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'WE STILL SQUABBLE  
ABOUT IT TODAY...'

## PINK FLOYD

40 YEARS ON

THE  
TRUTH  
ABOUT  
THE  
DARK  
SIDE

JIMI HENDRIX  
(SLIGHT RETURN)

A SNEAK PREVIEW  
OF THE NEW MOVIE

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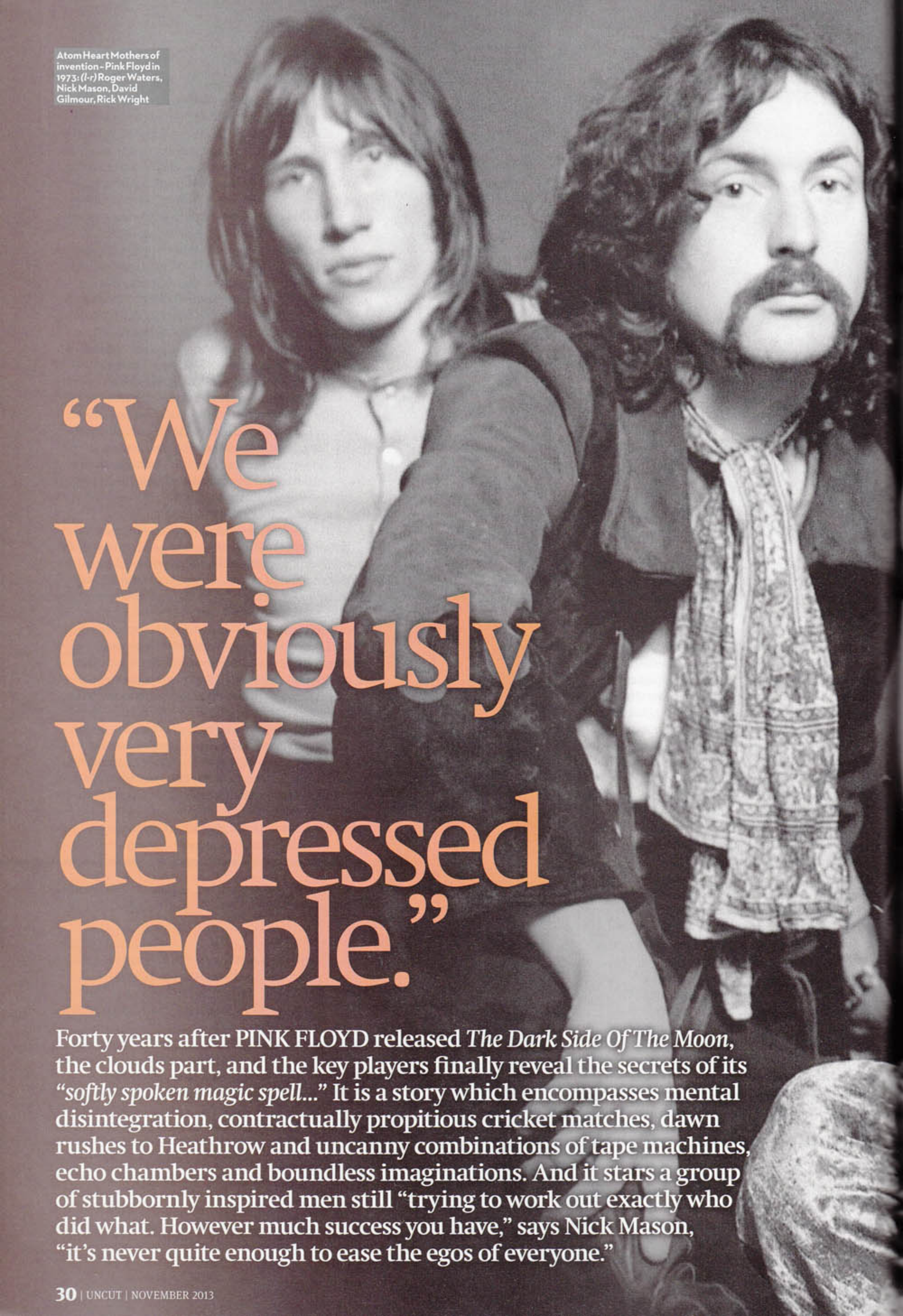
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Atom Heart Mothers of  
invention - Pink Floyd in  
1973: (l-r) Roger Waters,  
Nick Mason, David  
Gilmour, Rick Wright

“We  
were  
obviously  
very  
depressed  
people.”

Forty years after PINK FLOYD released *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, the clouds part, and the key players finally reveal the secrets of its “softly spoken magic spell...” It is a story which encompasses mental disintegration, contractually propitious cricket matches, dawn rushes to Heathrow and uncanny combinations of tape machines, echo chambers and boundless imaginations. And it stars a group of stubbornly inspired men still “trying to work out exactly who did what. However much success you have,” says Nick Mason, “it’s never quite enough to ease the egos of everyone.”



