

TOP 50 EXTREME METAL COLLECTABLES



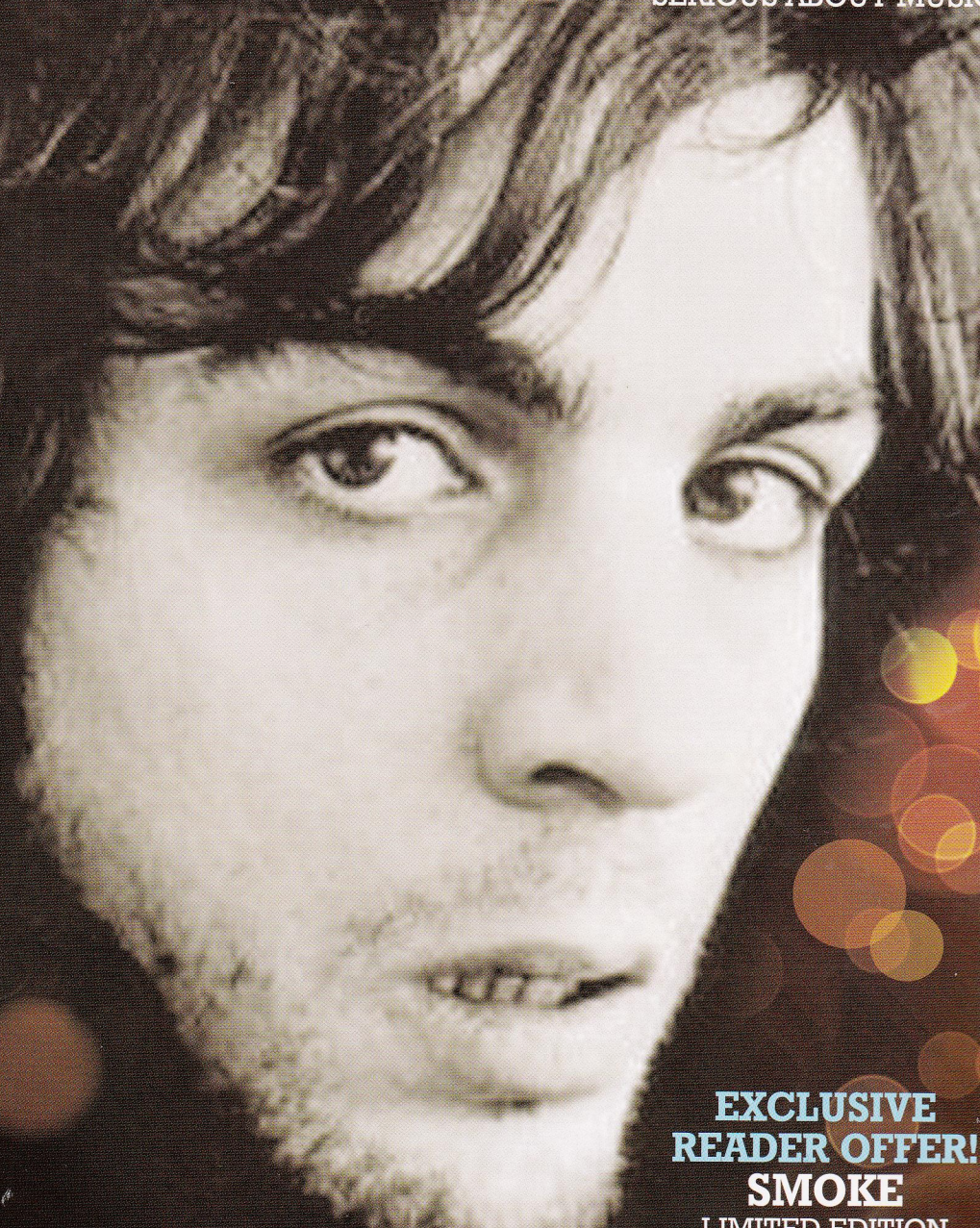
RECORD COLLECTOR

SERIOUS ABOUT MUSIC

MEMORIES OF

Syd

UNSEEN IMAGES
of SYD BARRETT
& PINK FLOYD

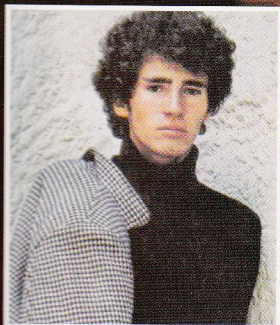


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PICTURES *of* SYD

A new book and exhibition presents a fascinating insight into the life and work of Syd Barrett



