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NDLESS RIVER SPECIAL

"A FLOYD

THE 21st

ALBUM FOR

CENTURY..." HE INSIDE STORY



UNCUT

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PLUS HISS GOLDEN MESSENGE **BRIAN WILSON: THE MOVIE** JOHN MCLAUGH



Coming back to life...

On David Gilmour's houseboat studio, a sleeping giant has been roused, with the sound of "splangs" and "twank bass". *The Endless River* is, as producer Phil Manzanera describes it, that most delightfully unexpected of releases – "A Pink Floyd album for the 21st Century !" In a series of studios around London, *Uncut* 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."

Story: Michael Bonner | Photograph: Denis O'Regan

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NOVEMBER 201 UNCUT



NAN 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 wickerframed 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 AMomentary Lapse Of Reason and The Division Bell, and where Gilmour himself recorded his most recent solo album, On An Island. Latelv. 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 Fourthat 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

over again. This is the last

chance someone will get to

hear him playing along with

"I think the most significant

us in that way that he did."

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."

"WithRick made me regret his passing all gone, it feels rightthat these revisited tracksare made available" DAVID GILMOUR

NDY JACKSON HAS good memories of the Division Bell sessions. As Pink Floyd's long-standing Lengineer, 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 computer we did those sessions on."

10 great Rick Wright songs.

NTERSTELLAR **OVERDRIVE**

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 multiinstrumental skills, he wrote, sang and played organ, Mellotron, xylophone and piano on this.

SUMMER'68

ATOMHEART **MOTHER, 1970** Written and sung by Wright, this harmonyheavy piece of protoambience included the Abbey Road Session Pops Orchestra on brass.

MEDDLE.1971

ECHOES MEDDLE, 1971

ate master: Rick with Pink Floyd at the Queen Elizabeth Hall



Celebrating the genius of Pink Floyd's fallen hero

THE PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN, 1967

PINK FLOYD

ONE OF THESE DAYS

Gilmour called this ominous instrumental "the most collaborative effort of anything we ever did". Wright's keyboards defined the mood.

This 20-minute psychedelic masterpiece is bookended by Wright: it

opens with his echoing piano notes and ends with 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, cosmic, 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 album, this comes with some excellent Orb remixes that foreground Wright's discreet keyboard digressions.



EYEWITNESS!

SECRETS OF FD

NCE 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 guite 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 materia 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 which fitted in with the way Div Bell started. It's just birds and lawnmowers. It's just a bit of fun to get you into the mood for the gig."



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NICKMASON

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 "Ebow noodle" remained in Gilmour's tape store, untouched, Meanwhile, Pink Floyd ended their Division Bell Tour on October 29, 1994 at Earl's 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 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?'"

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 that 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 them now, they remind me of the more German, Tangerine Dream-style ambient passages, but he managed to imbue then 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 annovingly 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

"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."



PINK FLOYD

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.'"



Phil Manzanera on his friendship with Mr Gilmour...

🖌 📕 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, 'l know this guy, he's just got into a band. Let's ask him how you become a professional musician.' So we went to Earl's 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, because I got into a band. After lunch, he went off to Abbey Road to, I think, record A Saucerful

Of Secrets. 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 Fonly way 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 and 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..."

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>SYRO

ICK WAS AND, I later discovered, has always been a bit shy," reflects Youth. "A 노 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 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!"

CCORDING 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.





NEOF 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 that 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," remembers 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."

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 had recorded new Flovd 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

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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, and 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 all 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."

What made **Rick tick**

Phil Manzanera on the essential components of Rick Wright's sound...

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 erv distinctive."



Considering the extraordinary circumstances around its genesis, and the processes diligently undertaken to complete The Endless River, Phil Manzanera muses that this is "a Pink Floyd album for the 21st Century".

66 TF IT 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."

The Endless River is released on November 10



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