative music which comes dangerously close to the Orwellian mean for a facile soulless music that would doubtless rule the airwaves and moreover be touted as fine art in the latter's vision of 1984."

"I mean," he continued, "one can easily envisage a Floyd concert in future consisting of the band simply wandering onstage, setting all their tapes into action, putting their instruments on remote control and then walking off behind the amps to talk football or play billiards."

"Personally," Gilmour states stoically, "I don't believe any of that rubbish about 1984."

I really do.

"But, I mean, what difference is there between our sort of music and anyone else's, apart from the fact that maybe most of the other bands just play music for the body?—and they're hardly progressive at all. Not that I think we're wildly progressive, either."

But at its worst, a stage show like Floyd's only dulls an audience's sensibilities even to the extent of sending them to sleep. Nothing is left for them to project their imagination into—it's the difference between the holding power of a radio play and a TV play. And in any case, how does it

feel to be part of a show where the crowd doesn't even give you a ripple for a good solo, yet applauds a bucket of dry ice every time?

"Yeah. That's all part of dramatic effect, isn't it?"

And that's a lame comeback.

"We went through a period where we blew out our entire light show for two years and there was no real difference. I know for a

fact it wouldn't make any difference if we did it again. We've never been hyped. There's been no great publicity campaign. It's built up purely on the strength of gigs.

"I don't think we're remotely close to that thing about tapes, do you?"

On the strength of the Wembley things, yes. You looked bored and dispirited.

"Not bored. Dispirited. It's depressing when you're fighting odds like dud equipment. Energy soon flags. We weren't pleased to do an encore, because we didn't deserve it."

Why didn't they say so, then? You know, don't the olde showbiz batcave?

"I'm not interested in disguising my feelings onstage with showbiz devices. I've seen hundreds of bands do that. Does anybody respect them? From what he writes, Nick Kent seems to believe in it all—the old thing of *The Show Must Go On, Never Let The Public See Your Feelings* and things like that?"

Wouldn't the discipline of forcing just a little of that attitude on yourselves help in situations like that?

"No. When I'm standing there I'm conscious of trying to give the most I can," says Gilmour emphatically. "And I don't need to have clean hair for that." 🐘

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# ‘WE ALWAYS ARGUED, ARGUMENTS COME OUT OF PASSION’

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In 2003, Roger Waters, Dave Gilmour, Richard Wright and Nick Mason tell the complete story of *The Dark Side Of The Moon*.

CAROL CLERK hears all about the politics, the money, the drugs (or lack of them) and the rototoms, and discovers that, 30 years on, the Floyd are still bickering about who did what on their landmark album.

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ROGER WATERS

BASS, VOCALS, VCS3, TAPE EFFECTS, LYRICS

*Uncut* meets Roger Waters at the five-star Berkeley Hotel in London's Knightsbridge. We are taken to his suite by his manager, Mark Fenwick, aloof and businesslike in a suit as he supervises his client's appointments. Mr Fenwick reappears in the room 15 minutes before the interview is due to end, discreetly standing by the door so you know that the clock is ticking just as loudly as any of those on *The Dark Side Of The Moon*.

A silver-haired Waters looks distinguished, and relaxed in jeans. There's a headmasterly air about him, an unquestionable authority, a sense of purpose and an inclination to get the job done rather than indulge in any introductory small-talk, which he tolerates, just.

Like his former bandmates in Pink Floyd, Waters recalls little of the dry dates and details, the sessions and the sequence of events that produced their classic album. Ask about Abbey Road, where it was recorded, and he will remember more about the studio's cricket teams than which recording facility they used and when.

He thinks and talks visually, personally, sometimes tangentially, and with a serious and single-minded commitment to the ideas at the heart of this most celebrated concept album. Waters is prepared to enter immediately into weighty territory and he smiles rarely, but unexpectedly bursts into laughter at the memory of Wings guitarist Henry McCullough's immortal line on the record: "I don't know. I was really drunk at the time."

UNCUT: What was your original vision for the album?

WATERS: I'm not sure when it came to me that one could make an entire album about things that could impinge upon one's life in an emotional or physical way. We had a meeting in Nick Mason's flat somewhere in Camden Town [*St Augustine's Road*]. I remember sitting in his kitchen, looking out at the garden and saying, "Hey, boys, I think I've got the answer," and describing what it could be about.

**How did you describe it?** That it was about all the pressures and difficulties and questions that crop up in one's life and create anxiety, and the potential you have to solve them or to choose the path that you're going to walk.

**What was their reaction?** There was a feeling of, "Well, yeah, all right."

It's been suggested that while you were eager to write meaningfully, other members of Pink Floyd were less interested in the lyrical content of the album. Rick, I remember, did interviews at that time saying, "We don't care about the lyrics." And I was thinking, "You speak for yourself, I care about them." Always have.

**How much did you resent this attitude?** We always had our differences – witness what happened later on, the ways we parted in 1979, 1980 or whenever it was [1979, when Rick Wright left the band for some years over his hostilities with Waters]. He and Dave, I think, always resented the idea that I put a lot of emphasis upon emotion, politics, philosophy and all those things that they felt shouldn't really be a component. They've always been central to all my work.

**It was called a concept album, although there's more than one theme running through it – madness, sadness, time, life,**

are confused as much by religion as politics. We have to be so aware of this now with the coming of the next crusade. In 2003, you know, 600 years later, we're looking at a new crusade.

**Presumably you're talking about Iraq.** Iraq or Bradford. Take your pick.

**Your lines about cannon fodder in "Us And Them" have taken on a renewed, albeit slightly different, resonance today: "Forward he cried from the rear and the front rank died."** Absolutely. Usually for short-term political ends.

**The lyrics alternate between big, universal topics and local ones – in "Us And Them" there's the old guy on the street who doesn't have the price of a cup of tea, or the general, sitting and moving the lines on the map. Did you use these specific portrayals to bring the wider issues closer to home?** Yeah, I guess so. All those political questions can always be reduced to some kind of microcosm. It's all

very well to be involved in grand political thoughts or acts, but it all comes back to one's own life and how you lead it and how you treat people on a personal level. I like to give people money on the streets, but that's 'cos it's really easy.

I stay in this hotel sometimes when I come to London and my doctor's just round the corner,

so occasionally I go and see him. There's usually a couple of people sleeping in doorways. I always give them some money. They're not coping. They're not professional beggars who sit underneath cash machines. If you're sleeping in doorways, you just haven't got it together. Most of them are alcoholics, but I like to think if I was sleeping in a doorway and someone gave me £20, it would lighten the load slightly, for a few minutes even. At a certain point, you find yourself irritated by people. I get as irritated as anybody else when someone cleans the windscreen.

**In "Time", you warn young people about squandering precious years – "You fritter and waste the hours in an offhand way" – and you encourage initiative. Do you see any irony in the fact that an entire generation of hippies and students spent weeks and months lying on floors, stoned or tripping, listening to *The Dark Side Of The Moon*?** I don't see anything wrong, when you're in your adolescence, with getting stoned, if you're aware of the fact that you're getting stoned because you want to, and because you can have that luxury. You have no responsibilities at that age, particularly. It may well be that it's important to lie around stoned, listening to music for a year or two. But that's not really the point of the song. It's actually about understanding your own autonomy. I wouldn't want to preach to anybody.

I used to go and stand on the South Bank at Arsenal every week. It was great; I loved it. Some people would say, "What a waste of time." So it's not about that. I suddenly

"DARK SIDE IS MY BABY. IN TERMS OF WHAT THE RECORDS WERE ABOUT, THEY WERE MY IDEAS AND I WROTE THEM" – WATERS

**death. Is it possible to summarise everything that you wanted to express on *The Dark Side Of The Moon*?** If there's any central message, it's this: this is not a rehearsal. As far as we know – and I know there are some Hindus that would disagree with this – you only get one shot, and you've got to make choices based on whatever moral, philosophical or political position you may adopt.

As I say in the very first lyric, "*Breathe, breathe in the air, don't be afraid to care.*" You make choices during your life, and those choices are influenced by political considerations and by money and by the dark side of all our natures. You get the chance to make the world a lighter or a darker place in some small way. We all get the opportunity to transcend our tendencies to be self-involved and mean and greedy. We all make a small mark on the great painting of life.

If *The Dark Side Of The Moon* is anything, it's an exhortation to join the flow of the river of natural history in a way that's positive, and to embrace the positive and reject the negative, given that one might be able to identify with the things which seem to be a matter of great confusion to a lot of people.

[Quoting from "*Breathe Reprise*"] "*Far away across the field, the tolling of the iron bell, calls the faithful to their knees, to hear the softly spoken magic spells.*" People

TRACK BY TRACK

**SPEAK TO ME** (Mason) **WATERS:** It's a kind of classical overture, a standard device used for hundreds of years – put some elements of the work together at the beginning, as a taster. **MASON:** The extra voices, the chink of money, the heartbeat, ticking clocks, the big, backward chord that introduces "*Breathe*". . . **WRIGHT:** The snippet of Clare [Torry] singing is, to me, the best part. **GILMOUR:** We talked about what should be in it, and I think then Roger put most of it together with Nick and gave him the credit. I'm sure Nick played his part.

Entering the *Dark Side*:  
at the Winter Gardens,  
Bournemouth, January  
22, 1972 – an early  
TDSOTM show



realised at 29 that I had been fulfilling someone else's prophecy. I was programmed by my childhood and education into believing that I was preparing for a life that was going to start later. It was never explained to me as a child that I was actually, moment by moment, in it.

**Also in "Time", you say, "Every year is getting shorter, never seem to find the time..." That's a very depressing discovery for a person only in their twenties.** I still have those feelings. I realise now they're something of an illusion. A lot of writers say, "I've gotta get up at six in the morning, I've gotta start at eight and work until lunchtime, I've gotta do 400 words a day." I've never been able to work like that.

Sometimes it's a concern. It may be that I could have produced another 20 albums. I like to think that maybe some of the connections I make are because I want to go fishing, and I'm more positive about my work like that. I allow the pressure to build up and when I feel pregnant pressure, I actually sit down at the piano and work at something.

**It's OK to go fishing, because "Breathe" seems to say, don't forget to stop and smell the roses.** Actually... it does mean that. It's very easy to wake up in the morning and get on with whatever you have to do. I used to go on the Underground from Goldhawk Road on

the Hammersmith & City line towards Paddington, and some artist had written on the concrete beside that line, "Same thing day after day, get up, get on the Tube, come home, watch TV, go to bed." It repeated all along the side of the tube line until you were going so fast you couldn't read it any more and then you went into the tunnel. It was a great piece of art.

So I think it's important to encourage people to be aware of what's going on... I feel we're increasingly in danger of finding ourselves in Huxley's *Brave New World*. We're controlled with diet and television, and it would be very easy for this to be the millennium of the living dead.

You see McDonald's on the Champs Elysée. What the fuck's going on with the French? The last bastion of culinary standards, and they trudge into McDonald's and buy this shit. Why? I don't understand it. People need to be encouraged not to be pawns in the game.

**"Time" ends with the lines: "The time is gone, the song is over, thought I'd something more to say." So you're saying that before death – "The Great Gig In The Sky" – most people run out of time to fulfil their hopes and dreams? That's a chilling thought.** Maybe it is. Maybe we all suffer from the feeling of lost opportunities, or you could have done better, or done more. Maybe it's comforting to hear that feeling expressed in a piece of work

that's been as successful as this one.

People often think, 'If only... I could write the hit song, or have the success, everything would be OK.' It's very nice, but it doesn't solve any of the problems you might feel about yourself. The feelings that you have fundamentally spring from the nature of the relationship you had with loved ones when you were babies and children, and you transcend that through an inward journey and not through connections to the world of commerce or entertainment.

**The phrase "dark side of the moon" arises in "Brain Damage". Does it refer to the dark side of the mind that has the potential for insanity, or is it a catch-all phrase to describe any number of bad things that can befall the personality?** It's more a general catch-all. It's also to suggest that there's a camaraderie involved in the idea of people who are prepared to walk the dark places alone. You're not alone! A number of us are prepared to open ourselves up to all those possibilities. So when I say, "I'll see you on the dark side of the moon", what I mean, I suppose, is, "If you feel that you're the only one... that you seem crazy 'cos you think everything is crazy – you're not alone."

It's all *Star Wars* – the light side and the dark side in us all. That's the good thing about Lucas' work, that these ideas get **CONTINUES OVER »**

to be expressed – which was a big part of science-fiction writing in the '60s and '70s.

**Your most famous reference to Syd Barrett is “Shine On You Crazy Diamond” [from 1975’s *Wish You Were Here*], but the “lunatic” theme of “Brain Damage” was clearly a reference to him. You were obviously severely affected by what happened to Syd. Absolutely. It was a huge shock to me to see the ravages of schizophrenia at those close quarters.**

**Is the general thread of insanity running through the album also linked to your experience of Syd’s illness? Yeah, maybe. I think that’s certainly one of the elements. There’s no way to deal with it [schizophrenia]. Certainly there wasn’t with Syd.**

**Are you still in touch with him? No, I’m not. He doesn’t like to be reminded of his times with the band.**

**The *Dark Side Of The Moon* originally went under the title of ‘Eclipse (A Piece For Assorted Lunatics)’ – before the closing track, “Eclipse”, actually existed. How did it come about as the finale? We’d started playing everything on the road before we recorded the album. I suggested it all needed an ending, I wrote “Eclipse” and brought it into a gig, at the Colston Hall in Bristol, on a piece of lined paper with the lyrics written out. We learnt it.**

**Would you agree that the album ends pessimistically, but with a small ray of hope?**

It isn’t very positive, but it’s very true. “*And everything under the sun is in tune, but the sun is eclipsed by the moon*” – saying that there’s the potential to express the positive side of everything, but that all the stuff that we have talked about on the rest of the record has the potential to get in the way, and it’s up to us to make a change. We all get to choose to some extent... We get the chance to think through questions of how useful it is to invade Iraq or not. We all get that opportunity – invade Iraq or protest in some way. We all get to choose our lives so long as we’re not being bombed...

**Do you remember a time when you realised this album could be made as a complete piece of music rather than a collection of separate songs? I think immediately after “Echoes”, which was one long piece of music. Within that were a number of different musical movements. It was the whole of that side of the record [1971’s *Meddle*]. Lyrically, it expressed some of the same preoccupations of alienation and isolation that crop up in *The Dark Side Of The Moon* – and *Wish You Were***

TRACK BY TRACK

**BREATHE** (Waters, Gilmour, Wright)  
**WATERS:** I remember doing that in Pittsburgh in a stadium with a mechanical, opening roof. As we started “Breathe”, the roof opened. It was a starlit night, a stunning moment.  
**MASON:** The stadium owner said at first it was too expensive. We established it would cost \$750 and decided it was worth it.  
**GILMOUR:** It was summer and it was very hot and smoky in the hall. When the roof opened, a real breeze went through the whole place. I stepped up to the mic and went, “*Breathe, breathe in the air*.”  
**WRIGHT:** There’s a slightly complicated sequence of chords which were influenced by Miles Davis’ *Kind Of Blue*, which I loved.  
**MASON:** It’s rather a Floyd thing, that slow, languorous flow.

*Here* and *The Wall*. You know, that stuff about two strangers passing in the street, that we’re connected, but we have problems allowing that connection to materialise.

**Why has *The Dark Side Of The Moon* remained relevant to successive generations of record-buyers? Is it because the lyrical ideas are eternal? It’s interesting... I have increasingly come to believe that the sonic and musical qualities of the record in some way express the underlying emotional and political concerns. There’s a symbiosis about it.**

**How does that happen, or do you not know? You get up in the morning and you go into the studio and there’s a blank canvas. You get the palette out, mix the paints and start painting, and at**

a certain point, you say, “It’s finished now.” How all the elements come together in that process of record-making... It’s the same as any other creative process, whether painting or a classical composer writing a symphony... There’s a bit of the brain that makes connections that seem obvious once they’ve been made but didn’t seem obvious before. That’s what writing is. That’s why it’s important, why you like to read good novels.

There’s a poem that I wrote a number of years ago that’s about writing. It’s about that

*solo credit* for] “Speak To Me”. I gave it to him. Nobody else had anything to do with it at all.

**Dave Gilmour has previously said he didn’t contribute as fully as he could have to the songwriting process; he was a bit lazy. Dave likes to think that his lack of contribution has to do with laziness.**

**What’s your reading of it? He doesn’t have very many ideas. He’s a great guitar player, but he’s not really a writer. However conscientious or hard-working Dave was, he would never actually write anything.**

**Was there any point in the recording sessions at which you realised that this album was turning into something special? Certain tracks started to turn out really well, like when [vocalist] Clare Torry came in and we worked on “The Great Gig In The Sky”. Alan Parsons [the engineer] had invited her in for the session. We were amazed at what she did. I didn’t know her then. But we became friends afterwards when I moved to East Sheen in 1980 and we lived a few doors away from each other. I used to see her walking her bull terrier on Sheen Common. I’d have the cocker spaniel with me.**

When we finished the record, I had a very strong feeling (a) that the work was really good and (b) that it was going to be successful. It was exciting to work on.

**Did you realise that you were making a perfect soundtrack to people’s drug experiences? We weren’t aware of that at the time.**

**Is it true that you took no drugs during the recordings? Probably I was taking something... no, maybe not. Maybe I’d stopped smoking dope at that time. I’d stopped taking acid. I only did that a couple of times, and that was in the ‘60s. I tried to give up cigarettes, which I’d smoked since I was 14. I tried cigars for a time. I**

went through a couple of years pretending not to smoke cigarettes. One of the ways I did this was to smoke hash joints. I was addicted to tobacco – the hash was irrelevant. So I was stoned for a couple of years, and then I realised that, so I stopped smoking dope because I got bored with being stoned all the time. For the last few years of smoking cigarettes, I wasn’t smoking dope any more.

In 1975, I went to stay in my little house in Greece and I bought 200 Marlboro Reds on the plane going over. I said, “When I finish these 200 fags, that’s it.” I finished them a few days later. I came downstairs the next morning and found the longest dog-end in the ashtray, straightened it out, lit it and thought, “What are you doing?” I crushed it out and went cold turkey. That was 28 years ago. I have promised myself when I’m 75 or something, I’ll start smoking cigarettes again.

**The album was recorded at Abbey Road. How important was that? We were contracted to**

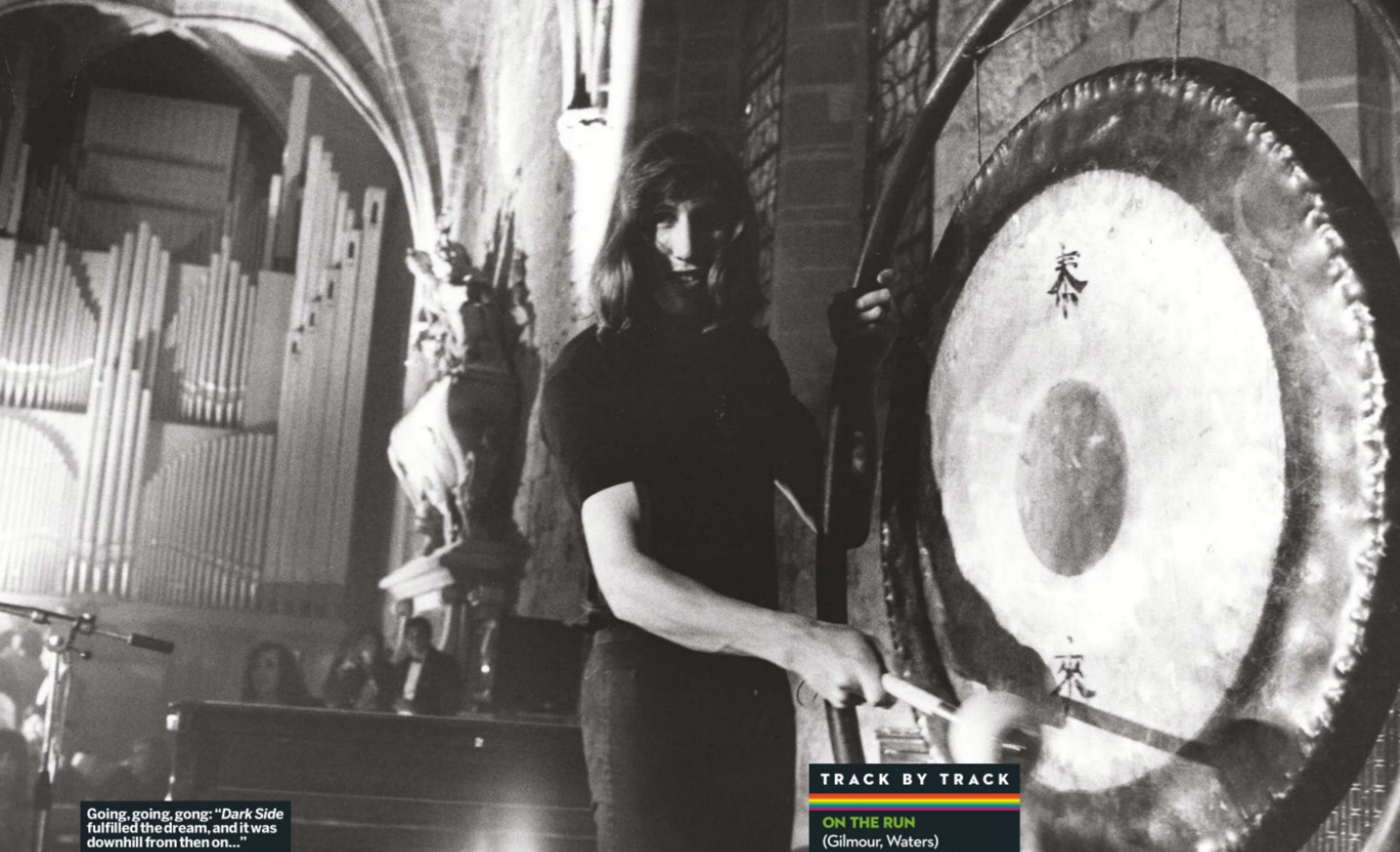
“RICK DID INTERVIEWS SAYING, ‘WE DON’T CARE ABOUT THE LYRICS.’ AND I WAS THINKING, ‘YOU SPEAK FOR YOURSELF’” – WATERS

moment when you’re reading a good book, getting close to the end, and you start putting it down ‘cos you don’t want to finish it.

In that poem, I wrote, “*There’s a magic in some books... A man will eke the reading out, guard it like a canteen in the desert heat, but sometimes needs must drink and then the final drop falls sweet, the last page turns, the end.*” That’s how I feel about writing. It’s that important.

**Was *The Dark Side Of The Moon* your baby? It was. This album is my baby. In terms of what the records were about – they were my ideas and I wrote them. Dave particularly, but Rick as well, had major, important contributions.**

**By all accounts, you feel that you were too generous with the songwriting credits on the album. I’ve regretted it rather a lot since, but I’m over that now. I went through many years when I really regretted having given away half the writing credits, particularly [Nick Mason’s**



Going, going, gong: "Dark Side fulfilled the dream, and it was downhill from then on..."

## TRACK BY TRACK

### ON THE RUN

(Gilmour, Waters)

**WATERS:** It's about fear of flying, which we all developed at some time. **WRIGHT:** I was exhausted by the grind of travelling. For me, it expressed that rather than the fear of crashing in an aircraft.

**MASON:** We had one particularly scary flight back from Japan in a thunderstorm. After that, we were just dreadful. Someone said, "You need to learn to fly." So I did. So did Steve O'Rourke and Dave. It cured me. I absolutely love it now. I still fly. Musically, the main element is Rick on the Farfisa, the rhythm thing is the VCS3, and there are backwards cymbals.

**GILMOUR:** I put an eight-note sequence into the Synthesizer and sped it up. Roger thought it wasn't quite right. He put in another, quite like mine, and I hate to say, it was marginally better. We added the footsteps, the slide guitar zooming around wildly, and the voices.

EMI and we recorded in Abbey Road willy-nilly. There was always a great atmosphere there, a very great feeling of family. We used to have a cricket match every year against Abbey Road. We had some extraordinary teams – Chris Spedding in his green alligator, high-heeled boots, Roy Harper inevitably out in the first couple of balls who would go and sit somewhere on a hillside and sulk...

I developed a powerful attachment to Abbey Road. Studio 2 has been kept as a shrine to The Beatles. It's still exactly the same, although the control room has changed completely. I went back there a few weeks ago. Hopefully, they'll keep it like that. It's a great room.

**If today's technology had been at your disposal then, how would this have affected the album?** Hardly at all.

**Surely it would at least have made life easier, particularly with all the sound effects?** Well, yeah. We did all that work on old machines. Some of the things I did on *The Dark Side Of The Moon*... the loop with all the cash registers [from "Money"] I did at home on a Revox A77 with bits of quarter-inch tape. I had a loop about four feet long, and I took it into EMI – "Stick that on the two-track and run it onto a track on the multi-track." Things like that you can do really, really quickly and simply now. In those days, there were no long, digital delays. You had to work with tape delays.

**The sound of jangling coins on "Money" was a home-made effort too, wasn't it?** I threw money into a mixing bowl made by my wife at the time, who was a potter. I recreated the sound effects for that. The cash registers came off a sound-effects album. The footsteps [on

"On The Run"] were recorded in the underground tunnel from the Natural History Museum that runs through to South Kensington Tube station.

**Were the sound-effects something that cropped up as the recordings progressed, or were they always going to be part of the album?** I suspect I always had that in mind, but the recording of the voices... I absolutely remember the way I got the voices was to write a bunch of questions on a series of cards.

**Famously, you showed the cards to everyone you bumped into at the Abbey Road studios – doormen and superstars alike.**

They just had the cards to respond to – "How do you feel about dying?", "When were you last violent?", "Were you in the right?" Henry McCullough, when asked, "When were you last violent?" said, "Last night." "Were you in the right?" "I don't know, I was really drunk at the time." [Laughs uproariously].

Wings were in Studio 2 at the time, and that's why Henry was there. The interesting thing is that when [director] Adrian Maben made the *Pink Floyd Live At Pompeii* film, there are some shots of me working on the VCS3 synthesiser, making "On The Run", and there are shots of Dave overdubbing something – and we're in No 2. Maybe we mixed the album in Studio 3.

**How do you feel now towards your former bandmates?** Nick and I have rekindled our

friendship and we have dinner together and that's been a recent thing, within the last couple of years, and I'm pleased about that. He was the only close friend I had in the band. Dave and I don't really speak. We were always so at odds philosophically and politically, and it spread into all kinds of bickering.

**During the recordings?** I don't think so. Maybe a little bit. It really developed after *The Dark Side Of The Moon*.

**Did that happen as a result of the album's success?** I think it did, partly. We had fulfilled the basic need we had to work together as a group. We'd cracked it after *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, and we clung together. I'm quite glad we did. We did some very good work after that. But we'd fulfilled the dream, and to us, in some

fundamental sense, it was over, so it was all downhill from then on.

**What was the source of the problem between you and Dave?** I think Dave's mum always thought he should be a leader, but he was not a writer, so he never could be. Dave believed then, and when we finally split he still believed, that it was wrong to make political statements.

**And at the same time, the frustrations over publishing were beginning to surface.** I talk about it on [the 1992 solo album] *Amused To Death*, in "What God Wants, Pt 2" **CONTINUES OVER**



Rick Wright: "We were at the height of our creativity..."

II" – "God wants friendship, God wants fame, God wants credit, God wants blame, God wants poverty, God wants wealth, God wants insurance, God wants to cover himself."

Friendship and fame, the credit and blame – that's the icky stuff you get in rock'n'roll bands. They're all very needy emotionally, so the way that we claw each other's eyes out over the credit and wealth is quite ugly.

**Are you as guilty as anybody else?** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Roger Waters is currently working on a new album: "I've written a bunch of songs, and I find myself torn between allowing it to be about problems with relationships and being dragged into the whole polemic about Bush and Iraq and Blair. I think it may end up being about all those things."

## RICHARD WRIGHT

KEYBOARDS, VOCALS, VCS3

Richard Wright opens the front door in person. There are no managers, no minions leaping into view as he ushers *Uncut* into his house in a leafy and exclusive area of London's Notting Hill and immediately rushes off to make coffee. The large, comfortable sitting room seems to suit his personality: it's not at all ostentatious. The laminated wooden floor is made cosy with rugs, a couple of paintings are stacked against the wall, and a modest collection of CDs is tucked into a shelving unit.

This is clearly a family home: lived-in, like his jeans. In the hall, the chandelier, gleaming above a shoe cupboard stuffed with pairs of trainers and a display of children's artwork on the mantelpiece, offers an incongruous flash of glamour. A cat pads into the sitting room to pour itself round the ankles of the unfamiliar company before Wright returns with a cafetière, cups and saucers on a tray, and sits on the sofa.

Friendly cat you have here, offers *Uncut*.

"They're not that friendly. Which one was it?" he retorts, going on to explain that the cat is overweight.

Richard – not Rick – is a stickler for detail: it is, of course, "a prism" rather than "a triangle" on the famous artwork. He is also patient, and given to comprehensive explanation in the interests of getting things right. Not wishing to offend anyone, he is equally determined to defend his own position in the history of *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. He is likeably anxious, almost jittery, confessing that he hasn't done an interview in years.

## TRACK BY TRACK

**TIME** (Mason, Waters, Wright, Gilmour)  
**WRIGHT:** Those big, grand keyboard chords are mine. Dave used to complain I'd write in these hard keys and weird major and minor sevenths, which is difficult to play on a guitar. The rototoms are great.  
**MASON:** I think they just happened to be around the studio. I went out and bought my own afterwards – the budget ran to it.

**UNCUT:** Roger believes that the music captures all of the emotional content of his lyrics. Where did all this emotion and magic come from?

**WRIGHT:** I would say they happened spontaneously. When we did *Dark Side*, we were at the height of our creativity. It has the best songs the Floyd have ever written. Even though I wasn't great friends with Roger, there was a great working relationship. We had respect for each other.

With *Dark Side*, Roger had a clear idea of what he wanted to say. He wanted to keep it in very simple language and make a 'concept' album [*winces*], and it was the first one we'd really done.

It expressed emotions that I think we all felt at the time. He was affected by us being on the road all the time, losing touch with families, and having memories of childhood. I think the music and lyrics just came together.

**Roger's favourite track on the album is one he wrote with you – "Us And Them".** Funnily enough, it's one of my favourite tracks. It's a great example of the music and the lyrics combining to create emotion. It's probably the best song Roger and I have written together.

**It wasn't originally written for *Dark Side*, was it?** The arrangements for the verses came from a piece I'd done for *Zabriskie Point* [director Michelangelo Antonioni's cult movie of 1970]. It was called "The Violence Sequence", and it was written for the scene where the students were being beaten up by the police on campus. I started off trying all this violent music. Then, one evening, I started playing this melancholy chord sequence. It was interesting to put something really quite sweet behind the violence. It makes it more real. Antonioni loved it, then he didn't like it and it wasn't used. So when we came to write "Us And Them", I still had this piece in my head. Then we needed a middle-eight. I came up with the chords for that. It's very flowing and sweet if you look at the verse, then there's the contrast, this big, harder chorus. With the lyrics about the war and the general sitting back – it worked so well.

**“The Great Gig In The Sky” was your composition. Did you know that you were writing the soundtrack to *Death*?** Not at the time. My memory was, “We want an instrumental.” I went away and came up with this piece, and everyone liked the chord sequence. It was a question of, “What do we do with it?” and we decided to get someone to sing. Clare Torry came in and she thought we were going to give her the top line and lyrics. We said, “Just busk it.” She was terrified – “I don’t know what to do.” “Just go in and improvise.” Which she did, and out came this wonderful vocal.

I didn’t, when I wrote it, think, ‘This is all about death,’ ‘cos I don’t think I would have written that chord structure. I get so excited when I hear Clare singing. For me, it’s not necessarily death. I hear terror and fear and huge emotion, in the middle bit especially, and the way the voice blends with the band. The way it was mixed helps.

**Was there also a musical vision for the album, existing alongside the concept, before the writing began?** I would say there wasn’t. We started off like we always started off – in the studio or the rehearsal room, with everyone just playing things. Once you’ve got a starting point, and the band are excited and flowing, it grows by itself. It grows, it grows, it grows. I suspect that’s how *Dark Side* started. I don’t remember a great deal about the writing or the rehearsals or the whole process of how it was put together. We were performing most of it live before we started recording it.

It was a very exciting and creative time in Abbey Road, a very happy time, very harmonious. We weren’t the best of friends, but we were very together. We were all into this project, and we worked extremely hard and quite fast. It was, quite honestly, the last time, the end of that era of the band working very closely and creatively together. *Wish You Were Here* was great, but the tensions were beginning to come between us. But, I remember, not on *Dark Side*.

**Were there no disagreements during the recordings?** We had a few disagreements on the publishing when we were close to finishing it – “Well, who gets what?” Nick gets credited on “Any Colour You Like” and “Speak To Me”, when, in fact, that was just us giving him some publishing because *Dark Side* is essentially Roger on lyrics and Dave and me on the music.

It was a great working partnership. To this day, I think it’s sad we lost it, but it does happen.

**Roger isn’t sure if he was smoking dope or not during this period. Do you remember?** I have no recollection of him or me smoking joints as we recorded *Dark Side*. We were both smoking cigarettes. I did, of course, smoke dope, but it doesn’t agree with me. I’ve had terrible times

on it. I had a nightmare once where I did have something in Paris. I knew I had to go onstage in a couple of hours’ time and I got too stoned. I had a total freak-out.

If I had nothing to do, literally nothing, then I could have a joint and relax. If I had to do anything – play music, go anywhere, drive a car – I would just get paranoid. *Dark Side* certainly wasn’t recorded or written under a haze of drugs. I couldn’t have made that record if I was stoned out on dope.

**Yet it became the essential stoner album of the ’70s.** It wasn’t intended. People, I suppose, could say, “I’m going to listen to *Dark Side*, I’ll roll up a joint and experience it.” They would have *Dark Side* parties in America. Timothy Leary, bless him, was saying, “You’ve got to tune in, drop out,” etc etc. I don’t believe that anyway. But it’s people’s choice to do whatever they like. We’re not responsible for it. In Australia, it was voted Favourite Album To Make Love To. It wasn’t always about drugs.

**“DARK SIDE WAS THE END OF THAT ERA OF THE BAND WORKING CLOSELY AND CREATIVELY TOGETHER” – WRIGHT**

**How did you achieve the integration of the keyboards and synths into the overall texture and drama of the album?** Just playing so well together. I did quite a lot of writing on *Dark Side*, therefore it was written on keyboards. Dave had to make his part to follow my keyboard structures. Later on, it would tend to be the other way round. Keyboards play a large part in the emotion of *Dark Side*. I’m very proud of their performance on it. There’s great empathy and interplay between the guitar and piano, and that quality brings a lovely warmth to the album. Although the lyrics are quite bleak and sad in places, I still find a huge warmth in it.

**Roger resented the fact that while the concept was of central importance to him, it wasn’t to the rest of the band.** I don’t remember a huge dispute. As a musician and a listener to music, I never laid that much importance on lyrics. To this day I will not often listen to the words, whoever the artist may be. The musicality of the sound of the words and tone of the voice I might like, but if they jump out at me or if they’re badly written, I find it disturbing, musically.

**According to Roger, you told an interviewer you weren’t bothered about the lyrics.** I may well have said that, but I might have meant that, for me, they weren’t as important as the music. I don’t think I had a problem with the quality of the lyrics at any time. Possibly Roger’s feelings and what he was trying to say

## TRACK BY TRACK

### BREATHE REPRISE

(Waters, Gilmour, Wright)  
**WATERS:** It’s about our attachment to the idea of being productive. Also about how organised religion can divert us from our potential to have empathy with other people.  
**WRIGHT:** It was a good idea to split the song up.  
**MASON:** It was a bit avant-garde. And it was a bloody good device not to have to write anything else.

weren’t necessarily things I felt. That was certainly true of *The Wall*. He was our lyricist on this album and I was happy to go along with that. There may have been evenings when I’d disagree with what he was saying politically, and still do. At the time, I don’t think I really agreed with the sentiments of “Money”.

**Does anything in particular still rankle?** Nothing really rankles with me now, because I’m older. Roger was probably

wiser than his 30 years. We were in a rock’n’roll band, we were swept away with the whole lifestyle, so to have someone seriously thinking about life – I admire him for coming up with these thoughts at that time. I can sympathise more now with what he was feeling and trying to say.

**Some of his preoccupations were pretty depressing for someone so young.** Certainly, he opened up all his traumas, which carried on through *Wish You Were Here* and into *The Wall*... I could empathise with those lyrics, but I didn’t find life so bleak as he was perhaps suggesting.

**Still, the lyrics hold out a degree of choice and hope.** There’s a ray of hope – “Be careful, these things could happen” – and people did feel uplifted, which I think is because of the music.

**How was it received live, before you recorded it?** It was received extremely well, with reverence. People were used to hearing five-minute songs or loud guitar solos, but to sit down and listen to one whole piece was in those days rare. It was a great piece to play live. I think it came into the public consciousness very quickly, *Dark Side*.

**How vital was the VCS3 synthesiser to the album?** It was one of the first synthesisers. I think we had the Mini-Moog as well. The VCS3 was the first one that we found. It was connected to the BBC Radiophonic Workshop. They showed it to us, and we took it back to the studio. It was sitting there in the control room and Roger, Dave and I would play around with it. After that, the Mini-Moog was my job. The VCS3 was a new toy. For then, it got amazing sounds. We spent hours putting plugs in it to get the tones. They were the first synths that gave you these big, meaty tones.

*Dark Side* had a four-piece set-up – guitar, keyboards, bass and drums – recording into a 16-track, plus the VCS3, and we used reverb units and echo machines. Definitely, the fact that we were so limited and we didn’t have much technology was what made the music sound so great. I would love to go back to having that simple set-up.

**The punks wanted to annihilate bands like the Floyd. More than two** CONTINUES OVER »

decades later, *The Dark Side Of The Moon* was held up as a great, ambient inspiration. Did this surprise you? No, not really. There's a huge influence. I wouldn't say it's just *Dark Side*. Clearly, the whole Syd Barrett thing – the sound of the guitar and keyboards – was influential, too. People tend now to look back. But we were looking forward. R'n'B had an influence in the first place, but we were trying to break free from all that and do something new.

Richard Wright is currently working on his own material, with Pink Floyd out of action. Feeling "fine" towards Gilmour and Mason, he says: "It's getting on for 10 years, and nothing's been done. That's down to Dave, who probably doesn't want to do it at the moment, and laziness on all our parts. I personally find it more of a struggle to create now than I did when I was 30."

NICK MASON

PERCUSSION, TAPE EFFECTS

It's in an unprepossessing backstreet not far from Caledonian Road in north London, through a blue door. You cross the courtyard, climb the metal staircase and enter a room that's not far off the size of a warehouse, and with something of the atmosphere of one, informally split into separate divisions.

The visitor is immediately confronted by a shiny, red, historic Formula 1 car, which we later discover is fitted with a computer simulator. Beyond it and to the left is a table, where Nick Mason is finishing lunch with his colleagues. This is the head office of his own enterprise, 10 Tenth, which supplies vehicles – everything from supercars to airplanes – to movie-makers, TV companies, advertisers and anybody else who can afford to hire them.

He dabs his mouth with a serviette, stands up to shake hands, and in minutes we are retiring to the sofa zone at the far end of the room. The back-wall shelves are stacked with filed material, books and videos relating to Pink Floyd, and to other things, too. His desk and computer are just a few strides across the room.

Mason has no affectations. Balding, tubby and wearing conservative brown trousers, precisely creased, he couldn't look less like the wealthy rock star or the high-flying company boss and racing driver that he is. And despite a refined eloquence, he seems to be as earthbound as his appearance would suggest, offering a humorous overview of events surrounding *The Dark Side Of The Moon* and a propensity for self-deprecating one-liners.

**UNCUT:** It appears that this was, largely, a drug-free album for the band. What are your memories of the time?

TRACK BY TRACK

**THE GREAT GIG IN THE SKY** (Wright)  
**MASON:** It was called "The Mortality Piece" originally. We wanted that keening wailing.  
**GILMOUR:** We recorded four or five tracks of Clare. One belted and another was soft. We mixed bits from each to make the final version.  
**WRIGHT:** Clare did this incredible screaming and was then very apologetic. We said, "It's wonderful!" It was a magical improvisation; you could never repeat it. She did try once at Knebworth, but she couldn't do it. To my regret, I did allow it once to be used in an advert for headache pills, which upset the others. At the time I thought, "Why not?" I got paid a lot of money for it.

MASON: A bit of rum and blackcurrant, occasionally.

**You didn't take any drugs?** For me, absolutely nothing. We were very straight, and I think the record reflects that. It's a carefully constructed piece. It's extraordinary – we were seen as "the psychedelic band". But the Psychedelic Kid [Barrett] left after about nine months. We only started in March 1967 as a professional band. He was really on the way out at the end of '67, early '68.

**Did you have any inkling that the album would become such an integral part of the drug culture?** It certainly wasn't designed in that way. In the early '70s, a lot of people listened to all music in a chemically-altered state.

**How do you think the album holds up after 30 years?** There are two elements to it. One is to

**The album was made very quickly by today's standards.** It was. I would say it was about three months of work, in total. The recording took place over quite a long period of time, and it was broken up by other things. We spent about three months touring, and five or six weeks on the ballet [*rehearsing and playing a live accompaniment for Les Ballets de Marseilles*]. *Live At Pompeii* was two weeks' work. We filmed there for a week and finished off with some time in the studio. The other film was about a month [*the soundtrack to Barbet Schroeder's La Vallée, released in 1972 as Obscured By Clouds*].

**Was there a moment of realisation for you, personally, that you were making a phenomenal album?** I don't think that happened. First of all, you're fairly close to it. You don't perceive it as being special. You do once it's sold so many millions and you look at it in hindsight. With all the other stuff going on, the most sense of it coming together would have been at the final part – although towards the end of it there were the arguments about the mixing, until we brought Chris [*Thomas, mixing supervisor*] into it.

**What arguments were those?** Particularly Roger and Dave disagreed fairly specifically. Dave preferred a slightly more orchestral feel, and Roger liked to bring things to the front. That's a real generalisation. It wouldn't be about changing anything, but about where things should be in the mix. Rick was probably a Dave supporter and I was

probably a Roger supporter, to put it into simple terms. We're not big on discussions – we tend to move straight into the argument. At some point, there was this idea of bringing Chris in. I suspect he sort of compromised.

**Did the arguments ever get to the point of anyone storming out?** I think we moved on to that later [*laughing*]. That tended to mean you'd lost anyway. I don't remember storming out.

**At the same time, Roger and Rick say this was a harmonious period for the group.** I think that's true. It's partly due to the way the band operated and what happened post-*Dark Side*, and also due to the technical requirements of the time. With more and more multi-tracking, it started making sense to record everything independently rather than together.

**Apparently, there were disputes over publishing and credits.** What does one say, really? No-one's ever going to get enough credit for what they did on something that's that successful. And it also depends upon how the listener feels. If they think the lyrics are the absolute crux of the whole record, then Roger was under-credited, and so on.

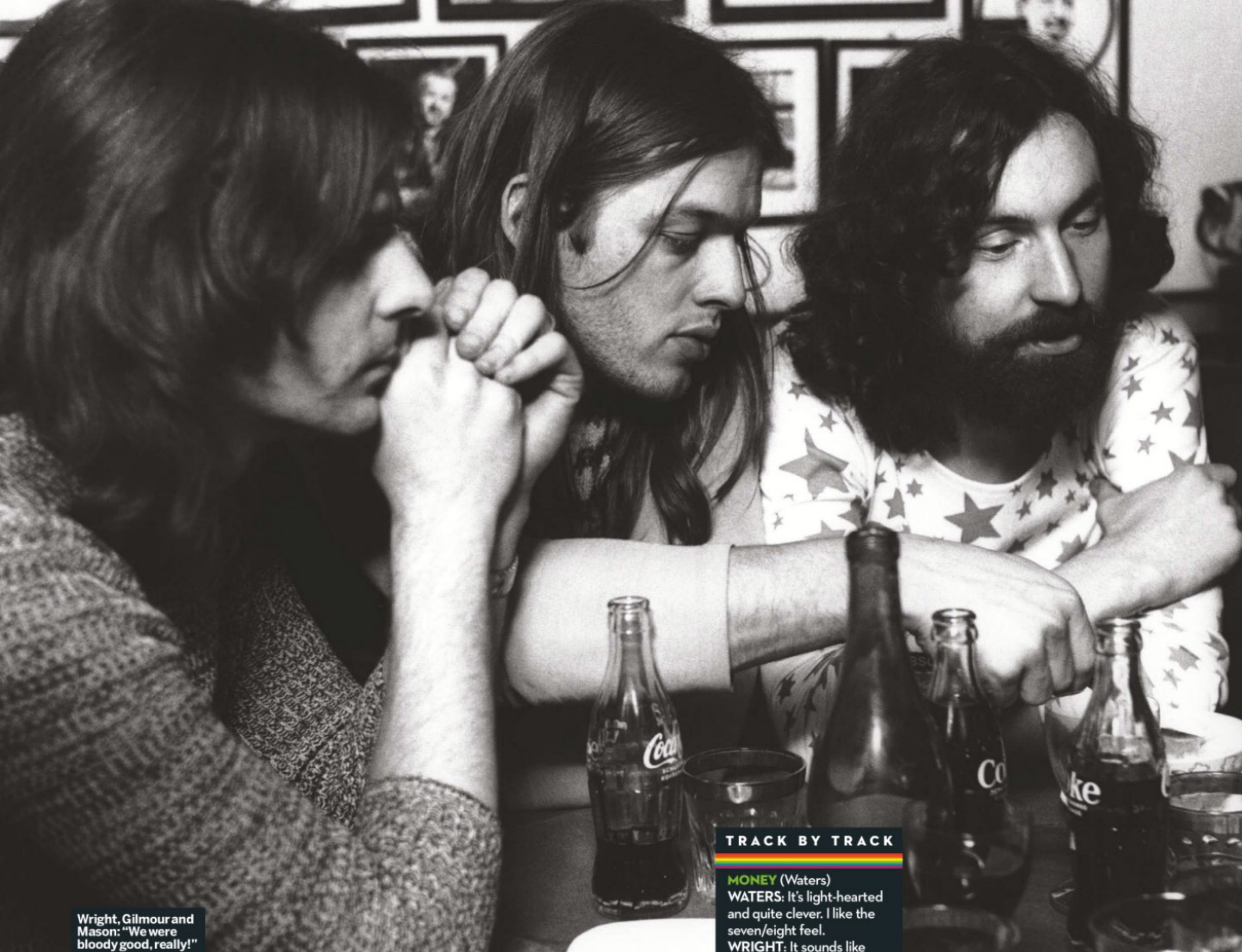
**Do you feel that you received the correct acknowledgement for your contributions?** I was probably over-credited.

“ROGER WAS NEVER KNOWN FOR HIS REASONABLENESS... HE'S ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST DIFFICULT MEN” – MASON

listen and think you'd do that differently or better, and the other is to hear it as a product of its time. It's held up incredibly well. The way things cross-fade and the layering, which is part of the special quality of it, still sounds really good. Due to all the layering, it's almost as if it's been compressed – it's squished up, and that's part of its attraction, I think.

**The album came to life at your home in Camden, when Roger presented his concept to the band. How did you feel about it?** Really weird and peculiar [*making hands tremble*]...

**Roger has complained that the rest of the band didn't share his commitment to the lyrics. Where did you stand on this?** Firmly in the middle. I've always been well-known for my fence-sitting and I'm certainly not going to change now. I think the key element of *The Dark Side Of The Moon* is that the sum was greater than the parts. The lyrics are very important, but the music is important as well, and so are the sound-effects, the voices, the concept, the fact that these ideas are rolled into one. We started playing the VCS3 synthesiser. There's a bit of avant-garde, a bit of rock'n'roll. It's like an air crash – you need a whole bunch of things to go wrong before you actually get the accident. You've probably got five different things that work for it.



Wright, Gilmour and Mason: "We were bloody good, really!"