Painter Man: Spring 1964 in the garden of 183 Hills Road, Cambridge. Photo (c) John Gordon



Syd and Frisky the cat, Hills Road, Cambridge, 1964. Photo (c) The Estate of Roger Keith Barrett

Musician, psychedelic explorer, eccentric cult icon – Roger “Syd” Barrett was many things to many people. Created in conjunction with the Barrett family and The Estate of Roger Barrett, who have provided unprecedented access to family photographs, artworks, and memories, the book *Barrett* offers an intimate portrait of the Syd known only to his family and closest friends.

Previously unseen photographs taken on seaside holidays and other family occasions show us a happy and loving young man, smiling energetically in images that map his early life, from childhood through his teenage years. Along with newly available photos from the album cover shoots for *The Madcap Laughs* and *Barrett* (taken by Storm Thorgerson and Mick Rock) they reveal the positive energy of a grinning Syd as he fools about in front of the camera. We are offered a rare glimpse of one who was immensely popular among friends and contemporaries.

Also contained within these pages are recently unearthed images of Pink Floyd in which we see Syd practising handstands, making muscle-man poses, and having fun. The other members of Floyd lark about too – a fledgling young band enjoying itself with a sense of real camaraderie. The images transport you back in time to 1966–67: the London Free School gigs, the launch of *International Times* at the Roundhouse, the UFO club, the band’s first European dates. There are photos of Syd and Floyd at numerous locations and events, giving a real sense of what it must have

been like to be there as the infant light shows, experimentation, and collective spirit of the time emerged, grew, and flourished in the psychedelic hothouse that was the late 1960s.

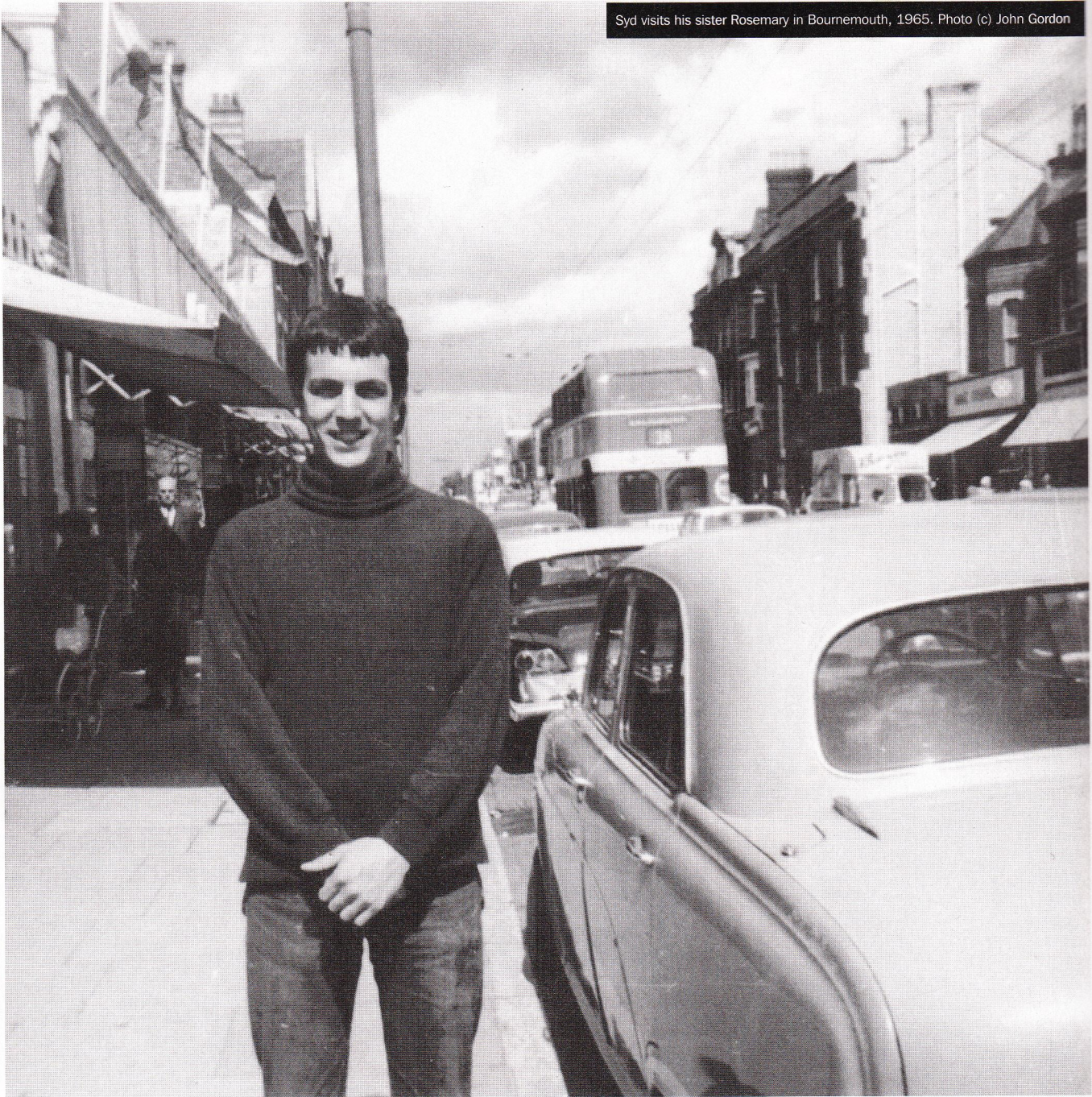
Where possible, we have restored the images to show them in their best light. The technical quality of some of the images is not great, but I hope you will agree that they bear inclusion. The illustrated letters that Syd wrote to girlfriends Libby Gausden and Jenny Spires, reproduced in the book, are of key interest, as they detail, among other things, his early days with Pink Floyd, and reveal his eccentric wit in full flow.

