Richard Wright, who died Monday from cancer at 65, was the key sonic architect in constructing the musical foundation for Pink Floyd.

Though Roger Waters and David Gilmour assumed the reins of the highly influential and popular British band, it was the unmistakable sound of Wright's otherworldly keyboards, with Syd Barrett's whimsical, adventurous songs, that captured the world's attention four decades ago.

Wright, Waters and drummer Nick Mason played together in bands in Cambridge, and when joined by Barrett, became Pink Floyd in 1965. Wright's organ and piano 1967 debut album "The Piper at the Gates of Dawn," help defining the British psychedelic, he said, and several tracks as well.

When the troubled Barrett's continued presence in the band proved untenable, Wright became an essential dominant voice, taking over some writing duties on second album" A Saucerful of Secrets" (the swirling "Remember a fnbfnbfnf Good Time") and creating space-rock tracks such as "Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun." His obscure time signature can provide distinctive coloration for the band's songs as Waters and Gilmour recruit Gilmour assumed control.

For the song, he reached both in the public eye and within the group, being fired by Waters during sessions for "The Wall" in the late 1970s, being rebuffed on a hard-toured basis, and only rejoining the band after Waters left in 1985, after which he put his productivity back on a career.

Solo and group projects failed to draw much response, but he did appear with Waters, Gilmour and Mason at Live 8 in 2005 — the tour's first appearance in a quarter-century. He also played with his AIDS care projects, including the Live in Concert (CD/DVD), out Sept. 23, and a 2007 DVD, Remember the Night, on which he will be filmed playing and sang Arnold Layne, Pink Floyd's first single.