

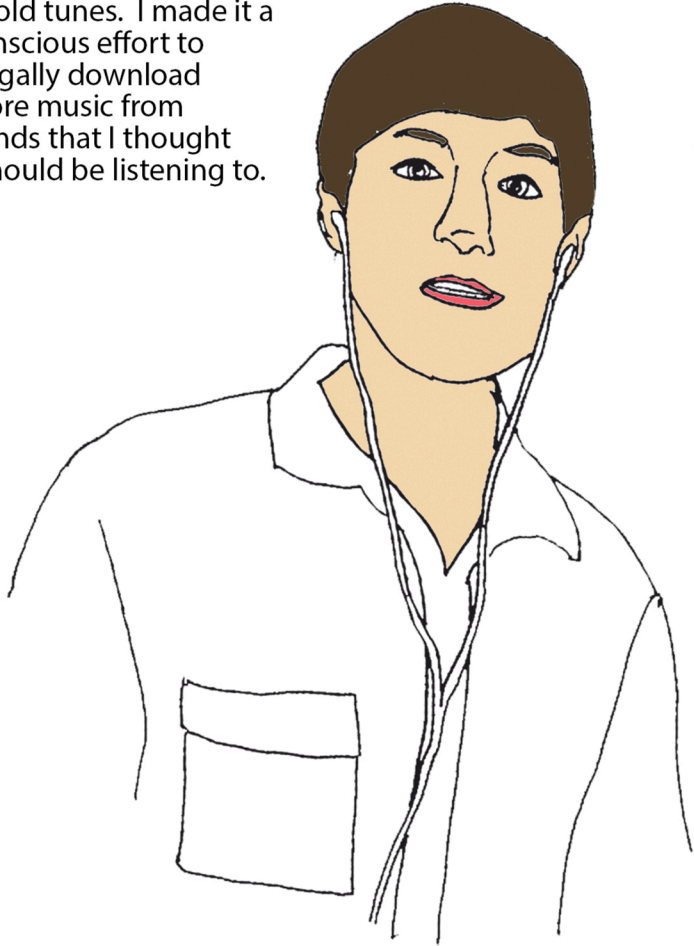
# A Assumption At 0



*introduces  
the  
Genius*

**Syd  
Barrett**

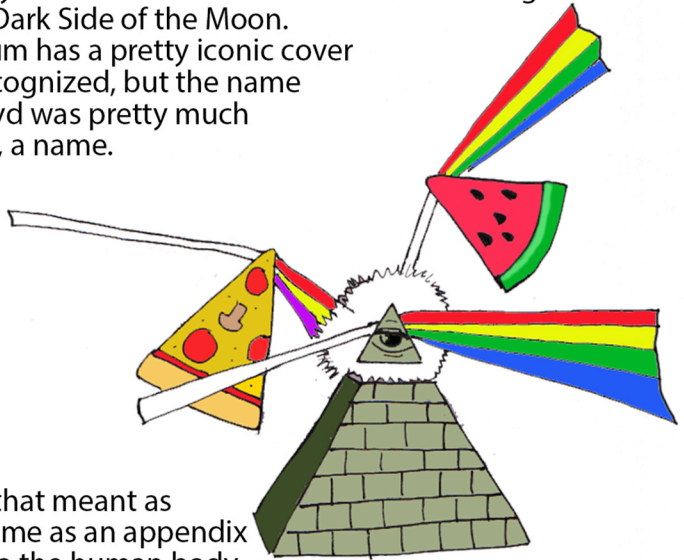
Although I wish it wasn't this way, I didn't grow up listening to good music or really having any interest in music at all. I was a late bloomer, but better late than never I like to think. The beginning of my freshman year was when my musical taste blossomed beyond the generic radio pop and a few stray indie or old tunes. I made it a conscious effort to illegally download more music from bands that I thought I should be listening to.