They also contain sketches of ideas that would later come to fruition in his artwork. These letters are just one example of the volume and range of art-related content, spanning from 1961 until his death, discovered in the course of researching this book.

My co-author Will Shutes has carried out some extraordinary research over the last few years on Syd’s art. Will’s engagement with Syd’s work not only allows for an appreciation of the breadth and sheer eclecticism of the art, but also of Syd’s dedication. Examining his myriad approaches and artistic methods one cannot but be impressed by the continuing, exploratory artistic attitude he maintained throughout his life, almost always with interesting and idiosyncratic results.

Our search for Syd’s paintings and related information took us around the UK, and to parts of the USA, Scandinavia, Spain, Holland, and Italy.

Syd visits his sister Rosemary in Bournemouth, 1965. Photo (c) John Gordon



The most interesting and revealing of the discoveries, however, came from perhaps the most obvious location: his home town of Cambridge. Just as we were completing the photography of the family's collection of his paintings, a couple of photo albums were discovered by Syd's sister Rosemary. These contained photos Syd had taken of artworks that he would later destroy, for reasons known only to himself.

There were also photos that he had taken of outdoor scenes and sketches he had made from those photographs. In some instances, the finished paintings resulting from this careful preparation feature in these photographs, too. Then there are the photos he took of his working area, his tools and brushes, and other artistic paraphernalia. Wonderfully, we see in these newly discovered images how Syd worked, where he worked, and

what he worked on. They reveal a dedicated practising artist employing thorough artistic methods right up until the end of his life. They also prompt a pertinent question: why take a photograph of something you didn't wish to be reminded of? It suggests that the destruction of his paintings wasn't born of some rage or wild artistic temperament. It was perhaps more a case of once it was done, for the artist it was time to move on to something new.

That is how it always had been with Syd, as Rosemary recalls: "All of his life, acquiring things was quite fun but the moment was gone as soon as he'd got them."

Researching and working on this book has helped me appreciate Syd's art and music anew. At the age of fourteen I was drawn to Syd's music by the sonically arresting and menacing opening chord progression of *Interstellar Overdrive*. Having been lucky enough to be given the complete Pink Floyd catalogue on vinyl by a friend, who had replaced his vinyl collection with compact discs, I had heard and enjoyed *The Dark Side of the Moon* and *Wish You Were Here* before I discovered the Barrett-peppered compilation, *Relics*. That was a profound moment. It threw up all manner of questions in my adolescent mind: who was this Syd Barrett credited with writing such strange songs? Were there two Pink Floyds? How did a bike become a Lear jet?!



