

Good afternoon. My name is Björgvin Rúnar Leifsson and this is an episode about Pink Floyd.

The origins of Pink Floyd can be traced back to bassist Clive Metcalfe and vocalist Keith Noble, who formed the band Sigma 6 at The London School of Polytechnics in the winter of 1962-63 and were joined by Roger Waters on guitar, Nick Mason on drums, Richard Wright on keyboards and vocalists Sheila Noble and Juliette Gale. They got Ken Chapman to join them as a songwriter and agent and he introduced them as The Architectural Abdabs later that winter.

In his book, *Inside Out*, Nick Mason mentions that his first acquaintance with Roger Waters was when Waters asked to borrow his car as Mason had an Austin Seven model year 1930. Mason also says that the first time Waters and Richard Wright met was when Waters asked Wright for a cigarette, which Wright flatly denied. Mason, who is clearly a humorist, adds that this was a shining example of Wright's mythical generosity. The story actually says that Waters sat at the end of the table where Wright was working and reached for and opened a new package as he asked for the cigarette. Another example of Mason's humor is his favorite joke about the boy who tells his mother that he intends to become a drummer when he grows up and the mother promptly responds that he can not do both.

Mason also says that PF arose from two groups of friends, who overlapped. On the one hand, there was a group of childhood friends from Cambridge, namely Waters, Roger (Syd) Barrett and David Gilmour and it may be added here that it was Gilmour, who taught Barrett to play the guitar. On the other hand, it was the three mentioned before who met in the circumstances already described in the 1st year at Polytechnics but it is a bit unclear whether Sigma-6 started before or after the turn of the year 62-63.

As early as the fall of 1963, Clive and Keith left (to try their luck as a duet). Sheila left too and so did Juliette, who later married Wright. The rest of the band, i.e. Roger, Rick and Mason then got a Mike Leonard to join them. Leonard, who, among other things, had the good fortune to own (and play) a piano and could also provide training facilities. It's probably this winter that the band started calling themselves the Tea Set after having called the band Leonard's Lodgers for a short period.

Bob Klose joined the band in September 1964. As he was a real guitarist, Roger Waters' path lay downwards to the bass (as he himself put it). Mason speaks strongly when he says that it was good that Waters' path was not lower than the bass, because then his own path would have been out of the band. Bob was also able to provide a lead singer, Chris Dennis, who thus became the face of the band. However, he only stayed for a short while because later that fall, when the band got Roger 'Syd' Barrett to join them, he was fired, probably because his political ideas did not work together with the ideas of Waters and Mason (and probably Wright as well). Mason says that Syd came to a rehearsal at Mike Leonard's house (who had then stopped playing with the band), listened and said: "Yes, this sounded good but I do not see what I should do in the band". Mason actually eliminates all doubt and I quote: "It was very much a case of Syd joining us, rather than him recruiting a band. "

The band went into the studio for the first time in December 1964 and recorded three songs written by Barrett. Those were "Lucy Leave", which we heard at the beginning of this episode, "Double O Bo" and "Butterfly" but they were never released on an album until 2016 on

Cambridge Station, the first CD of the compilation set *The Early Years 1965-1972*. Some say Lucy Leave is the only song where Bob Close's guitar was heard but I think it is unlikely that he only played on this one song in the studio where a few songs were recorded at once. At the same time, Richard Wright's song, "You're the Reason Why" was released on the B-side of the 45 revs per minute single "Little Baby" with a band that called themselves Adam, Mike & Tim. Thus Wright became the first of all Tea Set members to get a song released on an album.

Bob Close resigned in the summer of 1965 due to a dispute with Syd Barrett regarding the band's music policy. Syd wanted to move the music more towards blues and acid rock but Bob was more on the jazz line.

It was probably after Bob left that the Tea Set were supposed to play at a concert at an old RAF airport, probably Northolt outside London. Surprisingly there was another band playing under the same name and for some reason our men but not the other group had to change the name quickly. It was then that Barrett came up with the name The Pink Floyd Sound after the first names of two American blues players, Pink Anderson and Floyd Council. The name soon changed to Pink Floyd but the band became world famous over time for their special "Pink Floyd Sound", in which Richard Wright's part has often been strongly underestimated.

