

= Wish You Were Here (Pink Floyd album) =

Wish You Were Here is the ninth studio album by the English rock band Pink Floyd , released in September 1975 . Inspired by material the group composed while performing across Europe , Wish You Were Here was recorded in numerous sessions at London 's Abbey Road Studios . Some of the songs critique the music business , others express alienation , and " Shine On You Crazy Diamond " is a tribute to Syd Barrett , whose mental breakdown had forced him to leave the group seven years earlier . It was lead writer Roger Waters ' idea to split " Shine On You Crazy Diamond " into two parts and use it to bookend the album around three new compositions , introducing a new concept as the group had done with their previous album , The Dark Side of the Moon .

As with The Dark Side of the Moon , the band used studio effects and synthesizers , and brought in guest singers to supply vocals on some tracks of the album . These singers were Roy Harper , who provided the lead vocals on " Have a Cigar " , and The Blackberries , who added backing vocals to " Shine On You Crazy Diamond " . The album became an instant commercial success and record company EMI was unable to print enough copies to satisfy demand . Although it initially received mixed reviews , the album has since been acclaimed by critics and appears on Rolling Stone 's list of " The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time " . Band members Richard Wright and David Gilmour have each cited Wish You Were Here as their favourite Pink Floyd album .

= = Background = =

During 1974 , Pink Floyd sketched out three new compositions , " Raving and Drooling " , " You Gotta Be Crazy " and " Shine On You Crazy Diamond " . These songs were performed during a series of concerts in France and England , the band 's first tour since 1973 's The Dark Side of the Moon . As Pink Floyd had never employed a publicist and kept themselves distant from the press , their relationship with the media began to sour . Following the publication by NME of a negative critique of the band 's new material , written by Nick Kent (a devotee of Syd Barrett) and Pete Erskine , the band returned to the studio in the first week of 1975 .

= = Concept = =

Wish You Were Here is the second Pink Floyd album to use a conceptual theme written entirely by Roger Waters . It reflects his feeling that the camaraderie that had served the band was , by then , largely absent . The album begins with a long instrumental preamble and segues into the lyrics for " Shine On You Crazy Diamond " , a tribute to Syd Barrett , whose mental breakdown had forced him to leave the group seven years earlier . Barrett is fondly recalled with lines such as " Remember when you were young , you shone like the sun " and " You reached for the secret too soon , you cried for the moon " .

Wish You Were Here is also a critique of the music business . " Shine On " crosses seamlessly into " Welcome to the Machine " , a song that begins with an opening door (described by Waters as a symbol of musical discovery and progress betrayed by a music industry more interested in greed and success) and ends with a party , the latter epitomising " the lack of contact and real feelings between people " . Similarly , " Have a Cigar " scorns record industry " fatcats " with the lyrics repeating a stream of cliches heard by rising new @-@ comers in the industry , and including the question " by the way , which one 's Pink ? " asked of the band on at least one occasion . The lyrics of the next song , " Wish You Were Here " , relate both to Barrett 's condition , and to the dichotomy of Waters ' character , with greed and ambition battling with compassion and idealism . The album closes with a reprise of " Shine On " and further instrumental excursions .

= = Recording = =

Alan Parsons , EMI staff engineer for Pink Floyd 's previous studio album , The Dark Side of the Moon , had declined the band 's offer to continue working with them (Parsons became successful in

his own right with The Alan Parsons Project) . The group had worked with engineer Brian Humphries on More , recorded at Pye Studios , and again in 1974 when he replaced an inexperienced concert engineer . Humphries was therefore the natural choice to work on the band 's new material , although as a stranger to EMI 's Abbey Road set @-@ up he encountered some early difficulties . On one occasion , Humphries inadvertently spoiled the backing tracks for " Shine On " , a piece that Waters and drummer Nick Mason had spent many hours perfecting , with echo . The entire piece had to be re @-@ recorded .

