

= The Wall =

The Wall is the eleventh studio album by the English rock band Pink Floyd , released as a double album on 30 November 1979 by Harvest Records in the United Kingdom and by Columbia Records in the United States . It is the last studio album released with the line @-@ up of guitarist David Gilmour , bass guitarist / lyricist Roger Waters , keyboardist Richard Wright , and drummer Nick Mason before Wright left the band . It was supported by a tour with elaborate theatrical effects , and adapted into a 1982 feature film , Pink Floyd ? The Wall . The album features the band 's only single to top various charts , " Another Brick in the Wall , Part 2 " .

As with Pink Floyd 's prior three albums , The Wall is a concept album , exploring themes of abandonment and personal isolation . It is a rock opera that follows Pink , a character whom Waters modelled after himself and the band 's original leader , Syd Barrett . Pink 's life begins with the loss of his father during the Second World War and continues with abuse from his schoolteachers , an overprotective mother , and the breakdown of his marriage ; all contribute to his eventual self @-@ imposed isolation from society , represented by a metaphorical wall . Waters conceived the album during Pink Floyd 's 1977 In the Flesh Tour , when his frustration with the audience became so acute that he imagined a wall between the audience and the stage . The album features a harsher and more theatrical style than Pink Floyd 's previous albums . Wright left the band during its production but remained as a salaried musician , performing with Pink Floyd during the Wall tour .

The album was one of the best selling of 1980 , and by 1999 it had sold over 23 million RIAA @-@ certified units (11 @.@ 5 million albums) , making it the third highest certified album in the United States . Rolling Stone placed The Wall at number 87 on its list of " The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time " .

= = Background = =

Pink Floyd 's In the Flesh Tour was their first playing in large stadiums , and in July 1977 ? on the final date at the Montreal Olympic Stadium ? a small group of noisy and excited fans near the stage irritated Waters to such an extent that he spat at one of them . He was not the only band member who felt disaffected at the show , as guitarist David Gilmour refused to perform the band 's usual encores (" Money " and " Us and Them ") , leaving the rest of the band , with backup guitarist Snowy White , to improvise a slow , sad twelve @-@ bar blues , which Waters described as " some music to go home to " . Later that night , while returning from hospital to treat an injury sustained to his foot while play @-@ fighting backstage with manager Steve O 'Rourke , Waters spoke with music producer Bob Ezrin , and a friend of Ezrin 's , a psychiatrist sharing their car , about the feelings of alienation he was experiencing on the tour . He articulated his desire to isolate himself by constructing a wall across the stage between the performers and the audience . He later said , " I loathed playing in stadiums ... I kept saying to people on that tour , ' I 'm not really enjoying this ... there is something very wrong with this . ' " While Gilmour and Wright were in France recording solo albums , and Nick Mason was busy producing Steve Hillage 's Green , Waters began to write new material . The spitting incident became the starting point for a new concept , which explored the protagonist 's self @-@ imposed isolation after years of traumatic interactions with authority figures and the loss of his father as a young child . To execute The Wall concept was to attempt to analyse the performer 's psychological separation from the audience , using a physical structure as a metaphorical and theatrical device .

In July 1978 the band reconvened at Britannia Row Studios , where Waters presented two new ideas for concept albums . The first was a 90 @-@ minute demo with the working title Bricks in the Wall . The second , a project about a man 's dreams across one night that dealt with marriage , sex , and the pros and cons of monogamy and family life versus promiscuity . The first option was chosen by the group for the new Pink Floyd project and the second idea eventually became Waters 's first solo effort , a concept album titled The Pros and Cons of Hitch Hiking .