The first concert under the name Pink Floyd was held early 1966 in Countdown Club in Palace Gate. They played for 5 hours, with one 20-minute break and received £ 15.

It was not until 1967 that PF started releasing albums. That year, 3 two-track singles and one LP were released. The first was released in March 1967 with the A-side song "Arnold Layne" by Barrett. The song is about the transvestite Arnold Layne, who gets a kick out of stealing women's underwear from clotheslines in Cambridge, the former home town of Barrett and Waters. Their mothers both rented out rooms to young women and sometimes a lingerie part or two would be missing from the washing lines.

[Arnold Layne](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3DGpINHX5Q) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3DGpINHX5Q>

On May 12, 1967, the band held a famous concert at Queen Elisabeth Hall, which is usually only used for classical music performance. The concert was advertised under the name Games for May and Barrett created a song with that name but changed it at the last minute to "See Emily Play". The single reached great heights in popularity and was the most popular single by the band until Another Brick in the Wall, part 2, was released as a single 12 years later.

[See Emily Play](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7c0EDM-Yu9o) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7c0EDM-Yu9o>

Neither of these songs made it onto the LP album. Neither did Wright's song, "Paintbox", which was released as a single in November that same year.

[Paintbox](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HunMcsuiDZE) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HunMcsuiDZE>

Pink Floyd's first LP, "The Piper at the Gates of Dawn", was released on August 5th 1967. There were 11 songs, 8 of them by Barrett, one by Waters and two credited to them all. The first

song on the album, "Astronomy Domine", is a classic PF hit from the early years and very descriptive for Barrett's lyrical compositions.

[Astronomy Domine](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UbNbor3OqQ) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UbNbor3OqQ>

Next we listen to "Pow R. Toc H." which is by all four band members . Although it is relatively short, it can perhaps be said that it sets the tone for what came later in the band's progressive compositions

[Pow R. Toc H.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_BMl_inPI0) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_BMl_inPI0

The last track on the first side of the album is "Take Up thy Stethoscope and Walk" and is, as far as I know, the first song by Waters to appear on a PF album.

[Take up thy Stethoscope and Walk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk_OJhx3d2U) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk_OJhx3d2U

The first song on the second side is "Interstellar Overdrive" again by all four band members. This is a song that is descriptive of Pink Floyd's improvisational and progressive compositions in the Barrett era. It is 9 minutes and 40 seconds on the album but the longest concert version is more than 16 minutes long. In 1967, this song, along with the much lesser known song, Nick's Boogie, also by all band members, was performed in Peter Whitehead's film "Tonite Lets All Make Love in London". The focus of the film was events, concerts and interviews with Pink Floyd, although other artists, such as John Lennon and Mick Jagger, attended to the concert as well. The songs in the movie and the movie itself have been released on various media several times and in 1995 a CD with those two songs, which was simply called London 66-67, was released.

[Interstellar Overdrive](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4o2sA0vpA-4) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4o2sA0vpA-4>

The name of The Piper at the Gates of Dawn is taken from a chapter title in the famous children adventure Wind in the Willows. It looks like Barrett was very fond of adventures and some of his lyrics are like he is telling an adventure and sometimes even a bit childish. We will end this episode with three examples.

First we have Flaming

[Flaming](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPYVhMADdwk) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPYVhMADdwk>

Next we listen to The Gnome

[The Gnome](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLZOrqhSH40) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLZOrqhSH40>

Finally we listen to Bike where a boy tells his girl that he would give her "anything, everything if you want thing"

Meu nome é Björgvin Rúnar Leifsson e eu sei muito pouco sobre o Pink Floyd. Obrigado e até depois.

[Bike](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RKjzC7Tg-4) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RKjzC7Tg-4>

© Björgvin R. Leifsson 2020