The sessions for Wish You Were Here at Abbey Road 's Studio Three lasted from January until July 1975 , recording on four days each week from 2 : 30 P.M. until very late in the evening . The group found it difficult at first to devise any new material , especially as the success of The Dark Side of the Moon had left all four physically and emotionally drained . Keyboardist Richard Wright later described these sessions as " falling within a difficult period " , and Waters recalled them as " torturous " . Mason found the process of multi @-@ track recording drawn out and tedious , while David Gilmour was more interested in improving the band 's existing material . Gilmour was also becoming increasingly frustrated with Mason , whose failing marriage had brought on a general malaise and sense of apathy , both of which interfered with his drumming . Mason has since stated that Nick Kent 's criticism in the NME may have had some influence in keeping the band together .

It was a very difficult period I have to say . All your childhood dreams had been sort of realised and we had the biggest selling records in the world and all the things you got into it for . The girls and the money and the fame and all that stuff it was all ... everything had sort of come our way and you had to reassess what you were in it for thereafter , and it was a pretty confusing and sort of empty time for a while ...

Humphries said his point of view of these struggled sessions in a 2014 interview : ? There were days when we didn't do anything . I don't think they knew what they wanted to do . We had a dartboard and an air rifle and we'd play these word games , sit around , get drunk , go home and return the next day . That's all we were doing until suddenly everything started falling into place . ?

After several weeks , Waters began to visualise another concept . The three new compositions from 1974 's tour were at least a starting point for a new album , and " Shine On You Crazy Diamond " seemed a reasonable choice as a centrepiece for the new work . Mostly an instrumental twenty @-@ minute @-@ plus piece similar to " Echoes " , the opening four @-@ note guitar phrase reminded Waters of the lingering ghost of former band @-@ member Syd Barrett . Gilmour had composed the phrase entirely by accident , but was encouraged by Waters ' positive response . Waters wanted to split " Shine On You Crazy Diamond " , and sandwich two new songs between its two halves . Gilmour disagreed , but was outvoted three to one . " Welcome to the Machine " and " Have a Cigar " were barely veiled attacks on the music business , their lyrics working neatly with " Shine On " to provide an apt summary of the rise and fall of Barrett ; " Because I wanted to get as close as possible to what I felt ... that sort of indefinable , inevitable melancholy about the disappearance of Syd . " " Raving and Drooling " and " You Gotta Be Crazy " had no place in the new concept , and were set aside until the following album , 1977 's Animals .

= = = Syd Barrett 's visit to the studio = = =

One of the more notable events during the recording of Wish You Were Here occurred on 5 June 1975 , the day Gilmour married his first wife , Ginger , on the eve of Pink Floyd 's second US tour that year . The band were in the process of completing the final mix of " Shine On You Crazy Diamond " when an overweight man with shaven head and eyebrows , and holding a plastic bag , entered the room . Waters , who was working in the studio , initially did not recognise him . Wright was also mystified by the identity of the visitor , presumed he was a friend of Waters ' and asked him , but soon realised that it was Syd Barrett . Gilmour initially presumed he was an EMI staff member . Mason also failed to recognise him and was " horrified " when Gilmour identified him . In Mason 's personal memoir of Pink Floyd , Inside Out , he recalled Barrett 's conversation as " desultory and not entirely sensible " . Storm Thorgerson later reflected on Barrett 's presence : " Two or three

people cried . He sat round and talked for a bit but he wasn 't really there . "

Waters was reportedly reduced to tears by the sight of his former bandmate , who was asked by fellow visitor Andrew King how he had managed to gain so much weight . Barrett said he had a large refrigerator in his kitchen , and that he had been eating lots of pork chops . He also mentioned that he was ready to avail the band of his services , but while listening to the mix of " Shine On " , showed no signs of understanding its relevance to his plight . He joined the guests at Gilmour 's wedding reception in the EMI canteen , but left without saying goodbye . None of the band members saw him from that day on until his death in 2006 . Although the lyrics had already been created , Barrett 's presence on that day may have influenced the final part of the song ? a subtle refrain performed by Wright from " See Emily Play " is audible towards the end of the album .

