

16 HE IS THE ACKNOWLEDGED MASTER OF ECHO, and can conjure up otherworldly wailing noises at the flick of a finger. His use of a volume pedal in conjunction with the Italian-made Binson Echorec unit (a wire-based rival to the ubiquitous Echoplex) and a slide helped create the ethereal swells and spacey noises that fans enjoy so much. At other times it happens by accident, such as when he plugged in a wah-wah pedal back to front to create the sound in the middle of *Echoes*.

17 HIS IDEAS ARE JUST AS GOOD – IF NOT BETTER THAN – HIS PLAYING. Nick Mason: 'After Syd, Dave was the difference between light and dark. He was absolutely into form and shape, and he introduced that into the wilder numbers we'd created. We became far less difficult to enjoy.' For Gilmour, 'My role was to try to make it all a bit more musical, help create a balance between formlessness and structure, disharmony and harmony.'

18 HE PLAYS STEEL GUITAR ON STAGE, even if it looks like he's ironing. He bought his first one in a pawnshop in Seattle in 1968, its earliest use on record probably being *Fat Old Sun* from *Atom Heart Mother*.

His two Jensen lap steel guitars ('cheap steels I had customised with Fender pickups for slide parts') are kept in different tunings: the first is tuned to (low to high) EBEGBE for *One Of These Days* and the other to (low to high) DGDGBE for *The Great Gig In The Sky*.

19 HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST HIGH-PROFILE GUITARISTS TO GET A MULTI-FX UNIT and he has often used a pedal rig that would kill a normal human being. The 1977 tour for *Animals* saw Gilmour onstage with a Pete Cornish pedalboard for the first time, and he still swears by analogue effects today. Among the pedals to have featured in his armoury are a Boss CS-2 Compression/Sustainer, a Pro Co Rat II distortion, a Cornish-modded Big Muff, a Boss GE-7 graphic equaliser, a Cornish Soft Sustain, a Sovtek Big Muff II, an MXR Dynacomp, an Ibanez CP-9 compressor, a Boss Metalizer and two Chandler Tube Drivers, plus three Boss GE-7 graphic equalisers.

20 GILMOUR'S SUSTAIN, surely more elongated and far more subtle than almost anyone else's, gives even Carlos Santana a run for his money. He once tried using the newly-introduced Kahler locking vibrato system, but after a couple of weeks he decided it deadened the sound. Off it came.



21 WATCHING FLOYD CONCERTS CAN BE A DANGEROUS PASTIME. On 15 July 1989 the band played an historic gig in Venice, and the sheer volume of their sound was reported to have caused structural damage to Italy's canal city. At Philadelphia's JFK stadium, the Floyd were only just able to finish their set down-bill to The Who before a gigantic thunderstorm broke. The guitarist of Canadian band The Mandala who followed them on stage was hit by a bolt of lightning, and the concert was aborted.

The eight-month tour promoting *Division Bell* between March and October 1994 was a triumph, yet at Earls Court, London, the entire project was put in jeopardy when a section of seating in a 1,200-seat stand failed, with eight people being hospitalised after falling nearly 20 feet to the floor.

Remarkably, no-one sustained serious injury – which is more than can be said for the fish at the Crystal Palace Garden Party of May 1971. The finale featured a giant rubber octopus, which shared the front-of-stage pool with some daring audience members. Smoke flares were set off underwater while trying to inflate the octopus, to the detriment of the health of the fish.

22 DESPITE ALL THE GEAR HE USES, DAVID STILL THINKS 'IT ALL COMES FROM THE FINGERS' and is relatively fuss-free to produce. *Wall* producer Bob Ezrin agrees. 'With Gilmour, equipment is secondary to touch,' he points out. 'You can give him a ukulele and he'll make it sound like a Stradivarius. He's truly got the best set of hands with which I have ever worked.'

Dark Side engineer Alan Parsons recalls that though Gilmour took hours to perfect the sounds he needed for each track, once that had been organised he recorded the actual takes very quickly with just one microphone – and at 'wall-shaking' volume. 'I find it extraordinary when people think they can copy his sound [just] by duplicating his gear,' says Gilmour's tech Phil Taylor.

23 HE SOLD HIS LONDON HOUSE AND GAVE THE MONEY TO CHARITY. In 2003, Gilmour heard about a project to develop a new kind of mixed community for homeless people and key

workers – and decided to lend it a hand via a £3.6 million donation, funded by the sale of his London townhouse to Princess Diana's brother.

24 HE'S QUITE PARTIAL TO A FLOYD TRIBUTE BAND, and once reserved a box to see the 'jolly entertaining' Australian Pink Floyd at Croydon's Fairfield Halls. He went on to book them for his 50th birthday party. 'I've never seen Pink Floyd, you see. So it's great to me to see that.'

25 HE CHOOSES HORSES FOR COURSES. Despite Gilmour's long love affair with Fender, his solo on the Top 3 hit single *Another Brick In the Wall* was played on an early '50s Les Paul goldtop with P90 pickups.

26 GILMOUR RESOLVED, AFTER THE SPLIT WITH ROGER WATERS, TO ONLY PLAY MUSIC HE LIKED – and among the 'no-go' areas are certain Floyd classics that now strike him