#### TRACK BY TRACK

##### **MONEY** (Waters)

**WATERS:** It's light-hearted and quite clever. I like the seven/eight feel.

**WRIGHT:** It sounds like a straight four/four beat. When we came to play it, we couldn't work out why the drum beat was in the wrong place. At the time I felt it didn't fit with the rest of the LP. It does stand out.

**MASON:** It was incredibly difficult to play along with.

**GILMOUR:** Roger presented it as a complete demo. I added a guitar to the riff to make it more punchy. Then I had fun adding all sorts of other parts...

**Alan Parsons – who won a Grammy for engineering the album – has said that your contributions were crucial.** [*Feigns pride, but can't keep it up*] I'm really happy to have been part of it and I enjoyed making the record and I still like the sound of it.

**Roger and Rick, however, have said that the writing credits were given out almost like gifts. They have contested the credit, for example, on "Speak To Me".** It was an assembly that I did with the existing music. You could say there's no original material there, or you could say it's an entirely original assembly.

**Roger says it was his track, but he gave the credit to you.** That's his view. Roger was never well-known for his reasonableness. I think, 30 years on, to be crabbing about who did what when everyone knows that Roger wrote the lyrics for the thing... I'd have to say he's one of the world's most unreasonable and difficult men, but I'm very fond of him.

**You have dinner together, I believe.** Yes, and I'm really happy about that. I'm happy with the credit I received. Because I suppose the answer is, there's a sort of unfairness about it I benefit from. The individuals are to some extent hidden in [*the band identity*] and that's probably why he gets warmed up about it.

**How do you get on with Rick and Dave?** Rick, fine. Dave, when I see him, fine. I was more interested in the areas that Roger was interested in. The contributions I made tended to be along the lines of the special-effects and voices and cutting and editing of sound. They were of less interest to Dave and Rick.

**Did you spend a lot of time at the production end of things?** We all did. We had home studios, and bits and pieces would get done at home, like the loops. We were all at the studio throughout the making of the record, whereas in later years...

**What special-effects were you responsible for? The heartbeat was famously done on the bass drum...** It was probably someone else banging the drum. We set it up in the studio, and we took turns. We probably ended up with 30 different heartbeats, but who, exactly, did it? It could've been me, or it might just as easily have been Dave picking up the beat, or Roger. I can remember constructing the loop for "Money" at Roger's. We might have done that together or done various versions.

**Do you agree the music and the lyrics are inseparable?**

I think there's some synergy between them. It's like a film, say *Fantasia* and *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. If a film and its music work together, you can never, ever separate them. You can do untold damage. Once it has worked, it locks in so that you can never imagine it any other way. It seems absolutely perfect.

**To what extent did Alan Parsons and Chris Thomas influence the finished product?** Chris came in quite late on. I don't think he influenced it very much, but he did a very, very good job on the final mix.

Alan, without doubt, would have done more than simply engineer the record. He would have made suggestions about the music and how it should be constructed, and so we were extremely lucky to have him. Alan was definitely an engineer/producer.

**What was your most important contribution to the album?** My 'unique style of drumming' and an interest in the loops, the sound effects and the voices.

**The voices came from the responses to Roger's card-questions. Why did you reject the answers given by Paul and Linda McCartney?** We were all

CONTINUES OVER »

enormously respectful of Paul McCartney and it's extraordinary that we managed to avoid putting him on the record. And I suppose it's a credit to us that we thought about what would fit best. The voices we used were the people who really expressed themselves, whereas Paul and Linda were much more reserved, inevitably.

**What songs did you most enjoy playing live?** "Time", with the rototoms, was great fun to play, whereas I found "Us And Them" incredibly tedious. Certainly, in some of the live shows, you can almost hear the drummer going to sleep before he's woken up for the next part. The memory for me is the film that we showed when we played it live – people walking over Waterloo Bridge. It's extraordinary watching a slow-motion footstep.

**Why are people still listening to *The Dark Side Of The Moon*?** I think it's the rototoms.

**Is it surprising that the album continues to influence young musicians?** It's slightly surprising. Despite my modest demeanour, there's always a bit of the old, "We were bloody good, really." [*Sways shoulders, jokingly.*] It's always interesting to hear an idea revisited, apart from the tribute bands – an alien life-form.

**But you have to have a tribute band.**

I feel almost sad about them. Once you're a tribute band, you've given up your own thing. A number of them are bloody good. They can copy things we did. They can also play them better.

But leaving the tribute bands aside, there are influences where people have taken a sample, or perhaps the idea that you don't have to have the rhythm section banging through the entirety of the record. You can have layers and cross-fades and mood swings – do this business of drifting.

That's one thing that has lasted very well, the way that things cross from one idea to another imperceptibly. Funnily enough, it's something that was better done manually than by a computer. A computer rarely does it quite as sensitively; it tries to be accurate. *Dark Side* has a certain hand-made quality.

Nick Mason is typically blunt when asked what he's doing these days. Referring to the release of the 5.1 remix, he replies: "As my manager succinctly puts it, I'm in the recycling business."

#### DAVID GILMOUR VOCALS, GUITARS, VCS3

David Gilmour has invited us to his riverside studio – the splendid houseboat, Astoria, moored on the Thames at Hampton. It's surrounded by spectacular private gardens complete with their own 18th-century tunnel, leading the visitor safely underneath the busy

#### TRACK BY TRACK

##### US AND THEM (Waters, Wright)

**WATERS:** I like the lyrics, the chord sequence is beautiful and the sax solo's great.

**WRIGHT:** It's a very melancholic, emotional piece. It has quite a simple chord sequence, except for the rather strange third chord, influenced by jazz. It was an augmented chord, hardly ever used in pop music then.

**GILMOUR:** I asked Dick Parry to play beautiful, quiet, breathy sax. It's lovely. I worked really hard on all the vocal harmonies and backing vocals.



road outside. In the grounds is a large conservatory with a TV lounge, kitchen, dining area and all-day catering.

Gilmour enters in the manner of a country squire and, despite a reputation for being difficult, he's immediately friendly, welcoming. He's put on a few pounds over the years, he's greyer, his hair is short and he's braced against the fresh winds in a shirt and jumper – but he is instantly identifiable as David Gilmour.

We cross to the boat, a 90-foot craft built in 1911 for music-hall impresario Fred Karno, whose guests included Charlie Chaplin. The interior houses a sitting room, kitchen and bathroom as well as control room and studio, where we sit on a long window seat beside a drumkit that was recently used by Ringo Starr. The water is at window level, and swans float serenely past as Gilmour talks expansively – graciously waiving the agreed

time limit. He has two guitars beside him; he plucks at one, idly. The other, a Lewis, is the very instrument that produced the third solo on "Money". Later, Gilmour demonstrates the speeded-up, eight-note sequence from "On The Run" on his "briefcase" VCS3 Synthi. He also treats *Uncut* to a tape of Floyd playing "On The Run" live in Brighton in 1972, when it existed purely as a jam.

#### UNCUT: Is *The Dark Side Of The Moon* the performance of a lifetime?

**GILMOUR:** It's one of them. I like the following album [*Wish You Were Here*] just as much, and there are moments before and after, even in much more recent times, that I think are sublime. But its consistency, its subject matter, its lyrics, the music and everything all tied together to make one very original whole that you could say is once in a lifetime, although I don't, myself.

**Almost half a million people a year still buy the album in the US alone. Why?** I'm very thankful; it's very strange. The subjects that it addresses are pretty much eternal, and the music is always fairly direct, certainly compared to some of the things that we've done. And although it has its own Pink Floyd sound, there are no very unusual devices applied to it that can date it.

**Is it true you bet your manager, Steve O'Rourke, that it wouldn't go into the American Top 10?** Yes, it's true. The thing about the bet was, I couldn't lose. If it hadn't gone into the Top 10, then winning the bet would've been handy. And if I lost the bet, then I won anyway. I was very conscious of that.

**Did you pay up?** Yes, of course.

**You've been quoted as saying that you were a little lazy during the writing of the album. Is that right?** I would think I was a bit lazy during the songwriting. I didn't actually bring anything of mine into those rehearsal sessions – "Listen to this, it's great, why don't you write some words for it, Roger?" But it's not something I'm wracked with guilt about. It worked out perfectly. I was part of writing "Breathe" and "Time" and stuff, and the basic synthesiser part for the "On The Run" sequence was mine.

**Why did you take a back seat in the writing process? Was it because Roger and Rick had so many ideas?** I don't think so. I was just a bit flat – people go through these periods – and I think in the studio, while making the album, my contribution was fine. It was every bit as good as it should have been.

**What was that contribution?** It's very hard to tie down. I was very active in all the production side. Most of the melodies that I sang I made up in the studio at the time of doing them, or in the rehearsal room. That's the way we tended to work.

The guitar is the instrument that I chose or that chose me, and the one I obviously have the greatest facility with. I always wanted it to be a whole ensemble – an orchestra, if you like. I don't really see it as guitar playing as much as creating a whole sound and a background. You just hear sounds in your head and you try different sounds and different guitars and different amplifier settings until it all starts sounding the way you imagine it. I took a great deal of care and pride in putting together different guitar parts that were sympathetic and complementary, and doing solos was more just the fun, a release.

**Which was the most satisfying track to play live?** I'm tempted to say it was doing the whole thing that was good. It had a cohesion and a meaning, and we had quadraphonic tapes and we had the keyboards running on a quadraphonic system that Rick could manipulate himself. We'd have a tingle of

anticipation when we knew we were going to do it. Obviously it's nice when you cut to a guitar solo and you get a chance to turn it up and jam for a minute or two.

**One feature was a plane crashing into the stage. How easy was it to keep on playing with all that going on?** It was quite a large model airplane coming down at the end of the "On The Run" passage and disappearing into the dark, crashing onto a great big wodge of foam rubber, and there was a real explosion accompanied by a tape explosion happening at the same time. We've had all sorts of things over the years, so I don't think it put any of us off. It was jolly entertaining.

**Nick believes you're the only natural musician in the group and that the others are "a very gifted amateur band" who have a talent for playing in a style that suits Pink Floyd.** I'm fairly musical. Rick's very musical, too. Rick is less pushy than I am. I'm very happy, I suppose, to be thought of as the musical one. I think I did most of the arranging and cajoling.

**"I'M VERY HAPPY TO BE THOUGHT OF AS THE MUSICAL ONE. I THINK I DID MOST OF THE ARRANGING AND CAJOLING" – GILMOUR**

**Nick also says the female backing vocalists on the LP "were always going to shine". Did you arrange and direct them?** Yes. All our vocals are perfectly balanced – for instance, on "Us And Them". I did I don't know how many harmony vocals, then the girls on top. It's really great, really uplifting. You can move one element a fraction and the whole thing falls to pieces.

**It was you who brought in saxophone player Dick Parry. Didn't you know him way back in Cambridge?** I played with him. He was a jazz player. You'd be in two or three different groups at a time sometimes. My group in Cambridge very rarely had a gig on a Sunday night, and Dick had a regular spot in a ballroom on Sunday night. We got this jazz trio thing going on. Pink Floyd were so insular in some ways. I can't believe it, thinking about it. We didn't know anyone. We really didn't know how to get hold of a sax player or anything. We wanted to try a sax on "Money" and "Us And Them", so we got Dick in. He went on to play on the *Wish You Were Here* album and he toured with us in '94. He did some dates with me. He's still playing.

**Roger claims the rest of the band were not supportive of the philosophical and political ideas he wanted to express. You have**

**publicly upheld the album concept, but Rick remembers feeling that the music was more important, and Nick says he sat on the fence.** Nick's got a very sore bum, I imagine. He spent so many years sitting on that fence. Rick was curmudgeonly about things and wanted us to move in a more pure, maybe jazzy, direction. He was always moaning and groaning, but he didn't really mean it half the time. We all have very different personalities is the truth of the matter. We were all very, very happy to have a driving force like Roger who wanted to push for these concepts. I don't remember it being a big issue at the time. Jointly and severally, we wanted each piece of music to have its own magic. As an instrumental piece, we wanted it to have those little hints of magic about it before we tied it even into a lyric. Then, that lyric either has the same mood and strengthens the mood of the music, or the music then strengthens the lyric, or sometimes it's because the music and the words conflict that it creates it. It's not always the same way. If anything, at the end of *Dark Side*, I thought there were one or two moments where the lyric was stronger than the music that was carrying it.

**Can you say what those moments were?** It was just a general feeling and I can remember stating it at the time, and trying to encourage all of us to make the vehicles every bit as good as the lyrics on the next one. Maybe it was just my own guilty conscience about not feeling I'd contributed enough to the writing

of it anyway. It's a very tiny thing. Obviously, it's not a matter of big importance.

**So despite what Roger has said, you personally had no objection to his political and philosophical themes?** Absolutely not. That would have been a very strange attitude to have after the '60s and moving into the early '70s, and my absolute heroes were Bob Dylan and other people who expressed their philosophical and political ideas. If the political ideas being expressed by one are not the political ideas of another, you get into a slightly different minefield.

**Were you thinking about Roger's words on the tracks where you sang them?** Of course. I think back and I'm slightly amazed we didn't push him harder for explanations sometimes.

**What did you understand by the "dark side of the moon"?** The moon and the lunacy are obviously hard to get away from. It was referring to the dark side of the pressures of life that can drive a poor boy to madness.

**That lunacy, at least in parts, is related to Syd Barrett. Did you know this at the time?** There are specific references to "Syd moments" in some **CONTINUES OVER »**

#### TRACK BY TRACK

**ANY COLOUR YOU LIKE** (Gilmour, Mason, Wright)  
**WRIGHT:** "We've got nothing for this space... what can we do? We'll have a jam." And that's what it was – it's just two chords. It starts off with the synth, which sets the mood. And you have this extraordinary guitar solo from Dave.  
**GILMOUR:** It's not a vital part of the narrative, but there are moments when it's nice to get off the leash and just play. Having two of those moments was too much for the album, so we changed "On The Run".

of the lyrics of *Dark Side*. Syd was a constant presence in our minds and consciences, I imagine.

**Were you his closest friend in the band?** I would like to think so. We were quite good friends from when I was about 14.

**How distressing was it to witness his decline?** You know, one just accepts things as they happen. I have no idea how much it affected me at the time. I did spend quite a lot of time – more with friends of Syd’s than with the guys in the band – really trying to think of ways of helping him, but the ideas in psychiatry and psychological counselling were rather different to what they are now. We tended to cling to rather trippy-hippy ideas of what was best for him, which I don’t think many people would agree with these days. Who knew?

**Have you stayed in touch with him?** I’ve been in touch with people in his family.

**Roger, Rick and Nick have no recollection of any great degree of drug consumption around the making of *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. Is this your recollection, too?** To be really honest with you, I can’t remember. All of us, for pretty well most of our career, have been very, very professional in the studio and I don’t think that any drugs have played a significant role in any of it. It’s true that Roger and Nick were the drinkers, and Rick and I would have a puff on a reefer once in a while.

It’s nice to listen to the album that way [stoned]. It’s an accidental by-product, really. There’s a lot going on, lots of stuff semi-hidden, all sorts of layers... it’s not that simple to get it. The more you concentrate, the better you listen and the more you’ll get out of it. The classic stoner thing of a reefer and a pair of headphones does, I’m sure, get you an awful lot out of it.

**The other guys don’t recall a lot about rehearsals for the album, when the songs started coming together. Do you?** I can remember the rooms that we were in quite vividly. We went to a warehouse in Bermondsey, which belonged to The Rolling Stones, and we were there for a little while, writing pieces of music and jamming. It was a very dark room. We booked a different place in Broadhurst Gardens, near St John’s Wood, which was a light area, on the ground floor. It was a knocked-through, normal house. But I can’t remember the details of what happened when.

You jam, you knock stuff about, you plunder your old rubbish library. The process went on, the rehearsing, the writing, the performing live, the recording sessions, the final mixing moments and the cover. All these things came together and it became clearer and clearer,

TRACK BY TRACK

**BRAIN DAMAGE** (Waters)  
**WRIGHT:** Lyrically, it was the one I could least relate to. Possibly, for me then, it was the weakest link. Now I feel differently. I think it’s great. It’s very simple, and also it has the Mini-Moog. It’s got a hotel orchestra kind of sound. I love the chorus, and the girls blended in so beautifully.  
**MASON:** I thought the lyrics were fantastic.

probably gradually, that we had definitely made progress and that this was going to be a bigger, better thing than we had previously done.

**No one seems quite sure which Abbey Road studio it was recorded and mixed in.** It was mostly recorded in Studio 3. Probably some of it in Studio 2. We did an awful lot of work in both over the years. It wasn’t that essential thing, “We’ve got to be in 2,” or, “We’ve got to be in 3.”

They were quite similar.

**What were your musical priorities in the production stages?** It was, I felt, my role to do whatever I could to emotionally enhance whatever was going on and make the music sound nice. There are moments when real, ear-splitting, abrasive sound is right and moments when it just isn’t. You try to make each piece of music fulfil its potential.

“WE STRUGGLED AND SWEATED AND ARGUED AND FOUGHT OVER EVERY BAR, ALL THE WAY THROUGH THE ALBUM” – GILMOUR

**Is it true that feelings started running high during the mixing process?** The stereo mix was Roger and myself and Chris Thomas and Alan Parsons engineering, mostly, with other people dropping in and putting their oar in at various times. We struggled and sweated and argued and fought over every bar, all the way through the whole album. We really, really worked to get that as near perfect as we could.

We were fantastically busy in the run-up to the release of the album, going on tours, and when the quadraphonic mix became a possibility, we just didn’t have the time or the energy or really the belief that the system was going to take off and be in general use by people – as turned out to be the case. And so we let Alan Parsons do the quadraphonic mix of the whole album.

**How valuable was Alan’s role, and also Chris Thomas’?** Alan was the EMI staff engineer assigned to our project. He was a very good engineer, and he had one or two production ideas that were very good. In a clock shop in Hampstead, he had recorded the ticking clocks and made these tapes up to offer us as an idea, which was great. But I think we all really knew what we were doing and where we were going. We would have got there with any good engineer operating the knobs and buttons.

Chris was, I think, managed by Steve [O’Rourke] even then. Roger and I were, as usual, arguing and bickering about how things should be in the overall mix. I favoured

a wetter, more echoey sound, and I favoured things like the [speaking] voices appearing more subtly within the mush of the mix. Roger wanted things to be drier and cleaner and clearer. It’s the same argument we’ve been having again over the 5.1 remix.

I think Steve suggested that we bring Chris in ‘cos he was an expert and he’d worked with The Beatles. He’d done a lot of *The White Album*. He was more or less George Martin’s apprentice. He was basically brought in to help mediate between myself and Roger. We always argued. Arguments come out of passion. They come out of one’s absolute belief that one way is the right way, and the other person has an absolute belief that it should be different, and out of that compromise, wonderful things can happen.

**Were you and Roger both prepared to compromise with each other?** I don’t myself look on compromise as a dirty word. In our lives together in Pink Floyd, we argued and fought and compromised on things. Whether things would have been better done one way or the other way, we can only speculate.

During the making of *The Wall*, we had some pretty heavy arguments, which sometimes would culminate in bad feeling that would last for a day or two.

**Did your professional relationship with Roger work because of or in spite of the differences?** Probably because

of... It was an extraordinarily successful partnership. We had a good, valid working relationship right through until the period that’s well documented after *The Wall* album.

**Were the recording sessions for *The Dark Side Of The Moon* as happy as the other members remember?** You see... we had some pretty good arguments, Roger and myself, on that album, as we had had on “Echoes” and all sorts of things before. They came from a passion for getting it right. Obviously, one’s passion is sometimes obscured by one’s macho tendencies, as happens to everyone.

I remember there being fantastic moments of harmony after that – some of the moments during the making of *Wish You Were Here*... One inspired moment by one person would be so obvious that it would be picked up by another person, and there would be genuine harmony, and I can say that those moments still even, for me, existed during the making of *The Wall*. Obviously, there was a deterioration in some elements of our relationship.

**Roger feels that there was a power struggle between you.** It’s a funny old thing, the idea of a power struggle.

**He sees it as a leadership issue.** I didn’t want to be the leader, but Roger desperately did want to be the leader, and I didn’t think that if someone wants to be the leader that that then means he has the final say on everything that goes on.



Us versus Them: the Floyd football team, Dijon, France, 1974

#### TRACK BY TRACK

##### ECLIPSE (Waters)

**WRIGHT:** It's a great ending. The music grows, it gets bigger, it goes up in decibels. We would lift it up and up. If I ignore the depression of the words, which I tend to do, as I've said, I think there's hope in it, because of the music.

**MASON:** I remember Roger coming in with it. The initial version was less desperate. We wanted something climactic, the real ending.

**Roger claims he had to lead because he was the one with the ideas. How do you react to that?** In terms of drive and lyrical concept matters, he was the de facto leader. But I certainly had a resistance to stating, "Roger is our leader," as it creates a feeling that you have to defer to him on other matters – and on musical matters, I didn't feel I should. I didn't think it was good for us for me to not argue and try and push my case as I saw it. Those moments were the exception rather than the rule.

**There were also disagreements over songwriting credits.** We tended to think that if we threw ideas into the pot while we were all working together in the rehearsal studio, unless they were specific things, you didn't hang on too tightly – if songs came up, then you would split the credit equally. In later years, the lyric came to count for half, so the lyricist would get 50 per cent of a track and the musicians would get 50 per cent. So if we wrote a piece of music, all four of us jointly, Roger would get 62.5 per cent of it, cos he'd written the words and a quarter of the music, and the rest of us would get 12.5 per cent. That wasn't the case at the time of *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. I'm very impressed by, say, U2, where they just say, "We're all in it together," and split it equally. Very brave. We never quite managed that. Our fights at the end of making a record to decide who had what percentage of each song were always the worst arguments we ever had.

**So isn't "Money" a bit rich coming from Pink Floyd?** So it became, subsequently. We were by no means rich at that time. "Money" was the single that helped to really break us in America. It was the track that made us guilty of what it propounds, funnily enough.

**There is some feeling that credits were given, particularly to Nick, where they weren't deserved.** I suppose it would be fair to say that in terms of actual writing, Nick has got some credits once in a while where he... he certainly didn't put in a chord change. It seems daft to worry about it. It's swings and roundabouts. There are times when someone has done a certain amount of one song, but it's been substantially written by another person. One accepts not getting credited on that one, but gets maybe a slightly bigger credit on another.

**Roger says that, although he was annoyed for a long time about giving the credits away, he's got over it now.** He's lying. I'm averse to getting into an argument about it all, but his interpretation of equality tended to go up and down a little bit. Roger did go through periods where he wanted to be very socialist and share everything equally. There was a period long after *The Dark Side Of The Moon* when he was advocating for a little while that we split the profits of tours and records equally between us, and all of our staff and everyone. It never

quite came to fruition. And then something changed and he went so far the other way I still don't know exactly how one works out the credits and percentages. It's always been a cause of much argument and bad feeling.

**Was it more about actual credit or recognition, as Nick suggests, rather than cash?** It was about credit, I think, to all of us.

**How do you feel now about the other three members?** About the same as I've always felt. I've got a lot of time for Rick. He's got soul and musical talent. He's got some really irritating features as well. Nick and I are very different people and we just don't really see much of each other when we're not working. Nick is definitely the best drummer for Pink Floyd, as Rick is the best keyboard player.

**How about Roger?** I won't go into what I feel about Roger. I haven't seen him for so long that I don't know what he's like these days. I don't really have any feelings about him.

David Gilmour is currently writing for an unspecified project and taking saxophone lessons with his teenage son, Charlie. While he acknowledges that Pink Floyd still exist – "whatever 'exist' means" – and could regroup one day, it won't be tomorrow: "We've all got other things to do, lives to get on with."

# Wish You Were Here

What could follow the staggering success of *Dark Side*? An album about your own dysfunction and discomfort with stardom, naturally. *By Bud Scoppa*

RELEASE DATE 12 SEPTEMBER 1975

**H**OW DOES AN uncompromising art-rock band go about following up a completely unanticipated commercial blockbuster? That was the challenge Pink Floyd struggled with in the wake of *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, their ordeal beginning with a collective state of paralysis and a complete lack of direction. Early on, they'd actually entertained the notion of making a record without using any musical instruments whatsoever before coming to their senses. Leave it to Roger Waters to locate the LP's theme in the band's very dysfunction, and to harness their entropy as its driving force.

"We'd reached the point we'd all been aiming for ever since we were teenagers, and there was really nothing more to do in terms of rock'n'roll," Waters reflected in an interview for the *Wish You Were Here* songbook, conducted soon after the album's September 1975 release. "The interesting thing is that when we finally did do an album, the album is actually about not coming up with anything, because the album is about none of us really being there, or being there only marginally."

At that time, the dividing line between art and commerce in rock was all but non-existent – a state of affairs that had taken shape in the artistic eruption of the mid-'60s and reached a sort of apex

with *Dark Side*. As a result, there was no pressure on Pink Floyd to conform to any commercial conventions to maintain their sales momentum – not that they would have had anything to do with such a crass notion. Instead, the pressure they were feeling in 1974 and early 1975 was entirely of their own making, feeding off their ennui.

How, then, to continue? Waters had emerged as the band's point man in terms of material and direction, and he once again felt the weight of that responsibility. As it turned out, what inspired him to shake off his inertia was nothing more profound than deadline pressure: the band had a British tour coming up in October of '74 and needed some new songs to play. So they gathered in a rehearsal studio in King's Cross and began bouncing ideas off each other in what had become their customary manner. Things got moving when David Gilmour spontaneously spun off a striking guitar phrase, catching the ear of Waters, who immediately – and insightfully, as it turned out – suggested they build a song around it. From there, "Shine On You Crazy Diamond" began to take shape, progressively (so to speak) expanding into a series of movements.

As he was coming up with the lyrics, Waters realised he was writing about Barrett – **CONTINUES OVER »**



at least in part—inspired by the mournfulness of Gilmour’s guitar phrase. Only later in the album process did it hit Waters that Barrett’s fragmented state could be seen as being symbolic of the general state of the group. All he knew at that point was that he’d broken through his lethargy and that the band now had something substantive to work from. Waters also brought in a song he’d started at home, for which Gilmour came up with another chord sequence, and that became “Raving And Drooling”. He then came up with “You Gotta Be Crazy” in the rehearsal studio, which he and the band worked into shape. The three new pieces not only satisfied their immediate live performance needs, but also provided them with a reasonable starting point for the album.

Pink Floyd entered Studio Three at Abbey Road in January ’75 and promptly hit the wall, the momentum they’d generated through the initial writing sessions dead on arrival, the four musicians feeling uninspired individually and out of sync collectively. They struggled for weeks to arrive at a point from which they could get something going, while engineer Brian Humphries was himself preoccupied with trying to get his head around the complexities of the recently installed 24-track machine in the Studio Three control room (*Dark Side* had been recorded using a 16-track desk). Those early sessions were “very laborious and tortured” according to Waters, who got the impression that every one of them wished they were somewhere, anywhere, else. That realisation turned out to be the “Eureka!” moment in the making of the album.

Waters decided right then that the only way he could retain interest in the project was to try to make the album relate to what was and wasn’t going on within the group—their unwillingness to look each other in the eye and their tendency to merely go through the motions. So he suggested that they dump the other two songs and find a way to bridge the first and second halves of “Shine On...” with material that related in some way to the state they were all in at the time. When Waters presented his bandmates with his new premise in a meeting, Gilmour disagreed with the suggested change of plans, but Wright and Mason were all for it, and that was enough to pass the motion in the Floydian quasi-democracy. At Waters’ urging, they began

## THE CRITICS’ VERDICT

“From whichever direction one approaches *Wish You Were Here*, it still sounds unconvincing in its ponderous sincerity and displays a critical lack of imagination in all departments...” **ALLAN JONES, MELODY MAKER, SEP 20, 1975**

“Where...Moon seemed flatulent, morose, aimless and sometimes positively numbskull, *Wish You Were Here* is concise, highly melodic and in a pleasingly simple fashion.” **PETE SKINE, NME, SEP 20, 1975**

individually unburdening themselves as he took notes.

In relatively short order, Waters managed to transform those notes into the songs “Welcome To The Machine”, “Have A Cigar” and “Wish You Were Here”, and from this pivotal moment they forged ahead, the process of making the record immediately shifted from an arduous slog to a hopeful jog. Thematically on the money yet sufficiently intriguing in themselves to stand on their own, the three relatively succinct new songs would be used in sequence to fit in the slot between the dissected halves of “Shine On You Crazy Diamond”, and that would be all they’d need to populate the album. “Raving and Drooling” and “Gotta Be Crazy” were summarily shelved, turning up in reworked form on 1977’s *Animals*.

Two of the three songs Waters came up with to fit in the opening turned out to be biting commentaries on the record business, with which the band, thanks to *Dark Side*, now had an unbreakable, if unwanted, bond. The dead-serious “Welcome To The Machine” expresses Waters’ extreme discomfort—presumably shared by his three colleagues—with the radically ramped-up connection to the music business that was the inevitable residue of their remarkable commercial breakthrough. The business was in the process of transforming itself into an industry, and Pink Floyd were in the ironic position of having contributed to its mutation from what had been in large part a synergistic relationship between artists and labels to an impersonal, corporate behemoth. It’s a tribute to Waters’ sensibility that what might have come off as a polemic turns out to be one of his most personal songs, an affectingly emotional study of an individual caught between his internal turmoil and a world he wanted no part of. “Have A Cigar”, which follows in the album sequence, tackles the same theme, but in a scathingly satirical way.

Waters had struggled to lay down an acceptable vocal take on “Have A Cigar”. When Gilmour passed on the invitation to do the vocal, they had no choice but to look outside the band for a ringer. Their mate Roy Harper was recording his own album in another studio at the time, and he agreed to do the part. “Well I’ve always had a deep respect/And I mean that most sincerely,” Harper sang, convincingly

playing the part of a label weasel in the lyric’s most memorable passage. “*The band is just fantastic/That is really what I think/Oh, by the way, which one’s Pink?*” (By all accounts, the punchline was a direct quote.) Waters then returned to the theme of absence in what would become the album’s title song, powerfully yet wistfully put across via Gilmour’s guitar and vocal, which share a compellingly earnest tone.

This initial set of recording sessions continued until the middle of March, when the band broke for a month-long American tour. Returning from the April tour of the States, they spent the month of May back at Abbey Road refining the tracks, and after yet another American tour, they finished off the album in three more weeks of work, following its live première at Knebworth, which had been a disaster, ruined by a series of technical glitches.

On June 5, during the final session, as they were wrapping up the mix of “Shine On...”, an uninvited visitor showed up in the studio. He was fat, with his head and eyebrows shaved, and he seemed a bit slow-witted. It took the bandmembers several minutes to realise that the interloper was Syd Barrett. Nick Mason, who failed to recognise his former bandmate, later admitted he was “horrificed” when Gilmour told him. According to the band’s



## TRACKMARKS | Wish You Were Here

1. Shine On You Crazy Diamond, Parts I-V ★★★★★
2. Welcome To The Machine ★★★★★
3. Have A Cigar ★★★★★
4. Wish You Were Here ★★★★★
5. Shine On You Crazy Diamond, Parts VI-IX ★★★★★

**RELEASED:** September 12, 1975  
**LABEL:** Harvest  
**PRODUCED BY:** Pink Floyd  
**RECORDED AT:** Abbey Road Studio Three  
**PERSONNEL:** Roger Waters (composer, bass, vocals, guitar); Dave Gilmour (composer, guitar, vocals); Richard Wright

(composer, keyboards); Nick Mason (drums); Roy Harper (lead vocals on “Have A Cigar”); Venetta Fields and Carlena Williams (bk vocals on “Wish You Were Here”); Dick Parry (saxophone on “Wish You Were Here”)  
**HIGHEST CHART POSITION:** UK 1; US 1





Knebworth  
Festival,  
July 5, 1975

long-time album designer, Storm Thorgerson, who by then had practically become the fifth Floyd, “two or three people cried. He sat round and talked for a bit, but he wasn’t really there.” It would be the last contact any of them would have with Barrett.

Pink Floyd were the most cinematic of bands, and never more so than on *Wish You Were Here*, with Waters serving as writer/director, Richard Wright (making inventive use of the “big, meaty tones” of the then-revolutionary EMS VCS3 synthesiser) as cinematographer and Gilmour’s Stratocaster – which has never been more expressively visceral – in the lead role. With this band, the sound never took a backseat to the songs, and on this record the sonic richness functioned in part to counterbalance the unsettling messages embedded in Waters’ lyrics. “I didn’t find life so bleak as he was perhaps suggesting,” Wright admitted in 2003. “[But] people did feel uplifted, which I think is because of the music.”

Once the album began to take shape, the frustration and monotony of the project’s early stages were wiped clean by a general sense of excitement, along with a collective determination to get it all down on tape. It’s a good thing they had 24 tracks to work with,

because the players and Humphries overloaded the two-inch multitrack tape with the sounds they were generating – from dense electronic orchestrations to the clank and hum of industrial machinery. In the end, *Wish You Were Here* managed to seem wholly unprecedented while at the same time advancing the extremes of their previous work.

The band further refined some of the

themselves as interrelated musical motifs. The most ambitious previous undertaking, “Echoes” from 1971’s *Meddle*, ran more than 23 minutes and took up one entire LP side. The nine movements of “Shine On You Crazy Diamond” unfold over 26 minutes-plus.

Viewed as a tightknit amalgam of collective musical decisions, captivating in themselves while also providing interlocking thematic

commentary, the album is particularly impressive. To cite one telling example, Waters and Gilmour sing “Welcome To The Machine” in unison but an octave apart, suggesting the dichotomy of intimacy and distance visually expressed throughout Thorgerson’s vividly complementary album design.

Though critically savaged at the time, *Wish You Were Here* has gained in stature over the years, to the point where it’s now as revered in the Floyd canon as the history-making work that preceded it. The record’s breathtaking depth and scale make it a quintessential example of analogue recording at its most stunning, while the vibe it conjures up remains so palpable you can get lost in it. It’s a beguiling anomaly – an unguarded and heartfelt work from the most coolly cerebral of bands. 🎧

## A beguiling anomaly – an unguarded, heartfelt work from the most coolly cerebral of bands

elements they’d introduced on *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, including such commonplace devices as standard song structures, a saxophone solo and soulful female backing vocals, as well as signature moves including trippy stereo panning and orchestral synth beds. At the same time, “Shine On You Crazy Diamond” stands as the culmination of an elaborate form the band had been refining for years: a sort of rock symphony consisting of various movements that introduce and recontextualise what ultimately reveal

# Animals

Having passed judgment on the music biz,  
Roger Waters casts a weather eye over society  
in general. The prognosis? Not great...

By David Cavanagh

RELEASE DATE 23 JANUARY 1977

**R**EALISTICALLY, TO THE coach party of second-formers chugging down the M6 for the Pompeii AD 79 exhibition at London's Royal Academy in February 1977, a band like Pink Floyd would have been of no consequence at all. You're talking about a busload of Showaddywaddy fans. But not I. When we stop at the motorway services, I'll blow all my spending money on two cassettes: The Shadows' *20 Golden Greats* and Pink Floyd's *Animals*. Then, for hours, I'll look out the window, straining to see Battersea Power Station, unaware that it's in south London and we're approaching from the north.

This is how I first hear *Animals*. On a noisy coach, through a battery-operated Grundig tape recorder, with a Leeds United fan sitting next to me. I still recall the adenoidal, bunged-up voice – it was Roger Waters singing "Pigs On The Wing", buzzing out of a speaker not much bigger than a Freddo bar. "Put the other tape on," said the boy next to me. "This is desperate." Desperate would indeed be the word for *Animals*, but not in the sense he meant. *Desperate*

(adj). 1. extremely anxious, fearful or despairing. 2. very serious, difficult, dangerous and almost hopeless. 3. extreme and carried out as a last resort because of the seriousness or hopelessness of the situation.

There's something callous, morally questionable and entirely appropriate about selling cassettes of *Animals* to 12-year-old boys at motorway service stations. Most albums in our childhoods lied to us. You'll be fine, they said. Utopia is out there; you can run wild and free. *Animals*, however, presented a more pessimistic analysis. It notified us of the seriousness or hopelessness of the situation. It made us extremely anxious, fearful or despairing. It explained to us that life would be a fight to the death, a cut-throat cattle auction, a conveyor belt of lambs to the slaughter, with nothing at the end of it except abandonment, cancer and a pension if you were lucky. It's reminiscent of Ralph Richardson's advice in *O Lucky Man!* after he has bestowed a gold lamé suit on the ambitious young salesman, Malcolm McDowell: "Try not to die" **CONTINUES OVER »**



like a dog." McDowell stares back in horror, before shrugging off the remark. But as the lava-charred citizens of Pompeii in AD 79 could have told him, sometimes there's nowhere to run.

Roger Waters often talked about his adolescent unease of the life ahead, the life that he could see his mother shaping for him. A top school. A leading university. Qualifications, grades. A foot on the ladder. A promotion opportunity. A successful career as a business executive. Images of the rat race, the stressed employee and the early grave began to crop up in Waters' writing on *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, while "Welcome To The Machine", on *Wish You Were Here*, confronts the newly established rock star with precisely the same straitjackets and obligations that he got into rock'n'roll to avoid.

Songs about 'working for the boss man' are as old as the American railroads, but none of them quite went into detail like "Dogs", on *Animals*. Waters gets inside the thought processes of the sales force go-getter: "You got to be able to pick out the easy meat with your eyes closed/And then moving in silently, down wind and out of sight/You've got to strike when the moment is right without thinking."

As it happens, there's a strong possibility the competitive Waters would have been ruthlessly effective in the business world. He would have bided his time, waited for his moment, taken over the company, rebranded it, quadrupled its profits, written memorable advertising slogans (We Don't Give You That Do-Goody-Good Bullshit), made it mandatory for the workforce to sing tributes to the fallen soldiers of World War II, spat at the customers and ended up sacking the head of the keyboard department. Perhaps, in a parallel universe, he's launching a hostile takeover bid as we speak.

The concept of *Animals* can be seen as an interior monologue. In essence Waters is saying to himself, much like a quiz show host to a disappointed contestant, "Here's what you could have won." The club tie, the executive washroom, the Masonic handshake. There but the grace of God and a moderate aptitude for the bass guitar, Roger, go you. But Waters goes much further. Whether we operate in business or not, we are all herdlike in our social tendencies, fears, prejudices and self-interest. The album mentions three animals in

## THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"At times the shocks come as staggeringly as Johnny Rotten gobbling at his audience, an uncomfortable taste of reality in a medium ("progressive" rock) that has become increasingly soporific. Perhaps they should rename themselves Punk Floyd". **MELODY MAKER, JAN 29, 1977**

"One of the most extreme, relentless, harrowing, downright iconoclastic hunks of music this side of the Sun." **ANGUS MACKINNON, NME, FEB 12, 1977**

particular: pigs, sheep and dogs. Cutting through the allegories, human beings are divided into three categories: porcine, ovine and canine. Look at the pigs with their snouts in the trough. See how the sheep meekly flock together, oblivious to the sharpened knives that await them. The dogs think they're wearing suits and ties, little realising they're actually collars and leads. And the most these pigs, sheep and dogs can expect, be they loyal or feral ("But you believe at heart everyone's a killer"), is to be butchered in an abattoir or drowned in a canal like a surplus-to-requirements puppy.

Reading *Animal Farm* in English class later that

year, it began to dawn on me – dimly at first, because we don't reach conclusions about society until we're older – that if Orwell was warning us about political systems, Pink Floyd were warning us about people. In Waters' view of humanity, whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy beyond help. And when you break it down, what chance does that give us?



Wing 1" has been described by Waters, hilariously, as a love song for his girlfriend Carolyne. Oh, to have been a fly on the wall when he played it to her. Darling, I've written a few words that I feel encapsulate our romance. (Strum, strum.) "If you didn't care what

*happened to me, and I didn't care for you/We would zigzag our way through the boredom and pain/Occasionally glancing up through the rain/Wondering which of the buggers to blame/And watching for pigs on the wing.*" Well, as they say, it's the thought that counts.

And the thought in Waters'

mind, apparently, is that the line separating us from a lifetime of gloomy solitude is as thin as cotton from a reel. The song reappears (as "Pigs On The Wing 2") at the album's conclusion, with Waters sounding like an elderly farmer admiring his fat new bride: "I've found somewhere safe/To bury my bone/And any fool knows a dog needs a home..."

The origins of *Animals* go back to 1974. Halfway through that year, Pink Floyd introduced two lengthy new songs into their concert setlist ("Raving And Drooling", "Gotta Be Crazy") which they intended to feature on their next album. Held back in favour of "Welcome To The Machine", "Have A Cigar" and "Wish You Were Here", the two passed-over songs were revisited by the band during recording sessions in 1976 (at their new London studio complex, Britannia Row) and were rewritten by Waters to bring them into line with his 'animals' concept. "Raving And Drooling" became "Sheep". "Gotta Be Crazy" became "Dogs". David Gilmour, who has never been enthusiastic about the suggestion that *Animals* is 'a Waters album', likes to stress that he co-wrote the 17-minute "Dogs" and sings lead vocals throughout its first eight minutes (until, after an eerie instrumental passage, a

## This is Pink Floyd at something very near the summit of their musical and structural abilities

PIGGY IN THE MIDDLE. Telling porkies. Bringing home the bacon. Pigs will fly. Staged by Hipgnosis after close consultation with Waters, the photograph on the cover of *Animals* shows an inflatable pig flying through the air above one of London's most ominous landscapes, the four gigantic chimneys of Battersea Power Station. The image is brilliant – so brilliant that the pig is a tiny distraction, an irrelevance once you've got the joke. The image is more about the chimneys, the shadows, the peculiar jaundiced sunlight, the thunderstorm sky and the low clouds that appear to be billowing across the capital at ground level. Meteorologically, the cover of *Animals* is at least six weather forecasts in one.

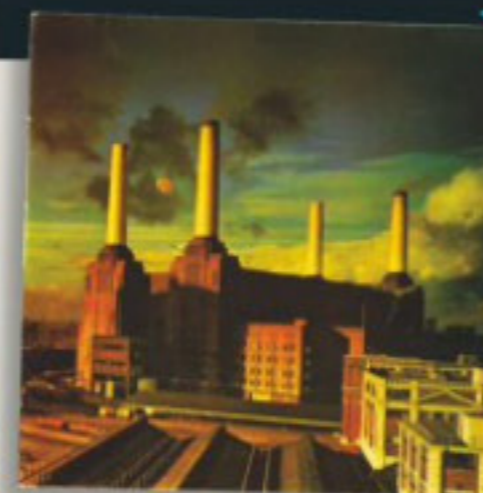
The music begins with a short, bleak folk song played on acoustic guitar. "Pigs On The

### TRACKMARKS | *Animals*

1. Pigs On The Wing 1 ★★
2. Dogs ★★★★★
3. Pigs (Three Different Ones) ★★★★★
4. Sheep ★★★★★
5. Pigs On The Wing 2 ★★

**RELEASED:** January 23, 1977  
**LABEL:** EMI  
**PRODUCED BY:**  
**RECORDED AT:** Britannia Row Studios, London  
**PERSONNEL:** David Gilmour (guitars, bass,

synthesiser, vocals); Roger Waters (bass, guitar, vocals); Richard Wright (keyboards, synthesiser, bk vocals); Nick Mason (drums, percussion).  
**HIGHEST CHART POSITION:** UK 2; US 3





Waters [inset] and Gilmour, 1977, combining to chilling effect on *Animals*

harried-sounding Waters takes over). “Dogs” isn’t just Gilmour and Waters at their most mutually supportive. It’s Pink Floyd at something very near the summit of their musical and editorial/structural abilities. Atmospheric and venom-spitting, the epic performance moves from section to section aided by haunting interludes in which we hear dogs barking, weird icy synthesisers and the distant pops of industrial explosions, like dynamite being detonated under disused warehouses. *Animals* was a January album, a winter album, and the guitars of Gilmour and keyboards of Rick Wright have a bitter chill

about them. They sound shivery, huddled in overcoats, their breath creating water vapour in the music’s sub-zero temperatures. There’s something stricken, terminal about “Dogs”. The sound that Gilmour makes at the end of the song is like the plug being pulled out of a life-support machine.

Only Waters, we know, was totally committed to the brutality of the album’s message. Gilmour and Wright didn’t view mankind with such cynicism, so deserve credit for giving the material their respect. Wright is ever so slightly beginning to fade from the Floyd picture on *Animals* (he wrote none of the music and

doesn’t sing any lead vocals), but Gilmour is ubiquitous and masterful. His work on “Dogs” puts him among the highest ranks of illustrative guitarists; if anything, he’s even cleverer on “Pigs (Three Different Ones)”, tearing out a series of aggressive, confrontational sounds to match the dislikeable characters Waters is singing about. Gilmour is possibly better still on “Sheep”, which recalls the sinister rolling pulse of “One Of These Days” on *Meddle*; the song’s last two minutes are an ecstasy of slashing guitars and thrilling chord progressions. Even Nick Mason, who’d deteriorated into a lazy drummer by the late ’70s – having been one of the most innovative English percussionists of the late ’60s – sounds energised enough by Gilmour’s climactic chords to give his drumkit a good working over.

Because it was released in 1977, there’s a popular theory that *Animals* was Pink Floyd’s riposte to punk rock. You sometimes see it described as “channelling similar inner-city rage to Rotten, Strummer and co” or “mirroring the zeitgeist of the alienated No Future generation”. The theory is interesting but holds no water. *Animals* is a progressive-rock album written in 1974–’76 and recorded in 1976, months before Waters had exposure to any punk records except “New Rose” and “Anarchy In The UK”, neither of which he would have found inspirational. Waters needed no punk to tell him about alienation. Alienation was his turf. In Waters’ eyes, the skies over London had darkened a long time before The Clash noticed stormy weather on the Westway. He’s closer to Danny in *Withnail And I*: “The greatest decade in the history of mankind is over. And as Presuming Ed here has so consistently pointed out, we have failed to paint it black.”

When punk, with its tunnels leading back to the Velvets and Iggy, began to seem a more exciting prospect than prog-rock, *Animals* was one of the few albums I exempted from the clearout. Mary

Whitehouse, the well-known clean-up campaigner, whom Waters derisively namechecks in “Pigs (Three Different Ones)”, used to talk of ‘moral pollution’ – meaning the way that the values of the right-thinking society, the *Daily Mail* angry brigade, were under threat from leftist influences determined to poison children’s minds. Well, like the Jesuits, Roger Waters got me young. I was shocked and elated by his warnings on *Animals*, as I was by Orwell, and by Golding in *Lord Of The Flies*, and I vowed never to find myself in the pigpen, the sheep dip or the dog pound. 🐷

# The Wall

As the band crumbles, Roger Waters builds a great autobiographical monument. Hey! People! Leave that genius alone! *By John Lewis*

RELEASE DATE 30 NOVEMBER 1979

ON PAPER, THE *Wall* album looks like a self-obsessed vanity project, the sound of a wealthy middle-aged man having a midlife crisis in public. The narrative is pretty trite: war is bad, women are worse, little boys need their daddies, being famous and successful turns you into a brutal tyrant.

So why has this solipsistic cry of pain become such a phenomenon? It spent a year on the UK charts and topped the US charts for 15 weeks, while its lead single "Another Brick In The Wall Pt 2" (the band's first single in 13 years) topped the charts in pretty much every territory on earth. According to Waters, the album still "does a couple of million each year". In total it has sold marginally fewer copies than *The Dark Side Of The Moon* but, as double album sales count double, it's ended up as the biggest grossing LP in the Floyd canon. In fact, it's America's third biggest grossing album of all time, just behind *Thriller* and The Eagles' *Greatest Hits*.

Waters was 36 years old when *The Wall* was released, hardly the age that pop stars are supposed to be when they have a big hit single and connect with mass audiences. That *The Wall* was such a phenomenon – and continues to be so three decades on – suggests not just a piece of work with staying

power but also an imaginative piece of marketing.

