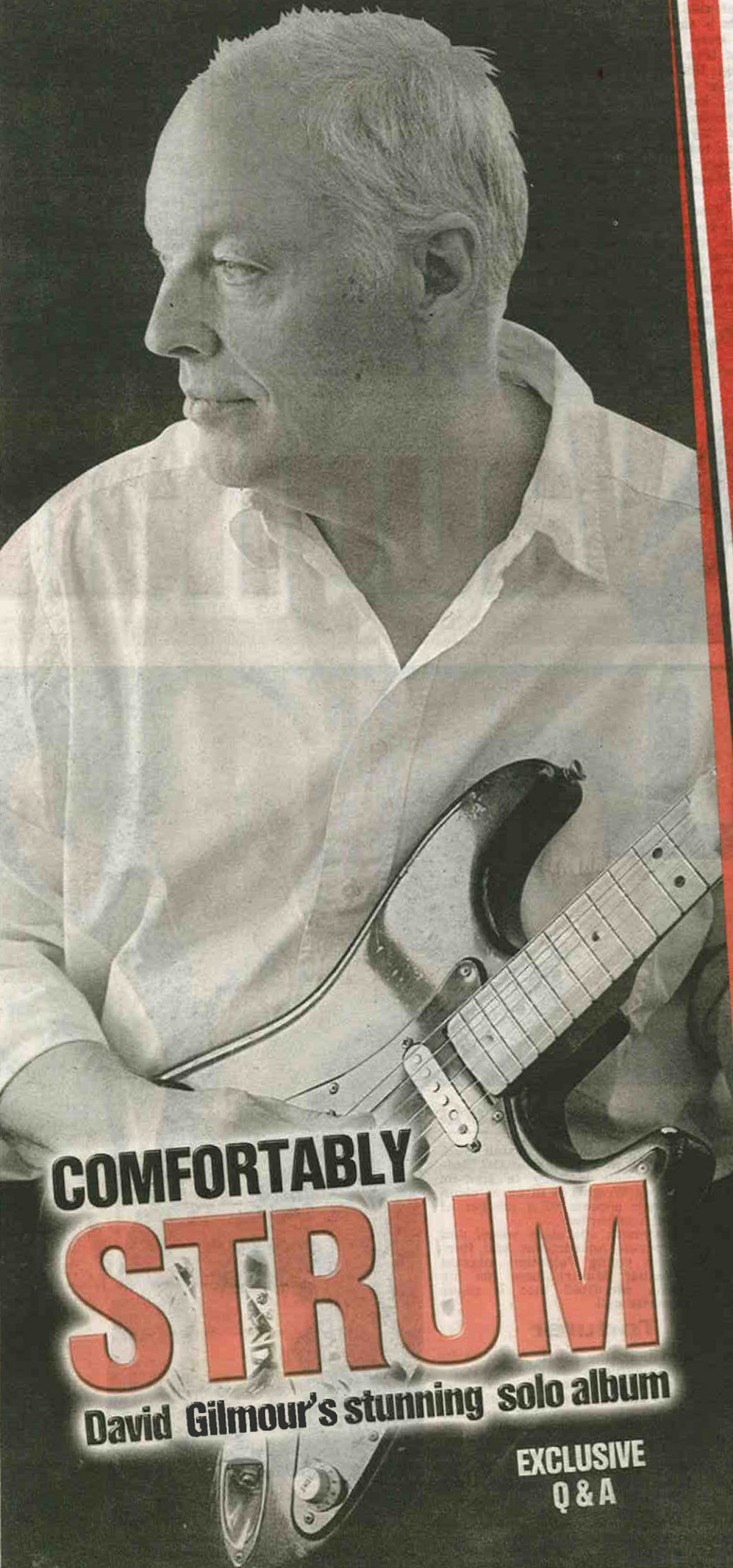


Something **For** the Weekend



COMFORTABLY **STRUM**

David Gilmour's stunning solo album

EXCLUSIVE
Q & A



THE **MANE** ATTRACTION

EXCLUSIVE SHAKIRA
INTERVIEW

Something

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Weekend

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**DAVID
GILMOUR**

Pink Floyd legend's
dazzling solo album

EXCLUSIVE Q&A

Something for the Weekend

By SIMON COSYNS

DAVID GILMOUR will be forever linked to the colour pink – as in Pink Floyd, of course.

Immerse yourself in his transcendent solo album and you'll find an entirely different colour keeps springing to mind. Blue.

Hearing the 51-minute *On An Island* is like taking a long, luxuriant dip in clear blue waters. There's even a song called *The Blue*, a blues guitar-led number called *This Heaven* and the album cover is mostly – you've guessed it – blue.

