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December 2005
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Guitar

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Gilmour

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Pink Floyd's legendary guitarmeister

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A MODEST, UNASSUMING CHAP HAS GUIDED ONE OF THE WORLD'S BIGGEST BANDS THROUGH 37 YEARS OF UNTOLD TURMOIL – AND WRITTEN SOME DARN FINE SONGS AND PLAYED SOME STONKING GUITAR SOLOS ALONG THE WAY. AS THE PINK FLOYD LEGEND APPROACHES HIS 60TH BIRTHDAY, MICHAEL HEATLEY KICKS OFF THE CELEBRATIONS BY OFFERING THREESCORE REASONS TO ADORE DAVID GILMOUR...

Diamond DAVID

The recent re-emergence of Pink Floyd in a one-off reunion for Live 8 reminded the world just what a great group they were – and reminded guitarists what an unique player David Gilmour still is. Recruited to the band in 1968 as a 'musical elastoplast' to keep them together in a period when original frontman Syd Barrett was rapidly coming off the rails, he found himself effectively fronting the group on his friend's departure. It was a challenge far greater than Roger Waters' defection a decade and a half later, and one he negotiated with surprising ease – and stickability has been his watchword ever since.

Gilmour's leadership of the band after the often edgy relationship with Waters finally crumbled in the mid '80s has been praised and criticised in equal measure. But whatever opinion may hold sway of the last incarnation of Pink Floyd, he has achieved the unlikely double of leading a world famous rock band while retaining the personal anonymity to walk down any main street in Britain without being mobbed or harassed.

As for his guitar playing, David ('not Dave, please!') has established himself as a master of the Strat without the need for excess of any kind. His style will never be as flamboyant as a Hendrix, his earliest hero, or as pointedly neo-classical as a Blackmore, yet it is every bit as much a signature sound. As he gears up to his 60th birthday early next year, he promises to unleash a long-awaited third solo

album on his adoring public. In this humble tribute, we present 60 reasons – one for every year! – to love Mr Gilmour.

1 HE CREATED ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS INTROS IN ROCK, the four-note riff to *Shine On You Crazy Diamond*, 'mucking about' on his Strat. It's nine minutes – count them – before a voice is heard, further cementing the intro and the track's epic status.

2 HE'S A DISTINCTLY ENGLISH ROCK STAR, with very little discernible US influence on his style or image (though he once admitted 'Eddie Van Halen has done a few things I like'), and makes no attempt to be 'with it'. He's quite happy living quietly on his country estate with his growing family. In 1978, when asked why he hadn't followed other rock stars of the time into tax exile, he explained 'I'm not keener on paying tax than anyone else, but my freedom's not for sale.'

3 HE RECOGNISED SYD BARRETT AS A GENIUS, even though he had to watch his friend's stability crumble. Gilmour was invited to the recording session for the band's second single, *See Emily Play*, and recalls even then that Syd didn't even recognise him. 'He looked through you. He wasn't quite there.'

Since then, he's ensured Syd has benefited from royalties generated by five songs included on the *Echoes* compilation and *Astronomy Domine*,

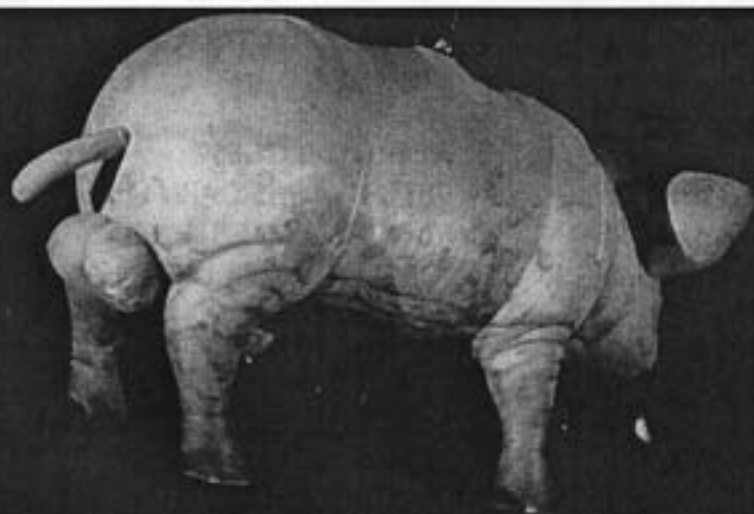
performed on the 1994 tour and later released as part of the album *Pulse*.