I 'm very sad about Syd . Of course he was important and the band would never have fucking started without him because he was writing all the material . It couldn 't have happened without him but on the other hand it couldn 't have gone on with him . " Shine On " is not really about Syd ? he 's just a symbol for all the extremes of absence some people have to indulge in because it 's the only way they can cope with how fucking sad it is , modern life , to withdraw completely . I found that terribly sad .

= = = Instrumentation = = =

As in *The Dark Side of the Moon* , the band used synthesizers such as the EMS VCS 3 (on " Welcome to the Machine ") , but softened with Gilmour 's acoustic guitar and percussion from Mason . The start of " Shine On " contains remnants from a previous but incomplete studio recording by the band known as " Household Objects " . Wine glasses had been filled with varying amounts of fluid , and recordings were made of a wet finger circling the edge of each glass . These recordings were multi @-@ tracked into chords , and used in the opening of " Shine On " .

Jazz violinist Stéphane Grappelli and classical violinist Yehudi Menuhin were performing in another studio in the building , and were invited to record a piece for the new album . Menuhin watched as Grappelli played on the song " Wish You Were Here " ; however , the band later decided his contribution was unsuitable and , until 2011 , it was believed that the piece had been wiped . It turns out his playing was included on the album , but so low in the final mix that the band presumed it would be insulting to credit him . He was paid £ 300 for his contribution (equivalent to £ 2 @, @ 300 in 2016) . Dick Parry again played saxophone , on " Shine On You Crazy Diamond " . The opening bars of " Wish You Were Here " were recorded from Gilmour 's car radio , with somebody turning the dial (the classical music heard is the finale of Tchaikovsky 's Fourth Symphony) .

= = = Vocals = = =

Recording sessions had twice been interrupted by US tours (one in April and the other in June 1975) , and the final sessions , which occurred after the band 's performance at Knebworth , proved particularly troublesome for Waters . He struggled to record the vocals for " Have a Cigar " , requiring several takes to perform an acceptable version . His problems stemmed in part from the stresses placed upon his voice while recording the lead vocals of " Shine On You Crazy Diamond " . Gilmour was asked to sing in his place , but declined , and eventually colleague and friend Roy Harper was asked to stand in . Harper was recording his own album in another of Abbey Road 's studios , and Gilmour had already performed some guitar licks for him . Waters later regretted the decision , believing he should have performed the song . The Blackberries recorded backing vocals for " Shine On You Crazy Diamond " .

= = Packaging = =

Wish You Were Here was sold in one of the more elaborate packages to accompany a Pink Floyd album . Storm Thorgerson had accompanied the band on their 1974 tour , and had given serious thought to the meaning of the lyrics , eventually deciding that the songs were , in general ,

concerned with " unfulfilled presence " , rather than Barrett 's illness . This theme of absence was reflected in the ideas produced by his long hours spent brainstorming with the band . Thorgerson had noted that Roxy Music 's Country Life was sold in an opaque green cellophane sleeve ? censoring the cover image ? and he copied the idea , concealing the artwork for Wish You Were Here in a black @-@ coloured shrink @-@ wrap (therefore making the album art " absent ") . The concept behind " Welcome to the Machine " and " Have a Cigar " suggested the use of a handshake (an often empty gesture) , and George Hardie designed a sticker containing the album 's logo of two mechanical hands engaged in a handshake , to be placed on the opaque sleeve (the mechanical handshake logo would also appear on the labels of the vinyl album this time in a black and blue background) . The album 's cover images were photographed by Aubrey ' Po ' Powell , Storm 's partner at the Pink Floyd design studio Hipgnosis and was inspired by the idea that people tend to conceal their true feelings , for fear of " getting burned " , and thus two businessmen were pictured shaking hands , one man on fire . " Getting burned " was also a common phrase in the music industry , used often by artists denied royalty payments . Two stuntmen were used (Ronnie Rondell and Danny Rogers) , one dressed in a fire @-@ retardant suit covered by a business suit . His head was protected by a hood , underneath a wig . The photograph was taken at the Warner Bros. studios in Los Angeles . Initially the wind was blowing in the wrong direction , and the flames were forced into Rondell 's face , burning his moustache . The two stuntmen changed positions , and the image was later reversed . Releases from 1975 to 2011 had the right man leaning backward , but with the 2011 reissue it was changed to have him leaning forward . The release of the album on Spotify had the cover with the mechanical handshake logo as the cover starting in 2011 , but it was changed to the actual cover in 2016 .

