

21-PAGE SPECIAL EXCLUSIVE DAVID & NICK SPEAK

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BILLY IDOL More Of His Lip JOHN LYDON

"I've Always Liked Status Quo"

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Mick: "There Will Be **Another Lovely Album"**

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The New Psych Magus

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The *Real* Broken Family Band

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"It was like the Ryder Cup"

Marcus Mumford speaks to Victoria Segal.

How did you first hear about the New Basement Tapes project?

"We were at the Grammys and I spoke to T Bone [Burnett] and his manager and they were very excited to have come across Bob's lyrics. T Bone and I had struck a deal so that if there was ever any project that I was excited about I could give him a call and vice versa. I'm not quite as well-connected as T Bone but he got me involved in the Coen brothers' film [Inside Llewyn Davis] and then he said, 'Do you wanna do this?' | just loved the idea. For any songwriter it's an offer that's hard to refuse. T Bone was like the matchmaker and the captain of the team. It was like the Ryder Cup."

Did you have any reservations?

"It was definitely intimidating, because it's Bob Dylan. But there's nothing I would rather do – it was quite an easy one."

Was there any conscious attempt to capture the original Basement Tapes atmosphere?

"We tried to adopt the spirit more than the sound. That band is so distinctive. It was all about collaboration rather than trying to recapture something."

Did it feel like you were working with Bob Dylan?

"It was sort of a satellite collaboration because he wasn't there but his character is so obviously in those lyrics. There's so many lines that just couldn't be written by anyone else other than him. It was also fun to take a bit of a liberty with them as well. I probably did it a bit more than anyone else. It got to the point when I was trying to write songs around these lyrics and it felt like I needed another verse, so I dipped into one of the other songs and nicked what I thought was a relevant lyric. So Kansas City, for example, the last verse of that song is stolen from another song that we had. I was just reading through the lyrics and I thought, Ooh, that works. So I asked T Bone and he said, 'We can do whatever we want, man,' in true T Bone style."

It doesn't feel too reverent...

"That again was down to the atmosphere in the studio. We were told there were no rules and the idea from the outset was that we were there to do what we wanted and not to be reverent to it. We were to treat it as if they were our songs as well, which they are. Having the opportunity to be free while working with these Dylan lyrics was really special."

What drew you to the words of Stranger?

"I liked that it was a bit dirty, I liked it was a bit gritty. There's a conversation within the song, so I enjoyed singing as the object and the subject. That's a style you find through reading people like T.S. Eliot who jump around in conversations all the time, and Dylan does that all the time in songs. It also had a kind of outlaw feel to it, and that was fun to play with."

Did you receive any feedback from Dylan himself?

"Hmm, I think he said to T Bone he was into it, but I don't know how much more he handed on than that."

The Saints

King Of The Sun/King Of The Midnight Sun

FIRE. CD/DL/LP

Two for the price of one from hardy Aus-rock legends.



As one-half of the songwriting muscle behind (I'm) Stranded and This Perfect

Day, two of 1977's most enduring punk blasts, few would quibble had Chris Bailey merely churned out facsimiles of his signature songs ever since. But the bard of Brisbane never favoured easy street, and has lent The Saints' name to many more-or-less polished bluesrock variants, his feral holler and hard-boiled romantic's worldview the sole constants. This latest album is typically mercurial: a belated European release for 2012's often beautiful gutter-soul collection King Of The Sun, appended with a song-by-song reprise newly recorded live by the latest band. While ... Midnight Sun will be welcomed by diehards who already have the first record, its raw demeanour feels shabby next to the poise of the piano-and-horn-dappled original, where Bailey has surely never sung better.

Keith Cameron



Neil Young

Storytone

WARNER BROS. CD/DL/LP

Neil goes lush with a 92-piece orchestra.

Ever unpredictable, Young's second album of the year couldn't be more different to A Letter Home, the primitive Jack White recording booth collection of Dylan/Jansch/ Springsteen/Ochs/Nelson covers. Here's a welter of sentiment, romance and raw melancholia, largely cloaked in a swathe of strings and grand orchestral arrangements. Sheer vastness occasionally swamps the pained intimacy of Young's vocals and open-heart songs of regret, nostalgia and reflection, over-balancing into maudlin (Tumbleweed; I'm Glad | Found You); but it's hard to take issue with songs as affecting as Plastic Flowers, Glimmer and When I Watch You Sleeping. An affectionate nod to big band jazz (Say Hello To Chicago) and dirty blues (I Want To Drive My Car) are welcome additions, though the keynote track is the passionate Who's

Gonna Stand Up, an intense ecological anthem with strings adding genuine drama.

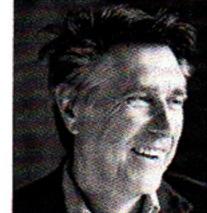
Colin Irwin

Bryan Ferry

**

Avonmore

Guests include Johnny Marr, Nile Rodgers, Flea and Ronnie Spector.



Given their shared acreage of luxuriant arrangements, it's fitting that the album title

Avonmore seems to chime with that of Roxy Music's 1982 gem Avalon. Yet it's perhaps telling that while the latter was named for the mystical isle of Arthurian legend, Googling Avonmore flags-up nothing more exotic than the west London location of Ferry's studio. Though Loop De Li's ambient lattice of expensivesounding guitars, disembodied voices, sax, percussion and (lots) more provides a classy bed for Ferry's elegant, still pliant warble, no amount of heavy-friend noodling can redeem One Night Stand and Driving Me Wild, and Ferry's Send In The Clowns would have Krusty renouncing his vocation. The album's spare, haunting re-invention of Robert Palmer's Johnny & Mary - a collaboration with Norwegian DJ Todd Terje – is much better, but Ferry completists will have heard it on Terje's solo debut, which came out in April.

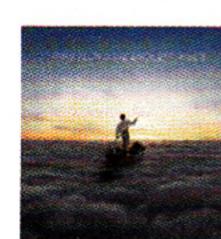
James McNair

Pink Floyd



The Endless River

New old music and a tribute to the late Rick Wright.



The first voice on *The Endless River* belongs to keyboard player Rick Wright, and is

taken from a 1972 interview in which he divulges that there's a "lot left unsaid" within the band. The theme of non-communication informed 1994's The Division Bell, and continues on an album compiled from the same sessions, but with new additions and overdubs.

Split into four lengthy compositions, Side 1 to Side 4, with sub-titles (à la 1970's Atom Heart Mother), The Endless River is predominantly instrumental, and full of Floyd trademarks: womb-like soundwashes, Gilmour's string-bending guitar solos, even a snippet of Wright playing the Royal Albert Hall pipe organ from 1969. But when the only vocal track, Louder Than Words, bursts into life with Gilmour announcing, "we bitch and we fight", you can't help wishing there was more like this elsewhere. The Endless River is big on atmosphere, just a little light on songs.

Mark Blake



Shellac

Dude Incredible

Fifth album in 20 years from Steve Albini's sporadic trio.

Shellac albums gestate at mastodonian pace, but on arrival strike with the unerring precision of a cobra. Just 90 seconds into Dude Incredible, the ensemble's hallmarks are in place: Steve Albini uncoils a tungsten guitar line over his malevolent vocal, Bob Weston coats the air with bass metal tar and Todd Trainer deals an entire drum masterclass before locking the trio into their ominous groove. This title track belongs to a tradition of mighty Shellac album openers, a daunting standard the ensuing eight tracks do well to maintain. There's evolution amid the rigour and grind: Albini's tones feel warmer, while conceptual fun is had with three songs about surveyors, and a thematic linkage between the US founding fathers and shady group conduct, be it monkeys (Dude Incredible) or kids (Riding Bikes). Rumbling the spleen like a desiccated Led Zeppelin, this is hard rock as anthropology, administered like only this band can.

Keith Cameron



Rebecca Miller



CELINIE.

THE MID-'60s ROOTS OF pink floyd SNAKE THROUGH THE SURREAL LANDSCAPES OF POST-WAR CAMBRIDGE, ACID-SOUSED BOHEMIAN LONDON, AND WEIRD INNER LANDSCAPES OF RELIGION, MEDITATION AND SYD BARRETT'S OWN PATCHWORK PHILOSOPHIES.

mark blake GOES BACK TO THE SOURCE. PICTURE BY alain dister.

N SUMMER 1967, THE TEENAGE GIRLS' MAGAZINE Trend interviewed young pop hopefuls The Pink Floyd. Under the headline "The Pink And Their Purple Door", Trend portrayed the group as psychedelic mop-tops co-habiting in a house with a colourful portal at 2 Earlham Street, London WC2, a stone's throw from what is now MOJO HQ.

Look closely and you'll see the outside of Number 2 in the 1961 thriller Victim, in which Dirk Bogarde's secretly gay barrister takes on a gang of blackmailers. By the time Pink Floyd and Trend arrived, the same Dickensian building had become a nexus for London's counterculture, with artists, actors and all-purpose scenesters passing through the purple door.

Trend's journalistic licence and Pink Floyd's thirst for publicity meant that everyone overlooked the fact that only lead vocalist and guitarist Syd Barrett actually lived at 2 Earlham Street. His bandmates, in a portent of future

divisions, resided in more salubrious lodgings with their girlfriends and future wives. The deception wasn't overly egregious, however. After all, Barrett's top-floor eyrie,

with its panoramic views of Charing Cross Road and Shaftesbury Avenue, was the garret in which he wrote most of Pink Floyd's summer '67 debut The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn.

Like the prism lens through which Floyd were photographed for that LP's sleeve, the music refracted Barrett's dizzying array of influences: fairy tales, folklore, hallucinogenics, abstract art, Indian mystics and the legacy of a mostly fatherless upbringing in post-war Cambridge. The dramatic story of Barrett's drug use and exit from Pink Floyd too often overshadows what went before: a tale of precocious '60s youth, of the blossoming counterculture and of a new world full of seemingly endless possibilities.

N HIS 2002 MEMOIR, GIVE THE ANARCHIST A CIGARETTE, the late underground writer Mick Farren described life as an art student in London in 1963. He and his friends read William Burroughs, smoked dope and built rudimentary light projectors that created "distorting, flashing, strobing images" to match the distorting, flashing modern jazz they listened to: "Later we discovered that other people in other parts of the city – indeed, in other parts of the planet – were doing the self-same thing."

In early-'60s Cambridge that included Roger 'Syd' Barrett and his friends. Like Barrett (whose father Max was a university demonstrator in pathology), many were the offspring of academics, growing up in the shadow of the city's university but also the Second World War.

"All our parents had either fought in or been through World War II," explains Barrett's old associate, film-maker and glassblower Anthony Stern. "My father suffered from a complete inability to talk about the war. He was also an academic. So one grew up thinking, How do you compete with World War II? How do you compete in this world of academia and with the weight of all this success? Nothing you really do is good enough."

Talking to me in 2005 Stern coined the phrase, 'The Cambridge



The Gates Of Dawn.

Syndrome' to describe this feeling of inadequacy. Stern maintains that for Barrett and many of their peers, the outcome of these feelings was a "need to rebel". The abolition of National Service in 1960, and Britain's relative post-war prosFloy

perity allowed them to do just that.

After Max Barrett died of cancer in 1961, his youngest son, an aspiring artist and musician, commandeered the front room of the family home, turning it into a music rehearsal space-cum-artist's studio, where he could play guitar, splash paint over canvases - and most of the furniture - and blast out his Bo Diddley records, untroubled by his mother, Winifred, who was happy to indulge him. Shortly after, Roger adopted the nickname, Syd. "And like most of us," says Stern, "Syd became an eccentric, which was fine, because eccentricity was licensed in Cambridge."

Stern and his friends were used to regular sightings of Cambridge eccentrics: molecular biologist Francis Crick pedalling his bicycle around town in a most peculiar manner, and the unnamed woman who wandered the city streets with a bucket over her head.

By the time he was 16, Syd, the raffish wannabe art student with the Ray-Ban sunglasses, had already attracted the attention of a group of older hip Cantabrigians. Many, like Syd, were former pupils of the Cambridgeshire High School For Boys (aka The County) or its rival The Perse, and many seemed to have fathers who were either physically or mentally absent. This crowd read their Huxley, Kerouac and Ginsberg, smoked marijuana, and listened to Snooks Eaglin and John Lee Hooker, aspiring to be what Norman Mailer called, in his 1957 essay, The White Negro. In between, they pondered the meaning of life in the El Patio coffee bar, on the banks of the River Cam, and at the house of one of their number, Storm Thorgerson, who, with another Cambridge friend, Aubrey 'Po' Powell, would go on to design most of Pink Floyd's album sleeves.