4 HE KISSED AND MADE UP WITH WATERS IN 2005, even though he once described him as 'not a generous-spirited person' – but few realised that he had asked the bassist to rejoin nearly a decade earlier to perform *Dark Side Of The Moon*. He insists it was a genuine offer, while conceding that 'there's a vast difference between having to sit in the studio and having someone come on, play a bit of bass and sing...'

5 HE REVELS IN ANONYMITY – a fact that probably helped Pink Floyd survive the loss of first Barrett and then Waters. The band once boasted that they mingled with the crowds while leaving a sellout gig at New York's Madison Square Garden and weren't accosted once. A press advertisement of the time used the backs of their heads to press home the point that music this good could afford to be 'faceless'.

6 HE'S TURNED DOWN A FORTUNE to take the Floyd out on a memorial tour, knocking back a rumoured \$150 million offer for the 're-formed' band to play the States. 'It's completely mad and we won't do it,' said Gilmour. 'The idea for Live 8 was a one-off.'

And when, as with Live Aid, Live 8 artists saw their post-concert sales figures skyrocket, Gilmour was first to urge artists and record companies to donate



GILMOUR ADDED BOLLOCKS TO FLOYD'S FLYING PIGS! Aggrieved when Roger Waters went to court and walked away with the rights to certain Floyd creations including the inflatable sows that had become synonymous with 1977 album *Animals*, he objected to paying a royalty each time the pigs 'flew' at a show. He added testicles to said porkers, making them visibly different from the beasts in the court documents, and no money changed hands...

extra profits to worthy causes. 'The main objective has been to raise consciousness and put pressure on the G8 leaders,' he declared. 'This is money that should be used to save lives.'

8 GILMOUR OCCUPIES HIS OWN STYLISTIC CATEGORY. Despite his influence on the likes of Radiohead, Gilmour has been imitated far less frequently than the likes of Beck and Page. While we await the 'new David Gilmour', let's enjoy the old one...

9 HIS EPIC SOLO FOR COMFORTABLY NUMB IS EMINENTLY COPYABLE. But did you know the original was pieced together from five or six separate takes? 'I just followed my usual procedure, which is to make a chart, putting ticks and crosses on different bars as I listen - two ticks if it's really good, one if it's good, and a cross if it's no-go,' he reveals. 'Then I follow the chart, whipping one fader up, then another, jumping from phrase to

phrase and trying to make a really nice solo all the way through.'

Guitar tech Phil Taylor puts the result (one of Slash's all-time favourite solos, incidentally) down to 'his fingers, his vibrato, his choice of notes and how he sets his effects'.

10 HIS SOLO ALBUMS ARE ACTUALLY PRETTY GOOD, but he's never really promoted them to the full. While *David Gilmour* ('78) filled a hole prior to *The Wall*, he toured *About Face* ('84) 'to see if it was possible for me to continue without Pink Floyd', but decided to stick with the band.

11 HE'S A PITCH-PERFECT SINGER as well as a great guitarist - just compare his performance on the aforementioned *Comfortably Numb* with Roger Waters' distinctive if, somewhat wayward style. *Dark Side* engineer Alan Parsons revealed that Gilmour's vocals 'would never take more than a couple of hours'. 'Dave sang *Breathe* much better

than I could have,' said Waters himself. 'His voice suited the song. I don't remember any ego problems about who sang what at that point.'

12 HE CAN GET PSYCHEDELIC with the best of them, but you have to dig deep into the back catalogue. 'We stopped trying to make overtly spacey music and trip people out in the '60s,' he protested in 1982, 'but the image lives on.' The likes of the live *Astronomy Domine* on *Ummagumma* demonstrates that, certainly in 1969, he wasn't embarrassed to take us on the odd musical trip.

13 HE ENJOYS HIS STRING-BENDING, which tends to crop up in trademark solos. A speciality is the compound bend, stopping at more than one different note when bending up. Perhaps the ultimate bend, on *Division Bell's* *Marooned*, was achieved courtesy of a Digitech Whammy pedal. Gilmour uses a customised set of strings, matching a light top of .010, .012 and .016 with a heavy bottom of .028, .038 and .048 or even .050.

14 WITH DARK SIDE OF THE MOON, GILMOUR PROVIDED A SOUNDTRACK FOR STONERS EVERYWHERE. 'If I could have the time back that I listened to this record on dope,' actor Billy Bob Thornton once joked about the album, 'I'd add another 12 years to my life.'