Performing as The Tea Set in autumn 1964: from left, Syd, Bob Klose, Chris Dennis, Roger Waters.

"These pictures were taken at a private house party in Oxshott, Surrey, organized by some rich school friends of my sister in 1964. It must be amongst the first few gigs that Syd Barrett played with other Floyd members, possibly the first". Sebastian Jenkins, photographer. Photo (c) Sebastian Jenkins



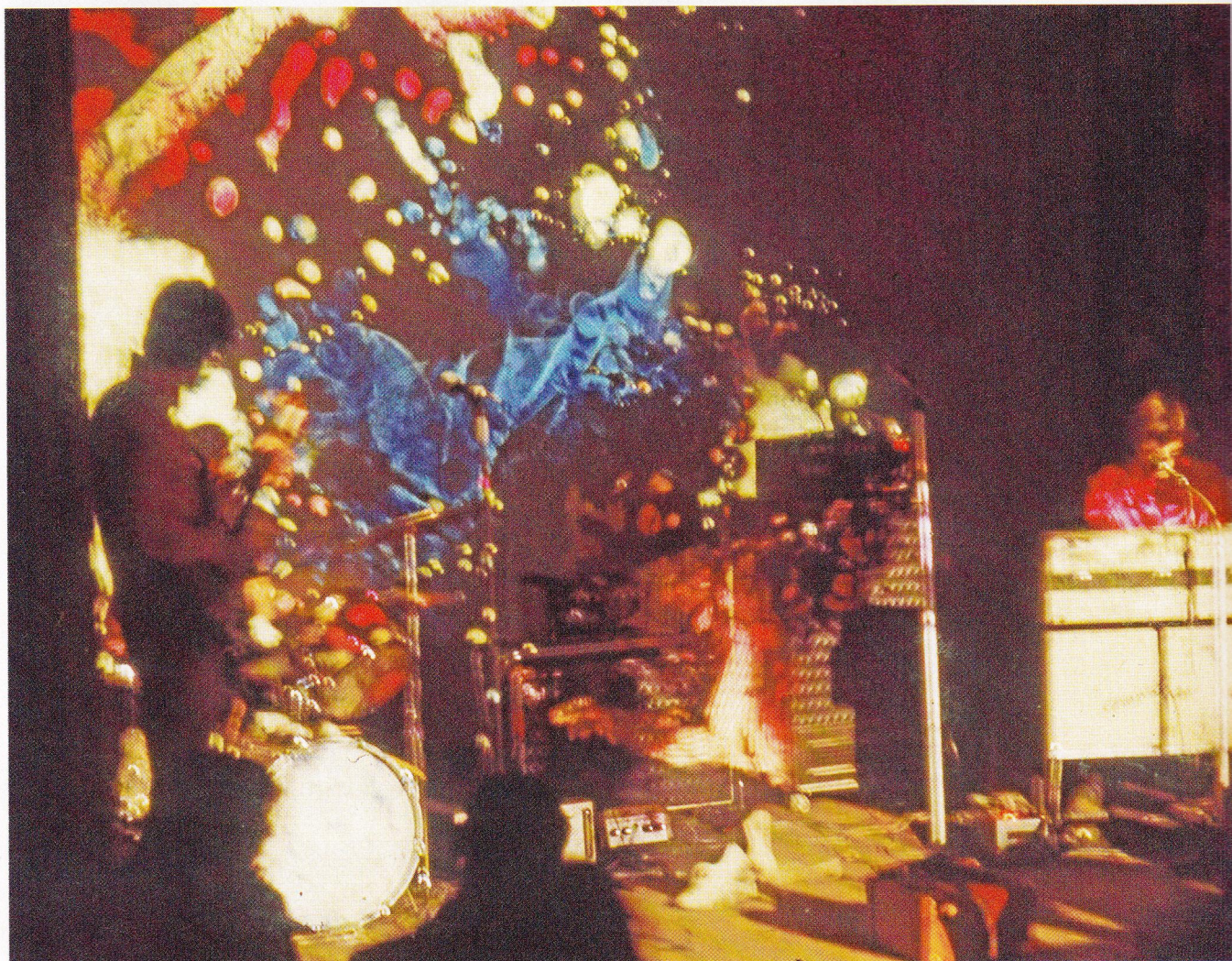
Syd in The Tea Set. Photo (c) Sebastian Jenkins