Some of those bands I really like to this day, but others just felt forced. It was as if their main purpose was to just sit on my iPod incase someone was scrolling through it and judging my music. Looking back, that was kind of stupid and pathetic. It doesn't matter what kind music you listen to as long as you enjoy it. For me, the music I prefer is the kind that evokes emotion and makes you feel a certain way. In a way, music is really about trying to convey a message to its listeners. Up to that point in my life I didn't feel as though I was listening for that message.



Sophomore year, I figured since I was genetically similar to my parents we would share a similar taste in music. I checked the folks CD stash at home. Turns out I was wrong, no offence to Mr. Kenny G. Amidst some of the elevator music was the greatest discovery of all time. An album that would change my life: Dark Side of the Moon. The album has a pretty iconic cover that I recognized, but the name Pink Floyd was pretty much just that, a name.



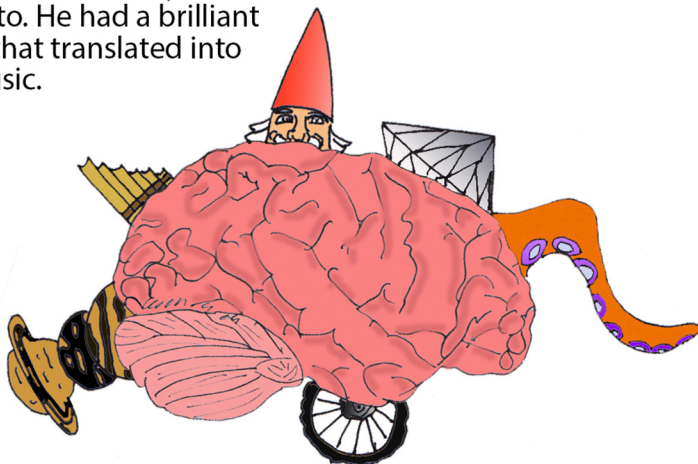
A name that meant as much to me as an appendix means to the human body. I'd heard of it but really knew nothing about it. I remember first playing the album while I was skateboarding. My iPod was set to shuffle naturally, something that I would later realize could be considered blasphemy towards Dark Side of the Moon. After listening to it correctly (from start to finish in order), it opened me up to the realm of Pink Floyd and their unorthodox progressive psychedelic rock.

Pink Floyd is now my favorite band. For me, their music causes my mind to evaporate from reality. It can help me focus at school, detach from the material world, or inspire me to create something unique of my own. During the peak of their popularity, the group consisted of members David Gilmour, Roger Waters, Nick Mason, and Richard Wright.



David Gilmour is one of the most influential guitarists of all time and a personal favorite of mine. However when the band formed in 1965, before Gilmour, there was Syd Barrett. Syd was the lead guitarist, singer, and main songwriter of Pink Floyd before his departure from the band in 1968. With Syd as the frontman, the band pioneered the unique progressive sounds of Pink Floyd before he went mentally insane from drug abuse.

I wish to dig deeper and explore the creative mind of Syd Barrett. I think it's truly sad to see his transformation and how his life fell apart. In some ways I think he is a man that others and even myself can relate to. He had a brilliant mind that translated into his music.



Pink Floyd's first album Piper at the Gates of Dawn really captures the essence of his musical genius, I highly recommend listening to it. I want to create a box that captures the strange brilliance of Syd's brain as well as the unfortunate demise of his mental wellbeing.





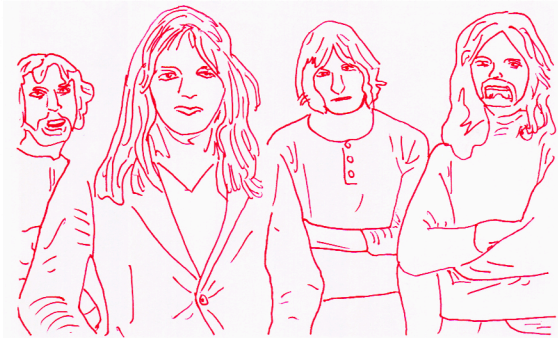
Snyed...