But Gilmour, if not exactly saying no, pleads innocence. 'Roger and Nick's largest indulgence was alcohol, mine and Rick's might have involved the occasional reefer, but at that time we were nothing like our image. I'm not sure Roger's ever taken LSD - it certainly wasn't on our menu after Syd left. We've never got away from that reputation, though, to this day.' And yes, he has tried playing *Dark Side* to *The Wizard Of Oz*...



Photos: L.A. Mochka/Wireton

15 HE PROVED THE DOUBTERS WRONG. When Syd left, Floyd managers Andrew King and Peter Jenner went with him, thinking him more likely to succeed, while fellow guitarist John Etheridge was among several contemporary musicians who thought a Barrett-less band was doomed to failure. 'Dave told me he'd just got the gig with the Floyd for £25 a week. I thought you'd better make the most of the money because without Syd that band's going nowhere. Boy, was I wrong...'

16 HE IS THE ACKNOWLEDGED MASTER OF ECHO, and can conjure up otherworldly wailing noises at the flick of a finger. His use of a volume pedal in conjunction with the Italian-made Binson Echorec unit (a wire-based rival to the ubiquitous Echoplex) and a slide helped create the ethereal swells and spacey noises that fans enjoy so much. At other times it happens by accident, such as when he plugged in a wah-wah pedal back to front to create the sound in the middle of *Echoes*.

17 HIS IDEAS ARE JUST AS GOOD – IF NOT BETTER THAN – HIS PLAYING. Nick Mason: 'After Syd, Dave was the difference between light and dark. He was absolutely into form and shape, and he introduced that into the wilder numbers we'd created. We became far less difficult to enjoy.' For Gilmour, 'My role was to try to make it all a bit more musical, help create a balance between formlessness and structure, disharmony and harmony.'

18 HE PLAYS STEEL GUITAR ON STAGE, even if it looks like he's ironing. He bought his first one in a pawnshop in Seattle in 1968, its earliest use on record probably being *Fat Old Sun* from *Atom Heart Mother*.

His two Jensen lap steel guitars ('cheap steels I had customised with Fender pickups for slide parts') are kept in different tunings: the first is tuned to (low to high) EBEGBE for *One Of These Days* and the other to (low to high) DGDGBE for *The Great Gig In The Sky*.

19 HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST HIGH-PROFILE GUITARISTS TO GET A MULTI-FX UNIT and he has often used a pedal rig that would kill a normal human being. The 1977 tour for *Animals* saw Gilmour onstage with a Pete Cornish pedalboard for the first time, and he still swears by analogue effects today. Among the pedals to have featured in his armoury are a Boss CS-2 Compressor/Sustainer, a Pro Co Rat II distortion, a Cornish-modded Big Muff, a Boss GE-7 graphic equaliser, a Cornish Soft Sustain, a Sovtek Big Muff II, an MXR Dynacomp, an Ibanez CP-9 compressor, a Boss Metalizer and two Chandler Tube Drivers, plus three Boss GE-7 graphic equalisers.

20 GILMOUR'S SUSTAIN, surely more elongated and far more subtle than almost anyone else's, gives even Carlos Santana a run for his money. He once tried using the newly-introduced Kahler locking vibrato system, but after a couple of weeks he decided it deadened the sound. Off it came.



Photo: Pizzarello/Pizzarello

21 WATCHING FLOYD CONCERTS CAN BE A DANGEROUS PASTIME. On 15 July 1989 the band played an historic gig in Venice, and the sheer volume of their sound was reported to have caused structural damage to Italy's canal city. At Philadelphia's JFK stadium, the Floyd were only just able to finish their set down-bill to The Who before a gigantic thunderstorm broke. The guitarist of Canadian band The Mandala who followed them on stage was hit by a bolt of lightning, and the concert was aborted.

The eight-month tour promoting *Division Bell* between March and October 1994 was a triumph, yet at Earls Court, London, the entire project was put in jeopardy when a section of seating in a 1,200-seat stand failed, with eight people being hospitalised after falling nearly 20 feet to the floor.

Remarkably, no-one sustained serious injury – which is more than can be said for the fish at the Crystal Palace Garden Party of May 1971. The finale featured a giant rubber octopus, which shared the front-of-stage pool with some daring audience members. Smoke flares were set off underwater while trying to inflate the octopus, to the detriment of the health of the fish.

