

= Meddle =

Meddle is the sixth studio album by English progressive rock group Pink Floyd , released on 31 October 1971 by Harvest Records . It was produced between the band 's touring commitments , from January to August 1971 . The album was recorded at a series of locations around London , including Abbey Road Studios and Morgan Studios .

With no material to work with and no clear idea of the album 's direction , the group devised a series of novel experiments which eventually inspired the album 's signature track , " Echoes " . Although many of the band 's later albums would be unified by a central theme with lyrics written mainly by Roger Waters , Meddle was a group effort with lyrical contributions from each member , and is considered a transitional album between the Syd Barrett @-@ influenced group of the late 1960s and the emerging Pink Floyd . The cover , incorporating a close @-@ up shot of an ear underwater was , as with several previous albums , designed by Hipgnosis , though Storm Thorgerson was unhappy with the final result .

The album was well received by music critics upon its release . However , despite being commercially successful in the United Kingdom , lackluster publicity on the part of their United States @-@ based label led to poor sales there upon initial release .

= = Recording = =

Returning from a series of tours across America and England in support of Atom Heart Mother , at the start of 1971 Pink Floyd commenced work on new material at Abbey Road Studios in London . At the time , Abbey Road was equipped only with eight @-@ track multitrack recording facilities , which the band found insufficient for the increasing technical demands of their project . They transferred their best efforts , including the opening of what became " Echoes " , to 16 @-@ track tape at smaller studios in London (namely AIR , and Morgan in West Hampstead) and resumed work with the advantage of more flexible recording equipment . Engineers John Leckie and Peter Bown recorded the main Abbey Road and AIR sessions , while for minor work at Morgan , Rob Black , Wayne Gregory and Roger Quested handled the engineering duties .

Lacking a central theme for the project , the band used several experimental methods in an attempt to spur the creative process . One exercise involved each member playing on a separate track , with no reference to what the other members were doing . The tempo was entirely random while the band played around an agreed chord structure , and moods such as " first two minutes romantic , next two up tempo " . Each recorded section was named , but the process was largely unproductive ; after several weeks , no complete songs had been created .

Leckie had worked on albums such as George Harrison 's All Things Must Pass and Ringo Starr 's Sentimental Journey , and was employed as a tape @-@ operator on Meddle , partly for his proclivity for working into the early hours of the morning . He has said that Pink Floyd 's sessions would often begin in the afternoon , and end early the next morning , " during which time nothing would get done . There was no record company contact whatsoever , except when their label manager would show up now and again with a couple of bottles of wine and a couple of joints . " The band would apparently spend long periods of time working on simple sounds , or a particular guitar riff . They also spent several days at AIR attempting to create music using a variety of household objects , a project which would be revisited between their next albums , The Dark Side of the Moon and Wish You Were Here .

Following these early experiments ? called Nothings ? the band developed Son of Nothings , which was followed by Return of the Son of Nothings ? the working title of the new album . One of these early works involved the use of Richard Wright 's piano . Wright had fed a single note through a Leslie speaker , producing a submarine @-@ like ping . The band tried repeatedly to recreate this sound in the studio but were unsuccessful , and so the demo version was used on what would later become " Echoes " , mixed almost exclusively at AIR Studios . Combined with David Gilmour 's guitar , the band were able to develop the track further , experimenting with accidental sound effects (such as Gilmour 's guitar being plugged into a wah @-@ wah pedal back to front) . Unlike with

Atom Heart Mother , the new multi @-@ track capabilities of the studio enabled them to create the track in stages , rather than performing it in a single take . The final , 23 @-@ minute piece would eventually take up the entire second side of the album .

" One of These Days " was developed around an ostinato bassline created by Roger Waters , by feeding the output through a Binson Echorec . The bass line was performed by Waters and Gilmour using two bass guitars , one on old strings . Drummer Nick Mason 's abstruse " One of these days I 'm going to cut you into little pieces " line was recorded at double speed using a falsetto voice , and replayed at normal speed .

