

few hours, printed it and signed it. That's the legal document on money and rights we are bound by today. No shouting. We both wanted to get it sorted out.

**Nick and Rick tend to get forgotten about. You were quite ruthless with them weren't you? Weren't they largely excluded from *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason* because you felt their playing wasn't up it?**

I wasn't ruthless. I don't think. Nick was there and involved in making the whole album. Rick wasn't. He came in down the road a little piece. Nick, we tried out some stuff and he just seemed to not really be able to play. This was a mental issue. I can only put it down to what I believe: that he had been ... bullied by Roger to the point that he couldn't really function as a drummer. And the same with Rick on keyboards. There were other drummers coming in to do stuff on the album and that must have been rather painful for Nick. But we got through all that.

**Did you talk to Nick about it?**

Probably not an awful lot in the studio. But on tour I was encouraging both of them, very consciously and deliberately praising them, trying to make them feel good about themselves and their confidence and ability soon came back. They were fine for *The Division Bell* (1994).

**Bob Ezrin thought Polly's presence on the writing side for *The Division Bell* slightly ruffled the Floyd boys' club.**

Polly has a tendency to ruffle everyone's feathers. She's very opinionated. And usually right. I think Nick and Rick were very happy to have her along, but certainly on the tour various people on the production team and our crew... there was a certain amount of anti-Polly power-struggling going on. Whether it was anti-woman or anti-newcomer... Really, she tried not to take part in the writing, but I wanted her to and I'm grateful that she did.

Here we pause to check for loose ends. Gilmour muses that it was Syd Barrett's 60th birthday on January 6. He hasn't seen him since that day at Abbey Road in 1975 during the recording of *Wish You Were Here*, he says. He sends Christmas cards to the Cambridge address where Barrett lives. There is no response. He also phones Syd's sister Rosemary: "I'm tempted to see him one of these days. I miss

him — or my fantasy of what Syd used to be. I think Rose disrecommends a visit overall, but she hasn't said, 'You really shouldn't...'"

Floyd themselves were starting to look like a ghost from the past until Live 8, astonishingly, saw them reconvene, if not reconcile as their fans had hoped. "Renewed interest" hardly covers the stir they caused. The UK sales blip on Pink Floyd albums immediately afterwards was estimated, with bizarre precision, at 1,343 per cent. Not wishing to exploit the Live 8 campaign, Gilmour promised to carefully deploy year-on-year comparisons to calculate his own extra