22 DESPITE ALL THE GEAR HE USES, DAVID STILL THINKS 'IT ALL COMES FROM THE FINGERS' and is relatively fuss-free to produce. *Wall* producer Bob Ezrin agrees. 'With Gilmour, equipment is secondary to touch,' he points out. 'You can give him a ukulele and he'll make it sound like a Stradivarius. He's truly got the best set of hands with which I have ever worked.'

Dark Side engineer Alan Parsons recalls that though Gilmour took hours to perfect the sounds he needed for each track, once that had been organised he recorded the actual takes very quickly with just one microphone – and at 'wall-shaking' volume. 'I find it extraordinary when people think they can copy his sound [just] by duplicating his gear,' says Gilmour's tech Phil Taylor.

23 HE SOLD HIS LONDON HOUSE AND GAVE THE MONEY TO CHARITY. In 2003, Gilmour heard about a project to develop a new kind of mixed community for homeless people and key

workers – and decided to lend it a hand via a £3.6 million donation, funded by the sale of his London townhouse to Princess Diana's brother.

24 HE'S QUITE PARTIAL TO A FLOYD TRIBUTE BAND, and once reserved a box to see the 'jolly entertaining' Australian Pink Floyd at Croydon's Fairfield Halls. He went on to book them for his 50th birthday party. 'I've never seen Pink Floyd, you see. So it's great to me to see that.'

25 HE CHOOSES HORSES FOR COURSES. Despite Gilmour's long love affair with Fender, his solo on the Top 3 hit single *Another Brick In The Wall* was played on an early '50s Les Paul goldtop with P90 pickups.

26 GILMOUR RESOLVED, AFTER THE SPLIT WITH ROGER WATERS, TO ONLY PLAY MUSIC HE LIKED – and among the 'no-go' areas are certain Floyd classics that now strike him



HE'S PLANE MAD! When reviewers applied to hear *The Division Bell* before its release, Gilmour made it a condition that they fly with him in his twin-engine plane as they did so. He'd reportedly even nipped out of sessions for its predecessor, *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason*, to indulge his hobby (no coincidence the track *Learning To Fly* is on the album), but the death in an accident of the pilot who taught him understandably curbed his enthusiasm... or, more likely, that of his wife.

as 'absolute crap. At the time, we felt that *Atom Heart Mother*, like *Ummagumma*, was a step towards something or other. Now I think they were both just blundering in the dark. *Meddle* was where we got our focus.'

28 HE HAD HIP PARENTS. Mr and Mrs Gilmour were Cambridge lecturers in the '60s who spent some of the academic year in the States. His mother introduced him to Bob Dylan, so to speak, by sending his first album from New York. David did meet Dylan in person some time later, and was delighted when he raved about *Dogs*, his favourite track on *Animals*.

29 HE'S BEEN ONE OF FENDER'S BEST ADVERTS ever since his parents brought him his first name guitar, a Telecaster, from the States for his 21st

birthday in 1967, but he has never sought nor consented to a signature model. Though the Tele was lost during his first US tour as a Floyd member in 1968 – an airline was to blame – a Tele or two has popped up among the Strats since, notably on *Run Like Hell*, for which one of his two '52 reissues has its bottom E tuned to D. Meanwhile, a '55 Esquire can be seen on the back cover of solo album *About Face*.

31 HE HAD BAD HAIR DAYS – when he had hair. His barnet was slaughtered by *New Musical Express* scribe Nick Kent, whose description of a 1974 show included the following: 'It was seemingly anchored down by a surfeit of scalp grease, and tapering off below the shoulders with a spectacular festooning of split ends.' An enraged Gilmour demanded a face-to-face (fringe

to fringe?) meeting to thrash things out, but sadly it never happened. His current hairstyle suggests he may since have taken the criticism to heart...

32 HE LOVES MESSING ABOUT WITH GUITARS. The Strat he used for much of the '70s, including the 1977 *Animals* tour, was a typical hybrid, matching a black '70s body with an early '60s rosewood neck. A switch was added to combine the sounds of the DiMarzio bridge pickup with the neck unit, and a black pickguard and white pickup covers and knobs completed the picture.

33 HE TURNED DOWN JONATHAN KING in 1965 when a member of Cambridge-based Four Seasons-soundalikes *Jokers Wild*. King asked Gilmour to go into the studio with some sessionmen and perform a couple of R&B songs. He then offered him a contract as a solo singer but David, ever loyal to his bandmates, declined.