PINK FLOYD



STORY: DAVID CAVANAGH  
PHOTOGRAPH OF PINK FLOYD  
©RAEANNE RUBENSTEIN, 2013



THE SOIREE AT THE London Planetarium was a grand affair. The 300 guests enjoyed dinner, cocktails and a glittering tour of the skies: Cassiopeia, Cepheus, the Ursas Major and Minor. But the evening's main attraction was not a star or a constellation. As everyone settled in their seats, the faint sound of a heartbeat was heard. Then a voice: "I've been mad for fucking years." It was 8.45pm on February 27, 1973. The occasion was the world premiere of *The Dark Side Of The Moon*.

In the foyer, guests had been greeted by an impassive welcoming committee: four life-size cardboard cut-outs of Gilmour, Waters, Wright and Mason. Not quite as three-dimensional as the real thing – or even the waxworks of the great and the ghoulish next door at Madame Tussauds – but when you dealt with Pink Floyd, you learned to improvise. Their manager Steve O'Rourke had made it clear to Harvest, their label, that Floyd would not promote the album in any way. No interviews, no personal appearances. The music would have to speak for itself. "It all added to their mystique, their aura of unattainability," says Harvest's then-general manager, Nick Mobbs.

In the days following the Planetarium launch, Martin Nelson, a promotions man for Harvest's parent company EMI, took the album on a tour of universities, playing it for students. Five hundred heard it while lying on the floor after a Kinks gig at the Exeter Rag Ball. Word of mouth was vital, and students were the prime target market. Harvest hoped the album might emulate *Atom Heart Mother* by going to No 1 in Britain. In the event, it wouldn't – a rare landmark missed – but 41 weeks in the Top 10 would just about compensate. "The world was ready for that kind of music," says the band's friend Roy Harper today. "Those big, bold soundscapes. Those magical ambient qualities. It was like a photograph looking back at the Earth from the Moon."

In February 1973, however, only one man foresaw the full astronomical possibilities. He believed, rightly, that *The Dark Side Of The Moon* would be an unprecedented commercial and cultural phenomenon. And his certainty had nothing to do with the planets being in alignment.

NICK MASON, WRAPPED in two cardigans, gets up from his desk in his private office and disappears into the kitchen to make coffee. The walls of the large open-place space are a gallery of vintage motor-racing posters. Ten Tenth's, Mason's company, supplies classic cars for use in films and TV programmes – some of them from his



"SUCCESS IS NEVER QUITE ENOUGH TO EASE THE EGOS OF EVERYONE"  
NICK MASON



Roger Waters at the Winter Gardens, Bournemouth, January 22, 1972 – only the second time that *Dark Side* was performed in full

own collection. At eye level, hundreds of model Ferraris and Brabhams gleam in glass cases.

Mason weighs his words like a Foreign Office diplomat. "I don't think Pink Floyd ever found an ideal way of working together," he says, "but *The Dark Side Of The Moon* was probably the closest we came to it. The problem is trying to work out exactly who did what. Not only is it a mystery, but it tends to get everyone incredibly worked up. 'I did that.' 'No, I did that.'"

Really? You still squabble about it today?

"Oh God, yes! However much success you have, it's never quite enough to ease the egos of everyone."

When it was first discussed in 1971, *The Dark Side Of The Moon* was a four-man brainstorming meeting in a house in Camden Town. Now it's a conversation that interconnects whole continents. Google the album's title and tens of millions of results come up. Wikipedia pages. Amazon listings. *Wizard Of Oz* synchronicities. The death of sleeve designer Storm Thorgerson. The broadcast of a new Tom Stoppard radio drama (*Dark Side*), inspired by the album. Keep scrolling and you read that high-school graduates in Dalton, Massachusetts, received their diplomas while their school band played "Eclipse". Or that the Eugene Ballet Company of Oregon performed an interpretation of the album last year. Or that DCI Alan Banks, in Peter Robinson's crime thriller *Piece Of My Heart*, listened to the album on his

iPod before investigating a grisly murder. Robinson, contacted by *Uncut*, recalls seeing *Dark Side* played live (for only the sixth time) at Leeds City Hall in 1972. The heartbeats at the start "sounded like a drunken giant stumbling around on the roof".

"There isn't a point at which you say, 'Suddenly it's become an iconic album'," Mason emphasises. "Forty years ago, the concept of even Beatles albums having longevity was something that

"It's like a good aircraft accident..." Nick Mason onstage





Floyd in Abbey Road Studios

no-one was clear about. The theory was that an album lasted for a year and then you got on with your next one. There's no single reason why *Dark Side* is so successful. It's like a good aircraft accident. A number of different things come together to make it happen."

The album plays a morbid game of stealth. Essentially, it's a sequence of melancholy songs about stress and stagnation. Whether you're a high roller ("Money") or an elderly pauper ("Us And Them"), *Dark Side* warns that there's no escape from the dehumanising pressures of life except to daydream or die, both of which waste crucial time that should have been spent living. After fighting a war, you grow old and go insane. And if that sounds a frightening trajectory, bear in mind that you've already been killed in a car crash at the end of track three. "We were obviously very depressed people," Mason smiles.