By September , the band was experiencing financial difficulties . Financial planners Norton Warburg Group (NWG) had invested £ 1 @.@ 3 ? 3 @.@ 3 million (up to £ 17 @.@ 1 million in

contemporary value) of the group 's money in high @-@ risk venture capital to reduce their tax liabilities . The strategy failed as many of the businesses NWG invested in lost money , leaving the band facing tax rates potentially as high as 83 per cent . Pink Floyd terminated their relationship with NWG , demanding the return of uninvested funds . The band thus urgently needed to produce an album to make money . Because the project 's 26 tracks presented a challenge greater than the band 's previous albums , " Waters decided to bring in an outside producer and collaborator . " He later said , " I needed a collaborator who was musically and intellectually in a similar place to where I was . "

Producer Bob Ezrin had worked with Alice Cooper , Lou Reed , and Kiss , as well as producing Peter Gabriel 's debut solo album . At the suggestion of Waters 's then @-@ girlfriend , Lady Carolayne Christie , who had worked as Ezrin 's secretary , the band hired him to co @-@ produce the album . From the start , Waters made it very clear who was in charge : " You can write anything you want . Just don 't expect any credit " . Ezrin , Waters , and Gilmour read Waters 's concept , keeping what they liked , and discarding what they thought was not good enough . Waters and Ezrin worked mostly on the story , improving the concept . A 40 @-@ page script was presented to the rest of the band , with positive results : " The next day at the studio , we had a table read , like you would with a play , but with the whole of the band , and their eyes all twinkled , because then they could see the album . " Ezrin broadened the storyline , distancing it from the autobiographical work Waters had written , and instead basing it on a composite , or gestalt character named Pink . Engineer Nick Griffiths later said of the Canadian producer , " Ezrin was very good in The Wall , because he did manage to pull the whole thing together . He 's a very forceful guy . There was a lot of argument about how it should sound between Roger and Dave , and he bridged the gap between them . " Waters wrote most of the album 's material , with Gilmour sharing credit on " Comfortably Numb " , " Run Like Hell " , and " Young Lust " , and Ezrin co @-@ writing " The Trial " .

= = Concept and storyline = =

The Wall is a rock opera that explores abandonment and isolation , symbolised by a metaphorical wall . The songs create an approximate storyline of events in the life of the protagonist , Pink , a character based on Syd Barrett as well as Roger Waters , whose father was killed during the Second World War . Pink is oppressed by his overprotective mother , and tormented at school by tyrannical , abusive teachers . All of these traumas become metaphorical " bricks in the wall " . The protagonist eventually becomes a rock star , his relationships marred by infidelity , drug use , and outbursts of violence . As his marriage crumbles , he finishes building his wall , completing his isolation from human contact .

Hidden behind his wall , Pink sinks into a deep depression . In order to get him to perform , a doctor medicates him . This results in a hallucinatory on @-@ stage performance where he believes that he is a fascist dictator performing at concerts similar to Neo @-@ Nazi rallies , at which he sets brownshirts @-@ like men on fans he considers unworthy . Upon realizing the horror of what he has done , Pink becomes overwhelmed and wishes for everything around him to cease . Showing human emotion , he is tormented with guilt and places himself on trial , his inner judge ordering him to " tear down the wall " , opening Pink to the outside world . The album turns full circle with its closing words " Isn 't this where ... " , the first words of the phrase that begins the album , " ... we came in ? " , with a continuation of the melody of the last song hinting at the cyclical nature of Waters ' theme .

The album includes several references to former band member Syd Barrett , including " Nobody Home " , which hints at his condition during Pink Floyd 's abortive US tour of 1967 , with lyrics such as " wild , staring eyes " , " the obligatory Hendrix perm " and " elastic bands keeping my shoes on " . " Comfortably Numb " was inspired by Waters 's injection with a muscle relaxant to combat the effects of hepatitis during the In the Flesh Tour , while in Philadelphia .

= = Recording = =

The album was recorded in several locations . In France , Super Bear Studios was used between January and July 1979 , with Waters recording his vocals at the nearby Studio Miraval . Michael Kamen supervised the orchestral arrangements at CBS Studios in New York , in September . Over the next two months the band used Cherokee Studios , Producers Workshop and The Village Recorder in Los Angeles . A plan to work with the Beach Boys at the Sundance Productions studio in Los Angeles was cancelled . For a week in November they worked at the Producers Workshop .