34 HE RECORDED HIS DOG, Seamus, on the final track of side one of *Meddle*. The eponymous number features both his slide-guitar playing and his dog of the title, as one reviewer put it, 'howling along like his plums have been dipped in pepper'. Interestingly, the Floyd revisited the canine theme on *Animals* with *Dogs*, though the barking was now strictly synthesised and no animals were hurt in its production.

35 HE SAID YES TO BOB GELDOF, who made it his personal mission to get David to reconsider after he initially nixed the Live 8 reformation. Gilmour's press statement read that he was doing the gig in the hope of persuading the G8 leaders 'to make commitments to the relief of poverty and

30 HE CAN DO FLOYD UNPLUGGED, as he proved beyond doubt when he played the Festival Hall in 2001 and three more shows at the same venue in 2002. The material tackled included band classics such as *Wish You Were Here*, *Comfortably Numb* and *High Hopes*.

Performing Pink Floyd material in an acoustic setting had provided a bit of a challenge: for *Shine On You Crazy Diamond*, for example, he created a pad underneath, and swelled it up and down with a volume pedal to achieve the sound of 'a big, ringing guitar orchestra underneath'. Gilmour's favourite acoustic is a Martin D-28, bought in 1968 in New York. Recently he's been using a Taylor on stage, but also chooses Ovations: 'They're robust-sounding and my daughter Alice can kick them around...'



increased aid to the Third World. Any squabbles that Roger and the band have had in the past are so petty in this context. And if re-forming for this concert will help focus attention, then it's got to be worthwhile.'

36 HE SAID NO TO DISCO when Wall producer Bob Ezrin tried to make Floyd music danceable. 'Bob told me to go to a couple of clubs and listen to what's happening. So I forced myself out and listened to loud four-to-the-bar bass drums and stuff – and thought it was God-awful!'

37 IT'S NOT JUST GELDOF HE CAN'T SAY NO TO. Gilmour appeared at London's Royal Festival Hall in 2001 at the invitation of old Soft Machine chum Robert Wyatt, that year's Meltdown Festival curator. In 1973, Floyd once played *Dark Side* twice in one day as a benefit for Wyatt after he had fallen out of a window and become paralysed.

38 HE PUTS HIS HAND IN HIS POCKET. When Gilmour and Mason relaunched Pink Floyd as a live act in 1987, they found no financial institution prepared to back them. The scale of show they wanted to put out required them to dip into their savings to the reported tune of a quarter of a million pounds each to put on the tour.

39 HE DISLIKES SPONSORSHIP. Though the 1994 tour was sponsored by Volkswagen to help fund bigger and better special effects, it was something Gilmour admitted later he would not repeat. Nor did he sanction the use of *Dark Side's* *Great Gig In the Sky* for a TV advert: this was written by Rick Wright and his business alone.

40 HE DISCOVERED KATE BUSH when she was just a teenager playing the pubs, and is said to have played uncredited guitar on her 1978 debut album, *The Kick Inside*. Since then he's contributed backing vocals on *The Dreaming* ('82), played on *The Sensual World* ('89) and appeared live with Bush in 1987 at Amnesty International's *Secret Policeman's Third Ball*.

41 HE DOESN'T FORGET HIS MATES. His friendship with Dick Parry, sax-player on *Money* and other Floyd classics, goes back to playing jazz in Cambridge pubs (the pair were once arrested by French police in the mid '60s for busking without a licence). He was brought in on *Dark Side* and has since been the band's sax player of choice. Gilmour: 'It's nice to involve your friends, people you have an empathy with.'

