

## **Outside In: A Personal, *Personal* History of Pink Floyd**

One of the first things that people learn about me after a conversation or two is that I love Pink Floyd. Ah – but love seems to be too frivolous of a word here – I love a great many things; but Pink Floyd? I am *obsessed* with Pink Floyd. I often refer to myself as a cultist of Pink Floyd. I can think of no other single interest of mine that has affected my life (body, mind, and soul) so profoundly. But Kashya, you might be thinking, isn't that a bit of an exaggeration? No, my dear reader, here I am entirely earnest in my devotion.

I oft joke that I've been listening to Pink Floyd since I was in utero, as they are my father's favorite band as well. I have no memory of listening to any Pink Floyd albums for the first time (except for *The Endless River*, which came out in 2014). When I was a kid, I would spend countless hours researching Pink Floyd on the early iterations of the world-wide web, quickly becoming a walking encyclopedia of Pink Floyd trivia – a talent which rarely has any practical use. It need not have practical use to hold great personal meaning though. And so, I continued my zealous research throughout my formative years, soaking up every piece of knowledge about Pink Floyd that I could, and then in 2004 the proverbial floodgates opened to me when Nick Mason, drummer of Pink Floyd, released his book *Inside Out: A Personal History of Pink Floyd*. This was something entirely new to me: the history of Pink Floyd told by the only band member who was there for the entire duration of the band – every album, every concert, every trial and success of the band.

I was enraptured.

We (the book and I) were inseparable. Every day in middle-school English class, I would read it during silent reading. Anytime I was on the bus or in the car, I was judiciously examining every page of this book. On a trip to see my grandparents in Wisconsin, this book was the only reading material that I brought (a small but telling gesture for a voracious bookworm). Looking at the worn corners and the cracked and tearing spine, I can see a physical manifestation of this devotion. Frankly, I am still a bit in awe of what an absolute treasure this book is for me and any other fellow Floyd fanatics. And so it is that *Inside Out* became the first book in my Pink Floyd collection.

Shortly afterwards, Roger Waters – lyricist, vocalist, and bassist for Pink Floyd – announced that he would be setting out on a new world tour focused on *Dark Side of the Moon*. We lived just outside of Seattle, WA at the time, so we were able to get tickets for the Roger Waters concert at the Key Arena for October 12, 2006 (the last show of the second leg of the tour). This was only my second concert ever (my first being Cher!) and it completely blew my 13-year-old mind. The theatricality of it all; seeing one of my idols in the flesh; singing along to every word with my father; seeing Roger Waters become emotional when singing *Shine on You Crazy Diamond* and *Wish You Were Here* – songs about former Pink Floyd founder and friend, Syd Barrett, who had passed only a few months prior – it was all so overwhelming and formative. My parents bought me a tour programme from that concert, an act for which I am immensely grateful, especially as this became the second piece of my collection.

My collection has since grown with the addition of more books, magazines, concert programmes, vinyl records, tattoos, posters, various knickknacks, and more band t-shirts and apparel items

than most acquire in their whole lifetimes. Some of these I've purchased for myself, and others have been gifted to me by friends and family. This collection is not only the diligent work of a diehard fan, but it is also, in a way, a re-telling of my life's story so far. The different pieces point to different times in my life. They show how this interest has shaped me throughout my adolescence and into my adulthood, as well as how I have curated and tended to this unwavering passion throughout my life. In short, my Pink Floyd collection is my own personal history.

Shine on, readers.

## Bibliography

Chapman, Robert. *Syd Barrett: A Very Irregular Head*. London: Faber & Faber, 2020.

A newly reprinted work that I haven't yet been able to dig into much yet. This is seen as the definitive work on Syd Barrett, founding member of Pink Floyd. It recounts Syd Barrett's early life, his rise to stardom, and his infamous and tragic mental decline which followed.

Geesin, Ron. *The Flaming Cow: The Making of Pink Floyd's Atom Heart Mother*. Cheltenham: The History Press, 2021.

