

= Atom Heart Mother =

Atom Heart Mother is the fifth studio album by English progressive rock band Pink Floyd . It was released by Harvest and EMI Records 2 October 1970 in the UK , and by Harvest and Capitol on 10 October 1970 in the US . It was recorded at Abbey Road Studios in London , England , and was the band 's first album to reach number 1 in the UK , while it reached number 55 in the US chart , eventually going gold there . A remastered CD was released in 1994 in the UK and the United States , and again in 2011 . Ron Geesin , who had already influenced and collaborated with Roger Waters , made a notable contribution to the album and received a then @-@ rare outside songwriting credit .

This was the first Pink Floyd album to be specially mixed for four @-@ channel quadrasonic sound as well as conventional two @-@ channel stereo . The SQ quadrasonic mix was released on LP in a matrix format compatible with standard stereo record players . There was also a release of the quadrasonic version in the UK in fully discrete four @-@ channel form on the " Quad @-@ 8 " format , a four @-@ channel variant of the stereo 8 @-@ track tape cartridge .

The cover was designed by Hipgnosis , and was significant in that it was the first one to not feature the band 's name on the cover , or contain any photographs of the band anywhere . This was a trend that would continue on subsequent covers throughout the 1970s and beyond .

Although it was commercially successful on release , the band , particularly Waters and David Gilmour , have expressed several negative opinions of the album in more recent years . Nevertheless , it remained popular enough for Gilmour to perform the title track with Geesin in 2008 .

= = Recording = =

The album came about after Pink Floyd had completed work on the soundtrack to the film *Zabriskie Point* in Rome , which had ended somewhat acrimoniously , and headed back to London in early 1970 for rehearsals . A number of out @-@ takes from the Rome sessions were used to assemble new material during these rehearsals , though some of it , such as " The Violent Sequence " , later to become " Us and Them " , would not be used for some time .

= = = Side one = = =

The title track to Atom Heart Mother resulted from a number of instrumental figures the band had composed during these rehearsals , including the chord progression of the main theme , which guitarist David Gilmour had called " Theme from an Imaginary Western " , and the earliest documented live performance was on 17 January 1970 at Hull University . The band felt that the live performances developed the piece into a manageable shape . Recording of the track commenced at Abbey Road Studios in London , and was somewhat cumbersome , as it was the first recording to use a new eight @-@ track one @-@ inch tape and EMI TG12345 transistorised mixing console ( 8 track 20 microphone inputs ) in the studio , and , as a result , EMI insisted the band were not allowed to do any splicing of the tape to edit pieces together . Consequently , band members Roger Waters and Nick Mason had little choice but to play the bass and drums , respectively , for the entire 23 minute piece in one sitting . The other instruments the band played were overdubbed later . Mason recalled the final backing track 's lack of precise timekeeping would cause problems later on .

By March , they had finished recording the track , but felt that it was rather unfocused and needed something else . The band had been introduced to Ron Geesin via the Rolling Stones tour manager , Sam Cutler , and were impressed with his composition and tape editing capabilities , particularly Waters and Mason . Geesin was handed the completed backing tracks the band had recorded , and asked to compose an orchestral arrangement over the top of it while the band went on tour to the US . Geesin described the composing and arranging as " a hell of a lot of work . Nobody knew what was wanted , they couldn 't read music ? " According to him , Gilmour came up with some of the

melodic lines , while the pair of them along with keyboardist Richard Wright worked on the middle section with the choir . When it came to recording his work in June with the EMI Pops Orchestra , the session musicians present were unimpressed with his tendency to favour avant garde music over established classical works , and , combined with the relative difficulty of some of the parts , harassed him during recording . John Alldis , whose choir were also to perform on the track , had experience in dealing with orchestral musicians , and managed to conduct the recorded performance in place of Geesin .

The track was originally called " The Amazing Pudding " , though Geesin 's original score referred to it as " Epic " . A refined and improved version ( with Geesin 's written parts ) was played at Bath Festival of Blues and Progressive Music on 27 June . Its name was changed after the band were due to play an " in concert " broadcast for BBC Radio 1 on 16 July 1970 , and had needed a title for John Peel to announce it . Geesin pointed to a copy of the Evening Standard , and suggested to Waters that he would find a title in there . The headline was : " ATOM HEART MOTHER NAMED " , a story about a woman being fitted with a nuclear @-@ powered pacemaker .