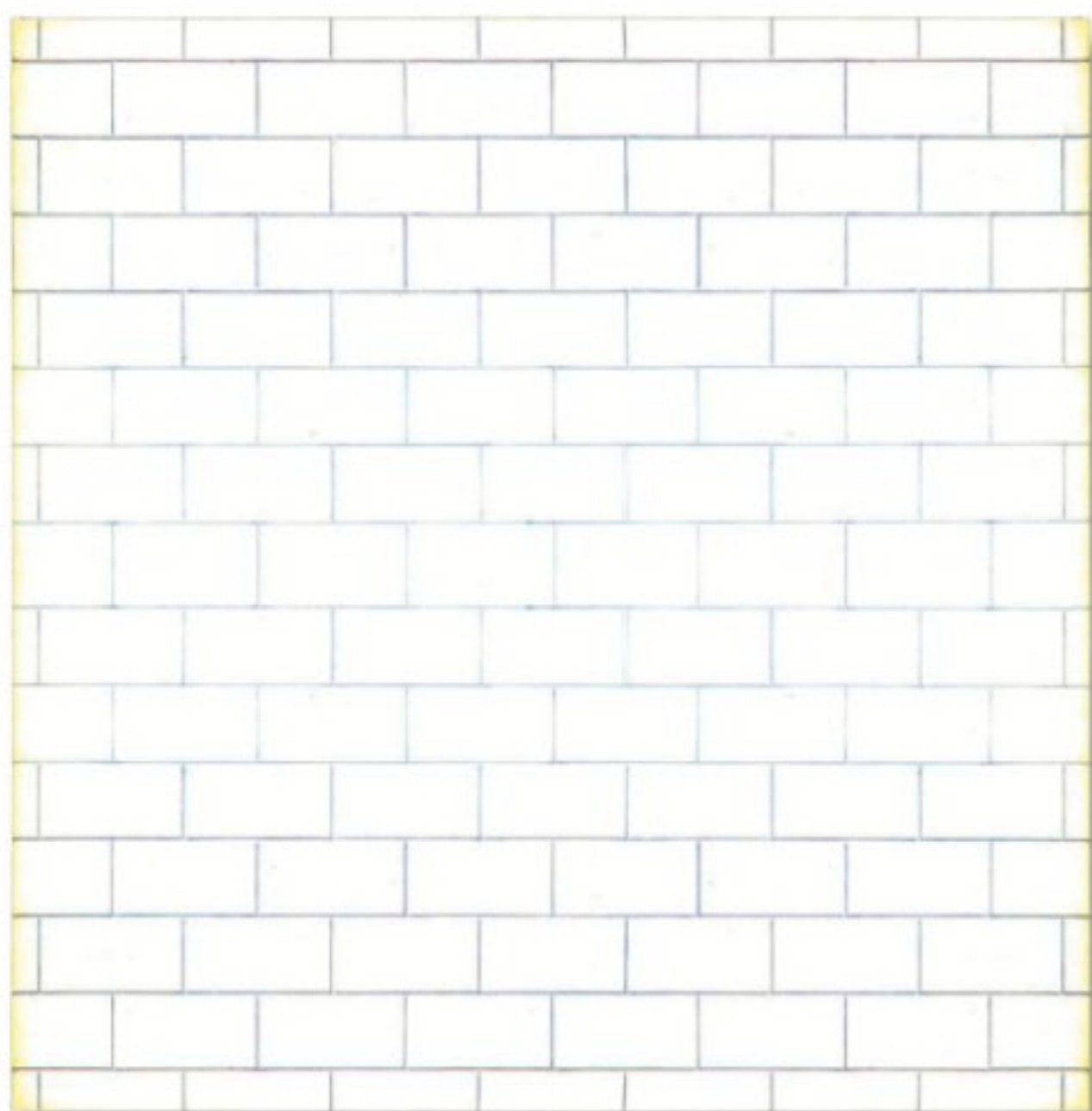
In corporate speak, the branding is magnificent. Very early in the project, Waters developed a 40-page script that he felt would work as an album, a film and a stage show. Cartoonist Gerald Scarfe – the Jamie Hewlett to Waters' Damon Albarn, if you will – provided the elegantly scabrous artwork that would chime with millions of adolescent boys the world over, plastering over any cracks in the narrative.

The word "concept album" is often bandied around about Pink Floyd's work, in reference to themed albums like *Animals* or *Wish You Were Here*. But this is their first proper concept album and one of the few genuine "rock operas". Waters plays "Pink", a screwed up child who becomes an even more screwed-up rock star.

The boundary between Waters and Pink isn't entirely distinct. By 1979, it was clear that Roger Waters hated playing big venues, hated facing the audience, hated his fans singing along to his songs and once – famously – spat in the face of an unfortunate punter at a gig in Montreal. He fantasised about dropping bombs on his crowd and declared that he'd prefer to play an entire gig behind a wall. Where most people would have stopped touring to count their millions – or

CONTINUES OVER »

# PINK FLOYD THE WALL





Building and breaking down walls: Floyd in late '79 [inset], and the astonishing live show

maybe just booked a few smaller venues – Waters decided to confront his demons.

The album's overture plunges us in the thick of the story with a "live" rock song, "In The Flesh?" (a piece that is reprised, without the question mark, in a more sinister form later in the album). The narrator of the song is a paranoid, disillusioned, clinically depressed rock star, treating his audience with contempt as he fantasises that he is a fascist dictator. "If you want to find out what's behind these cold eyes," he spits, "you'll just have to claw your way through this disguise".

We then loop back to tell Pink's life story. "The Thin Ice" establishes a nuclear family which is quickly shattered by war, while "Another Brick In The Wall Pt 1" fleetingly introduces the spectre of Pink's dead father. We are quickly taken through Pink's childhood – "The Happiest Days Of Our Lives" and "Another Brick In The Wall Pt 2" serve as embittered attacks on strict schooling, while "Mother" a hate-filled attack on suffocating parenting disguised as a waltzing lullaby. "Goodbye Blue Sky" (with its Crosby, Stills And Nash harmonies) revisits the boy's father's death.

The Pink character then enters adulthood, a hate-filled child trapped in a man's body ("Empty Spaces"). We see him being abusive to the women in his life – the groupies ("Young Lust"), the girlfriends ("One Of My Turns"), the

wife ("Don't Leave Me Now") – before ending up alone and isolated. The main theme is reprised ("Another Brick In The Wall Part 3") as the last howl of rage before he starts to build his self-imposed wall ("Goodbye Cruel World").

Side three of the old vinyl set starts by celebrating Pink's splendid isolation, with the blissful melancholy of "Hey You" and "Is There Anybody Out There?". Behind his wall, Pink watches a World War II movie on television ("Nobody Home") and it kicks off a delusional cycle. The ghost of his father returns ("Vera", "Bring The Boys Back Home") before he seeks solace in opiates ("Comfortably Numb").

We're then thrown into the hallucinations of Pink the rock star. "The Show Must Go On" is a gentle West Coast ballad, sweetened by Beach Boys harmonies, which segues into "In The Flesh" and "Run Like Hell", where Pink mutates into a fascist dictator. Soon Pink is overcome by his delusions of dictatorship ("Waiting For The Worms") before being forced out of his hallucinations ("Stop").

Next? A Brechtian opera set-piece in the form of "The Trial", in which Pink's behaviour and delusions are confronted by a judge and assorted figures from Pink's past – his wife, his mother, his school-master – who force Pink to tear down his wall ("Outside The Wall").

## TRACKMARKS | The Wall

- |   |                                    |                         |
|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. In the Flesh? ★★                     | 13. Goodbye Cruel World ★★         | 25. The Trial ★★        |
| 2. The Thin Ice ★★                      | 14. Hey You ★★                     | 26. Outside The Wall ★★ |
| 3. Another Brick In The Wall Part 1 ★★  | 15. Is There Anybody Out There? ★★ |                         |
| 4. The Happiest Days Of Our Lives ★★    | 16. Nobody Home ★★                 |                         |
| 5. Another Brick In The Wall Part 2 ★★  | 17. Vera ★★                        |                         |
| 6. Mother ★★                            | 18. Bring the Boys Back Home ★★    |                         |
| 7. Goodbye Blue Sky ★★                  | 19. Comfortably Numb ★★            |                         |
| 8. Empty Spaces ★★                      | 20. The Show Must Go On ★★         |                         |
| 9. Young Lust ★★                        | 21. In The Flesh ★★                |                         |
| 10. One Of My Turns ★★                  | 22. Run Like Hell ★★               |                         |
| 11. Don't Leave Me Now ★★               | 23. Waiting For The Worms ★★       |                         |
| 12. Another Brick In The Wall Part 3 ★★ | 24. Stop ★★                        |                         |

RELEASED: Nov 30, 1979

LABEL: Harvest

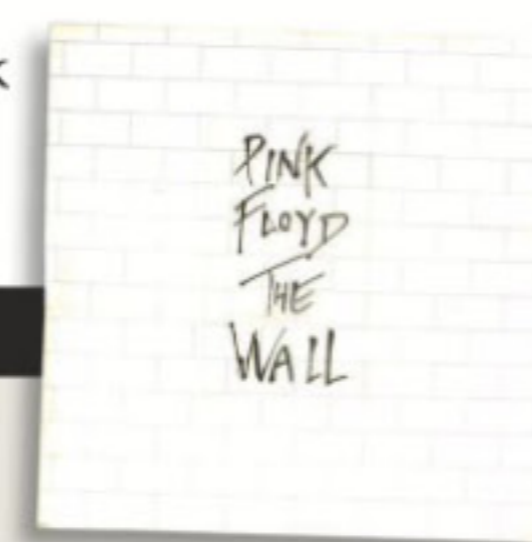
PRODUCED BY:

Bob Ezrin, David Gilmour, James Guthrie and Roger Waters

RECORDED AT: Super Bear and Miraval (France), CBS Studios (NYC), Cherokee Studios, The Village Recorder and Producers Workshop (LA)

CREDITED PERSONNEL:

David Gilmour (guitars, vocals, synths, clavinet,



sound effects); Nick Mason (drums/percussion); Roger Waters (vocals, guitars, synth effects); Richard Wright (organ, pianos, synths, bass pedals); Bruce Johnston, Toni Tennille, Joe Chemay, Jon Joyce (bk vocals); Islington Green School (children's choir); Michael Kamen, Bob Ezrin (orchestral arrangement)  
HIGHEST CHART POSITION: UK 3; US 1

In a way this just loops us back to the beginning of the story – the album starts with the opening bars of "Outside The Wall", which suggests that the process will begin all over again.

As a story, *The Wall* borrows extensively from other sources: The Who's *Tommy* explores the territory of the fatherless war-baby-turned-rock star; Bowie's *Ziggy Stardust* gets under the skin of the rock star-turned-dictator ("I think I'd have made a bloody good Hitler", said Bowie in a 1976 interview); while Peter Watkins' cult 1967 film *Privilege*, scripted by Johnny Speight and starring Paul Jones, focuses on the rock gig as Nuremberg rally.

But where certain 1970s stadium rock acts (Led Zeppelin, Queen, Bowie) actually embraced a certain allure of fascism – its Wagnerian bombast, its decadent aesthetics, even the mystical romanticism of Nazism – Waters was actively repelled by it. Pink's Nuremberg tendencies are made as unappealing as possible. He exhorts his fans to victimise blacks, gays and Jews (two years before riots raged around the inner-cities of England, Pink's fascist leader is heard inciting violence "outside Brixton Town Hall"), while Alan Parker's film shows his followers on the rampage, raping women, randomly attacking people and smashing up buildings. The most recent stage production even has Pink machine-gunning the audience (unfortunately, the audience simply lap it all up, cheering him on as they do Pink's fascist "crossed-arms" salute).

As with any set of songs designed to tell a story, or to fit into a concept, there is a trade-off between narrative clarity and quality. For reasons of concision, Waters apparently omitted several tracks that helped to tell the story – there was one highly autobiographical



song about the death of his own father at the battle of Monte Cassino, entitled "Anzio 1944" – and elements of these offcuts later surfaced on *The Final Cut*.

But, even after such ruthless self-editing, you're left with plenty of tracks whose function has more to do with narrative than aesthetics. The dirge-like "Don't Leave Me Now" – which sounds like a late-era Scott Walker song being sung by a derelict – is unlikely to make it into anyone's Top 100 Floyd songs. And while unlovely fillers such as "Empty Spaces", "Happiest Days Of Our Lives" or "Vera" struggle to work in isolation, they remain crucial to the way in which the album unfolds.

Waters' voice, never the most lovely of instruments, is crucial to *The Wall*. Straining to hit the melodies at the higher end of his register, going into a half-spoken speech-song in the lower register, the contours of most of the songs are based around his limitations. Oddly, the singer he most resembles throughout is Bob Dylan: Waters' strangled *sprechgesang* is not dissimilar to the Dylan of "Tangled Up In Blue", and it's those unique vocal quirks that dominate so many of these tracks. "Nobody Home", which plays like Dylan singing an old Hoagy Carmichael ballad, is one of the LP's highlights. It simply wouldn't work without Waters' vocal idiosyncrasies, which are sweetened by romantic strings and piano.

As if Waters' own personal demons weren't enough, *The Wall* also catalogues the painful break-up of the band, by this stage a dysfunctional marriage in its dying throes. "The atmosphere in the studio was war," says Bob Ezrin, the Canadian-born producer who'd

been drafted in by Waters to help complete the album. "But, you know, a very gentlemanly war, because they're British."

Rick Wright was not technically a member of the band at the time and worked only as a hired hand for the duration of *The Wall* (being on a hefty weekly wage during the tour, he ended up being the only member of the quartet not to lose any money from the crippling expensive production). But, in many ways, David Gilmour was virtually a session musician for this album. Although he gets a production credit for the entire album and a co-writing credit on three of the album's stand-out tracks – "Comfortably

Numb", "Run Like Hell" and "Young Lust" – his is very much a supporting role.

Oddly, it's a role in which he appears quite comfortable. His playing is as confident, assured and inventive as on any Floyd album. Talk to any of the guitarists who've subsequently taken his place – both in the many Pink Floyd tribute bands or in Roger Waters touring projects – and they'll insist that *The Wall* is the most satisfying Floyd album for a guitarist to play. "It's got the best guitar parts of any Floyd album," says Damian Darlington,

who has toured *The Wall* with the Australian Pink Floyd Show and Brit Floyd. "You get to do funky, bluesy, atmospheric, ambient – it's a wonderful vehicle."

Gilmour's multi-tracked rhythm playing – particularly the effects-laden funk-rockers "Run Like Hell" and "Young Lust" – see him pioneer the kind of widescreen, heavily flanged sound that would later be used by U2 (The Edge has acknowledged Gilmour's influence). Although Gilmour initially resisted producer Ezrin's suggestion to turn "Another Brick In The Wall Part 2" into a four-to-the-floor disco stomper, he adapts to it well, turning in a funk guitar performance of which Nile Rodgers would have been proud.


His solos, most notably on the album highlight, "Comfortably Numb", but also on "Mother" and all three parts of "Another Brick In The Wall", are exemplary. Unhurried and unflashy, Gilmour takes each solo at half-speed, using lots of sustain, drifting lazily over

bar lines and melting one chord change into the next, often sounding like he's playing without using his hands. The effect is to make each song slow down or go into reverse, endlessly delaying gratification.

And then there's the simple fact of Gilmour's voice. The best tracks on the album ("Goodbye Blue Sky", "Young Lust", "Hey You", "Mother", "Comfortably Numb") all see Waters delegating the prettier – or more soulful – vocal melodies to Gilmour. Waters' subsequent projects – *The Final Cut*, *The Pros And Cons Of Hitchhiking*, *Radio KAOS*, *Amused To Death*, even his opera *Ça Ira* – might have shared *The Wall*'s narrative impulse, but each one lacked Gilmour's voice. It's something that has signally dogged Waters' career ever since.

What nobody might have predicted in 1979 was the remarkable afterlife *The Wall* would have, not just from Alan Parker's 1982 film, but from the subsequent live productions. Critics have long accused Waters of cynicism, of retooling his psychodrama to fit various geopolitical events. The initial production and the subsequent film alluded to the rise of the far-right NF; the 1990 revival in a huge open-air concert near the Brandenburg Gate gaffa-taped the fall of the Berlin Wall onto the story; while the 2010/11 live

revival has bolted on references to the barrier that separates Israel from the West Bank.

In effect, *The Wall* does what all art should do – it starts with a single personal truth and then universalises it. Clumsy and illogical it may be, but *The Wall* is validated by sheer mathematics – by the 2.5 million punters who'll watch *The Wall* on its current international tour, by the millions around the world who witnessed the Brandenburg Gate show on television – and by the 30 million plus who have, to date, bought the album. 

## THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"Quite obviously, *The Wall* is an extraordinary record. I'm not sure whether it's brilliant or terrible, but I find it utterly compelling." **CHRIS BRAZIER, MELODY MAKER, DEC 1, 1979**

"A rock musician's equivalent of the tired executive's toy, a gleaming, frivolous gadget that serves to occupy midspace. It's misplaced boredom." **IAN PENMAN, NME, DEC 1, 1979**

## *The Wall* does what all art should do – it starts with a single personal truth and then universalises it

# The Final Cut

A cathartic requiem for Eric Fletcher Waters, for the fallen of all wars – and, ultimately, for Roger Waters' time in Pink Floyd.

By David Quantick

RELEASE DATE 21 MARCH 1983

**“T**HE *FINAL CUT* – we should have called it ‘The Final Straw,’ is one of the politest things said by David Gilmour about this, the last Pink Floyd album to feature Roger Waters. Many people, of course, don’t see it as a Pink Floyd album at all, pointing to its cumbersome, pompous subtitle – ‘A Requiem For The Post War Dream By Roger Waters Performed By Pink Floyd’ – and calling it a Waters solo record in all but name. And these people have a point. For a start, Rick Wright is gone, no longer even on wages. Nick Mason doesn’t even play on the final track. David Gilmour, the band’s best singer, sings on one song only and, whereas he had written one of Pink Floyd’s best-ever melodies on *The Wall*’s “Comfortably Numb”, contributes no songs at all to *The Final Cut*.

The other main reason people don’t think that *The Final Cut* is a proper Floyd record is that it doesn’t sound much like one. By which they probably mean that it doesn’t sound like *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. Never mind the fact that *The Wall* doesn’t sound like *The Dark Side Of The Moon* much, as nor do *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*, or *Ummagumma*, or even *Wish You Were Here*, the fact is that for many people Pink Floyd’s defining record is *The Dark Side Of The Moon* (presumably in the same way that, if you want to know all about The Beatles, a copy of *Sgt Pepper* will do the trick). But *The Final Cut* sounds like nothing else recorded by the band; except of

course, the acorn from which it grew, “When The Tigers Broke Free”. Given that Waters’ song was rejected by the rest of Pink Floyd for being “too personal”, there is a rich and loamy irony in the fact that “When The Tigers Broke Free” spawned an album so personal that it makes John Lennon’s solo debut look like *Wings At The Speed Of Sound*.

But this is nonsense largely put about to re-edit Floyd’s history into a happy (well, consistent) pop prog flow where they become less and less hippyish and more and more stadium, and flow inexorably into a new decade where Gilmour – accompanied by Mason, Wright and a host of unfaced musos – presides over the band. If *The Final Cut* has a polar opposite, it’s Gilmour’s 2006 solo album, *On An Island*, which contains all of Pink Floyd’s stylistic devices and none of their anger, wit or invention.

*On An Island* is a pleasant and easy-going record. *The Final Cut*, on the other hand, is extremely hard-going (at least, if you’ve never heard Radiohead’s *In Rainbows*, an album it oddly resembles. Or not). Instead of ringingly gorgeous Gilmour solos, *The Final Cut* is mostly muted keyboards and the odd enormously out-of-place drum – “I would veer away from the over-dramatic use of the drumkit,” said Roger Waters more recently. “Some of it I find difficult to listen to. A specific example is ‘Your Possible Pasts’, which is this quite melodic thing and then the drums come in really loud,

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## The image shows the front cover of the Pink Floyd album 'The Final Cut'. The background is a solid black. In the top left corner, there is a large, bright red, irregular shape that resembles a sun or a splash. In the center, there is a small, white, rectangular tag with the text 'pink floyd the final cut' written in a simple, lowercase, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the cover, there is a horizontal band of colorful, textured material. This band is divided into several sections: a solid red section on the far left, followed by a section with diagonal stripes in blue and white, then a section with diagonal stripes in orange and white, then a solid red section, then a section with diagonal stripes in orange and white, then a section with diagonal stripes in green and white, and finally a solid red section on the far right. The overall design is minimalist and iconic.

and I find that slightly irritating now." Instead of Dave's gorgeous, husky croon, the songs are almost entirely filled with Waters' angry, bitter caw.

And where *On An Island* features well-realised, sloopy melodies reminiscent of old Floyd songs about meadows and summer days, *The Final Cut* is a collection of fragments – some songs here are less than two minutes long, an extraordinary thing for a band who once could spend two minutes soundchecking a frying pan. Where you come out of *On An Island* feeling like you've had a lovely spa treatment and they let you keep the robe, *The Final Cut* leaves the listener drawn and quite possibly quartered.

I fucking love it, from "The Post War Dream"'s sound collage intro – fast cars and nuclear fall-out news – that goes into Michael Kamen's totally un-Floydian harmonium and Waters' almost folksy opening line, "Tell me true, tell me why/ Was Jesus crucified?/ Is it for this that my daddy died?", all the way to "Two Suns In The Sunset" (metal doors, organ, BIG DRUM THUMP, "And as the windshield melts/ My tears evaporate"). It might not be entirely coherent – it's simultaneously one of the angriest and saddest records ever made, so not every lyric fits into the concept – but it's arguably the most passionate record made by anyone of Pink Floyd's generation. No elves, no wizards, no sheep collapsing in New York, this is why – one always presumed – Pink Floyd were supposed to be great. Roger Waters' bleak, bitter passion about whatever it was that was eating him, combined with often brilliant music.

And this time we finally, finally got to find out what was wrong with Roger Waters. Alluded to as far back as "Us And Them" (and even "Corporal Clegg"), the world wars had been an obsession of his. *Animals* was filled with a spectacularly inchoate rage about everyone while *The Wall* began to narrow it down, to mother, school and – in the end – one song. That song was, as previously noted, "When The Tigers Broke Free", a song about the World War II military action which directly led to the death of Waters' father, Eric Fletcher Waters, and which ends with the chilling line, "And that's how the High Command took my Daddy from me." Left out of *The Wall*, it formed the

## THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"The 'important' parts sound suspiciously like outtakes from an Alan Price LP, broken up by crashing thunderstorms of quasi-orchestral melodrama... Truly, a milestone in the history of awfulness." **LYNDEN BARBER, MELODY MAKER, MARCH 19, 1983**

"Underneath the whimpering mediation and exasperated cries of rage it is the old, familiar rock beast: a man unhappy in his work." **RICHARD COOK, NME, MARCH 19, 1983**

basis first of a collection of songs called, apparently, *Spare Parts*, which would have formed a kind of supplement/sequel to that album. Instead, though, "When The Tigers..." became the launching point for a series of songs about war, infused with Waters' hatred for the then-fresh Falklands conflict. From "The Hero's Return" to "Southampton Dock" (one of the saddest songs about war you'll ever hear), this is a cogent and furious collection of completely personal and also universal songs.

It's also very odd. Take the single, "Not Now John", famously the only uptempo song on the record, and equally famously one of the few singles ever made with a backing chorus of "Fuck all that." A distant, even more cynical relation of Dire Straits' "Money For Nothing", with a grim marching beat and yet another *Final Cut* lyric

namechecking the Japanese (whose apparent role in both World War II and the decline of British industry seems to have marked them out as a nation for Waters' ire), "Not Now John" features fierce vocals and guitar from Dave Gilmour, a man for whom shouting "Fuck all that" in Roger Waters' general direction was probably a welcome release from recent pressures.

And then there's the one track that, we are told, the band all agreed on enough to place on Pink Floyd's enormous *Echoes* CD compilation, the fantastically sadistic "Fletcher Memorial Home". Named after Waters' late father, the track posits a home for "incurable tyrants and kings" who can while away their deluded hours appearing "to themselves on closed circuit TV". Waters adds a toastmaster's voiceover, laden with sarcasm, and his most keening, desperate vocal, and Gilmour more than nods his approval with his best piece of guitar work on this album. It makes anything on *Animals* sound chirpy, and yet Waters, in his role as administrator of tyrannicide, sounds as though he's more wounded than wounding.

Which leaves, in this forest of pain and hurt, one track which more than any other is rooted in suffering and misery. It's the title track and this time, it's not about war, or family. Opening with a lyric that screams depression – "And far from flying

high in clear blue skies/I'm spiralling down to the hole in the ground where I hide" – "The Final Cut" rides on the rising circular keyboard riff of "Comfortably Numb", paraphrases a *Dark Side Of The Moon* lyric by referencing another Floyd album ("If you negotiate the minefield in the drive/ And beat the dogs and cheat the cold electronic eyes/ And if I'm in I'll tell you what's behind the wall") and then turns into a love song of doubt – "And if I show you my dark side/ Will you still hold me tonight?". With its references to "selling your story to Rolling Stone" and tearing the curtain down, it might well be a rejected song for Pink, the narrator of *The Wall*, but here it sounds like a farewell to Pink Floyd.

"I was in a pretty sorry state when I was making this record," Waters told *Uncut* a few years later, and it shows. *The Final Cut* is a slightly ragged album. Emotionally, it has more than one focus. Yet it completely succeeds as a concept piece, not in the way it compares the Falklands conflict to World War II, or the life of a rock star to that of a soldier who never made it home, but in the way it combines all those elements into one cathartic release of all Roger Waters' years of pain and misery. How much fun that process was for his so-called collaborators is easy to guess: but, just as The Beatles' *White Album* wouldn't be half as good if it really was, as is often claimed, a collection of solo projects played by one band, so *The Final Cut*'s conflicts, frustrations and rages would just not be there if played by Roger Waters and a tame band. And when Gilmour lets rip with another (for him) brutal solo, or when Mason slaps down another drum beat, it's with the weight, not just of another bad day in the studio, but of a band's entire history.

"The last track, obviously, describes a nuclear war," Waters told *Uncut*. "And it's that idea that... at the end of life, one may have that kind of realisation that you could have when you're alive, and you go, 'Hold on a minute, maybe this is what I should do.'" Roger Waters' and Pink Floyd's careers have continued, with varying degrees of creativity and success. And while it's not always the case that Waters has entirely laid the ghost of Pink to rest – he's toured both *The Dark Side Of The Moon* and *The Wall* – it's more than arguable that, of all the partners in the relationship, he's moved on. That must surely be due to the catharsis of *The Final Cut*. There are those who might complain that Waters had suffered for his art and now it was our turn, but there are others who find *The Final Cut*, if not the most polished or spliff-friendly of Floyd's albums, the most emotional and direct.

Nearly all rock bands end their working relationships with records that sound like the dusty fart of all that was good about them, limping echoes of whatever it was they used to be good at all those years ago. *The Final Cut* isn't like that. It's the end of Roger Waters and Pink Floyd, but it's not the sound of a snapped cartwheel spinning weakly in the dirt. It's a man going out – not down – fighting, shouting his name, rank and serial number at anyone within earshot. Radiohead as the new Pink Floyd is a comparison so lazy you'll find it in this review, but Thom Yorke could literally learn a thing or two from this record. As could we all, frankly. 🐉

## TRACKMARKS | The Final Cut

1. The Post War Dream ★★★★★
2. Your Possible Pasts ★★★★★
3. One Of The Few ★★★★★
4. The Hero's Return ★★★★★
5. The Gunner's Dream ★★★★★
6. Paranoid Eyes ★★★★★
7. Get Your Filthy Hands Off My Desert ★★★★★
8. The Fletcher Memorial

9. Southampton Dock ★★★★★
10. The Final Cut ★★★★★
11. Not Now John ★★★★★
12. Two Suns In The Sunset ★★★★★

**RELEASED:** March 21, 1983  
**LABEL:** Harvest  
**PRODUCED BY:** Roger Waters, James Guthrie and Michael Kamen

**RECORDED AT:** Mayfair Studios, Olympic Studios, Abbey Road, Eel Pie, Audio International, RAK, Hookend and The Billiard Room  
**PERSONNEL:** Roger Waters (vocals, guitars, bass, synth, sound effects); David Gilmour (guitars, vocals on "Not Now John"); Nick Mason (drums, percussion); Michael Kamen (piano)

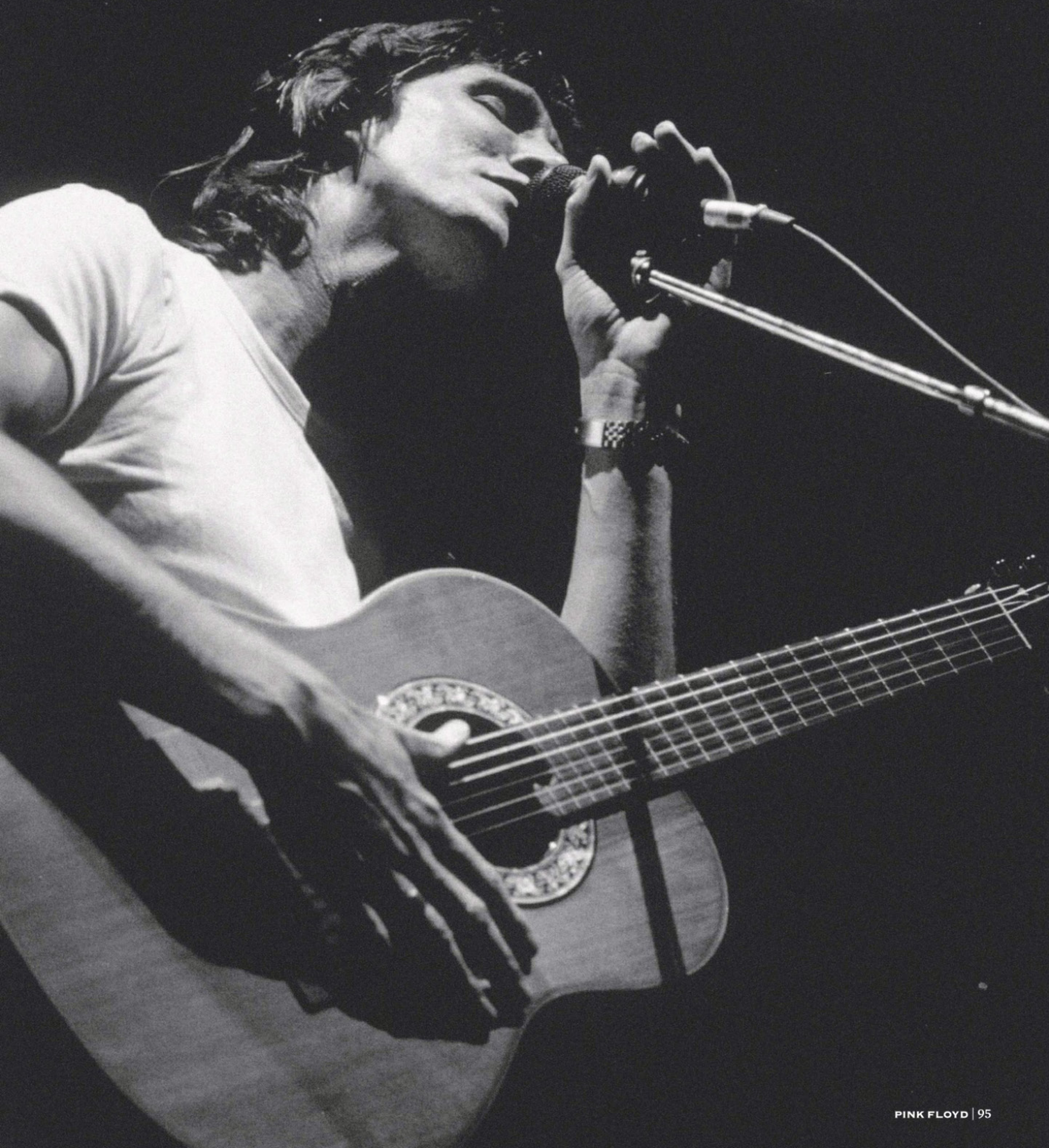


Andy Bown (Hammond organ); Ray Cooper (percussion); Andy Newmark (drums on "Two Suns..."); Raphael Ravenscroft (tenor sax); NPO conducted by Michael Kamen  
**HIGHEST CHART POSITION:** UK 1; US 6

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**The sound of a man going out  
– not down – fighting, shouting  
his name, rank and serial number  
at anyone within earshot**

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‘IF I’M HONEST, MY IDEA  
WAS THAT WE SHOULD  
GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS’

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Two decades on, ROGER WATERS recalls the Fall Of The Floyd Empire. CAROL CLERK listens as Waters details the aftermath of *The Wall* and the troubled making of his anti-war opus, *The Final Cut*. “I dragged us kicking and screaming into new ways of doing things,” he says. But the band he led would soon leave him behind...



AT THE END OF 1979, when Pink Floyd released *The Wall*, they were at the height of their fame and glory. A double album, it smashed into the Top 3 in the UK, going on to sell more than eight million copies in America, where it remained at No 1 for 15 weeks. The first single, “Another Brick In The Wall (Part 2)”, topped the British and US charts for five and four weeks respectively,

bringing home audiences a surprising and unusually serious Christmas bestseller.

The band took the album out on tour in 1980 with one of the most memorable, ambitious and expensive stage shows in rock history. Dramatising the central story of Pink, a rock star who had become alienated from his fans, the theatrics involved the building, and subsequent demolition, of a wall, 30-feet high, between the Floyd and their audience.

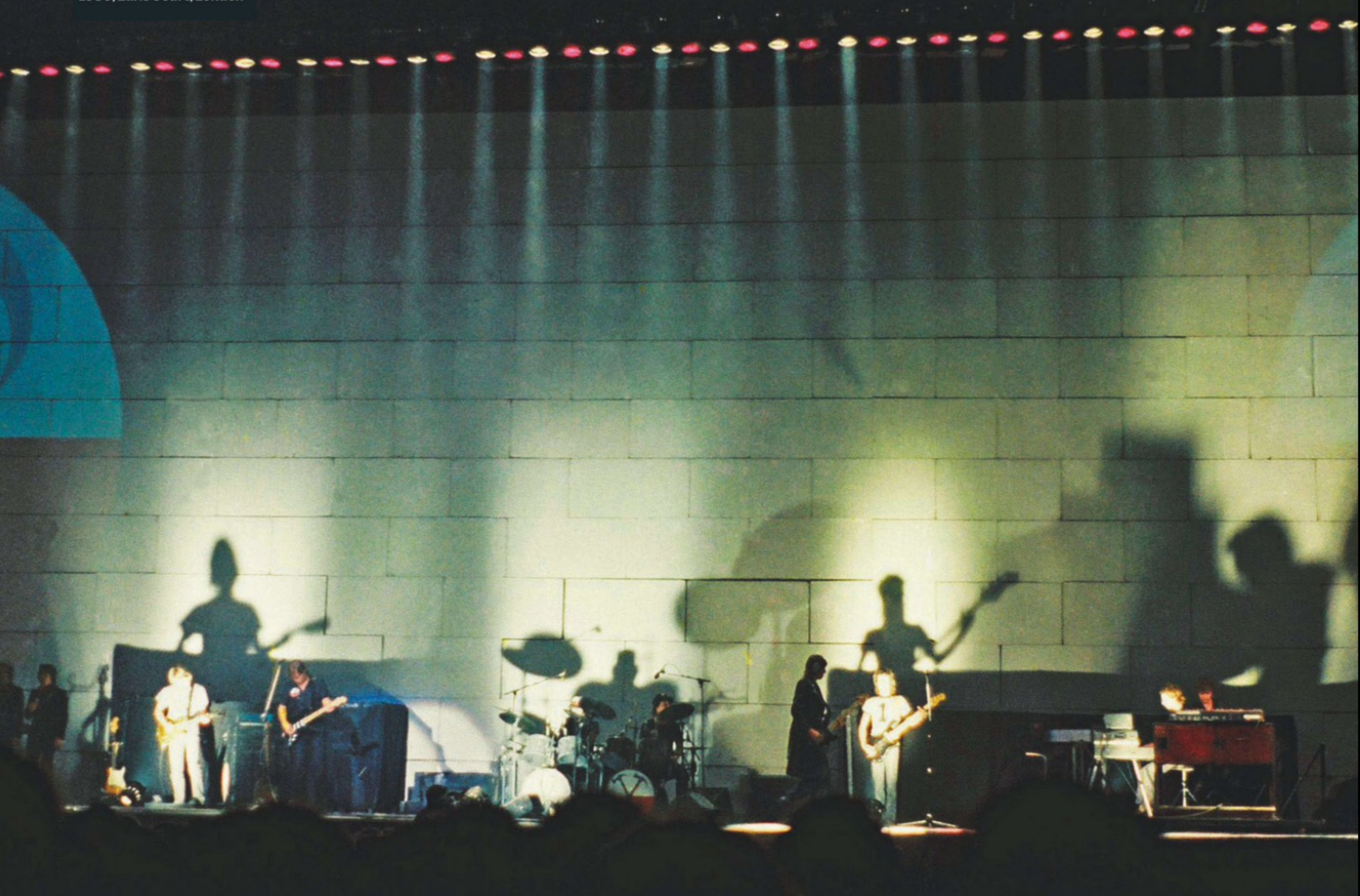
They followed this with a movie version of *The Wall*. Released in 1982, it was directed by Alan Parker with Bob Geldof cast in the role of

Pink. There seemed no limit to what the Floyd could achieve.

But even as *The Wall* was being packed into racks in record shops across the world in its week of release, the Floyd empire was beginning to crumble. Less than four years later, it was all over bar the shouting – and there was a lot of shouting – for the four-piece that had so dominated the previous decade.

Keyboard player Rick Wright left the band in 1980 amid claims he had been forced to quit by Roger Waters – who, in addition to his bass and vocal duties, had become

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the primary songwriter. Meanwhile, the already shaky relationship between Waters and guitarist/vocalist Dave Gilmour was deteriorating. They had never been the best of friends, but their musical visions for the Floyd had been conflicting sharply since *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. For a long time, they had been able to fight their way to a compromise, but the gulf was widening. It would soon be impassable.

Drummer Nick Mason was caught, unhappily, in the middle of the hostilities, telling *Uncut* in 2003 that “I’ve always been well known for my fence-sitting.”

By the time of *The Wall*, Waters was largely in control. And *The Final Cut*, released in the spring of 1983, was almost entirely his own work, a full-scale anti-war protest, with Gilmour and Mason turning out simply to play their designated parts – and subsequently dumping Waters.

It was, indeed, the ‘final cut’. *The Wall* had taken Floyd to the top of the world, ma, but *The Final Cut*, another No 1 album, saw their future about to go up – or rather down – in flames.

Gilmour, Mason and Wright would together achieve commercial success with *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason* (1987) and the chart-topping *The Division Bell* (1994), but neither album could hope to recapture the magic and enduring mass appeal that the

three had created with Waters, the John Lennon of the group.

On the eve of EMI’s remastered re-release of *The Final Cut* in April 2004, Waters rings *Uncut* from his home in New York to talk in his usual forthright manner about the fateful period from 1979-1983, which saw Pink Floyd in decline, fated to plummet from a seemingly unassailable greatness to an ordinary and relatively unproductive rock stardom.

**UNCUT: *The Wall* was, mostly, written by you. Did its success confirm to you that you could effectively take charge of the group’s music and direction, or had you been working towards this anyway with confidence?**

WATERS: Let’s see. At the time, I had started to work very much on my own. I’d moved to the countryside in England and I did drafts of both *The Pros And Cons Of Hitch Hiking* [his 1984 solo album] and *The Wall* concurrently. I presented both pieces to the band in the studios in Britannia Row. I said, “I’m going to make one of these as a solo record and the other as a band record.”

**So they had to choose which would be recorded as the next Floyd album?** They were all in favour of *The Wall* except for the late Steve O’Rourke [band manager], who preferred *The Pros And Cons*... As history, it’s

well known that I objected to a couple of chord sequences during the making of the record, and [producer] Bob Ezrin wrote some pieces for “The Trial”, and I wrote some new songs.

I’d sort of dragged us kicking and screaming into new ways of doing things since *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. With *Wish You Were Here*, there was the first big divergence – Dave wanted us to put “Raving And Drooling” [the original title of *Animals* track “Sheep”] on *Wish You Were Here*, and I had a very strong sense of the record. I had a pretty clear vision, I think.

**Were the rest of the band sidelined during *The Wall*?** I know that’s how it’s perceived by some people. The fact is, we all had the opportunity to write as much as we wanted. There was never any question of me saying, “Don’t write. I don’t want your stuff.” I was desperately keen for everybody in the band to produce as much as possible. But Nick doesn’t write at all, and Dave and Rick are not prolific writers. They’ve written very, very little over the years. They’ve written some great stuff, but very little of it. So, you know, it fell to me as a more prolific writer to fill in the gaps, to actually produce the material, which I have done and have continued to do, clearly, since.

I tend to write almost exclusively on my own. Since I left the band, Dave has collaborated with all kinds of people to get some kind of an output, because he isn’t actually a writer. You

either write or you don't. If you do, you can't help it. You can't stop yourself doing it. And if you don't write, you can't start yourself doing it. You can't think, 'Oh, I'll become a writer now,' and start writing. If it were as simple as that, I'm sure Dave and Rick would write. If it were easy, everybody would be doing it. But it's not. It's a very specific skill.

RICK WRIGHT CLAIMED he was given an ultimatum by Waters: if he didn't leave the band, Waters would refuse to allow the release of *The Wall*. At this time, Pink Floyd were, astonishingly, in a multi-million-pound financial crisis, allegedly due to their involvement with investment managers Norton Warburg. Wright has stated that because of this, he did not want to endanger the album's release. Gilmour and Mason, while opposing Wright's dismissal, reluctantly agreed they could not sacrifice the album that would go on to save them from bankruptcy.

Before his departure, Wright accompanied the band on *The Wall* tour, although he had been demoted from his position as full-time band member to that of hired hand, receiving a wage. Since the tour lost spectacular amounts of money, Wright joked that he was the only player who earned anything from it. He would later rejoin the lineup.

#### What were your particular problems with Rick Wright during the making of *The Wall*?

A lot of revisionist nonsense has been written about it, and certainly the history as seen from the perspective of Dave and Rick and Nick is quite different from the history as seen from my perspective. So there are no reliable witnesses to the historical events unless you're a camera or a tape recorder. I don't really want to document my view of Rick's shortcomings during that period. Suffice it to say, however, that my memory of events is not that I wickedly axed Rick from the band, somehow managing to force Dave and Nick into a position that they weren't happy with.

Rick was in his own space at that time and he was no longer really anything much to do with the rest of us. It became intolerable in the end.

**Is it frustrating to be portrayed as the bad guy all the time?** I've sort of got used to it. It doesn't annoy me very much. My memory of what happened at the time, who did what and said what... when the other guys decided to make records after I'd left and they'd gone on tour, there was a lot of attacking of me, I think to make themselves feel stronger or whatever. A lot of it was deliberately revisionist to an extent that was pretty upsetting at the time.

Interestingly, Nick's written his book and sent me a draft of it. I called him and said, "Nick, this is wildly revisionist and if you want my input in any way we'll have to go through it." He seems very happy about that. I said, "This history cannot be got right because we will all have different memories."

It's well known now that in the last 30 years

or so, the study of neurology has advanced to the point that we know humans are capable of inventing memories for themselves that are convenient. There are no simple facts. We will all invent a history that suits us and is comfortable for us, and we may absolutely believe our version to be the truth, but the truth is that empirical data tells us an individual isn't in a position to say what is and is not the truth about what is in his or her past. The brain will invent stuff, move stuff around, and so from 30 years ago, or 25 years ago, there's no way any of us can actually get at the truth.

**By the time of *The Wall*, there was increasing animosity in your relationship with Dave and Nick. What were the reasons for this?** At that point... not with Nick. Dave and I were always slightly at loggerheads. Making *The Wall*, there was a lot of to-ing and fro-ing about the mixing of "Comfortably

#### CAREFUL WITH THOSE FACTS, EUGENE

Hey, teacher! Alun Renshaw taught the "Another Brick In The Wall" kids – aka Islington Green School's fourth form music class. In a 2007 BBC TV documentary, his former pupils recalled a man who smoked in class, swore at fellow teachers and wore the "tightest jeans he could possibly get into".

performances and expect to make money.

#### How do you rate the movie version of *The Wall* now?

I think it's an interesting film. Famously, I had divergences of opinion with various people at certain points. [Alan] Parker's a passionate man and so am I and so is [designer and animator] Gerry Scarfe. Whether the piece suffers from that, I don't know. The one disappointment I had – and it's my fault more than anybody else's – is that it gave me a chance to introduce my sense of humour to the piece, and I signally failed to do that. It's extremely dour.

I'm happy to say I'm being given a chance to redress that problem. I'm just on the verge of signing a deal with Miramax to rewrite the whole thing as a Broadway show. I've written the first 10 pages. That's why I've been very keen on, and have thought about, rewriting it at some point – to get my humour into it. My humour is an extremely important part of my life. It's a challenge, and something I'm really looking forward to.

**Is there a possibility that the show might travel to the UK?** It might well open in London. We'll see.

**Would it be accurate to say that if *The Wall* was the last great Pink Floyd album then *The Final Cut* was essentially the first Roger Waters solo album?** I suppose you could say that. I mean, *The Wall* was quite different. It was conceived as a theatrical event. *The Final Cut* wasn't.

***The Final Cut* is described as "a requiem for the post-war dream". Is the post-war dream the same thing as "The Gunner's Dream", where he hopes that the world can one day become a safe and peaceful and compassionate place for**

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## "DAVE THOUGHT *THE FINAL CUT* WAS TOO PERSONAL AND POLITICAL. HE DIDN'T LIKE THE ATTACKS ON THATCHER..."

Numb", with Bob Ezrin in the middle. Nick never thrust his oar with any great vigour into the stew. He was always happy to be on board. He was a very close friend of mine as well.

**The live show was extraordinary, but it was very expensive. How seriously did this add to the financial problems the band were having after the trouble with Norton Warburg?**

Not at all. The album was so successful that any downside in terms of the shows was irrelevant. We always knew it couldn't make a profit. You can't put on a show like that for 15

The Wall tour: August 1980, Earls Court, London



**everyone?** That's exactly what it is. The post-war dream... we experienced the beginning of the Welfare State in 1946. The government introduced all that new legislation. At the point where I wrote *The Final Cut*, I'd seen all that chiselled away, and I'd seen a return to an almost Dickensian view of society under Margaret Thatcher.

**The album opposes war in general, and is specifically fired by your feelings about World War II. To what extent were your lyrics driven by other conflicts such as the Falklands?** I felt then, and I still feel today, that the British Government should have pursued diplomatic avenues more vigorously than they did, rather than steaming in the moment that the Task Force arrived in the South Atlantic. Some kind of compromise could have been effected, and lots of lives would have been saved. It was politically convenient for Margaret Thatcher to wham Galtieri because there's no way she would have survived another six months without the invasion of the Falkland Islands.

**Some critics have said that your references to Thatcher, Reagan and other world leaders have dated the work. But it could be argued that, although the names have changed, it remains relevant today. Would you agree?** Absolutely, yeah, in the face of the invasion of Iraq. I wrote some songs last April which I haven't managed to release yet, and maybe they will date in some way. I've mentioned Blair by name. One song refers to a short story I wrote many years ago about one night in my life when I was 19 years old, hitch-hiking back to London from Beirut. On my first night on the road, I was taken in by an Arab couple with a small child. They treated me with extraordinary hospitality and kindness. I've never forgotten them. It's so easy for us to develop enmities for people in other countries whom we know nothing about, people we can identify as a potential threat. Most of them are just ordinary people. Most people over the world are moderate, and our lives get destroyed by extremists of one kind or another. My theory has always been that the problem is exacerbated because of the demands of commerce.