Yet the album's descent into mental disintegration is seductive. David Gilmour and Rick Wright, who sing most of it, have two of rock's softest voices, creating a pleasurable calm – enhanced by the production – even as one dire warning follows another. The abiding enigma of *Dark Side*, meanwhile, is the uncanny ability of Roger Waters, a



"Backstage with Pink Floyd was a fate worse than death..." The band at Brighton's Dome, before the debut performance of *Dark Side*, January 20, 1972

## TICKING AWAY THE MOMENTS...

## AND WHEN AT LAST THE WORK IS DONE

### A timeline of *The Dark Side Of The Moon*

**LATE 1971** Pink Floyd meet at Nick Mason's house in St Augustine's Road, Camden to discuss writing a full-length work to replace *Atom Heart Mother* as centrepiece of their live show. Proposed themes include "physical

violence, travelling, money, religion".

**JANUARY 20, '72**

"Dark Side Of The Moon – A Piece For Assorted Lunatics" is performed for the first time at Brighton Dome... and abandoned halfway through due to technical problems.

**JAN-FEB '72** On a UK tour, the title is changed to "Eclipse"



before reverting to the original choice.

**JUNE '72** Recording sessions for *The Dark Side Of The Moon* begin at Abbey Road.

**FEB 1, '73** The band complete their final day of work on the album.

**MARCH 1, '73** US release date. Album reaches No 1 on April 28, '73, spending 741 unbroken weeks in the Top 200.

**MARCH 23, 1973** UK release date. Peaks at No 2 in a 301-week chart run.





GET A GOOD  
JOB WITH  
MORE PAYHow *Dark Side*  
changed Pink Floyd  
— by Nick Mason

“THE HAPPIEST TIMES are when you’re all striving together to achieve something. Then you achieve it and think, ‘Hang on – now what?’ We were also growing up. In ‘67, we were four lovable mop-tops. By ‘73, we were getting married, having children, having a life outside the band. That changes things. We were wandering away from the original commitment; drifting into middle age. We had

The Pink  
Floyd, 1967

attracted millions more fans with *Dark Side*, but that didn’t change our lives so much because we weren’t very recognisable. It’s a bit like a television audience – if it’s a billion or 100,000 it doesn’t really make much odds. It wasn’t like suddenly becoming pop stars. We’d been pop stars in ‘67, but only very briefly. We never had screaming girls. We had a fan club for about a year, and we were on the cover of *Fab* 208, but it wore off very quickly. But we did struggle with what should happen next after *Dark Side*. My view is that we should have spent a year touring it, and filmed the tour, and not rushed back into Abbey Road to try and do the next record. We wasted so much time.”

JILL FURMANOVSKY

● songwriter in his twenties, to anticipate and articulate the fears and emotions that await a 28-year-old several decades down the line. “Roger’s a thoughtful person,” Mason allows. “He can be extremely difficult, but he’s put a lot of thought into his life – into life generally. I’m not sure it always makes him happy.”

WHEN NICK MOBBS, a self-styled “afro-haired hippy ex-drummer”, was appointed general manager of Harvest Records in 1971, Deep Purple (*In Rock*, *Fireball*) were probably the biggest-selling group on his roster. Pink Floyd – whom he met for the first time in Montreux that September – were second or third along with The Move. Finding himself at the helm of a hip underground label, Mobbs decked out his office in suitable paraphernalia, including huge cushions for the bands to crash on. Floyd, however, were a special case.

EMI mostly left Harvest alone, who in turn mostly left Floyd alone – and Floyd, everyone knew, liked to be left alone. “Record companies in the ‘70s started giving bands complete freedom, and Pink Floyd exploited that to the full,” says Brian Southall, an ex-EMI press officer and author of a recent book, *Dark Side Of The Moon Revealed*. “Floyd brought in record sleeves with no name on them. They made demands. This was not a normal band. They didn’t do anything to help. They just delivered stuff. And if you like, they delivered it with instructions.”

“I wouldn’t say they were difficult,” qualifies Nick Mobbs, “but they were very intelligent and impatient with bullshitters. That could cause an atmosphere when hangers-on might over-praise a performance that they weren’t happy with. As their music publisher Peter Barnes once said, backstage with Pink Floyd was a fate worse than death.”

Transferred by EMI from its pop label Columbia onto Harvest in 1969, Floyd had a quintessential underground sound: stoned tempos, open-ended guitar and organ solos,