The album 's back cover depicts a faceless " Floyd salesman " , in Thorgerson 's words , " selling his soul " in the desert (shot in the Yuma Desert in California again by Aubrey ' Po ' Powell) . The absence of wrists and ankles signifies his presence as an " empty suit " . The inner sleeve shows a veil concealing a nude woman in a windswept Norfolk grove , and a splash @-@ less diver at Mono Lake ? titled Monossee (the German translation of Mono Lake) on the liner notes ? in California (again emphasising the theme of absence) . The decision to shroud the cover in black plastic was not popular with the band 's US record company , Columbia Records , who insisted that it be changed (they were overruled) . EMI were less concerned ; the band were reportedly extremely happy with the end product , and when presented with a pre @-@ production mockup , they accepted it with a spontaneous round of applause .

= = Critical reception = =

The band played much of Wish You Were Here on 5 July 1975 at the Knebworth music festival . Roy Harper , performing at the same event , on discovering that his stage costume was missing , proceeded to destroy one of Pink Floyd 's vans , injuring himself in the process . This delayed the normal setup procedure of the band 's sound system . As a pair of World War II Spitfire aircraft had been booked to fly over the crowd during their entrance , the band were not able to delay their set . The result was that a power supply problem pushed Wright 's keyboards completely out of tune , damaging the band 's performance . At one point he left the stage , but the band were able to continue with a less sensitive keyboard , a piano and a simpler light show . Following a brief intermission , they returned to perform The Dark Side of the Moon , but critics displeased about being denied access backstage savaged the performance .

The album was released on 12 September 1975 in the UK , and on the following day in the US . In Britain , with 250 @, @ 000 advance sales , it went straight to number one , and demand was such that EMI informed retailers that only 50 per cent of their orders would be fulfilled . With 900 @, @ 000 advance orders (the largest for any Columbia release) it reached number one on the US Billboard chart in its second week . Wish You Were Here was Pink Floyd 's fastest @-@ selling album ever .

On release , the album received mixed reviews . Ben Edmunds wrote in Rolling Stone :

Shine on You Crazy Diamond is initially credible because it purports to confront the subject of Syd

Barrett , the long and probably forever lost guiding light of the original Floyd . But the potential of the idea goes unrealised ; they give such a matter @-@ of @-@ fact reading of the goddamn thing that they might as well be singing about Roger Waters 's brother @-@ in @-@ law getting a parking ticket . This lackadaisical demeanor forces , among other things , a reevaluation of their relationship to all the space cadet orchestras they unconsciously sired . The one thing those bands have going for them , in their cacophonously inept way , is a sincere passion for their " art . " And passion is everything of which Pink Floyd is devoid .

Melody Maker 's reviewer similarly opined : " From whichever direction one approaches Wish You Were Here , it still sounds unconvincing in its ponderous sincerity and displays a critical lack of imagination in all departments . "

Robert Christgau thought highly of the album , however , writing in The Village Voice at the time : " The music is not only simple and attractive , with the synthesizer used mostly for texture and the guitar breaks for comment , but it actually achieves some of the symphonic dignity (and cross @-@ referencing) that The Dark Side of the Moon simulated so ponderously . " He later wrote : " My favorite Pink Floyd album has always been Wish You Were Here , and you know why ? It has soul , that 's why ? it 's Roger Waters 's lament for Syd , not my idea of a tragic hero but as long as he 's Roger 's that doesn 't matter . "

