

from its collaborators. But such eagerness to embrace the new would have been empty bravado were it not matched with thoughtful, meaningful lyrics and stories, exquisite musicianship and, not least, damn fine tunes.

Like many others, the band can trace its roots to young men – in this case, David Gilmour and Roger Barrett (Syd to his friends) – learning to play guitar together during college meal breaks. Soon after, Gilmour busked his way around France with an unrecorded band while Barrett moved to London to study art, sharing a flat with an old school friend, architecture student Roger Waters. Barrett and Waters soon found themselves in a band with, among others, Richard Wright on keyboards and Nick Mason (another would-be architect) on drums. After many name changes, it was Barrett who christened this outfit “the Pink Floyd Sound.”

Sadly, after an album and a half of superb psychedelic invention, Barrett became a casualty of the pressures of stardom. *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*, Pink Floyd’s debut, and his contributions to the follow-up, *A Saucerful of Secrets*, still stand as defining moments of the ’60s rock revolution. After Barrett’s friends in the band assisted him in recording two brave but ultimately disturbing solo albums, he retired completely from the music world and abandoned his alter ego. The

Just how did a band named for two Georgia bluesmen, Pink Anderson and Floyd Council, journey from England’s idyllic Cambridge to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame?

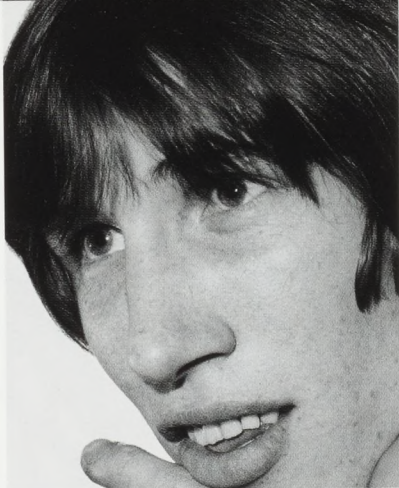
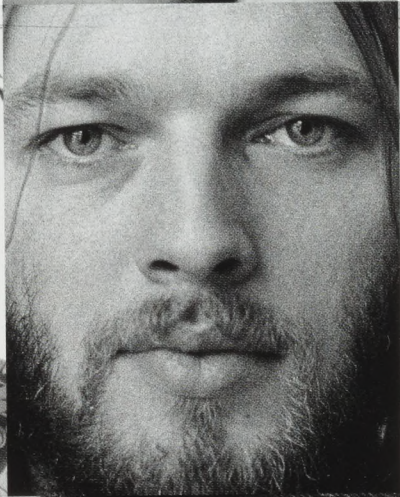
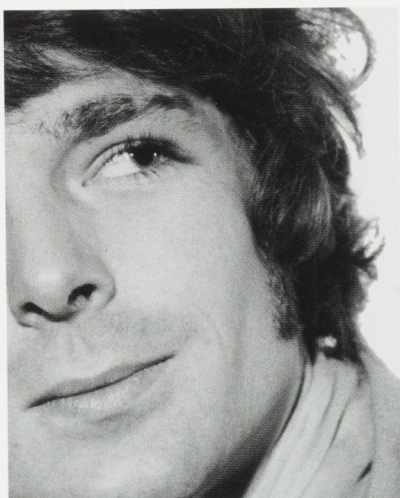
From its beginnings as an improvising blues-based psychedelic band with hit pop singles to a period when journalists insisted on describing Pink Floyd, mistakenly, as “electronic rockers”; from the ubiquitous *Dark Side of the Moon* to being the first rock band played in space; from tales of an underwear thief to the doom and gloom of *The Wall*, Pink Floyd have always been bigger, better and braver than the rest.

As pioneers of coordinated stage lighting, quadraphonic concert sound, theatrical stage shows (with films, props and even flying pigs) and a hundred and one technical and artistic innovations, the band has never accepted the words “can’t be done”



The five members of Pink Floyd, all of whom are being inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, were never all in the group

at the same time. Clockwise from top: Rick Wright, Nick Mason, Roger Waters and Syd Barrett, who was replaced by David Gilmour (center).









mental health of Roger Barrett (as he now prefers to be called) is to this day the subject of unfounded speculation and exaggerated rumor, both more fiction than fact. Suffice it to say that his royalties ensure he has a comfortable existence, and his family describes him as happier than ever.