James Guthrie , recommended by previous Floyd collaborator Alan Parsons , arrived early in the production process . He replaced engineer Brian Humphries , emotionally drained by his five years with the band . Guthrie was hired as a co @-@ producer , but was initially unaware of Ezrin 's role : " I saw myself as a hot young producer ... When we arrived , I think we both felt we 'd been booked to do the same job . " The early sessions at Britannia Row were emotionally charged , as Ezrin , Guthrie and Waters each had strong ideas about the direction the album would take . Relations within the band were at a low ebb , and Ezrin 's role expanded to that of an intermediary between Waters and the rest of the band . As Britannia Row was initially regarded as inadequate for The Wall the band upgraded much of its equipment , and by March another set of demos were complete . However , their former relationship with NWG placed them at risk of bankruptcy , and they were advised to leave the UK by no later than 6 April 1979 , for a minimum of one year . As non @-@ residents they would pay no UK taxes during that time , and within a month all four members and their families had left . Waters moved to Switzerland , Mason to France , and Gilmour and Wright to the Greek Islands . Some equipment from Britannia Row was relocated in Super Bear Studios near Nice . Gilmour and Wright were each familiar with the studio and enjoyed its atmosphere , having recorded there during the production of their solo albums . While Wright and Mason lived at the studio , Waters and Gilmour stayed in nearby houses . Mason later moved into Waters 's villa near Vence , while Ezrin stayed in Nice .

Ezrin 's poor punctuality caused problems with the tight schedule dictated by Waters . Mason found the producer 's behaviour " erratic " , but used his elaborate and unlikely excuses for his lateness as ammunition for " tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek resentment " . Ezrin 's share of the royalties was less than the rest of the band and he viewed Waters as a " bully " , especially when the bassist mocked him by having badges made that read NOPE (No Points Ezrin) , alluding to his lesser share of the album 's royalties . Ezrin later admitted that he had marital problems and was not " in the best shape emotionally " .

More problems became apparent when Waters 's relationship with Wright broke down . The band were rarely in the studio together . Ezrin and Guthrie spliced Mason 's previously recorded drum tracks together , and Guthrie also worked with Waters and Gilmour during the day , returning at night to record Wright 's contributions . Wright , worried about the effect that the introduction of Ezrin would have on the band 's internal relationships , was keen to have a producer 's credit on the album (their albums up to that point had always stated " Produced by Pink Floyd ") . Waters agreed to a trial period with Wright producing , after which he was to be given a producer 's credit , but after a few weeks he and Ezrin expressed dissatisfaction with the keyboardist 's methods . A confrontation with Ezrin led to Wright working only at nights . Gilmour also expressed his annoyance , complaining that Wright 's lack of input was " driving us all mad " , and Ezrin later reflected : " it sometimes felt that Roger was setting him up to fail . Rick gets performance anxiety . You have to leave him alone to freeform , to create ... " Wright had his own problems , a failing marriage and the onset of depression , exacerbated by his non @-@ residency . The band 's holidays were booked for August , after which they were to reconvene at Cherokee Studios in Los Angeles , but Columbia offered the band a better deal in exchange for a Christmas release of the album . Waters therefore increased the band 's workload accordingly , booking time at the nearby Studio Miraval . He also suggested recording in Los Angeles ten days earlier than agreed , and hiring another keyboardist to work alongside Wright , whose keyboard parts had not yet been recorded . Wright , however , refused to cut short his family holiday in Rhodes .