# Syd Barrett

*and his direct and indirect contributions to Pink Floyd*





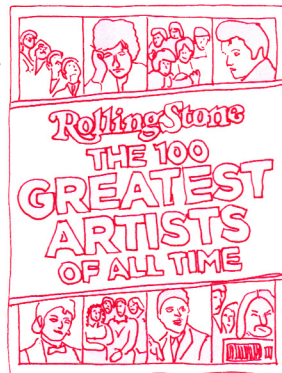


*Richard Wright, Roger Waters, David Gilmour, and Nick Mason*

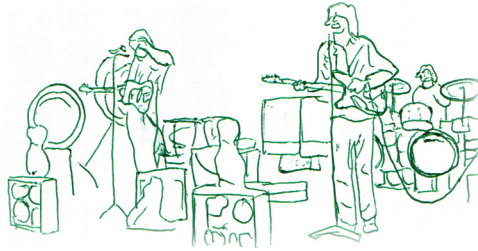
Pink Floyd is an English progressive rock band popular in the late 60's and 70's. They have been regarded as one of the most influential musical groups of all time. At the peak of their popularity, the band consisted of David Gilmour, Roger Waters, Nick Mason, and Richard Wright. Under that lineup the band produced some of their most popular and commercially successful albums such as "Dark Side Of The Moon" and "Wish You Were Here."

By 2013, Pink Floyd had sold over 250 million

records worldwide and currently ranks number 51 on Rolling Stone's list of 100 greatest artists. It's safe to say that Pink Floyd is an internationally well known music group, what is less known about the band is how it all started, with a man name Syd Barrett. Barrett was one of the founding members of Pink Floyd back in 1965. With Barrett as the lead singer, songwriter, and guitarist, the band pioneered the progressive new sound that Pink Floyd is famous for.



*Rolling Stone Magazine*



*Live in 1967*

Barrett's time with the band was short-lived due to his gradually deteriorating mental health. There's been speculation as to the cause of Barrett's gradual mental decline. Many believe Barrett to have been a schizophrenic, while others regard him as an acid addict who took one too many trips. By 1968, Barrett was not the man he used to be just years earlier. His inability to perform live as well as other related mental problems were the cause of his departure from the band in 1968. The three years Barrett was with Pink Floyd led to the commercial success of the band in the years to follow. Through the lyrics and sounds he produced, as well as the albums that were later dedicated to him by the band, Barrett shaped Pink Floyd into the the psychedelic group that the world would come to know and love. Without Barrett and his lunacy induced musical genius, Pink Floyd wouldn't have been nearly as successful as they were and are.

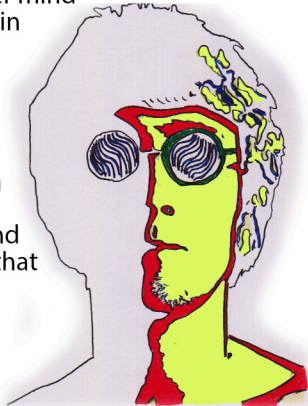


*Early shot of Pink Floyd with Syd*

Barrett was a very unique human being. The music he produced was unlike anything at the time. Under Syd's leadership, the band had achieved a new distinct sound that would carry with Pink Floyd for decades to come. Unfortunately, Barrett would not be carrying on with them. Barrett's mind was slowly fading into oblivion. Many people attribute Syd's insanity to his extensive drug use. It's no mystery that Barrett was an avid drug user. Barrett's bandmate and friend David Gilmour had this to say:

*I wouldn't put it down to drugs or LSD, necessarily. I suspect that it would have happened anyway, and that maybe that stuff was a catalyst... by the end of 1967, he was in a condition where he couldn't play with the band at all. He would just stand onstage with his amp and guitar turned full up, his left arm hanging down by his side and just sort of smashing the guitar with his right hand, making a fearful racket all night long. (Gilmour)*

Musicians that used acid and other mind altering drugs wasn't uncommon in the 60's. Barrett's old girlfriend recalls him taking acid every day for an entire week. The problem was that Barrett became impossible to work with, he was no longer able to collaborate with a group of people. It was only a matter of 3 years before Barrett and the rest of the band both agreed that it was time for him to go.