According to Acclaimed Music , Wish You Were Here is the 185th most ranked record on critics ' all @-@ time lists . In 2012 , it was voted 211th on Rolling Stone magazine 's list of the " 500 Greatest Albums of All Time " . In 1998 Q readers voted Wish You Were Here the 34th greatest album of all time . In 2000 the same magazine placed it at number 43 in its list of the 100 Greatest British Albums Ever . In 2007 , one of Germany 's largest public radio stations , WDR 2 , asked its listeners to vote for the 200 best albums of all time . Wish You Were Here was voted number one . In 2004 Wish You Were Here was ranked number 36 on Pitchfork Media 's list of the Top 100 albums of the 1970s . IGN rated Wish You Were Here as the 8th greatest classic rock album .

Despite the problems during production , the album remained Wright 's favourite : " It 's an album I can listen to for pleasure , and there aren 't many Floyd albums that I can . " Gilmour shares this view : " I for one would have to say that it is my favourite album , the Wish You Were Here album . The end result of all that , whatever it was , definitely has left me an album I can live with very very happily . I like it very much . "

= = = Sales = = =

Pink Floyd and their manager Steve O 'Rourke had been dissatisfied with the efforts of EMI 's US label Capitol Records , and Wish You Were Here was Pink Floyd 's first album with Columbia Records , an affiliate of CBS . The band remained with EMI 's Harvest Records in Europe . As a result of the label switch , the band gained ownership of their recordings , so that , from Wish You Were Here onward , every one of their albums has been copyrighted to either " Pink Floyd Music Limited " or (after Waters ' departure) " Pink Floyd (1987) Ltd . " instead of the corresponding record label .

The album was certified Silver and Gold (60 @,@ 000 and 100 @,@ 000 sales respectively) in the UK on 1 August 1975 , and Gold in the US on 17 September 1975 . It was certified six times platinum on 16 May 1997 , and by 2004 has sold an estimated 13 million copies worldwide . " Have a Cigar " was chosen by Columbia as their first single , with " Welcome to the Machine " on the B @-@ side in the US .

= = Reissues and remastering = =

Wish You Were Here has been remastered and re @-@ released on several formats . In the UK and US the album was re @-@ issued in quadraphonic using the SQ format in 1976 , and in 1980 a special Hi @-@ Fi Today audiophile print was released in the UK . In the US it was released on CD in 1983 , and in the UK 1985 , and again as a remastered CD with new artwork in 1994 . In the US , Columbia 's CBS Mastersound label released a half @-@ speed mastered audiophile LP in 1981 ,

and in 1994 Sony Mastersound released a 24 @-@ carat gold @-@ plated CD , remastered using Super Bit Mapping , with the original artwork from the LP in both longbox and jewel case forms , the latter with a cardboard slipcover . The album was included as part of the box set Shine On , and five years later Columbia Records released an updated remastered CD , 17 seconds longer than the EMI remasters from 1994 , giving a running time of 44 : 28 . Its label was a recreation of the original machine handshake logo , with a black and blue background . The album was subsequently re @-@ released in 2000 for its 25th anniversary , on the Capitol Records label in the US . The album was re @-@ released and remixed in 2011 in multiple editions as part of the Why Pink Floyd ... ? reissue campaign . The Wish You Were Here - Immersion Box Set includes the new stereo digital remaster (2011) by James Guthrie on CD , an unreleased 5 @.@ 1 Surround Mix (2009) by James Guthrie on DVD and Blu @-@ ray , a Quad Mix (which had been released only on vinyl LP and 8 @-@ track tape) on DVD , as well as the original stereo mix (1975) on DVD and Blu @-@ ray . This campaign also featured the 2011 stereo remaster on 180g heavyweight vinyl as well as the 2011 stereo remaster and the 5 @.@ 1 surround sound mix (2009) as a hybrid Super Audio CD (SACD) .

= = Track listing = =

All lyrics written by Roger Waters .

= = Personnel = =

= = Charts and certifications = =