

27 HE'S PLANE MAD! When reviewers applied to hear *The Division Bell* before its release, Gilmour made it a condition that they fly with him in his twin-engine plane as they did so. He'd reportedly even nipped out of sessions for its predecessor, *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason*, to indulge his hobby (no coincidence the track *Learning To Fly* is on the album), but the death in an accident of the pilot who taught him understandably curbed his enthusiasm... or, more likely, that of his wife.

as 'absolute crap. At the time, we felt that *Atom Heart Mother*, like *Ummagumma*, was a step towards something or other. Now I think they were both just blundering in the dark. *Meddle* was where we got our focus.'

28 HE HAD HIP PARENTS. Mr and Mrs Gilmour were Cambridge lecturers in the '60s who spent some of the academic year in the States. His mother introduced him to Bob Dylan, so to speak, by sending his first album from New York. David did meet Dylan in person some time later, and was delighted when he raved about *Dogs*, his favourite track on *Animals*.

29 HE'S BEEN ONE OF FENDER'S BEST ADVERTS ever since his parents brought him his first name guitar, a Telecaster, from the States for his 21st

birthday in 1967, but he has never sought nor consented to a signature model. Though the Tele was lost during his first US tour as a Floyd member in 1968 – an airline was to blame – a Tele or two has popped up among the Strats since, notably on *Run Like Hell*, for which one of his two '52 reissues has its bottom E tuned to D. Meanwhile, a '55 Esquire can be seen on the back cover of solo album *About Face*.

31 HE HAD BAD HAIR DAYS – when he had hair. His barnet was slaughtered by *New Musical Express* scribe Nick Kent, whose description of a 1974 show included the following: 'It was seemingly anchored down by a surfeit of scalp grease, and tapering off below the shoulders with a spectacular festooning of split ends.' An enraged Gilmour demanded a face-to-face (fringe

to fringe?) meeting to thrash things out, but sadly it never happened. His current hairstyle suggests he may since have taken the criticism to heart...

32 HE LOVES MESSING ABOUT WITH GUITARS. The Strat he used for much of the '70s, including the 1977 *Animals* tour, was a typical hybrid, matching a black '70s body with an early '60s rosewood neck. A switch was added to combine the sounds of the DiMarzio bridge pickup with the neck unit, and a black pickguard and white pickup covers and knobs completed the picture.

33 HE TURNED DOWN JONATHAN KING in 1965 when a member of Cambridge-based Four Seasons-soundalikes *Jokers Wild*. King asked Gilmour to go into the studio with some sessionmen and perform a couple of R&B songs. He then offered him a contract as a solo singer but David, ever loyal to his bandmates, declined.

34 HE RECORDED HIS DOG, Seamus, on the final track of side one of *Meddle*. The eponymous number features both his slide-guitar playing and his dog of the title, as one reviewer put it, 'howling along like his plums have been dipped in pepper'.

Interestingly, the Floyd revisited the canine theme on *Animals* with *Dogs*, though the barking was now strictly synthesised and no animals were hurt in its production.

35 HE SAID YES TO BOB GELDOF, who made it his personal mission to get David to reconsider after he initially nixed the Live 8 reformation. Gilmour's press statement read that he was doing the gig in the hope of persuading the G8 leaders 'to make commitments to the relief of poverty and

30 HE CAN DO FLOYD UNPLUGGED, as he proved beyond doubt when he played the Festival Hall in 2001 and three more shows at the same venue in 2002. The material tackled included band classics such as *Wish You Were Here*, *Comfortably Numb* and *High Hopes*.

Performing Pink Floyd material in an acoustic setting had provided a bit of a challenge: for *Shine On You Crazy Diamond*, for example, he created a pad underneath, and swelled it up and down with a volume pedal to achieve the sound of 'a big, ringing guitar orchestra underneath'. Gilmour's favourite acoustic is a Martin D-28, bought in 1968 in New York. Recently he's been using a Taylor on stage, but also chooses Ovation: 'They're robust-sounding and my daughter Alice can kick them around...'

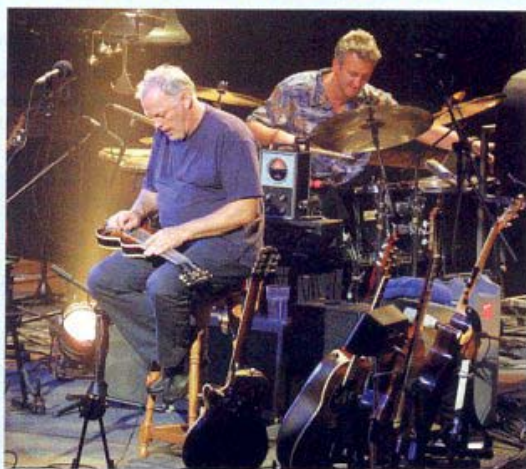


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