



David Gilmour: 'The mother of all guitar solos, repeatedly.'

The Axe Files

That **Pink Floyd** reunion will have to wait.



DAVID GILMOUR
On An Island

EMI
★★★★

Q Recommends

APART FROM THE shock reconciliation between guitarist David Gilmour and bassist Roger Waters, Pink Floyd's appearance at Live 8 also proved that the band really existed. Without lasers to distract the eye, a global audience squinted as one at its TV screen and declared, "So they *are* human." Humanity and warmth are traits rarely associated with Pink Floyd. But both qualities are in the music, even if they're buried under a lofty concept.

It may be an oversimplification to portray Waters as Floyd's brain with Gilmour as its beating heart, but *On An Island* plays up to that assumption. It is a very warm record. There's a loose concept linking the 10 songs, six co-written with Gilmour's wife Polly Samson. But is the titular island a metaphor for self-discovery, or just an apt title for music that sounds fantastic when lying prone on a foreign beach? Either way, you can wallow in songs that allow Gilmour to do what he does best: sing in that lullaby-ish high register and peel off another candidate for the mother of all guitar solos, repeatedly.

and backing singers David Crosby and Graham Nash – Gilmour has sculpted a sumptuous record that leans heavily on familiar Floyd themes: sustained guitar notes, Wright's doleful organ, lots of waves lapping on a foreign beach, etc. Yet it works beautifully, with *The Blue* and the title track especially good on housing the Gilmour falsetto and those languid guitar flurries. He sounds like the happiest man alive on the charming *Smile* and does a great haunted croon on *Take A Breath*. But if a song ever wavers, there's always another tennis-racket moment just around the next bend.

Live 8 was the perfect trailer for *On An Island*, while also saddling it with impossible expectations. Gilmour has risen above all that and made an album which should keep those baying for a reunion record satisfied. MARK BLAKE

DOWNLOAD: On An Island → Take A Breath → A Pocketful Of Stones → Then I Close My Eyes → The Blue

BY CORRALLING HIS rock aristo pals – Roxy Music's Phil Manzanera, Floyd keyboard player Richard Wright

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