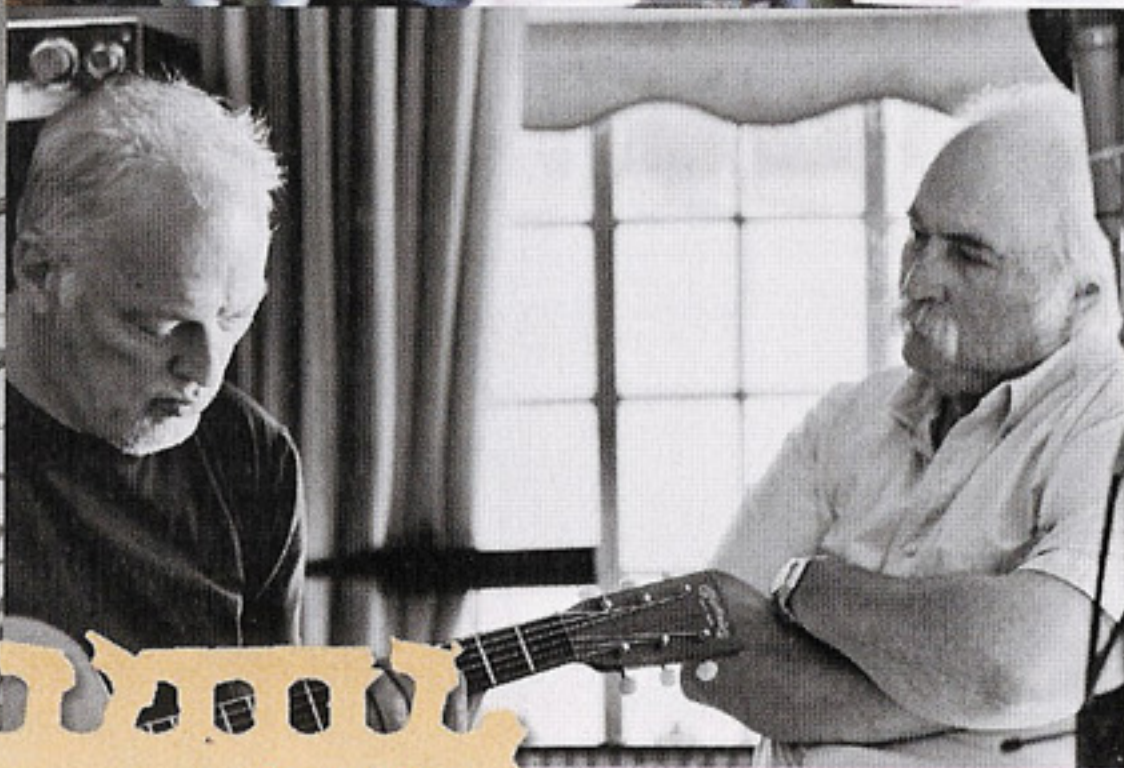


Gilmour, Waters, Mason and Wright steal the show at Live 8, Hyde Park, London, in June 2005 (left); David in the grounds near the Astoria, February 2006 (above).

income arising from the event so that he can donate it all to charity. He'll be doing that in the next few weeks when the accounting period figures are confirmed.

**So, David, how did the Pink Floyd "comeback" start for you?**

Geldof rang and asked if I would do Live 8 with Pink Floyd. He didn't mention Roger, he just said (*imitation unfortunately more Ian Paisley than Bob Geldof*), "Will you put Pink Floyd back together to do fuckin' Live 8?" I said, "No. I'm in the middle of my album." He said, "I'll come down and see yer," and jumped on a train. I thought, No, no, no. When I rang him on his mobile he was at East Croydon. I said, "Bob, there's no point, get off the train." He said, "I'm coming down anyway." He arrived and explained the whole thing to me in detail which made me feel a bit guiltier, but I was hanging on to my selfishness. I said, "You've got enough great people, you don't need us." But he wanted us. He managed to connive with Nick to get Roger and he got Roger to ring me. I was working in here, in fact, my mobile rang and it was, "Hi this is Roger, how about it?" It was... surprising. ➤



## Island Life

How to whittle 150 pieces of music into a 10 track album.

"DAVID'S A VERY adept guy in the studio. He knows what he wants," states David Crosby, who saw Gilmour's attention to detail first-hand when he and his CS&N cohort Graham Nash visited the guitarist's Astoria studio last summer to guest on *On An Island's* title track.

"Nash and I went down to David's barge and we spent an afternoon working on it," adds Crosby. "In the studio David's not in a hurry. He has a melody he wants to sing you with his guitar and he takes his time."

And, time has been the essential ingredient in the recording of Gilmour's first new work in 12 years. "It took a while because over the years I had 150 pieces recorded on mini-disc when we started and I didn't know which ones to throw out," smiles Gilmour. "Then in May 2004 my friend Phil Manzanera offered to help sort through these things."

"We whittled it down to

40 tracks and I said Great! A triple album! I think I scared him with that!" laughs Manzanera, who co-produced the album with Gilmour and Chris Thomas.

By May 2005 Gilmour's first Abbey Road sessions took place for the larger, orchestrated elements of the album that could not be accommodated at the Astoria, and he continued to work at home. "A lot of this album was recorded in my demo studio. The demo has become the track," he states. "That happened with Smile and Then I Close My Eyes. That came out of day when BJ Cole came down and picked up a Weissenborn slide guitar. It's just two microphones and us jamming all day."

Gilmour's tight-but-loose approach is heard in the number of other contributors – Jools Holland, Georgie Fame, Robert Wyatt, Pink Floyd colleague Richard Wright among them.

"We recorded a lot of stuff in a lot of different ways," says Gilmour. "It's been the most productive period of my life but there's still a lot of stuff I'll get to one day."

By Mark Blake

### ◀ When had you last spoken to him?

We'd had one phone conversation since the meeting at the Astoria in '87. That was a couple of years ago, a five-way conference call shouting at each other about some argument over the documentary, *The Making Of The Dark Side Of The Moon*. This time we chatted quite pleasantly and I said I'd call him back the next day when I'd thought about it. And I realised I'd always regret it if I didn't do it – the performance and, more importantly, getting over the squabbles with Roger and doing it for this good cause.

