

## The Last Few Bricks

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

In his book, "Inside Out", Mason mentions that he had a hard time writing about the tragic events when Wright was actually forced to leave Pink Floyd and the band changed from a very democratic band to a group with only one leader. He also mentions that at this time his friendship with Waters was getting fragile but until then they had been good friends.

The sound mixing of the album "The Wall" took place in Los Angeles. Ezrin got The New York Symphony Orchestra with conductor Michael Kamen to take care of string playing and other classical accompaniment in various places, including "The Trial", co-authored by Ezrin and Waters. Kamen's contribution led to a major dispute between Gilmour and Waters as to how much of it should be used in "Comfortably Numb", which they composed together from Gilmour's demo from the previous year. According to sources they quarreled furiously in a restaurant in Hollywood but finally reached a sort of agreement in which Ezrin had probably been involved in. Gilmour said in an interview in Mark Blake's book, "Comfortably Numb - The Inside Story of Pink Floyd" in 2008, that the song was the last piece that he and Waters would be able to compose together.

Meanwhile, a Nick Griffith worked overtime on sound effects in The Britannia Row studio, and Waters and Ezrin called him any time of the day with new demands. Waters actually took care of a part of the effects himself and Mason mentions in his book that he hung up when he thought that he was a phone call prank victim. Then an innocent phone girl in Los Angeles was used to make a fake call between Pink and his girlfriend.

The album was released on November 30, in 1979, a week after the popular single "Another Brick in the Wall, part 2". It rocketed onto popularity lists around the world in a short time and sold in huge quantities. Many consider it the best work of Pink Floyd ever but I do not agree with that assessment although it is certainly one of the band's best albums. Of the individual songs, I like "Comfortably Numb" best by far, not least because of Gilmour's guitar. According to the website "digitaldreamdoor.com" it is the best rock guitar solo of all time and this is actually my favorite Pink Floyd song. The reason I don't put "The Wall" in the first or second place is first and foremost that it is rawer and drier than both "Dark Side of the Moon" and "Wish You Were Here". However, the heavy Pink Floyd sound can clearly be identified throughout the whole album and that is in my opinion Wright's real contribution to the work and perhaps the reason why Waters, who always wanted the music to be rougher than Gilmour and Wright, was never happy with his keyboards.

In February 1980, They embarked on a long and rigorous concert tour, which lasted until June 1981. This concert was in many ways very special and some people had difficulty understanding the band's message to the audience. It should be kept in mind that Wright's departure as a full time member of Pink Floyd had been carefully kept secret and while he played at the concert as a paid sessioner, everyone thought of course that he was still in the band.

The concert started with 4 men with masks on their faces rising from below floor level onto stage and playing the first song, called "In the Flesh" and there is a question mark after the name. This was the famous "surrogate" or backup band and these were Pete Woods on keyboard, Willie Wilson on drums, Andy Bown on bass and Snowy White on guitar. It took the audience usually some time to realize this but the masks were of course images of the faces of the Pink Floyd members.

As the concert progressed, the wall rose higher and higher between the audience and the band until only one hole was left for Waters to sing "Goodbye Cruel World" through but then the hole closed. Since there was still a lot left of the wall to build after the song "Another Brick in the Wall, part 3" they played a kind of overview of the first part of the work for a few minutes while

the roadies finished the building. This overview was anonymous to begin with but is called "The Last Few Bricks" on the concert CD, which was released in 2000 and that was exactly what you heard in the beginning today. At the concert, drawn figures by Gerald Scarfe were projected onto the wall and these figures were used in the cartoon parts of Alan Parker's film of "The Wall", released in 1982. At the end of the concert, after "The Trial" but before "Outside the Wall" the wall collapsed. The concert ended with the final tune "Outside the Wall" and no encore songs were played.

In May 1981, shortly before the end of the tour, the solo album "Nick" Mason's Fictitious Sports", was released, which was a collaboration between Mason and Carla Bley, who is credited for all the material. The album was recorded in October 1979, a month before "The Wall" was released but the release was delayed for almost two years. In November 1981, after the tour ended, the compilation album "A Collection of Great Dance Songs" was released, which was considered a bit of a contradiction as Pink Floyd songs are not exactly considered dance songs. There was nothing new on this album but a few songs were remixed and Gilmour recorded himself a completely new version of "Money".

The film, "Pink Floyd - The Wall", was Waters' collaborative project with Alan Parker, the film's director, and the illustrator Gerald Scarfe. According to Mason the latter partnership with Pink Floyd dates back to 1975. Since all three were egoists, the filmmaking was not quite effortless even though the final result was an amazing artwork and many have said that it is spectacular how well the film accompanies the music. The punk rock star Bob Geldof from the Irish band Boomtown Rats was in a taxi on the way to the airport when his agent mentioned to him that he had been invited to play Pink in the movie and he replied that he hated Pink Floyd. The taxi driver happened to be Waters' brother and of course he let him know of the incident. Bob accepted the role in the end and played it quite well despite having almost no text to go with in the film. I always remember the incident when Pink shaved off all body hair and appeared with no eyebrows after shaving. This is a direct reference to Barrett's appearance when he showed up to everyone's surprise in the studio during the making of "Wish You Were Here" in 1975.

I said at the beginning of the last episode that the idea for the main theme of "The Wall" came to Waters after the fateful spit at an "Animals" concert in 1977. It is quite true that the main theme is the abyss, which he felt was between the band and the audience and he managed to particularly well demonstrate it at the concert. The Wall is also a rock opera about Pink, who loses his father as an infant and is raised by an overprotective mother. He is bullied at school by teachers and all this contributes to the bricks in the psychological wall, which he builds up gradually between himself and the outside world. As he grows older, he becomes a rock star and his life is marked with drug use and violence. When his marriage goes to the sink the wall is fully built and Pink has isolated himself from everyone around him. Gradually, the insanity behind the wall increases until he sees himself as a fascist leader at an extremist rally where he encourages violence against fans who clearly represent minorities in society that he does not like. At the same time, he becomes more and more filled with guilt until he holds a trial over himself where he manages to break down the wall and thereby reconnect with the outside world.

The album ends with the words "Isn't this where ...". This is the beginning of a sentence, which ends at the beginning of the album where the words "... we came in?" are heard before the work begins and thus Waters indicates a kind of eternal cycle of the main theme. Pink's story is extremely well presented in the film and so is Waters' critique of warfare, fascism, and the development of the British community at that time. The analogy between Pink and Waters' life itself is furthermore apparent. A reference to the death of the father is a good example but Waters was only 5 months old when his father died in Italy in World War II. Then there are some

references to Barrett on the album and in the film, such as in the song "Nobody Home" and the shaving scene, which I described earlier.

Overall, "The Wall" is an amazing work and undoubtedly Waters' best work throughout his musical career. Let us now listen to the latter part of the work.

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

The Wall

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