**As we saw with the invasion of Iraq.** Absolutely.

**The jingoism and colonial ambition that you rail against on *The Final Cut* is probably more appalling now than it ever was.** It seems to be. It seems to have got worse, and it's terrifying. I'm living in New York at the moment, and it's absolutely terrifying what a slight grasp of foreign politics and of the facts the American public has in the face of the onslaught of the Murdoch media, Fox News and CNN. It seems to amount to a conspiracy in the media to defraud the population. It's quite terrifying out here. What happened in the aftermath of 9/11 was absolutely frightening and it still is, although it's just beginning to change now.

"THERE WAS SO MUCH CONFLICT... IT WASN'T EASY MAKING A RECORD IN THE FACE OF ALL THE GOINGS-ON BETWEEN ME AND DAVE..."

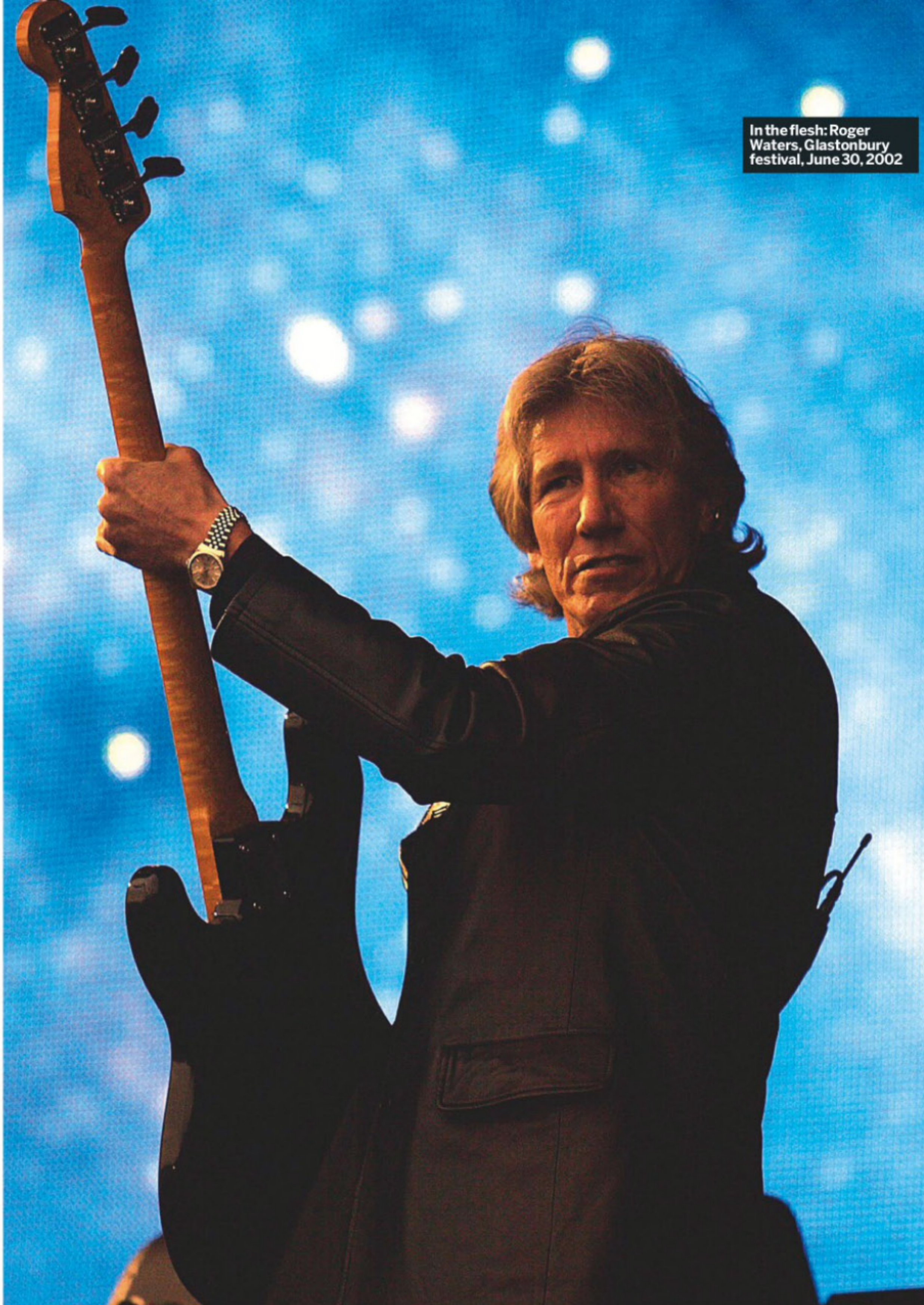
**Is it changing because of the information emerging about military intelligence and so on?** Exactly. Also, people are beginning to see a little bit more. Bush's domestic policy is fleecing the poor to pay for the rich, and people are just beginning to get that as well.

**Would you say that the American public is more gullible than the British?** There's a solid Tory vote in the working class based on an attachment to the jingoism of the past and the empire and the flag. It's true in Republican America as well, particularly in the Midwest,

where they're very God-fearing. In the Bible belt, even if you're working-class, blue-collar, a farmer or whatever, there's about half the population who are prepared to believe that if you're successful you must have got something right – "Oh look, they're rich and they're powerful, they obviously know what they're doing, so let's vote for them," rather than, "They're rich and powerful, they're stealing all our money and spending it on themselves, so let's vote against them." Democracy seems to be the best chance we have at the moment, but it's by no means a perfect instrument.

There was no freedom of speech about 9/11, no *habeas corpus*. They'd thrown away a lot of their notions of civil liberties – arresting Muslims and imprisoning them without trial, with no access to lawyers. Everybody was saying, "Hey, so what? Kill a few, torture a few,

In the flesh: Roger Waters, Glastonbury festival, June 30, 2002



so what?" I don't think they realise just how dangerous, just how slippery that slope is. Just after 9/11, there was one interesting guy [who] had a talk show. It was pretty open, at least as far as they can be. After 9/11, on his show, this guy said, "You can call [suicide pilot] Mohammed Atta and the others anything you want, but you can't call them cowards."

There was a big thing about this attack. It's an oxymoron to suggest somebody in the cockpit of a plane, flying it into a building, is guilty of an act of cowardice. This presenter was fired, and the next day the show was cancelled. You could not say that in America, even something patently obvious.

**On *The Final Cut*, you empathise with the victims, the dead and their relatives, but you also show great sympathy for the demobbed soldiers. Do you think they all felt haunted, betrayed and isolated?** Clearly, one can't generalise. Different people respond to things in different ways. As a general rule, they suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome. When I was growing up, the men who'd been in the war... they were really, by and large, very quiet about it all. My Uncle Jimmy was married to my father's sister, Auntie Verna. He was a driver in North Africa, and his Bedford truck was hit by a shell. All his mates were killed. He was injured but he survived. Obviously, you're never the same. Those of us who haven't been exposed to it can never properly understand it. You get desensitised to it by the violence on TV. You never sense the actual trauma involved.

**Two characters on the album come to mind – the man in the pub who laughs with his friends but is really hiding "behind petrified eyes", and the homecoming hero who can't forget the dying words of the gunner crackling over the intercom. Presumably they are demobbed soldiers?** Yeah. They're both the same character. They're both the teacher [from *The Wall*]. We learn a bit more of his past history – "When you're to land on your feet/What do you do to make ends meet?/ Teach." So many of the teachers at the Cambridgeshire School For Boys, the school I went to, had gone into teaching after the war. They couldn't think of anything else to do.

**Have you met many such former soldiers?** Nobody that I can be specific about apart from Uncle Jimmy. I tend to experience them as we all do, through TV documentaries and listening to people, their responses to things. It's like those US veterans who appear on TV. After 20 years, they go back to Asia again. "Too Much Rope" from [1992 solo album] *Amused To Death* – all of that song came directly from me watching a programme about Americans going back to Vietnam and bursting into tears as they went into hospital wards and saw women dying of cancer that they got from Agent Orange and all the deformed kids, again from Agent Orange. You see these men in tears, faced with the aftermath of the hideous reality that they had to go through, because we were incorrectly devoted to the 'domino theory'.

**The military themes of *The Final Cut* are echoed in both the arrangements, with all the brass, and the trademark sound effects. Do you still use these devices to consolidate lyrics?** I'm using sound-effects in this opera I've been working on. That's what I do every day. I put sound-effects on my opera. It's about the history of the French Revolution.

**When *The Final Cut* was released, there were various criticisms. Some people felt it was too depressing. Was that the reaction you wanted?** You always hope that by moving people you will get them to connect, either just with the music or with some of the ideas or with each other.

It did hit a nerve. People seem either to love it or hate it. That's been my experience, talking to people.

It's remarkable how many people I meet, as I potter round the world, who adore *The Final Cut*. It has a resonance. There are certain people with certain histories, and they're not all people who were affected by World War II.

## CAREFUL WITH THOSE FACTS, EUGENE

Waters created *The Final Cut*'s cover using photos taken by his brother-in-law, Willie Christie; the medals shown are the 1939–45 Star, the Africa Star, the Defence Medal, and The Distinguished Flying Cross. The album made UK No 1 in April '83, but was replaced by Bonnie Tyler's *Faster Than The Speed Of Night*.

**Some complained that it was all too quiet, and that despite the big swells and outbursts and musical variety within certain songs, "Not Now John" was the only track with any bollocks. How would you answer that?**

They may be right. I was in a pretty sorry state when I was making this record. If I made it now, I'd do things differently. There was so much conflict in my professional life. It wasn't easy making a record in the face of all the goings-on between me and Dave particularly.

**What would you do differently now?** I think I would probably work the songs up with a band so

there would be more flow. I would veer away from the over-dramatic use of the drumkit. Some of it I find difficult to listen to. A specific example is "Your Possible Pasts", which is this quite melodic thing and then the drums come in really loud, and I find that slightly irritating now. I'd probably put in some kind of rhythm section that carries you through the song more smoothly. [The sudden outbursts], they'd be toned down. I'd bring the verses up and take the choruses down to the point where you could listen to the song from beginning to end without leaping out of the chair.

**The last track, "Two Suns In The Sunset", has a very simple conclusion – "We were all equal in the end". It gives a sense of the album having been a journey. Was this what you intended?** With that final song, yeah. There was something strange about it. Obviously, it describes a nuclear war – the remnants of all that paranoia about nuclear war from the '60s – and it's that idea maybe at the end of life one may have that kind of realisation that you could have when you're alive, and you go, "Hold on a minute, maybe this is what I should do."

**The song says, "I think of all the good things that we have left undone." So you're urging that we should do them now and not wait until we're heading towards the "big truck" with the brakes locked?** We've gotta try and think every day. Every single day. I'm not talking about being heavy. I'm talking about living your life. Don't be scared to live it. Don't be scared to take risks. Particularly, don't be scared to take the risk of touching people, or to be vulnerable.

**Was that the problem with the guy in the title track, the "kid who had a big hallucination making love to girls in magazines"?** That's just about me and my sense of sexual shame.

**You've said that you insisted on starting work on *The Final Cut* as quickly as possible. Why?** I wanted to do the record. Dave had shown no sign of writing any songs in the previous three years, and I didn't see it was likely if we hung around another year or two. What I did do at the time was say to all of the

CONTINUES OVER »

## SOLO FLIGHTS

**If *The Final Cut* was a Roger Waters album in all but name, what were Messrs Gilmour, Mason and Wright doing during this period?**

At the time *The Final Cut* was being prepared and recorded, Dave Gilmour, Nick Mason and Rick Wright didn't have a hell of a lot to do, at least as far as that album was concerned. However, they had other projects on the go. Dave Gilmour had been working on his second solo album, *About Face*, which featured some lyrics contributed by Pete Townshend. Released in March 1984, it was solidly successful on both sides of the Atlantic, charting at No 21 in the UK and No 32 in the US. Gilmour toured the album in Europe and America as a solo act during the spring and summer of the same year, and his performances included a version of the Floyd's "Money". He then embarked on a series of studio collaborations with artists including Bryan Ferry, Grace Jones and Duran Duran offshoot Arcadia. Rick Wright had also been recording an album away from Pink Floyd, with former Fashion frontman Dave Harris. Operating under the name of Zee, they released the album *Identity* in April 1984, but it didn't shift too many copies. A month later came the release of Waters' *The Pros And Cons Of Hitch Hiking*, which reached No 13 in Britain and No 31 in America, and which he followed with a world tour incorporating many of the songs he'd written for Pink Floyd. Nick Mason was the last band member to emerge alone in the wake of *The Final Cut*. He'd been working with former 10cc guitarist Rick Fenn, and the 1985 album *Profiles* – Mason's second non-Floyd album – was credited to both. It didn't chart. He also issued a short film, *Life Could Be A Dream*, to coincide with the release, focusing on his parallel careers as a musician and a racing driver.



Waters in 1984: a partial advocate of hitch hiking

band, as things became more and more difficult and uncomfortable: "If you guys don't want to go on with this, I'll make it as a solo record. I don't want to force anything down anyone's throat. I'm quite prepared to take this on myself." As anybody in any pop group knows, you live or die by material. Dave was unhappy. He thought it was too political. He didn't like the attacks on Margaret Thatcher. He thought it was way too personal and way too political.

**Dave has accused you of manipulating a situation with *The Final Cut* where the rest of the band couldn't do any writing. How do you react to that?** How could that be? How on earth could I possibly stop Dave Gilmour writing? What would I do? Go round to their house and when they pick up a guitar say, "Put that down"? The idea is absolutely ludicrous. It may be that within the context of the prolific nature of my own writing... I don't know.

Rick used to write. He would write odd bits. He secreted them away and put them on those solo albums he made and were never heard. He never shared them. It was unbelievably stupid. I never understood why he did that. I'm sure there were two or three decent chord sequences. If he'd given them to me, I would have been very, very happy to make something with them. One of my collaborations with Rick was "Us And Them" [from *The Dark Side Of The Moon*], which was a fabulous song. This idea that I somehow stopped them writing is so patently ludicrous, I just don't get how they could say that.

**What were the contributions of Dave and Nick to *The Final Cut*? Did they give them willingly?** Oh, absolutely. Nick played drums and Dave played guitars.

**There have been reports that you took on session players in the place of Dave and Nick.**

Only on "Two Suns In The Sunset". Andy Newmark played drums on that. Rhythmically, there are some 5/4 timings thrown in so the downbeat changes from bar to bar and it's confusing for Nick. His brain doesn't work that way. That's why he didn't play on "Mother" on *The Wall*. There are other session players on the record, but no guitar players.

**How did he manage that?** Just by being obdurate. That was when we really fell out, over all that. He and I faced off about it, and Nick... I had this one telephone conversation with Nick about that. He said, "I think you're completely right about this, but I'm going to side with Dave 'cos that's where my bread's buttered." Obviously, I was a bit hurt because we were friends but, I mean, if I'd got my way and the band had all disappeared and gone, that would have been probably pretty much the end of it for Nick in terms of rock'n'roll. He likes playing and he likes the attention and he likes the money and he got a lot more years – from 1984 or whenever we split up until 1994. That's another 10 years and a lot of cash and a lot of attention.

**"WHAT WERE DAVE AND NICK'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO *THE FINAL CUT*? NICK PLAYED DRUMS AND DAVE PLAYED GUITARS..."**

**And then there were the rumours that you and Dave were never actually in the studio at the same time.** Not true. I have vivid memories of sitting in the room playing *Donkey Kong* hour after hour. After we'd got into it a bit, he didn't come in much. The big argument was whether he'd be getting a production credit and a point off the top for producing the record. He didn't produce it. He didn't want it to be made. He was disinterested. He didn't get the production credit. He did, however, insist on taking the point off the top.

**Could he not have hoped to find a place with you?** I don't think so. If I'm honest, my idea was that we should go our separate ways. What actually happened was, the reason that I finally left, signed the letter saying, "I'm leaving the band", evoking my "leaving member" clause, was because they

threatened me with the fact that we had a contract with CBS Records and that part of the contract could be construed to mean that we had a product commitment with CBS and if we didn't go on producing product, they could (a) sue us and (b) withhold royalties on that product if we didn't make any more records. I said, "That's ridiculous. We'd never have signed a contract like that."

They showed me the clause, and it was ambivalent. So they said, "That's what the record company are going to do and the rest of

the band are going to sue you for all their legal expenses and any loss of earnings because you're the one that's preventing the band from making more records." They forced me to resign from the band because, if I hadn't, the financial repercussions would have wiped me out completely.

**Were you preventing the band from making more records?** They were right about that, because I was not going to write any more records or make any more records for the band. I had decided the band had run its course as a creative unit. That was my belief, rightly or wrongly. I thought we'd finished. I thought we were done. Rick had gone, and Dave and I were at loggerheads. I said, "Let's just stop; let's retire gracefully." They decided they wanted to continue and eventually they did, and I left. I bowed to the threat and wrote a legal document resigning from the group.

**How did you feel when you left Pink Floyd? Was there any sense of loss or did you feel liberated, or both?** I felt liberated. I had a lot of negative feelings later on when the boys went off marching round the world with my songs. That was problematic for me for a number of years. I'm completely over it now. I couldn't care less, and also I feel much less bullish about the notion that I was right and they were wrong. People do what they do and they have their own lives to lead. The control of those songs... when you write songs, you don't actually have control over them. They become public property. You just have to accept that, and you can't be too precious about them.

I absolutely did the right thing, difficult as it was for the first few years when I was making records on my own. It was very hard to carve out a niche for myself outside the context of the band. I have accepted the fact that people have a big resistance to people in successful bands doing something on their own, and I understand that. I've found an audience for my solo work, which is pretty solid, and I'm happy about that. I don't know how many albums I sell. I probably sell a million albums with each of my solo recordings. It's perfectly all right and I'm really enjoying working with the people I work with these days.

I'm probably happier knowing that it's my responsibility and my work, and I work with collaborators who are brilliant musicians or producers, but the buck stops with me and I make the decisions and it's certainly easier for me than working in a group.

With that, Roger Waters politely says goodbye. There are things to do. A spot of lunch, perhaps, or some sound effects for his opera. The phone line clicks off with a decisive, final cut.



## ERIC FLETCHER WATERS 1913-1944

### Roger Waters on the death of his soldier father

THE REISSUED VERSION of *The Final Cut* contains an extra track, "When The Tigers Broke Free". Originally included on the soundtrack of *The Wall* (though not the original album) and released as a single in 1982, it's a devastatingly simple first-

person account of how Waters' father died in combat in Anzio, Italy, with an appropriately poignant accompaniment. Military themes have cropped up regularly in Waters' writing since *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. With the song, he reveals not only the source of his preoccupation but also the roots of his distance, his separation from others, which he has also examined with Pink Floyd. "When The Tigers..." is, therefore, perfectly placed on *The Final Cut*, Waters' all-out personal tirade about the iniquities of war and the self-serving motives of the politicians who unleash it.

**"When The Tigers Broke Free" is about your father's death in World War II. Do you feel that it has finally found its rightful home on *The Final Cut*?**

I think it fits very well. James Guthrie [*the original producer and engineer on the album*] sent me a compilation of the record when he'd remastered it, and I was extremely confused for a while because "Tigers" kept coming up again and again. I said, "James, what the fuck are you doing?" He said, "No, no, no, dear boy, I've put it in lots of different places. You have to choose which place you think it works best." It's great that it's found a little home on an album somewhere.

***The Final Cut* is dedicated to "Eric Fletcher Waters 1913 to 1944" – your father. You must have been a tiny baby when he died.**

I was born in September 1943. I was five months old.

**To what extent did this event at the beginning of your life shape your experience and thinking in later years?**

You'd have to speak to all my psychiatrists about that. It's pretty obvious that that sense of loss I felt extremely keenly through my infancy. As soon as I could talk, I was asking where my daddy was. And my mother's often told me that, when I was about two-and-a-half or three years old, in '46, it became really acute. In '46, everybody got demobbed. Suddenly all these men appeared. There weren't any men around in '44, '45. Now they were picking their kids up from nursery school and I became extremely agitated at that point. And because no body was ever found, there was always just a faint "maybe" – "Maybe he's wandering around Italy with amnesia". He was only ever missing, presumed dead. So

through '44 and '45, I assume my mother went through a period of intense emotional limbo, scanning lists and hoping.

**Has this loss contributed to the isolation and alienation you had been writing about in Pink Floyd since *The Dark Side Of The Moon*?** Absolutely. It's a major contributing factor.

**Probably the most scathing line on the album is when you are talking about the letter of condolence that your mother received, ostensibly from the King – "His Majesty signed with his own rubber stamp."**

That's exactly the truth of it. I'm not really wishing to criticise George VI, but I think it might be better if somebody actually signed a letter like that on behalf of His Majesty. I understand he couldn't sign every letter that went out to the widow of every soldier that was killed in the British forces in World War II. But there's something slightly weird about a replica signature on a document. I remember trying on my father's uniform and finding the letter from George VI with the rubber stamp.

**Do you know and respect the reasons that your father had for being in the Army in the first place, and to what extent can you reconcile those with your own strong feelings about war?**

I know them very well. If my mother's to be believed as an honest witness to events, my father was a devout Christian in 1939 when he was called up, and so he refused to be conscripted. He was a conscientious objector. They decided he was genuine, and rather than sending him to prison, the tribunal asked if he would be prepared to do other work. So he drove an ambulance all through the Blitz in London, which is where he met my mother, and he was working in his spare time for the voluntary service.

He was in London all through '40, '41 and '42, and during that time he became interested in politics, and his politics became more and more left-wing until he joined the Communist Party, at which point he had a struggle with the dialectic between his Christianity and communism. In the end, he took the view that it was necessary to fight against the Nazis. He went back to the Conscription Board and said, "Listen, I've changed my mind and so I would like to volunteer for the armed forces." They went, "Oh, jolly good. Look, this chap's got a degree, he's obviously officer material." So he did officer training and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Fusiliers. To have had the courage to not go – and then to change your mind and have the courage to go – is a sort of mysteriously heroic thing to have done, which my brother and I have to live with. 🐶

# A Momentary Lapse Of Reason

Dave Gilmour wrests control of the Pink Floyd brand, and reshapes the band in his considerably mellower image.

By Graeme Thomson

RELEASE DATE 07 SEPTEMBER 1987

**Q**UESTION: WHEN IS Pink Floyd not Pink Floyd? Surprisingly often, it seems, after surveying the less-than-unified operational procedures of this oddly dysfunctional band. The question is never more relevant, however, than when contemplating the troubled conception of *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason*.

Pink Floyd's 13th studio album is so overburdened by the extraordinary significance heaped upon the moral and legal ownership of those two titular words, not to mention the personal drama hard-wired into the circumstances surrounding its creation, it's little wonder that the music it contains has struggled to assert itself.

The record began in the midst of lawsuits, injunctions and bitter personal feuds, and ended with the launch of a valedictory tour so vast and relentless it seemed to eat entire countries alive. Somewhere in the middle lies an album which at times seems barely worthy of all the fuss. Perhaps appropriately, much of *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason* appears to be a ghost incarnation of mid-'70s Floyd, a kind of expertly rendered facsimile which nonetheless retains sufficient echoes of former glories to convince listeners that this is not an imposter but something close to the real thing.

One of many supreme ironies wrapped up in this album is that, following years resenting the fact that Pink Floyd were becoming little more than a crucible for Roger Waters' increasing creative tyranny, *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason* is essentially a Dave Gilmour solo album in all but name. After all, if anyone had been using Floyd as a vehicle for his personal vision over the previous decade, it had been Waters. He had written every song on *The Final Cut*. Gilmour later claimed that the bassist's ideal at the time was to make all the creative decisions himself and demand the presence of the other two members only when he deemed it strictly necessary. For his part, Waters claimed Gilmour and Mason had become utterly disinterested.

And yet sometime in '86 Gilmour decided to turn the solo album he was slowly making, with producer Bob Ezrin and a platoon of high-end session musicians, into a new Floyd LP. This was not quite as straightforward an endeavour as it sounded.

After *The Final Cut*, Floyd had dispersed. They didn't tour the album and when Live Aid came around they were notable by their absence. Instead, Gilmour made his second solo offering, *About Face*, and Waters made *The Pros And Cons Of Hitch Hiking*, both released in 1984. Each toured

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PINK FLOYD



A Momentary Lapse of Reason



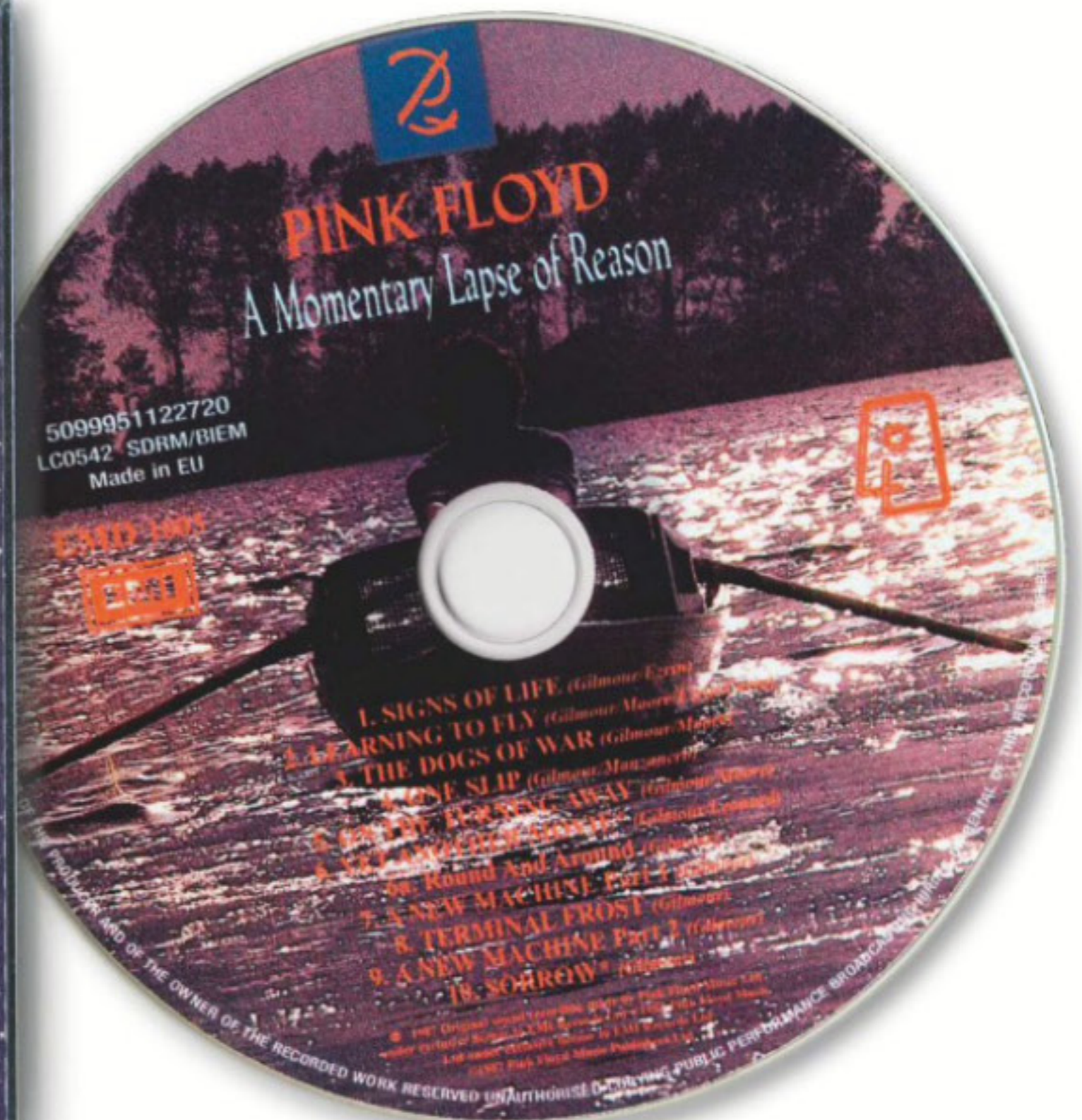
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1. SIGNS OF LIFE
2. LEARNING TO FLY
3. THE DOGS OF WAR
4. ONE SLIP
5. ON THE TURNING AWAY
6. YET ANOTHER MOVIE
- 6a. Round And Around
7. A NEW MACHINE Part 1
8. TERMINAL FROST
9. A NEW MACHINE Part 2
10. SORROW

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independently, a move which only proved that, in the eyes of the public at least, the sum of Floyd was very much more than its individual parts. Gilmour had to cancel dates; Waters' jaunt received a critical mauling. When Nick Mason released *Profiles* in August '85, did anyone even notice?

In December 1985 Waters finally jumped ship, claiming that the band was creatively moribund. He informed EMI that he was no longer liable to his contractual obligations and in doing so believed he had effectively sealed the end of Pink Floyd. Gilmour demurred, telling him, "Make no bones about it, if you go we're carrying on."

So began a legal fist-fight over the right to play and record as Pink Floyd which made The Beatles' day in court seem positively carefree. One further striking irony is that, following the departure of Syd Barrett in 1968, Waters was the one who had most fiercely argued to continue. Now the tables were turned. "Roger's leaving didn't mean they were all suddenly going to fold up their tents and go home," Bob Ezrin, who produced *The Wall* and also *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason*, later told *Uncut*. "Being a member of this band was how they defined themselves."

The legal detail is labyrinthine and too knotty to contemplate in any depth here, but it hovered over the sessions like a storm cloud. "When we started recording the album in England there were lawyers calling the studio literally every five minutes," Gilmour later recalled. "The amount of information they had to amass to fight the legal battle properly was enormous. They needed to know who'd said what when during our 20-year career."

In many ways, *A Momentary Lapse*... only became a Floyd album to win an argument, born from an act of cosmic stubbornness. During the sessions Wright was readmitted mainly because his presence strengthened Gilmour's case for using the name, but the keyboard player was taken on as a hired hand rather than fully Floyd. In any case, his contribution was minimal, while Mason was dreadfully rusty. He fiddled around with

## THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"OK, so is there a message in this waffle? The record starts with the sound of a man rowing a boat... Is this blob called Dave Gilmour, a kind of Chris Rea with an amusement arcade manager's haircut, telling us we are but minnows in the constants stream of wet stuff that is our experience? Or is he saying we would be better off as eels with big biceps?"

**CHRIS ROBERTS, MELODY MAKER, SEP 19, 1987**

"Neither progressive nor regressive, they just appear to have stopped. Death-rattles, no matter how elegantly arranged, are still terrible things to hear."

**EDWIN POUNCEY, NME, SEP 12, 1987**

"sound effects" while most of his parts were replaced by Jim Keltner and Carmine Appice. At other times a drum machine was used.

Much of the album was recorded in Gilmour's lavish 90-foot houseboat Astoria, moored on the Thames near Hampton Court, and finished in LA, partly to put some air miles between the band and the lawyers. "We ended up finishing the album in LA as the business hours are so different that we could get a bit of peace," said Gilmour.

The music reflects a desire to return to happier times, at least creatively, setting its compass at the epic scale of some of Floyd's seminal moments. While Waters is by nature an involved, intense kind of chap, there is something languid – almost lazy, perhaps – about Gilmour, in whose image this album is made. There is less emphasis on complex lyrical conceits and more on the texture of the music. *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason* almost always favours atmosphere over concept.

"Signs Of Life" – clang! geddit? – opens with the gentle sound of oars lapping the water, the aural

underlay for a classic Floyd mood-setter which, depending on your perspective, is either a return to sublimely familiar sonic terrain or a rather shameless imitation of "Shine On You Crazy Diamond"'s intro. The other instrumental, "Terminal Frost", is an old Gilmour demo retrieved from the vaults, and it sounds like it, the sax rather desperately slathered on top as a diversionary tactic.

"A New Machine Pt 1" and "...Pt 2" are brief dramatic interludes, Gilmour's voice phased with the then-cutting-edge Vocoder, but "Yet Another Movie/Round And Around" is more substantial, with its moody *Casablanca* samples and nicely insistent melody line.

Generally more comfortable as a collaborator, Gilmour had never been a prolific or entirely natural writer. On these songs he drafted in Slapp Happy's Anthony Moore as a co-writer, and also composed with Ezrin, keyboard player Jon Carin and – on "One Slip" – Phil Manzanera. Lyrically, having grown weary of the didactic psycho-political themes Waters brought to



"Making an album to win an argument" – Floyd meet the press as a trio, '87

*The Wall* and *The Final Cut*, he frequently retreats into blustery vagueness, though he also occasionally falls foul of the '80s affliction of Rock Star With Conscience. The overwrought "The Dogs Of War" – "flesh and bone is our currency" – is like Dylan's "Masters Of War" rewritten by an agitated fourth former. Musically, with its ominous, *Jaws*-like central riff, it recalls some of the more confrontational moments of *The Wall* without quite escaping the feeling that this is manufactured rage.

"On The Turning Away" offers a more gently wagged finger at those who choose to ignore the suffering of the world, a risky stance for even this most philanthropic of rock stars to adopt. Yet with its whispering hints of "Wish You Were Here" the song charms, uplifts and even moves. Gilmour takes the outline of some ancient Celtic melody and twists it into epic shapes that summon up more than a little of the old grandeur.

"Learning To Fly" was the lead single, a decent '80s radio rock song propped up by a phalanx of female backing singers and making good use of the rather synthetic textures which tend to define (and date) this record. "One Slip" is where we find the title phrase, borne aloft on a lovely liquid guitar riff, reminiscent of John Martyn's dizzying Echoplex manoeuvres. It also packs an emotional punch, the lyrics seeming to dwell on trouble in the nest between Gilmour and his soon to be ex-wife, Ginger. "Sorrow" is a rousing closer, beginning

## TRACKMARKS | A Momentary Lapse Of Reason

1. Signs Of Life ★★★
2. Learning To Fly ★★★
3. The Dogs Of War ★★
4. One Slip ★★★
5. On The Turning Away ★★★★★
6. Yet Another Movie/Round And Around ★★★
7. A New Machine (Part 1) ★★★
8. Terminal Frost ★★
9. A New Machine (Part 2) ★★
10. Sorrow ★★★★★

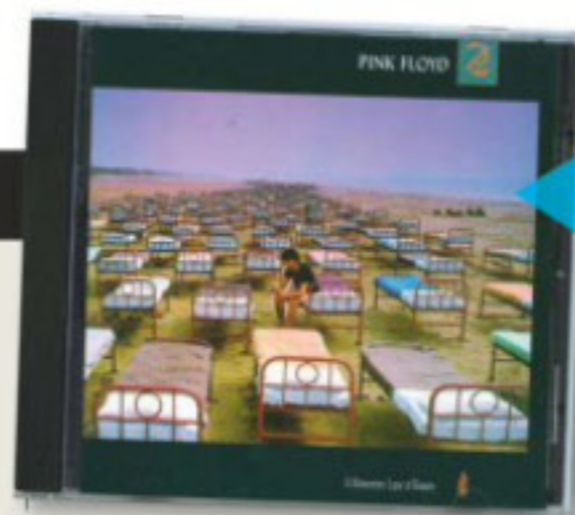
**RELEASED:** September 7, 1987

**LABEL:** EMI

**PRODUCED BY:** Bob Ezrin, David Gilmour

**RECORDED AT:** Astoria (Hampton), Britannia Row (London), A & M Studios (LA), Can Am Studios (LA), Village Recorder (LA), Mayfair (London), Audio International (London)  
**Personnel:** David Gilmour (guitars, vocals, keyboards and sequencers); Nick Mason (electric and

acoustic drums, sound effects); Richard Wright (piano, vocals, Kurzweil, Hammond organ); Bob Ezrin (keyboards, percussion and sequencers); Tony Levin (bass guitar, stick); Jim Keltner (drums); Steve Forman (percussion); Jon Carin (keyboards); Tom Scott – alto and soprano saxophone); Scott Page (tenor saxophone); Carmine Appice (drums); Pat Leonard (synths);



Bill Payne (Hammond organ); Michael Landau (guitar); John Halliwell (saxophone); Darlene Koldenhaven, Carmen Twillie, Phyllis St James, Donnie Gerrard (backing vocals).

**HIGHEST CHART POSITION:** UK 3; US 3



with a flurry of squally guitar and huffing and puffing over nearly nine minutes to stirring effect without quite landing a knock-out blow.

The same might be said for the whole album. It's a solid piece of work. Stubborn. More than a little calculated. But *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason* is fascinating ultimately because it's the sound of a band which isn't a band trying to be a band; a lop-sided, top-heavy unit attempting to bolt itself back together for the sake of its own survival. It lacks Waters' infuriating dogma, his self-absorbed intelligence, his often ludicrous belief in what music can and should be. "I think it's a very facile but quite clever forgery," he said of the album at the time. "If you don't listen to it too closely it does sound like Pink Floyd. With the considered intention of setting out to make something that sounds like everyone's conception of a Pink Floyd record, it's inevitable you will achieve that limited goal."

He has a point. In general, this is a Pink Floyd album which is content to lean on the band's historic sense of power rather than create it anew. Shorn of its stern concepteur, the group sounded more mundane than of old: they became a good, vaguely experimental rock band, and in 1987 we had plenty of those already. But they were also a far more inviting proposition than they had been for many years,

offering some hope in the words, some textural light and shade in the music.

Above all, *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason* provided a licence to tour, a decision that was made before the album was even close to finished and which drove the reunion, ultimately convincing the world that Pink Floyd remained a viable entity. The tour, which began on September 9, 1987 and ran for two years, was a behemoth, largely self-funded and

injunction at that point was nerve-wracking."

That threat eventually fizzled out, although by neat coincidence Waters ended up touring his *Radio KAOS* album through the States at the same time as Floyd were on the road. He was unable to resist a dig. "That's my pig up there," he told *Rolling Stone*. "That's my plane crashing."

The legal issues were finally resolved just before Christmas 1987, with Gilmour and

Mason given rights to the Pink Floyd name in perpetuity, but the consequences of this bloody tussle are still rippling through the ether nearly 25 years later. Has an album ever been more costly? Forget the astronomical legal fees. What about the shattered friendships, breached loyalties, the damage to the

band's image and legacy...

In the end, none of it seemed to matter to the fans as much as it might have. *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason* announced the return of Pink Floyd, which ultimately meant the chance to go to an arena and hear them play "Shine On You Crazy Diamond" and "Money" again. But was it really Pink Floyd? Far away from the courtroom and media bitch-fests, the ultimate answer to the question hanging over this tangled album lies in the music. Yes, just about, seemed to be the consensus. Just enough to matter. 🐷

## A Pink Floyd album content to lean on the band's historic sense of power rather than create it anew

immensely successful. In the beginning, however, its very existence hung precariously in the balance as legal issues dragged on.

"When the album was finished we began to spend millions of dollars developing a show to tour with, and Roger was threatening to stop the shows," Gilmour later told *NME*. "We were working all day and night every day, like absolute bastards, doing phone interviews with European lawyers from nine in the morning, then going down the hangar and rehearsing and refining until two or three next morning. The possibility that he might get an



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‘A FEW DINOSAURS  
SHOULD BE TREASURED’

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It's 1988, and Pink Floyd – minus Roger Waters, of course – are a bigger live attraction than ever. Still, though, the fighting continues, as DAVE GILMOUR and NICK MASON break a 13-year silence to defend themselves against the relentless assaults of their former leader. How have they survived when so many of their '70s comrades perished, asks SIMON WITTER...



IT'S A RAINY Friday night in New Jersey, and all around me Pink Floyd's "Brain Damage" is becoming reality. 50,000 people are raving in the section of Giants Stadium not taken up by the group's equipment, but it's not the scale of the event, so much as the behaviour of its

participants, that's sending my mind reeling. I always wondered what people DO at a Pink Floyd gig, and now I know. They wank the air above their heads and bark. I kid you not.

Anyone whose image of a Floyd fan is of a lank-haired, greatcoat-wearing dopehead who sleeps through the show, waking up just in time to hold up a lit match for the encore, should've seen this crowd: wholesome GI lookalikes and girls who were born around the time the band released *Dark Side*, all up on their seats, dancing and screaming for three hours, undeterred by the ever heavier downpour. The black girl on my left warbles like an opera singer throughout, while the white boys on my right bark like dogs in heat.

Despite the size of the stadium, there are no video screens, just one circular back-projection that never shows the people onstage (Pink Floyd's members are hardly riveting eye balm). Instead, the band create a spectacle of sound and vision that exploits the enormity of the venue, sucking the audience in. Planes, beds and pigs fly about during an extravaganza of film, animation, lights, lasers and pyrotechnics so spectacular that the aircraft overhead look like they're part of the show. My state of consciousness was straighter than the band's appearance, but this was a trip.

If Pink Floyd were ever sensitive about the dinosaur tag, they've gone out of their way to encourage it. The *Momentary Lapse Of Reason* Tour makes their mid-'70s outings look like cub scout expeditions. The tour is traversing America for the second time, after more than 100 shows here and in Australasia, and they're back for more in August after they've covered Europe. Apart from the brilliance of the production, it's hard not to be impressed by the scale of the undertaking. While I'm watching Floyd playing Giants Stadium, their roadies are already building a proscenium stage somewhere in Germany. These steel stages take five days to assemble, and there are four of them on the road at any one time, being assembled by leapfrogging roadcrews. After the following night's show, the band will fly to Germany and slot their equipment in place.

Onstage Pink Floyd are 11 musicians, but add to that a 100-strong crew and 45 trucks, and you've got a marauding army. Among the ranks are two generator drivers, five bus drivers, 16 truck drivers, a trucking co-ordinator plus (on top of the lighting crew) a lot of laser technicians and pyrotechnicians, nine caterers and an accountant. These statistics are justified by the resulting show, and the money it's reaping, but pity

the sod who has to organise them.

Some people may be wondering why Pink Floyd are doing this kind of business. They haven't played live since *The Wall* shows, they weren't at Live Aid and, apart from the uneventful *Final Cut* LP, haven't existed on vinyl either this decade. To cap it all, they've lost Roger Waters, their main songwriter and conceptualist.

Well firstly, this is a new generation discovering the band. Secondly, the Pink Floyd phenomenon has always been an audiovisual experience, with no time for personality cults, and Roger Waters stupidly overestimated his role in their success. And thirdly, their music may no longer be pioneering, but it still makes perfect sense. No rock group experimented with sounds as imaginatively as Pink Floyd, with such limited technology and such a commercial feel, and now – what with the advent of the CD and the return of LSD – their impressionistic creation of drama through texture has become peculiarly timely again.

Pink Floyd are often cited as the ultimate bloated, redundant '70s supergroup, but to lump them in with the technoflash wankery of Yes, the progressive pomposity of Supertramp or the cringeworthy neo-classical pretension of ELO is both unfair and misguided. Sure, they had their bad points – chemically

ex-bassist Roger Waters. In the press and via lawyers he has fought to prevent the group he left from carrying on, declaring them creatively dead and trying to stop their tours. So far Pink Floyd have remained silent, above the petty squabbling that Waters is conducting solo, but now they've had enough, the war is just too bitter and public, and they want their story to be heard. And behind his genteel exterior you sense that Gilmour would love to dance on Roger Waters' bones in hobnailed boots.

Because Pink Floyd haven't spoken to the press for well over a decade, few people know that Gilmour and Waters have been at each other's throats for the past 15 years. Producer Chris Thomas was brought in on *The Dark Side Of The Moon* to referee the radical disagreements the pair were having over the group's sound, and the same thing happened on *The Wall*. *Wall* co-producer Bob Ezrin said of the fighting: "It was all done under that English, smiling, left-handed adversarial stance they take, with the smiles on their faces and soft voices. But they were basically saying, 'I hate you and I'm going to kill you.' The war between those two guys was unbelievable."

#### But what did they fight about?

**NICK MASON:** "Music and control, and various inversions of that. The writing was on the wall with *The Final Cut*, because the next LP would've been us being employed by Roger. That was what he wanted, it was the problem, and he was using everything in his power to gain total control."

**DAVID GILMOUR:** "He actually said to us that if we were to make another album, he'd have to be in

charge, and we'd come in and play when he asked us. Aside from any question of my own pride, I just couldn't make myself see that that was a good idea for the music we were making. I knew it was wrong. We opposed Roger's control not only because we weren't being invited to contribute creatively, but because a lot of his ideas weren't very good. In the past we could always say 'that's a piece of shit', but now we had someone who didn't even know if he was missing the mark.

"*The Wall* is a good example of teamwork, as we all respected Bob Ezrin, and were able to say when things were not happening. By the time we made *Final Cut*, Roger had become incapable of accepting any criticism, which is why there are only three good songs on the LP."

**After *Animals*, the more control Roger gained, the more unpalatable the Floyd concept became. Someone said *The Final Cut* was the best Roger Waters solo album, but it was certainly the worst Floyd album.**

**MASON:** "Without doubt. We all think that, too. Roger announced Pink Floyd was creatively dead, and he was right at one level. We couldn't have made another record with him after *The Final Cut*. What nobody realised at the time was that his departure was the best thing he could possibly do for us."

## "ROGER WAS USING EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER TO GAIN TOTAL CONTROL..." MASON

induced piffle on some of the early albums and the ponderous, doom-laden concepts with which Roger Waters would later saddle them – but they developed quickly from R'n'B copyists, through whimsical psychedelia, to a musical idiom that was uniquely their own. And, whether you enjoy it or not, their music was informed by a wealth of ideas that would shame most of their peers, past and present.

Floyd have outlived and outlasted almost all of the '70s supergroups, by association with whom they were discredited, and still a vice-like social taboo prevents many people from openly displaying appreciation of their music.

Deciding it was time to put an end to all this silliness, I leapt at the chance of going where no-one had been in many a year, into the interview chamber with Pink Floyd – in practice a suite at New York's Parker Meridien Hotel, containing one David Gilmour and one Nick Mason. (Original keyboard player Rick Wright was forced to resign in 1980 by Roger Waters and, though he still plays with the band, won't officially rejoin until their legal battles are over.)

I'M PROBABLY BEING granted this interview thanks to the same force that spurred the band on during the recording of their last album, the overdriven hostility of their



## CAREFUL WITH THOSE FACTS, EUGENE

"Roger who?"  
Mason, Gilmour  
and Wright, 1986

### So he did the leaving?

**GILMOUR:** "Yes. He wrote a letter to EMI in December '85, saying 'pursuant to clause so-and-so of our contract, I have left the group Pink Floyd.' After we got this letter he was still coming to meetings with us and telling us that he was still in the band, that the letter was just for the record company. Sure!"

**I've never heard of somebody leaving a band, no matter how important they were within it, and telling the remaining members they have to stop, too.**

**GILMOUR:** "That's exactly our feeling, and we see no reason to believe any judge or any court is going to see it any other way. As far as we're concerned it's an open and shut case, but it's time-consuming, boring and distracts our concentration from more worthwhile things."

**Roger's actions seem designed only to shoot himself in the foot. If (as he claims) he was the only creative force in Pink Floyd, then the band will fail without him, and he won't need to take you to court.**

**GILMOUR:** "Yes, and you can see how badly we're doing without him. My view is that if Roger had put half as much energy into his career as he has into fighting us, he'd be doing a lot better than he is now. I can't understand how he can't see the stupidity of it all. He's spending a lot of time trying very hard to damage us, with a limited amount of success,

but the damage he's doing to himself is immeasurable."

**MASON:** "When you go to see a lawyer, and you want to fight a hopeless case, there's always someone willing, especially in America. It's partly to do with the fact that Roger's a gambler, and he thought we might've failed, that we might've lost our nerve. He was trying to scare us off."

**MASON:** "He actually said to us, in one of our acrimonious rows in '85 or '86, 'you'll never fucking get it together.' I think that's one of the reasons that he has carried on for so long. He hates to lose."

**Are there a lot of co-owned companies and interests that are complicating matters?**

**MASON:** "That's certainly part of it. It doesn't feel like it did a year ago. I don't really care any more. We're sick of it, sick of paying lawyers to write to each other, and it's humiliating to be squabbling like this."