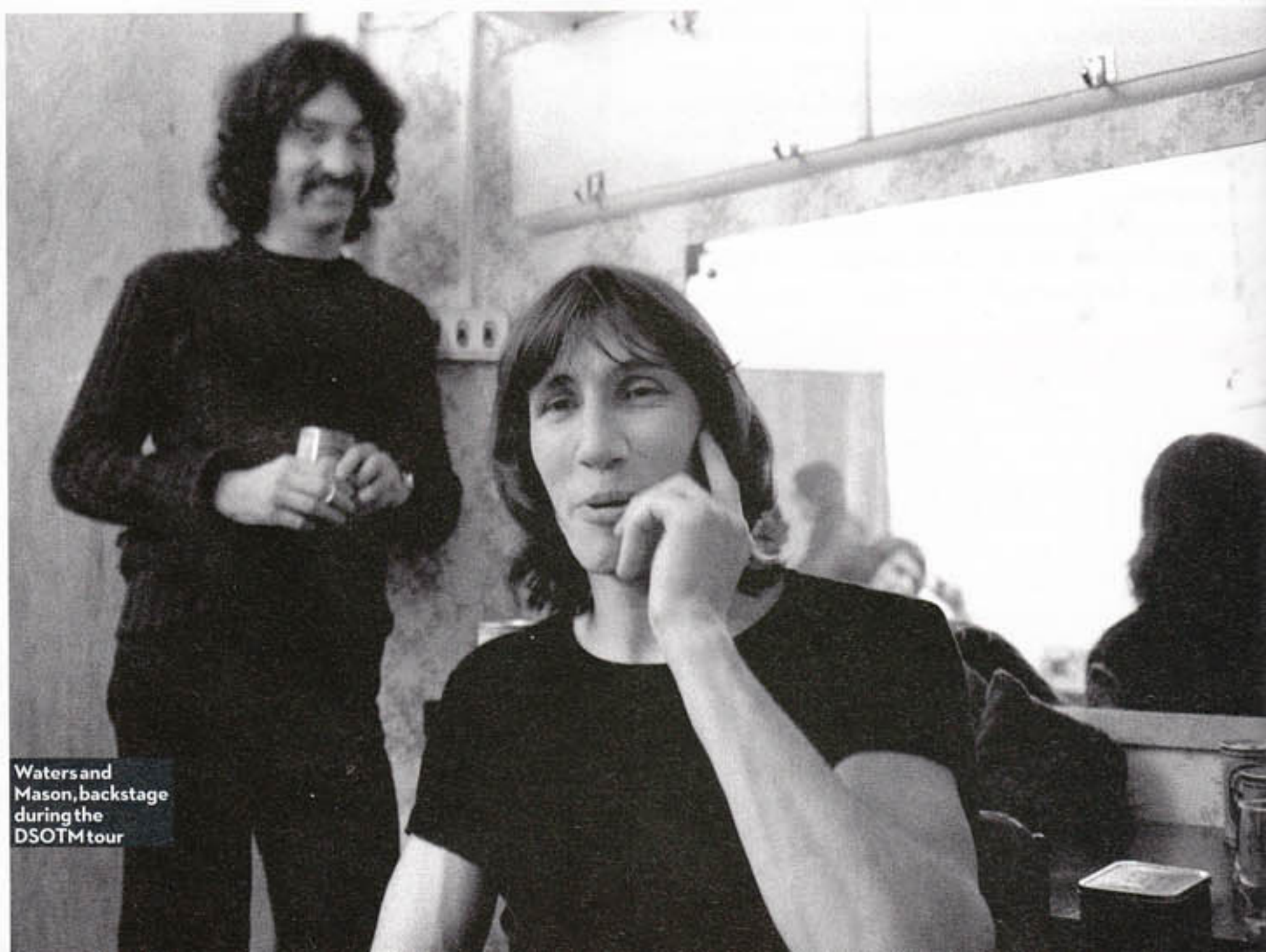
Rick Wright on  
the *Dark Side* tour

“THEY WANTED  
SUCCESS. THEY WANTED  
TO BE A FAMOUS ROCK  
GROUP” RON GEESIN

blazing freakouts, heavy vibes. The double-album *Ummagumma*, with its epic live tracks and eccentric studio sides, was virtually the definitive Harvest release. “Harvest was prog rock, man. It was about making albums and sending them to John Peel. It was the obvious label for Pink Floyd,” remarks Peter Jenner, a former Floyd manager whose company Blackhill represented many Harvest acts.

Singer-songwriter Michael Chapman, who made four albums for Harvest, calls the label “a home for the insane”. He lists a few of the key lunatics. “Me. Roy Harper. Kevin Ayers. I mean, the retired colonels who ran EMI didn’t understand why there were a load of deranged hippies in an office downstairs.” One or two senior EMI figures had worked there since the ‘30s; managing director LG Wood had taken temporary leave in 1939 to become a fighter pilot in the war. “When *Atom Heart Mother* was presented to EMI,” Roy Harper remembers, “I happened to be in [Wood’s] office. He looked at the cover and said, ‘Ah! Fresians!’”

*Atom Heart Mother*, a collaboration with composer Ron Geesin, ventured into long-form structure, orchestration and musique concrète. Having conquered the cosmos on *Ummagumma*, Floyd attempted to land their spacecraft

Waters and  
Mason, backstage  
during the  
DSOTM tour





Eclipsing the rest: Mason and Waters onstage performing *Dark Side*

somewhere in the avant-garde. Geesin suspects they hedged their bets. "They weren't really exploring the avant-garde," he says. "I would suggest that showmanship was more important to them. They and I had different aims and outlooks. I had an eye for composition; they had an eye for the main chance. They wanted success. They wanted to be a famous rock group."