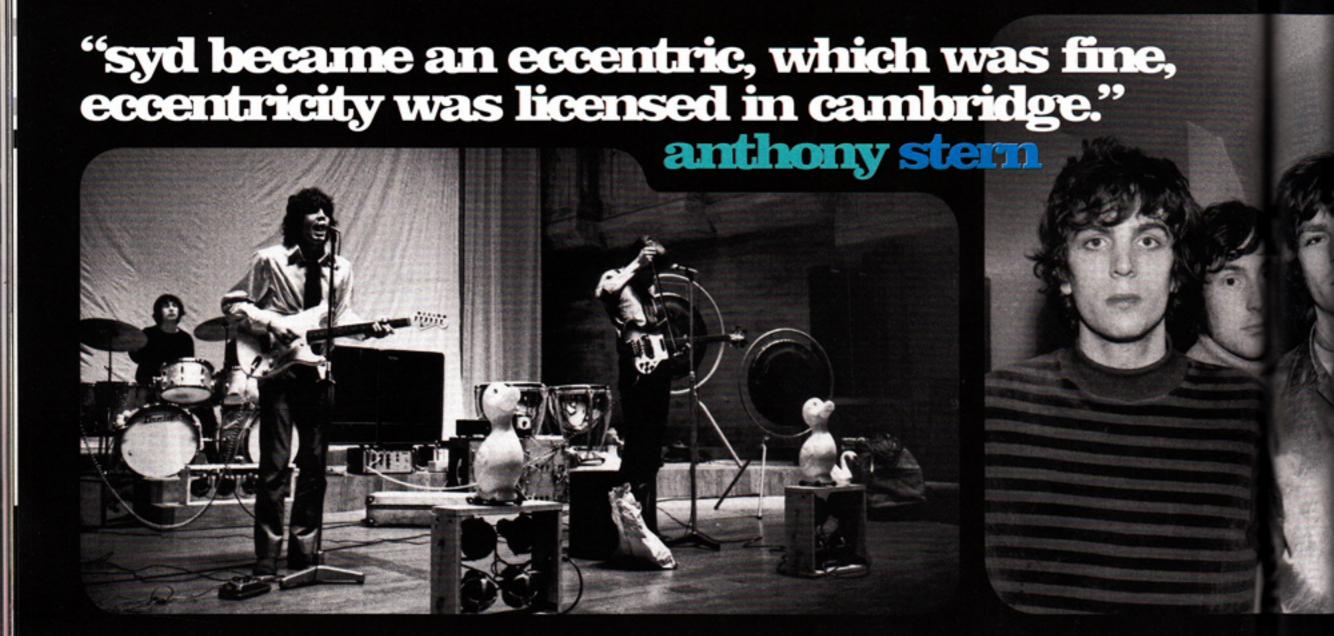
Thorgerson was a precocious former County boy with an outspoken opinion on most subjects, which he delivered in a nasal tone, acquired after a childhood accident in which he'd fallen, nose-first, onto a bamboo cane. He lived with his mother, a potter, who allowed him to decorate his bedroom with a montage of ➤ ₹

The new bohemians? Pink Floyd line up in London, April 1967: (from left) Syd Barrett, Nick Mason, Rick Wright, Roger Waters. Camfallen, of ➤ ₹

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graffiti and surrealist art, and to fill it with his dope-smoking cronies any hour of the day or night.

"Storm's room was amazing," recalls Po, "and that sort of decoration was really quite unheard of, back then." Barrett was part of this precocious little scene, but also apart from it: "He was a highly creative, artistic chap, but also a secretive character. He could be with a crowd of people and then, suddenly, he was gone." Talking to the author in 2006, Barrett's first girlfriend, Libby Gausden, confirmed Po's impressions: "Syd adored nature, which trendy people didn't do back then. Instead of going to the parties we'd been invited to he'd sometimes drive off and sit in the Gog Magog hills—nobody else, just us."

Among the entourage's other regular haunts was a notorious refuge for Cambridge's apprentice beatniks at 27 Clarendon Street. It was here that Syd first experimented with a projector, ink and microscopic slides to create a light show to accompany the records he was listening to. Storm Thorgerson had a primitive movie projector, a zoopraxiscope, which he used for much the same purposes. Later, Anthony Stern, who was now studying at Cambridge, took Barrett to meet the artist Reg Gadney at King's College.

"Gadney had made these sculptural pieces, like huge television screens, behind which were mechanical gadgets and light projections," he explains. These were psychedelic light shows waiting for psychedelic music to be invented.

ITH PLACES AT ART AND FILM SCHOOLS WAITING, most of the Cambridge clique decamped to London in 1964. That summer, Syd Barrett joined them and took up a place at Camberwell art college. In May, Barrett and Libby Gausden went to see Bob Dylan at the Royal Festival Hall. Surveying the crowd, Syd turned to Libby and said, "Look, it's the me and you from every town."

Barrett moved into 39 Stanhope Gardens, Highgate, and a shared room with an older Cambridge schoolfriend, Roger Waters. Waters was studying architecture at Regent Street Polytechnic, and playing bass in a group with fellow students, drummer Nick Mason, keyboard player Rick Wright, and another Cantabrigian, guitarist Rado 'Bob' Klose.

In Cambridge, Barrett had sometimes played guitar with a group called Those Without, named after feminist French author Françoise Sagan's 1957 novel, Those Without Shadows. Within months of arriving in London, he'd join his housemates, fumbling through Louisiana bluesman Slim Harpo's (I'm A) King Bee at pub gigs and college balls. By early 1965 Syd had christened the band The Pink Floyd Sound (sometimes changed to The Pink Floyd Blues Band),

and started writing songs. When 'Bob' Klose left to concentrate on his studies, Syd found himself pushed to the fore. He was becoming Pink Floyd's frontman whether he liked it or not. Later, in a letter to Libby Gausden, Barrett wrote about not wanting to sing, and — blissfully unaware of what was to come — wished that his Cambridge friend David Gilmour, whom he nicknamed 'Fred', was available to take his place.

The house in Stanhope Gardens was owned by college lecturer and jazz aficionado Michael Leonard, who encouraged his tenants' musical adventures by inviting the group to play at his light and sound workshops at Hornsey art college. Leonard built light machines containing projectors, rotating discs and coloured cellophane; convinced that in the near future every home would have one.

Leonard's inventions later featured in a 1967 edition of BBC TV's Tomorrow's World, looking quaintly Heath-Robinson by today's standards. However, by improvising music to accompany Leonard's light shows, Barrett and his friends would eventually discover a sound divorced from Bo Diddley and Slim Harpo, and closer to the abstract canvases Barrett was painting at art school.

In his memoir, Mick Farren claimed that what he and his friends' multimedia experiments needed to "complete the equation" between the light show and the music were psychotropic drugs. The impact of LSD on the Cambridge contingent was equally seismic. Two of their number, a would-be poet Nigel Lesmoir-Gordon and his future wife Jenny, had moved to London, and taken over a flat at 101 Cromwell Road, SW7, that became an extension of the scene at Clarendon Road. "I was evangelical about LSD," he told me in 2006. "Selling it for a quid a trip."

"Their flat became a focal point," recalls Po. "Mick [Jagger] and Marianne [Faithfull] would come round on a Saturday night to see Nigel – everyone tripping and watching spinning crystals reflecting on the walls." Regular visitor Donovan later sang "come loon, soon, down in Cromwell Road" in homage to 101 in his song Sunny South Kensington.

Nobody knows exactly when and where but at some point between 1965 and '66 Syd Barrett started taking LSD. Subsequently, a Pink Floyd Sound setlist might still feature Chuck Berry or Howlin' Wolf but other sounds were emerging: elongated improvisations, squalling feedback and Barrett's un-virtuoso guitar playing. As Roger Waters noted: "We started making strange noises instead of the blues."

In truth, while much of Barrett and Pink Floyd's approach stemmed from a lack of technical ability, their deconstruction of standard musical norms seemed to chime with the changing times. In June '65, the Lesmoir-Gordons had trooped off to the Royal to;

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Albert Hall to watch Allen Ginsberg and others at the International Poetry Incarnation. Like the Bob Dylan gig a year before, it was a gathering of the "me and you from every town". "There was this sense," says Nigel, "that some kind of scene was finally coming together, and that The Pink Floyd would become part of it."

HAT SAME SUMMER, BARRETT gave up his shared room at Stanhope Gardens, informing his new girlfriend, Jenny Spires, that "you can have too much of Roge [Waters], even though he is a good mate." His new digs were a grubby, tenement flat at 12 Tottenham Street, W1, along-side three other Cambridge émigrés, future playwright and author David Gale, Seamus O'Connell, and Seamus's mother, Ella. The flat exposed him to another set of influences.

"Ella O'Connell was this very bohemian woman, who read palms and tarot cards," explains Gale. Ella also gifted Barrett with a first edition of occultist Aleister Crowley's novel Moonchild, and introduced him to the ancient Chinese book of wisdom, The I Ching.

Before long, Barrett had acquired a copy of Richard Wilhelm's 1950 translation of The I Ching from another nexus of the underground scene, the Indica bookshop. He would later borrow the line "All movement is accomplished in six changes, and the seventh brings return" to use in the Piper song Chapter 24. Over time, books were passed between friends and flats, creating a constant traffic of ideas: Robert Heinlein's sci-fi novel, Stranger In A Strange Land, about a terrestrial raised by Martians; J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord Of The Rings, still regarded an underground work in '60s Britain, and Scottish anthropologist Sir James George Frazer's study of religion and folklore, The Golden Bough... "Syd was open to everything," says David Gale. "Hungry for knowledge."

and I were at film school together. We'd produced some covers for Penguin books, so when Pink Floyd's second album, A Saucerful Of Secrets, was coming out Roger [Waters] said, 'Why don't you do the cover?' I'd hated the cover of Piper... and the band didn't like it either. Vic Singh was a revered photographer, but it was such a cheap shot – slap a funny lens on, dress everyone up in flower-power clothes. Roger specifically didn't want any of that. Marvel Comics were all the rage, and Floyd's music was very spacey. So Storm and I came up with a montage of multiple images cut out of Marvel comics and alchemical

HIPGNOSIS CO-FOUNDER

OF PINK FLOYD'S LIFE.

obscured by clouds

Aubrey Powell: "In 1968 Storm Thorgerson

a saucerful of

secrets / meddle /

WITH STORM THORGERSON.

AUBREY 'PO' POWELL TALKS

MOJO THROUGH THE SLEEVES

very small within this montage.
This was both the beginning of
Hipgnosis, the visual art-house Storm and I
put together, but also the beginning of Pink
Floyd telling the record company, 'We'll do
our covers the way we want to do them' – and

books. We'd been experimenting with

infra-red film on some of the Penguin covers,

so we took some infra-red pics of the band on

Hampstead Heath. But the band picture was

An extension of that thinking led us to

Meddle [1971] and Obscured By Clouds [1972].

Idon't care who it is – whether it's Picasso or

Rembrandt – you can't be good all the time.

Our output at Hipgnosis in the '70s was
phenomenal, but some of those covers were
real turkeys. Meddle was one of them. The
essence of the idea was that water amplifies
sound, so we wanted an ear covered by
water. But it was not an appealing image. The
same applied to Obscured

By Clouds – throwing a

As 1966 progressed, Barrett and – by default – Floyd were inexorably drawn into this burgeoning alternative world. In March, through the Lesmoir-Gordons' hip connections, they performed at the first of a series of 'happenings' at the Marquee, where, in between jugglers and poetry readings, they played their otherworldly non-blues to a formative light show.

Before long, Floyd found themselves playing benefit gigs for writer and activist John 'Hoppy' Hopkins' London Free School, in Notting Hill's Powis Terrace and various subterranean venues, where, as Nick Mason put it, "people painted their faces or bathed in a giant jelly."

