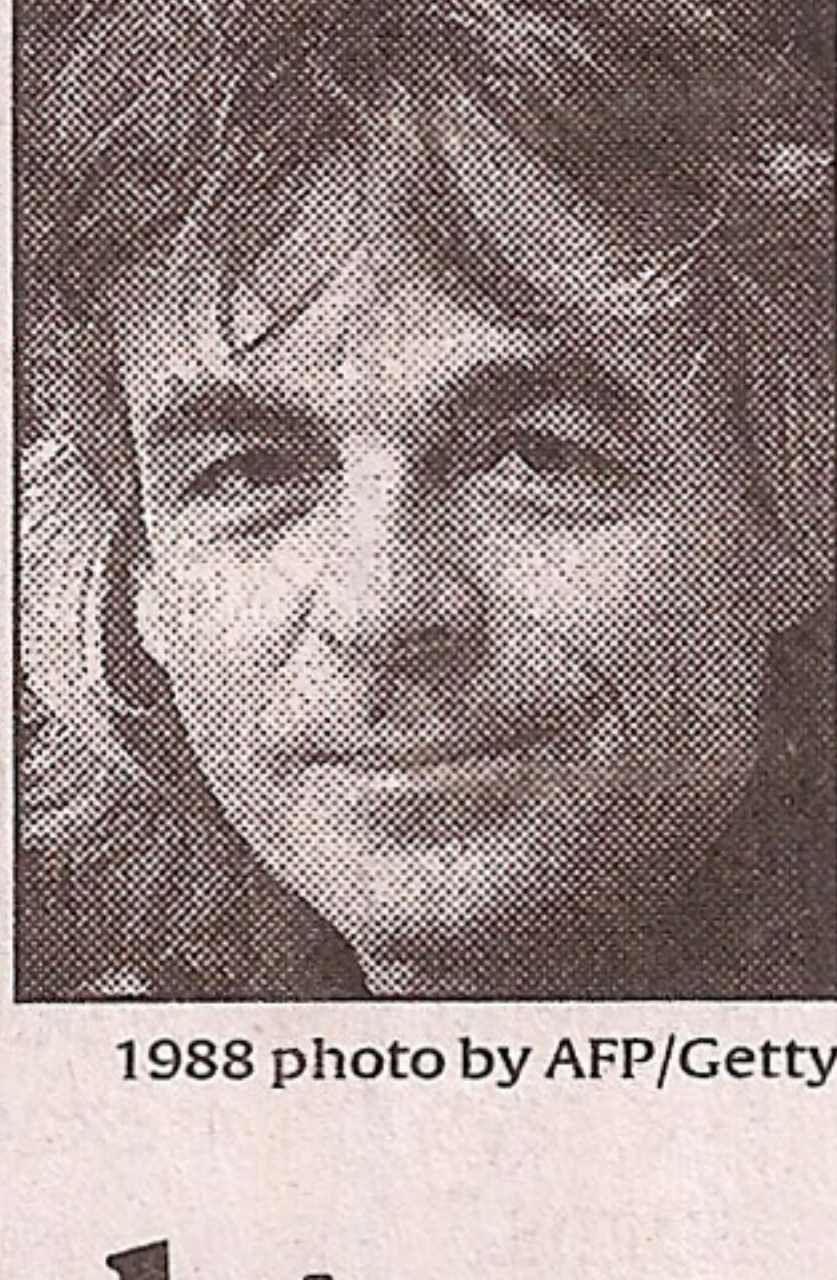


Music

Richard Wright: Pink Floyd founding member dies of cancer at 65.



1988 photo by AFP/Getty

Wright: Pink Floyd architect

Keyboards, writing helped give band unmistakable sound

Richard Wright, who died Monday from cancer at 65, was the key sonic architect in constructing the musical foundation for Pink Floyd.

Though Roger Waters and David Gilmour assumed the reins of the hugely influential and popular British band, it was the unmistakable sound of Wright's otherworldly keyboards, with Syd Barrett's whimsical, adventurous

Appreciation

By Ken Barnes

songs, that caught the world's attention four decades ago.

Wright, Waters and drummer Nick Mason played together in bands in Cambridge, and when joined by Barrett, became Pink Floyd in 1965. Wright's organ and piano dominated 1967 debut album *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*, helping to define the sound of British psychedelia, and he sang on several tracks as well.

When the troubled Barrett's continued presence in the band proved unfeasible, Wright became even more prominent, taking over some writing duties on second album *A Saucerful of Secrets* (the swirling *Remember a Day*) and dominating key space-rock tracks such as *Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun*. His keyboards continued to provide distinctive coloration for the band's songs as Waters and 1968 recruit Gilmour assumed control.

Wright contributed an entire side to the double album *Ummagumma* in 1970, and wrote two songs, *The Great Gig in the Sky* and *Us and Them*, for the classic, mega-selling *Dark Side of the Moon* album in 1973.

From there he receded both in the public eye and within the group, being fired by Waters during sessions for *The Wall* in the late '70s, being rehired on a salaried basis, and only rejoining the band after Waters left in 1985, after which the band's productivity slowed to a crawl.

Solo and group projects failed to draw much response, but he did appear with Waters, Gilmour and Mason at Live 8 in 2005 — the quartet's first appearance in a quarter-century. He also played with Gilmour on the guitarist's projects, including the *Live in Gdansk* CD/DVD, out Sept. 23, and a 2007 DVD, *Remember the Night*, on which he, fittingly, played and sang *Arnold Layne*, Pink Floyd's first single.