The other Barrett-era Floyd albums and the odd article here and there filled in a few of the gaps for me, but in those pre-internet days the pickings were slim. Only with Mike Watkinson and Pete Anderson's 1991 book *Crazy Diamond* would I finally discover more about the mercurial Syd. Since then, there have of course been many books, articles, and opinion pieces on Syd. Several, though not all, have left fans feeling rather short-changed, recycling as they do the same old sensationalist stories. Very little authoritative work has been produced on Syd the creator. That, after all, is at the heart of the public's interest in him. The need for a well-researched, intelligent, and well-thought-through account of Syd's life and work was fulfilled with the publication of Rob Chapman's excellent *An Irregular Head*, in 2010.

An Irregular Head is the definitive *textual* work on Syd. *Barrett* is the definitive *visual* work on Syd's artistic life. The two books complement one another. They seek to debunk as much of the myth surrounding Syd as possible, leaving the reader to draw their own conclusions on the basis of what lies before them. Both show Syd as the creative force he undoubtedly was.

The testimonies of family and friends make clear that Syd was both naturally inclined toward being creative, and helped in that by his friends and surroundings. He was also influenced by the attitudes and social changes taking place during the era in which he grew up. It all contributed towards making Syd Barrett the unique artistic force whose like we shall not see or hear again.

It has been an honour working on this book and – via conversations with Syd's friends and family, as well as viewing the many unseen photos, letters, and paintings – getting to know him a bit better. I hope that the humour, wit, eccentricity, energy, and originality of the man comes through in the book. I also hope that, after viewing his art, which the book collates for the first time, and reading the accompanying commentary, you too will feel that you know a little more about the creative life of a true English original. **Russell Beecher**



London Free School Benefit Concert, All Saints Church Hall, Notting Hill, London, 14 October 1966.

"There was a lot of freedom from the organizers for the audience, you could bring along your own lighting! One night a friend and I brought along an 8-ft fluorescent tube and some electronics to strobe it; this was a very early high-power strobe source for the first time in the UK". Steve Wilkins, photographer. Photo (c) Steve Wilkins

Q&A, RUSSELL BEECHER, CO-AUTHOR, *BARRETT*

How long did it take to source all the images?

I began to source images for the *A Technicolor Dream* documentary I was working on about three years ago, so that's when it all started. Sourcing for the book in earnest began around 18 months ago so that's when the real work began.

Which ones were the hardest to track down?

Lots of them were really hard to track down but the ones that took the most work were the live shots of Syd and Nick Mason playing in Aarhus, Denmark (see p71). I contacted every venue I could find that Syd and the Floyd had ever played a gig at and all of the associated local papers too which, as you can imagine, was quite a few!

I received hundreds of responses from local papers and people that had been involved with now-defunct venues but not many knew the difference between Syd and David Gilmour so there were a lot of dead ends.

