

BY EMMANUEL LEGRAND

## David Gilmour

**D**avid Gilmour has remained quiet since Pink Floyd's reunion last July for the Live 8 concert at London's Hyde Park. Quiet but hardly inactive.

He has been busy putting the finishing touches on his third solo album in a career that spans close to 40 years.

The 10 tracks on the new set, "On an Island," bear Gilmour's trademarks—atmospheric guitar work and ethereal harmonies. Some of the songs, such as the title track and "A Pocketful of Stones," could easily fit on a Pink Floyd album. There are inroads to blues and jazz, and a couple of instrumentals—including one, "Red Sky at Night," that has Gilmour playing the saxophone.

Gilmour co-produced the album with Roxy Music guitarist Phil Manzanera and Chris Thomas. It is due March 6 on EMI in Europe and March 7 on Columbia Records in the United States. "I do really think it is about as good a piece of work as I have ever done," Gilmour says.

Starting in March Gilmour will embark on a 25-date sold-out tour in Europe that will continue in America in April before a U.K. return at the end of May for a series of concerts at Royal Albert Hall. The set list will include tracks from the new album as well as Pink Floyd favorites.

Despite Gilmour's acrimonious split with Pink Floyd bass player and main composer Roger Waters, they agreed to appear together at Live 8, fueling speculation that Pink Floyd could regroup.

Gilmour spoke with *Billboard* about his new album; his creative partnership with his wife and lyricist, Polly Samson; his aspirations in life; and, of course, Pink Floyd.

**Q:** You have recorded only three solo albums in 25 years. What triggered this one?

**A:** As well as the two previous solo albums, there's been two Pink Floyd albums in '87 and '94. So while it is not very frequent, quite a lot of more work has gone on in the intervening period. I have remarried and had four more children, and I have been enjoying bringing those children up. But in the last couple of years it felt it was time to start again and start working on a new album. It felt to me that this album should be me and not Pink Floyd this time. It's just a slightly different way of working.

**Q:** Did it change anything in the songwriting process?

**A:** It was me writing little pieces of music and picking up what I wanted to work on. But I don't think it would have made any difference to the selection of the pieces of music, whether it was Pink Floyd or me on my own. I want to be a little smaller and more compact in my work, and the Pink Floyd is so big and unwieldy that I feel more comfortable doing this.

**Q:** With your body of work, you

could probably get any lyricist in the world to pen something for you. Why work with your wife?

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### HIGHLIGHTS

#### DAVID GILMOUR

**1968:** Joins Pink Floyd to supplement Syd Barrett's guitar playing

**1978:** Releases first self-titled solo album

**1984:** Releases second solo album, "About Face"

**1985:** Takes control of Pink Floyd following departure of Roger Waters

**2005:** Performs at Live 8 alongside Waters, Rick Wright and Nick Mason

**Q:** Which are the Pink Floyd tracks you really like and that stand the test of time?

**A:** "Shine On You Crazy Diamond" and "Wish You Were Here" are standout tracks. "Comfortably Numb" is another one. "High Hopes" from "The Division Bell" is one of my favorite all-time Pink Floyd tracks. "The Great Gig in the Sky," "Echoes"—there's a lot of them. For the tour, we have a list of songs that we want to try to decide on and that we'll be rehearsing.

**Q:** Are you frustrated that the tour is sold as "the voice and the guitar of Pink Floyd"?

**A:** Well, I am David Gilmour, the voice and guitar of Pink Floyd. I have been since I was 21. I can't see any reason at all when trying to promote my shows and my album, I shouldn't mention the fact that that's what I spent my life doing.

**Q:** You are playing a select number of midsize venues. Are you aware that you may frustrate millions of people who may wish to see you?

**A:** I can't help other people's frustrations. I don't owe peo-



ple anything. If people would like to come to my concerts, I'd love them to come. And if they like the music that I make, I love that too. But I do not make music for other people. I make it to please myself. To go out and tour for months and months on end is not just what I want to be doing at my age. Sorry if you don't like that, but it's my prerogative.

**Q:** What motivated you to do Live 8?

**A:** For one thing, the cause. What Bob Geldof was trying to make happen was to persuade the leaders of the G8 nations to

cancel the world's debt. Obviously, if one can do something about that, one wants to help.

The second reason is that Roger and I had a lot of bitterness and anger over the years, and this was the first time that he had seemed to be wanting to put some of that behind him. And getting rid of anger and hatred is a good thing to do. I also thought that if I did not do it, I would regret it. So there are a lot of reasons for doing it, and I did thoroughly enjoy doing it. And it is very good to get over some of the bitterness and very good to have some sort of closure on all of that.

**Q:** Have you spoken to Waters since?

**A:** Not since that week, no.

**Q:** He seemed very happy onstage.

**A:** Yes, he was, and so was I.

**Q:** Why did you decide to give back the royalties you would earn from your performance at Live 8?

**A:** I felt that it was not an act of generosity, but it was a debt. I don't think that being invited on a concert like that and having that massive advertisement for your career is something that is yours. It belongs to the cause, so I absolutely think that it is morally wrong to hang on to a profit that you have made out of something like that.

**Q:** Is it correct to assume that you turned down an offer to tour after Live 8?

**A:** Yes, we were offered a lot of money to go on tour. And I did turn it down, yes. The offer was made to tour with a lot of money, and it was with or without Roger. But I have no interest in going on a tour to make money without making new product, new art. So just going out and re-playing our old hits again on a tour does not appeal to me at all.

**Q:** Will there ever be a chance to see the band live together?

**A:** Who knows? I have no plans at all to do that. My plans are to do my concerts and put my record out.

**Q:** What is your life going to be like in the next couple of years?

**A:** I have no idea what the future holds. I hope that I am going to get through my tour and enjoy it, and then I will be back home looking after my children, while my 16-year-old boy gets ready for his exams. And I shall be trying to steer and guide my children into their future. ....