It was the eternal paradox of Floyd. Could you be a mainstream avant-gardist? Yes, if you were a populist counter-culturalist. But didn't that make you a materialistic hippy? Michael Watts from *Melody Maker* found Waters tussling with these conundrums in 1970 on the eve of a European tour. The bassist admitted he was doing the tour for the "bread". Appearing rather guilty about his tastefully furnished Islington home, he owned up to having "the acquisitive instinct to a certain extent", but professed



The *Dark Side* road crew, Usher Hall Edinburgh, November 1974

suggests. "We were still aspiring. We felt we were capable of more. *Meddle* wasn't the plateau. We were aiming to go higher." Shrewd enough to realise that their standoffishness would never harm their record sales, and confident that they had carte blanche in every department that mattered, Floyd advanced towards *The Dark Side Of The Moon* in a state of near-total autonomy. They brooked

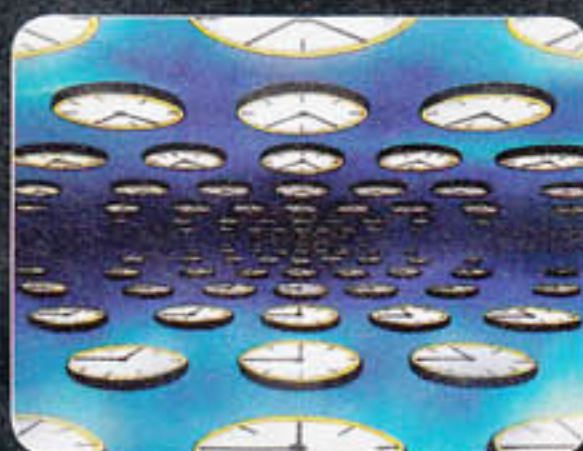
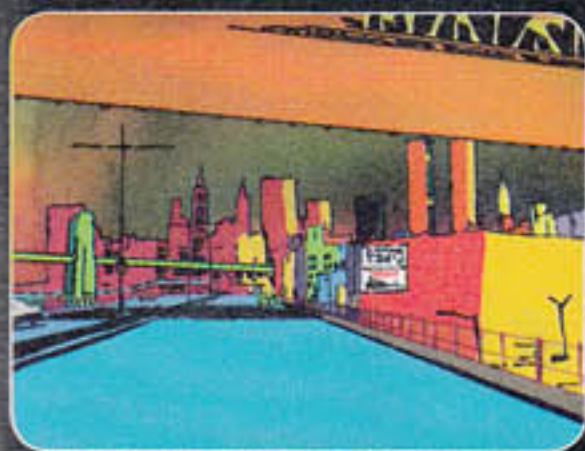
himself a compassionate man and a socialist. Some of his Harvest label-mates would have been surprised to hear it. "There was a lot of wonderful anarchy going on back then," says Edgar Broughton, whose band was synonymous with community work and free concerts. "But the Floyd always seemed to have an organisational edge. They didn't wear their politics on their sleeve, but when pushed, they were conservative. They were astute, well-educated guys who went about things in a methodical, businesslike fashion. To be that efficient – that *together* – was a new idea for rock bands. They must have thought we were a bunch of Bolsheviks."

Clearly, Floyd were not in the music business for the same reasons as the Edgar Broughton Band. Money was intrinsically significant to Floyd, a consequence of their upbringings. Roy Harper goes through the lineup one by one. "Nick was born into quite a wealthy family, so having money was a natural thing for him. Rick was very softly spoken, very quietly middle-class. David was middle-class, but then again his mother came from the town I was brought up in [Lytham St Annes]. And I met Roger's mother a few times early on. She was the epitome of the British middle-class battleaxe."

Discreetly ambitious, forever self-critical, Floyd adjudged *Meddle* – their 1971 album – to be their finest in some time. But Mason doubts they would have viewed themselves as successful. "Top of the second division," he

JILL FURMANOVSKY; ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPER GROUP

## A FLOYD ODYSSEY



## AND ALL YOU CREATE

How a 22-year-old student became Floyd's official *Dark Side* filmmaker

WATCHING THE OLD Grey Whistle Test one night in 1972, Rick Wright was impressed by an animated film – showing four dancers pirouetting through a psychedelically patterned city – which a student at Birmingham College Of Art, Ian Emes, had made to

accompany "One Of These Days" [*Meddle*]. Wright told his bandmates, who commissioned Emes to animate "Time" for their 1973 Earls Court concerts. "Animation, even now, is very labour-intensive and slow," Emes



explains. "The film took about a month to hand-draw with a team of animators." Dominated (inevitably) by clocks, Emes' film became a feature of Floyd's 1973 US tour. "Then they asked me to do 'On The Run' and 'Speak To Me' for Wembley in 1974. [The film for] 'Speak To Me' started with all

these girders flying towards you, curving into a huge sphere with hundreds of heartbeats across the grids. 'On The Run' was more like the climax of 2001, only you were flying across New York – curiously, it ended with the Twin Towers exploding. Nobody's ever asked me about it. I suppose it might have been a premonition." The BAFTA award-winning Emes later worked with Waters on his 1990 production of *The Wall* in Berlin. He currently directs children's show *Bookaboo*.



no interference. When it was finished, they would deliver it with instructions.

From time to time, Harvest and EMI played Pink Floyd at cricket. Both sides took the matches seriously, which were played at the Bank Of England's ground in Roehampton or at Harrods' club in Barnes. Old EMI men have warm recollections of Storm Thorgerson's aggressive spin bowling, and of seeing Rick Wright, Floyd's unsportiest member, loitering on the boundary smoking joints. And as Brian Southall notes, when EMI and Floyd were in contract negotiations, it was amazing how many umpiring decisions went in the band's favour.