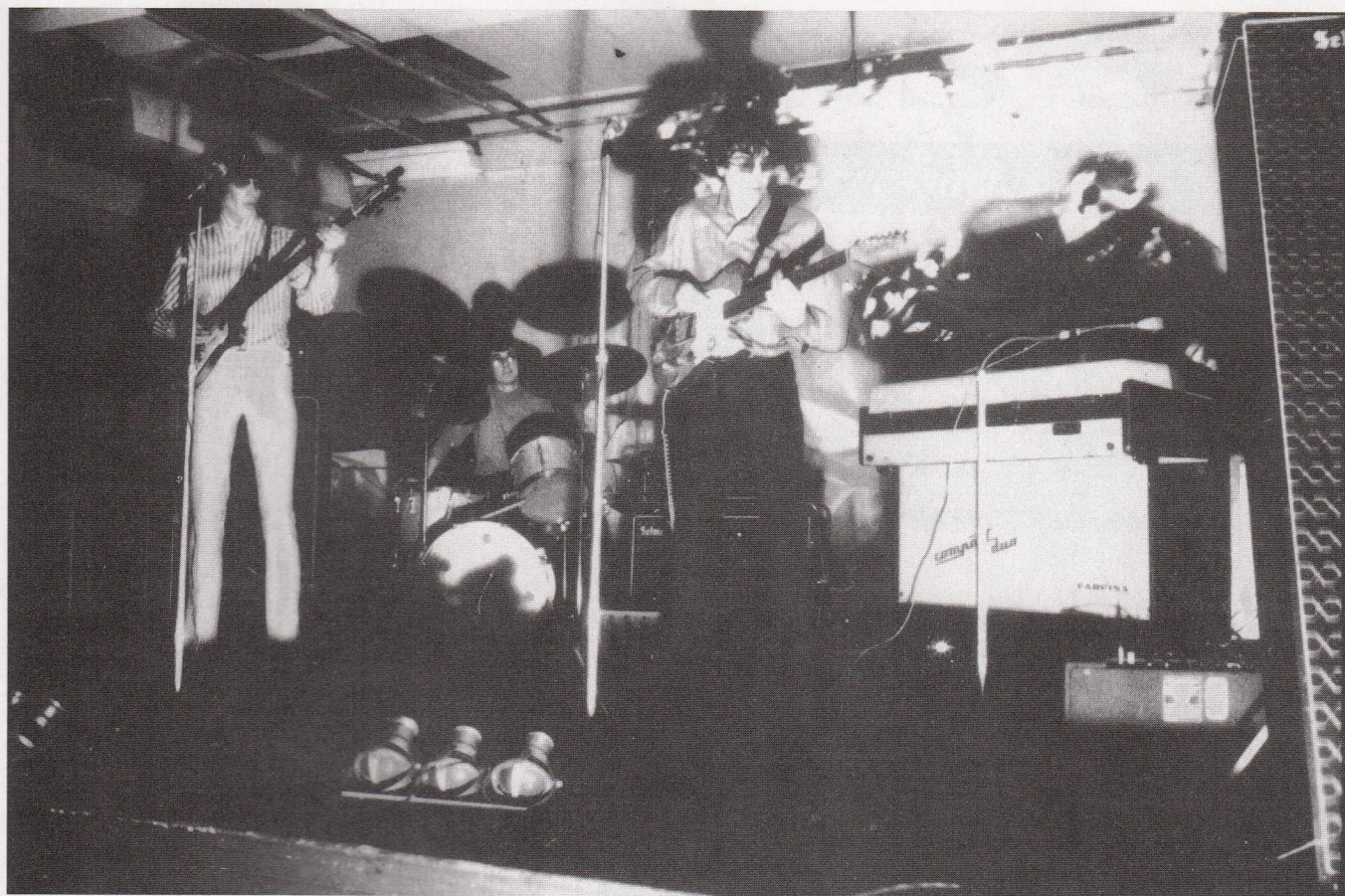
After a few months of waiting I'd given up on this line of research when out of the blue I received an e-mail from a local paper in Aarhus who forwarded me onto a photographer. It turned out, not only did he know the difference between Syd and David, but the resulting shots we found were some of the best black and white shots of Syd playing live I'd ever seen – all totally unseen and completely unexpected. Those are the days you live for when looking for lost treasure!

Which is the most significant image?

We found a great many historically significant images as far as Syd and the Floyd go. Many of these are completely unseen and include fascinating rare glimpses of the first gigs at the All Saints Church Hall (see above) where the band started to make a name for themselves, unseen colour images of Pink Floyd playing on Dutch TV, the launch of *IT* magazine at the Roundhouse where the band really started to take off, psychedelic nights at the UFO club where they cemented their reputation, Syd and Roger Waters playing their first gig together as part of The Tea Set (see p69), and iconic photos by Mick Rock and Storm Thorgerson from the legendary The Madcap Laughs cover shoot which both Storm and Mick believed to be lost ... and many others!

Why do you think Syd has such an enduring appeal?

In doing the research for this book I met with many friends and contemporaries of Syd's and interviewed family members but also talked with many fans and I discovered he has no real specific fan type. Different people get different things out of Syd's music and the way he was. There's something in his songbook for everyone from beefy rockers such as Interstellar Overdrive, to psychedelic masterpieces like See



Philadelic Music For Simian Hominids, Hornsey College of Art, Crouch End, London, 18 November 1966. Photo (c) Spencer Kelly Collection

Emily Play, and then there's his solo stuff which, unlike the Floyd, takes a bit more effort to get into but is just as rewarding.