The piece as presented on the completed album is a progression from Pink Floyd 's earlier instrumental pieces such as " A Saucerful of Secrets " and even earlier , " Interstellar Overdrive " . The " Atom Heart Mother " suite takes up all of side one , and is split into six parts , individually named . Geesin chose the opening section name , " Father 's Shout " after Earl " Fatha " Hines , while other names such as " Breast Milky " and " Funky Dung " were inspired by the album cover artwork . The orchestral arrangements feature a full brass section , a cello and the 16 @-@ piece John Alldis choir , which take most of the lead melody lines , while Pink Floyd mainly provide the backing tracks ; a reverse of the 1960s pop music practice of using orchestration as the background , and putting the rock band in front . Nevertheless , there are several occasions where Gilmour 's electric guitar and Wright 's keyboards take the lead .

= = = Side two = = =

The album 's concept is similar to their previous Ummagumma album , in that it features the full band in the first half , and focuses on individual members in the second half . Side two opens with three five @-@ minute songs : one by each of the band 's three resident songwriters , and closes with a suite with sound effects primarily conceived by Mason , but credited to the whole group . Waters contributes a folk ballad called " If " , playing acoustic guitar . Pink Floyd rarely played the song live , but Waters often performed it at solo shows in support of his Radio K.A.O.S. album , more than a decade later . This is followed by Wright 's " Summer ' 68 " , which also features prominent use of brass in places . It was issued as a Japanese single in 1971 , and was the only track on the album never to be played live in concert .

According to Mason , Gilmour , having had little songwriting experience at that point , was ordered to remain in Abbey Road until he had composed a song suitable for inclusion on the album . He came up with a folk @-@ influenced tune , " Fat Old Sun " , which he still cites as a personal favourite . The song was extended in arrangement to fifteen minutes as a key part of the band 's live set , and is a staple of Gilmour 's various solo tours .

The final track , " Alan 's Psychedelic Breakfast " , is divided into three segments , each with its own descriptive title , joined by dialogue and sound effects of then @-@ roadie Alan Styles preparing , discussing , and eating breakfast . The idea for the piece came about by Waters experimenting with the rhythm of a dripping tap , which combined sound effects and dialogue recorded by Mason in his kitchen with musical pieces recorded at Abbey Road . A slightly re @-@ worked version was performed on stage on 22 December 1970 at Sheffield City Hall , Sheffield , England with the band members pausing between pieces to eat and drink their breakfast . The original LP ends with the sound of a dripping tap which continues into the inner groove , and thus plays on indefinitely .

While recording sessions for his Barrett album were underway ( with help from Gilmour and Wright ) , previous Floyd frontman Syd Barrett would occasionally observe his old band as they were recording Atom Heart Mother .

= = Cover art = =

The original album cover , designed by art collective Hipgnosis , shows a cow standing in a pasture with no text nor any other clue as to what might be on the record . Some later editions have the title and artist name added to the cover . This concept was the group 's reaction to the psychedelic space rock imagery associated with Pink Floyd at the time of the album 's release ; the band wanted to explore all sorts of music without being limited to a particular image or style of performance . They thus requested that their new album had " something plain " on the cover , which ended up being the image of a cow . Storm Thorgerson , inspired by Andy Warhol 's famous " cow wallpaper " , has said that he simply drove out into a rural area near Potters Bar and photographed the first cow he saw . The cow 's owner identified her name as " Lulubelle III " . More cows appear on the back cover , again with no text or titles , and on the inside gatefold . Also , a pink balloon shaped like a cow udder accompanied the album as part of Capitol 's marketing strategy campaign to " break " the band in the US . The liner notes in later CD editions give a recipe for Traditional Bedouin Wedding Feast on a card labelled " Breakfast Tips " . Looking back on the artwork , Thorgerson remembered : " I think the cow represents , in terms of the Pink Floyd , part of their humour , which I think is often underestimated or just unwritten about . "

In the mid @-@ 1970s , a bootleg containing rare singles and B @-@ sides entitled The Dark Side of the Moo appeared , with a similar cover . Like Atom Heart Mother , the cover had no writing on it , although in this case it was to protect the bootlegger 's anonymity rather than any artistic statement . The album cover to The KLF 's concept album Chill Out was also inspired by Atom Heart Mother .