**You don't look like the party doing the squabbling.**

**MASON:** "It's a big effort trying to hold this poor old boy down."

**GILMOUR:** "I do tend to go off the deep end at times. When we started recording the album in England there were lawyers calling the studio literally every five minutes. The

Floyd brought back Storm Thorgerson to design the cover for *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason*, his first work for the band since *Animals*. It was shot at Saunton Sands, Devon – where some scenes for *The Wall* were filmed. Other titles considered for the LP were 'Signs Of Life', 'Of Promises Broken', and 'Delusions Of Maturity'.

amount of information they had to amass to fight the legal battle properly was enormous. They needed to know who'd said what when during our 20-year career. We ended up finishing the album in LA because the business hours are so different that we could get a bit of peace.

"When the album was finished we began to spend millions developing a show to tour with, and Roger was threatening to stop the shows. We were working all

day and night every day, like absolute bastards, doing phone interviews with European lawyers from nine in the morning, then going down the hangar and rehearsing and refining until two or three the next morning. The possibility that he might get an injunction at that point was nerve-wracking. When we began touring, and all we got from Roger was threats but no action, we got to the point where we'd made back enough money to keep going even if he did get our assets frozen. As the tour and LP became more successful, all those worries evaporated, until it became a minor irritation. Now, whether we go to court or settle, it's not going to be a problem for us."

**Is he earning money from your success?**

**GILMOUR:** "Not directly, but one of the results of this tour has been that our

CONTINUES OVER »



'Games For May' – surround sound experiments at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, May 12, 1967: "The Pink Floyd Syd was in was a completely different band to the one that came after..."

entire back catalogue, which has just been released on CD, is selling like hot cakes, and he's making a lot of money off that."

**MASON:** "What's so silly is that if it had been more amicable, we could've helped each other. The Genesis/Peter Gabriel split is the prime example of that. They were meant to lie down and die after he left, but he didn't try to stop them doing their thing and they co-operate now. Their stature increases because of it, they look like grown-ups compared to this debacle."

It's particularly amusing that Roger's trying to do this within Pink Floyd, because 21 years ago he was on the other side of his current argument, when Syd Barrett left. At that point Syd was responsible for the band's name and all the songs, and Roger could be said to have continued on Syd's impetus. To make a case like he's now making, with an incident like that in your past, seems strange.

**GILMOUR:** "Yup! We've never been able to believe it, and there doesn't seem to be any legal precedent."

**MASON:** "All you can say is that it's fucking boring, but there have been two good aspects. It has been so totally public that nobody can accuse us of trying to shuffle his departure under the carpet, and it has been a spur. His determination to stop us spurred us on to keep going, it was just what we needed, at our advanced age, to make us hungry again."

**GILMOUR:** "And the spirit of joy, pleasure and co-operation that came back into it, that had been missing for a long time."

**MASON:** "Yes, during the making of the album and even more so on the road. Of the last 16 years of Pink Floyd, this last year has been by far the most enjoyable. It has been one of the best years of my life."

**If *The Wall* really was autobiographical then, judging by last night's backstage party, life on the road with Floyd has lightened up considerably since Waters left. But he must be furious about the way your audiences seem neither to notice or care about his absence.**

**MASON:** "That's right. We get more people asking us where Syd is. There was a sign in the audience the other night saying 'Where's Syd?'"

**GILMOUR:** "There've been a few 'Roger who?' T-shirts, and then there was that famous night when a whole row of guys in the audience turned up in 'Fuck Roger!' shirts."

David Gilmour laughs heartily. Pink Floyd's success has been a revenge so sweet that you could almost feel sorry for Roger Waters.

**IN 1967 THE PRESSURES of success and heavy LSD usage were beginning to push the eccentric personality of Pink Floyd's leader, Syd Barrett, over the border between genius**

**and madness. The group, who could no longer work for or communicate with Syd, replaced their leader with his old friend (and guitar tutor) David Gilmour. Some people think they've never been any good since.**

**GILMOUR:** "Syd was fantastic, a great guy, but the Pink Floyd he was in was a completely different band to the one that came after. If people say we weren't the same after Syd left, fair enough. The first LP was English whimsy at its best, with large slices of psychedelia thrown in, but it bears little resemblance to anything we've tried to do since."

**At the dawn of Pink Floyd, Nick was quoted as saying your ambition was to establish yourselves playing R'n'B. That obviously changed very early on. When and why?**

**MASON:** "We probably realised there wasn't any future in recycling R'n'B."

**GILMOUR:** "You mean you realised you were never going to be any good at playing it. They used to do a lot of Bo Diddley covers, it was great [laughs]."

**MASON:** "A lot of what I said back then was utterly cringeworthy. We were just staggering out into the glare of being a professional band and doing interviews, and saying whatever seemed sensible or outrageous at the time. To be honest there was no masterplan, no perception of what we were, or would become. If we were going to play Bo Diddley covers,

fine. We wanted to become really famous Bo Diddley players. It was a gradual transition, over many years, from the time when we began playing improvisations like 'Interstellar Overdrive', basically freeform R'n'B, which we thought was intellectually OK."

**The idea of Pink Floyd as a three-minute pop band never quite fit.**

**MASON:** "When we started out, that's what we wanted to be. We wanted to be on *TOTP*, we backcombed our hair and all that. In those days you couldn't release a seven-minute single. I remember when 'House Of The Rising Sun' came out, it seemed mindblowing."

**But you never played your two hits live. Even in Syd's day, Floyd music was drawn out in experimentation, nothing to do with pop.**

**MASON:** "It was wonderful, because we used to tour the country playing our peculiar music, to the absolute fury of the punters, who hated it with a deep and bitter loathing. Promoters would come backstage feeling totally ripped off because 'See Emily Play' had just been a three-minute spot."

**And you'd play that to avoid being bottled?**

**MASON:** "Well, we got that anyway, audiences throwing beer and bottles at us, 'cos they'd come to see Geno Washington And The Ram Jam Band, who we were supporting."

**To what extent was your music influenced by LSD culture?**

**MASON:** "It didn't influence much of our recorded stuff, but it gave us a launching pad, and a record deal, which we wouldn't have got if everyone hadn't been so fascinated by the new, changing culture in London. The underground scene gave us a home base to work from, but as a way of developing ourselves around the country it was pretty useless."

**Have you been aware of Acid House?**

**GILMOUR:** "No."

**There's a club scene in Britain where people take acid (when they can get it) and freak to a hypnotic techno-psychedelia. It unfolds in a strict dance framework, but the spirit of the music's not unlike what you were doing 22 years ago, experimenting with the latest technology to mess with people's minds.**

**GILMOUR:** "So it's almost come back round to our time? [laughs] I hadn't heard about that."

**Funkadelic's *Free Your Mind* album sounds like a load of musicians out of their brains on LSD, ruminating on the ills of the world while they try in vain to find a studio door. By comparison your records always sounded very organised and together. When did you stop taking acid?**

**GILMOUR:** "Some of us never really did it. Syd was the big acid freak. It was never a big thing, and it stopped very early."

**There are pictures of a young Nick Mason with pupils the size of Piccadilly Circus.**

**MASON:** "I must just have large pupils [lies! – SW]. I never touched anything, except for one very unfortunate incident with hash brownies on the way to a show, which I won't go into."

**Are you saying that, apart from Syd, Pink Floyd was never an acid band?**

**GILMOUR:** "It definitely wasn't. I don't know if Roger has ever done it."

**MASON:** "Syd was a walking example of why not to."

**One thing Pink Floyd haven't been for ages is funny. Did Syd take the band's sense of humour with him?**

**MASON:** "No. There's lots of hidden or dry humour. Half of it is absolutely there, like the Lord's Prayer bit on 'Sheep', but people take our lyrics so seriously that they don't see it."

## CAREFUL WITH THOSE FACTS, EUGENE

Never mind the "I hate Pink Floyd" T-shirt! In a 2010 interview, John Lydon – aka Johnny Rotten – admitted he wanted to record a new version of *The Dark Side Of The Moon* with the Floyd. "You'd have to be daft as a brush to say you didn't like Pink Floyd," explained Rotten. "The Dark Side Of The Moon! love..."

includes one of the Sex Pistols! No. I'm not going to tell you which one!"

**Though aesthetically it was far from punk, Pink Floyd's '77 LP *Animals* was more deeply nihilistic in spirit than most punk records,**

**portraying human nature as a fusion of three negative states of animalism, dog, pig and sheep. Though this vision was carried by some of the band's angriest playing, they always seemed alienated by the mood of that era.**

**GILMOUR:** "I don't think we felt alienated by punk, we just didn't feel it was particularly relevant to us. We weren't frightened by it."

Nick was a punk producer. He produced The Damned's *Music For Pleasure*. Good things came out of punk, but there were an awful lot of people leaping on it as a bandwagon, who leapt off when they'd got to the top."

**Well, the whole point was that anyone who could get their fingers round the neck of a guitar could do it.**

**GILMOUR:** "That's what we were like when we started, so we've always had an affection for the gifted amateurs – not that many of them were very gifted. My feelings about punk at the time were of benign amusement. I rather liked it. I certainly didn't sit around worrying about it. And I loved some of the Sex Pistols things, which were really well produced."

**MASON:** "The Damned album took a week to record, which was considered really detailed work. They felt more than three takes would make anything stale, which was great after you'd spent a year making your own album. It was interesting to see how punk worked as the antidote to all those technoflash dinosaurs."

**Weren't and aren't Pink Floyd still, by length of your history and size of your operation, the technoflash dinosaur.**

**MASON:** "Oh absolutely, but at least now the world isn't full of dinosaurs. When that was all that was happening it was very boring, but I think a few dinosaurs should be treasured."

**Why do you think Johnny Rotten wore a T-shirt splattered with the**

CONTINUES OVER »

**"IF ROGER HAD PUT HALF AS MUCH ENERGY INTO HIS CAREER AS HE HAS INTO FIGHTING US, HE'D BE DOING A LOT BETTER" GILMOUR**

**Tommy, the classic rock opera indulgence, looks like Harold Lloyd next to *The Wall*. Where are the jokes on *The Wall*?**

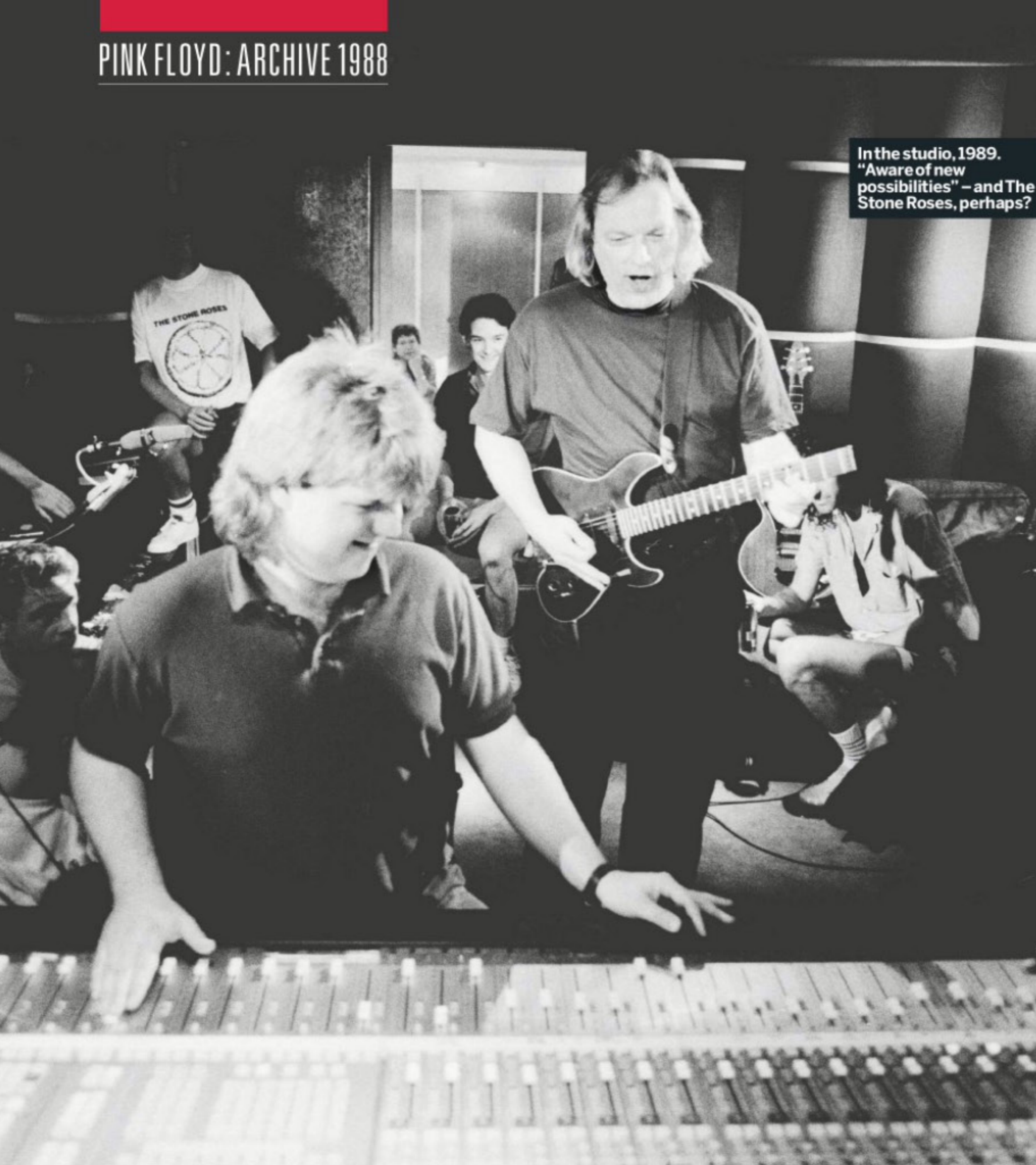
**GILMOUR:** "We never sat around consciously thinking 'God, we must put more jokes in', but there was a band sense of humour. I mean, Roger laughed at least once a year."

**The lyrical side of Pink Floyd is the part I have most problems with. I think the fact that 'Is There Anybody Out There?' was used on an ad for the Samaritans says it all. Roger's writing can be impressively incisive, but there's a relentless tone of cynicism and self-pity that becomes overwhelmingly grim. I know some people find a dark view of life quite refreshing, but...**

**MASON:** "That attitude is quite refreshing, particularly in the context of rock'n'roll, which is all tied up with cars and babes."

**But if you're not in the mood for it, you think 'either do something, or shut up!' I expected – now that the man who imposed his bleak vision of mankind on the group has gone – that you'd lighten up a bit, but there's been no dramatic change in the group's identity.**

**MASON:** "That's probably true, but we were both very impressed with what we've been able to achieve without him. There's no doubt that Roger's attempt to gain power was very destructive to our abilities. It certainly smashed my self-confidence, and yet we managed to rebuild a bit. Without him here we've found a lot more within ourselves."



In the studio, 1989. "Aware of new possibilities" – and The Stone Roses, perhaps?

slogan 'I hate Pink Floyd', as opposed to 'I hate Yes' or 'I hate Genesis'?

**GILMOUR:** "I take it as rather a compliment. I think he took us as a kind of symbol, because we were a target with substance. It would have been boring to have 'I hate Yes' or 'I hate Genesis'."

**MASON:** "And he didn't have the guts to write 'I hate The Beatles', which might've really upset people."

**In the mid-'70s you seemed very uneasy, disbelieving about your success.**

**GILMOUR:** "It was definitely pretty hard to believe at times. The years after *The Dark Side Of The Moon* were a very questioning time for us, when we looked at ourselves and worried about our motivation."

**That certainly comes over on *Wish You Were Here*, an obsession with the cynical machinations of the music industry.**

**GILMOUR:** "Yes. It was difficult to adjust, but we gradually came round to the point where we could say, 'Yes, we do like making music.' We realised that we were being quite straight about our intentions, that we did like making music, and going out and playing big shows."

**It was once said that you were too intelligent to believe your own rave reviews, as if you were more discerning than your reviewers**

## "ROGER'S ATTEMPT TO GAIN POWER WAS VERY DESTRUCTIVE TO OUR ABILITIES. IT SMASHED MY SELF-CONFIDENCE" MASON

**and audience, but now you're bigger than ever and seem very happy. Do you believe in the adulation you get these days?**

**GILMOUR:** "We're doing a very good show, we've put out a pretty decent record, and it's not a surprise that we're making people happy, but if you want to get into deeper issues of who deserves what in this world, in this life, then that's another question entirely."

**MASON:** "We are happy, but that doesn't mean we believe the adulation. In the old days we, particularly Roger, used to worry too much about whether the audience was quiet enough, but now we're playing better than in the past, so if the crowd wants to be very noisy, we'll play to suit that mood. We're more relaxed now, don't take ourselves so seriously."

**What do people do to Pink Floyd? I would've thought it was listening music, but last night's crowd was one of the rowdiest I've seen for a long time. They were demented.**

**MASON:** "That's Americans for you. If you're talking about the male section of our audience, aged 15-21, I know exactly what they

do. They play invisible guitar throughout the show; you see them miming furiously in their hundreds. Others hold things up, T-shirts, banners and car licence plates, and they make a lot of signs at you, trying to get you to specifically acknowledge them. They do a lot of peculiar things, and you wonder what's going through their minds. I guess it's basically listening to music, but Americans just listen rather noisily."

**Roger's gone and you've proved that you can do without him. Is there anything else you still need to prove?**

**GILMOUR:** "We're not here this year to prove anything to ourselves, to Roger or to anyone else. Our primary motivation is a continuation of what we've always done, though there was a certain amount of proving involved."

**But his departure made you hungry again. What'll make you hungry now?**

**MASON:** "We still enjoy playing music. We have other interests, but none that would make a better career, and when you've been at it for 20 years, you've an awareness of the new possibilities that will develop. If and when we tour again, I know there'll be loads of new technologies for us to play with."

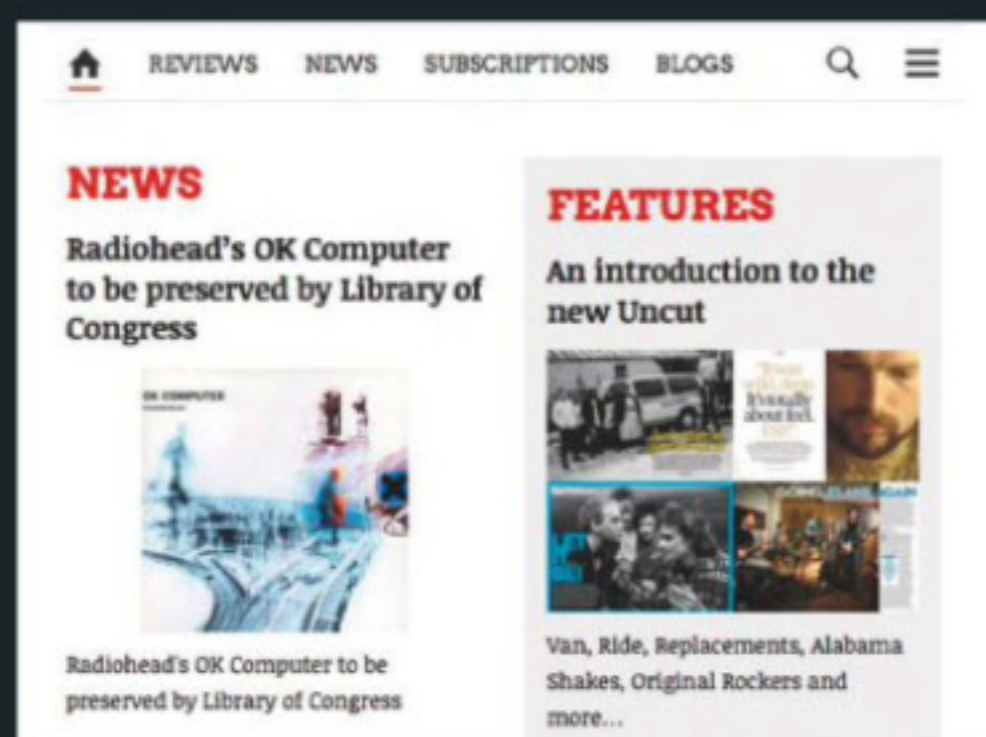
**SO, WHAT ARE WE to make of Pink Floyd?** They are part of the machine that they love to criticise, and are doing very nicely thank you by its rules. They are a dinosaur rock band, a middle-aged, middle-class money-spinning business concern. They have almost nothing

to do with the spirit of rock'n'roll. But so what? Rock'n'roll is dead. It had its chances to change the world, and for the most part it failed. If the spirit of rock'n'roll returns, it will probably be in another medium, far from the shallow, dishonest mythology of contemporary pop.

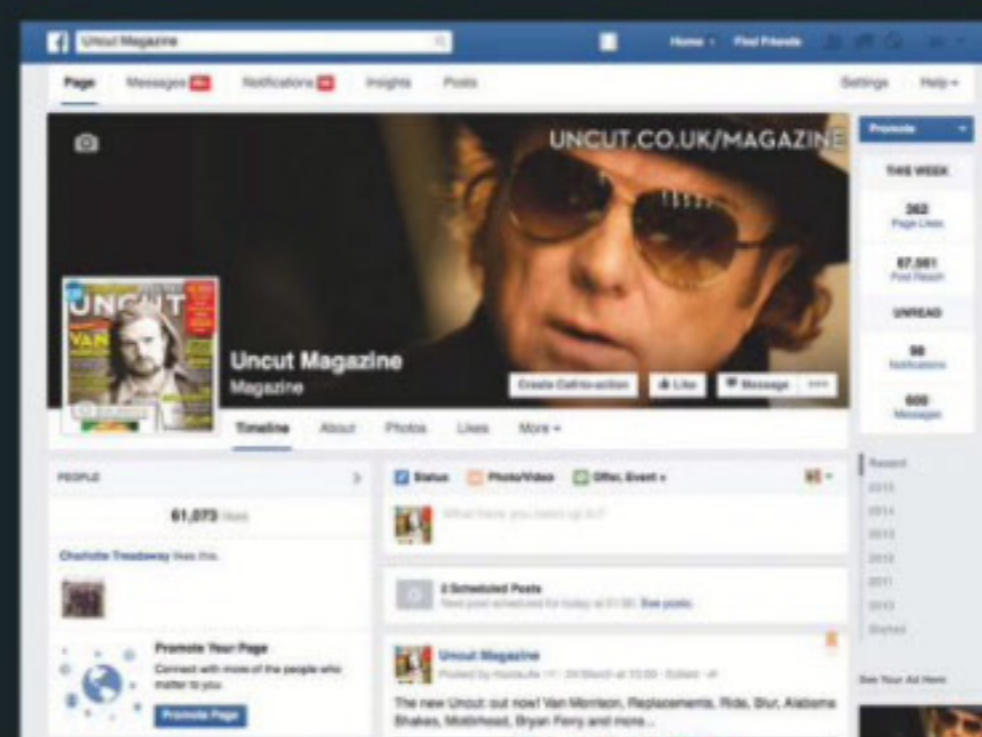
Post-Waters Pink Floyd avoid both pop's banality and rock's hollow idealism. They claim to be nothing more than entertainers, and the incredible amount of time, money and imagination they invest in their show makes other bands of similar stature look like hit-and-run cheapskates. Of course at their level of popularity a great deal of spontaneity (or the cathartic intimacy of a great club date) isn't a realistic proposition, but the mass audio-visual experience of a good Pink Floyd show is still one of the highlights of any musical calendar.

Pink Floyd may never cease to symbolise the unacceptable face of rock, but this honour is more the result of the scale of their success and the era that spawned them, than any real parallels between them and the many infinitely less valuable acts that made up the dreaded 'progressive rock' school. Their vinyl legacy may contain as many bad ideas as good, but that's because it was full of ideas and experiments in the first place, and though their days as pioneers are over, they're still far more weird, imaginative and interesting than any of the '80s stadium rock giants. The Pink Floyd taboo ends here! 🍷

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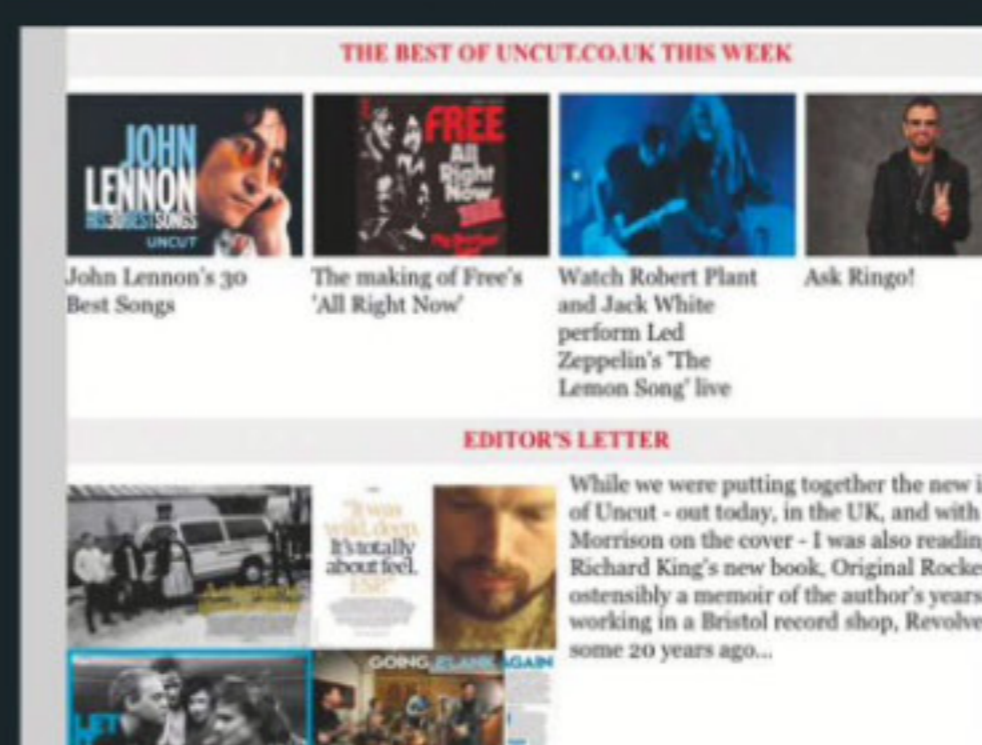
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# The Division Bell

“Could we wipe the slate clean?” Messrs Gilmour, Mason and Wright rediscover the fine art of collaboration – without, of course, a certain opinionated bassist... *By Graeme Thomson*

RELEASE DATE 28 MARCH 1994

**H**AVING DRAGGED THE Momentary Lapse Of Reason tour around almost every mapped point on the globe and released the live album and film *Delicate Sound Of Thunder* into the bargain, by 1990 Pink Floyd Mk II had asserted their credentials beyond all reasonable dispute. Grossing \$135 million, the tour outpunched all comers, including heavyweights U2 and Michael Jackson, while the 1987 album massively outsold its predecessor, *The Final Cut*.

Point well and truly proven, the band members spent the early '90s independently attending to their affairs, both domestic and creative: Gilmour got divorced and worked on the soundtrack to the Arthur C Clarke documentary *Fractals: The Colors Of Infinity*. Mason remarried, bought classic cars and flew a few planes.

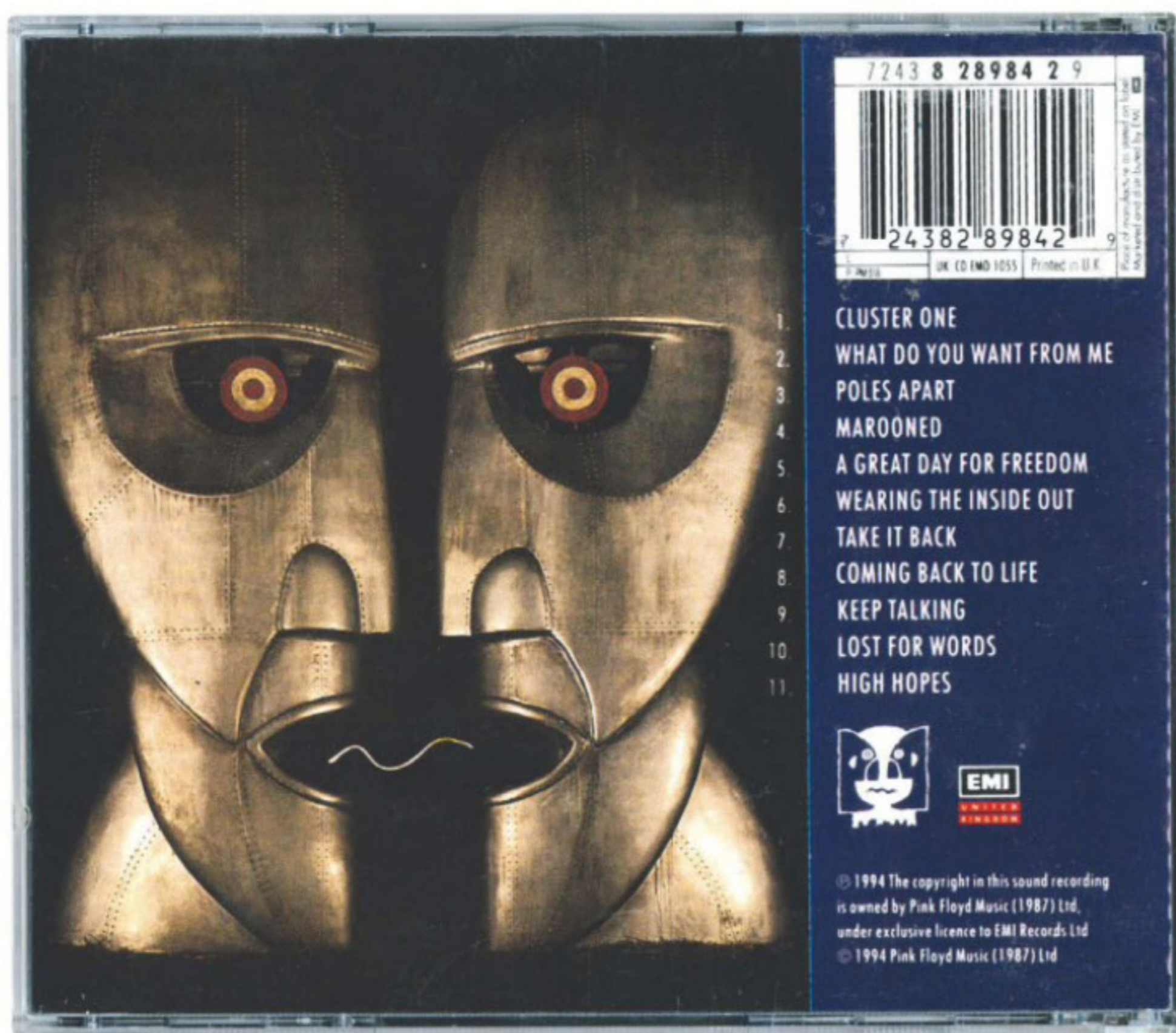
In January 1993 they reunited with Rick Wright at their old '70s haunt, Britannia Row studios, where the trio, tentatively at first, began improvising new material. As the sessions rapidly succeeded expectations, bassist Guy Pratt was invited to participate and, over the course of the next two weeks, Gilmour and Wright composed dozens of musical pieces together and separately; some were fragments, others more fully formed.

Encouraged by the potential for a new album, they relocated to Gilmour's houseboat Astoria, where with the help once again of producer Bob Ezrin they set about separating the wheat from the chaff. Now attempting to pass themselves off as a functioning democracy, band members were asked to award each piece of music a mark out of 10 – oh, how Roger Waters would have laughed. Wright rather skewed this process by giving top marks to all his own compositions and zero to everyone else's, but eventually they settled on 11 songs and recorded sporadically through 1993.

Upon its release in March 1994 the results were generally slated, but *The Division Bell* might just be the dark horse of the Floyd canon. The opening triptych of songs is a hugely impressive return to something very close to the eternal essence of Pink Floyd, and much of the rest retains a quiet power and a meditative quality that betrays a genuine sense of unity.

It is a considerably warmer and less uptight record than any they had released since *Animals*. Pink Floyd on *The Division Bell* sounded more like a true band than they had for many years; one, furthermore, that was secure enough to feel that it had nothing to prove. “It took *The*

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*Division Bell* to get the new order established," Bob Ezrin later told *Uncut*. "There was less tension and stress." It wasn't all plain sailing. Wary of the Yoko Factor, certain management figures and musicians bristled at the involvement of Gilmour's new girlfriend (and soon-to-be wife), novelist Polly Samson, who co-wrote seven of the album's nine lyrics. Meanwhile Wright was still being paid as a hired hand rather than a full member, a slight which required him to swallow his pride, but which he found deeply hurtful.

Despite these issues, both Mason and Wright felt more valued and genuinely part of the process than they had on *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason*. The latter co-wrote four tracks and on "Wearing The Inside Out" took a lead vocal for the first time since "Time", while the band's old sax sidekick Dick Parry made his first Floyd appearance since playing on "Shine On You Crazy Diamond".

Not coincidentally, the results feel integrated and organic. Opener "Cluster One" is an archetypal instrumental that creeps in like sea mist, conjuring a genuine sense of mystery and expectation that the rest of the LP does much to fulfil. Like many of the songs, "Cluster One" was improvised into existence by Gilmour and Wright, their first co-composition since 1972.

Meanwhile the input of Dream Academy's Nick Laird-Clowes and in particular Samson ensured that the lyrical ambition on *The Division Bell* was greater than that of the previous record and the execution more accomplished. Without aspiring to become anything as grand as a concept album, these songs are largely concerned with the joys and difficulties of communication. Apropos the album title, which references the bell that announces a vote in Parliament, the subtext is the necessity in life of choosing which side of the fence on which to stand.

Many tracks conform to the self-referential Floyd tradition of rootling around in the band's turbulent history and examining its interpersonal quirks. Inevitably the focus frequently falls on the dog days of 1985-'87 and the festering resentment surrounding the making of *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason*.

This approach reaps surprisingly worthwhile

## THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"Neither dazzling nor radical. However, even burdened with steaming great dollops of self-indulgence, it remains oddly comforting that, in this uncertain world of ours, the weather seldom changes on Planet Floyd."

STEPHEN DALTON, *VOX*, MAY 1994

"So effortless, they sound as though they could do it sleeping, blindfolded, one hand tied behind their backs... It's very, very boring. Their accountants will be pleased."

TOMMY UDO, *NME*, APRIL 9, 1994

results. "Poles Apart" is gentle, regretful and musically supple, its folksy open-tuned acoustic guitar lines breaking halfway through into a sinister little fairground waltz. The first verse addresses Syd Barrett ("You were always the golden boy...") but the sentiments of the second stanza ("Hey you, did you ever realise what you'd become?") are clearly reserved for Waters. "Lost For Words" continues the theme over a vaguely Celtic melody and fluid classical guitar, but the mood here is truly vengeful. Gilmour at first tries to transcend the graceless circumstances of the band's recent predicament before casting an eye over the protagonists. A reference to "the Right One walk[ing] out of the door" is widely interpreted as a nod to Wright's firing in 1979, while it doesn't take a genius to identify the man with "tunnel vision" who would "martyr yourself to caution".

Gilmour had attempted to extend an olive branch to Waters by inviting him to play some part in the making of *The Division Bell* and to join the tour that followed. The final verse of "Lost For Words" unambiguously records the bass player's response. "I open the door to my enemies, and I ask, 'Could we wipe the slate clean?'" sings Gilmour. "But they tell me to please go and fuck myself..." In case we haven't quite got the message, sampled audio from a boxing bout declares "the winner... by a knockout!" while on the inner sleeve the relevant lyrics are placed next to a pair of boxing gloves. Ouch.

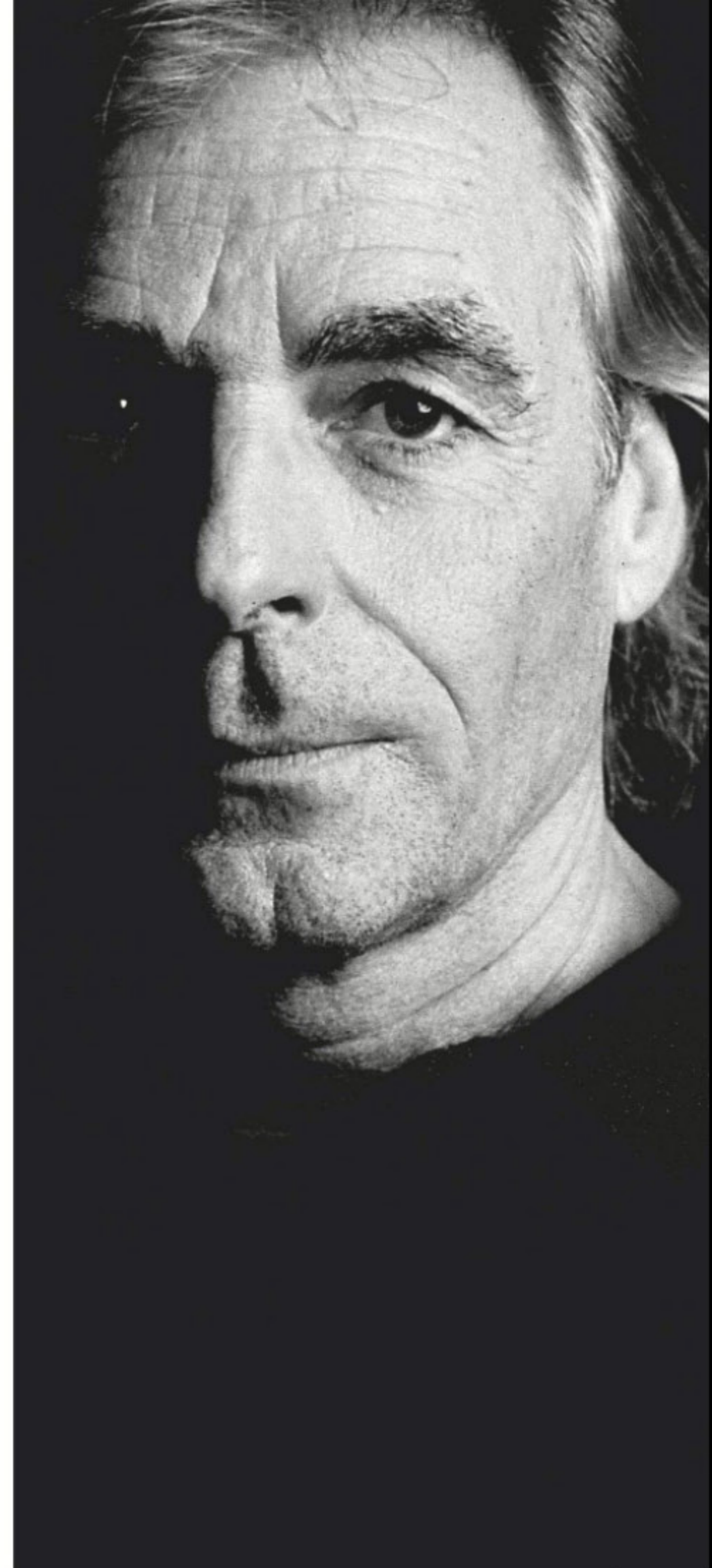
"What Do You Want From Me" concerns itself with another favoured Floyd theme, the terrible lot of handsomely remunerated men negotiating the apparently unreasonable expectations of their fans. "Should I... play these strings till my fingers are raw?/You're so hard to please," bawls Gilmour. It's a conscious return to the existential graffiti plastered all over *The Wall*, in which stardom is portrayed as innately alienating, warping the views of both observer and observed. It may be a rich man's lament, but nevertheless "What Do You Want From Me" has real bite; a Chicago blues-cooked Pink, featuring a terrifically committed vocal from Gilmour. "Wearing The Inside Out" is even more disquieting, an odd

but rather effective study in blankness sung by Wright with just the right measure of diffidence, as though each word is being filtered through a Xanax haze.

Elsewhere the focus thankfully extends beyond navel-gazing. "Keep Talking" samples the Stephen Hawking speech – "For millions of years mankind lived just like the animals/Then something happened which unleashed the power of our imagination/We learned to talk" – that first featured on a British Telecom advert, of all things. Sonically it roams into more traditionally experimental Floyd territory. Built on layers of propulsive guitar and some highly effective call-and-response vocal trade-offs between Gilmour and the female backing singers, its message is hardly revolutionary or subtle, but it is conveyed with crisp power and tense drama.

"A Great Day For Freedom" juxtaposes the hope felt following the fall of the Berlin Wall with the subsequent atrocities committed in the former Yugoslavia. It begins as a rather ponderous ballad but soon swells – or should that be bloats? Near the end Gilmour unzips one of those great arching solos atop a stirring string arrangement by Michael Kamen, but the effect is oddly listless.

Almost inevitably for an album clocking in at just under 70 minutes there are some misfires. Amid the sporadic sense of regained majesty, some terribly orthodox rock shapes are



## TRACKMARKS | The Division Bell

1. Cluster One ★★
2. What Do You Want From Me ★★
3. Poles Apart ★★
4. Marooned ★
5. A Great Day For Freedom ★
6. Wearing The Inside Out ★★
7. Take It Back ★
8. Coming Back To Life ★
9. Keep Talking ★★
10. Lost For Words ★★
11. High Hopes ★★

**RELEASED:** March 28, 1994  
**LABEL:** EMI  
**PRODUCED BY:** Bob Ezrin, David Gilmour  
**RECORDED AT:** Astoria (Hampton), Britannia Row (London), Olympia (London), Metropolis Studios (London), The Creek (London)  
**PERSONNEL:** David Gilmour (lead vocals, guitars, bass guitar, acoustic guitar, keyboards,

production, mixing, programming); Nick Mason (drums, percussion, programming); Richard Wright (keyboards, piano, vocals); Jon Carin (programming and additional keys); Guy Pratt (bass guitar); Gary Wallis (percussion); Tim Renwick (guitars); Dick Parry (tenor sax); Bob Ezrin (keyboards and percussion); Sam Brown (backing vocals); Durga McBroom (backing



vocals); Carol Kenyon (backing vocals); Jackie Sheridan (backing vocals); Rebecca Leigh-White (backing vocals).  
**HIGHEST CHART POSITION:** UK 1; US 1



thrown. "Marooned" is a noodling instrumental, while "Coming Back To Life" rapidly descends to limping mediocrity. "Take It Back", the first single from the album, plunders inspiration from Big Country and U2's "Where The Streets Have No Name". A sub-par '80s stadium rock anthem almost a decade too late to the party, it's all "earth", "fire" and an overworked delay pedal, opting for hollow bombast over nuance.

No matter. *The Division Bell* ends on a high, both literally and figuratively.

"High Hopes" was written quickly by Gilmour but covers a lot of ground. A moving, very English rumination on childhood innocence, it reflects on what became of the ideals of the sun-dappled '60s generation since "*time took our dreams away*". Both epic and restrained,

with its shifting musical moods and finely etched detail, "High Hopes" doesn't merely gaze longingly towards Floyd's career peaks, it gamely sets about climbing them.

The Division Bell tour began in Miami on March 30, 1994, two days after the album's release, and ended 110 shows later at Earls Court on October 29. The final date of the highest grossing tour in rock history up until that point, it was the group's last concert performance until their historic reunion at

Live 8 in 2005, when Waters joined the band onstage for the first time in 24 years. He had been invited to participate on *The Division Bell* but declined, and at the time of its release he called the album "just nonsense from beginning to end". Now the dust has settled the evidence mostly proves him wrong. This is a worthy Pink Floyd album, as good if not better than anything most veteran rock bands manage to produce nearly 30 years into their career and shorn of a limb.


## **"High Hopes" doesn't merely gaze at Floyd's career peaks, it gamely sets about climbing them**

As a swan song *The Division Bell* is very far from being a blot on the Floyd copybook, but is it definitely the final chapter? Such was the depth of the schism between Waters and Gilmour that for almost two decades any rapprochement seemed impossible, yet the hard ground has certainly softened. First came that historic four-song, 18-minute reunion at Live 8, the collective resistance of both parties worn down by the irrepressible chivvy of Bob Geldof. Since then, both men have been


busy with their own work. Gilmour has continued touring, making solo albums and embarking on diverse collaborations, the most recent and best of which was *Metallic Spheres*, 2010's fine album with The Orb. Waters has carved out a successful if largely unheralded solo career, but increasingly he has made it clear that he'd be happy to see Floyd come together again, even if only once.

Gilmour continues to resist, preferring to look forward, but last July the pair performed four songs together – including "Wish You Were Here" – at a charity concert in Oxfordshire in aid of the Hopping Foundation. Onlookers recall two smiling faces and much mutual warmth. Gilmour then promised to join his old sparring partner on Waters' live reboot of *The Wall*; duly, on May 12, 2011 at London's

O<sub>2</sub>, the guitarist turned up for a tilt at "Comfortably Numb". Nick Mason even joined them onstage to add tambourine to "Outside The Wall".

After Rick Wright's death in 2008, a genuine reunion seemed no longer possible, and a final tour deeply improbable. There remained, however, the possibility that the members could unite for something more official. Maybe, just maybe, the final toll of the bell belonged to the future rather than the past? 

# 'A FLOYD ALBUM FOR

A photograph of a man with dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and dark trousers, standing with his hands on his hips in the aisle of a large, empty stadium. The stadium has rows of red seats and a green field in the background. The man is looking towards the camera.

On David Gilmour's houseboat studio, a sleeping giant has been roused, with the sound of "splangs" and "twank bass". In a series of studios around London, MICHAEL BONNER traces the secret sources of *The Endless River*, and discovers how a 20-year saga became a tribute to the Floyd's fallen comrade, Rick Wright. "It's very evocative and emotional," says Gilmour, "and certainly listening to all the stuff made me regret his passing all over again."

# THE 21ST CENTURY...'



Pink Floyd at the Rose Bowl stadium, Pasadena, CA, during the Division Bell Tour, April 1994: (l-r) Nick Mason, David Gilmour and Rick Wright

Tolling the *Division Bell*... Pink Floyd in Prague, 1994



ON AN AFTERNOON in mid-August, Astoria – the houseboat studio owned by David Gilmour – seems deceptively quiet. Moored at the end of a sloping garden along a quiet stretch of the River Thames, Gilmour's handsome Edwardian vessel is usually shut up during the summer holidays. But not, it transpires, this year. On closer inspection, signs of activity become apparent. In a large conservatory at the top of the riverside garden, coffee mugs and a small frying-pan are stacked in a sink ready for washing up, while a spaniel lolls on a wicker-framed sofa, content in a warm patch of sunlight. Meanwhile, the boat itself – nearly a victim of the floods that hit this stretch of the Thames earlier in the year – is open for business. There are lights on in the elegant, mahogany-panelled cabins. The windows are open out across the river, and a breeze gently ruffles the thick curtains in the control room itself, set back at the stern of the boat.

This is where Pink Floyd worked on *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason* and *The Division Bell*, and where Gilmour himself recorded

his most recent solo album, *On An Island*. Lately, however, *Astoria* has been the site of another astonishing – and entirely unexpected – development in the remarkable life of Pink Floyd. Today, a length of masking tape is stretched across the 72-channel analogue mixing console, marked in thick, black, felt-tip writing to identify each separate channel. It begins, “side 1”, then “tools”, “bass”, “baritone”, “leslie gtr”, “lead gtr”, “swell melody”. It is possible to discern other words transcribed along the tape: “wibbly”, “twank bass”, “splangs”, “end rhodes + ebow”, “o/h”, “amb”. It becomes apparent that these seemingly arcane signifiers are in fact tantalising evidence of the achievements that have taken place here over the last two years. Nothing less remarkable, that is, than the creation of *The Endless River* – the first new Pink Floyd album since 1994's *The Division Bell*. Arranged across four sections (called “four sides”), it is an instrumental album – with one song “Louder Than Words” embedded within Side Four – that largely privileges the band's spacey, ruminative qualities. Reassuringly, the elements for which they are best known – ethereal synths, acoustic passages, melodic guitar solos, exploratory digressions, sweeping organ – are all very much to the foreground.

But critically, there is also another story here. *The Endless River* is a splendid tribute to one of their fallen comrades, the band's co-founder and keyboardist, Rick Wright, who died on September 15, 2008, aged 65. Indeed, the source of *The Endless River* lies in material originally recorded in sessions for *The Division Bell* by Wright, Gilmour and Nick Mason.