What a treat! And a new one, at that. Ron Geesin helped to develop the 1970 album *Atom Heart Mother* with Pink Floyd and was responsible for composing the 24-minute long orchestral suite of the same name. It is incredible to be able to read Geesin's personal perspective and retelling of what it was like working on this early Floyd album as both an outsider to the band and a close collaborator.

Harris, John. *The Dark Side of the Moon: The Making of the Pink Floyd Masterpiece*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2006.

This is one that I just found out existed while I was doing research for the Pink Floyd Johnnie study group I've been hosting throughout the current academic year. It's a fun deep dive into one of the most iconic and best-selling albums of all time.

Mason, Nick. Essay. In *Inside Out: A Personal History of Pink Floyd*, edited by Philip Dodd. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle books, 2005.

The first item in my collection and probably one of the dearest to me. This well-loved, slightly battered gem is the absolute best repository of Pink Floyd knowledge. One of its best features is that it's filled with photos from throughout the band's history from Nick Mason's own archives; a real peak behind the curtains at the decades-long union of Pink Floyd.

*Mojo* no. 263, October 2015.

This magazine has a great interview with David Gilmour, lead guitarist and vocalist of Pink Floyd, in his houseboat on the Thames (equipped with a full recording studio), about his 2015 album *Rattle that Lock*. He went on tour to support the album, and my father and I were able to attend his concert in Chicago on April 6, 2016. This magazine also came with a CD that included music from David Gilmour or related to him in some way.

*Mojo* no. 271, June 2016.

This is a special edition of *Mojo* Magazine that includes a wonderful tribute to Syd Barrett, founding member of Pink Floyd, published 10 years after his death. It includes a piece from Syd Barrett's sister, a look at all of Barrett's recordings, and two beautifully reprinted concert posters from the Barrett-era of Pink Floyd.

*Newsweek* Special Edition, Pink Floyd, 2015.

*Newsweek* published this special edition magazine for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the forming of Pink Floyd. It is an utter delight through and through! Great backstage stories, rare photos, and all sorts of other excellent Floydian insights.

*Pink Floyd: Their Mortal Remains*. London: V&A Publishing, 2017.

This is another special piece of my collection. This is from the Their Mortal Remains exhibit that premiered at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London in 2017. I was able to travel to London to go to the exhibit during my birthday week in September 2017 and it was a transcendent, sonically immersive experience! This book shows the vast category of items that were on display at the exhibit, a truly impressive collection!

Povey, Glenn. *Pink Floyd in Objects*. London: Carlton Books, 2018.

This is a fun one! It's almost exclusively pictures of the objects that were part of Pink Floyd's history: instruments, posters, giant puppets, inflatable pigs, etc. The best part is that I won it from a random drawing from The Floydian Slip, a weekly one-hour radio show all about Pink Floyd. I used to listen to the radio show on a local radio station when I was a kid in Washington, but after moving to Montana was no longer able to until it came to a local Montanan radio station about a decade later!

Reisch, George A. *Pink Floyd and Philosophy: Careful with That Axiom, Eugene!* Chicago, IL: Open Court, 2012.

I found this book in a used bookstore many years ago and immediately purchased it after seeing the phrase 'Camus-ed to Death', as I have also been an avid Camus reader for quite some time. It is a series of essays about how different philosophical ideas are explored and expressed in Pink Floyd's works.

"Roger Waters The Dark Side of the Moon" (Tour Programme), 2006

This was from my first Roger Waters concert from October 12, 2006 at the Key Arena in Seattle, WA.

"Roger Waters The Dark Side of the Moon" (Tour Programme), 2007

This was from my second Roger Waters concert from June 21, 2007 at the GM Place in Vancouver, BC.

"Roger Waters The Wall Live" (Tour Programme), 2010

This was from my third Roger Waters concert from December 11, 2010 at the Tacoma Dome in Tacoma, WA. This concert tour was the first time anyone from Pink Floyd had performed The Wall in its entirety since 1990. A truly spectacular production with giant puppets, a flying pig, and, of course, a giant wall which was built on stage throughout the concert. This one includes a bunch of tissue paper pieces shaped in different symbols of modern society (dollar sign, cross, Star of David, Shell logo, etc.) that were released from the ceiling during the show and that I collected afterwards.