*Syd Indulging in some acid sugar cubes*



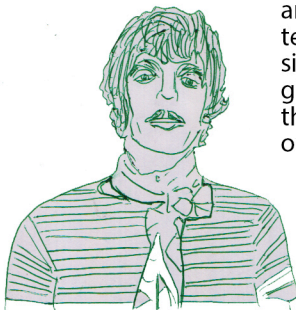
*Album Cover for Piper, 1967*

Barrett was a creative genius, Pink Floyd's first album "Piper At The Gates Of Dawn," is a testament to that. "Piper At The Gates Of Dawn," which was almost entirely written by Barrett, was the album

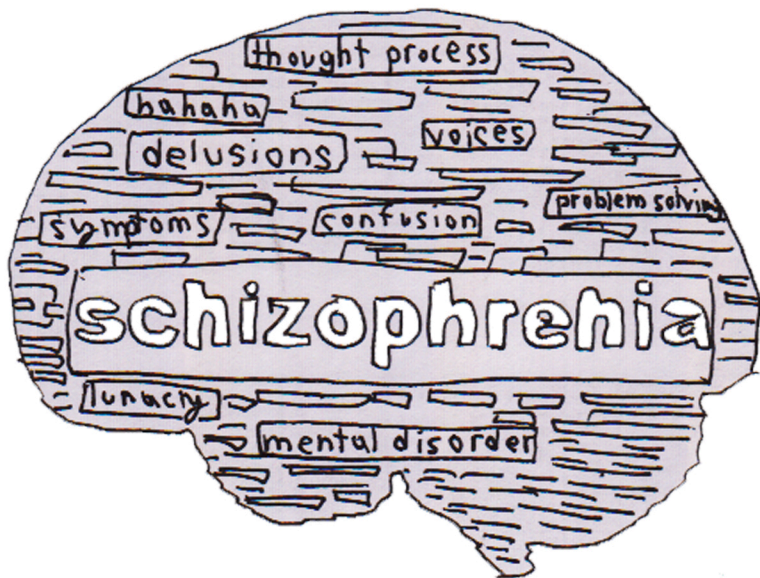
that launched Pink Floyd's career.

A review of the album from BBC Music by Chris Jones describes how impactful the album was. "Syd's guitar is fabulously lithe. There follows a series of tales of cats, silver shoes, unicorns, mice called Gerald, bikes, gnomes, scarecows [sic] and the I Ching. Sounds horrible, doesn't it? But in 1967 this was fresh and new" (Jones). Piper set Pink Floyd apart from other bands that were performing generic pop songs at the time. Jones continues to say that "this album remains a pinnacle of English psychedelic music. It's filled with the child-poet musings of a mind not yet oppressed, but free to wander between fairy tales and cosmic explorations

and still be home in time for tea." Barrett was able to take simple lyrics and imagery and give a second meaning to them. Often times about his own feelings or state of mind.



*Syd looking kinda french*



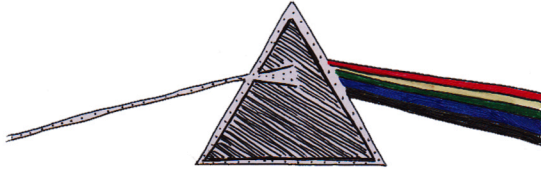
*Representation of schizophrenia*

Barrett would translate the inner workings of his mind into his music. He was thus able to communicate how he felt through the music he composed as well as the lyrics he wrote. A prime example of this is shown in his song "Jugband Blues" which is featured on Pink Floyd's second and final album with Barrett. "In one short verse, Barrett acknowledges that he's 'not here', acknowledges gratitude that his old shoes have been tossed out, and admits he doesn't even know who's written the very song he's singing" (Shea).