ALAN PARSONS, THE young Abbey Road staffer who engineered the LP, chooses his *Dark Side* interviews carefully these days. Famously paid the sum of £35 a week for the 1972-3 sessions, he's had to withstand Waters and Gilmour's frequent insinuations that any reasonably skilled engineer could have done a comparable job. Mason is kinder, dubbing him "the fifth member of the band" for the duration of *Dark Side*'s recording. Parsons, based in Santa Barbara, hasn't listened to the album in years. "I don't need to. I know every note of it."

Parsons, who first met Floyd on *Ummagumma*, considers them the natural heirs to The Beatles, sharing a similar audio-experimentalist approach. "[Floyd] came into the business as pioneers of psychedelia," he says. "In order to get interesting psychedelic sound effects, you had to push the limits of the studio. Think about how primitive the equipment was. There was nothing except tape machines and echo chambers. It was all done with the imagination." Notorious for vacillating, Floyd could also be unusually productive. A curious fact about *Dark Side* is that, although the Abbey Road sessions stretched for seven months (interrupted by two tours and a summer holiday), the album itself took only 40 days to record (and

JILL FURMANOVSKY

I'M YOUR FAN

"IT'S NOT ROCK!"

The Orb's Alex Paterson on a life spent listening to *Dark Side*



"IT TAKES ME back to school. I remember it being in the charts for God knows how many years. Someone put the poster of the pyramids up in the sixth-form common room. Later on, I listened to it during my first six months at art school. I think it's probably the album I had my first trip to... What kind of music is it? It's not rock. It's far from rock. Far, far away. Rock is Led Zeppelin and The Rolling Stones. Pink Floyd is avant-garde. It's a good album to paint to. The best track for that is 'The Great Gig In The Sky' - that's the one I always go for."

for the first five of them, according to Parsons, Mason did nothing but complain about the drum sound). It's often assumed that *Dark Side* would be made even quicker now.

"I don't think so," Parsons disagrees. "One of the misunderstandings about recording is that you don't actually spend time recording, you spend it playing back. They were constantly listening to things over and over again. Nowadays, of course, you don't have to wait for the tape to rewind. And 'Money' would certainly take less time to assemble. That loop took us a day to get right." Heath Robinson in 7/4, "Money" was *Dark Side* at its most ingenious: yards of tape running in circles around Studio Three's control room, kept taut by strategically placed microphone stands. Parsons: "Those were some of the best moments. You'd think, 'Has this ever been done before?' Possibly Stockhausen might have tried it. But I don't think he ever recorded a roomful of clocks in quite the same way we did ['Time'], getting them all to strike at once. Although I think it happens in *Pinocchio*. Don't quote me, but *Pinocchio* might have been an influence."

There are convincing explanations for the fluency of the *Dark Side* sessions compared to other Floyd albums. They'd been playing it live since January 1972, which helped. Mason remembers working fruitfully with Waters on "planning". Waters himself played a non-confrontational role throughout the recording, content for Gilmour and Wright to be the main singers, as they had been on *Obscured By Clouds*, and only taking over lead vocals on the final two songs. "Everybody was so amenable that I didn't think the band had a leader," says Parsons. "Roger was in no way dictatorial."

*Dark Side*, too, arguably, was the moment when Waters and Gilmour found themselves on the same page for the first time in their four years as bandmates. "Roger," says Roy Harper, "had always treated Dave as the new boy. Roger was very much the leader, though it was disputed.

"Good-looking boy"  
David Gilmour  
backstage in  
Edinburgh, 1974





But Dave's ethic propelled Pink Floyd regardless of what Roger says. It propelled them all the way to *Dark Side Of The Moon*. Gilmour's ethic as a musician involved playing the guitar at staggering volume. He was fastidious about his sound (and his effects pedals) and could casually reel off solos that other guitarists would have killed for. "Dave's sound gave Floyd a huge persona," says Harper. "Don't forget, too, he was a good-looking boy in those days. Dave's image helped to sell the whole thing. He was someone that women looked at and said, 'Yeah, go on then...'"

If *Dark Side* was a Waters concept, there are times when it's all about Gilmour. His double-tracked vocals and harmonised lap-steel guitars ("Breathe") are the essence of the album. When the opening collage peaks and pitches us forward into golden light, Gilmour's guitars cocoon and surround us. When "Us And Them" demands an abrupt emotional modulation from grace to tragedy, Gilmour's is the voice that does it. No wonder Harper demarcates: "Roger's a good writer. But if Roger was stuck with a guitar – just a guitar – he'd be in my position. He needed Dave to sell millions of albums."

Parsons, exposed to *Dark Side* on a daily basis in Studio Three, gave little thought to its origin and concept. When Waters suggested that they ask some people to respond to a list of questions written on cards, and record the results, Parsons went first, but was too nervous to provide anything of value. He was particularly flummoxed by one question: "What is *The Dark Side Of The Moon* all about?" He remembers saying, "Elements of life... money," before drying up. Parsons now feels that his answer to the question was wrong – because *The Dark Side Of The Moon* was about something more specific. "It was about a band," he says. "I hadn't sussed that. It was about what a rock'n'roll band goes through, as opposed to what everybody goes through."