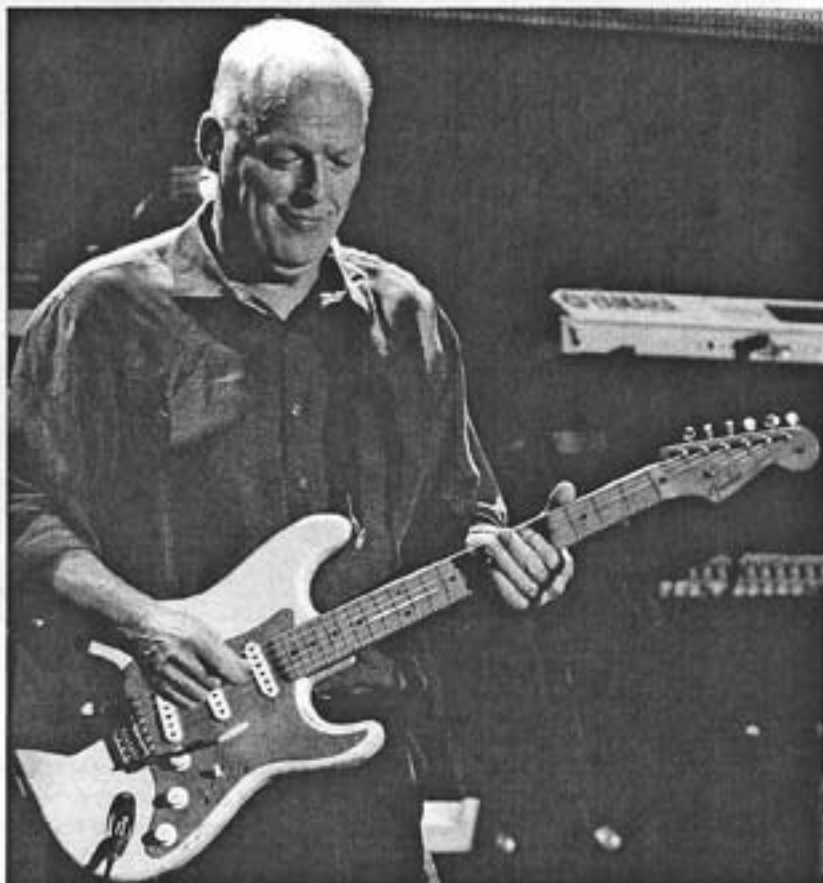


Photo: Alexey Sazonov

42 HE'S GOT THE COOLEST GUITAR EVER – a maple-neck, anodised-pickguard '54 Strat that carries the serial number 0001 and is rarely if ever seen in public, let alone played. Despite its serial number, it's not the first Stratocaster ever produced (Fender serial numbers being non-sequential) but is certainly from the first year of manufacture, the date June 1954 being stamped on the neck.

The instrument was originally owned by Leo Fender himself, who gave it to Seymour Duncan. Floyd guitar tech Phil Taylor acquired it in the early '70s for a reported \$900, selling it to his boss later in the decade: suffice to say he bought a house with the proceeds.

Gilmour continued this tactic by rolling drummer Willie Wilson from early band *Jokers Wild* into the *Wall* shadow band and onto his first, eponymous solo album with fellow Joker Ricky Wills (bass, later of Foreigner fame). His ultimate old pal's act came in London in 1994 when as a birthday present he allowed Douglas Adams, writer of *Hitch-Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy*, up to contribute guitar to *Dark Side Of The Moon*.

43 CALL HIM DANGEROUS DAVID. Not content with flying the skies, in 1991 he took part in a Mexican sportscar road race, La Carrera Panamericana, with Nick Mason and band manager Steve O'Rourke. Gilmour managed to drive his C-type Jaguar off the road at 80mph. The guitarist got away with a few cuts and bruises, but O'Rourke sustained a broken leg.

This wasn't our man's first piece of daredevil driving. Rick Wright once

revealed that Gilmour 'drove a motorbike into a restaurant and out again, in a very straight bit of America, and most of the diners pretended it wasn't happening...'

44 HE'S A DESPOT BY DEFAULT. There have, by common consent, been three leaders of Pink Floyd: Barrett, Waters and Gilmour. However, the first two arguably abdicated the throne. Surprisingly, Rick Wright had been the man tipped to take the helm on the drug-addled Barrett's departure in 1968, but it's clear that Gilmour has ruled the roost since Waters' exit.

45 HE WANTED TO BE A BEATLE SO MUCH HE PALLED UP WITH PAUL MCCARTNEY. After playing on *Back To The Egg* album ('79) as part of the *Rockestra* and then contributing a trademark solo to the 1984 hit single *No More Lonely Nights*, he appeared at The Cavern with his boyhood hero to promote

the rooky *Run Devil Run* – an experience he rated one of the thrills of his performing life. His next guest appearance: Paul and Heather's wedding.

46 GILMOUR IS SO DARN MULTI-TALENTED he's even spent the past few quiet years learning the sax. 'Dave was the most musical of the Floyd members,' Alan Parsons confirms.