Interviewed for MOJO in 2007, Roger Waters dismissed the Floyd's early psychedelic adventures and *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*, saying: "You'll never get me to take this stuff seriously, however hard you try." Barrett and Waters were friends, with much in common: Waters, too, had lost his father, in the war. However, while Syd was outwardly gentle and artistic, Waters was a tougher character. He'd read On The Road, but many aspects of the emergent counterculture left him cold: "I always felt much more connected to The Rolling Stones, The Beatles and The Who than I ever did to any of that *stuff*."

If Waters needed reminding of how disconnected he felt from the 'scene', it came that summer when he and Rick Wright joined the Lesmoir-Gordons on the



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ummagumma/ atom heart mother

Aubrey Powell: "What happened with Ummagumma [1969] is that Pink Floyd were under huge pressure from EMI to have their picture on the cover. I remember Roger being very resistant, but they agreed only if Hipgnosis could come up with something interesting. Storm had found this packet of cocoa powder, made by a company called

woman holding a tray with the packet on, which had a picture of the woman holding a tray with the packet on... and so on. I shot the Ummagumma cover at Storm's girlfriend's parents house in Cambridge. But it was Storm's idea to have the picture on the wall and have them doing something different in each image – Pink Floyd as a sort of living sculpture. The lettering on the floor came from the Cambridge

department
store, Eden & Lily, where I'd worked
when I was a student. The Gigi record
was something we put there to fill the
space. There was no hidden meaning.
With Ummagumma Pink Floyd gave the
record company what they wanted,
but on their own terms. Of course for
the next album, Atom Heart Mother
[1970], we went the other way, and
gave them a cow. I still think it's a great
cover and the most unusual ever."



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Pink Floyd, Cambridge UK, 1969.

"there was something very cambridge about it all, a mixture of syd's whimsy and roger's heavier ideas." david gale

I-CHING

THE

FELLOWSHIP

OF THE RING

J. R. R. TOLKIEN

✓ Greek island of Patmos. Here, Nigel administered the two
Floyds with their first LSD trips: "I don't think they enjoyed it
all," he understates. Waters was seen standing motionless in
front of a window for hours on end, and a badly sunburned
Wright was found crouched on the beach. When a boat came
puffing round the harbour, the tripping party were convinced it
was a fire-breathing dragon. But Waters would have even less
time for the next craze that swept through the Cambridge gang.

That spring, one of Barrett's old schoolfriends, Paul Charrier, discovered the teachings of Maharaj Charan Singh Ji, an Indian mystic who espoused a strand of Sikhism known as Sant Mat, and was referred to as 'The Master' by his followers, the satsangi. Some recall Charrier having his epiphany while on LSD in the Norfolk sand dunes. David Gale maintains that it happened at his parents' house in Cambridge: "Paul was on an acid trip, went into the toilet and found a book [about The Master], and whilst having a shit had this revelation that this was where it was at."

To Gale's astonishment, Charrier found Charan Singh Ji's address, and bought a plane ticket to Delhi: "Paul came back after six weeks having been initiated into this guru's outfit. He cut off his hair, bought a suit at Burton's, got a job and began proselytising like mad."

Charrier's evangelism would split the clique down the middle. Half of them, including the hedonistic Lesmoir-Gordons, would go on to become satsangi and preach peace, love, meditation and, crucially, abstinence. Others would remain sceptical: "Storm and I were going, 'This is bollocks!" declares David Gale. "But Paul gave Syd the books to read, and Syd was impressed."

In a remarkable coincidence, The Master arrived in London that summer, and held court at the Bloomsbury Hotel. Among the attendees was Barrett. "Syd met The Master to see if he could be initiated, and The Master told him he wasn't spiritually ready for it," explains Gale. "So did he see in Syd, something we were not yet seeing?"

In his final years, Storm Thorgerson, who died in 2013, rarely spoke publicly about Barrett, but always believed that Syd was "deeply affected" by The Master's rejection, and that this somehow fed into his later disaffection with the music business.

Either way, it was a reminder of Barrett and his friends' precocity. It would be 12 months before The Beatles fell under the spell of the Maharishi, and nearly two years before Pete Townshend discovered his own guru, Meher Baba. As one of the Floyd's Cambridge associates later informed the author: "There was a certain elitism about us. I remember hearing *Revolver*, and thinking, 'Oh, at last The Beatles have got it... At last, people are catching up with *us*."

The '60s Cambridge scene and its soul food: (above) literary influences; (below, from left) lain 'Imo' Moore, Ian 'Pip' Carter, Lindsay Corner, Frances 'Fizz' Fitzgerald, Syd Barrett and Tony Joliffe, summer '65; Maharaj Charan Singh Ji aka 'The Master'; (far right) Jenny Spires models 'cosmonocles'.

had acquired management and would soon begin a residency at a new underground club, UFO, on Tottenham Court Road. Here they'd perform their signature song, Interstellar Overdrive, an instrumental that could be spun out for as long as 20 minutes. The residency would lead to a deal with EMI. Remarkably, the band members' parents agreed to allow them to forego college and 'proper jobs' to try their hand at music.

Storm Thorgerson once posited that there was no better place to be than London in 1966: "It was fantastic. We were all full of hormones and life." That same summer, Barrett moved into 2 Earlham Street, right at the heart of soon-to-be-swinging London. One regular visitor described the house as a place where "lying on the floor all day was acceptable, if that was your bent." But it could also be a hive of industry.

The Pink Floyd's roadie/lighting engineer, Peter Wynne-Willson, lived on the third floor, where he covered

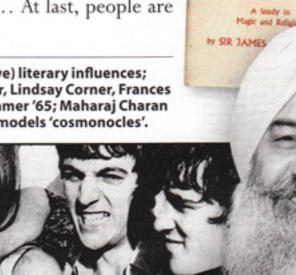
the bare wooden boards with a maze of projectors, ink slides and cellophane. Among his other creations were a pair of welder's goggles customised with glass prisms instead of lenses, and which were nicknamed 'cosmonocles'. When worn outside, especially in a state of heightened consciousness, Shaftesbury Avenue became a kaleidoscopic otherworld.

Barrett took the top room at Earlham Street, which he sparsely furnished, a bedroll in one corner, his guitar in another. Hash was smoked and The Beatles' Revolver played on a daily basis, but Syd was also writing songs which traced a line between Cam-

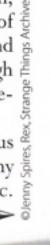
bridge's bicycling dons and London's burgeoning underground; between the books he was reading, the drugs he was taking and the women he was sleeping with. Syd had a new girlfriend, Lindsay Corner, but it was Jenny Spires who found her way into the song Lucifer Sam. ("Jennifer Gentle she's a witch"). Elsewhere, The Gnome conjoined Grimm's Fairy Tales with Tolkien's The Hobbit; Chapter 24 was the sound of the well-thumbed pages of The I Ching; Matilda Mother referenced the toy theatre in his Cambridge bedroom, and The

Scarecrow borrowed from The Golden Bough, with its celebration of the elemental power of patterns. The trees, skies, the Gog Magog hills and (endless) rivers of Cambridge filtered through the fuzzy prism lens of LSD or Peter Wynne-Willson's cosmic goggles.

"I always thought Syd got stuck in a curious of sort of protracted childhood," offers Anthony Stern. "So it was always there in the music. Childhood had been an idyllic time."



Robert A. Heinlein



"they seemed normal to us!"

NICK MASON PICKS FIVE KEY SYD-ERA FLOYD TRACKS.

candy and a current bun

(B-side to Arnold Layne, EMI 7-inch, 1967) "One of the first songs Syd brought to us and it became a mainstay of our repertoire early on. It was originally titled Let's Roll Another One, which is a bit like Endless River's working title: 'The Big Spliff'. It's great being 70 and still feeling coy about references to drugs. The oldest naughty boys in the school: 'Mason! Stop that!' Candy was one of the first times we came back into the control room and heard something we'd done and thought, Cor, that sounds just like a real record! People say Syd's songs sound odd and disjointed, but they seemed normal to us."

see emily play

(EMI 7-inch, 1967) "We did it in Sound Techniques - where we'd done Arnold Layne with Joe Boyd because [producer] Norman Smith felt we should go somewhere more relaxed. Abbey Road was fairly formal at the time. Emily shows the level of Syd's writing, but I don't think he had a vision. Initially he just had some songs and then he became a bit more mystical, then he looked at Sgt. Pepper and the whole LSD thing and then he lost interest in it. He got very [disillusioned] about being a pop star. Funnily enough, that was the sanest element [about him] at the time. Whereas we were all absolutely intent on being pop stars.

interstellar overdrive

(from The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn, EMI, 1967)

"That was one of the first jamming things we did on stage – very geared to the UFO club. It could be extended endlessly if required – 20-25 minutes. There wouldn't be any discussion or agreement in advance.
Someone would just pick up some element, some tempo, and go. But I don't think improvised jazz was an influence. The technique of most jazz players was so advanced compared to what we had. For us, it was just about using whatever you could do to make it work."

astronomy domine

(from The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn, EMI, 1967)

"That's one of the few things from Piper that we've picked to play since. I still think it's a great song. It's got dynamics, great fun to play for a drummer. I like the poetry of it,

the references, it's sort of theatrical, psychedelic in
a slightly cod way. Bit
of astrology chucked
in, there's a bit of
everything. Was there
a tongue in cheek
component to that?
Yes. Before Syd
became morose he was
charming and funny and
everything else. Might it

have carried on that way with Syd? I don't know. You could see his writing becoming more Nick Drake-ish, more insular."

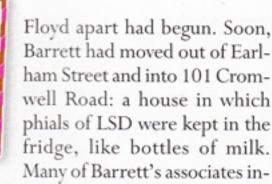
jugband blues

"The most wonderful poignant farewell, with the silver band. So mournful. We were recording in Holborn at the time, somewhere underground. Somebody made a phone call and the Salvation Army showed up. It was a difficult session, the same time we recorded Scream Thy Last Scream and Vegetable Man. It was felt that those two songs weren't right for Saucerful Of Secrets. We didn't want to put any more of Syd on there than we had to, I suppose. They felt very unfinished, very Syd."

OME FEBRUARY 1967, PINK FLOYD HAD BEGUN recording The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn at Abbey Road under the stewardship of producer and Beatles engineer Norman Smith. In an earlier interview with The Times, Roger Waters, yet to denounce psychedelia, declared that Pink Floyd's music "may give you the horrors or throw you into screaming ecstasy". Smith's challenge was to convince the band to go for the latter.

The first taster came in March '67 with debut single Arnold Layne. Jenny Spires recalls Syd playing her his ode to a Cambridge eccentric on Boxing Day, 1966. Four months later it was a Top 20 hit. But the album had a troubled birth. Talking to me in 2005, Norman Smith claimed that he always found Barrett difficult to deal with: "It was like talking to a brick wall. He wasn't happy about recording singles particularly."

The musical tug of war that would pull Syd Barrett and Pink



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sist he took LSD no more often than they did. But his behaviour had become increasingly odd.

In May, David Gilmour, the friend Syd once wished would replace him in Pink Floyd, turned up at Chelsea's Sound Techniques where the band were recording a second single, See Emily Play. Gilmour had been playing in France with his own group, entertaining minor royals and starlets, including Brigitte Bardot, and had made a

whistlestop trip back to London to buy new microphones.

Gilmour had gone busking in France with Barrett two years earlier, but was now shocked at the transformation in his friend, who barely seemed to recognise him. "Having known him as an incredibly bright, chirpy, witty person, to find this person with practically dead eyes was pretty scary," Gilmour tells MOJO today.

See Emily Play captured the essence of British psychedelia, by merging a chiming pop melody with the distorted sounds whizzing around Barrett's head. It was one of the great singles of the era. But Syd wanted nothing to do with it. Before long, he was walking out of radio sessions and refusing to play Top Of The Pops. Soon after that, David Gilmour was invited to join Pink Floyd.

August 5, 1967. It began with Astronomy Domine, a tale of Marvel comic-inspired space adventure, and ended with Bike and the sound of trilling bells, clanking machinery and looped laughter, as if Pink Floyd had fallen from Outer Space and landed on Francis Crick's head. "There was something very Cambridge about it all," says David Gale. "But it was also a mixture of Syd's whimsy and Roger's heavier ideas." In between Barrett's tales of gnomes, scarecrows and witches were Waters' Take Up Thy Stethoscope And Walk and Pow R Toc H, the latter named after Toc H, a Christian fellowship initially established to aid World War I soldiers. The song unwittingly flagged up a theme – war – that would later dominate Waters' songwriting. As fragile Syd retreated, sturdier Roger came to the fore. "Ambition, backbone, steel... You need all kinds of things in a band to keep it moving forward," he told MOJO in 2007.