Here is extraordinary music that occupies a hazy space between dreams and reality, comfortably the nearest thing we'll get to a new Pink Floyd offering.

It's also one of THE music events of 2006, released on David's 60th birthday this coming Monday.

It's also his first new solo record since 1984's *About Face* and his first studio recording of any kind since 1994's Floyd swansong *The Division Bell*. It comes just a few months after that triumphant reunion at Live 8.

Strong comparisons can be made with Kate Bush's glorious comeback album *Aerial*, all the more significant because it was David who brought her to the attention of EMI way back when *Wuthering Heights* was a mere twinkle in her eye.

Richly orchestrated by Polish composer Zbigniew Preisner, *On An Island* features a host of stellar pals, including Pink Floyd's Rick Wright, West Coast harmony kings David Crosby and Graham Nash and piano man Jools Holland.

Roxy Music's Phil Manzanera was on hand to help give the production a bright, organic feel and David's partner Polly Samson penned most of the poetic lyrics.

This week, I managed to catch David for a brief chat about the latest chapter in a recording career that spans four decades and includes such towering albums as *Dark Side Of The Moon*, *Wish You Were Here* and *The Wall*.

THE QUESTIONS

What prompted you to make *On An Island*?

I've been casually recording odd bits of music over the past ten years or so but it was beginning to become too hard to ignore.

I started waking early with pieces of music and ideas buzzing around in my head and found they were keeping me awake at night too.

We weren't getting much sleep – it became obvious that this was the moment to let rip.

And how does it feel to see the name David Gilmour on a finished product after all this time?

I never really feel anything very much about the package once it's out there – it's what's in the grooves that matters.

Why did you choose to release it on your 60th birthday?

It takes the pressure off the birthday.

The colour blue – the cover, the song *The Blue*, the whole atmosphere of other songs – pervades the album. Was that something you were conscious of?

I was thinking of the big blue sea throughout.

Some of the music wouldn't be out of place on a Pink Floyd album but how do you feel this work differs?

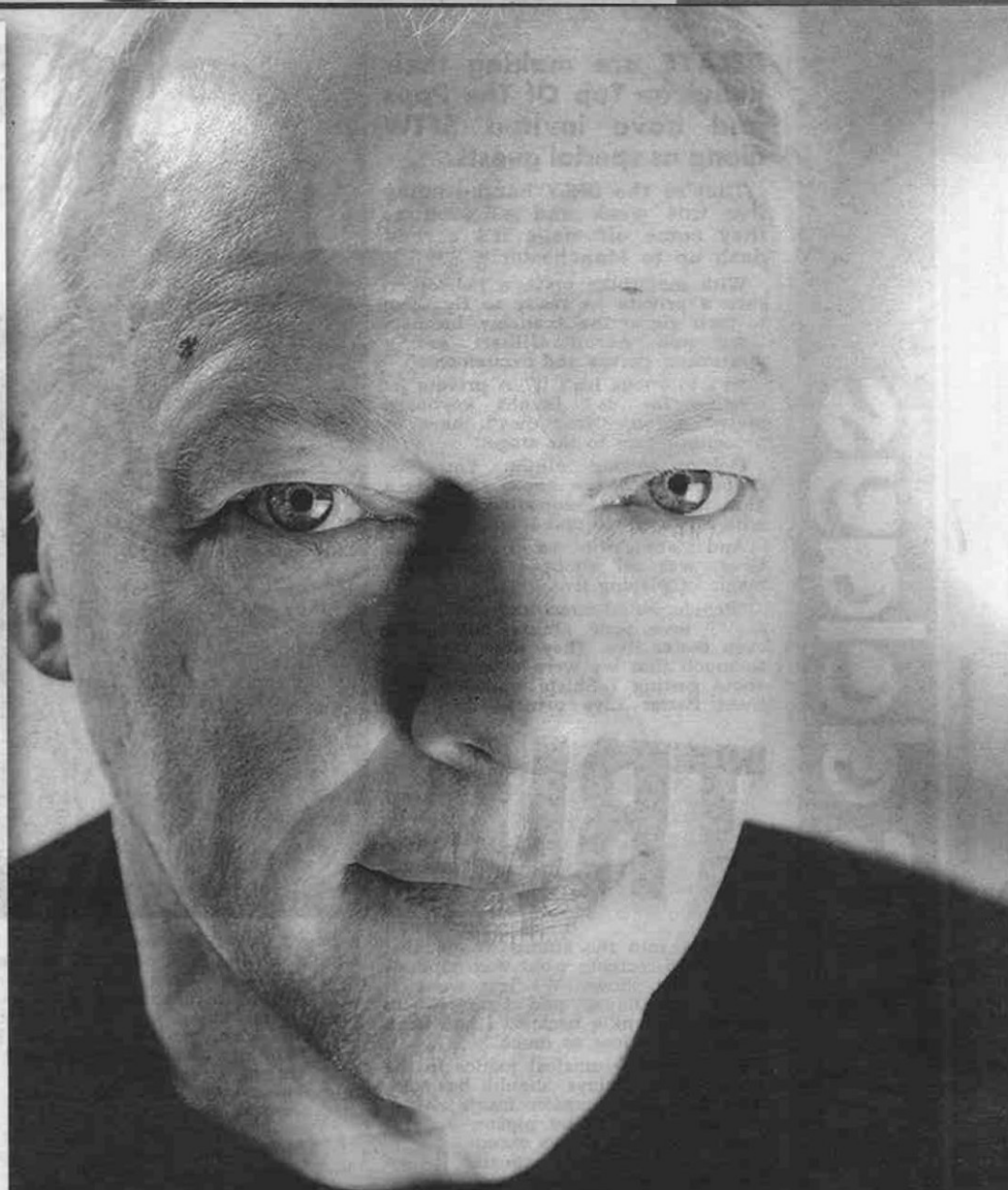
It doesn't.