Meddle was recorded between the band 's various concert commitments , and therefore its production was spread over a considerable period of time . The band recorded in the first half of April 1971 , but in the latter half played at Doncaster and Norwich before returning to record at the end of the month . In May they split their time between sessions at Abbey Road , and rehearsals and concerts in London , Lancaster , Stirling , Edinburgh , Glasgow and Nottingham . June and July were spent mainly performing at venues across Europe . August was spent in the far east and Australia , September in Europe , and October to November in the US . In the same period , the group also produced Relics , a compilation album of some of Pink Floyd 's earlier works . A quadraphonic mix of the album was prepared at Command Studios on 21 and 26 September , but remains unreleased .

= = Composition = =

Although the tracks possess a variety of moods , Meddle is generally considered more cohesive than its 1970 predecessor , Atom Heart Mother . The largely instrumental " One of These Days " is followed by " A Pillow of Winds " , which is distinguished by being one of the few quiet , acoustic love songs in the Pink Floyd catalogue . These two songs segue into each other across windy sound effects , anticipating the technique that would later be used on Wish You Were Here . The title of " A Pillow of Winds " was inspired by the games of Mahjong that Waters , Mason , and their wives , played while in the south of France .

The song " Fearless " employs field recordings of the Liverpool F.C. Kop choir singing " You 'll Never Walk Alone " , their anthem , which brings the song to an end in a heavily reverberated fade @-@ out . " San Tropez " , by contrast , is a jazz @-@ inflected pop song with a shuffle tempo , composed by Waters in his increasingly deployed style of breezy , off @-@ the @-@ cuff songwriting . The song was inspired by the band 's trip to the south of France in 1970 . Pink Floyd uncharacteristically displayed their sense of humour with " Seamus " , a pseudo @-@ blues novelty track featuring Steve Marriott 's dog (which Gilmour was looking after) howling along to the music . " Seamus " often tops polls as the worst song Pink Floyd ever created , but the band would later use animal sounds again , in Animals .

The final song on the album is the 23 @-@ minute " Echoes " . First performed as " Return of the Son of Nothing " on 22 April 1971 in Norwich , the band spent about six months on the track in three studios (Morgan , AIR and Abbey Road) . The track opens with Wright 's " ping " . " Echoes " was recorded almost entirely at Air Studios , and completed in July 1971 . " Echoes " also gave its name to the compilation album Echoes : The Best of Pink Floyd , on which a much @-@ edited version of the title track was included . On the compilation , multiple edits throughout the entire song cut the running length of the piece down by some seven minutes . Some of the material composed during the creation of Meddle was not used ; however , one song would eventually become " Brain Damage " , on The Dark Side of the Moon . " Echoes " was later featured in its entirety in the 1973 Australian surf film Crystal Voyager , filmed , written and narrated by surfer , photographer and filmmaker George Greenough during an extended section of slow @-@ motion footage shot inside the curl of waves .

= = Packaging = =

The album 's title Meddle is a play on words : a medal , and to interfere . Storm Thorgerson of the

art @-@ design group Hipgnosis originally suggested a close @-@ up shot of a baboon 's anus for the album cover photograph . He was overruled by the band , who informed him via an intercontinental telephone call while on tour in Japan that they would rather have " an ear underwater " . The cover image was photographed by Bob Dowling . The image represents an ear , underwater , collecting waves of sound (represented by ripples in the water) . Thorgerson has expressed dissatisfaction with the cover , claiming it to be his least favourite Pink Floyd album sleeve : " I think Meddle is a much better album than its cover " . Thorgerson 's colleague Aubrey Powell shares his sentiments , saying : " Meddle was a mess . I hated that cover . I don 't think we did them justice with that at all ; it 's half @-@ hearted . " The gatefold contains a group photograph of the band (Floyd 's last until 1987 's A Momentary Lapse of Reason) .

= = Release and reception = =

Meddle was released on 31 October 1971 in the US , and 13 November in the UK . Meddle was later released as a remastered LP by Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab , and in April 1989 on their " Ultradisc " gold CD format . The album was included as part of the box set Shine On on 2 November 1992 .