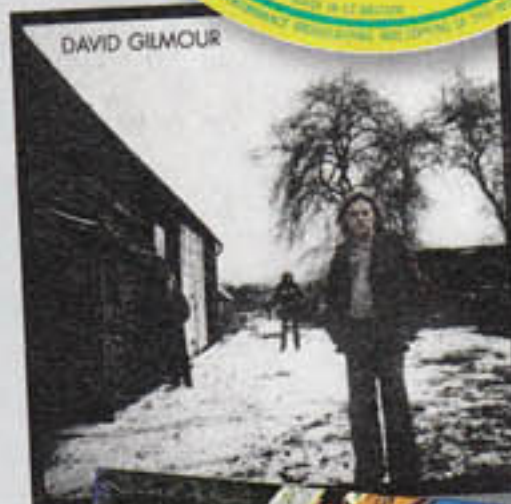
This viewpoint (which Rick Wright shared) goes against many Floyd fans' interpretation of the lyrics. It also contradicts Waters' numerous claims over the years that he deliberately conceived *Dark Side* as an album of universal themes – "an expression of political, philosophical, humanitarian empathy," as he loftily described it in the *Classic Albums* documentary. But Parsons remembers an interesting detail that Waters tends to omit when documentary makers' cameras are rolling. "Roger doesn't narrow it down to being in a band? Well, one

## UNDERGROUND RELICS

### WHATEVER HAPPENED TO HARVEST?

The label's strange afterlife

LAUNCHED BY EMI in 1969, Harvest was a familiar name in British progressive rock for many years. Besides releasing albums by Pink Floyd (from *Ummagumma* onwards) and their former leader Syd Barrett, Harvest's roster included Deep Purple, Roy Harper, Kevin Ayers, Pete Brown, Edgar Broughton, Third Ear Band, Barclay James Harvest (who gave the label its name) and – for two albums – Love. An unexpected move into the singles market in 1972-'73 brought hits for ELO



(Above) First Harvest release, *The Book Of Taliesyn* by Deep Purple, and solo records by Dave Gilmour and Rick Wright

and Wizzard, but Deep Purple left to start their own Purple label.

Be-Bop Deluxe enjoyed some success in the mid-'70s (though Babe Ruth and Sadistic Mika Band were less fortunate) and in 1977, in line with the prevailing trend, two punk signings, Wire and The Saints, gave Harvest a fresh look. The label continued releasing Floyd albums into the late '70s and '80s, as well as their solo projects. Following a dormant '90s, Harvest was reactivated sporadically in the 2000s before being officially re-launched in February 2013 by Capitol. Its current roster includes White Lies and Pete Yorn's band, The Olms.

### "DARK SIDE WAS ABOUT WHAT A ROCK'N'ROLL BAND GOES THROUGH"

ALAN PARSONS



Experience, Discovery and Immersion editions (2011). Only once, in fact, has the title been changed to *Dark Side Of The Moon* – in 1985 on the spine of the first CD pressing – and even then, the sticker on the cover got the title correct. (Source: *Dark Side Of The Moon Revealed* by Brian Southall, Clarksdale Books, 2013.)

of the questions on the cards was, "Why do rock'n'roll bands split up?" But nobody had a very interesting answer, so it wasn't used."

What is *The Dark Side Of The Moon* all about? It depends whom you ask, it seems, and whether you ask them in 1972 or 2003. Roy Harper believes it was about Syd Barrett, who, having gone missing from their lives, suddenly materialised at a cricket match around that time. When Floyd browsed through photographs of the match, one of their wives noticed a shadowy figure in the background. "Isn't that Syd?" He turned out to be in several pictures.

Nobody had noticed him at the match and he hadn't spoken to anyone.

*Dark Side* was mixed by the end of January. EMI promotions man Martin Nelson was dispatched to collect a copy master from Abbey Road and drive it to Heathrow Airport for a flight to Los Angeles. Nelson was kept waiting and eventually allowed into the studio at 2am. "They were finishing off," he says. "They were trying to decide how much swearing to leave on. Dave Gilmour was doing the editing with a razor blade and there were piles of tape all over the floor. Finally, at about 4am, they turned the lights down in the studio and played the whole album. Unbelievable. Absolutely fantastic. I drove to Heathrow at dawn, with the sun coming up and that incredible music still ringing in my ears."

THE COPY OF *Dark Side* that flew to LA that morning was addressed to Capitol Records. Until the release of *Obscured By Clouds* in 1972, Floyd and Capitol had had a dreadful relationship. The legendary label, home of Sinatra and Nat King Cole, had offended Floyd by shunting them onto a minor subsidiary label (Tower) early on, and in 1969-'71 their album sales were a fraction of, say, Led Zeppelin's. *Obscured By Clouds* improved relations somewhat, reaching the US Top 50. However, *Dark Side* was to be the final album on Floyd's Capitol contract, and even prior to its release,

## STILL MEDDLING

### AND WHO KNOWS WHICH IS WHICH?

It's sold 50 million. So how come everybody gets its title wrong?