47 HE'S PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF MIMICKING JIMI HENDRIX, whom he once saw at a London club and has appreciated ever since. Former Floyd manager Peter Jenner remembers Gilmour being auditioned at Abbey Road. 'Someone said "C'mon, Dave, give us your Hendrix," and out came this extraordinary sound, just breathtaking. He was a great mimic.'

48 HE'S NO GUITAR PURIST and admits he'll 'use any gadget or trick that will make me achieve something that sounds nice to my ear'. We're not sure if this includes the Peter Frampton-style 'voicebox' employed to render Professor Stephen Hawking's cameo vocal on *Keep Talking* on stage.

49 HE REHABILITATED RICK WRIGHT AND NICK MASON after Wright was forced out of the band and when Mason's confidence became so damaged that he hardly drummed on *Momentary Lapse Of Reason*.

50 OTHER GUITARISTS LOVE HIM, TOO. Roxy Music's Phil Manzanera was particularly grateful for his help when he was a mere 17-year-old wannabe. 'David was a friend of my brother's when he first joined Pink Floyd, and I went along to meet him to ask how I could get into a band,' recalled Manzanera. 'The experimental side of the Floyd was what was happening in '68 and 1969, and I was very much influenced by that in my playing.'

HE MADE IT TO LIVE AID INCOGNITO. Although Pink Floyd had ceased to trade by the summer of 1985, and lawsuits over the name were pending – hence their non-appearance alongside such giants as Queen, The Who, Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin – David was present, unknown to many of the watching millions, playing guitar for Bryan Ferry.



52 HE WRITES LOVE SONGS TO HIS MISSUS, just like Eric. Author/newspaper journalist Polly Samson became Mrs David Gilmour in July 1994, four months after the release of *The Division Bell*. His songs to her include that album's *What Do You Want From Me*, apparently written during a pre-nuptial row.

53 HE WAS THE PRIME MOVER IN PUTTING TOGETHER THE BEST-SELLING COMPILATION ECHOES, even setting up a voting system to ensure fair play in the track selection process. This caring approach caused the album's deliberately non-chronological track listing – something that was either loved or hated by the fans.

54 HE JOINED IN THE STRAT'S 50TH BIRTHDAY PARTY. When Fender fans from all points of the compass descended on Wembley Arena in November 2004 to celebrate the Strat's half-century, he starred alongside Hank Marvin, Gary Moore, Joe Walsh, Phil Manzanera and Ronnie Wood, gaining much applause from 10,000 fans.

56 HE SECRETLY LONGS TO PLAY SMALL VENUES AGAIN, like Mother's, a regular Floyd haunt in Erdington, near Birmingham at the turn of the '60s/'70s where some of the live material on *Ummagumma* was recorded. 'Before *Dark Side*,' he reminisces, 'in the quiet passages you could hear a pin drop. One always has a bit of nostalgia for the days when we could perform without any compromise.'

57 HE HAS A FLOATING STUDIO ON HIS HOUSEBOAT, called *The Astoria*, where he can get away from it all, pull up the gangplank and be creative. The vessel was actually built in 1911 for music hall impresario Fred Karno and was purchased by David in 1986.

58 HE'S NOT AVERSE TO A BIT OF DIY. When he had the inspiration for *High Hopes*, he upped anchor, sailed away from all interruptions and completed the track, drums and all, in just one day. 'That joy, the pride was absolute magic.'

59 HE WAS ONCE A HIGHLY PAID MALE MODEL. Well, maybe not quite. 'I was hanging around London in the mid '60s and someone wanted someone to go up to Santa Pod Raceway and sit in a stupid motor with some stupid clothes on and have their photo taken for fifty quid a day,' he once admitted. 'I jumped at it!'

60 HE HAS A SENSE OF HUMOUR. When asked what he wanted to call *Pulse*, he said: 'Why don't you just call it *The Inevitable Live Album* and have done with it?' Describing the 'fretboard-cam' shots on a DVD, he said these were 'for all the anoraks out there who want to follow my fat little fingers at work'. We do. Cheers, David.

55 HE DIDN'T MAKE A FUSS ABOUT HIS CBE, awarded in November 2003 for services to music. 'I don't know her taste in music,' he said of his meeting with the Queen, 'but I suspect that if she has listened to Pink Floyd it's been one of her children or grandchildren playing it and she's more likely to be the one to say "turn it off".' He also admitted it had been 'more nerve-racking than playing to a hundred thousand people'.