Many accounts of Barrett's departure from Pink Floyd portray his bandmates, especially Waters, as the bogeymen — "the architects" who crushed Syd's creative free spirit. It's nonsense. However much needling guilt his bandmates might have experienced over the years, ultimately they were victims of their own youthful inexperience and thoughtlessness, young men still trying to make sense of their own feelings, never mind anyone else's. To quote Rick Wright's spoken words on *The Endless River*: "There are a lot of things left unsaid."

"I think when things started to take off and he had to be a pop star, Syd didn't want it," offers Aubrey 'Po' Powell. "In Cambridge, you always wanted to break new ground, not repeat yourself," says Anthony Stern. "My interpretation of Syd was that he was innately revolutionary. Whatever he did, he did from a different angle."

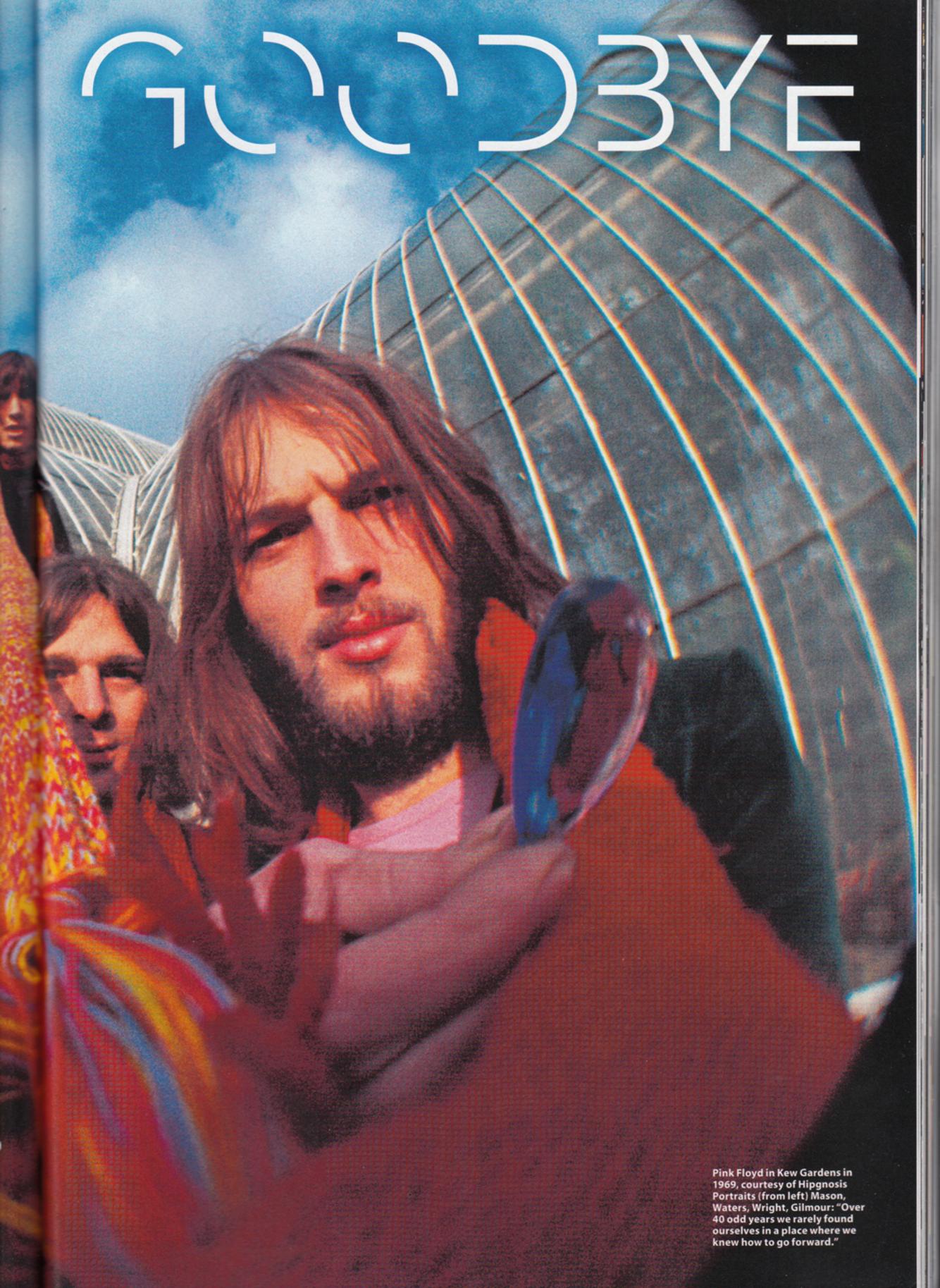
As Pink Floyd release their final album, 50 years after Syd Barrett first moved to London, *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* stands as a reminder of younger, more innocent times. It's the sound of early-'60s England, a black-and-white world twinkling into colour like the first flickerings of a home-made psychedelic light show; and of a band full of what the late Storm Thorgerson called "hormones and life".

MORE FLOYD!

Jim Irvin meets Nick Mason and David Gilmour to discuss Floyd then and now, and The Endless River...

Opposite: the short-lived five-piece Floyd in January, 1968; (below) the incredible, disappearing Syd Barrett in London, 1970, courtesy of Hipgnosis Portraits. "To find this person with practically dead eyes was pretty scary," says Gilmour. ut ut er N of ike ped on out msy nes, ope hris-The omiloger ds of 1007. ay his tects" much years, ce and own § poken e id." a pop bridge, says anately Barrett § as a rerly-'60s } the first § a band and life".

"IDON'T WANT THIS TO **BE SEEN AS OUR** LAST GREAT HURRAH," SAYS DAVID GILMOUR, "BUT IT IS THE LAST THING, I'M PRETTY SURE." "I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING ELSE HAPPENING," ALLOWS **NICK MASON**, "BUT LIFE IS FULL OF SURPRISES." AFTER NEARLY 50 YEARS OF DEPARTURES **PINK FLOYD** ARE QUIETLY SAYING FAREWELL. JIM IRVIN SPEAKS EXCLUSIVELY TO BOTH SURVIVING MEMBERS TO DISCOVER THE LONG, STRANGE AND OFTEN TROUBLED COURSE THAT HAS BROUGHT US TO THE ENDLESS RIVER. **74** MOJO







N AN EDWARDIAN HOUSEBOAT ON THE THAMES AND a high-tech bunker by the ocean, two venerated stars and a team of producers have been quietly constructing a new album over the past couple of years. Constructing, because, thanks to the alchemy of current technology, they have drawn performances from various sources - one from as far back as 1968 - and assembled them into new music. These stars are the survivors of the last iteration of Pink Floyd, David Gilmour and Nick Mason, and their quest has been to capture the unmistakeable spirit of their band one last time.

In the 20 years since the previous album, The Division Bell, several core contributors to that spirit have left us: manager Steve O'Rourke, designer Storm Thorgerson and, most significantly, keyboard player Rick Wright, whose measured, quietly affecting playing provided the musical cumulus so associated with 'the Pink Floyd sound', certainly whenever he was not the band's primary keyboard player - The Wall, The Final Cut, Momentary Lapse Of Reason - something fundamental was missing.

"SOMETHING HAPPENS WHEN WE PLAY **TOGETHER** THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN WITH OTHER PEOPLE. IT JUST FLOWS."

When EMI collapsed and the band's catalogue was offloaded to Warner Brothers, there was conversation about further possible Floyd projects. Compilations, live albums and remasters had been well covered, but there was a significant stash of unused material from the Division Bell sessions, much of it exploratory jamming between Gilmour, Mason and Wright conducted in Britannia Row studios and the tiny live-room at Gilmour's Thames-side facility, Astoria - a restored houseboat built for Edwardian impresario Fred Karno – moored in Hampton.

After The Division Bell's release, engineer Andy Jackson compiled some of those off-cuts into a long, chilled medley he called The Big Spliff, for the amusement of the Floyd inner-circle. Word got out to fans who were keen to hear it. Floyd listened to it again recently, to see if it was something that might be released. Deciding it wasn't, but was a nice idea, they set about doing something similar. Jackson was on hand to oversee the project, while Gilmour's neighbour and colleague, Roxy Music's Phil Manzanera, was asked to sift through the material and select useful moments. He came up with an album's structure, four 13-minute 'sides', giving each one a little narrative to help him separate the material atmospherically.

Gilmour was pleased with this but wasn't sure what to do with it. His partner, the author Polly Samson, who wrote the majority of the lyrics for The Division Bell, suggested bringing in producer Martin Glover, better known as Youth, famed for his stint in

Killing Joke and his way with ambient textures. At this point, Gilmour was still being purist about keeping the source material the way it was. Then, reasoning that what they would have done 20 years ago was add to it, and feeling he could improve on the old solos Manzanera had found to graft onto the tracks, he and Mason undertook some new recording at his studio in Hove. Once their new playing was down, the project came to life.

One section in particular was crying out to be a song. Samson wrote Louder Than Words, a lyric that describes the way these stoical colleagues communicate eloquently through music, even though "We bitch and we fight, diss each other on sight." After getting over the slight shock at hearing the words "bitch" and "diss" in a Pink Floyd song, it's soon clear this heartfelt tribute to "this thing we do" is a classic Floyd moment, with its downtempo prowl, Gilmour's sylvan, double-tracked voice and pealing guitar, Mason's relaxed fills, Wright's billowing keyboards, female voices soaring behind, to form that beautiful and particular amalgam of space-blues and pastoralgospel that is the Pink Floyd landscape. The Endless River flows right into that meadow on the moon.

When it is time to discuss this album, however, we detect a reticence in the Floyd camp to wheel the old girl out of the barn for one more fly-past. And who can blame them, when it inevitably means going over the old battlefields with those sensation-seekers from the fourth estate? A scheduled interview with Mason and Gilmour is cancelled. After a period of silence, we're told Mason may talk. A few days later he definitely will. Then Gilmour might talk on the phone. Finally, he agrees to speak in person.

Someone hints that this may be the last time the Floyd talk Floyd. I doubt it. It's bound to come up in talk about solo projects, books, reissues, or anything else in the years to come. But it becomes clear - they mean this to be the very last new music issued under that evocative name. It's an understated farewell, more ta-ta than ta'dah! A discreet showcase of what § they excel at, a dynamic voyage across the ears, heard 2 through the mists of hindsight, a harvest of echoes. \triangleright $\stackrel{\mathbb{R}}{=}$



ABOVE A TAILOR'S SHOP IN ISLINGTON, SITS NICK **MASON'S** OFFICE...

...a large, bright, modern space over two floors. The décor reflects an interest in racing, cabinets filled with model cars, walls decorated with framed posters for the Le Mans 24-hour race, but there's also a vintage drumkit, its garish scarlet livery, dinky cymbals and temple blocks suggesting it belonged to the jazz band of a 1920s bordello.

Nick comes to the door himself, dressed in the kind of roomy shirt and slacks combo he's worn since the early '80s. He still looks and speaks like a blue-chip accountant - or an architect, of course - the hair a little greyer than before, the demeanour slower, but the mischievous twinkle in his eye, once he's relaxed, is as pronounced as ever. We adjourn to an upstairs room lined with high-

> backed seating and gold and platinum discs, including an early Japanese gold disc for Atom Heart Mother inscribed: "With great appreciation. Toshiba Musical Industries, March 1972."

At what point do you feel something is worth putting the Pink Floyd brand on? That must be a pretty big decision.

Yes, it was. It was a very slow process, bringing it to the point where we thought it was a full-on, proper record, that's only been in the last year, though its gestation goes back 20 years. I felt quite uneasy about it for quite a long time. For a long time, we just assumed it was something that was quite nice but we'd only get 20 minutes of music out of it. Its strength is it's old-school, what we did a long time ago. It sounds a little mawkish saying this is a tribute to Rick, but it is one nice aspect of this record, hearing him play.