“When we finished the *Division Bell* sessions,” says Gilmour, “we had many pieces of music, only nine of which had become songs on the LP. Now with Rick gone and with him the chance of ever doing it again, it feels right these revisited tracks should be made available as part of our repertoire.”

The work here on *Astoria* – and also at Gilmour's studios in Hove and on his farm in West Sussex, as well as other studios across London – has largely been carried out under a veil of secrecy. In collaboration with producers Phil Manzanera, Youth and Andy Jackson, Gilmour and Mason have edited and reshaped unused *Division Bell* material and fashioned new parts for *The Endless River*, quietly going about their business undisturbed. That was, until July this year, when the threat of a leak prompted Gilmour's wife, Polly Samson, to break the news on Twitter of this marvellous new undertaking. “Btw Pink Floyd album out in October is called ‘The Endless River’,” she tweeted. “Based on 1994 sessions is Rick Wright's swansong and very beautiful.”

“It is a tribute to him,” acknowledges Gilmour. “I mean, to me, it's very evocative and emotional in a lot of moments. And listening to all the stuff made me regret his passing all over again. This is the last chance someone will get to hear him playing along with us in that way that he did.”

“I think the most significant element was really hearing what Rick did,” agrees Nick Mason. “Having lost Rick, it really brought home what a special player he was. And I think that was one of the elements that caught us up in it and made us think we ought to do something with this.”



# 10 GREAT RICK WRIGHT SONGS...

Celebrating the genius of Pink Floyd's fallen hero

ANDY JACKSON HAS good memories of the *Division Bell* sessions. As Pink Floyd's long-standing engineer, Jackson was present when Gilmour, Wright and Mason convened at *Astoria*, after a week's jamming at Mason's Britannia Row studios, in early 1993. "The idea was to try and find kernels for songs," he explains. "That was the way they had always worked, up until I suppose *The Wall* and maybe even *Animals*. It was a very deliberate attempt to try and get back to that ethos, because they felt it gave them something they didn't get by going off into separate corners and writing. It was recorded in a very minimalistic way. Just a handful of mics. They fed into a DAT machine sitting by David and as soon as anything started happening that was good, he'd just press record."

As Jackson remembers, "a pile of tapes of jams" was brought to *Astoria* and a sifting process began, with the band, producer Bob Ezrin and Jackson whittling down a list of over 60 pieces of music to the nine that became *The Division Bell*.

"Initially, we had considered making *The Division Bell* as a two-part record," says Mason. "Half to be songs, and the other a series of ambient instrumental pieces. Eventually, we decided to make it a single album and inevitably much of the preparation work remained unused."

"I took it upon myself to make 'The Big Spliff'," admits Jackson, on his early attempts at compiling an ambient companion LP, "which was just a comical title I came up with. It never got thought about again, really." These remaining tapes were assiduously catalogued in Gilmour's warehouse. "It has a huge tape store," Jackson reveals. "Fortunately, we're very anal about that. We library everything, even hardware. We've still got the

**"WITH RICK GONE, IT FEELS RIGHT THAT THESE REVISITED TRACKS ARE MADE AVAILABLE"**  
DAVID GILMOUR

computer we did those sessions on."

Jackson described the material as ranging from "undeveloped" to "psychedelic instrumental noodles" comparable to the middle section from "Echoes". The tapes – marked functionally as "DAT 1, piece 7", "Brit Row 1" or perhaps with the slightly more descriptive "Elbow noodle" – remained in Gilmour's tape store, untouched. Meanwhile, Pink Floyd ended their *Division Bell* Tour on October 29, 1994 at Earls Court and entered into what Mason wryly describes in his autobiography *Inside Out* as "a significant cessation of activity". Nevertheless, Gilmour called on Wright for his 2006 album *On An Island* and, critically, the subsequent tour.

"They had a great time," says Andy Jackson. "They hadn't been onstage together for an awfully long time. Particularly smaller stages, not the humungadomes. Doing a theatre tour, they can see the whites of each other's eyes. Things like that middle bit of 'Echoes', where they're trading licks, they're looking at each other and getting that spark again. David was really full about how much he enjoyed playing with Rick again, how special it was. In some ways, with Rick coming back into the fold after not having been involved in *The Final Cut* at all, then the remoteness of the whole thing when it got so huge, then finding it again, it was almost

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## INTERSTELLAR OVERDRIVE

THE PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN, 1967

At the centre of this psychedelic freakout from the Floyd's debut were exploratory free-form improvisations led by Wright and Syd Barrett.

## SEE-SAW

A SAUCERFUL OF SECRETS, 1968

A marvellous showcase for Wright's multi-instrumental skills, he wrote, sang and played organ, Mellotron, xylophone and piano on this.

## SUMMER '68

ATOM HEART MOTHER, 1970

Written and sung by Wright, this harmony-heavy piece of proto-ambience included the Abbey Road Session Pops Orchestra on brass.

## ONE OF THESE DAYS

MEDDLE, 1971

Gilmour called this ominous instrumental "the most collaborative effort of anything we ever did". Wright's keyboards defined the mood.

## ECHOES

MEDDLE, 1971

This 20-minute psychedelic masterpiece is bookended by Wright: it opens with his echoing piano notes and ends with some trippy keyboard effects. But his expansive

organ duels with Gilmour's guitar are the highlight.

## THE GREAT GIG IN THE SKY

THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON, 1973

Everyone remembers Clare Torry's incredible vocal gymnastics, but at the heart of "Great Gig..." was Wright's pensive piano motif.

## SHINE ON YOU CRAZY DIAMOND

WISH YOU WERE HERE, 1975

Wright's pastoral keyboard lines prove the perfect bed for Gilmour's chiming guitar notes and Waters' poignant tribute to Syd Barrett.

## WAVES

WET DREAM, 1978

From Wright's first solo album, this recalls the atmospheric soundscapes of More-era Pink Floyd.

## CLUSTER ONE

THE DIVISION BELL, 1994

This delicate, ambient track was one of two instrumentals on *The Division Bell*; a return to form for Wright after a period of creative inactivity.

## NIGHT OF A THOUSAND FURRY TOYS

BROKEN CHINA, 1996

A single from Wright's second solo LP, this comes with some excellent Orb remixes that foreground Wright's discreet keyboard digressions.



Late master: Rick Wright, rehearsing with Pink Floyd at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, May 12, 1967



## SECRETS OF 'THE BIG SPLIFF' REVEALED!

**S**INCE NEWS OF *The Endless River* first broke, it has been speculated that it would be based on the 'Big Spliff' mash-up made by Andy Jackson. This is categorically not the case. But, as Jackson explains, 'The Big Spliff' was built from 1993 jams to showcase a potential ambient counterpart to *The Division Bell*...

"It was just a mash-up of some of the psychedelic noodling from the *Division Bell* jams. Have you ever watched *MasterChef*? It's the bit where they say, 'Ok, here you go, a pile of ingredients, make something.' So I made something and said, 'We could do something like this!' Everyone quite liked it. As Nick said in *Inside Out*, there was a thought that we could have the songs album and the psychedelic mash-up album. It could have happened if there had been more time. But there was a time limit, a tour was booked. And work expands to fill the available time. We just got the album done. It never got thought about again, really."

Another rumour about *The Endless River* is that it also incorporates material from the 'soundscape' used on the cassette edition of *Pulse*, the *Division Bell* Tour album. "That soundscape existed from the tour before," says Jackson. "I made another new one which was to go into 'Astronomy Domine'. It was a much shorter one of spacey noises and things that fitted in with the way *Division Bell* started. It's just birds and lawnmowers. It's a bit of fun to get you in the mood for the gig."



Floating free: Andy Jackson at the desk on Astoria

like a second honeymoon."

Phil Manzanera, the Roxy Music guitarist who co-produced *On An Island* and played on the live shows, recalls witnessing a warm moment between Gilmour and Wright at the end of the tour. "We played in Gdansk, at the shipyard, the biggest gig of David's solo tour. We played 'Echoes'. I only know this because I ended up mixing the live album from that tour and choosing the tracks we'd recorded and all the different gigs, but that night the version was 20 minutes long. The interplay between him and David... Rick was so happy. He was right back at the top of his game, and I looked round and saw him playing away and David answering on guitar. That was the most spectacular version of 'Echoes'. People loved it on that tour."

"It wasn't that long after the tour that Rick died," continues Jackson. "I think David was really aware of what he'd lost, personally but also musically. In some ways, that became the seed that led to this album. 'There won't be any more Rick, but there is a bunch of material we've got from the past that we never used...' I think that was the spark that grew into David saying, 'Shall we see what we've got?'"

**L**OOKING BACK ON Rick Wright's contribution to Pink Floyd, Nick Mason considers, "Where he really is unique, is this thing in him of being able to come up with ideas and just work them into whatever else is going on at any given moment."

Manzanera, meanwhile, describes Wright as "a hippy musician, in it for the music" and that he "provided a very broad musical context for David to play his guitar into and, earlier, for Syd to put his songs into. He held his line right through the career and provided sonority. You take that out of the equation, and it doesn't sound like Pink Floyd."

Youth, for his part, cites "One Of These Days" as emblematic of Wright's considerable talents. "His Farfisa, his organ playing... I can't think of anyone I'd rather listen to on an organ than him. 'The Great Gig In The Sky' is up there with Beethoven and Bach. It's a stunning piece of music. *Wish You Were Here* is probably my favourite album, and it's mainly Rick. The long keyboard sections, his Moog lead lines. Listening to

**"IT WAS AN ENJOYABLE, SATISFYING EXPERIENCE, RATHER LIKE UNCOVERING LOST GEMS"**  
NICK MASON

them now, they remind me of the more German, Tangerine Dream-style ambient passages, but he managed to imbue them with a very English, pastoral sensibility. There's something very melancholic and whimsical at the same time. It's beautiful music. He's always had a massive part to play with me for Floyd."

Writing in *Inside Out*,

Mason noted, "Rick perhaps never received the credit – both inside and outside the band – that he deserved for his talents, but the distinctive, floating textures and colours he brought into the mix were absolutely critical to what people recognise as the sound of Pink Floyd. Musically he knitted us all together."

Evidently, then, it was essential that *The Endless River* deliver not only a Pink Floyd album strong enough to stand alongside its many illustrious predecessors; but also one that provided a substantial showcase for Wright's craftsmanship. Sitting in his smart north London studio, Phil Manzanera described his own first-hand experiences with Wright. "He was very astute and could speak very well. Though he didn't seem to have done tons of interviews, when he did, he nailed it. He could verbalise a lot of what the music was about."

Close by Manzanera sits his cherished Gibson Firebird VII, a strap wound round it with Manzanera's nickname, 'El Magnifico', picked out in metal studs. On the wall, above a compact black mixing desk built into a wooden frame, hangs a large burgundy carpet. This is where, among many other projects, work was partly done on the unreleased Roxy Music album from 2005, and where his old friend Robert Wyatt is soon due to record some new music. Sipping a herbal tea, Manzanera considers an invitation he received in August 2012 from David Gilmour. "He just said, 'There's this stuff. Do you fancy having a listen to it, to see if there's anything there?' So I went down to *Astoria*. Andy Jackson was there and Damon Iddins, who also works for the studio. I said, 'Right, I've come to listen to the stuff.' That was when I heard that Andy had put together a thing called 'The Big Spliff', which rather annoyingly I said, 'I don't wanna hear. I wanna hear every single piece or scrap that was recorded, everything. Outtakes from *Division Bell*. Everything.' So we commenced on a 20-hour epic listening sessions over six weeks. That was when I

learned they thought of having a double-album for *The Division Bell*. One was going to be the instrumentals, a bit like *Ummagumma*. Or, as Nick calls it, 'Oommagooma.' I was like, 'Oommagooma? Who calls it that?'"

"Phil was heavily involved in *On An Island*," says Andy Jackson. "David had a huge amount of potential material, and Phil was really good at keeping track of everything. He'd have lists and say, 'Remember that bit there, that could go really well as a middle-eight in this...' He was really helpful to David in that way and it was an obvious thing for David to say, 'Do you want to do that process again?'"

"They've got a very good archiving system," Manzanera continues. "So you can even find footage from them doing those original jams at Britannia Row. They're not pretty—it's like CCTV footage. But you have got footage, and footage of them on the boat, too. The material was all on different formats. They were on DAT, some were on stereo DAT, some bits were on 24-track, and some bits were on half-inch tape. Every time I heard something I liked, I wrote it down. I had pages and pages. When they're looking through the tapes, there's time to think... 'OK, what the fuck am I going to do? I've got 20 hours of stuff. How am I going to organise this?'"

"Phil logged everything, recorded everything," continues Jackson. "He thought about it and jigsaw puzzled and came up with the concept: 'Let's think of it like a symphony, let's make four pieces that are 10, 12 minutes long that are thematic and it flows like a classical piece would.' We made a mash-up at that point. The vast bulk of it was from these stereo DAT tapes. It was a skeleton at this point. It's like *MasterChef*. 'We can do this, here's a dish.'"

"This isn't what's on the album now," Manzanera stresses, "but I needed a narrative. I visualised a scenario with a tone that was a product of the cosmic bang. Let's have it so only people in a certain frequency can hear the tone. Eventually it arrives at the tunnel entrance to *Astoria*, under the road. The door clanks, and you can hear them walking on the gravel towards the boat, the three of them, our heroes, they come onto *Astoria* and start jamming. That's the first section. The second section, the boat takes off and we're in outer space. They arrive on a planet that is all acoustic. Then there's this end bit, where it goes back. So I had this narrative and I started putting all the things together. I would take a

guitar solo from another track, change the key of it, stick it on an outtake from another track... 'Oh, that bit there, it reminds me of *Live At Pompeii*, but let's put a beat underneath it.' So then I'd take a bit of Nick warming up in the studio at Olympia, say, take a bit of a fill here and a bit of a fill there. Join it together, make a loop out of it. My brief was to use what was there."

Two months later, in December 2012, Manzanera presented his workings to Gilmour onboard *Astoria*. "I think he thought, 'This guy's mad,'" laughs Manzanera. "He said, 'Can you play it to Nick?' So I got him here, played it to him. He could see the potential in it, but he was slightly worried. It's a lot more extreme than how it ended up. But they saw there was enough stuff there to make something good. It ticked all the Pink Floyd boxes. A year passed of them wondering what to do with it, and towards the end of that year, David sent two parts of what I did to Youth..."

"David had started writing his own album and he didn't want to get torn away from it," Jackson explains. "He ends up being quite busy all the time, not least of all living in two different houses. He lives in one in the week and another in the weekend. It's like moving court. Children, nannies and dogs. So the logistics of everyday life become..." he pauses. "And the social life... Tuesdays and Thursdays, go to the gym and it's like the week's gone. So it sat on the back-burner for a while. I'm not sure he knew what to do with it or where to react to it."

"**R**ICK WAS AND, I later discovered, has always been a bit shy," reflects Youth. "A bit more gentle. More spacey. David's quite anchored. Weirdly enough, there's nothing really that psychedelic about any of them. Yet together they make the most sublime psychedelic music ever made. There's lots of ironic things going on there." Youth is sitting in the spacious living room of his South London home. Behind him, bookshelves line an entire wall. There are volumes by Colin Wilson, Joseph Campbell and Freud. The *Psychedelics Encyclopedia* rests on *The Classic Whisky Guide*.

Resting in the **CONTINUES OVER»**

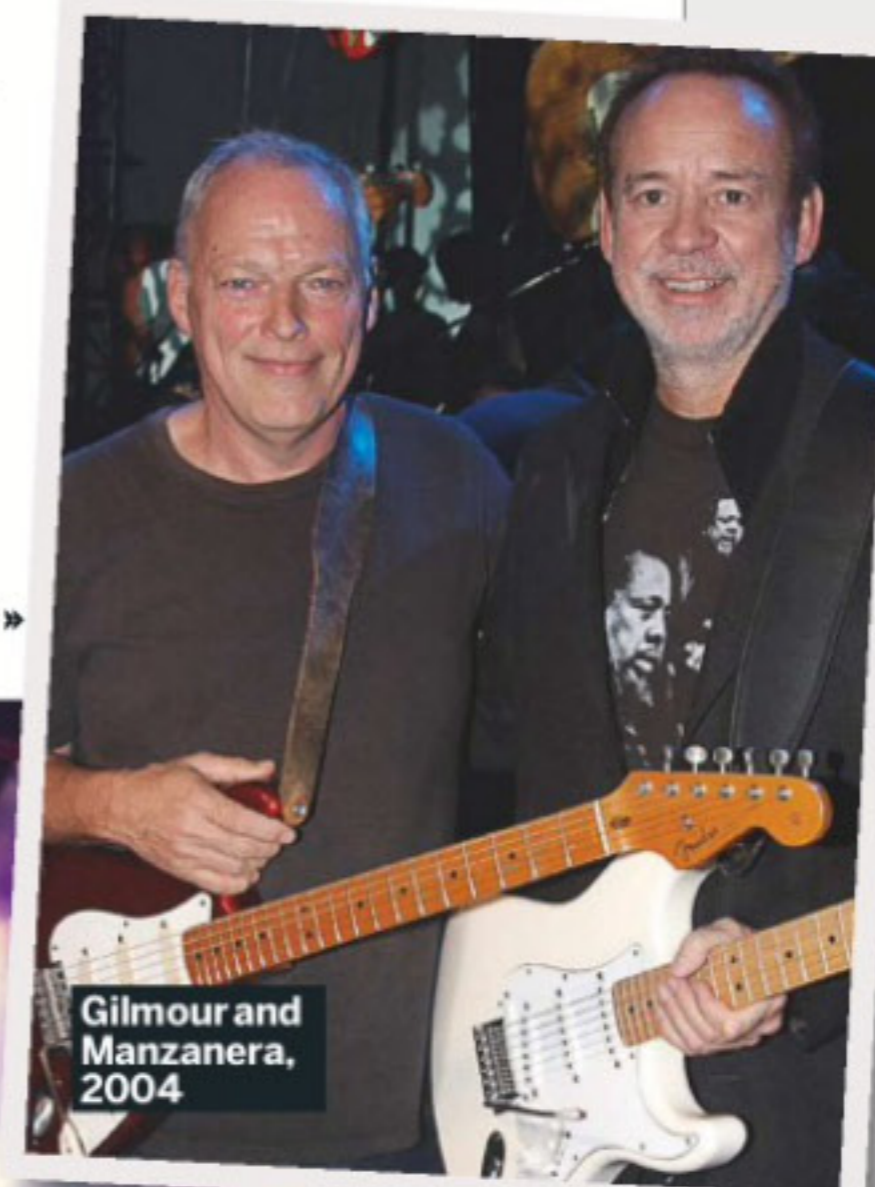
## WHEN PHIL MET DAVID

Phil Manzanera on his friendship with Mr Gilmour...

"**I**N 1967, I was at Dulwich College," begins Phil Manzanera. "My brother went up to Cambridge where he came into contact with David. I was 16 or 17 and said to my mum that I wanted to be a musician. My brother said, 'I know this guy, he's just got into a band. Let's ask him how you become a professional musician.' So we went to Earls Court. I think he was living in Syd's flat, but we went to the restaurant opposite and had lunch. I can't remember what he said, but it must've been bloody good, as I got into a band. After lunch, he went to Abbey Road to, I think, record *Saucerful*.

Scroll forward to when Roxy were recording *For Your Pleasure* at Air Studios. Chris Thomas was mixing *Dark Side* there. After he finished, he produced *For Your Pleasure* for us. I heard David's solo on 'Money' and thought, 'Fuck, this is fantastic.' The only way that I could

communicate was by sending him a telegram. I said, 'Fantastic guitar. Guess what? I'm in a band now'. We stayed in touch. During the 1980s, I had the same manager, Steve O'Rourke. Steve said, 'Why don't you try to write something with David?' He came over to the studio and a track evolved called 'One Slip'. Actually, for the last 10 years, I seem to have been working with David on and off..."



Gilmour and Manzanera, 2004

Pink Pulse: the Floyd at London's Earls Court, October 1994





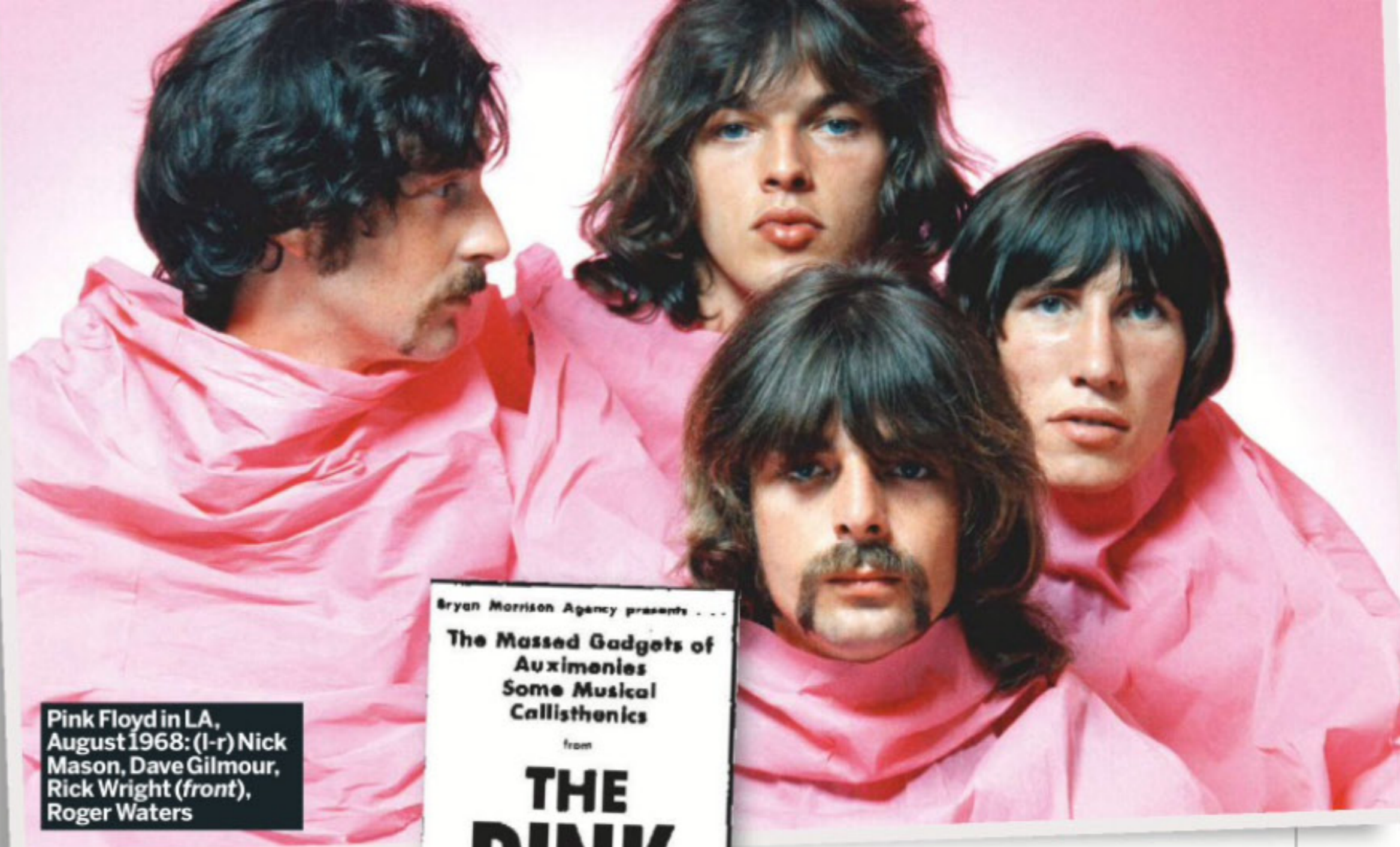
Youth: "It was absolutely magical..."

fireplace is a giant painting of Rupert Bear and the Wise Old Goat, staring out into the cosmos. A platinum disc for The Verve's *Urban Hymns*, which Youth co-produced, hangs on the wall opposite, while a light fitting in the shape of a huge pineapple hangs from the ceiling. Youth has history of his own with Pink Floyd. A friend of the band's bassist, Guy Pratt, he worked with Floyd backing vocalist Durga McBroom in Blue Pearl; Gilmour and Wright guested on their 1990 album, *Naked*. He worked again with Gilmour on The Orb's 2010 album, *Metallic Spheres*. As with Manzanera, Youth recalls getting a call "out of the blue from David. He always surprises me. He's very frank and forthright. There's no flutter or decoration in his communication. This call was last June. He said, 'I've got this thing I've been working on, it's not quite been working out. Could you come down and have a listen?' So I jumped on the train, he picked me up and we drove to his farm in Sussex. David's got this amazing studio at the top of a barn. He put on this track up there. I was expecting to hear solo material. Within about 40 seconds, it sounded like Floyd. It was absolutely magical. The window was open and there were birds singing. June in England is the most beautiful place in the world you could be, listening to unreleased Pink Floyd recordings with David, the hair was going up on the back of my arms. Then David explained that Phil had spent days going through all the tapes, and had put together these four pieces. What was interesting as well was that David had been working on it with Phil and without Phil. He said, 'I've gone as far as I can, I just don't know. What do you think?' I thought maybe the arrangements weren't quite right. Because some of it's '90s Floyd, it doesn't sound that much like Floyd. I said, 'Maybe I could experiment with some different arrangements and see if we can make it flow better.' His parting words were, 'Make sure it sounds like us!'"

Among the many marvellous treasures unearthed by Jackson and Iddins from Gilmour's tape store was a recording dated from June 26, 1969, of Wright playing the Albert Hall pipe organ during rehearsals for the Floyd's show there that evening. "There was 20 minutes of that," says Youth. "I think at that point, Rick was toying with ideas for writing a symphony." Taking all the material to his studio in Spain, he began rearranging and extending sections. As illustrative guides for Gilmour, he added guitar lines where he felt appropriate. At the same time, he was fighting a severe parasitic infection: "I thought, 'Even if I die in a week, or a day, I've gotta finish this before I go – and don't hold back!'"

ACCORDING TO ANDY Jackson's diary, on November 4, 2013, David Gilmour and Nick Mason met with Manzanera, Youth and Jackson on *Astoria* to review the work done so far. "David said, 'Explain to me exactly what you've done,'" says Manzanera. "From that day onwards, he took possession of the thing. He said, 'We're changing the goalposts. So, OK, there's only me and Nick, but we're going to take a bit of what Youth's done, bits of what you've done, bits of what Andy's done and we're gonna work it, and I want you all to be there.'"

Events moved swiftly after that. Jackson's diary records that they gathered in Gilmour's home studio in Hove a week later, on November 11: a momentous date, as it turned out. This was the first time Gilmour and Mason



Pink Floyd in LA, August 1968: (l-r) Nick Mason, Dave Gilmour, Rick Wright (front), Roger Waters

## CAREFUL WITH THAT ORGAN, RICK!

ONE OF THE most powerful moments on *The Endless River* is Rick Wright's organ solo from the Albert Hall. This was recorded during the afternoon rehearsal for the band's show on June 26, 1969. The show was billed 'The Final Lunacy!' and featured performance art pieces including a roadie dressed as a gorilla and band members sawing planks of wood onstage. In his memoir, *Inside Out*, Nick Mason describes the Albert Hall organ as "an instrument with such power, it was rumoured certain stops should never be used as they might either damage the building's foundations or cause an attack of mass nausea amongst the audience members." "At the time, playing the organ at the Albert Hall was very controversial," recalls Phil Manzanera. "When the Mothers Of Invention played there, Don Preston went up and played 'Louie, Louie' on the organ and it was considered sacrilege! It was a great moment of rebellion. It sounds silly, doesn't it? But it was a big deal for a rock band to get into the Albert Hall."

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had recorded new Floyd music since the *Division Bell* sessions. Says Mason, "With encouragement from Andy, Phil and Youth, David and myself either re-recorded, or added some parts. Despite an element of trepidation, I found it to be a really enjoyable and satisfying experience, rather like uncovering lost gems."

"I remember one of those early times, when we all met up here," says Jackson, perched near his beloved Neve 88R console in *Astoria*. "Nick was very concerned about, 'I only want to do this if we make something good.' We're taking some stuff from 20 years ago – because it's got Rick on it – but is it

actually up to standard? As it got fleshed out, and turned into the album proper, everyone got revved up about it."

"I think David and Nick are both in a really good place at the moment," adds Youth. "Also because Rick's no longer with us, there's a poignancy to them being together that seems to transcend all the problems they've had in the past. There were concerns as to whether they'd be into it, or whether Nick would be up for it. But Nick was core to the project, and the amazing thing is that whenever those two play, whatever they're playing, they sound like them. They can't help it."

In fact, Mason's drums were the first element to be officially recorded for the album on November 11. "Nick was just great, straight away," remembers Manzanera. "It sounded like what Robert Wyatt calls 'Pink Floyd time'. It was just magic."

The sessions lasted for three days, overdubbing guitars and recording drums; the following week, they were back in Hove for two days, then back at *Astoria* on Wednesday, November 20, to review the material. The process of adding new overdubs continued into early 2014. In total, Jackson estimates the work took 30 days. "It became an interactive process of mixing and recording. You put drums on this, flesh this bit out, this bit needs a guitar solo. Then you assimilate that, do a layer of mixing to make it sound like a record and then go, 'Great, but this has revealed that we now need this...'"

"It was really about illustrating Rick's genius," adds Youth. "So we navigated around his keyboards to give them as much spotlight as possible. Although it was quite a delicate and time-consuming task, it works really well and they adjusted to it. It was a joy to see David and Nick playing together and joking with each other between takes – to see their rapport with each other, all harnessed to Rick's playing. Their humour is very dry. One day, I wanted some more gongs. Nick asked his drum tech, 'Where's my gong?' His tech said, 'I think it's in that drum shop in Camden.' Nick had helped this guy keep his

drum shop going a few years ago and donated some kit that he kept in the window, including the gong. The gong arrived, David came in and said, 'Where's that from?' and Nick replied, 'Oh, a shop in Camden. I lent it to them, they're lending it back.' So they started joking about the gong. I remember David and Nick giving each other a hug, and David giving Nick the affirmation of his drumming being amazing."

One of the key elements of *The Endless River* is "Louder Than Words", the album's one conventional song. Introduced on a bed of stately keyboard melodies and acoustic flourishes, a more solid structure gradually emerges to carry Gilmour's first new Pink Floyd vocal in 20 years. With lyrics co-written with Polly Samson, "Louder Than Words" is concerned with providing an appropriate full stop to the Pink Floyd saga, embracing the full history of the band across nearly 50 years – as Gilmour sings, "We bitch and we fight... but this thing that we do... it's louder than words... the sum of our parts... the beat of our hearts... it's louder than words". Manzanera describes it as "a comment on their methods of working over their whole careers; it seemed like a fitting summation of the complexity of the music." Jackson considers "it's about the dynamics of being in bands, which I've always thought of as Big Brother on wheels. You become best of friends and worst of enemies at the same time."

The song was recorded during the latter part of the *Endless River* sessions, at Gilmour's home studio in Hove. "Both Phil and myself had been pushing David to get the lyric and get the vocal," recalls Youth. "Everyone around him was saying how he hates doing vocals, and he always leaves them to the last minute... He does this amazing thing when he's composing and gets a melody. He does this skat vocal. It is absolutely perfect. Apparently, that's how he did 'Comfortably Numb'. I've never heard a singer skat a lead vocal so exact, with the right emotion and everything. So we had this skat vocal, and then we waited for Polly and David to come up with the lyrics."

"David had come up with a concept that when he went into the chorus, he would go low and the backing singers would go an octave up from him," continues Jackson. "He's a big Leonard Cohen fan, and that's something

Leonard does a lot. Because the studio was in his home, he'd try it every day until he got all the lines he wanted. He ended up just doing it alone. It had been a while since he sang, so he had to get his voice limbered up, a bit every day. It's now the closing part of the album, but it was originally the end of part three. We rejigged three and four, moved some sections around. It made a lot more sense at the end of the record. It's a bit like, 'You have been listening to...'"

Additional work followed – Youth recorded backing vocals with Durga McBroom in his South London studio, while Manzanera recorded clarinet and sax contributions from Gilad Atzmon at *Astoria*. Youth remembers Guy Pratt also returning to record new bass parts. Jackson is keen to stress the fluid nature of the work. "There was a very blurred line between mixing and recording. It was a constantly interactive process. We were still working on it quite recently. I've got August 6 in my diary, I was in here and David's saying, 'Maybe we should cut one cycle out of that bit.' Meanwhile, it had already gone to James Guthrie in California for mastering. 'You know that bit you just did? You're going to have to do it again...' There's odd bits of dialogue on the album and even really late David wanted to get rid of one. Which meant I was having to put it back on the board and remix a section. That was August. You wouldn't have done that in the past because you couldn't. Pandora's Box is well and truly open."

Considering the extraordinary circumstances around its genesis, and the


processes diligently undertaken to complete *The Endless River*, Manzanera muses that this is "a Pink Floyd album for the 21st Century".

"FIT HADN'T been for the leak, this wouldn't exist yet," acknowledges Andy Jackson in mid-August, while the waters of the Thames lap at the flanks of *Astoria*. "Still no-one knows where it came from. At that point, Warners and Sony knew about it and that increases the number of people massively. They don't seem like the likely source, but it certainly wasn't any of us within the inner circle."

Polly Samson's pre-emptive tweet on July 5 may have revealed this fresh twist in the Pink Floyd narrative earlier than intended, but all the same it reflected the band's pervasive ability to adapt and survive. Historically, the band have reinvented themselves on many occasions: first, following Syd Barrett's departure, then after the transitional, experimental run of albums in the late '60s to mid-'70s, and again when Roger Waters left. With *The Endless River*, their 15th studio album, they've mutated once again; using elements of their past to find a place in the present day. Manzanera describes the record as having "that Pink Floyd slow groove, that if you're in the right mood just washes through you". Certainly, across its four sides it focuses on the more atmospheric and digressive aspects of Pink Floyd's music. From the guitar loops and snippets of conversation ("This is what we do, we turn up and we play") at the start of the first side, on through Rick Wright's improvised jams with Gilmour, it feels very much of a piece with the band's cherished exploratory journeys. Manzanera flags up "the classic Farfisa, arpeggiated sound that to me is Pink Floyd, from 'Arnold Layne' right through *Dark Side Of The Moon*", that runs through the second side. Side Three contains more typically articulate guitar work from Gilmour laid against delicate passages from Wright; as well as the Albert Hall organ recording. It all ends with "Louder Than Words".

"It's part documentary, this album," notes Manzanera. "It captures a moment where they were jamming, but it also captures a bit of talking from interviews, and the Albert Hall."

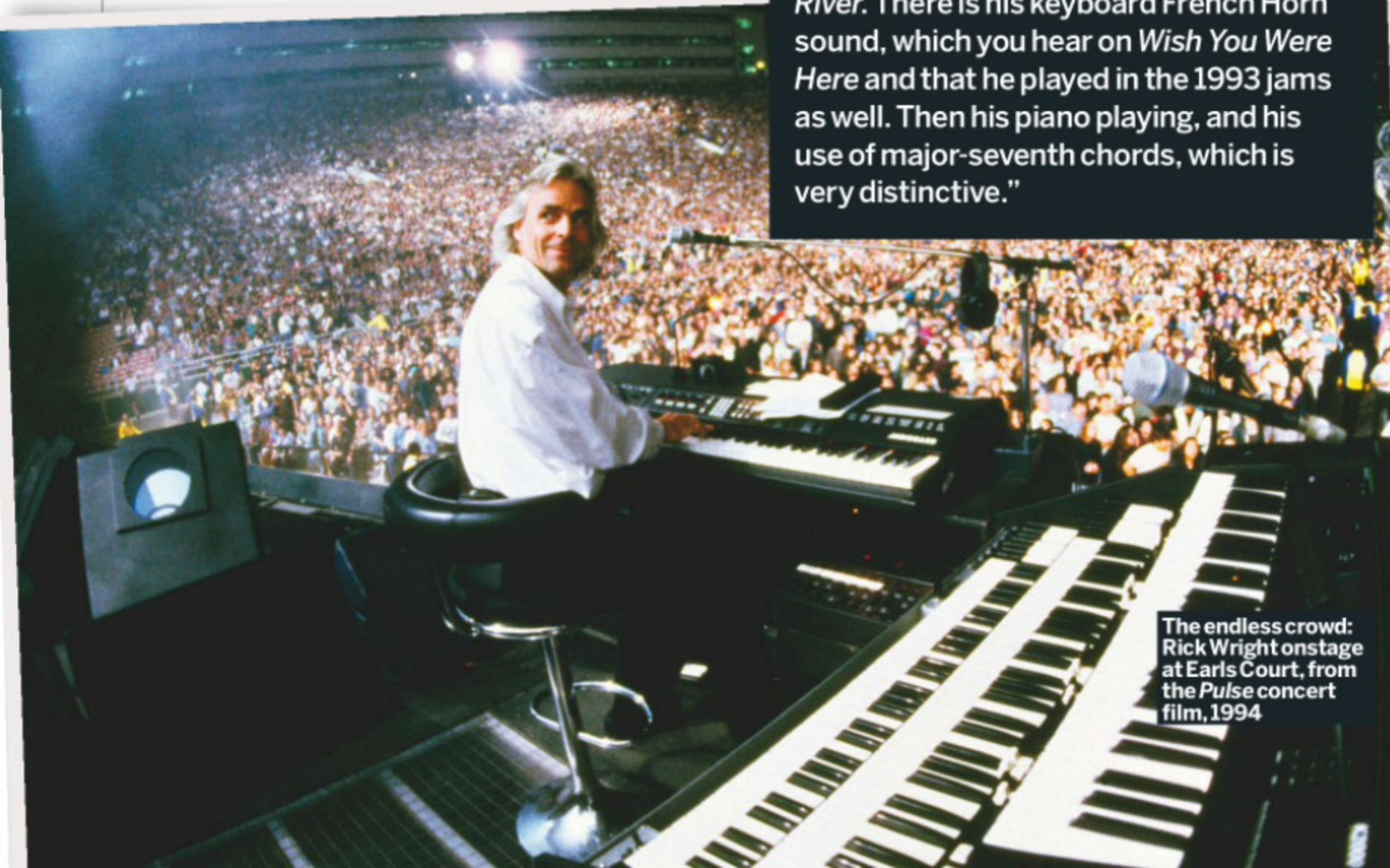
"Those guys, they've all been through so much," offers Youth. "Addictions, broken marriages, the band collapsing, reinventing itself. Them coming together now has this air of redemption. It would have been wonderful if Rick had been alive to share in that. But nevertheless, to do this took a lot of courage, and emotional strength. If these guys can work together again and find the harmony out of discord, then anyone can. I found it very beautiful to bear witness to."

"We had got into what one might call a professional way of making records," reflects Nick Mason. "Never really suited to it. The thing of constructing a thing more carefully, having specific parts. But actually" – he adds, considering Wright's work – "what's great is when you've got musicians who just shine when they're not given the part and are just allowed to be creative in their own right." 

## WHAT MADE RICK TICK

Phil Manzanera on the essential components of Rick Wright's sound...

"THERE'S THREE THINGS I associate with his keyboard playing. One is the sound of the Duo Compact Farfisa. It's almost like an arpeggiator and you hear it at the beginning of Side Two of *The Endless River*. There is his keyboard French Horn sound, which you hear on *Wish You Were Here* and that he played in the 1993 jams as well. Then his piano playing, and his use of major-seventh chords, which is very distinctive."



# The Endless River

In which Messrs Gilmour and Mason navigate their archives to honour Richard Wright, and at least a few “Things Left Unsaid” are finally resolved. The real Final Cut? *By Tom Pinnock*

RELEASE DATE 7 NOVEMBER 2014

**F**OR A GROUP who perhaps personified English reserve, Pink Floyd’s approach to making their first new album in 20 years seemed surprisingly open-hearted. *The Endless River* was devised ostensibly as a tender tribute to the late Rick Wright, whose keyboards long provided much of the sonic identity of the band: from their days as psychedelic pipers, and onwards – with the one exception of *The Final Cut*, practically a Roger Waters solo album anyway – to the tolling of *The Division Bell*. The complicated history between Wright and the other Floyd members is crucial to fully unlocking the complex emotions behind the creation of the band’s 15th full-length album.

Wright passed away in September 2008, with his last live performances accompanying David Gilmour on his 2006 *On An Island* tour. The two former Floyd members seem to have grown closer during those shows, so much so that the guitarist appeared on *Later... With Jools Holland* just after Wright’s death to pay tribute with a performance of “Remember A Day”, originally released on the Floyd’s 1968 album *A Saucerful Of Secrets*.

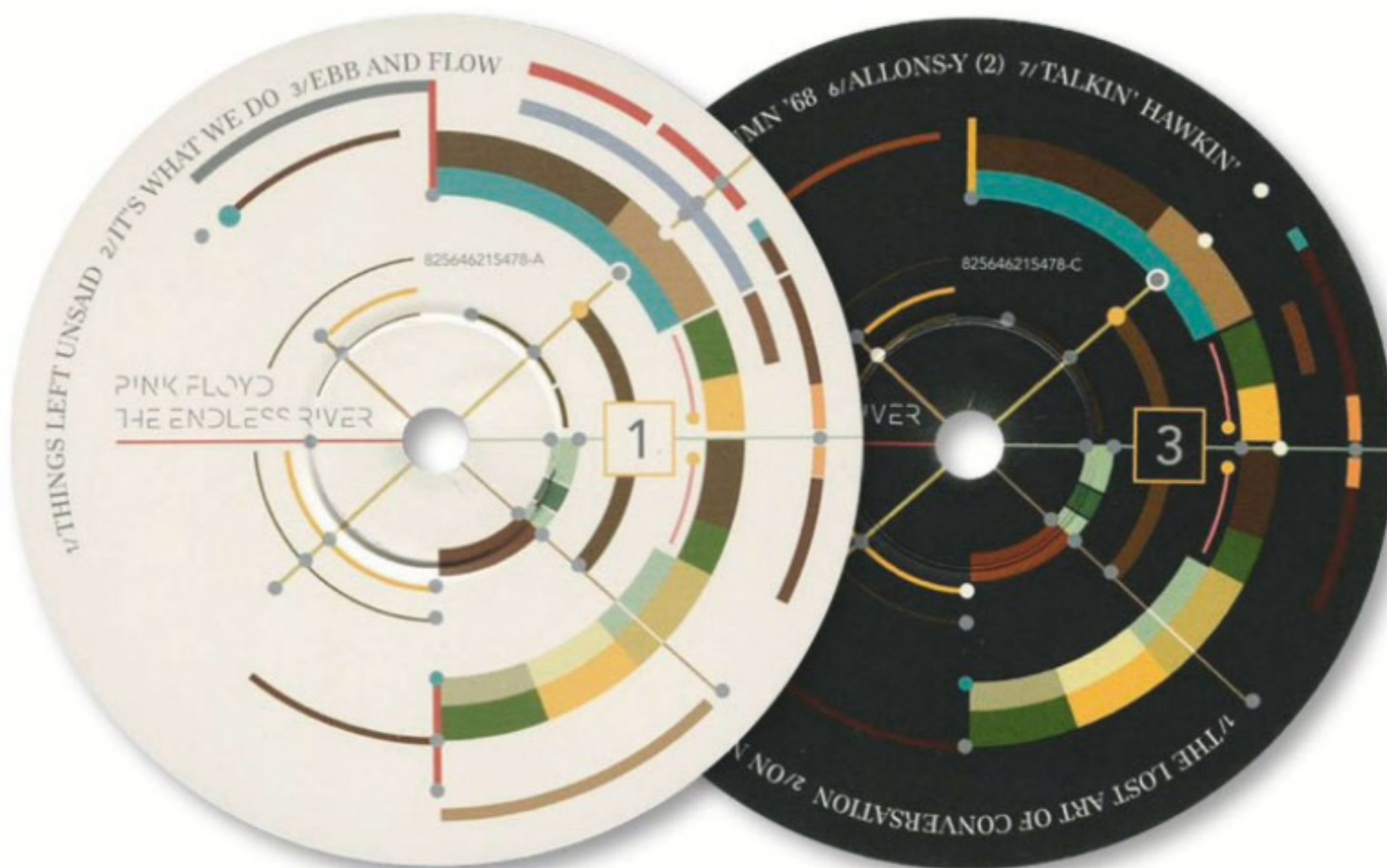
The keyboardist hadn’t always been so appreciated. He was sacked during sessions for *The Wall*, with Roger Waters reportedly refusing to work

with him, and humiliatingly brought back as a session hand for the subsequent tour. The keyboardist had always contributed the odd gem to Floyd releases, such as ’67 B-side “Paint Box”, *Atom Heart Mother*’s “Summer ’68” or indeed “Remember A Day”, but after *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, his songwriting had dried up, which particularly displeased Waters.

Though Gilmour had long stuck by his fired friend, inviting him back into the fold for 1987’s *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason* (if not legally into the band until 1994’s *The Division Bell*), even he admitted that he’d somewhat undervalued Wright’s contribution. “I didn’t necessarily always give him his proper due,” he told *The Guardian* in 2014. “People have very different attitudes to the way they work and we can become very judgmental and think someone is not quite pulling his weight enough, without realising that theirs is a different weight to pull.”

Even considering their sense of loss at Wright’s death, though, the effort that Gilmour and Mason put into curating this 53-minute memorial was considerable, pairing hours of discarded 21-year-old jams, mostly recorded on the floating Astoria studio in 1993 in preparation for

CONTINUES OVER »



*The Division Bell*, with newly recorded parts. In total, five producers, eight keyboardists and four studios were enlisted during its mammoth gestation.

In keeping with the affection behind the project, *The Endless River* itself coursed with positivity and bittersweet celebration, qualities often absent from the rest of the Floyd canon. Even the record's title seemed to embrace warmer, hippier ideals, perhaps a sign that this once closed-off band of passive-aggressives had finally learned to go with the flow and maybe even appreciate each other and their qualities.

As the first of the album's four "sides" drifts into earshot with a clear evocation of "Speak To Me" from *The Dark Side Of The Moon* – all hushed drones and muffled speech – it still seems that way. "We certainly [have] an unspoken understanding," says Wright. "Uh, but there are a lot of things unsaid as well, I feel." "We shout and argue and fight, and work it on out," adds Gilmour. Side One is comfortingly, warmly nostalgic: after that introduction, the synth and E-bowed acoustic guitar on "Things Left Unsaid" recall the first few minutes of "Shine On You Crazy Diamond", even with the same dramatic chord change as the synths blossom, and the Hammond organ whirrs into life. Soon, David Gilmour embarks on a very David Gilmour solo, all yearning melody and bent blue-notes, while Wright digs out his trademark French horn synth sound. Acoustic guitars are strummed, hinting strongly at "Welcome To The Machine", while Mason adds some signature fills, before the piece ends with Wright's chiming electric piano and more E-bowed guitar. This whole suite is no great departure, and at times it skirts the edges of pastiche, but it's bittersweet, and uniquely, beautifully Floyd.

It's not just the band's '70s work that is evoked throughout *The Endless River*, either. Side Two opener "Sum" fades in with Wright's Farfisa Compact Duo organ fed through a vintage Binson Echorec tape delay unit, a combination which soundtracked the Syd Barrett-era Floyd and hasn't been heard on record for around 40 years. Why Wright decided to bring it back for *The Division Bell* is a mystery, but it's a perfect

## THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"More postscript than swansong, a curate's egg that will no doubt sell like spacecakes, but which feels like an anticlimactic way to bring down the curtain... a collection of spruced-up outtakes from 1994's *Division Bell* – on those limited terms it works well enough, but it's never quite as satisfying as you want it to be."

**BARRY NICOLSON, NME, NOVEMBER 3, 2014**

example of what producer Phil Manzanera has described as the "part-documentary" aspect of this album.

The two middle sides of *The Endless River* are more experimental than the opening tour de force, and more uneven as a consequence, with the second marred by a stiff drum solo from Mason. Never the loosest drummer, his usual perfectly restrained style is briefly swapped for some clunky, if thundering tom work on "Skins", performed to a backdrop of echoed slide guitar from Gilmour.