Accounts of Wright 's subsequent departure from the band differ . In his autobiography , Inside Out , Mason says that Waters called O 'Rourke , who was travelling to the US on the QE2 , and told him to have Wright out of the band by the time Waters arrived in LA to mix the album . In another version

recorded by a later historian of the band , Waters called O 'Rourke and asked him to tell Wright about the new recording arrangements , to which Wright allegedly responded : " Tell Roger to fuck off ... " Wright disagreed with this recollection , stating that the band had agreed to record only through the spring and early summer , and that he had no idea they were so far behind schedule . Mason later wrote that Waters was " stunned and furious " , and felt that Wright was not doing enough to help complete the album . Gilmour was on holiday in Dublin when he learnt of Waters 's ultimatum , and tried to calm the situation . He later spoke with Wright and gave him his support , but reminded him about his minimal contribution to the album . Waters , however , insisted that Wright leave , or he would refuse to release The Wall . Several days later , worried about their financial situation , and the failing interpersonal relationships within the band , Wright quit . News of his departure was kept from the music press . Although his name did not appear anywhere on the original album , he was employed as a session musician on the band 's subsequent The Wall tour .

By August 1979 the running order was largely complete . Wright completed his duties at Cherokee Studios aided by session musicians Peter Wood and Fred Mandel , and Jeff Porcaro played drums in Mason 's stead on " Mother " . His duties complete , Mason left the final mix to Waters , Gilmour , Ezrin and Guthrie , and travelled to New York to record his début solo album , Nick Mason 's Fictitious Sports . In advance of its release , technical constraints led to some changes being made to the running order and content of The Wall , with " What Shall We Do Now ? " being replaced by the similar but shorter " Empty Spaces " , and " Hey You " being moved from its original place at the end of side three , to the beginning . With the November 1979 deadline approaching , the band left the now @-@ incorrect inner sleeves of the album unchanged .

= = = Instrumentation = = =

Mason 's early drum sessions were performed in an open space on the top floor of Britannia Row Studios . The 16 @-@ track recordings from these sessions were mixed down and copied onto a 24 @-@ track master , as guide tracks for the rest of the band to play to . This gave the engineers greater flexibility , but also improved the audio quality of the final mix as the original 16 @-@ track drum recordings were finally synced to the 24 @-@ track master , and the duplicated guide tracks removed . Ezrin later related the band 's alarm at this method of working ? they apparently viewed the erasure of material from the 24 @-@ track master as " witchcraft " .

While at Super Bear studios Waters agreed to Ezrin 's suggestion that several tracks , including " Nobody Home " , " The Trial " and " Comfortably Numb " , should have an orchestral accompaniment . Michael Kamen , who had previously worked with David Bowie , was booked to oversee these arrangements , which were performed by musicians from the New York Philharmonic and New York Symphony Orchestras , and a choir from the New York City Opera . Their sessions were recorded at CBS Studios in New York , although Pink Floyd were not present . Kamen eventually met the band once recording was complete .

" Comfortably Numb " has its origins in Gilmour 's debut solo album , and was the source of much argument between Waters and Gilmour . Ezrin claimed that the song initially started life as " Roger 's record , about Roger , for Roger " , although he thought that it needed further work . Waters rewrote the song and added more lyrics for the chorus , but his " stripped @-@ down and harder " recording was not to Gilmour 's liking . The guitarist preferred Ezrin 's " grander Technicolor , orchestral version " , although Ezrin preferred Waters 's version . Following a full @-@ scale argument in a North Hollywood restaurant , the two compromised ; the song 's body eventually included the orchestral arrangement , with Gilmour 's second and final guitar solo standing alone .

= = = Sound design = = =

Ezrin and Waters oversaw the capture of the sound effects used on the album . Waters recorded the phone call used on the original demo for " Young Lust " , but neglected to inform its recipient , Mason , who assumed it was a prank call and angrily hung up . The call references Waters ' viewpoint of his bitter 1975 divorce from first wife Judy . Waters also recorded ambient sounds along

Hollywood Boulevard by hanging a microphone from a studio window . Engineer Phil Taylor recorded some of the screeching tyre noises on " Run Like Hell " from a studio car park , and a television set being destroyed was used on " One of My Turns " . At Britannia Row Studios , Nick Griffiths recorded the smashing of crockery for the same song . Television broadcasts were used , and one actor , recognising his voice , accepted a financial settlement from the group in lieu of legal action against them .