He was very eclectic and there's a lot contained within a relatively small body of work. There is also the fact that he was good-looking and lived in a very interesting time and disappeared from public view. All of this makes him a very iconic and romantic figure.

What do you think he would make of the book/exhibition if he were still around to see it?

I'm not sure to be honest. I hope he would feel pride at what he'd done but I have a sneaking suspicion he'd be a bit too busy working on the next thing to pay too much attention to things he'd consider 'a bit old'! One constant we feel the book shows is that Syd continued to express himself as an artist throughout his life and was always looking ahead to the next thing.

Would he have been pleased that so many of his art works have been preserved, or would he have preferred that they 'stay dead'?

Again, it's hard to say, but many of those included in the book and exhibition were works he'd given to family members and girlfriends and the like, so one would assume he was pleased with them as he gave them to people he felt affectionate towards.

Did the Pink Floyd themselves co-operate with the project?

Nick Mason was good enough to help by allowing us access to his archive and answering questions regarding dates etc, but the book and exhibition



Boom Dancing Center, Aarhus, Denmark, 9 September 1967.

"In 1967 I had just started my education as a professional photographer. On the weekends I'd go to the Boom discotheque and always had my camera with me to take pictures of the bands. Some of the bands came from England so we were used to English bands, but on that evening we saw and heard something new. The DJ was playing when Pink Floyd suddenly came on stage and started to play but their microphones did not work so there was no vocals for the whole concert. It didn't make a difference because what we saw and heard was marvellous. I was standing at the front but couldn't move so could only take pictures of Syd Barrett and Nick Mason. After the concert Syd Barrett said 'Why do the audience scream so much? Why don't they clap?'" **Nils Aarestrup Røddik, photographer**
Photo (c) Nils Aarestrup Røddik



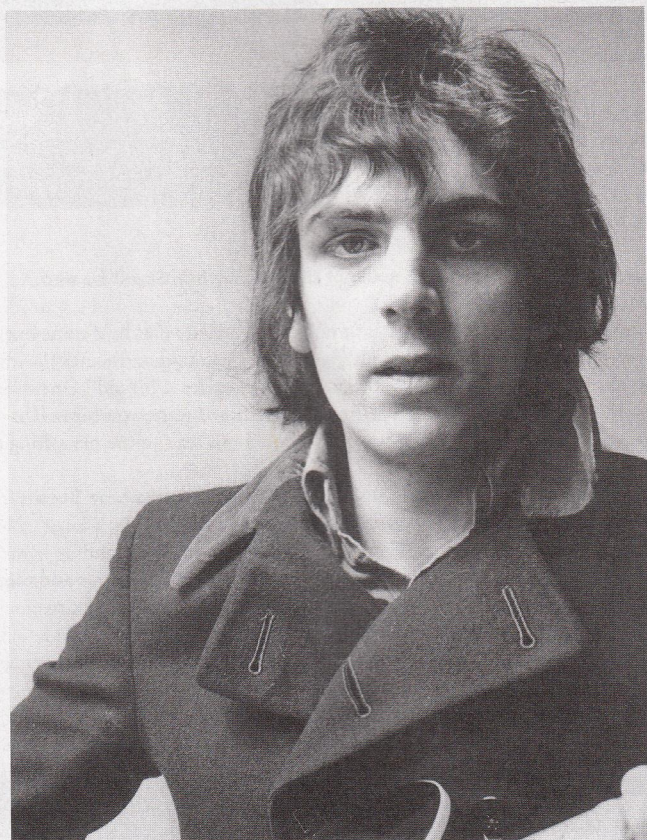
Syd, December 1967. Photo (c) Pink Floyd Ltd Archive

are both concerned with Syd and both Nick and Roger have already said all that needs saying as far as their thoughts on Syd go.

The book has been made in conjunction with the Barrett family and the Pink Floyd management, so Roger knows about the book and an interview I had previously done with him a few years ago was a great help in many areas of the book.

Barrett, The Definitive Visual Companion is published on 18th March by Essential Works, www.barrettbook.com

The exhibition *Syd Barrett | Art and Letters* runs from 18th March – 10th April at the Idea Generation Gallery, Redchurch Street, Shoreditch, London, E2 7JB, www.ideageneration.co.uk



Syd in April 1968, just around the time it was officially announced he had left Pink Floyd. Photo (c) Pink Floyd Ltd Archive