Wright's own pieces are scattered throughout the record, with the fractured "Unsung", shot through with seams of slide guitar, and

the moody, New Age "The Lost Art Of Conversation" especially interesting. Gilmour even seems to pay tribute to Wright's love of jazz with his own "Anisina", something like a Riviera bar version of "Us And Them". It's a laidback, piano-led piece with swinging drums and bucolic guitar, guest star Gilad Atzmon's saxophone and clarinet soaring out of the haze.

On Side Three, the galloping two-part blues of "Allons-y" – which could fit perfectly alongside the heaviest cuts from *The Wall* – is bisected by Wright beautifully playing the grand organ at London's Royal Albert Hall in 1969, with new Gilmour parts answering his lines. It's reminiscent of the hymnal solemnity of "A Saucerful Of Secrets", and one of the record's highlights. Much of the third side, especially, seems to act as a showcase for Gilmour's soloing, both good and bad. At times, he's unbeatable, as on "Autumn 68", when he's restrained and lyrical, his guitar clean and crystalline in tone; at other points, particularly on the squealing "Allons-y", there's a little too much echoey bluster and unsubtle wailing, as if Gilmour decided he'd have to play all over the place to make up for the lack of vocals, for better or worse.

A voice does turn up at the end, of course. Though the fourth side can't match the first for quality and impact, it's perhaps the most significant. Featuring no Wright credits and

an actual bona fide song, with words and everything, it acts as a definitive coda to the record, the conclusion to its narrative.

It begins with "Calling", which, with its quasi-industrial synth drones courtesy of Gilmour and occasional latter-day collaborator Anthony Moore, is a glimpse at an alternative route the Floyd could have taken, if the experimental *Ummagumma* had become their template. "Eyes To Pearls" is next, marking a return to the textures of Side One, before "Surfacing" dissolves artfully into a sample of ghostly church bells and an arpeggio of piano and guitar.

Though in truth nothing here is as inspired as "Echoes", "Astronomy Domine" or even "Comfortably Numb", *The Endless River*'s success as an immersive listening experience is all in edits like this. The level of sonic detail across the four sides, generally, is staggering – from the backwards sounds that introduce "Sum" to the sculpted echoes on "It's What We Do" – a testament to the effort put into weaving these ragged offcuts and newly recorded additions into one seamless tapestry, that winds through the band's back catalogue towards its climax.

That elegiac conclusion, "Louder Than Words", takes up half of Side Four, and when Gilmour's vocals come floating in, it's something of a surprise. "We bitch and we fight/Disseach other on sight/But this thing we do..." he sings, over a stately ballad that could have been a highlight of *The Division Bell*. "[We could] stay by the fire/Failed by desire/Stoking the flames/But we're here for the ride."

It's a surprisingly moving finale, and a fitting tribute to Rick Wright as man and musician, finally underlining, for anyone who didn't know, just how important the keyboardist really was to the band. When founding creative force Syd Barrett was invalidated out of the group, they brought in David Gilmour to replace him and muddled through somehow. Then, when Roger Waters, increasingly holding the creative reins, tried to break up the group, Gilmour refashioned the band in his own sensibilities as the main writer. But not even a beast as malleable as the Floyd could survive the death of Wright, the member responsible for the sophisticated, restrained and melancholy moods – the architect of all those glorious major and minor sevenths – threaded through the group's best loved work.

And yet, *The Endless River* as a whole is more than just a tribute to their departed friend. With its flashbacks to their myriad past glories, it's also a memorial to Pink Floyd as a group, a

## TRACKMARKS | The Endless River

- 1 Things Left Unsaid ★★★★★
- 2 It's What We Do ★★★★★
- 3 Ebb And Flow ★★★★★
- 4 Sum ★★★★★
- 5 Skins ★★★★★
- 6 Unsung ★★★★★
- 7 Anisina ★★★★★
- 8 The Lost Art Of Conversation ★★★★★
- 9 On Noodle Street ★★★★★
- 10 Night Light ★★★★★
- 11 Allons-y (1) ★★★★★
- 12 Autumn '68 ★★★★★
- 13 Allons-y (2) ★★★★★
- 14 Talkin' Hawkin' ★★★★★
- 15 Calling ★★★★★

- 16 Eyes To Pearls ★★★★★
  - 17 Surfacing ★★★★★
  - 18 Louder Than Words ★★★★★
- PRODUCED BY:** David Gilmour, Phil Manzanera, Youth and Andy Jackson  
**RECORDED AT:** Astoria, London; Olympic, London; Medina Studios, Hove; Britannia Row, London  
**PERSONNEL:** David Gilmour (guitars, E-bow guitar, lead vocals, backing vocals, keyboards, piano, EMS VCS 3, bass

- guitar, Hammond organ, perc, voice samples), Nick Mason (drums, perc, rototoms, gong, voice samples), Richard Wright (Hammond organ, Farfisa organ, pipe organ, piano, Rhodes piano, electric piano, keyboards, synthesiser, voice samples), Guy Pratt (bass guitar), Bob Ezrin (bass guitar, additional keyboards), Andy Jackson (bass guitar, effects), Jon Carin (synthesisers, perc, loop), Damon Iddins



- (additional keyboards), Anthony Moore (keyboards), Gilad Atzmon (tenor sax, clarinet), Escala (strings), Durga McBroom, Louise Marshal, Sarah Brown (backing vocals), Stephen Hawking (voice sample), Youth, Eddie Bander, Michael Rendall (additional programming, sound design, assorted synthesisers, keyboards)  
**UK/US CHART POSITIONS:** UK 1; US 3



Gilmour and Mason: bowing out in style

glimpse of what's been lost and what could have been. From Polly Samson's lyrics, and Stephen Hawking urging us to "keep talking" in "Talkin' Hawkin'", to the opening clip of Wright discussing "things left unsaid", almost every word on *The Endless River* is about communication, and it serves to highlight just how bad the members of Pink Floyd have been at it, historically.

"Pink Floyd tend to record in six- and seven-year cycles," Wright told interviewer Mark Blake in 1996, "so as the last album was finished in '94, who knows—the next one could be in the year 2001!"

In the end, it took a little longer. Though why they waited until after Wright's death to make another album is one of many questions that

## ***The Endless River* might be the best thing the Floyd have released for over 30 years**

still remain unanswered about the Floyd and their complicated relationships with each other. After all, fans would certainly have appreciated other releases in the 20-year chasm between *The Division Bell* and *The Endless River*—before its release, the latter became the most pre-ordered album in Amazon's history, and then the fastest-selling vinyl album of the 21st Century.

Though it's the end, then, this isn't goodbye—that already happened at London's

Hyde Park in 2005, when Gilmour, Wright, Waters and Mason performed together for the last time, dedicating their set "particularly, of course" to Barrett. *The Endless River*, it seems, is a transmission from the afterlife of the group, an echo from the past. That it

far surpasses its cut-up, protracted origins, and might even be the best thing that the Floyd have released for over 30 years, was a welcome surprise.

So, with a grand Gilmour solo, a departing wave of ambient noise and feedback, and the very same synth arpeggio that kicked things off almost an hour before, the record, and Pink Floyd, bow out on what seems like their final journey. As always, with a little quiet desperation, but a lot of grace. 🎸

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# 'EVERYTHING'S LINKED BY THIS COLLECTIVE PSYCHE...'

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## PINK FLOYD'S 30 GREATEST SONGS

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...as voted for by DAVID GILMOUR and NICK MASON and their friends, fellow musicians and famous fans, including PAUL WELLER, JARVIS COCKER, WAYNE COYNE, ICE CUBE, JIM REID, MICK ROCK, ROBERT WYATT and more...

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## FOREWORD BY DAVID GILMOUR

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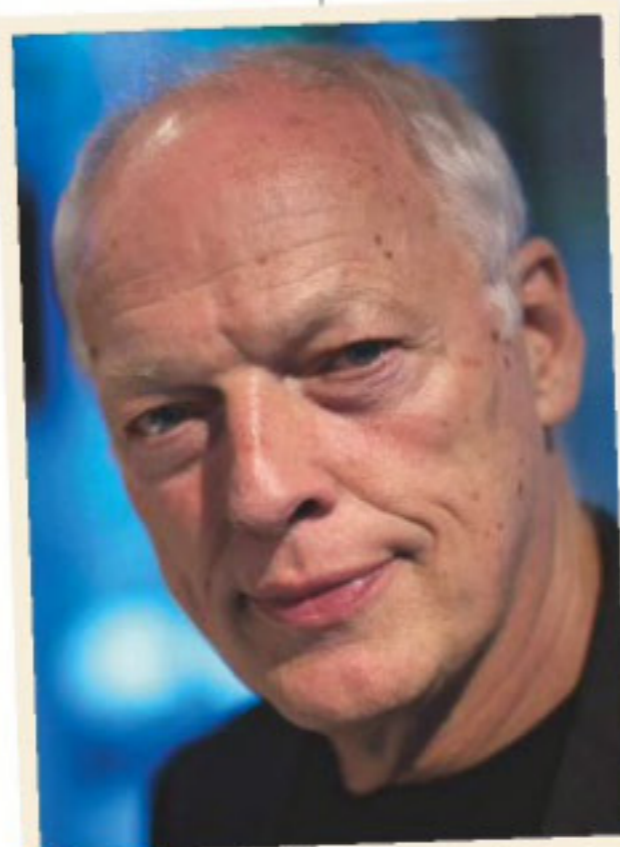
SO, THE TOP 30 PINK FLOYD songs. Hmm. When I joined, it sometimes looked like we'd never even be able to write any songs at all, so to have 30 songs that different people love is an achievement.

Looking through the Floyd songbook of the past 40 years surprises me sometimes. There are hundreds of songs, we go

through lots of different styles of music, three different leaders and at least three different singers, and dozens of guests. But everything's linked by this collective psyche. When you're playing a Floyd song, there's a certain underground feel—it's difficult to

define, but it's about texture, about atmosphere, about the use of space. It's rarely about the technical stuff.

I suppose there are several distinct stages in Pink Floyd's songwriting history. Obviously, there's the Syd era, which was before I joined. The second stage occurred in the years after he left, when we were all scrabbling around, trying to fill that Syd-shaped hole in the band and not knowing entirely what we were doing. We initially tried to write the quirky, well-structured pop songs that Syd wrote, but we couldn't. Then, quite by accident, we developed what we were good at — those spacey, atmospheric instrumentals. And then there's a third stage, where we started to turn those instrumentals into properly structured songs, and that hit a peak with *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, **CONTINUES OVER**»





The Syd Barrett-led Floyd, circa '67

*Wish You Were Here* and *Animals*. Then the stuff after Roger left is yet another stage.

On my first solo tour in '85, I didn't want to do Floyd songs. I think I grudgingly did a version of "Money", but the whole issue of playing old material was a bit sore. Nowadays, when I tour, as a solo act and as one third of Pink Floyd, I'm happy to play Floyd songs from every era of the band's history. There's an emphasis on my side of the songs – or mine and Rick's – and I feel uncomfortable doing things too heavily associated with Roger. It's not a political thing, there's no bad feeling about that, it's just that they're his songs to do. So I'd feel uncomfortable doing "Money" nowadays, same with things like "Another Brick In The Wall", even though they're great, great songs.

I've always played a few of Syd's numbers. When I did Robert [Wyatt]'s *Meltdown* we played "Terrapin", which was from a solo album that I produced for Syd; a month before Syd died we did "Arnold Layne" at the Albert Hall with Bowie; we played "Dark Globe" after Syd died; and we still play "Astronomy Domine". I've revisited "Fat Old Sun" from *Atom Heart Mother* and a few other early things. Each one always sounds really fresh. But I'm proud of everything there, really.

In the early days of a band you tend to write songs together. You spend all your time together, you jam in rehearsal studios, and you tend to write collectively. Then, you spend more time apart, and your songs tend to be based on ideas that were written individually. With us, sometimes the ideas would be mine, occasionally they'd be Rick's, but invariably they'd be Roger's. The main writer would bring the idea, which would be largely worked out beforehand, and it would then go through a process of being filtered through the influence of the rest of the band.

Rick's input started to fizzle out throughout the 1970s. In fact, by *The Wall*, even I wasn't writing much. "Comfortably Numb" and "Run Like Hell" were two of the few tracks where I came up with the initial idea there – I think the producer Bob Ezrin played them to Roger and convinced him to get stuck in with it. I don't think it was Roger being a dictator, it was more that we were happy to let him get on with it. And that was how we wrote for years – it was only with *The Division Bell* that we started to rectify that and write like we did in the old days, collectively, jamming in the studio.

We were never the most proficient musicians. When the band started, Pink Floyd were unique in that they weren't great blues players. In fact, we never did become that musically accomplished! And that pushes you to try other things – instead of copying Muddy Waters or whatever, you start to explore the sounds in your own head. You start to explore hypnotic basslines, guitar effects... That's always been a part of our collective psyche. You have a sound in your head and you try to replicate it. I'm always looking for new sounds. And it's true that I never used my guitar as a "riff machine", it was always a mechanism for creating textures and atmosphere. That's why, no matter how many records we sold, Pink Floyd were always an "underground band". It was the way we approached music.

## 30 ECHOES FROM MEDDLE

(OCTOBER 1971)

Beginning with faint submarine bleeps, and evolving into a 23-minute space-prog epic, "Echoes" sees the birth of conceptualist Floyd.



**John Leckie, engineer, Meddle and Wish You Were Here:** I love the

interplay with the guitars and keyboards. It's a keyboard track, really, with classic Floyd chord progressions. The record had started off earlier in the year, with the Floyd putting down ideas, each of which was called "Nothing". We went up to "Nothing No 20". And then they came in three months later, and put them together as one piece. They played it right through, the funky breakdown excepted, because they'd been playing it live. I went to see them at Twickenham Tech – they were still playing college gigs, and there wasn't anyone there. They did "Echoes" then. They probably played it the same every night. Although it sounds improvised, they weren't really improvisers, like Soft Machine – they weren't jazz musicians. I don't think they aspired to be. It was tightly rehearsed and structured.

I remember good vibes in the studio. They were all together and contributing, like a normal band. We spent a lot of time experimenting with the technology we had. We would get two tape recorders, six feet apart, with a 10-second delay, which built into those wailing voices at the end, like creatures from the deep. We pushed the toys we had to the limit. They were trying to experiment, and make sounds no-one had heard before.

## 29 MONEY FROM THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON (MARCH 1973)

A sarcastic glorification of greed and complacency among the jet set, with an impossible-to-dance-to 7/4 tempo. Ker-ching, swoosh, whirr, click...



**Andy Fairweather-Low, Amen Corner and Roger Waters' touring band:** In 1967, Amen Corner toured with Jimi Hendrix, Floyd, The Move and

The Nice. I remember listening to the Floyd for so many nights and thinking, 'I don't get this: where's the backbeat?' And the first Floyd song I got to play bass on in '84 was "Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun", which immediately took me back to '67 and the Albert Hall. They created a new musical genre.

I've been playing with Roger for a long time,

## CAREFUL WITH THOSE FACTS, EUGENE

**Pig on the wind! The giant helium-filled pig on the cover of *Animals* broke free of its moorings on the second day of the elaborate photoshoot. Press reports claimed it was chased across Kent by a police helicopter, but evaded capture when it rose up to 18,000ft. It came to ground in a farmer's field.**

touring from '84 through to 2007. And that length of time says it all. Roger and I became very close. The more I've played with him, the more I've realised how many truly great songs he's written. When I started playing "Money" on the *Dark Side* tour, I thought, 'What a riff. How the hell do you come up with something like that?' And the time signature is 7/4, then they sing over it! Another thing Roger did incredibly well was putting extraneous noises into the music – they become completely part of the foundation of the song. There's a filter in Roger's brain that tells him if something is going to work or not.

## 28 GREEN IS THE COLOUR FROM MORE (JULY 1969)

From the band's first film soundtrack, this tranquil love song on acoustic guitar is a fine example of their 1969/70 pastoral period.



**Wayne Coyne, *Flaming Lips*:** Back in the mid-'80s, as the Flaming Lips endlessly toured around America, we were constantly approached by

hardcore, psychedelic freaks bearing gifts. They would almost always offer acid, mushrooms or pot and some would bring

records. Let it be said the Pink Floyd bootleg collector, back then anyway, had a very rich pile of stuff to enjoy...

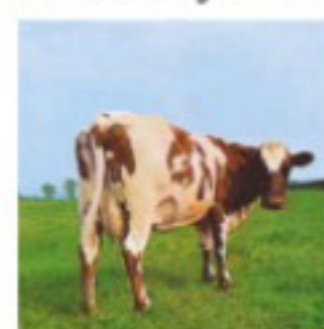
My favourite version of "Green Is The Colour" is from a double-disc bootleg that has a photo of a severed hand on the back

**"WE WERE ALL YOUNG NUTTERS, BLASTING INTO A NEW WORLD..."**  
**RON GEESIN**

cover. David Gilmour's voice cracks, perfectly, on some of the delicate, higher notes and, though the group speeds up a little bit as the song rolls on, the overall effect is a gentle, death-on-the-beach-at-sunset kind of groove. It is strange for a Pink Floyd song... I can think of no other Floyd track I like that conjures up that effect. It is a beautiful, simple summer "trip-out-with-a-girl" song and it's also a colourful, abstract, existential mantra that could be interpreted many different ways.

## 27 IF FROM ATOM HEART MOTHER (OCTOBER 1970)

A Waters tune from the 'song' side of the album, its references to "the moon" and insanity seem oddly prescient somehow...



**Ron Geesin, orchestrator "Atom Heart Mother (Suite)":** "If" reveals something of what Roger Waters really was inside. At the time, I was very close to Roger. But then I fell out with him. I'd just had enough. The fella was paranoid and I'd had one bit of nonsense too many.



"The more I played with Roger, the more I realised how many truly great songs he'd written"  
— Andy Fairweather-Low

"If" is a kind of therapy. Roger could not face closeness, yet he needed it. Everybody needs friends, male and female, but he couldn't cope with it. His way of dealing with it was by either attacking people or hiding. Basically, "If" is Roger Waters saying: 'I'd like to make an album, but I haven't got enough material.' When Roger and I were close, playing golf together and socialising, he was always on about leaving the group. I told him the best thing to do was do it, but he didn't.

When I came to do "Atom Heart Mother", we were all young nutters in different ways, blasting out into the new world. Their original backing piece, called "Epic", had chord sequences. So I put all the melodies on there. They're all mine. [*On the fact that Geesin is not credited on the album sleeve*] ... They could not face somebody having done so much on something of theirs. They couldn't allow that for their image. And when I say "they", I'm talking about four individuals, plus henchmen, and the giant commercial machine that is the Pink Floyd Industry. It's a powerful operation. It can be manipulative, and it is.

## 26 TIME FROM THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON (MARCH 1973)

After a deafening barrage of alarm clocks comes a cynical indictment of the English middle classes' miserable lives.



**Patterson Hood, Drive-By Truckers:** *The Dark Side Of The Moon* was my favourite record. It came out when I was eight, and my dad [David Hood, *Muscle Shoals* bassist] had it. He had all the Pink Floyd records. *Dark Side...* was like hearing the most exotic thing in the world. For an eight-year-old in Alabama, it was like something from another planet. It made a huge impression on me. I remember saving up my allowance so I could buy my own copy. "Time" was a really big deal when I was a kid. My stereo was down on my uncle's farm and I'd go stay with him on weekends. Out on the farm, I could play it as loud as I wanted to. So when I went to bed at night, that was my 'go-to-bed' record.

I liked how dreamlike it was and I especially liked the hypnotic quality of it. It was a very melodic record. I followed Pink Floyd through

my teens, right up until punk rock started happening at junior high school. Listen to any of the Drive-By Truckers songs I play lead guitar on and Dave Gilmour is one of the bigger influences on my playing.

## 25 FAT OLD SUN FROM ATOM HEART MOTHER (OCTOBER 1970)

A dreamy, woozy Gilmour tune that cheekily nicks a Jim Morrison line ("summer Sunday and a year") from "Love Street".



**Geoff Hoon, former cabinet minister:** "Fat Old Sun" captures for me that early period – it's about Cambridge, about Grantchester, it's very laidback, quite folky and pastoral and it's got that fantastic guitar solo that builds up towards the end. I first saw them in Leicester in 1972. The first half of the show was one continuous piece of music, which was *Dark Side...* They were fantastic, but when they then made that leap into the stadium circuit, some of the excitement went out of it a bit. You have to remember that they were a really obscure band in those early days – if you were a fan you spent a lot of time explaining who they were to other people!

## 24 CHAPTER 24 FROM THE PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN (AUGUST 1967)

A whimsical reading of the I Ching, in which "action brings good fortune" and reality dissolves into beatific harmonic clusters.



**John "Hoppy" Hopkins, co-founder UFO Club and The International Times:** "Chapter 24" is spiritual with a cyclical narrative and great melody: Syd at his ecstatic best. And it's the only inspired musical rendition of the core of I Ching. It moves my heart. I remember going through *Piper...* number by number and trying to work out which vector each tune lay on between being serious and being out of your mind on acid. So many different dimensions.

In the early days, when we were starting up the UFO Club, I'd see them weekly. I was able to watch it all build. When we started at the London Free School before UFO [September 1966], I saw the Floyd play and there was just a handful of people watching. But it built very fast and kept building. The Floyd were the core of that whole movement, like a strange attractor for people. There was something about their improvisation that hovered on the boundary, not between sound and noise, but between melody and no melody.

## 23 BRAIN DAMAGE FROM THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON (MARCH 1973)

A paranoiac's view of care in the community, as the album inexorably approaches its 'we're-all-quite-mad-you-know' conclusion.



**Jarvis Cocker:** I first heard *Dark Side* when we used to have a babysitter come around. She used to play it and it absolutely terrified me: all those lyrics in "Brain Damage", like "The

CONTINUES OVER »

*lunatic is on the grass*" and "Got to keep the loonies on the path." When I heard that coming up through the floorboards it scared me to death. The weird thing about the record was that, until I bought it, I'd never heard the whole album. What had happened was that she'd bought it and someone had sat on the lid of her parents' radiogram while it was in there and it had snapped off the outer edge of the record. So she couldn't play the first tracks on either side. It wasn't until I bought it that I heard stuff like "Speak To Me" and "Breathe".

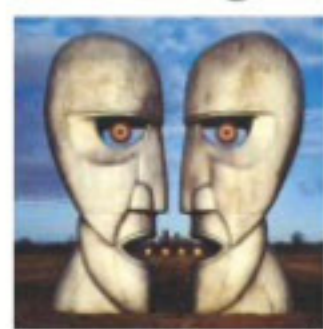
But everything about that record seemed very profound. In the intervening years, I came to realise that wasn't the case. In fact, it was a bit sixth form in its lyrics, which I think even Roger Waters admitted. But it was also the fact you bought the album and you got two posters with it. The pyramid one was mainly blue, but then there were pink dots floating around, which I thought were actually Pink Floyd. It all seemed very meaningful.

## 22 HIGH HOPES

FROM THE

*DIVISION BELL* (MARCH 1994)

Acclaimed track from Gilmour-helmed 'new' Floyd, shunning Waters' nihilism...



**Bob Ezrin, producer, *The Wall*, *The Division Bell*:** Roger's leaving

didn't mean they were all suddenly going to fold up their tents and go home. Being a member of this band was how they defined themselves. But it took *The Division Bell* to get the new order established.

There was less tension and stress than in *The Wall*. We went away for Christmas. And when we came back, Dave played us "High Hopes". It wasn't something we'd been working on. And there's nothing complacent about it. It was absolutely feverish. It came to him in a burst, in two days. It was cathartic.

It's the best track on the record. It is all David. It knitted together the album. It's a monochrome, high-contrast musical painting, surrounded by a few little colourful elements, that form a wrapper around it. But the essence of the song is very stark. It's peculiarly English. And when the Floyd are being English, they are at their best. Sometimes they are almost Dickensian. So is this.

## 21 ONE OF THESE DAYS

FROM *MEDDLE* (OCTOBER 1971)

Hypnotic, bass-driven album opener. An instrumental, save the distorted warning: "One of these days, I'm going to cut you into little pieces!"



**Jeff Dexter, UFO DJ and promoter:** A real acid freakout. It's got a thundering bass intro. And it's got that wonderful sweeping slide of Dave's. That was the song the Pink Floyd did for the Roland Petit Ballet

[Paris, 1973]. Being involved with that was one of the greatest experiences of my life. Being an old ballet dancer myself, to go to France with Floyd and see it being performed was fantastic. I was at the front of the stage with a camera, filming it all.

I used to put Floyd on at the Roundhouse a lot in the early days. And on June 2, 1967, my wedding day, they played for us. I always loved "Money", too. In fact, it was me who convinced them to put "Money" out as a single. They had no faith in it because it had such strange timing. But when I got the first version of it, I played it at the Roundhouse, then called up Steve [O'Rourke, Floyd's manager from 1968-2003] and told him to get over there. Whenever I played it, people went apeshit. It was the best idiot dancing I'd ever seen. I said, "That is a big hit." Steve wasn't sure, but I told him: "Don't worry about it. It'll be the Floyd's calling card for the rest of their lives."

And nobody's ever written that up before, because they were so out of it at the time!

## "RICK WRIGHT CREATED A LANDSCAPE ON ORGAN AROUND WHICH THINGS COULD HAPPEN"

ROBERT WYATT

## 20 SEE-SAW

FROM *A SAUCERFUL OF SECRETS* (JUNE 1968)

Keyboards man Rick Wright shuffles to the forefront with a glorious piece of soft-focus psychedelia.



**Robert Wyatt:** Rick Wright's contribution is underestimated. He created a landscape on organ, an atmosphere around which things could happen. In the early days, the two star guitarists are the ones who are the most spectacular, obviously, but Rick is so modest. "See-Saw" is such a beautiful tune. If you listen to that, then listen to stuff I've done ever since, you can hear the modest but crucial role keyboards have.

The Floyd are such gentlemen. I was upset at the split between the bass player [Waters] and the guitarist [Gilmour], because I owe them both so much as friends. It's like when you know a couple who get divorced and you like both of them. I think David's a giant. To the extent that David has asserted himself, I think that saved the Pink Floyd.

When Syd left, David recomposed the band. Had he not done that, they would just be another cult band from the '60s. But David took a moment out of that fleeting adolescent ethic, held onto it and made it into something the group could grow up with.

## CAREFUL WITH THOSE FACTS, EUGENE

Was *Dark Side* written as score for *The Wizard Of Oz*? Many have noted 'synchronicity' between the film and the LP, although Gilmour has attributed the theory to "some guy with too much time on his hands". In 2000, cable channel TCM aired a version of *Oz* with *Dark Side* as the alternate audio.

## 19 HAVE A CIGAR

FROM *WISH YOU WERE HERE*

(SEPTEMBER 1975) Cricketing chum Roy Harper sings this waspish satire of an unctuous record company big-cheese ("Oh, by the way, which one's Pink?")



**Bob Harris, DJ and presenter:**

I was there back at Middle Earth and UFO in 1967 – and I've been a friend and observer ever since then. "Have A Cigar" is certainly

the one song that jumps out. Partly it's the presence of Roy Harper on lead vocals – one of the great mavericks of British music. His voice gives Floyd a real edge. The grinding, syncopated opening guitar riff establishes a really funky groove, and the lyrics are cynical but very funny. Even though they had moved away from making singles, "Have A Cigar" proved that they could still write strong pop songs less than five minutes long. There's no long solos or anything that detracts from the

strength of the melody and the chord changes. A superb piece of music.

## 18 COMFORTABLY NUMB

FROM *THE WALL* (NOVEMBER 1979)

Waters and Gilmour alternate verses of traumatic and nostalgic scenes, increasing and relaxing the tension, until

Gilmour's guitar bursts forth...



**Jake Shears, Scissor Sisters:**

After a while, a band becomes more unashamed about doing certain things, and that's when I find them most interesting. I

think Syd Barrett was really 'cool'; Dave Gilmour isn't. And I prefer bands when they stop caring about being cool.

When I was in ninth grade, there was a kid I had a crush on who played me Floyd for the first time – I grew up on an island, and we would lie out on the harbour with a boombox and listen to this song. A few years ago, I was asked to sing "Comfortably Numb" with David Gilmour at Radio City for two shows. I was emotionally fragile and weeping – a mess – but over the moon because I can sing the hell out of that song: I've been singing it for half of my life. But the day before the gig they decided not to have any guests. They canned me. Bastards! It was one of the worst things you could do to anybody!

## 17 APPLES AND ORANGES

SINGLE (NOVEMBER 1967) Syd's guitar teeters on a feedback tightrope as a happy-go-lucky girl ambles round the shops. Non-charting follow-up to "See Emily Play".



**Richard Lloyd, Television:**

When I was a teenager one of my best friends had a great record collection. That's where I first heard Hendrix, Floyd, Traffic and the Grateful Dead. I remember how wonderfully nutty some of the lyrics were, and how wacky the music was. Syd Barrett was a

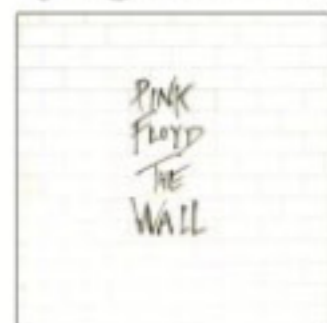


"When Syd left, David Gilmour recomposed the Floyd. Without him, they'd be just another cult '60s band..." – Robert Wyatt

huge hero to us; he was clearly nuts but wrote these amazing songs with completely weird ideas. Who else would write a song about apples and oranges and actually be talking about the fruit? Or a song called "Bike" which was really about a bike? Like a child's view of the world coupled with psychedelic music and crazy guitars and sound-effects. The sheer pleasure in a song like "Apples And Oranges" still causes me wonder. I followed Pink Floyd for the first two albums, but lost interest after they lost Syd. Still, those first singles and songs continue to play regularly in the jukebox of my mind.

## 16 GOODBYE BLUE SKY FROM THE WALL (NOVEMBER 1979)

Among *The Wall's* gentler moments, but nevertheless, alongside Gilmour's gently plucked guitars and sweet "ooh"s, Waters still finds room for "falling bombs" and "frightened ones".



**Gerald Scarfe, illustrator/ animator, *The Wall* album, stage-show and movie:**

Roger said he had this magnum opus he wanted to produce. He came to my house and played me the raw tapes, watching like a hawk. There was an awkward silence. Roger said, "I feel like I've pulled down my trousers and shat in front of you." At that point *The Wall* didn't mean a lot to me. But when Roger talked to me about what was behind it, we had in common being affected by the Second World War. Roger's father had been killed in it, and I'd had a

miserable time. "Did you see the frightened ones, did you hear the falling bombs/The planes are all long gone, but the pain lingers on" – those are lines in "Goodbye Blue Sky" I can very much identify with. I was four when the war started. I was born into a world of ultimate chaos. I have very strong memories of air raid shelters and having to wear these ghastly gas masks. As an asthmatic, I couldn't breathe. I used all of that in the animation for "Goodbye Blue Sky" in the film – the frightened troglodytes have gasmasks for heads, and are crouching underground. The song, and the animation, has a sadness that resonates with my real past very strongly. And with Roger's.

## 15 BREATHE FROM THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON (MARCH 1973)

*Dark Side...*'s curtain-raiser begins languidly (another pastoral Floyd album?), but its lyrics ("Run rabbit, run") are wickedly booby-trapped.



**Guy Garvey, Elbow:**

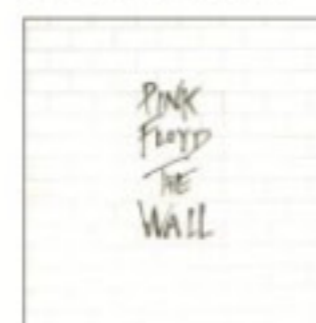
My sisters loved *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, so it was always playing somewhere in the house. At 17 or 18, I had an acid experience and it made me listen to the album in a completely different way. I think Pink Floyd's ethos for *Dark Side* was very different, too. It was industrial, experimental rock and represented a machine-made freedom. They were utilising everything at their disposal, experimenting within themselves. It was a classic example of using the studio as an

instrument. "Breathe" is as simple as dimples in the way it's sung, but they use an interesting vocal tracking style. The lyrics are delivered ad hoc, then tracked to lend them weight. It was something Pete Waterman later picked up, but that was to protect a bad singer. Pink Floyd put that song down as they felt it, then bolstered it to give it real weight. It was something else altogether.

## 14 IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE?

FROM THE WALL (NOVEMBER 1979)

An aural collage from an American hotel room (TV, passing traffic, ominous bass noises) drifts off into dreamy English folk music.



**Jim James, My Morning Jacket:**

I love a lot of Pink Floyd. To me their music is classic and will transcend all time. As long as there are people on the earth they will be listening to Pink Floyd. But the cut I listen to most would be "Is There Anybody Out There?", which is a short instrumental. Starting at about 1:15 is one of the most beautiful little classical guitar pieces I have heard. I listen to it on repeat. They say no-one knows who really played it. I mean, I'm sure someone does, but in *The Wall* movie it's in one of my favourite scenes. After Pink has smashed his hotel room to pieces, he builds this beautiful sculpture on the floor out of all the remnants of the smashed goods. It's quite a beautifully heartbreaking scene!

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"They were the core of the movement, a strange attractor for people" – John 'Hoppy' Hopkins, UFO Club founder

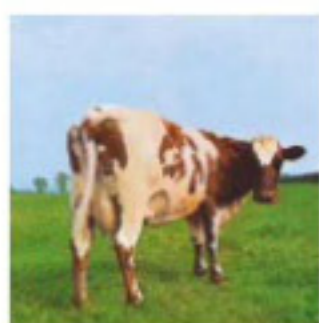


## 13 ATOM HEART MOTHER (SUITE)

FROM *ATOM HEART MOTHER*

(OCTOBER 1970)

A six-part suite, conceived (with Ron Geesin) for rock group and choir, initially known as "The Amazing Pudding".



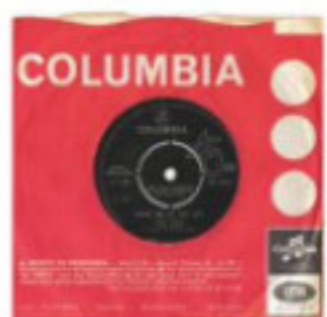
**Iain Banks, author:**

I have a weakness for bands with semi-symphonic ambitions. We all – by golly, quite rightly – recoil in horror from the excesses of the triple-sleeve concept album so beloved of certain progressive bands of the '70s. But even allowing for the fact that in some ways the three-minute balls-out head-thumping thrash is what pop and rock is most truly about, it's good to hear talented musicians giving their imaginations room to play in. Floyd taking a side of an album to launch into an widescreen abstract soundscape of madly chuntering choirs and sonic weirdness was an almost predictable step after the serial indulgences of *Ummagumma*, but it could still all have gone horribly, embarrassingly wrong. It didn't. This is one of their finest pieces. The Floyd always had the tunes to match their ambition, and that makes all the difference.

## 12 CAREFUL WITH THAT AXE, EUGENE

B-SIDE OF THE SINGLE, "POINT ME AT THE SKY" (DECEMBER 1968)

Sprawling psych improv and crowd favourite – a great live version is on *Ummagumma*.



**Genesis P-Orridge, *Psychic TV/Throbbing Gristle*:** By 1969, I was living in the HoHo Funhouse, a semi-commune full of freaks in an old fruit warehouse in Hull.

Pink Floyd were touring *Ummagumma* and the university asked us to do the light show. Everyone was stoned, but I vividly remember "Careful With That Axe, Eugene", which nobody had heard yet and seemed to go on for three hours. We had these glass slides with liquid in, and an epidioscope, onto which we put live maggots. So you had this psychedelic light show, with six-foot maggots crawling across. Floyd played their first set, then came back on wearing overalls from a building site and carrying wood, a saw, hammers and nails. And they started building a very ramshackle table, sat on the wooden boxes they'd just made and had a tea break. Pre-industrial rock!

## 11 LUCIFER SAM FROM THE PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN

(AUGUST 1967)

Originally entitled "Percy The Rat Catcher", this feline yarn ("be a hip cat, be a ship's cat") was inspired by Syd's own moggy.



**Jim Reid, *The Jesus And Mary Chain*:** I almost feel that I should apologise for choosing a Syd/Floyd song because although it took a while, I eventually

realised what a great band they were with or without Syd. I remember as a teenager sitting in my bedroom trying to play the guitar riffs for "Lucifer Sam" and make out the lyrics. The version I used to play, if you were being kind, could be described as punk/avant-garde, or more truthfully complete shite, but I enjoyed hacking away at it anyway. I never understood why Floyd didn't release it as a single, it seemed like a sure hit to me.

When the Mary Chain appeared on *The Tube* in 1985, Dave Gilmour was there playing with Pete Townshend's band. In between the rehearsals, William [Reid, *JAMC*] was onstage doing a really bad job of painting his lovely old vintage Gretsch guitar. Gilmour came over to watch. He had a look on his face as though someone was taking a shit on The Bible. A couple of years ago, at an awards ceremony, he came up to me and mentioned this. Christ, I was astonished he could even remember it! I thought, 'Fuck, what have we done to the poor guy?' He must have been traumatised to remember that, 20 years later. I wanted to shake his hand and give him a big hug, but I just smiled meekly and disappeared into the shadows.

## 10 FEARLESS FROM MEDDLER

(OCTOBER 1971)

Overlooked album track with a naggingly insistent Gilmour riff, a lazing-on-the-lawn feel and a crowd of overdubbed Liverpool FC fans...



**Storm Thorgerson, Floyd sleeve artist and schoolfriend:** Of course I love "Shine On You Crazy Diamond", the key to Floyd's past. But this is

overlooked, haunting and melodic, and very beautifully sung by Dave. I suppose it's about being confident, believing in yourself – going forward without fear. There's what feels like a backward-chord sequence, strange and incredibly telling, and a very simple but interesting guitar chord-riff. But I don't really think about any of that. Songs grab you by the throat or the bollocks. "Fearless" isn't complex, but simply beautiful. It's more or less faultless. And it's a key song on a seminal, underrated album.

## 9 JUGBAND BLUES FROM A SAUCERFUL OF SECRETS

(JUNE 1968)

Syd says goodbye in extraordinary style, singing along to an oompah band, but his stuttering lyrics hint at an all-too-real psychosis...



**Mick Rock, photographer:** There was certainly no conflict in Syd when I first met him in December '66, when he played at the Cambridge Arts College

Christmas Party. He was this incredible figure, bouncing up and down, while the other members of the Floyd were anonymous.

I did take one acid trip with Syd and a fun affair it was, too. He wasn't any problem on LSD. He was quite relaxed, smiling a lot. I remember us playing Coltrane and Stones records and looking at Robert Crumb comics. In 1971, I did the final interview he ever did, for *Rolling Stone*. He described himself as having "a very irregular head" and said, "I'm full of dust and guitars." The lyrics that kick off "Jugband Blues" – "It's awfully considerate of you to think of me here/ And I'm much obliged to you for making it clear/ That I'm not here" – seem to be making some kind of statement about his situation. And it's not like any other song in the world. It's always haunted me. Maybe it's a great description, not just verbally but sonically, of a schizophrenic state and a kind of psychic disintegration. It seems to sum Syd up for me more than any other song in existence.

## 8 ASTRONOMY DOMINE FROM THE PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN

(AUGUST 1967)

Swapping his kaleidoscope for a telescope, Syd contemplates the universe with awe...



**Peter Jenner, Floyd manager, '66-'68:** I was at the studio when they were making the first LP. Syd suddenly said, "Let's have you read a bit through a megaphone." And I was game for that, so they used it on the song. Syd had me read bits from a book of his, from which he was getting all his info about astronomy. Syd wasn't particularly

into astronomy, it's more a case of us all being hippies and groovy and "wow! man". In that context, it worked. Syd's music was that of a very English eccentric.

## 7 SET THE CONTROLS FOR THE HEART OF THE SUN

FROM A SAUCERFUL OF SECRETS (JUNE 1968)

Wonderfully atmospheric Floyd cosmic-rock prototype, written by Waters, full of spooked whispers, eerie keyboards, spine-tingling glockenspiels and pummelled tom-toms.



**Nick Mason:** It's a good example of something that we got our teeth into, which is that not everything had to be flat out all the time. We could be a bit more subtle and laid back. I can see now more clearly where the influences came from, so far as the drums are concerned. Do you remember a film called *Jazz On A Summer's Day*? There was a sequence in that where Chico Hamilton played with mallets. I always had this in the back of my mind, long before Pink Floyd were

## CAREFUL WITH THOSE FACTS, EUGENE

Floyd websites include Mr Pinky's vinyl database at [digilander.libero.it/mrpinky](http://digilander.libero.it/mrpinky), Floydian Slip's weekly radio show at [www.floydianslip.com](http://www.floydianslip.com) or the website of fanzine *Brain Damage* at [www.brain-damage.co.uk](http://www.brain-damage.co.uk). Other fanzines past and present include *The Azimuth Co-ordinator* and *The Amazing Pudding*...

sorts. And certainly, *A Saucerful Of Secrets* was highly structured in the way that it worked. Having said that, we went on to release stuff like "Echoes" and a number of pieces that could be unspeakably open-ended and witter on for as long as anyone had the patience!

It's weird that, around 1967-'68, we all still thought we wanted to be an R'n'B band. We all thought it terribly important to perm our hair and wear leather trousers. But it's absolutely true what David and Roger say about our lack of musicianship being turned into a positive attribute. As we admired those fairly "authentic" R'n'B musicians like Eric Clapton and

John Mayall, we couldn't quite do that, so we ended up doing something else. And one positive product of that – one that we weren't aware of at the time! – was the significance of having our own material. So many great artists like John Mayall and Aynsley Dunbar would release albums where virtually every song was a traditional blues song, arranged by them. I think our limitations meant that we ended up making music like "Set The

Controls..." I still think it sounds fantastic and I love playing it today.

## "OUR LIMITATIONS AS AN R'N'B BAND MEANT THAT WE ENDED UP MAKING MUSIC LIKE 'SET THE CONTROLS...' " NICK MASON

even thought of, as something that was fantastically cool. Ginger [Baker] also played mallets with Cream on "We're Going Wrong". It's that whole thing about being able to repress, instead of the endless, wild banging away that characterises so much rock music. And I think that this is also a wonderful, held-back drum part.

We recorded this around the time that Syd left. Before it all went wrong, ha ha! I'm not entirely sure if Syd was at this recording session or not – it was one of the Abbey Road dates where Syd was around for some but not others. But he would have dropped quite easily into proceedings were he there.

I think you can see this as us not so much looking for a new direction rather than just developing something that was already kicked off – songs like "Interstellar Overdrive" and "Astronomy Domine". We started getting into the business of extending everything, particularly anything we played live. It soon became unthinkable that we'd go on stage and begin and end a song within six or seven minutes.

Actually I think there was quite a lot of structure to these songs, even if it doesn't sound like it! When we were doing *Saucer* – even tracks like "Interstellar Overdrive" – there was a move to put some structure into it, there's actually quite a disciplined structure of

## 6 WISH YOU WERE HERE FROM WISH YOU WERE HERE

(SEPTEMBER 1975)

Waters' bleak vision of incipient middle age and failing marriage would prove strangely popular with buskers...



**Phil Manzanera, Roxy Music:** I saw Floyd in the early days, at the Albert Hall with Hendrix,

Amen Corner and The Move. It was the most amazing package tour. I was 16 or 17 and it was incredibly exciting. Floyd, particularly the atmospheric, textural stuff, were a huge influence on my own guitar-playing.

Like a lot of people, I've heard all the tracks, but had never tried playing them. So when David [Gilmour] asked me to go on tour with him, I had to create a guitar sound that was as close as possible to the originals. And of course, every backpacker from here to Timbuktu knows how to play "Wish You Were Here", but not me! So I had to learn it from scratch, which was hilarious. It's one of their most well-known numbers and I spent the whole tour learning how to play it properly.

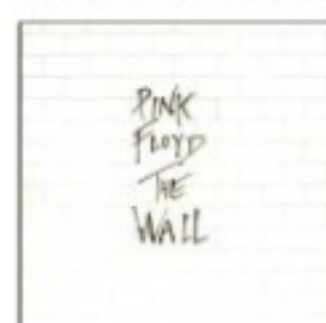
That riff is like other great riffs – the minute you hear it, you know what it is. Halfway through the tour, I told David it was getting so embarrassing. So I went into his kitchen and said, "For fuck's sake, show me exactly how you play it!" I think on the very last gig, which is the live version that's coming out, I do finally get it right! When you're playing those songs, you marvel at the simplicity of it all, yet it's totally self-contained. It's quite minimalist, so each part is distinctive.

CONTINUES OVER »

## 5 ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL (PART 2)

FROM THE WALL;  
RELEASED AS SINGLE (DECEMBER 1979)

School brutality set to a midtempo disco beat. Their first hit single since 1967.



**Ice Cube, rapper:** It was a big hit, it was getting a lot of airplay at the time, even on black stations. It's a seriously funky track, it's got a tight drum beat and a killer

bassline. I remember we used to march around the playground singing the lyrics from this song. "We don't need no education/We don't need no thought control... Hey teacher! Leave them kids alone!" Ha! When you're a kid at school, of course you're going to love a lyric like that! The idea that we're all just bricks in the wall, just identikit packages that the system requires. That's the shit. It's real. And it's true. It's still true now.

## 4 ARNOLD LAYNE

RELEASED AS A SINGLE (MARCH 1967)  
Not your standard debut single, or debut hit – Syd's lyrics tell of the arrest and imprisonment of a ladies' underwear fetishist...



**Joe Boyd, co-UFO Club founder and producer of "Arnold Layne":** In the studio, Syd was a quiet leader. Roger was more vocal, but everyone deferred to

Syd's opinion. He sat at the back and kept quiet most of the time, but everyone listened when he spoke. The sessions were easy and fun: record one night, mix the next. I don't recall any conflict. Roger had an ego, Syd did, too, but was more diffident and oblique. The early Floyd songs are pretty European and blue-note free. David Bowie has been quoted as saying that Syd taught him how to sing like an ordinary Englishman – no blues, no mockney accent. I think their un-Americanness is the key to Floyd's strength over the years.

Hey teacher! The Wall tour, Earls Court, London, June 16, 1981



PETER STILL/REDFERNS

## 3 INTERSTELLAR OVERDRIVE

FROM THE PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN (AUGUST 1967)

Bacharach-David's "My Little Red Book" meets the theme from *Steptoe And Son* in a psychotropic, stereo-panning, nine-minute freak-out...

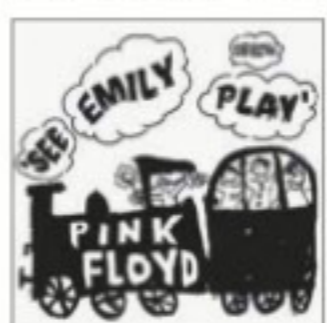


**Dave Brock, Hawkwind:** It's very true that it's the same tune as the theme to *Steptoe And Son*. I saw them play it once at UFO on Tottenham Court Road,

when the light-show was giant blobs behind the screen, and they went off at great tangents. My collection of Floyd is all early days, nothing since *Ummagumma*. What they were doing then was lovely and free, those long tracks we loved listening to. Prior to all this, it was two- or three-minute tracks. The record companies freaked out, they thought our attention spans wouldn't take any more. "Interstellar Overdrive" was avant-garde rock. We were doing psychedelic freak-out stuff in a circus tent when they were rising stars. They were the kings of space-rock then, with those repetitious chords, elongated solos and electronics – going out there for long periods. You can make a parallel with modern jazz. They were making rock music abstract. Of course they had to give the odd nod to the music business – an "Arnold Layne". But "Interstellar Overdrive" gave us absolute freedom.

## 2 SEE EMILY PLAY

RELEASED AS A SINGLE (JUNE 1967)  
Irrepressible, childlike psych that namechecks the band's own 'Games for May' concert at the QE Hall...



