

Cluster One

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

In 1991, Mason, Gilmour, and their agent O'Rourke participated in the Carrera Panamericana racing in Mexico. Mason finished in 6th place along with his assistant, but Gilmour and O'Rourke collided from which Gilmour escaped with a few scars but O'Rourke broke his leg. Mason says in his book that they were lucky not to kill themselves and at the same time praises Wright for not letting himself become distracted by car racing. Instead he kept sailing on his yacht in the Greek Aegean.

A year later, a video was released about the race with songs by Pink Floyd under the name "La Carrera Panamericana". There were some older songs primarily from "A Momentary Lapse of Reason" but also new songs, which are found nowhere else and two of them are credited to all three of them. This is the first time Mason and Wright were credited as co-authors since "Dark Side of the Moon" and "Wish You Were Here" respectively but as the existence of "La Carrera" is not common knowledge, most people think that the first credit to Wright after "Shine on" is on "The Division Bell" and to Mason not until "The Endless River".

What was remarkable about these songs was that they were largely composed in a similar way to Pink Floyd's work in the early seventies and set the tone for "The Division Bell". Instead of bringing in demos or ready-made songs they met with some of the musicians from the "Delicate Sound of Thunder" concerts, such as Gary Wallis, Guy Pratt and Jon Carin. Then they simply jammed and improvised. Usually it was Gilmour who started a series of tones and the others followed him.

The same year that the race film was released, Waters released his third solo album, "Amused to Death", with many good songs, such as "It's a Miracle". Many consider this album to be Waters' best solo album, but in my opinion that would be "Flickering Flame", which was released in 2002 and is a kind of an overview of his solo career. It includes the song "Each Small Candle", which in my opinion is among the best that Waters has composed during his solo career.

Work on "The Division Bell" began in January 1993. They booked the Britannia Row studio and decided to meet there daily for a week to jam and improvise without any assistants other than the technician. Immediately after the first day, they were happy with the outcome and a few days later Guy Pratt was called in to play the bass. Mason mentions that Pratt's bass immediately affected the instrumental playing as well as changing the texture of the music.

The unusual thing was that the jam usually immediately led to something they were happy with and felt they could use on the album, unlike how it was in the old days when they needed a long time to create something that everyone was happy with, such as when "Meddle" and "Wish You Were Here" were made.

The opening track of the album, "Cluster One", which you heard at the beginning of the episode is a shining example of the glorious collaboration between Gilmour and Wright and they have both said in interviews that they work so well together and know each other so well that each of them usually knows which tone the other is going to hit next. The song "Marooned" is another example of this collaboration and is the only Pink Floyd song, which has won a Grammy Award. It was chosen as the best instrumental rock song of the year 1995.

Marooned

All other songs on the album have lyrics, most of them by Polly Samson, who became Gilmour's second wife in 1994. Her contribution cannot be overrated as she took the chalice from Gilmour having to compose lyrics and thus he could concentrate on the music. Mason

actually says that this was the first time Gilmour could create music when he needed it instead of taking a long time to come up with a song. According to Mason they all liked making "The Division Bell". The struggle with Waters was behind them and they all took part in the making of the album. Wright did not actually become a full member of Pink Floyd again until 1994 according to Wikipedia but according to an interview with him in 1996 he enjoyed making the album and does not mention that he had any doubts about it at any point, as Wikipedia suggests. Mason says that Wright felt he was fully involved in the making of the album and does not mention any doubts on his part. In fact, there is one song on the album by Wright along with lyricist Moore, who worked with them on "A Momentary Lapse of Reason". The song begins with Dick Parry's sweet saxophone tones and both Wright and Gilmour sing it. In my opinion, "Wearing the Inside Out" was among the very best songs that Wright composed in his entire career.

Wearing the Inside Out

As the jam in Britannia Row went very well, they had a lot of material as early as February 1993. Then they moved into Gilmour's houseboat, Astoria, to work further on the material and decide what would go on the album. When they had about 25 songs they intended to have a very democratic vote on what would go on the album with each of them giving the songs a rating on the scale of 1-10 regardless of who had composed the work. This should have worked quickly and easily if Wright had not completely misunderstood the underlying concept of democracy and simply gave all his songs 10 points and everything else zero points. According to Mason it took him and Gilmour some time to figure out why the album was suddenly changing from a Pink Floyd album to a Richard Wright album. Similarly, much later when songs were selected for the compilation album "Echoes", Waters only voted for his own songs.

Gradually, however, an agreement was reached on which songs should go on the album, but a name for it was still missing. Everyone had his opinion and in January 1994 the album was still anonymous. Then the help came from an unexpected source. Douglas Adams, the author of "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy", was a big Pink Floyd fan and a good enough acquaintance of the band members to be asked to suggest a name and accept £5,000 for the trouble that he could give to charities of his choice. He suggested "The Division Bell" after a while, but these words actually appear in one of the lyrics on the album and Pink Floyd members felt a bit sullen having not found it themselves.

Let's now listen to Gilmour's song "Coming Back to Life", that begins with sweet guitar tones, which are so characteristic of Gilmour and are close to his best solos.