*Syd's only live performance  
of Jugband Blue, 1968*



Barrett was able to use his schizophrenia and/or lack of a stable mind as influence to produce beautiful music. Not only was this done by Barrett, but also by the rest of the band members. Lyrics from the 1973 song "Brain Damage" include "And if the band you're in starts playing different tunes... I'll see you on the dark side of the moon" Yet another Barrett reference referring to his habit of playing the wrong music when performing with the band. It is evident that there are traces of Barrett themes scattered throughout the music written by Pink Floyd. Some of the references more blatant than others.



*Iconic album cover for Dark Side of the Moon, 1973*

Even without Syd, Pink Floyd achieved international fame and success by writing songs about their fallen bandmate. The entire album "Wish You Were Here" was written as a tribute to Syd Barrett, while "Dark Side Of The Moon" showcased themes of Barrett's mental status throughout. "Shine On You Crazy Diamond" is a two piece, 26 minute song featured on Wish You Were Here that is solely about Syd. The lyrics go as so:

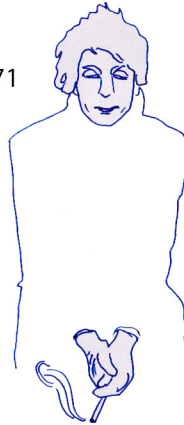
*Remember when you were young, you shone like the sun  
Shine on you crazy diamond  
Now there's that look in your eyes, like black holes in the sky  
Shine on you crazy diamond.*



*Album cover for  
Wish You Were Here, 1975*



Syd in 1971



The song showcases how the band frequently referenced Syd in some of their most popular songs. By 2004 the album had sold approximately 13 million copies worldwide. In 1975, during the recording of the "Wish You Were Here", Syd made a visit to the studio in which he was initially unrecognizable by any of his former bandmates.

His appearance was drastically different as he had gained significant weight, had minimal hair, and no eyebrows. Bandmates Roger Waters and David Gilmour were both reduced to tears when they realized who it was.

Syd's studio visit,  
June 5th 1975



Syd was the reason for Pink Floyd. It's unfortunate, but without his mental deterioration Pink Floyd could not have written some of its greatest hits. The band members are all very sentimental about their lost friend. Roger Waters stated "I'm very sad about Syd. Of course he was important and the band would never have f--king started without him because he was writing all the material. It couldn't have happened without him but on the other hand it couldn't have gone on with him." The music they created told the story of Syd, as both a tribute to him as well as a way to connect with the listeners. After a short solo career of two albums and his 1975 visit to the studio recording the album written for him, Syd became a recluse and vanished from the public eye. Even in his absence there is no question that Pink Floyd would have never made it without his brilliant mind.



Syd Barrett, 2002





Alright boys let's get a move on  
Syd, go put your guitar on.  
Shows at 9, we haven't much...time

What does a man do,  
with the world in his hands?  
He doesn't have a schedule,  
but he's planned one more dance.  
And after the show,  
just where does he go?  
Into the forest,  
without a sound,  
never to be found...

He looks at the trees you know what he sees? Just Bark  
He falls in the grass, you know what he asks? where do I go from here  
and just as the roots, scrape up his boots he thinks to himself:

Will my shoes be new again? Will I ever make new friends? Is life just  
means to an end?

Look into his eyes, you know what you'll see,  
The shadow of the man he used to be

from young to old,  
from diamonds to coal. That's just the way it is  
Every man's nightmare is to grow alone

Close your eyes and roll your tongue,  
drift away after a long day,  
fall asleep in a pile of hay,  
yesterday, tomorrow, today... they're all the same.

Good show guys, Syd that was a pretty good song you wrote,  
Really? no... but at least he played the right notes.