### Was Roger's approach to you, "Let bygones be bygones"?

Roger has been saying in his interviews he thinks he'd clung on to this stuff too long – and I agree he did (*mischievous grin*).

### You mean you agree with him it was all his fault?

Yeah (*laughs*).

### And what about you, had you clung on to it too long?

Er, well, I, uh... I invited Roger to play *The Dark Side Of The Moon* with us at Earl's Court in '94 and I invited him to my 50th birthday party in '96. I had proffered minor... not exactly hands of friendship, but... and yeah, I do feel genuinely that back in the mid-'80s I was attacked unfairly and dishonestly.

### So how did you deal with that when you came back together?

We didn't discuss it, we just got on with it. They say time heals all wounds and I guess it does... to some extent.

### So how did it go – choosing songs, rehearsals, the show itself?

We had a meeting and then we talked on the phone about which songs to

"It's been the most productive period of my life."

**The making of *On An Island*:** (clockwise from top left) Gilmour with Manzanera; with Crosby and Nash; with harpist Lucy Wakeford; with Chris Thomas; with Jools Holland; drummer Ged Lynch; Robert Wyatt, cornet and drums; with Crosby. All photographs by Polly Samson.

play. We fell straight into arguing. I rather insisted on my view and Roger backed down gracefully, went along with what I thought pretty much. The same thing happened a bit more in rehearsals. I wanted us to be small, compact, the four of us with no more help than absolutely needed. Roger wanted to expand it a bit. But again he backed down gracefully and we got on. The rehearsals were pretty good fun mostly. Tense at times. I felt the strain at the end of most days. Then we did a run-through at Hyde Park and that was fantastic. And on the night it was pretty damn good. I'm very glad to have put some of the... shit to bed.

### Does this mean "closure"?

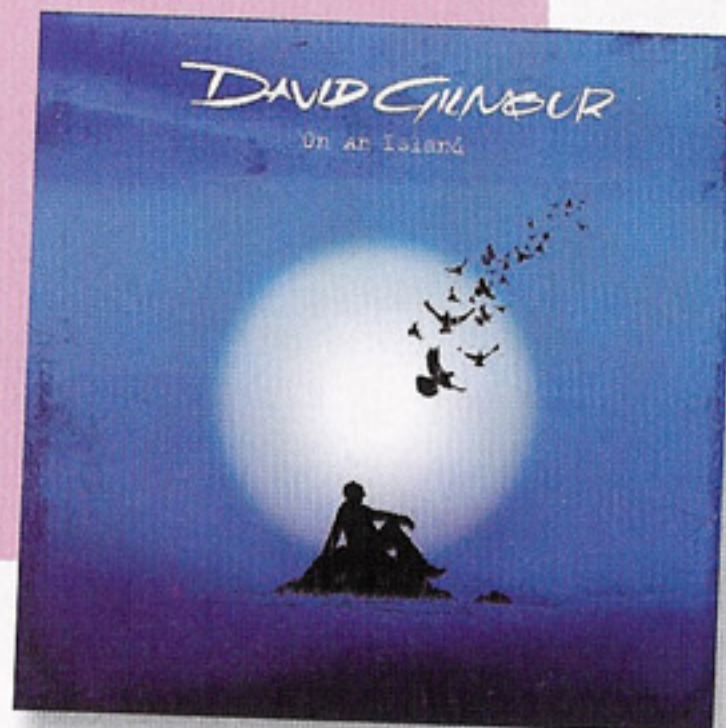
Closure feels pretty good to me. It also convinced me that taking a backward step into Pink Floyd, doing a tour, which we've been offered – riding the gravy train – has no appeal for me whatsoever, it wouldn't make me a happier person than I am. The thought of making an album with the old line-up like that... I... couldn't do it.

### So no new Pink Floyd tour...

No new Pink Floyd tours or albums, no.

### Are you and Roger talking now?

Erm, we're not not talking. As far as I know, we're not not talking. But we're not talking either.



## SYD'S LAST STAND

Turn the page for the untold story of Barrett's last ever live shows...