Your drumming is featured too. A percussion

For many years I felt, "I really don't know very much about drumming," which is still true, but I played on a couple of things here and thought, "Hmm, that sounds all right." It's taken me a long time to feel comfortable with my playing. I can't do a proper paradiddle. But the drum community is very supportive. I bought a share in Foote's, the drum shop that was about to fold. It was where I bought my first kit 50 years ago and I couldn't bear to see it go to the wall. I absolutely love it, it's the ultimate social club.

Yes, there are people who come up and say "I really love what you do, I listen to all your records" and I think "Why!? What have I done?" I know it

I have a T-shirt that says, 'Most Men Strive For Fame, This Man Has Loitered into It'.

Curiously, although Syd was the main writer

workout at one point.

A lot of drummers were influenced by you.

sounds over-modest, but that's how I've felt.

MIND OVER MATTER

PINK FLOYD

I don't think we ever felt we were backing Syd.
Things like Interstellar Overdrive were absolutely
four people improvising, doing interesting
things with relatively little musical technique, in
an idiot savant way. You don't recognise how you
actually learn the trade over 40 years, I still half
expect the drum police to show up, "All right
Mason, come along quietly, the game's up..."

Some say the Floyd has always been in flux.

That is quite a good way of putting it. Over 40-odd years we very rarely found ourselves in a place where we knew how to go forward. It was always a bit, "How do we do the next thing because we can't do it the way we did that one."

Why so? Scared of repeating yourselves?

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I think we were, but I'm not really sure. Looking back, I feel that after the success of *Dark Side* we should have just lived with that, gone off and toured it properly for a year, whereas we did about six weeks of touring and went back into the studio.

When you were making Dark Side did it feel like you were pushing the envelope?

A bit. When we were finally assembling it we thought, "This is different and good," but we'd already learnt that if there's something you think is good that doesn't mean it's going to sell.

Unless the record company really got it. Bhaskar Menon, who took over Capitol Records, knew we were unhappy there and said, "I'm going to make this record work," and galvanised the company.

Up until then our American results had been pretty modest.

Après Syd, après Roger, you've had to consider 'Life after Floyd' several times. How has that made you feel?

It's made me very insecure, doctor. I have to go and lie down for a bit.

Is that true?

Yes. Well, it's curious. Life after Syd, partly because it had been such hard work with Syd losing it, there was hardly a moment of doubt,

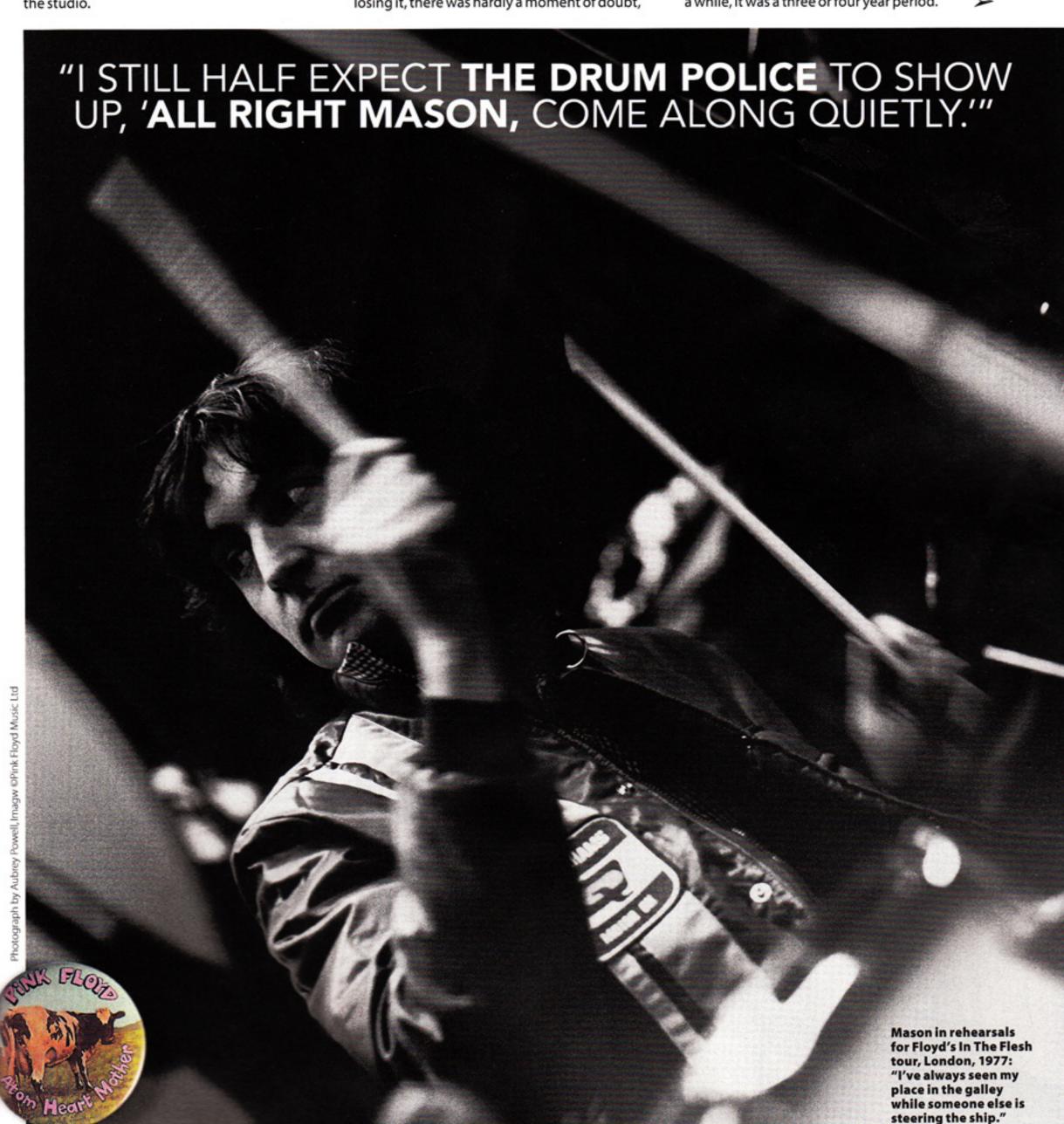
which was astonishing given that Syd had written 90 per cent of everything we'd ever done. Rick leaving didn't impact so much, because Roger was the main writer, and then when Roger left it did feel like maybe that was the end until David said, "I don't see why we should have to stop just because he does."

You've been forced to become pragmatic, though. Are you very, "Come on lads, carry on regardless!"?

No, not carry on regardless. I have to say, in 1987, if the public had gone, "No thanks," we'd have gone, "All right then." One had to be prepared for that. There was no guarantee that [Momentary Lapse Of Reason] would work.

Having gone from Roger in maniacal control to no Roger at all must have been particularly strange.

Yes, absolutely. It must have been the same when Stalin died. (*Laughs*) Well, it took quite a while, it was a three or four year period.



✓ In your book [Inside Out] you mention a meeting in a sushi restaurant in 1984, where you all left with diametrically opposed views of what had happened. What was the conversation?

Roger thought we were all going to call it a day, and David and I thought Roger was going to call it a day and we were going to carry on. But we had no plan. Steve O'Rourke was there too and I think he had an agenda, to see whether there was some way to cement things back together. It was sad that these reasonably well-educated people couldn't work things out a lot better.

From the outside one can't help thinking, Why can't they hold this together? Surely the whole thing is more important than the personal beefs?

Yes, look at The Rolling Stones and how brilliantly they've managed to hold it together. Despite writing books disparaging each other, all kinds of shit that's gone on. Also interesting is how the public at large are not the least bit interested in any of them going solo.

The thing is these slightly unbalanced people make great musicians. If we hadn't had the mad Syd and the mad Roger, we might have been doing Chirpy Chirpy Cheep Cheep. Well, actually no! But you know what I'm saying.

Have you ever felt the need to step up and take charge?

I've always seen my place in the galley while someone else is steering the ship, and I'll come up with a cup of tea now and then. I've never wanted to direct it. Not being a writer. But I feel very protective towards the catalogue and I'm still very involved in that side of things.

Watching some of the documentaries about Pink Floyd it feels like the band has been a study in industrial scale passive aggression. I'm thinking specifically of the Wish You Were Here sessions where people sat around not saying anything.

No, it wasn't like that. We were trying all sorts of things, idiotic things. It wasn't silent, not doing anything, it's just that we couldn't come up with anything remotely interesting.

In fact, even a lot of *The Wall* was not difficult. It became more difficult towards the end. The unfortunate thing with Rick where he was hanging around for four or five months waiting for everyone else to finish and then when time came for him to do his keyboards he'd booked a holiday. And Roger just went berserk, plus Columbia had said if we could deliver it by Christmas there'd be a more favourable deal and we knew that meant they'd work the record.

What was the musical bond without Roger?

It's the recognition that something happens when we play together that doesn't happen with other people. It just flows. It took a while to understand that it happens in this combination and not in others. Almost anything we do, if it's us playing, is Pink Floyd. There's almost nothing you can do about it. When we were doing Momentary Lapse, we kept saying, "Let's try and break out, use completely different sounds, listen to all these other influences," and you find (makes noise of swift return to square one) same drum fill, same tempo, same everything. That's curious and interesting and on some level, charming, you can't help it. It's impossible to organise something you think the public will like. You just have to do what you like, do what you do.

How do you feel about Momentary Lapse these days? Is it a proper Floyd album to you?

It's a proper Floyd album, but it's a bit like Atom Heart Mother, it's got so many other influences and outside people coming in, it doesn't have that nucleus that I like. I was much happier on The Division Bell, when we were all playing together. Lapse was made in a climate of insecurity with as many lawyers in the room as musicians, and the album reflects that.

Live 8 was astonishing for a lot of people, because Pink Floyd was suddenly there again in front of you, and you'd forgotten how much you loved it. It was very moving. How could it not go any further from that point?

I loved doing Live 8, it was terrific and said all sorts of things about us being more grown up, brought a lot of pleasure to a lot of people and did some good. Led Zeppelin went through the same

thing. That was not, "Let's reform!" It was a moment. Roger was heading off to do his own thing. David, after two huge tours we did in the '90s, just felt he'd done that and didn't want to do any more. Roger thrives on the big thing, David would rather do the medium-to-small thing, just play guitar. There wasn't the appetite. In some ways, curiously, touring is

only as exhausting as you make it. If you stay up all night dealing with your ambience coordinator on a regular basis you can be finished within three weeks, but in other ways it's like doing The Mousetrap. You fall into the groove and it can be quite relaxing.

I was always up for it, for me it was easy, but I didn't push it. That makes all the heels dig in. I've learnt that. With Live 8, I specifically said to Bob Geldof, who'd asked me, "Could you have a word with Dave?" I said, "If I start going, 'Come on Dave', there's not a hope in hell. The only way he'll do it is if you get Roger to call." And that worked.

You could have made some music together, no obligation to release it, or tour. There was no conversation about that?

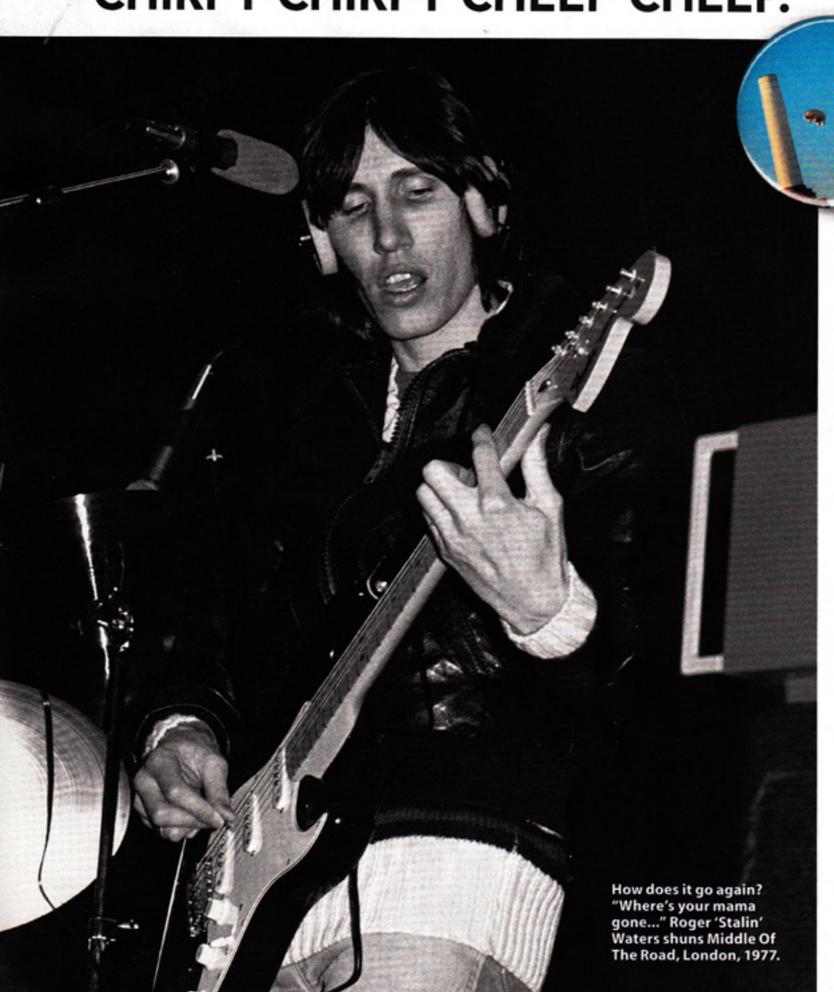
No, there wasn't. The problem is, and I think
David would agree, as soon as the three of you, or
four of you sit down [to talk about it] it feels as if
this must be going somewhere, you don't do it
for no reason. For David that'd be quite scary,
"Where's this going, this runaway train?!"