The maniacal schoolmaster was voiced by Waters , and actress Trudy Young supplied the groupie 's voice . Backing vocals were performed by a range of artists , although a planned appearance by the Beach Boys on " The Show Must Go On " and " Waiting for the Worms " was cancelled by Waters , who instead settled for Beach Boy Bruce Johnston and Toni Tennille . Ezrin 's suggestion to release " Another Brick in the Wall , Part 2 " as a single with a disco @-@ style beat did not initially find favour with Gilmour , although Mason and Waters were more enthusiastic . Waters was opposed to the idea of releasing a single at all , but became more receptive once he listened to Ezrin and Guthrie 's mix of the song . With two identical verses the song was felt to be lacking , and so a copy was sent to Griffiths in London with a request to find children to perform several versions of the lyrics . Griffiths contacted Alun Renshaw , head of music at the nearby Islington Green school , who was enthusiastic about the idea , saying : " I wanted to make music relevant to the kids ? not just sitting around listening to Tchaikovsky . I thought the lyrics were great ? " We don 't need no education , we don 't need no thought control ... " I just thought it would be a wonderful experience for the kids . "

Griffiths first recorded small groups of pupils and then invited more in , telling them to affect a Cockney accent and shout rather than sing . He multitracked the voices , making the groups sound much larger than they were , before sending his recordings back to Los Angeles . The result was that Waters was " beaming " , and the song was released , becoming a Christmas number one hit . There was some controversy when the British press reported that the children had not been paid for their efforts ; they were eventually given copies of the album , and the school received a £ 1 @,@ 000 donation (£ 4 @,@ 000 in contemporary value) .

= = Packaging = =

The cover design is one of Pink Floyd 's most minimal ? a white brick wall and no text . Waters had fallen out with Hipgnosis designer Storm Thorgerson a few years earlier , when the latter had included the cover of Animals in his book Walk Away Rene , and The Wall is therefore the first Pink Floyd album cover since The Piper at the Gates of Dawn not created by the design group . Releases would include the now @-@ famous handwritten lettering of the artist name and album title by cartoonist Gerald Scarfe , either as a sticker on the sleeve wrapping or printed onto the cover itself in either black or red . Scarfe , who had previously done some animated segments for the band 's In the Flesh tour , also did the LP 's inside sleeve art , and labels of both records of the album showing the eponymous wall in various stages of construction , accompanied by characters from the story . The drawings would be translated into dolls for The Wall Tour , as well as Scarfe 's animated segments of the film based on the album .

= = Release and reception = =

When the completed album was played for an assembled group of executives at Columbia 's headquarters in California , several were reportedly unimpressed by what they heard . Matters had not been helped when Columbia Records offered Waters smaller publishing rights on the grounds that The Wall was a double album , a position he did not accept . When one executive offered to settle the dispute with a coin toss , Waters asked why he should gamble on something he owned . He eventually prevailed . The record company 's concerns were alleviated when " Another Brick in the Wall Part 2 " reached number one in the UK , US , Norway , Portugal , Israel , West Germany and South Africa . It was certified platinum in the UK in December 1979 , and platinum in the US three months later .

The Wall was released in the UK and in the US on 30 November 1979 . Coinciding with its release Waters was interviewed by veteran DJ Tommy Vance , who played the album in its entirety on BBC Radio 1 . Critical opinion of its content ranged from The Village Voice critic Robert Christgau 's " too @-@ kitschy minimal maximalism with sound effects and speech fragments " and Rolling Stone writer Kurt Loder 's " a stunning synthesis of Waters 's by now familiar thematic obsessions " , to Melody Maker 's " I 'm not sure whether it 's brilliant or terrible , but I find it utterly compelling . " Nevertheless , the album topped the Billboard charts for 15 weeks , and in 1999 was certified 23x platinum . It remains one of the best @-@ selling albums of all time in the US , between 1979 and 1990 selling over 19 million copies worldwide . The Wall is Pink Floyd 's second best selling album under 1973 's The Dark Side of the Moon . Engineer James Guthrie 's efforts were rewarded in 1980 with a Grammy award for Best Engineered Recording (non @-@ classical) . According to Acclaimed Music , The Wall is the 145th most ranked record on critics ' all @-@ time lists . Rolling Stone placed it at number 87 on its 500 Greatest Albums of All Time list in 2003 .

