

# Brilliant illuminations and shining guest stars



POP  
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## David Gilmour

ALBERT HALL

"LIKE sleeping with your ex-wife" was how David Gilmour dismissively described Pink Floyd's reunion for Live 8. Given that Gilmour has since insisted that his solo activities will, from now on, be his main priority, this show at the Albert Hall was an intermittently brilliant puzzle.

With him on stage at 7.30 sharp was not just a prominent bit of ex — the Floyd's silver-haired organist,

Rick Wright — but three members of their old extended family: Guy Pratt, the bass player drafted in to replace Roger Waters, Jon Carin, an American keyboard wizard who stood in for Wright after his departure in the 1980s, and Dick Parry, the sax man featured on many of their classic cuts from the 1970s.

With two originals and three long-term associates in the line-up, this formation was as much Pink Floyd as any of the bands who have recorded and toured under that name since the notorious split in 1984.

Even more surprisingly, the material they performed was mainly ex-rated, too. Although Gilmour's new solo album, *On An Island*, got played in its tasteful but uneventful entirety in the first half, the remaining two hours of a marathon concert

comprised items from the Floyd catalogue.

Some of these, such as the opening *Breathe* and the pre-encore finale *Echoes*, were accompanied by a frenetic 360-degree light show that carpet-bombed the entire auditorium with lasers, pulsing floodlights and forests of spots — substantially allaying fears that "David Gilmour" might be code for "Floyd minus lights with longer guitar solos". Others were obscurities, delivered with a bizarre lack of flair.

In general, the burnished fluency of Gilmour's virtuoso fretwork could be relied on to supply a lift, but the pace flagged noticeably in the second half while he and his six-man band soldiered, pub-rockishly, through *Wot's... uh the Deal* from the *Obscured by Clouds* soundtrack, followed by three

tracks from the Floyd's unremembered last album, *The Division Bell*.

All of that was forgotten once the clock passed 10. The son-et-lumière of *Echoes* gave way to the evening's most touching acoustic lament, *Wish You Were Here*, and the first big surprise of the night, Gilmour singing an a cappella version of *Find the Cost of Freedom* with his two guest backing vocalists, David Crosby and Graham Nash.

Then came a show-stopper that instantly brought the whole hall to its feet. A grey-suited David Bowie strolled on to supply a beautifully apt mockney lead on the Floyd's first single, *Arnold Layne*. As the lights went mental, and Bowie and Gilmour duetted on *Comfortably Numb*, a patchy show miraculously pipped Pink Floyd for drama in the end.