Although in the UK it reached number three , lacklustre publicity on the part of Capitol Records led to weak sales in the US , and a chart position of number 70 . On 29 November 1971 , " One of These Days " was released as a 7 @-@ inch single in the US , with " Fearless " on the B @-@ side . " One of These Days " and " Echoes " were performed during Live At Pompeii (the latter in two parts) and also on the BBC 's 1971 In Concert . Meddle was later certified gold by the RIAA on 29 October 1973 and then double platinum on 11 March 1994 , following the added attention garnered by the band 's later successes in the United States .

= = = Critical response = = =

On release , Meddle received generally positive reviews from music critics . Rolling Stone 's Jean @-@ Charles Costa wrote : " Meddle not only confirms lead guitarist David Gilmour 's emergence as a real shaping force with the group , it states forcefully and accurately that the group is well into the growth track again " , and the NME called it " an exceptionally good album " . Steve Peterson of Hit Parader cited " Fearless " as its best song and said of the album , " This has got to be their best ever . " Ed Kelleher of Circus called it " another masterpiece by a masterful group " , noting " Fearless " as " fascinating " and praising " Echoes " as " a tone poem that allows all four group members much time to stretch their muscles " . However , Melody Maker was more reserved , describing it as " a soundtrack to a non @-@ existent movie " .

In a retrospective review , Robert Christgau said Meddle was a fairly good progression over the group 's previous work and featured folk songs highlighted by unique melodies , although he lamented the lyrics to " A Pillow of Winds " : " The word ' behold ' should never cross their filters again " . In his critique of " Echoes " , he believed the lyrics imitate " Across the Universe " by the Beatles but over 23 minutes of music that flows with a " timeless calm " similar to " Interstellar Overdrive " . Daryl Easlea of BBC felt it is a similar , but more consistent and tuneful version of Atom Heart Mother highlighted by " Echoes " , which he said " dominates the entire work " and is " everything right about progressive rock ; engaging , intelligent and compelling " . In The New Rolling Stone Album Guide (2004) , Rob Sheffield said " Echoes " showed Pink Floyd to be a more developed group than before , " coloring the slow guitar ripples with deep @-@ in @-@ the @-@ studio sonic details that only the truly baked would notice , much less appreciate . " Writing for AllMusic , editor Stephen Thomas Erlewine called Meddle the best album from their transitional years leading up to The Dark Side of the Moon , as it " spends most of its time with sonic textures and elongated compositions , most notably on its epic closer , ' Echoes ' " . He noted a " uniform tone " , but not song structure , and wrote of the album 's significance in the group 's catalogue : " Pink Floyd were nothing if not masters of texture , and Meddle is one of their greatest excursions into little details , pointing the way to the measured brilliance of Dark Side of the Moon and the entire

Roger Waters era . "

= = Track listing = =

= = Personnel = =

Credits adapted from sleeve notes .

Pink Floyd

David Gilmour ? guitar , lead vocals , harmony vocals on " Fearless " , bass on " One of These Days " , harmonica on " Seamus "

Roger Waters ? bass , acoustic guitar and lead vocals on " San Tropez "

Richard Wright ? Hammond organ , piano , EMS VCS 3 synthesizer , co @-@ lead vocals on " Echoes " , Farfisa organ (uncredited)

Nick Mason ? drums , percussion , vocal phrase on " One of These Days "

Additional personnel

Rob Black ? engineering (Morgan Studio)

Peter Bown ? engineering (Air and EMI Studios)

Peter Curzon ? design on album remaster

Bob Dowling ? outer sleeve photos

James Guthrie ? remastering

Hipgnosis ? band photo

John Leckie ? engineering (Air and EMI Studios)

Tony May ? inner sleeve photos

Pink Floyd ? album cover design

Roger Quested ? engineering (Morgan Studio)

Doug Sax ? remastering

Seamus the Dog ? vocals on " Seamus "

Storm Thorgerson ? design on album remaster

= = Charts and certifications = =