**Paul Weller:** There are so many of Syd's songs that I love, but this is my favourite. I remember hearing it on the radio as a kid and being totally bowled over. It

was a proper hit single, which is unbelievable when you look at the state of the charts now. Melodically it's brilliant, and the arrangement is so compact and concise. It does so much in less than three minutes. Sonically, it's amazing. The intro is fucking overwhelming, it still sounds fresh today. But then for me, all those great psychedelic records haven't dated.

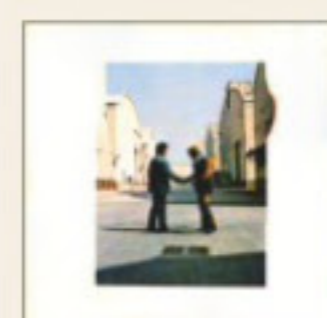
I like the fact that lyrically it's a simple song. I read an article recently that explained that it was inspired by a girl called Emily Young who hung out with the Floyd. She was friends with Anjelica Huston, I think. There's a purity about the song which reflects that.

It's funny. At the time it came out, I didn't know what Syd looked like. I had no idea that he was this amazing, beautiful-looking character. Which is odd, because I used to watch *Top Of the Pops* religiously every week. I didn't actually buy it until years later! Syd has been an influence on all my music. I heard "Start!" on the radio the other day, and it reminded me that the guitar break was totally influenced by Syd. Even if it didn't sound like him, in my mind I was trying to get that feeling over. To me, that's what Syd's Floyd were about: creating a mood you can't quite put your finger on...

## 1 SHINE ON YOU CRAZY DIAMOND

FROM WISH YOU WERE HERE (SEP 1975)

Pink Floyd were world-famous, rich beyond their dreams, and under pressure. Waters revisited the theme of mental illness (which had been central to *Dark Side*), but this time rooted it in the real-life disintegration of Syd Barrett. Unfolding over 13 carefully measured minutes, the song's mood is one of equipoise before the onslaught – and while Waters rarely allowed sentimentality to creep into the Floyd, it's clearly appropriate on "Shine On...", and is judged perfectly.



**David Gilmour:** It's great that this is No 1, as it's the purest Floyd song, the peak of that particular stage in our development. We wrote the

song in a dingy rehearsal room near Kings Cross – I've no idea why we were in such a dark, cheap, horrible rehearsal space when we'd just released one of the biggest-selling albums in history! Ha! Maybe it was tight-arsed management.

The song fell out of a four-note guitar figure I came up with – that distinctive opening sequence. Roger really liked it. It had that haunting, serial quality, like something from a piece of modern classical music, or from a film soundtrack. The rest of the song was a joint effort, which was becoming rare at that time, where me and Roger tended to write separately and bring the ideas into a rehearsal. But here the song seemed to emerge organically out of a jam. There's the pedal bassline that links into the last part, lots of interesting chord changes, and Nick's drumming, which switches between a kind of 12/8 shuffle to a swing beat and back. The ideas were all so good that we wanted room for them to breathe, which is why the complete version is about 26 minutes long, and needed to be split in two as it didn't fit on one side of an LP.

Roger would always disappear for a few days to write lyrics and he came up with this tribute to Syd. They're beautiful words and it's a heartfelt tribute that speaks for us all. It had been four or five years since we'd last seen him, and I think it was all tied up with our feelings of regret and possibly guilt. It was a remarkable coincidence that, not long after we'd finished recording "Shine On...", Syd wandered into the studio at Abbey Road. Everyone's memory of the event is a bit hazy. My memory is of a rather plump chap wandering around No 3 studio while we were mixing in the control booth. God knows how he managed to get past security – it was pretty tight then and I'd imagine that it'd be impossible nowadays! And it took us all a while to work out who it was – we were all a bit shaken as to how different he looked. We had a chat with him. When we played him some of the stuff we were working on he thought it was really good "but a bit long". Ha!

For years after he left, Syd was the elephant in the room when it came to Pink Floyd. He was the glue that linked us all. He knew Roger, Rick and Nick from the first incarnation of the band, obviously, before I joined, but me and Syd were also close friends, dating back before



the band. I liked to remember the Syd of my teens, this sweet, crazy, fun-loving friend that I went to France with and went busking with. And the terrible thing is that I couldn't really equate that figure with the person that he turned into. The thing was, his mental problems always seemed to come up when the issue of the band surfaced. So it was his family's preference that members of Pink Floyd didn't visit him, as it might set off another relapse. So it's astonishing to think that that time in Abbey Road was the last time I ever saw him.

Obviously, the news of his death was enormously sad. I'd known he was ill for a long time, but the reality was terribly sad, even if

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## **"NEWS OF SYD'S DEATH WAS ENORMOUSLY SAD. BUT WE'D BEEN GRIEVING FOR HIM FOR OVER 30 YEARS..." – GILMOUR**

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me and the rest of the band had been grieving for him for over 30 years. The thing was that the Syd I knew hadn't been around for a long time. If I have one regret it's that I'd not been more forceful with his family and gone to visit Syd in Cambridge. But it's a difficult one to negotiate, isn't it?

Syd's death affected the way I now play "Shine On...". It's a tremendously adaptable piece of music. On the original it's a pretty big

production, with harmonies and backing singers. On my last tour, it became more mournful. I stripped away everything. After a few dates, it became more experimental. We developed a new way of playing the opening where Phil Manzanera, Guy Pratt and Dick Parry would play wine glasses – you know, rubbing a wet finger over the rims –

that had been tuned to an open chord, replicating the organ part, and I'd play the guitar riff over the top.

That was a throwback to the LP we were initially going to make instead of *Wish You Were Here*, in which the sounds were going to be made with household objects, an idea we ditched but which influenced some of what we did after that. It makes the track even more haunting and ethereal. 🐉

# The Pink Floyd Miscellany

Live albums, compilations, solo albums, collectables...

## LIVE ALBUMS

### DELICATE SOUND OF THUNDER

EMI/COLUMBIA, NOVEMBER 1988

HIGHEST CHART POSITION:

UK:11; US:11



Floyd's first-ever fully live official release was this double set, recorded over five nights at the Nassau Coliseum, New York in August 1988, on the Momentary Lapse Of Reason tour. It represented the second attempt to capture the Gilmour-led incarnation live: the band had recorded and filmed shows at the Omni Coliseum in Atlanta, Georgia in November 1987, but were unhappy with the results. *DSOT* was the first rock album played in space: a cassette copy (without the case, to save weight) was taken by Soviet cosmonauts aboard Soyuz TM-7 on its flight to the Mir Space station. Gilmour and Mason flew to Bajkonur to see the launch, and the sound of take-off was recorded for possible use on a future release. "To say that we are thrilled at the thought of being the first rock band to be played in space is something of an understatement," said Gilmour.

**TRACKLISTING** Disc One: Shine On You Crazy Diamond/Learning To Fly/Yet Another Movie/Round And Around/Sorrow/The Dogs Of War Disc Two: On The Turning Away/One Of These Days/Time/Wish You Were Here/Us & Them/Money/Another Brick In The Wall Part II/Comfortably Numb/Run Like Hell

## PULSE

EMI/COLUMBIA, MAY 1995 (UK), JUNE 1995 (US)

CHART POSITION: UK:1; US:1



A document of the 1994 The Division Bell tour, and one described by some members of Floyd's vociferous online community as "the greatest live album ever". Part of the reason for that might be the second disc, where Gilmour, Mason and Wright (augmented by live stalwarts Guy Pratt on bass, Jon Carin on keyboards and Tim Renwick on guitar) play *The Dark Side Of The Moon* in its entirety, in sequence,

followed by a three-song encore. *Pulse* also includes Syd's "Astronomy Domine", which the band had not performed since the early '70s.

**TRACKLISTING** Disc One: Shine On You Crazy Diamond/Astronomy Domine/What Do You Want From Me/Learning To Fly/Keep Talking/Coming Back To Life/Hey You/Great Day For Freedom/Sorrow/High Hopes/Another Brick In The Wall (Part II). Disc Two: Speak To Me/Breathe/On The Run/Time/The Great Gig In The Sky/Money/Us And Them/Any Colour You Like/Brain Damage/Eclipse/Wish You Were Here/Comfortably Numb/Run Like Hell

### IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE? THE WALL LIVE 1980-81

EMI/COLUMBIA, MARCH 2000 (UK); APRIL 2000 (US)

CHART POSITION: UK: 15; US: 19



This double disc of performances from the 1980/1 tour was recorded on a 48-track mobile studio during concerts at Earl's Court, London by Floyd soundman and co-producer James Guthrie. As well as the whole of *The Wall* album, *Is There Anybody Out There?* contained two tracks removed from the studio album, "What Shall We Do Now?" and "The Last Few Bricks". A 'surrogate band', which included Status Quo's Andy Bown on bass, played "In The Flesh?" throughout the tour, while wearing the masks featured on the cover. This was the first Floyd album not to receive a vinyl release.

**TRACKLISTING** Disc One: MC: Atmos/In The Flesh?/The Thin Ice/Make Me Happy/The Happiest Days Of Our Lives/Another Brick In The Wall – Part II/Mother/Goodbye Blue Sky/Empty Spaces/What Shall We Do Now?/Young Lust/One Of My Turns/Don't Leave Me Now/Another Brick In The Wall – Part III/The Last Few Bricks/Goodbye Cruel World. Disc Two: Hey You/Is There Anybody Out There?/Nobody Home/Vera/Bring The Boys Back Home/Comfortably Numb/The Show Must Go On/MC: Atmos/In The Flesh/Run Like Hell/Waiting For

The Worms/Stop/The Trial/Outside The Wall

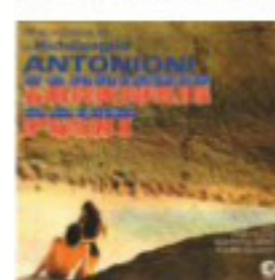
## COMPILATIONS

Like the band itself, Floyd compendiums don't follow the traditional Greatest Hits rules. Barring those early Syd-era singles, their reputation is defiantly that of a beanbags-and-headphones 'albums' band – but they have nonetheless managed to release over 30 singles, the majority after Barrett's departure, and scored a global No 1 hit in "Another Brick In The Wall (Part II)". If you want a comprehensive singles collection, it doesn't exist. Rather, the band's comps have tended to reprise their best-known album cuts, perhaps with the odd rarity bundled in. Indeed, celebrated Floyd rarities have sometimes turned up in the oddest of places...

### ZABRISKIE POINT OST

MGM, FEBRUARY 1970

CHART POSITION: N/A



Nestled alongside The Grateful Dead, John Fahey and Kaleidoscope, there are three exclusive Floyd numbers on this soundtrack to Antonioni's portentous counterculture flick: "Crumbling Land", "Come In Number 51, Your Time Is Up" (an alternate version of "Careful With That Axe, Eugene") and an instrumental improvisation, "Heart Beat, Pig Meat". The 1997 CD reissue included four more Floyd cuts: "Country Song", "Unknown Song", "Love Scene (Version 6)" and "Love Scene (Version 4)".

### THE BEST OF THE PINK FLOYD/MASTERS OF ROCK

EMI/COLUMBIA, 1970

EUROPE, 1974



A celebrated oddity. Originally released in the UK in 1970 as *The Best Of The Pink Floyd*, this set was repackaged and re-released as *Masters Of Rock* across continental Europe – with some tracks suddenly in stereo – four years later. The European issue included the first-ever stereo mix of "Apples And

Oranges", and remained the only official source of 1968 single "It Would Be So Nice" prior to 1992's *Shine On* boxset. Another rarity is the original mono mix of "Nice"'s B-side "Julia Dream", which is a different version to the one on *Relics*. Despite its Barrett-era content, Syd is curiously not credited on some pressings as a member of the band – although, in an attempt to compensate, one version of the cover art showed an image from *Meddle* with Syd's head superimposed onto Gilmour's body.

**TRACKLISTING** Chapter 24/Matilda Mother/Arnold Layne/Candy And A Current Bun/The Scarecrow/Apples & Oranges/It Would Be So Nice/Paint Box/Julia Dream/See Emily Play

## RELICS

EMI STARLINE, MAY 1971

CHART POSITION: UK: 32; US: 153



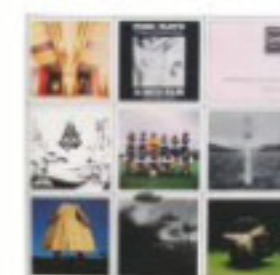
A much-loved comp of the Barrett-era singles and more. Released on EMI's budget offshoot, Starline, between the releases of *Atom Heart Mother* and *Meddle*, *Relics* remained the definitive Syd-era singles set until *Shine On*. It also contained an unreleased Waters composition, "Biding My Time". The original artwork was drawn by Mason at architecture school: Starline issues have a b/w cover, later UK issues on Music For Pleasure colour the title in pink, obviously.

**TRACKLISTING** Arnold Layne/Interstellar Overdrive/See Emily Play/Remember A Day/Paintbox/Julia Dream/Careful With That Axe Eugene/Cirrus Minor/The Nile Song/Biding My Time/Bike

## A NICE PAIR

CAPITOL/HARVEST, DECEMBER 1973 (US), JANUARY 1974 (UK)

CHART POSITION: UK: 21; US: 36



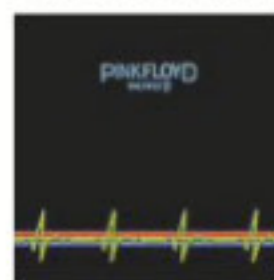
Not a comp, but a twofer reissue of *Piper* and *Saucerful*, released just six months into *Dark Side*'s monster chart run. It is notable for its all-new cover art: early copies featured an image of the real-life Dr Phang's dental surgery before Phang himself objected and it was removed.



The Great Gig In The Sky  
Rocket: Pink Floyd, the first  
rock band in space, officially!

## THE FIRST XI

HARVEST, 1979



Floyd were very early adopters of the "boxset" approach: *The First XI* was a limited-edition, felt-lined set of 11 replica LPs, plus *Wish You Were Here* and *Dark Side* as picture discs.

## A COLLECTION OF GREAT DANCE SONGS

EMI/COLUMBIA, NOVEMBER 1981

CHART POSITION: UK: 37; US: 31



A classic 'contractual obligation' album, with a darkly facetious title, which owes its existence to the fact none of Floyd wanted to record the follow-up to *The Wall* in time for 1981's Christmas season. Further complications arose when Columbia refused to license the use of "Money" in the US, so the version here is an entirely new one, with all instruments bar the sax played by Gilmour. The album also featured alternate mixes of "Shine On You Crazy Diamond" and "Another Brick In The Wall (Part II)". The cover art is, of course, by Hipgnosis, forced to work here under the pseudonym 'TCP' after falling out with Roger Waters.

**TRACKLISTING** One Of These Days/ Money/ Sheep/ Shine On You Crazy Diamond (Part One) (1-5)/ Wish You Were Here/ Another Brick In The Wall (Part II)

## WORKS

EMI/CAPITOL, JUNE 1983

CHART POSITION: US 68



After Floyd left Capitol for Columbia in the US, their former label released this North America-only 'spoiler' collection to coincide with *The Final Cut*. It's notable for the elusive studio recording of "Embryo", an outtake from *Ummagumma*, only available previously on an EMI label sampler, *Picnic - A Breath Of Fresh Air*. "Brain Damage" and "Eclipse" are both alternate mixes.

**TRACKLISTING** One Of These Days/ Arnold Layne/ Fearless/ Brain Damage/ Eclipse/ Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun/ See Emily Play/ Several Species Of Small Furry Animals.../ Free Four/ Embryo

## SHINE ON (BOX SET)

EMI, COLUMBIA, NOVEMBER 1992

CHART POSITION: N/A



Working title "The Big Bong Theory" wouldn't have done justice to this extravagant nine-CD boxset, which featured postcards, a hardback on the history of the band and seven remastered studio LPs (whose spines, when lined up chronologically, displayed the prism image from *Dark Side*). The major talking point for fans, however, was bonus disc 'The Early Singles', which included the release of their first five singles – plus B-sides – in one place for the first time.

**TRACKLISTING:** ('The Early Singles' only): Arnold Layne/ Candy And A Currant Bun/ See Emily Play/ Scarecrow/ Apples And Oranges/ Paint Box/ It Would Be So Nice/ Julia Dream/ Point Me At The Sky/ Careful With That Axe, Eugene

## 1967: THE FIRST THREE SINGLES (EP)

EMI, DECEMBER 1997



The first standalone collection of the early Barrett-era singles and B-sides, released to commemorate 30 years of the Floyd. Each track was either an extended or edited version of the original.

**TRACKLISTING** Arnold Layne/ Candy And A Currant Bun/ See Emily Play/ Scarecrow/ Apples And Oranges/ Paint Box

## ECHOES: THE BEST OF PINK FLOYD

EMI, NOVEMBER 2001

CHART POSITION: UK: 2; US: 2



From "Arnold Layne" to *The Division Bell*'s final track, "High Hopes", this spans the group's entire catalogue from before *The Endless River*. And, as its title suggests, this is probably the closest thing to a traditional career retrospective. There's a twist, though: the 26 tracks are non-chronological, and fade into one another, courtesy of trusted engineer/producer James Guthrie.

Odd fact – the album cover, by Storm Thorgerson, was originally designed for Dream Theater's *Falling Into Infinity* but rejected by the band.

**TRACKLISTING** Disc One: Astronomy Domine/ See Emily Play/ The Happiest Days Of Our Lives/ Another Brick In The Wall (Part II)/ Marooned/ The Great Gig In The Sky/ Echoes/ Hey You/ Set The Controls.../ Money/ Keep Talking/ Sheep/ Sorrow. Disc Two: Shine On You Crazy Diamond (Parts 1-7)/ Time/ The Fletcher Memorial Home/ Comfortably Numb/ When The Tigers Broke Free/ One Of These Days/ Us And Them/ Learning To Fly/ Arnold Layne/ Wish You Were Here/ Jugband Blues/ High Hopes/ Bike

## OH, BY THE WAY (BOX SET)

EMI/CAPITOL, DECEMBER 2007



All 14 of the studio LPs, presented in mini-vinyl to celebrate the band's 40th anniversary. The only 'additional extra' is a Storm Thorgerson poster.

## WHY PINK FLOYD...?

EMI, 2011-2012



Comprehensive reissue programme in three stages – 'Discovery', 'Experience' and 'Immersion' packages of remastered albums on CD, SACD, DVD, Blu-ray and vinyl, including new remasters and unreleased and rare recordings. **CONTINUES OVER»**

# SOLO ALBUMS

## DAVID GILMOUR

HARVEST/COLUMBIA, MAY 1978

**CHART POSITION:** UK: 17; US: 29



"Being in a group for so long can be a bit claustrophobic," said Gilmour at the time of this album's release, and this bluesy, rocky effort – which features Rick Wills and Willie Wilson of Gilmour's pre-Floyd outfit Joker's Wild – was the first solo album proper by any '70s Floyd member. Although not included on the album, "Comfortably Numb" was first composed for these sessions, and sections of the instrumental "Raise My Rent" were later adapted for the Floyd songs "What Do You Want From Me?", "Hey You" and "Keep Talking".

## ABOUT FACE

HARVEST/COLUMBIA, MARCH 1984

**CHART POSITION:** UK: 21; US: 32



Characterised by US radio hit "Murder" – about the killing of John Lennon – here was a set of high-sheen '80s rock, co-produced by Gilmour and Bob Ezrin. Collaborators included Steve Winwood, Roy Harper and Pete Townshend, who supplied lyrics for "Love On The Air" and "All Lovers Are Deranged". Floyd fanzine *The Amazing Pudding* voted disco-inflected single "Blue Light" the worst song by any Floyd solo member, ever.

## ON AN ISLAND

EMI/COLUMBIA, MARCH 2006

**CHART POSITION:** UK: 1; US: 6



Released on Gilmour's 60th birthday, this is by some distance the most commercially successful solo Floyd solo album – as well as making the US Top 10 and No 1 in the UK, it has sold over one million copies worldwide. *On An Island* features another all-star cast, including Graham Nash, Jools Holland and Robert Wyatt, plus Richard Wright

and early Floyd/Screaming Abdabs member Bob Klose. Most of *On An Island* was recorded on Gilmour's houseboat-cum-studio, the Astoria, on the River Thames, and was produced by Gilmour, Phil Manzanera and Chris Thomas.

## LIVE IN GDANSK

EMI/COLUMBIA, SEPTEMBER 2008

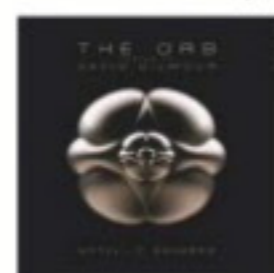
**CHART POSITION:** UK: 10; US: 26



The final date of Gilmour's *On An Island* tour took place in a Polish shipyard, a celebration of the founding of the Solidarity trade union. This souvenir live set – weighted heavily towards Floyd material – is bolstered by the presence of the Baltic Philharmonic Orchestra, and is the last Floyd-related album to feature Richard Wright, who died just a week before it went on sale.

## METALLIC SPHERES (AS THE ORB FEATURING DAVID GILMOUR)

COLUMBIA, 2010



The outfit sometimes dubbed "the rave's generation's Pink Floyd" got a taste of the real thing on this set of

undulating ambient – the product of a 2009 jam session – where The Orb's spacey, dubby textures are elevated by Gilmour's distinctive slide guitar sounds. All artist royalties from the collaboration were donated in support of British computer expert Gary McKinnon, fighting extradition to the US after being accused of hacking The Pentagon.

## NICK MASON

HARVEST/COLUMBIA, MAY 1981



Although the album carried Mason's name, all songs were written and produced by US jazz composer Carla Bley, and all but "Can't Get My Motor To Start" featured vocals from Robert Wyatt, with Nick contributing only the drum tracks and acting as co-producer.

## PROFILES (WITH IOCC GUITARIST, RICK FENN)

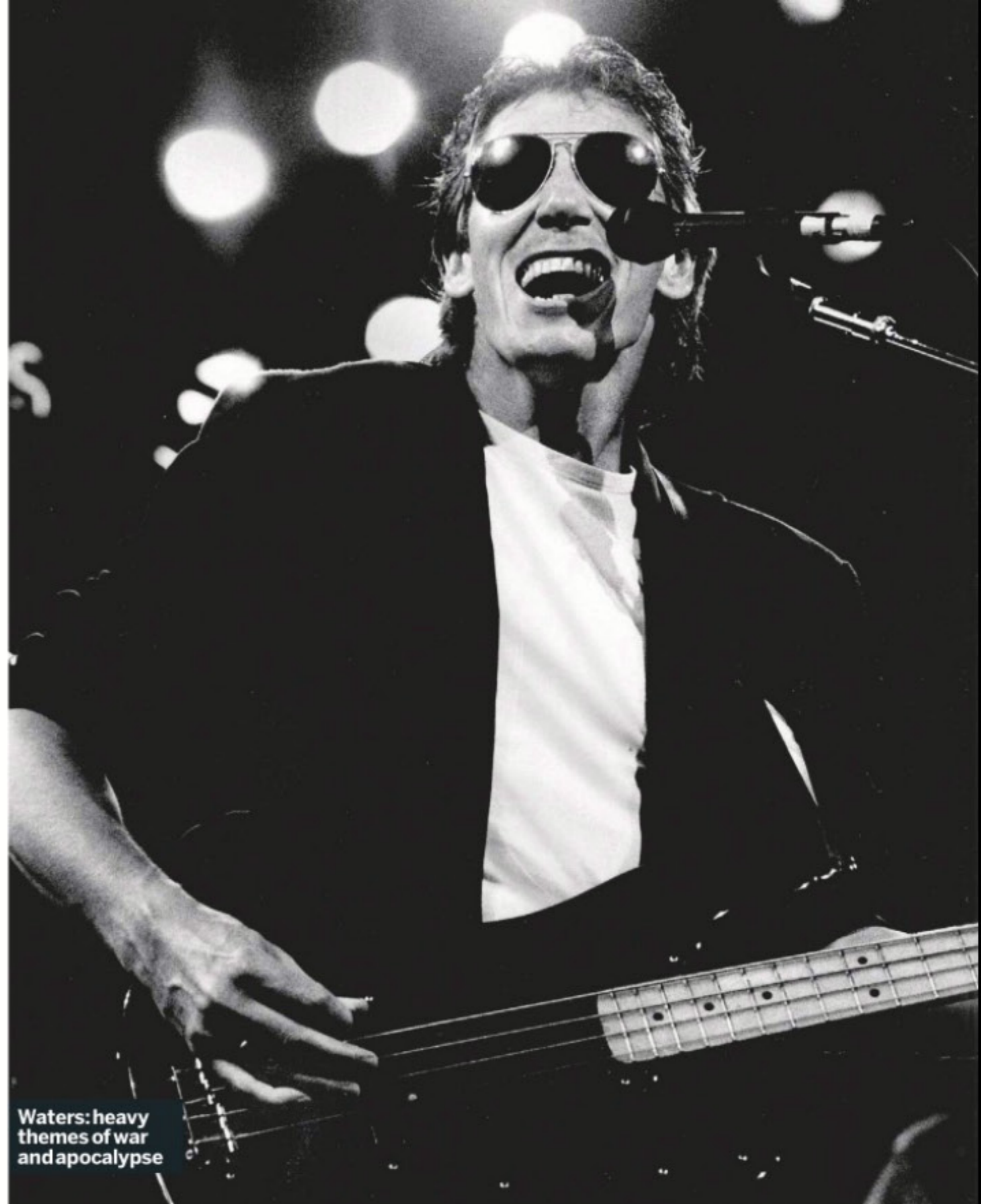
HARVEST/COLUMBIA, JULY 1985



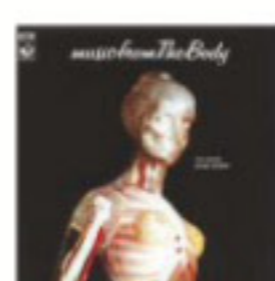
Profiles was a short-lived extra-curricular project – as Mason later told *The Amazing Pudding*: "It's useful and important to change the people you work with. You get so stuck in certain patterns." Only "Israel" and "Lie For A Lie" are not instrumentals and feature UFO's Danny Peyronel and Mike Oldfield's singer Maggie "Moonlight Shadow" Reilly, respectively.

## ROGER WATERS

EMI, NOVEMBER 1970



Waters: heavy themes of war and apocalypse



Working with Ron Geesin – best known for mediating the Pink Floyd on *Atom Heart Mother* – this

soundtrack to *The Body* documentary implemented samples of sounds from the human body – from slaps to flatulence. Though not credited on the sleeve, the final track, "Give Birth To A Smile", featured the other three Pink Floyd members.

## THE PROS AND CONS OF HITCHHIKING

HARVEST/COLUMBIA, APRIL 1984

**CHART POSITION:** UK: 13; US: 31



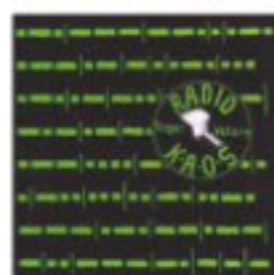
This concept work – a study of a man's dream of committing adultery, told in real time from 4.30am to 5.11am –

was originally presented to Pink Floyd in 1977. It was rejected as being "too personal" in favour of another set of Waters demos, tentatively titled 'Bricks In The Wall'. *Hitch Hiking* eventually surfaced as Waters' first solo album proper, and was released as his relationship with the other members of Floyd reached its nadir. Jack Palance, Michael Kamen and Eric Clapton feature.

## RADIO K.A.O.S.

EMI/COLUMBIA, JUNE 1987

**CHART POSITION:** UK: 25; US: 50



Waters had worked on the soundtrack to the 1986 Holocaust film *When The Wind Blows*, and his second solo effort picks up its themes of apocalypse and isolation via its main protagonist, Welsh boy Billy, who has the ability to receive radio waves directly into his brain. *Dark Side*

backing vocalist Clare Torry is among the contributors.

## THE WALL: LIVE IN BERLIN

MERCURY, SEPTEMBER 1990

**CHART POSITION:** UK: 27; US: 56

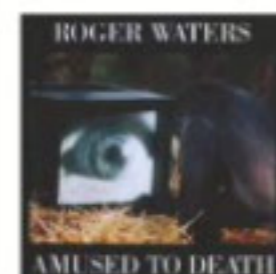


Described by Waters himself as "an unparalleled rock, music, theatre event", this mammoth charity gig took place on July 21, 1990 at the former no-man's land next to the Berlin Wall in front of an estimated 350,000 people. It was broadcast in 52 countries. The eclectic all-star cast includes The Band, Joni Mitchell, The Scorpions, Cyndi Lauper, Marianne Faithfull, Albert Finney, Bryan Adams and James Galway.

## AMUSED TO DEATH

COLUMBIA, SEPTEMBER 1992

**CHART POSITION:** UK: 8; US: 21



Another work of big themes, and five years in gestation, this takes its title from a book by academic Neil Postman – *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse In The Age Of Show Business*. Songs like "What God Wants (Part I)" and "The Bravery Of Being Out Of Range" express Waters' disillusionment with war, organised religion and Western Civilisation generally. A proposed – but swiftly rejected – artwork concept for an earlier incarnation of the album apparently featured the heads of Waters' former Floyd bandmates floating in a Martini glass.

## IN THE FLESH

COLUMBIA, DECEMBER 2000

**CHART POSITION:** UK: 170; US: 136



Solo Gilmour: "Being in a group can be a bit claustrophobic"



A live document of the successful tour of the same name, this was drawn from shows across the US. A

mixture of solo and Floyd material, it also featured some of Floyd's regular backing musicians, Snowy White and Jon Carin. Concluding nine-minute track "Each Small Candle", written by Waters in response to events in Kosovo, was used as an encore throughout the tour.

## FLICKERING FLAME: THE SOLO YEARS VOLUME 1

COLUMBIA, MAY 2002

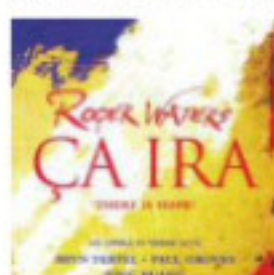


This solo-years survey focused on previously released album tracks, but it did offer a few rarities, including, for the first time, the demo "Lost Boys Calling", composed for the film *The Legend Of 1900* with Ennio Morricone. There was also a cover of "Knocking On Heaven's Door" and the demo of the title track.

## ÇA IRA: THERE IS HOPE

SONY CLASSICAL, SEPTEMBER 2005

CHART POSITION: UK CLASSICAL 1; US CLASSICAL 5



Waters showed his range by composing the music for this three-act classical opera about the French Revolution, adapted – again by Waters – from a French libretto by Étienne and Nadine Roda-Gil.

## RICHARD WRIGHT WET DREAM

HARVEST/COLUMBIA, SEPTEMBER 1978



After relations were strained during the 1977 *Animals* tour, both Wright and Gilmour focused on their solo releases before taking on *The Wall*. Gilmour's effort was generally well-received, but Wright's saw minimal success and is still out of print in the UK. "Against The Odds" was co-written by his then-wife, Juliette.

## IDENTITY (WITH ZEE)

HARVEST/EMI, APRIL 1984



This UK-only release was the only album from Zee, his short-lived partnership with Dave Harris of Fashion. Wright, who had been forced to leave the Floyd, later branded this interesting prog-pop release, which used synth heavily throughout, an "experimental mistake".

## BROKEN CHINA

EMI/GUARDIAN, NOVEMBER 1996



A four-part concept album which charts Wright's then-wife's battle with depression, and after *Identity*, marks a return to the relative safety of Floyd-like structures. Sinéad O'Connor lends vocals to "Reaching For The Rail" and "Breakthrough". Gilmour also performed on demos, but his contributions failed to make the final edit.

# GRAB THAT CASH AND MAKE A STASH!

## Collecting Pink Floyd memorabilia

"By the way, which one is Pink?" The question asked of the band by a US record executive – and slyly referenced on "Have A Cigar" – might sound uncomfortably dumb, but it at least makes one telling observation about the Floyd: they were, and remain, probably the least-recognisable, most anonymous megastars in rock.

Of all their album releases, only *Piper* features a standard "band shot" on the cover; in perfect complement to the band's music, it's those later Hipgnosis sleeves – elliptical, abstract, supremely confident – that have most clearly defined and shaped the Pink Floyd brand.

The brand is strong. In the beyond-iconic *The Dark Side Of The Moon* album artwork – routinely voted 'best album sleeve of all time' – they have one of rock's most powerful logos, easily on a par with The Who's 'Mod target' or the Stones' tongue-and-lips. And that logo graces an astonishing amount of stuff. For sale on eBay we found a "TDSOTM wind proof lighter" (£4.95), a 1:43 scale die-cast model of a VW Beetle (£80), multiple key-rings (starting price – £2.21), pens, patches, flags, mugs, scores of T-shirts, even an iPhone case (£12.95, free P&P). Hit the official Pink Floyd store, and you'll come across TDSOTM wristbands, guitar straps, more T-shirts, hoodies, chef's aprons and travel mugs. Any colour you like, then, as long as it's black, with triangular prism and a beam of light refracting through it. (And remember – that's just *Dark Side* stuff. We're not even counting the *Animals* fridge magnets, or *The Division Bell* Official Royal Mail Stamp Collection.)

"There's a major market for pretty much anything Floyd-related," confirms Julian Thomas, buyer for memorabilia specialist 991.com, who rather proves his point by offering a *Dark Side* light switch cover (about £12) and a four-pack of "cork-backed Pink Floyd drinks coasters" (£7) on the 991 site. (He does, however, admit to "mixed feelings about the *Wish You Were Here* beach towels".) All a little frivolous, which might explain why serious collectors tend to look towards items with a direct connection to Floyd themselves – particularly the Syd Barrett-era. The November 2006 auction of Barrett's paintings and personal effects by Cheffins of Cambridge raised some astonishing prices: over £5,000 each for two bikes Syd used to pedal around Cambridge, £1,400 for a self-made plywood breadbin, even £800 for his plastic Christmas tree. Likewise, a recent 'transitional era' autographed picture of the band with the signatures of both Syd and Gilmour sold recently for £1,500, while Thomas' favourite Floyd find remains the signed contract between Rotherham Students Union and Galaxy Entertainments for the band to play Clifton Hall, Rotherham on March 23,

1967. "For the sum of £80," says Thomas, "they were expected to play two 30-minute sets and provide their own transport." It sold for nearly £500 in 2007.

Collecting Floyd's recorded output is an academic field in itself. Their albums sold by the factory-load worldwide (*Dark Side* was even rumoured to have its own dedicated pressing plant), so the most collectable, and by extension most valuable, Floyd releases are the rarities. Demo versions of Syd-era UK singles – with their promo-only picture sleeves – are famously collectable, but "the UK export LPs for *Piper*, *Saucerful* and *More* are the holy grail," states Thomas. "They are extremely hard to find, especially in mint condition, with their gold export sticker intact. A full set of three is worth £10,000 or more."

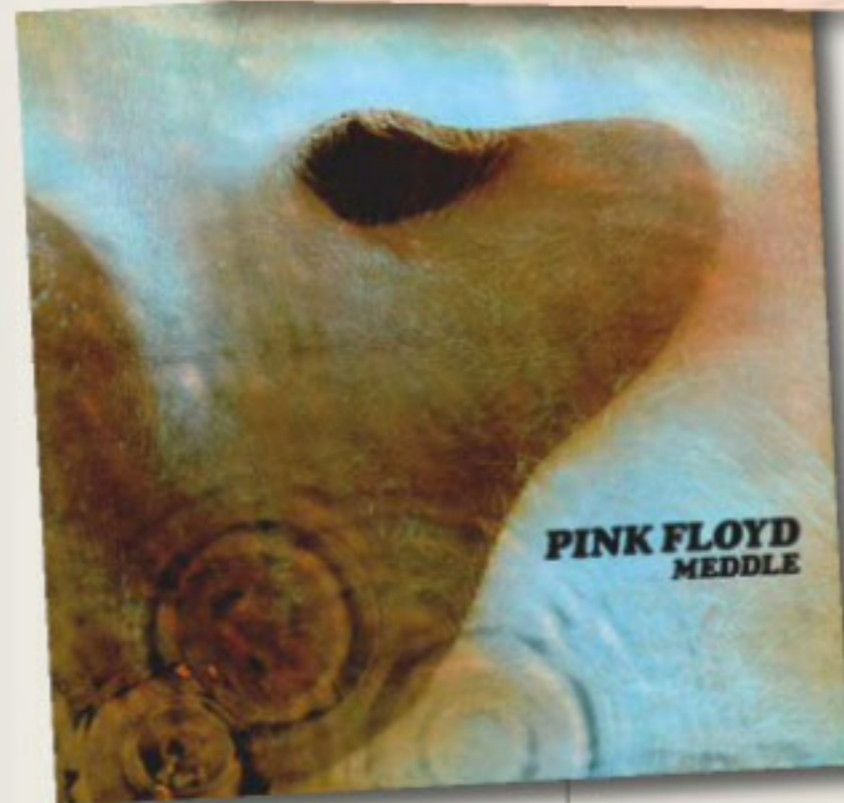
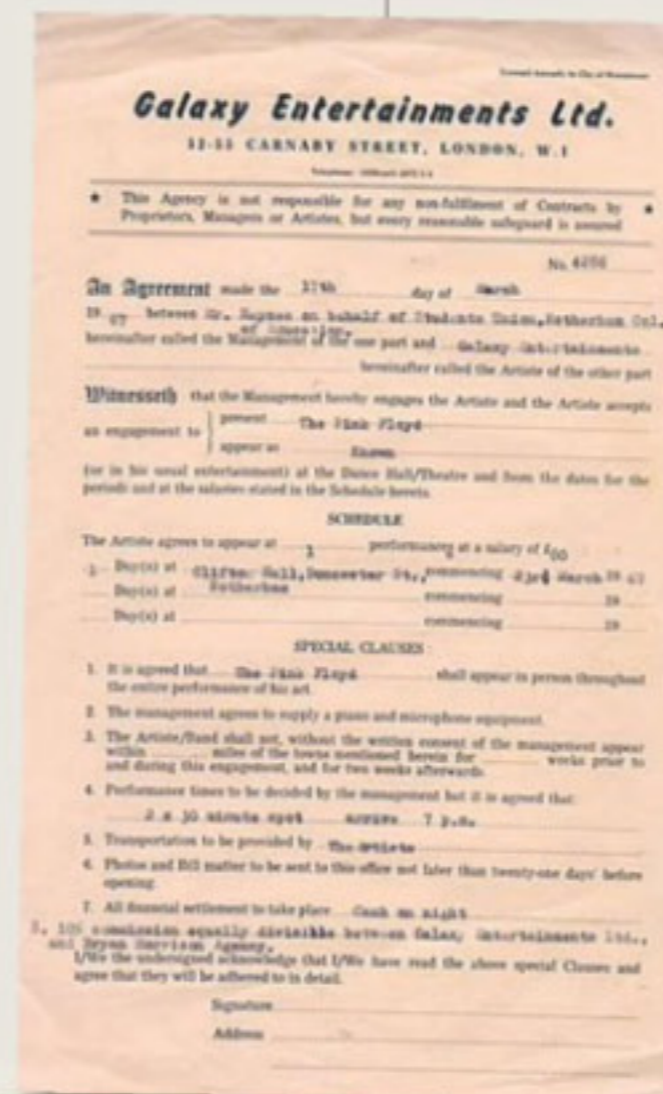
Other desirable releases include the Italian pressing of *The Wall* – on orange vinyl and in a limited run of 600 copies, now worth £1,000 – and the first Japanese issue of *Dark Side*, which fetches a similar amount. "The sleeves were incorrectly printed," explains Thomas. "The beams of light refracting through the prism were shown in reverse – purple at the top and red at the bottom."

As if to confirm Floyd's global appeal, 991 once offered an "incredibly rare" Indian pressing of *Meddle*, with title and band name on the cover: yours for £160.

And as always in record collecting, condition and exacting levels of detail are paramount. First UK pressings of *Piper*, in mono, in mint condition, could make £300 or more. Just-as-mint second pressings – bearing the legend 'File Under Pop' on the right-hand side of the flipback sleeve – might make half that amount. A "Very Good" (ie not mint) first pressing of *Ummagumma* with 'The Gramophone Co' label text around the record label's rim but *without* EMI logos is for sale at 991.com for around £110, where a mint, but standard, issue would fetch only £30-£40. And valuing a standard release of *More* is a famously forensic business. Turn your copy over: if you have a green-tinted flipback sleeve with the couple facing west, you've got a first pressing, which, if mint, could make £40-£50. A second pressing (black-tinted, non-flipback sleeve) is worth a third less. And – bear with us – an even later issue, with a black-tinted rear sleeve and the couple facing *east*, could sell for £40. All Floyd vinyl is subject to these kind of devil-in-the-detail rules, but it's probably safe to say your standard, much-played issues of *Animals*, *The Wall*, *Wish...* won't go too far as a deposit on one of Nick Mason's classic motors.

And so back to *Dark Side*. Mint early pressings with a solid light-blue triangle label, black inner, two posters, two stickers and a gatefold sleeve that *opens on one side only* can make hundreds; one of the squillions of blue/silver label '70s pressings won't fetch much. Sell a couple of copies, and you might – just! – be able to afford that chef's apron...

MARK BENTLEY





# Stop me... if you've heard this one before

**MARCH 1969:** Allan Jones 'head dances' to PINK FLOYD at the Welsh Fillmore...

**I**DON'T REMEMBER WHO in obvious jest first referred to it as the Welsh Fillmore, and the comparison over 40 years later seems even more outlandish now than it did then. The Kee Club in Bridgend, a small town in South Wales, half way to Cardiff from where I grew up in the even smaller town of Port Talbot, was nevertheless as near as we would ever come to the fabled West Coast venues, with the possible exception of the Ritz in nearby Skewen, which was similarly home to what was then called 'underground' music.

The original Fillmores were places to us of distant wonder, while the Kee was a tiny place, black-walled, not much bigger than your living room, that held no more than 100 people, with possibly the smallest stage in the world and a ceiling so low it meant anyone taller than a jockey had to stand in a stoop beneath it, a hint of the hunchbacked troll in their uncomfortable bending. Still, over a period of a couple of years, before it burned down during a gig in, I guess, the early '70s by a band called Daddy Longlegs, the Kee hosted some of the most memorable 'underground' stars of the era.

The Nice played there, Keith Emerson's Hammond taking up most of the stage, not much room at all for his usual antics with whips and daggers, but still unbelievably exciting. The original Yes were almost as good. I'm pretty sure, meanwhile that, if you were signed at the time to Harvest, it was part of your contract that you would fetch up in Bridgend, playing the Kee. Roy Harper seemed a regular, and we also saw Pete Brown's Battered Ornaments and The Edgar Broughton Band, whose colossal hairiness was impressive even by the standards of the time.

Most memorable of all, though, was an appearance there on March 15, 1969, of Pink Floyd, a miraculous visitation. I'd seen them once before, supporting Jimi Hendrix at the Sophia Gardens in Cardiff, in November '67. Syd Barrett was still with them then, although for not much longer, being ushered out of the group by the following April due to his increasingly addled behaviour and general druggy waywardness. I remember them that night engulfed in melting light, Syd's guitar like something screaming across space from another planet. They were on stage as long as it took them to play "Astronomy Domine" and "Interstellar Overdrive", whose planetary churn and cosmic whoosh were the most far out things I'd ever heard, at least until Hendrix came on and blew big holes in the stratosphere, his entire set a transportation to some spacey somewhere without a name.

Syd in 1967 was the tangled-haired boy-genius of the Floyd, author of all their best songs, and there was something quite the star about him



that night, where we were close enough to the stage to make out the band in reasonable detail even through the blinding blur of their light show, the liquid colours that looked like they were being poured over them. Some hard part of me would have sacrificed puppies to look as cool and otherworldly as Syd then. He looked as amazing as the Floyd sounded.

**I KNOW WATERS IS  
GOING TO START  
SCREAMING, AND  
THERE'S PROBABLY  
NO STOPPING HIM...**

By the time they come back to South Wales to play the Kee Club, though, Syd's been gone for a year and Gilmour's on guitar. There's a feeling back then, among a lot of people less attached to the band than the friends I see them with, that their moment has passed with Syd's departure.

The lull in their career means the Floyd at that point have trouble selling out places as modest as the Kee. There are some students from the art school in Newport already there when we arrive, along with a few notable local heads, a couple of whom appear to be tripping, though we know too little at the time about how people act when they're on acid to be sure. Anyway, we gather at the front of the stage, which is mostly occupied by Nick Mason's double drum kit, an impossibly

large contraption, its twin bass drums jutting so far forward there's barely room between them and the lip of the low stage, a big gong hanging behind the empty drum stool. Rick Wright's keyboards are to the left of the stage, wires dangling. You wonder how the band are going to fit into this ridiculously cramped space, which they do eventually, Roger Waters slightly to the left of Mason's drums, Gilmour to their right, Rick Wright squeezed into a corner behind them.

As a measure of our seriousness, we watch the show sitting cross-legged on the floor, the band looming over us, Waters directly in front of me, close enough for me to note the rope-like veins in his arms, biceps bulging beneath the sleeves of a black T-shirt. Gilmour is similarly burly, a big man in a grandad vest and velvet flares. From where I'm sitting, I can just make out the top of Nick Mason's hat, those bass drums largely hiding him from view.

We'll spend most of the set gaping in awe

at what unfolds and when the music gets frantic, as it often does, we'll shake our heads wildly from side to side, like people having seizures, which at the time is called 'head dancing' and leaves us feeling giddy and not a little nauseous.

In the confined space, what follows is ear-splittingly loud, a barrage of pounding drums and bass, shrieking guitar and organ. This turns out to be a pumped-up "Astronomy Domine", the first of five long songs they play over the next hour, a terrifying "Careful With That Axe, Eugene" up next, followed by "Set The Controls...", "Interstellar Overdrive" and, as an encore, "A Saucerful Of Secrets". My most vivid memories of the show, though, are of Roger Waters, possibly the most intimidating presence I've ever seen onstage, who towers above me, full of gaunt intensity. I know that as "Careful With That Axe, Eugene" reaches its frenzied climax he's going to start screaming and there's probably going to be no stopping him. I brace myself for it, like someone about to go over a waterfall in a barrel, a big drop coming up. But when the shrieking starts I'm still startled out of my wits, Waters' manic roar a wholly unnerving thing that leaves me shaking.

A couple of nights later, in a drab hall at Swansea University, he does it again, head thrown back and sounding like someone at the world's edge giving voice to a nightmarish terror that even thinking about fair puts the wind up me. What a time, though, to have seen them. 🐉

*Allan Jones*



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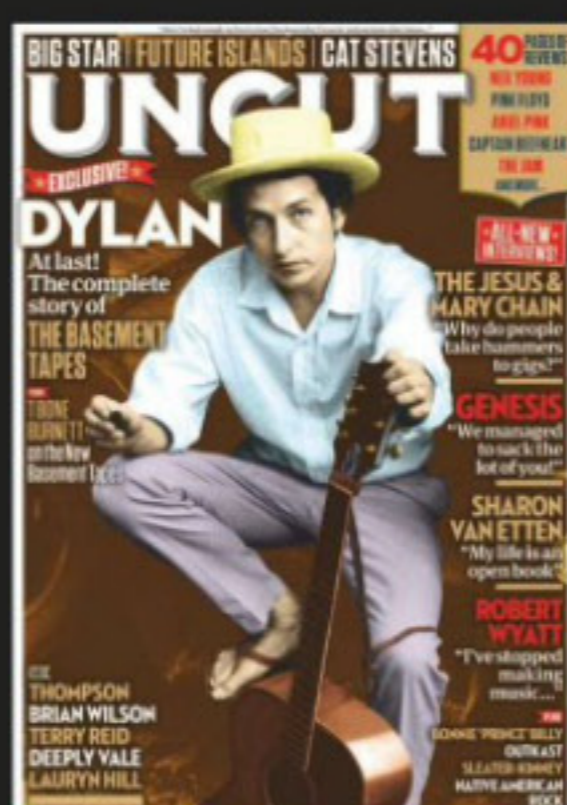
## ‘WE ALWAYS ARGUED...’

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