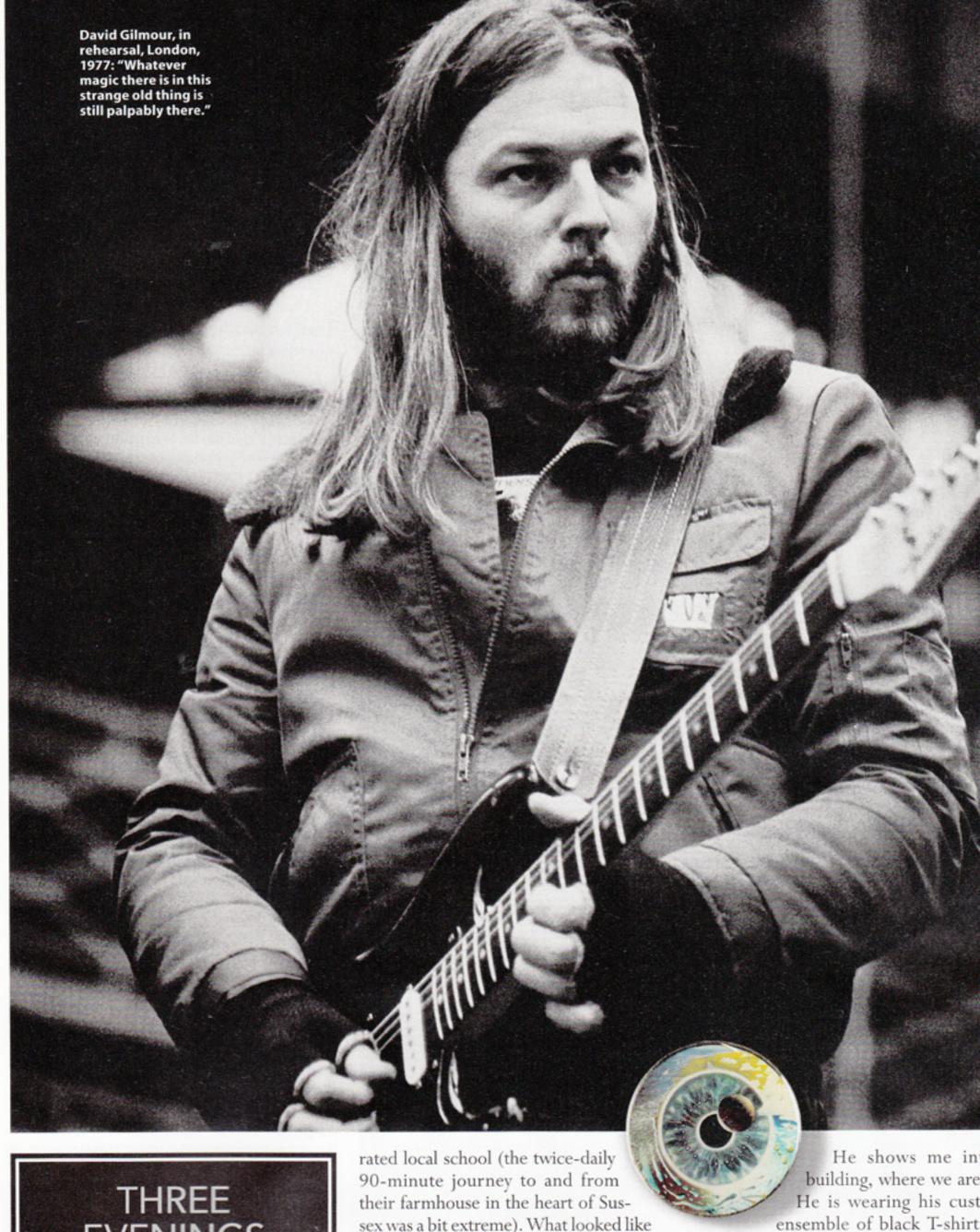
This album isn't an invitation to tour. It's so much about Rick and the three of us playing. I'd like to do something, but there's no appetite on David's part.

So this really feels like the last Floyd record?

They all do. I can't see anything else happening, but life is full of surprises. One thing that could be a driver, if there was a grander version of Live 8, where you could make an enormous difference to something, bring peace to the Middle East through music, or something, then I'm sure we'd all want to be involved.

"IF WE HADN'T HAD THE MAD SYD AND THE MAD ROGER, WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN DOING CHIRPY CHEEP CHEEP."





EVENINGS A WEEK, DAVID GILMOUR...

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...and Polly Samson take an evening constitutional along the sea-front, their promenade culminating with a shot of tequila at a bar on Brighton beach. As fitness regimes go, it's most agreeable.

The couple live here during term-time while their youngest children attend a highlya lock-up in the car park next to their house, has been lavishly converted into a recording studio, cunningly designed so that the notespecially-technical Gilmour can engineer everything himself, all the equipment on stand-by, drums, amps and microphones permanently channelled into the computer. All David has to do is arm the correct track on Pro Tools, and hit Record. "For a lunatic hermit like me, it's great," he says. Some 30 songs are currently being shepherded towards a solo album that will arrive whenever it's ready. At least one of those songs has been gestating for about 18 years, so no one should hold their breath.

He shows me into the building, where we are alone. He is wearing his customary ensemble of black T-shirt, black

trousers and bare feet. The hair on his head is now completely white, and cropped close. g The piercing eyes and full lips are still striking, but have been softened by a dusting of snow. We've met before and he's warm and friendly, but I know he is a reluctant interviewee and it adds a slight uneasiness. He has an unnerving habit of making a short statement and then stopping abruptly before he commits himself to anything revealing, then staring at you waiting for the next question. Mason enjoys just having a chat about himself and his work. Gilmour, it seems, would rather be doing anything else. He lets the carapace drop when the recording



Aubrey Powell: "Before Storm died [in April 2013] he put me forward to take over as creative director and caretaker of Pink Floyd's artwork. Six months ago Imet up with David and Nick, who explained they were releasing an album that was a tribute to Rick and wanted a cover. The working title was 'It's What We Do', so that was the brief linitially worked to. Then Polly Samson wrote some lyrics for the song Louder Than Words, so that became the new title. Then, eventually, it became

The Endless River. Typical Floyd!

river

I'm a film-maker these days, so rather than me attempt to do something I said, 'Let's go to lots of different people and see what they come up with.' Stylorouge, Peter Saville, the ad agencies Clinic and Brave, and Damien Hirst all submitted ideas. Damien came up with 40 possible pictures. In one of them, The Endless River was represented by blood going through a body. A great image, but David and Nick didn't think it was ethereal enough. After the last two Floyd covers [A Momentary Lapse Of Reason and The Division Bell], David said he wanted a singular image - another Dark Side... - something that takes your attention to one singular thing.

We had some very intense meetings, and we'd narrowed it

down to about five options. They were all radically different. One

was a very abstract image like flowing soundwaves in black and white, with thin lines of a rainbow going through it. It looked amazing, and it had great fluidity, like water. However, it had an element of The Dark Side Of The Moon in it. So... no. There was another, which we actually constructed - a sculpture, which referenced the heads on the cover of The Division Bell - since this is music that originated at

"there was the thought that the boat could have been a punt!"

that time. It was two heads again, but one on top of the other you'll see it, there are plans to display it. But again it was decided that this wasn't 'The Division Bell II' and this would be misleading. Then we had another that involved the Thames - too obvious. Then there was another, a very interesting photograph we half in winter, one in summer.

But we kept coming back to a picture created by this 18-year-old Egyptian digital artist, Ahmed Emad Eldin. In the

original picture it was a bigger boat and the man had his arms in the air, so it wasn't quite what they wanted. So Rob O'Connor, who'd worked with Storm and Stylorouge, put the final image together. The picture reverberates with the vibe of the album It's a tribute to Rick, but the imagery of a man rowing on clouds into a sunset is a logical one when you think of this being last Pink Floyd album. I think it's a very personal statement.

There was the thought that the boat could have been a punt! That would have had a resonance. but we all ended up agreeing that Cambridge was a long time ago, and David's studio Astoria is on the Thames. We decided a Thames skiff would be more appropriate so that's what that boat is.

The whole process took about five months. It's the first Pink Floyd album for a number of years, so the image was taken seriously. It was considered - and very much in the spirit of Hipgnosis. It had that basis in Storm's surrealism. At the same time, it's a freshapproach - something none of us would have thought about. It continues the cultural identity of Pink Floyd. And it's wonderful the idea came out of nowher finding this boy in Cairo with this perfect image: it's synergy.

I think it's a beautiful image: mysterious, enigmatic, impossible - almost Zen.

device is off and we start talking about the Kate Bush show (he saw it three times, loved it, and marvels with me at Kate's mastery of the fine line between the preposterous and the profound - my phrase) and, briefly, about technology. An admittedly slow adopter of computers - "I'm just not wired that way" - he is thrilled with Pro Tools, the music production program that has enabled his solo recordings and The Endless River, and he picks up his iPhone and says, laughing, "And this thing is fucking amazing."

I use mine to record the interview. As I switch on the app, David gets the first question in:

"What did you make of the album?"

I enjoyed it a lot, I've only heard it the once, but it seems to deliver exactly what you want from a piece of Floyd music, that transporting atmosphere. It sounds like Floyd but it also stands apart from your other works.

Yes, it's the bit we kind of came from; in the really early days we sounded more like that and it's something we got away from, by maybe over-emphasising songs and proper structures.

My struggle is to try to not have it over-hyped. All the powers that be that surround us, the record companies and management, want to make a huge, huge, huge fuss and I want to make a bit of a fuss, but I want people to understand where this is coming from and why it's not Dark Side Of The Moon or even The Division Bell.

Unapologetically, this is for the generation that wants to put its headphones on, lie in a beanbag, or whatever, and get off on a piece of music for an extended period of time. You could say it's not for the iTunes, downloading-individual-tracks generation...

But there are a lot of people who'll get a lot of enjoyment out of this.

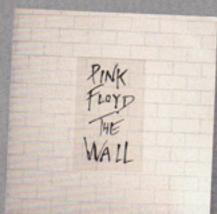
This is the first Floyd album to be done using Pro Tools, which seems like the ideal method.

Yes, I love Pro Tools, I can't tell the difference between tape and digital. Besides, we couldn't have done this record like it is on tape, there are too many elements coming from different places. We were stuck in the construction; if we wanted to redo things we'd lose Rick, as a lot of the pieces we used were just in stereo [not multitrack].

Nick told me he was very moved seeing footage of you playing together at that point. Listening back to those sessions for this record, did it reawaken something in you too?

I definitely got this lovely feeling that, whatever magic there is in this strange old thing, despite Roger not being around, is still palpably there. It

DON'T MENTION THE WAR... FLOYD SINCE THE SCHISM 1979-2014



SEPTEMBER 1979

Roger Waters demands Rick Wright leave Pink Floyd or he'll refuse to release The Wall as a Floyd album. Under duress, Wright agrees.