That moment at 2:16 on *Castellorizon* when a wonderful guitar solo begins is a spine-tingling moment. What inspired it?

I can never pinpoint these things – on the whole it just happens.

You called on some very special friends to help make the album. How did they affect the recording process and will some be joining you on tour?

I am delighted that Phil Manzanera is joining me on tour because he has been holding my hand throughout the making of the album. And Rick Wright and the other muckers from Floyd tours give me a great feeling. I love playing



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PINK TO BLUE

Pink Floyd star talks to SFTW about

his new solo album

On An Island

5 DAVID GILMOUR



with them.

The lyrics are beautiful. What's it like working with Polly?

Polly knows how to look at the world through someone else's eyes. She has an uncanny ability to know what the music means before I do.

You play sax for the first time on a recording on *Red Sky At Night*. What encouraged you to pick up the instrument?

Polly gave me a saxophone for my 50th birthday and it sat around until my son Charlie started learning the sax a few years ago and I asked his sax teacher to take me on as well.

There's a sense of wonder at nature here that draws comparisons with your "protégée" Kate Bush's *Aerial*. Is that a fair comparison?

I played that album the other day and it's great so I'm glad if there's common feeling. I admire her.

And finally, sorry to ask: Is it safe to assume there will be no Pink Floyd reunion?

YES!!

THE TRACKS

CASTELLORIZON: Ambient sounds drift in and out, then a languid but breathtaking guitar solo. Gilmour's inimitable style has rarely sounded better. Notes pour out like liquid gold.

ON AN ISLAND: Gentle Crosby and Nash harmonies and unhurried lead vocals on a song that ebbs and flows before another big guitar finale.

THE BLUE: Perhaps the album's most evocative track. Spacey, dreamy and filled with wonder. "Still, marooned, silence drifting through, nowhere to choose, just blue."

TAKE A BREATH: The pace quickens for the most muscular song. Chanted vocals and a full rock sound provide necessary extra texture to proceedings.

RED SKY AT NIGHT: This is a heavily orchestrated instru-

mental notable for David's debut as a saxophonist. It gives you a chance to catch your breath before...

THIS HEAVEN: A more gritty sound and a perfect vehicle for Gilmour to show what a great blues guitarist he is. Georgie Fame pops up to nail a lovely Hammond organ cameo.

THEN I CLOSE MY EYES: There's a backwoods feeling to this instrumental. Part of its charm comes from David playing a cumbus, a six-stringed Turkish instrument resembling a banjo.

SMILE: The mood stays quiet, reflective and melodic. And yes, from someone who played such moody stuff in Pink Floyd, music that could even put a smile on your face.

A POCKETFUL OF STONES: The pivotal song around which, you feel, the later stages of the album are built. Another epic guitar work-out.

WHERE WE START: The cyclical nature of this set-piece of an album is borne out by the title of the closer. Gilmour wrote the lyrics and plays all the instruments except drums.

THE VERDICT

Pink turns blue to devastating effect. Happy birthday, David – shine on.

Further listening: Pink Floyd - *Obscured By Clouds*; Kate Bush - *Aerial*; Brian Eno - *Another Green World*;

Mercury Rev - *The Secret Migration*