“Roger Water The Wall Live” (Tour Programme), 2012

This was from my fourth Roger Waters concert from September 2012 at the United Center in Chicago, IL.

“Roger Waters This Is Not a Drill” (Tour Programme), 2022.

This was from my eighth Roger Waters concert from August 16, 2022 at the Capital One Arena in Washington, D.C. I also saw this concert tour in Milwaukee on July 28, 2022 at the Fiserv Forum. Roger Waters is calling this his first farewell tour, so it’s quite possible that this will be the last concert of his that I attend. The concert was set in the round, and we were able to get front row seats for the one in Milwaukee and third row seats for the one in Washington D.C. At one point, while Roger Waters was walking around the stage, we made direct eye contact from less than 6 feet away, a real highlight of my various concert experiences!

*Rolling Stone* no. 1114, September 30, 2010.

This was the first magazine that was added to my collection. I saw it randomly in the magazine section of a store while shopping with my mother and absolutely had to have. I was so giddy to see Roger Waters on the cover of *Rolling Stone*, and better yet, it was because he was going back out on tour with *The Wall*!

*Rolling Stone* Special Collectors Edition, Pink Floyd: The Ultimate Guide, 2014.

Another Special Collectors Edition magazine on Pink Floyd. My favorite part of this one is the 1971 *Rolling Stone* interview with Syd Barrett. It’s a sad interview overall since Syd Barrett was no longer fully coherent, but it was one of the last interviews he ever did and so it holds significance as being one of the last times we get to see Syd in Syd’s own words.

Scarfe, Gerald. *The Making of Pink Floyd The Wall*. London: Da Capo, 2010.

Wow, what a book! This is another that I found out about fairly recently. Gerald Scarfe was the lead artist and animator for the band’s 1982 film *Pink Floyd – The Wall*. This book is an absolute treasure trove of Gerald Scarfe’s illustrations, including character sketches, early drafts of animations, and art that didn’t make the final cut of the film. One of the most remarkable aspects of this book (to me, at least) is that it consists of almost entirely new information, photos, and art that are not covered anywhere else! And Gerald Scarfe’s illustrations are just phenomenal for Floyd fanatics and ‘normies’ alike.

Schaffner, Nicholas. *Saucerful of Secrets: The Pink Floyd Odyssey*. New York, NY: Delta, 1992.

This was one of the first books on Pink Floyd that I ever bought myself. It’s not quite as good as some of the other books that were written by people close to the band, but it is still a good retelling of the history of Pink Floyd. This one has had its place on my bookshelf for well over a decade.

Thompson, Dave. *Roger Waters: The Man Behind the Wall*. Milwaukee, WI: Backbeat Books, an imprint of Hal Leonard Corporation, 2013.

This book had been on my 'Wanted Books' list for years and I just happened to find it in a used bookstore randomly last year! I haven't had a chance to read it fully yet, but it is the first biography of Roger Waters and is regarded pretty highly in the Floydian community. The book starts with the polemic line "*The Wall* was Roger Waters's first album" which is quite the catchy opener!

Thorgerson, Storm, and Peter Curzon. *Mind over Matter: The Images of Pink Floyd*. Omnibus Press, 2017.

Another of my favorites. This is a book about the artwork of Pink Floyd written by one of the artists who worked with the band throughout almost their entire careers. Storm Thorgerson was a childhood friend of the members of Pink Floyd and when he founded the graphic art group Hipgnosis in 1968, it became the obvious choice for Pink Floyd's design needs. Hipgnosis is responsible for almost every album cover that Pink Floyd released, including the quintessential prism of *Dark Side of the Moon*. Storm Thorgerson is not only a masterful visionary in the field of rock music aesthetics, but he is also an extremely intelligent, clever, and witty writer. Thorgerson even opens the book with his own Apologia, which I think my fellow Johnnies would appreciate!