FEBRUARY 1980

For the Wall tour, Wright is rehired on a wage to play

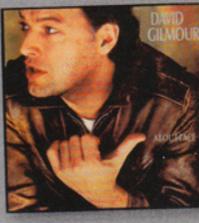
keyboards. Not the least absurdity within the most conceptually overloaded rock tour in history.



MARCH 1983

The Final Cut - gnarly swansong of the Waters-era Floyd - is released. Waters wrote everything; Wright isn't

on it; Gilmour and Mason felt excluded. It bombed.



MARCH 1984

Gilmour solo album About Face emerges. Mason and Wright play on Comfortably Numb at Gilmour's Hammersmith Odeon show.



APRIL 1984

Waters releases The Pros And Cons Of Hitch-Hiking, a concept album about one man's thoughts in the early hours, some rather lewd. Eric Clapton plays the Gilmour guitar foil. Elaborate tour haemorrhages cash. Wright

teams with Fashion's Dee Harris for synth pop excursion as Zee (back cover below).

OCTOBER 1985

Waters issues writ to prevent Pink Floyd name being used. He believes his resignation amounts to dissolution of band and brand. Gilmour and lawyers disagree.



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created a whole nostalgia for Rick that is more saddening.

Those original sessions that The Endless River and The Division Bell came from were what, over a few weeks?

Yes. We did two weeks in Britannia Row, one week was just me, Nick and Rick and then another week we had Guy Pratt [bass] as well, just to feel the vibes of actually playing stuff together was very good for us, to come back to that. We hadn't done anything for a long time and we hadn't done that sort of thing for even longer.

The process of going into a studio with something already written, learning it and recording it, sort of takes you over, then later you start thinking you could have done it in a more organic way.

Is this it? Have you combed the archive as far as it will go?

There's always more, but we're not saving stuff. This is the best of what we can find.

How much new playing did you put down?

Nick came here for a couple of days to do some drumming and played really well on tracks that were only guitars. I played some guitar over stuff. For a long time we had a purist attitude to it, where we thought we would try and keep it as it was, but at some point that idea just flew out the window and we thought, "You've got to make this as good as you can make it."

Were you ever tempted to go, "Oh, we need a Wish You Were Here type thing here, or an Animals one"?

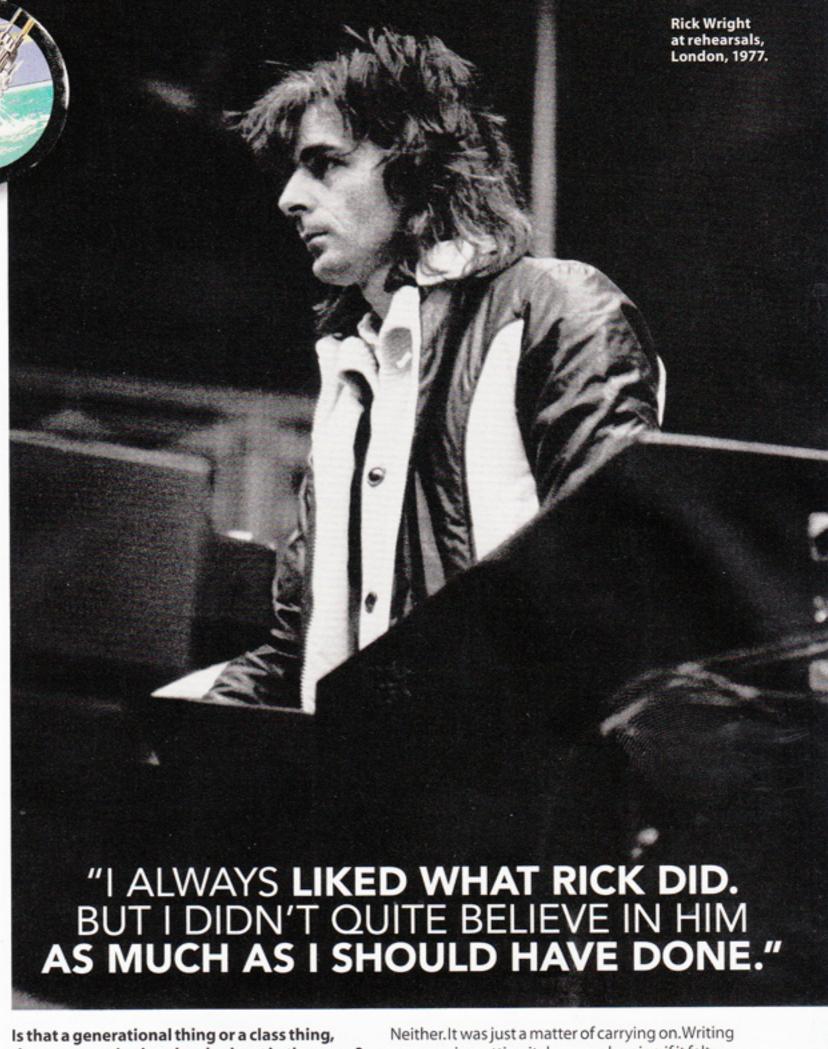
Another boundary was how far we wanted to create new stuff to turn this into something which it really wasn't, and we decided not to go there. At the heart of all this was the old playing and it was better to stay true to that.

There were about three, possibly four things we could have put songs on, but I think it is a better statement that there's just the one.

Polly wrote these great words that sound like they come from me. Which is her view of the strange relationship that we have in this band. Which is not one of three great pals - or four great pals when Roger was a part of it - but has this strange magic that occurs when we are together, and she thought that was a very interesting idea, to round off the whole album with this one statement of what we're like - or what Polly thinks we're like, which, to me, is a hundred per cent accurate.

Communication has been a common theme on Floyd albums, but within the band it hasn't been a strong point...

No, it never has been.



that not mentioning the elephant in the room?

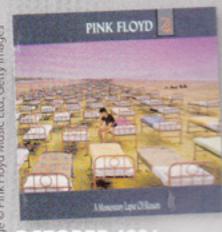
Maybe that's the only way you survive or can keep things going. There were things that happened in the old days of the four of us, in that brief 15-year sparkle... (he stops with a wistful look) funny to think it's been 30 years since Roger went, which is double the time he was in it.

With Roger gone, was there a sense you'd try to recapture what was there with the four of you or did you resolve to completely reformat it?

new music, putting it down and seeing if it felt right. You can't pretend to yourself you haven't lost something, but you also gain something. Particularly after those last few years which were so difficult, it became a much more enjoyable experience.

It's hard from the outside to understand how one allows something to get to the pitch of megalomania that Roger achieved on The Final Cut.

Let's not cover that old ground.



In spite of Waters' belief that "the muffins" would "never fucking get it together to make a record", Gilmour and Mason begin A Momentary Lapse Of Reason with Wall producer Bob Ezrin. Rick Wright contributes - still on a wage, and doesn't make it into the super-smug

inner-sleeve pics. Perhaps a blessing in disguise.



Waters unleashes second solo album, Radio K.A.O.S. He plays Floyd songs on tour - including Have A Cigar and Mother - and releases a version of Money as a B-side. "I got death threats," said singer Paul Carrack.

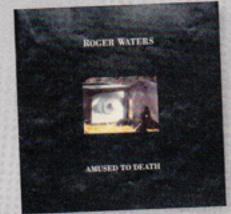


"The muffins" take Momentary Lapse on the road in the teeth of Waters writs, and gross \$135million worldwide, crushing Michael Jackson and U2. Live LP Delicate Sound Of Thunder follows. Yah boo, Rog!

JULY 1990

Berliners having pulled down their own version of The Wall, Waters decides to rebuild it in Potzdamer Platz (below) in the opening bid of a concert-based gambit to reclaim the Floyd legacy. See also: 1999-2002's In The Flesh ("An Evening With Roger Waters... The Creative Genius Of Pink Floyd"), '06-08's The Dark Side Of





AUGUST 1997

Waters' Amused To Death album is released. War as entertainment, iniquity of TV are typical Waters themes. Jeff Beck is the filler of Gilmour-shaped hole.

Gilmour, Mason and Wright convene at Britannia Row to start work on what will become The Division Bell. Gilmour's



But, regarding that question of communication, when he wanted to sack Rick during the Wall sessions didn't anyone go,"Oh, for fuck's sake, Rog!"

Yes, there was a lot of that. I remember being on the phone in different countries for hours about that. It was a nasty, nasty time, that whole two-year period. I can look back and see the frustrations on all people's sides. We all could and should have behaved differently. I certainly wouldn't excuse myself from blame, I can see how frustrating it was for Roger as well.

Did he think people were being lazy? Yes, I guess.

You must have felt, "He's not allowing me into the music..."?

(Exhales deeply) I don't want to go over that again. I'd rather stay away from all that conflict stuff.

What was your feeling when he wrote to the record companies? [Roger invoked the leaving member clause in their contract, in a simultaneous letter to EMI and Columbia.]

It was a relief that it was at least a decision, that took away the doubts and we could either get on with it or not, [Pink Floyd] wasn't in limbo any more.

When we last spoke, just after the On An Island tour, where you and Rick played together, you said to me: "Rick's got soul."

I was using the word 'soul' closer to the original sense of the word, rather than 'soul music'. You could call it heart as well, something that stirs you inside. Rick had his years of troubles, problems, as we all did to some extent. His were quite serious. In those periods of life people often aren't very loveable. Rick and I were never that close. None of us in the band were that close as friends, Nick and Roger were at one point. I always liked what Rick did. But I didn't quite believe in him as much as I should have done in times when he should have been given more support.

Revisiting his work through this record, were there any fresh revelations?

Not really, just a constant reiteration that this was a great talent, and I was sad that we have lost it.

You have also lost Storm Thorgerson recently. How did you approach choosing the sleeve image? Was there a lot of discussion?

Yes, a lot of discussion. Storm had left a lot of artwork and ideas, not specifically for this, but for future projects, but there was nothing that I thought was appropriate for this. I got Po [Aubrey Powell, Thorgerson's former partner in Hipgnosis] on board to find a new way to do these things in the absence of Storm, but at the same time it is the last Pink Floyd record, and we didn't want to stray too far from the territory we've been in before, and Po found this piece of artwork by an Egyptian kid. We'd rejected dozens of things with rivers on and this one came through as a very welcome image that seemed to suit exactly what we were trying to get to

When you were making the record did the knowledge that it would be Pink Floyd's last statement give it some portent, some pressure?

That's a hard one. As I said, it wasn't ever going to be Dark Side or Division Bell, it was always going to be an album put together from existing pieces of music recorded a long time ago. My responsibility to myself was to make it as good as we could get it, but I'm not going to worry about how that is perceived in terms of the rest of the output.

I don't want this to be seen as Pink Floyd's last great hurrah. It is a moment. But as a full stop?

More a semi-colon...

Something like that. It is the last thing, I'm pretty sure.

But the curtain's closing quietly.

Yes

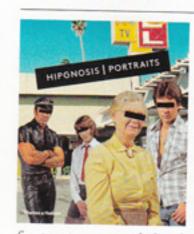
AS I'VE ONLY HEARD THE ENDless River once, Gilmour asks if I'd like to hear Louder Than Words again. He finds it on his computer and we listen together. He is clearly absorbed in the song, his body keeping time while he mouths along to the words. The last

moment is one of his trademark, skylark-ascending solos, bringing the album to a rousing close, before a final pulse fades into the distance.

"An appropriate way to sign off," I say. "As a final reminder of what you represented, it's perfect."

"I think so," he says.

He switches off the lights, shows me out and locks up. We shake hands and, still barefoot, David Gilmour pads around the corner to his house.



Hipgnosis Portraits is a lavish celebration of the photography that fed into the record sleeve fantasias of Aubrey Powell, Storm Thorgerson and Peter Christopherson, aka rock'n'roll design house Hipgnosis. Presenting unearthed snaps and the

fascinating stories behind them and including unseen Stones, fascinating test set-ups and a naked Peter Gabriel. The striking Pink Floyd portraits on pages 70, 73, 74, 79, 80, 81, 83 of this feature are all taken from the book.

Hipgnosis Portraits by Aubrey Powell is published by Thames & Hudson www.thameshudson.com at £35.