In 1968, just a year after the chart success of the first two Pink Floyd singles, "Arnold Layne" and "See Emily Play," Barrett was replaced by his former mentor David Gilmour. Almost immediately, the band changed direction, becoming, after a further brace of vain attempts at pop-chart mastery, less psychedelic. Ideally suited to film music, the new lineup soundtracked Schroeders' *More* and *La Vallée* (*Obscured By Clouds*), plus Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point*. *Ummagumma*, a double album, mixed two sides of live tracks with four pieces, each recorded by one band member as a solo project. From then on, and for the next 14 years, Pink Floyd would concentrate on albums, not singles; on lengthy suites instead of albums of songs.

1970's *Atom Heart Mother* comprised one side of songs and a side-long instrumental, the title track. This was co-written by the avant-garde artist Ron Geesin and featured not only Pink Floyd's guitars, bass, keyboards and drums but a choir, an orchestra and a motorbike. A similar mix of songs with one more weighty work gave us *Meddle*. The sublime "Echoes" was in its day, unsurprisingly, a concert favorite, as demonstrated in the audience-less concert movie *Live at Pompeii*.

Pink Floyd's fortunes turned commercially upward, and forever, in 1973, when Roger Waters' "Piece for Assorted Lunatics" was recorded as "The Dark Side of the Moon." The statistics for the album could

themselves be the subject of a book. It's enough simply to say that the album's 14 year-plus chart run is unlikely ever to be broken. Following *Dark Side's* success and inspired by the pressures that the band's increasing fame generated, *Wish You Were Here* told tales of loneliness and isolation and hinted at Waters' dissatisfaction with the industry that fed him (he was, from *Dark Side* to *The Final Cut*, the band's only lyricist). The poignant "Shine On You Crazy Diamond" was for Syd Barrett.

Further bile from Waters fueled *Animals*, *The Wall* and the oft-overlooked damnation of the Falklands conflict which was *The Final Cut*. We must remember, however, that these albums would not have been what they are without the unbelievable beauty of David Gilmour's guitar, Nick Mason's solid and always appropriate drumming and Rick Wright's succulent keyboards, although, for *The Final Cut*, Wright was reluctantly taking a break from the band. This, however, was not before the already legendary *Wall* concerts — in which the band disappeared behind a wall built across the stage by roadies as the concert progressed — and the Alan Parker movie adaptation.

In 1986, Waters decided that the band had had its day and publicly announced its demise. Gilmour and Mason, later re-joined by Wright, had other ideas. The disparity of the stances taken, with equal conviction by the two sides, resulted in contentious negotiations. Despite the disagreements, the band continued as a three-piece, aided by some of the best session musicians in the business. In the past nine years, Pink Floyd have sold millions of copies of their two studio albums and two live double CDs. They have crisscrossed the globe, played at the Palace of Versailles

and on a pontoon in Venice, and performed hundreds of concerts for millions of people. While these impressive figures prove that Pink Floyd remain as popular as ever, their current musical activity, if any, remains a closely guarded secret — and the subject of yet more rumor.

Waters, meanwhile, continues to record works of quality and insight comparable to anything he and the band produced together. His recreation of *The Wall* show in Berlin, with an all-star cast, symbolically reclaimed the former no-man's land between East and West. His ventures into opera and poetry are eagerly awaited worldwide by his fans.

Whether you love them for their '60s psychedelia, '70s concept albums, '80s reinvention or '90s stadium-filling adult rock, there can be no denying that all five members of Pink Floyd deserve their induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. —Andy Mabbett

Opposite page: Pink Floyd, circa '66. One of the earliest color photographs shows the band in its pre-psychedelic Carnaby Street mode. This page: Roger Waters, Rick Wright, Roger "Syd" Barrett, David Gilmour and Nick Mason. (clockwise from top).

