

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

After the incredible reception that "Dark Side of the Moon" received, it can be said that all days were not days of wine and roses for the Pink Floyd members. They felt that they would have to start on a new album even though no publisher applied any pressure to them and they also felt under a lot of pressure that the new album would be as least as good as the gold nugget or even better. So they went into the Abbey Road studio in the fall of 1973 with both hands empty and started jamming, hoping that something would come out of it.

Sometime before, they had discussed ideas for an album, which would be based exclusively on sounds of all kinds of household appliances, both indoors and outdoors. They worked on this for two months in the fall of 1973 before they gave up and had by then recorded a lot. Everything from hammer- and ax sounds to breaking sounds from light bulbs and water sounds of the most separable varieties. They called the project "Household Objects" and although it is mostly unused, it is perhaps most remarkable because it still exists without having ever been published on a "bootleg", that is illegally.

To keep new fans busy, they decided to re-release the band's first two albums with one cover in December 1973 under the synonym "A Nice Pair".

The year 1974 was mostly spent postponing the inevitable, that is, to make a new album. In fact, they had such a hard time getting started that they seriously considered discontinuing the band. However, they went for one or two concert tours this year, where they played among older songs, drafts of new songs, like "Raving and Drooling", "You've got to be Crazy" and an unfinished work, which they simply called "Shine on" at this point. But in fact, very little was happening and as they had formed a kind of wall between themselves and the media it had led to a certain stiffness on both sides. At the end of the year, they got quite a hard criticism from journalist Nick Kent, who was actually a great Barrett fan. He simply spoke the truth, saying the new material that they played at concerts was no good and that led to them going into the studio in the first week of 1975.

At that time, however, they had a basis for a new work. Sometime in 1974, Gilmour struck four simple notes on his guitar, the notes, which you heard at the beginning of the episode. Waters immediately picked it up as it was coming from some kind of distance. That became the main theme of the album, that is, absence, which actually developed in two ways. On one hand is was the memory of Syd Barrett in "Shine on You Crazy Diamond" and "Wish You Were Here" and on the other the demanding record companies, who always want more and more of the musicians but are still so distant or rather have so little interest that they do not even know the names of the band members. The text "Oh by the way, which one's Pink" in the song "Have a Cigar" is not a coincidence as band members have hinted that they have really been asked this question. Gradually, as the album progressed, Waters saw that "Raving and Drooling" and "You've got to be Crazy" did not have a place on this album and suggested that they should be postponed until the next one. He got what he wanted although Gilmour was skeptical.

The album "Wish You Were Here" was released in September 1975 and is in my opinion almost as good as "Dark Side of the Moon" and is actually my favorite PF album. It also received a great reception and went straight to number one in both the UK and the US. I am sure, however, that newer fans like myself have been surprised while listening to the first parts of "Shine on You Crazy Diamond", asking themselves "What? No singing"? Older fans, who knew "Atom Heart Mother" and "Echoes", on the other hand, have probably nodded and immediately recognized this type of song.

One of the things that makes "Wish You Were Here" so good in my opinion is how strong the contrast is to "Dark Side of the Moon". The latter both begins and ends powerfully while "Wish

"You Were Here" both begins and ends on very calm and low tones, which in the beginning gradually strengthen during the introduction to "Shine on" but also fade out brilliantly at the end of the same work, which both begins and ends the album. This was Waters' idea. Again, Gilmour had his doubts but gave in as both Wright and Mason supported Waters in this case.

All lyrics are by Waters and he is the sole author of two songs, "Welcome to the Machine" and "Have a Cigar". However, I cannot agree that he had taken over the band at this point as the role of the others is far too great, including Mason although he is not credited as a co-author of any song on the album.

Because I'm going to play the whole piece "Shine on You Crazy Diamond" for you at the end of the episode, let's start with the fight with the music industry and first listen to "Welcome to the Machine" by Waters. The song is about a young musician, who brings with him freshness and new trends but is soon made the private property of the record business. Example lyric "What did you dream, it's all right, we told you what to dream". There is a very funny effect use at the beginning of the song. I always get the feeling that I am out at sea and that the bridge is asking the engine room for more speed. The song ends after an air defense whistle at a party, which might as well be some kind of a publishing party.