Continued from previous page partner Polly Samson writes lyrics. Sense that some songs – Poles Apart, Lost For Words and A Great Day For Freedom – address the Roger schism. Wright graduates to "a percentage of everything".



OCTOBER 1994
The Division Bell tour ends at Earls Court on October 29,

having grossed around \$100m. Live album and video, both titled *Pulse*, ensue.



NOVEMBER 1996
Rick Wright's Broken China
album released. Henry Cow's
Anthony Moore helps out.
The Orb provide remixes.

JULY 2005

The full line-up of surviving Pink Floyd members reform to play Live 8's Hyde Park show, awesomely. They perform Speak To Me, Breathe, Breathe (Reprise), Money, Wish You Were Here, Comfortably Numb.

SEPTEMBER 2005

Waters' Ça Ira, an opera in three acts based on the French Revolution, features Bryn Terfel and other topnotch singers. François Mitterand declares himself impressed.



WARCH 2006 Gilmour's elegant On An Island solo album released. Rick Wright contributes. Waters fails to comment.

DAWGANDLA

JULY 2006

Syd Barrett, reclusive and longestranged frontman of the nascent Floyd, expires. Tribute show at London's Barbican features Waters, Wright, Mason, Gilmour, Damon Albarn and Kevin Ayers.

SEPTEMBER 2008

Rick Wright dies at home, aged 65, of an undisclosed form of cancer. Is this the end of Pink Floyd? Not quite.

APRIL 2013

Genius Floyd art director Storm Thorgerson dies.

JULY 2014

Polly Samson (left) tweets:
"Btw Pink Floyd album out
in October is called "The
Endless River". Based
on 1994 sessions is Rick
Wright's swansong
and very beautiful."
The cat is out of the bag.

"It was like the Ryder Cup"

Marcus Mumford speaks to Victoria Segal.

How did you first hear about the New Basement Tapes project?

"We were at the Grammys and I spoke to T Bone [Burnett] and his manager and they were very excited to have come across Bob's lyrics. T Bone and I had struck a deal so that if there was ever any project that I was excited about I could give him a call and vice versa. I'm not quite as well-connected as T Bone but he got me involved in the Coen brothers' film [Inside Llewyn Davis] and then he said, 'Do you wanna do this?' I just loved the idea. For any songwriter it's an offer that's hard to refuse. T Bone was like the matchmaker and the captain of the team. It was like the Ryder Cup."

Did you have any reservations?

"It was definitely intimidating, because it's Bob Dylan. But there's nothing I would rather do – it was quite an easy one."

Was there any conscious attempt to capture the original Basement Tapes atmosphere?

"We tried to adopt the spirit more than the sound. That band is so distinctive. It was all about collaboration rather than trying to recapture something."

Did it feel like you were working with Bob Dylan?

"It was sort of a satellite collaboration because he wasn't there but his character is so obviously in those lyrics. There's so many lines that just couldn't be written by anyone else other than him. It was also fun to take a bit of a liberty with them as well. I probably did it a bit more than anyone else. It got to the point when I was trying to write songs around these lyrics and it felt like I needed another verse, so I dipped into one of the other songs and nicked what I thought was a relevant lyric. So Kansas City, for example, the last verse of that song is stolen from another song that we had. I was just reading through the lyrics and I thought, Ooh, that works. So I asked T Bone and he said, 'We can do whatever we want, man,' in true T Bone style."

It doesn't feel too reverent...

"That again was down to the atmosphere in the studio. We were told there were no rules and the idea from the outset was that we were there to do what we wanted and not to be reverent to it. We were to treat it as if they were our songs as well, which they are. Having the opportunity to be free while working with these Dylan lyrics was really special."

What drew you to the words of Stranger?

"I liked that it was a bit dirty, I liked it was a bit gritty. There's a conversation within the song, so I enjoyed singing as the object and the subject. That's a style you find through reading people like T.S. Eliot who jump around in conversations all the time, and Dylan does that all the time in songs. It also had a kind of outlaw feel to it, and that was fun to play with."

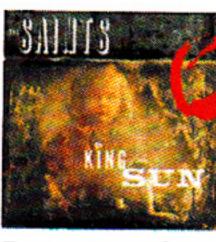
Did you receive any feedback from Dylan himself?

"Hmm, I think he said to T Bone he was into it, but I don't know how much more he handed on than that."

The Saints

King Of The Sun/King Of The Midnight Sun

Two for the price of one from hardy Aus-rock legends.



As one-half of the songwriting muscle behind (I'm) Stranded and This Perfect

Day, two of 1977's most enduring punk blasts, few would quibble had Chris Bailey merely churned out facsimiles of his signature songs ever since. But the bard of Brisbane never favoured easy street, and has lent The Saints' name to many more-or-less polished bluesrock variants, his feral holler and hard-boiled romantic's worldview the sole constants. This latest album is typically mercurial: a belated European release for 2012's often beautiful gutter-soul collection King Of The Sun, appended with a song-by-song reprise newly recorded live by the latest band. While ... Midnight Sun will be welcomed by diehards who already have the first record, its raw demeanour feels shabby next to the poise of the piano-and-horn-dappled original, where Bailey has surely never sung better.

g better. Keith Cameron

ENTL TOURGE EXCEPTIONS

Neil Young

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Storytone
WARNER BROS. CD/DL/LP

Neil goes lush with a

92-piece orchestra. Ever unpredictable, Young's second album of the year couldn't be more different to A Letter Home, the primitive Jack White recording booth collection of Dylan/Jansch/ Springsteen/Ochs/Nelson covers. Here's a welter of sentiment, romance and raw melancholia, largely cloaked in a swathe of strings and grand orchestral arrangements. Sheer vastness occasionally swamps the pained intimacy of Young's vocals and open-heart songs of regret, nostalgia and reflection, over-balancing into maudlin (Tumbleweed; I'm Glad I Found You); but it's hard to take issue with songs as affecting as Plastic Flowers, Glimmer and When I Watch You Sleeping. An affectionate nod to big band jazz (Say Hello To Chicago) and dirty blues (I Want To Drive My Car) are welcome additions, though the keynote track is the passionate. Who's

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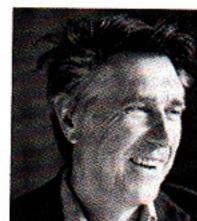
Bryan Ferry



Avonmore

BMG. CD/DL/LP

Guests include Johnny Marr, Nile Rodgers, Flea and Ronnie Spector.



Given their shared acreage of luxuriant arrangements, it's fitting that the album title

Avonmore seems to chime with that of Roxy Music's 1982 gem Avalon. Yet it's perhaps telling that while the latter was named for the mystical isle of Arthurian legend, Googling Avonmore flags-up nothing more exotic than the west London location of Ferry's studio. Though Loop De Li's ambient lattice of expensivesounding guitars, disembodied voices, sax, percussion and (lots) more provides a classy bed for Ferry's elegant, still pliant warble, no amount of heavy-friend noodling can redeem One Night Stand and Driving Me Wild, and Ferry's Send In The Clowns would have Krusty renouncing his vocation. The album's spare, haunting re-invention of Robert Palmer's Johnny & Mary – a collaboration with Norwegian DJ Todd Terje – is much better, but Ferry completists will have heard it on Terje's solo debut, which came out in April.

James McNair

Pink Floyd

The Endless River

New old music and a tribute to the late Rick Wright.



The first voice on *The Endless River* belongs to keyboard player Rick Wright, and is

taken from a 1972 interview in which he divulges that there's a "lot left unsaid" within the band. The theme of non-communication informed 1994's The Division Bell, and continues on an album compiled from the same sessions, but with new additions and overdubs.

Split into four lengthy compositions, Side 1 to Side 4, with sub-titles (à la 1970's Atom Heart Mother), The Endless River is predominantly instrumental, and full of Floyd trademarks: womb-like soundwashes, Gilmour's string-bending guitar solos, even a snippet of Wright playing the Royal Albert Hall pipe organ from 1969. But when the only vocal track, Louder Than Words, bursts into life with Gilmour announcing, "we bitch and we fight", you can't help wishing there was more like this elsewhere. The Endless River is big on atmosphere, just a little light on songs.

Mark Blake



Shellac

Dude Incredible

Fifth album in 20 years from Steve Albini's sporadic trio.

Shellac albums gestate at mastodonian pace, but on arrival strike with the unerring precision of a cobra. Just 90 seconds into Dude Incredible, the ensemble's hallmarks are in place: Steve Albini uncoils a tungsten guitar line over his malevolent vocal, Bob Weston coats the air with bass metal tar and Todd Trainer deals an entire drum masterclass before locking the trio into their ominous groove. This title track belongs to a tradition of mighty Shellac album openers, a daunting standard the ensuing eight tracks do well to maintain. There's evolution amid the rigour and grind: Albini's tones feel warmer, while conceptual fun is had with three songs about surveyors, and a thematic linkage between the US founding fathers and shady group conduct, be it monkeys (Dude Incredible) or kids (Riding Bikes). Rumbling the spleen like a desiccated Led Zeppelin, this is hard rock as anthropology, administered like only this band can.

Keith Cameron





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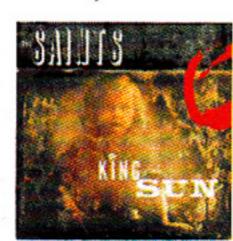
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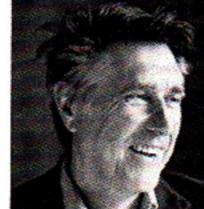
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Guests include Johnny Marr, Nile Rodgers, Flea and Ronnie Spector.



Given their shared acreage of luxuriant arrangements, it's fitting that the album title

Avonmore seems to chime with that of Roxy Music's 1982 gem Avalon. Yet it's perhaps telling that while the latter was named for the mystical isle of Arthurian legend, Googling Avonmore flags-up nothing more exotic than the west London location of Ferry's studio. Though Loop De Li's ambient lattice of expensivesounding guitars, disembodied voices, sax, percussion and (lots) more provides a classy bed for Ferry's elegant, still pliant warble, no amount of heavy-friend noodling can redeem One Night Stand and Driving Me Wild, and Ferry's Send In The Clowns would have Krusty renouncing his vocation. The album's spare, haunting re-invention of Robert Palmer's Johnny & Mary - a collaboration with Norwegian DJ Todd Terje – is much better, but Ferry completists will have heard it on Terje's solo debut, which came out in April.

James McNair

Pink Floyd



The Endless River

PARLOPHONE. CD/DL/LP

New old music and a tribute to the late Rick Wright.



The first voice on *The Endless River* belongs to keyboard player Rick Wright, and is

taken from a 1972 interview in which he divulges that there's a "lot left unsaid" within the band. The theme of non-communication informed 1994's The Division Bell, and continues on an album compiled from the same sessions, but with new additions and overdubs.

Split into four lengthy compositions, Side 1 to Side 4, with sub-titles (à la 1970's Atom Heart Mother), The Endless River is predominantly instrumental, and full of Floyd trademarks: womb-like soundwashes, Gilmour's string-bending guitar solos, even a snippet of Wright playing the Royal Albert Hall pipe organ from 1969. But when the only vocal track, Louder Than Words, bursts into life with Gilmour announcing, "we bitch and we fight", you can't help wishing there was more like this elsewhere. The Endless River is big on atmosphere, just a little light on songs.

Mark Blake



Shellac

Dude Incredible

Fifth album in 20 years from Steve Albini's sporadic trio.

Shellac albums gestate at mastodonian pace, but on arrival strike with the unerring precision of a cobra. Just 90 seconds into Dude Incredible, the ensemble's hallmarks are in place: Steve Albini uncoils a tungsten guitar line over his malevolent vocal, Bob Weston coats the air with bass metal tar and Todd Trainer deals an entire drum masterclass before locking the trio into their ominous groove. This title track belongs to a tradition of mighty Shellac album openers, a daunting standard the ensuing eight tracks do well to maintain. There's evolution amid the rigour and grind: Albini's tones feel warmer, while conceptual fun is had with three songs about surveyors, and a thematic linkage between the US founding fathers and shady group conduct, be it monkeys (Dude Incredible) or kids (Riding Bikes). Rumbling the spleen like a desiccated Led Zeppelin, this is hard rock as anthropology, administered like only this band can.

Keith Cameron



Rebecca Miller

Pink Floyd



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