= = Release and reception = =

Atom Heart Mother was released in the UK and US in October 1970 , reaching number 1 and number 55 , respectively . It was released in the quadraphonic format in the UK , Germany and Australia . A remastered CD was released in 1994 in the UK and the US . Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab released a 24KT gold CD in the US in 1994 , while a LP version was released in the US in the same year . As part of the Why Pink Floyd ... ? campaign , a remaster was released in 2011 . Then the album was re @-@ issued again in 2016 on the band 's own Pink Floyd Records label .

Critical reaction to the suite has always been mixed , and all band members have expressed negativity toward it in recent times . For instance , Gilmour has said the album was " a load of rubbish . We were at a real down point ... I think we were scraping the barrel a bit at that period " and " a good idea but it was dreadful ... Atom Heart Mother sounds like we didn 't have any idea between us , but we became much more prolific after it . " Similarly , in a 1984 interview on BBC Radio 1 , Waters said " If somebody said to me now ? right ? here 's a million pounds , go out and play Atom Heart Mother , I 'd say you must be fucking joking . "

= = Live performances = =

The band were initially enthusiastic about performing the suite in the early 1970s . An early performance was taped for the San Francisco based television station KQED , featuring just the band , on 28 April 1970 . Two memorable performances were at the Bath Festival of Blues and Progressive Music on 27 June and the " Blackhills Garden Party " in Hyde Park , London on 18 July . On both occasions the band were accompanied by the John Alldis Choir and the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble . Later , the band took a full brass section and choir on tour just for the purpose of performing this piece . However , this caused the tour to lose money , and the band found problems with the hired musicians , which changed from gig to gig as they simply took who was available , which , combined with lack of rehearsal and problems miking up the whole ensemble , made a full live performance more problematic . Reflecting on this , Gilmour said " some of the brass players have been really hopeless " . According to Mason , the band arrived at one gig in Aachen , Germany , only to discover they had left the sheet music behind , forcing tour manager Tony Howard to go back to London and get it . Because of this , a later arrangement without brass or choir , and pared

down from 25 minutes to fifteen by omitting the " collage " sections and closing reprise of the main theme , remained in their live repertoire into 1972 . For instance , during the first concert of that year , halfway through the first ever public live performance of The Dark Side of the Moon in Brighton , technical problems resulted in the abandoning of that performance , replaced by Atom Heart Mother . The last documented live performance of the suite was on 22 May 1972 at the Olympisch Stadium , Amsterdam , Netherlands .

= = Legacy = =

Stanley Kubrick wanted to use the album 's title track in A Clockwork Orange . The group refused permission , primarily because Kubrick was unsure of exactly which pieces of music he wanted and what he wished to do with them . In retrospect , Waters said " maybe it 's just as well it wasn 't used after all " . Nevertheless , the album is visible behind the counter in the record store scene .

On 14 and 15 June 2008 , Geesin performed " Atom Heart Mother " with Italian tribute band Mun Floyd over two nights as part of the Chelsea Festival . Geesin introduced it with a history and slide show . The performances featured the chamber choir Canticum , brass and noted cellist Caroline Dale , who has worked with Gilmour . The second night saw Gilmour join Geesin on stage for the performance , which was extended to 30 minutes .

In 2013 , Geesin produced a book , The Flaming Cow , which documented his experience with working with Pink Floyd , including the making of this album from his point of view .

= = Track listing = =

= = Personnel = =

Taken from sleeve notes

Pink Floyd

( all instrumentation uncredited )

Roger Waters ? bass guitar , acoustic guitar and vocals on " If " , tape effects , tape collages

David Gilmour ? guitars , vocals , bass and drums on " Fat Old Sun "

Rick Wright ? keyboards , vocals on " Summer ' 68 "

Nick Mason ? drums , percussion , tape editing , tape collage , additional engineering on " Alan 's Psychedelic Breakfast "

Additional musicians

EMI Pops Orchestra ? brass and orchestral sections ( uncredited )

Hafliði Hallgrímsson ? cello ( uncredited )

John Alldis Choir ? vocals

Alan Styles ? voice and sound effects on " Alan 's Psychedelic Breakfast " ( uncredited )

Production

Peter Bown ? engineering

Alan Parsons ? engineering ( misspelled as " Allan Parsons " on the original sleeve )

Ron Geesin ? orchestration and co @-@ composition on Atom Heart Mother ( uncredited on sleeve )

James Guthrie ? 1994 remastering

= = Charts and certifications = =