Coming Back to Life

Unlike "A Momentary Lapse of Reason", "The Division Bell" has at least a loose theme of human interaction: That talking together can solve many problems. The name of the album, taken from one of the lyrics, refers to a bell in the British Parliament, which tolls when a vote is to be taken, or as Mason puts it, when it comes to making decisions. Various people, including the author of these episodes, have considered many of the lyrics to be more or less a direct reference to the argument with Waters, but Gilmour has vehemently denied it. However, I do not think it is unlikely that the theme of the album is partly caused by the lack of communication that led to the band members stopping talking to each other in the middle of the eighties and as Mason points out in his book it played a part in the breaking up with Waters.

The song "Keep Talking" by Gilmour and Wright with Samson's lyrics is descriptive of the album's theme. At the beginning of the song, the physicist Stephen Hawking is heard saying a

few words that Gilmour first heard in a TV commercial and was licensed to use on the album. Hawking's text reads as follows:

" For millions of years mankind lived just like animals
Then something happened which unleashed the power of our imagination We learned to talk "

Keep Talking

Storm Thorgerson, who designed most of Pink Floyd's album covers except "Piper", "The Wall" and "The Final Cut", had two giant metal heads made at the size of double-decker busses and placed in a field. The heads were set up so that they turned towards each other as if they were talking but at the same time the profile of both points to the viewer in the picture on the album cover. This gave a sense of the third face, pointing to the viewer. According to some sources the heads represent the former members of Pink Floyd, Barrett and Waters.

"The Division Bell" was released on CD at the turn of the months March-April in 1994 and went straight to number one in the UK and the US charts. Despite this, the album did not receive good reviews from critics, who could not see past the Waters era. I talked a bit about this in the last episode and do not intend to repeat it but point out that the album was nominated for the 1995 Brit award as the best album by a British artist but did not win.

I find "The Division Bell" to be very good and like so many of Pink Floyd's albums it gets better with each listen. In my opinion, it is a lot better than both the studio albums of the eighties and in fact a decent example of how a good co-operation leads to a much better work than absolute domination by one man. "The Division Bell" showed without a doubt that Pink Floyd could continue without Waters and the only regret is that they did not more studio albums in those years. According to Mason, they had a lot of stuff that would have been worth publishing.

Immediately after the release, they went on a concert tour, which ended in October of the same year at Earl's Court in London. This concert has been released on CD, video and DVD and is in the minds of many fans even better than the "Delicate Sound of Thunder" concert. Here you can find by far the best concert version of "Comfortably Numb" in my opinion. At the final concert at Earl's Court, Bob Klose visited the band backstage and the old acquaintance was renewed. Incidentally, Klose played with Gilmour on the "On an Island" album in 2006. Asked if he regretted having quit "The Tea Set" just before the name change, Klose said in an interview in the 2005 documentary film about Barrett and Pink Floyd that maybe he just had to go for Pink Floyd to become what they did. A few years later, Clive Metcalf, one of the two founders of Sigma-6 in 1962, appeared on a car race in Britain and met Mason. On that occasion, a reporter remarked that he must feel like he had missed out on the big lottery winnings. Metcalf calmly replied that he and Noble had decided to leave Mason, Waters and Wright in 1963 because at that point they thought that the other three were more or less hopeless.

At the end of his book, Mason says he served under three captains on the ship Pink Floyd. The first was the crazy Barrett, who almost led them to destruction until rebellion brought the cruel Waters to power. Later, Waters walked his own plank and the able captain Gilmour, took over.

In 1996, Wright's second solo album was released. The album is called "Broken China" and is a theme album about depression as Wright's third wife suffered from chronic depression. Waters released the concert DVD "In the Flesh" in 2000 and in 2002 the DVD "David Gilmour in Concert" was released with excerpts from two more or less unamplified concerts by Gilmour. In 2005, they all performed together at the Live Aid concert hosted by Bob Geldof. By an unexpected coincidence, Waters met with Mason in 2002 and they renewed their friendship but it probably did not start to heal between Waters and the other two until after Live Aid.

Waters' opera, *Ça Ira*, was released in 2005 and Gilmour's best solo album until that time, "On an Island", was released in 2006 on his sixtieth birthday. Two concert discs followed, "Remember That Night" 2007 and Live in Gdansk 2008.

The compilation album "Echoes" was released in 2001 and another compilation album, "A Foot in the Door", was released in 2011. In the same year, Waters went on a concert tour with The Wall and on May the 12 of that year, Gilmour performed "Comfortably Numb" with him. On the same occasion, Mason and Gilmour took to the stage during final song, "Outside the Wall". They had not been seen together on stage since Live Aid in 2005. The Wall tour lasted for about three years and I saw the last show with my wife at Stade du France in Paris in the autumn of 2013.

In 2013 there were rumors that Gilmour was working on an album and would follow it up with a concert tour the year after.

Barrett died on July 7, 2006 and Wright died on September 15, 2008, a week before Gilmour's "Live in Gdansk" concert was released. Wright played at this concert. Both died of cancer.

This was the last episode at Radio Husavik in Iceland in 2013. We still have one to go but I am going to end today with the last song on the "Division Bell" album, the song "High Hopes", which deals with Gilmour growing up in Cambridge. At the end of the song, Steve O'Rourke can be heard talking to Charlie, Gilmour's stepson over the phone but the latter hung up and the agent's long-awaited dream of appearing on a Pink Floyd album was fulfilled.

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

[High Hopes](#)