= = = Reissues = = =

The album was reissued in three versions as part of the Why Pink Floyd ... ? campaign , which featured a massive restoration of the band 's catalogue with remasterings by producer James Guthrie : in 2011 , a " Discovery " edition , featuring the remastered version with no extras ; and in 2012 , both the " Experience " edition , which adds a bonus disc of unreleased material and other supplementary items , and the " Immersion " version , a seven @-@ disc collection that also adds video materials .

= = = Tour = = =

During each performance of the band 's subsequent The Wall Tour , a 40 @-@ foot (12 m) high wall of cardboard bricks was gradually built between the band and audience . Gaps allowed the spectators to view various scenes in the story , as Scarfe 's animations were projected onto the completed parts of the wall . Several characters from the story were realised as giant inflatables , including a pig , replete with a crossed hammers logo . The tour opened at the Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena on 7 February 1980 . One of its more notable elements was the band 's performance of " Comfortably Numb " . While Waters sang his opening verse in front of the wall , Gilmour waited in darkness at the top of the wall , for his cue . When it came , bright blue and white lights would suddenly illuminate him , astonishing the audience . Gilmour stood on a flight case on casters , held steady by a technician , both precariously balanced atop a tall hydraulic platform . At the end of the concert , the wall was made to collapse , once again revealing the band . Along with the songs in the album , the tour featured an instrumental medley , " The Last Few Bricks " , which was played before " Goodbye Cruel World " to allow the construction crew to complete the scenographic wall .

Scarfe was employed to produce a series of animations for The Wall . At his studio in London he employed a team of 40 animators to create a series of nightmarish visions of the future , including a dove of peace exploding to reveal an eagle , a schoolmaster , and Pink 's mother . During the tour , relationships within the band were at an all @-@ time low ; four Winnebagos were parked in a circle , with the doors facing away from the centre . Waters remained isolated , using his own vehicle to arrive at the venue , and stayed in separate hotels from the rest of the band . Wright , returning to perform his duties as a salaried musician , was the only member of the band to profit from the venture , which lost about £ 400 @, @ 000 .

Scarfe 's animations were also to have been used in the film based on the album , accompanied by live concert footage , but the latter proved too impractical to film . Alan Parker agreed to direct the film that band mate Roger Waters had written , which kept the animated sequences but also used professional actors in each scene , with no dialogue . Bob Geldof took the role of Pink . A modified soundtrack was also created for some of the film 's songs . Pink Floyd The Wall was released in July 1982 .

In 1990 Waters and producer Tony Hollingsworth created The Wall ? Live in Berlin , staged for charity at a site once occupied by part of the Berlin Wall . Beginning in 2010 and with dates lasting into 2013 , Waters performed the album worldwide on his tour , The Wall Live . This had a much wider wall , updated higher quality projected content and leading @-@ edge projection technology . Gilmour and Mason played at one show in London at The O2 . A movie of the live concert by Roger Waters was released on 29 September 2015 .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and composed by Roger Waters , except where noted .

= = Personnel = =

Pink Floyd

Roger Waters ? lead vocals , bass guitar , rhythm guitar , synthesizers , sound effects

David Gilmour ? lead guitar , rhythm guitar , lead vocals , bass guitar , synthesizers

Nick Mason ? drums , percussion

Richard Wright ? piano , Hammond organ , electric piano , synthesizers , bass pedals

Additional musicians

Production team

= = Sales chart performance = =

Album

Singles

= = Selected album sales = =