[Welcome to the Machine](#)

The song "Have a Cigar" is also by Waters and deals with the hypocrisy and greed of the music industry but on the other hand it's also about the pressure that members of Pink Floyd felt after the masterpiece "Dark Side of the Moon" which I mentioned earlier. For some reason neither Gilmour nor Waters felt they could sing the song well enough. Both Mason and Wright actually thought Gilmour should sing it and I have not found out whether they invited Wright to try. Anyway, a certain Roy Harper, who was also recording in Abbey Road offered to sing it which they accepted but Waters has always regretted not singing the song himself ever since.

"Have a Cigar" ends very abruptly like it is being turned down on the radio and then changed stations. Then they navigate between radio stations on Gilmour's car radio until they find a station, that is starting to play the title track of the album, "Wish You Were Here". The story of "Wish You Were Here" began when Waters approached Gilmour when the latter was blabbering on an acoustic guitar. Waters asked Gilmour to play it a little slower and picked up another guitar and thus the song gradually became a musical product of those two, which was probably rare at this point. Waters' text, which was actually created before the song, which was unusual, is mostly about Syd Barrett. Compare "Can you tell a green field from a cold steel rail?", with the song, "If It's In You", from Barrett's solo album, "The Madcap Laughs" which has the line "Hold you tighter so close Yes you are Please hold on to the steel rail". There is also some evidence that the last part of the lyrics, "How I wish, how I wish you were here..." etc. refers to the fact that already in 1975 the musical gap between Waters and Gilmour had begun to evolve and often they were not both in the studio at the same time while making "Wish You Were Here".

They invited the violin geniuses Stephane Grappelli and Yehudi Menuhin to play the background music as they were recording in the studio at the same time. Yehudi refused but Grappelli agreed. The violin recording was actually not used then but still exists and was eventually used on the version of Wish You Were Here - Experience Edition in 2011. Let's listen now to "Have a Cigar" and "Wish You Were Here" with Gilmour's car radio solo in between.

[Have a Cigar](#)

[Wish You Were Here](#)

Finally we come to the album's masterpiece, "Shine on You Crazy Diamond" by Waters, Gilmour and Wright, which in my opinion is Pink Floyd's best song ever. Here, a small part of

the "Household Objects" was finally used. They had, among other things, struck the edges of wine glasses filled with different amounts of water and this is used in the introduction of the work. I have not found out if this has been used at the band's concerts, but it was done on Gilmour's concert tour, "Remember that Night" in 2006. Perhaps the most remarkable event is the incident in Venice when Gilmour and his second wife, Polly Samson, were out on a walk the day before the concert and saw a street artist play Beethoven's "Für Elize" on wine glasses. They looked at each other, nodded and offered Ivan Sklyarov the chance to play in the first part of "Shine on" at the concert the day after. Despite having little training time, Ivan responded tactfully: "Yes, this is a good idea", but actually got a week to practice when the concert needed to be postponed for technical reasons.

"Shine on" is divided into 9 parts and is Pink Floyd's longest work with a total time of 26.05 minutes. It both opens and closes the album, starting with parts 1-5 and ending with 6-9. The song is about the old friend Syd Barrett and every time the band performed it at concerts there was a big picture of him in the background.

Waters' text is a masterpiece and shows how good a lyricist he was at this point. An example is "Remember when you were young, you shone like the sun" and then in the same verse "Now there's a look in you eyes, like black holes in the sky". Gilmour's guitar tones are spectacular and Wright's contribution on the keyboards is a unique experience. Wright is actually alone credited for the amazing finale and, with one exception which I'll mention later, it turned out to be the last work for which he was credited until "The Division Bell" was released in 1994. Also, we must not forget Dick Parry's contribution with the saxophones in Part 5

Before I allow you to hear "Shine on" we must mention the remarkable day of June the 5, in 1975. Legend has it that they were working on "Shine on You Crazy Diamond" when a fat, bald and tightly shaven man strolled from the street into the studio. It took the Pink Floyd members considerable time to realize who this was. Mason says in his book that it was Gilmour who first realized that this was their old partner, Syd Barrett. It was a difficult time to say the least for those comrades and even some tears may have been shed. When asked, Syd said he had a big fridge, which he constantly had to fill with pork chops because they disappeared so quickly. Syd listened to what they said they were doing at that moment whether it was "Shine on" or something else. Asked what he thought of it, he didn't answer but when he was invited to hear it again he said he saw no purpose in it since he had just heard it. Mason still believes that this unexpected event has affected the final result of "Shine on" and says he is still on the verge of weeping when he hears the final notes of the work where Wright adds a few high staccato tones from "See Emily Play".

Finally, "Wish You Were Here" was Wright's and is Gilmour's favorite album out of all the Pink Floyd material.

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

Shine on You Crazy Diamond