UNLIKE MOST ICONIC worldwide phenomena, *Dark Side* has always suffered from a small problem: nobody seems to know its title. Most people, including the Floyd members themselves, refer to the album as "Dark Side Of The Moon", omitting the first definite article. But the correct title has always been *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. Harvest's original 1973 'blue label' pressing included the definite article, as did all the press adverts in Britain and America at the time. So did the remastered CD (1994), 30th anniversary edition (2003) and



On the run: the Floyd perform the 'travel' portion of *Dark Side*, 1974



## "ON LEAD SPOON: DAVID GILMOUR!"

"Household Objects", the aborted follow-up

IN OCTOBER 1973, with *Dark Side* still riding high in charts around the world, Floyd returned to Abbey Road with the idea of recording - of all things - an LP played on bottles, rubber bands, aerosol cans and cutlery. "It seemed like a good idea at the time," Roger Waters later explained. In early 1974, after several weeks spent painstakingly assembling three rhythm tracks, the project was abandoned and Floyd began work on *Wish You Were Here* instead. Two incomplete pieces from "Household Objects" were given an official release in 2011 on the Immersion boxsets of *Dark Side* and *Wish....* The only other surviving evidence of Floyd's bizarre folly can be heard in "Shine On You Crazy Diamond" - the sound of tuned wine glasses being rubbed by a wet finger.

their next deal - with Clive Davis at CBS - had been signed. Capitol could easily have taken its foot off the pedal and coasted, knowing Floyd were leaving anyway. But that was never likely to happen. "There was this feeling at Capitol around 1972 that Pink Floyd were going to break big," says Rupert Perry, an Englishman who worked in the company's A&R department. "We had some insight into *Dark Side* because we'd been hearing them play it on the '72 tour. For those of us in A&R, promotion and marketing, it was a case of 'If they get this right in the studio, we could have a gold album.'" A gold album is awarded in America for 500,000 sales. *Obscured By Clouds* had sold 300,000.

Capitol's president, Bhaskar Menon, adored Pink Floyd. Entrusted by EMI with the task of streamlining and modernising Capitol in 1971, Menon was deeply embarrassed to learn of its poor treatment of Floyd in the past, opting to prioritise their long-overdue American breakthrough as a matter of urgency. An Indian-born graduate of Oxford's Christ Church, Menon began hearing rough mixes of *Dark Side* in 1972. "Frankly," he tells *Uncut*, "one would have had to be entirely tone deaf, partially blind and totally unmusical not to be instantly awed by the sheer brilliance of the melodies, their arrangement and the power of the words of this masterpiece." Digesting his words, one gets a sense of why Menon is regarded by Rupert Perry as "a pretty extraordinary individual" and by Nick Mason as "a great president in the mould of the Ahmet Ertegun and David Geffens".

For *Dark Side*, Menon sanctioned one of the most intensive sales and marketing campaigns in music history. As Capitol awoke to a new-found confidence in its massive collateral strength, Menon invested his teams with the motivation to do "whatever it took and whatever it required" to make *Dark Side* "an ultimate standard of triumph and success". No arguments or discussions of a negative mindset, he adds, "would have been encountered, invited or tolerated". Charismatically clever (which made him a good match for Floyd's straight-

talking manager O'Rourke), Menon was to oversee a 276 per cent increase in net income at Capitol in the space of 12 months, almost wholly due to the relentless sales graph of *Dark Side*. "My abiding feeling," he says, "was simply that Pink Floyd's time had absolutely arrived - both as musicians and as people."

Critically, to keep sales momentum going and send the campaign into a 'second phase', Menon persuaded O'Rourke to let Capitol release "Money" as a single. Floyd had a strict no-singles policy, a legacy of their progressive rock principles. But Menon's logic - that once you've reached your target audience, you then target another - won the day. "Money" climbed to No 13 in the summer, introducing Floyd's music to a colossal untapped market of Top 40 AM radio listeners. Floyd slotted in the last piece of the promotional jigsaw by touring America in June, for the third time in nine months. "We'd been sort of bobbing along beneath the A-list," remembers Mason, "selling out theatres. *Dark Side* transformed us from a theatre band to an arena band."

Menon is flattered to be given credit by Mason for *Dark Side*'s record-breaking American achievements - it's certainly not a tribute he can expect these days from Gilmour or Waters - but the scholarly Indian sounds a note of caution from his Beverly Hills home. "I must remind Nick of what I said to the band when they first thanked me and Capitol for the enormous success of the album 39 years ago; namely and truthfully: 'Non nobis, non nobis, Domine; Sed nomini tuo da gloriam'. The Biblical quotation translates as: 'Not to us, not to us, O Lord, But to thy name give glory'."

Clive Davis, the man who dared to prise Floyd from Menon's grasp, was fired by CBS in 1973 before they'd delivered a note of new music. *The Dark Side Of The Moon* entered the US charts on St Patrick's Day 1973, staying there for 741 weeks. In the month that it finally left the Top 200, Rick Wright, who'd been 28 when the *Dark Side* recording sessions began, celebrated his 45th birthday. ☉