



White and Andy Fairweather-Low, drummer Graham Broad, with backing vocalists Katie Kissoon, P. P. Arnold and Carol Kenyon, while impressive newcomer guitarist Dave Kilminster now takes on most of Gilmour's parts. Also in the line-up, on keyboards, are Waters' hirsute son Harry and Jon Carin, fresh from a break in Gilmour's touring itinerary... how very incestuous!

The tour, which began in Europe at Lisbon's *Rock In Rio* festival on June 2 and embarks on a North American leg throughout September and October, features the production accessories pioneered by Floyd such as giant inflatables (check the astronaut!), creative video and surround sound. The scenic design also benefited from the input — at various intervals — from the band's associates Jonathan Park and Mark Fisher, while Hangman handled its actual delivery with medal-worthy diplomacy.

A SHEEPISH TALE

Although obviously highlighting *The Dark Side Of The Moon* as a continuously flowing piece, the first half of the show focuses on tracks from Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, *Wish You Were Here*, *Animals*, *The Final Cut* and their first post-Syd Barrett (God bless him) album, *A Saucerful Of Secrets*, as well as Waters' extraordinary and often overlooked 1992 solo album, *Amused To Death*.

It's the climax of the first half — 'Sheep' from *Animals* — that has given rise to one of the touring world's great backstage tales. When preparations for this tour started, advance production manager Mark Ward and tour director Andrew Zweck brought in Hangman to take over the co-ordination and production for various stage effects, and act as a conduit for set designer Jonathan Park's original design concepts... before Park eventually took leave.

For Hangman's Alan Chesters and Sam Booker, the request was the chance to get their teeth into another "impossible Krypton Factor-style" project. The team spent many hours resolving complex mechanical and technical issues as well as prototyping all sorts of weird and wonderful aspects of the show.

A key element was to create a system for floating six foot inflatable sheep high above the audience's heads before letting them drop gently to the ground. After some delay, the sheep, manufactured in China by ABC Inflatables, were delivered to Hyde Park in time to make their debut on the tour — reviving a concept originally conceived for Floyd's *Animals* tour in the late '70s.

The team at Hangman discovered that the original flying sheep were designed by madcap engineer, Tim Hunkin, in 1976. Constructed of the same material as tea bags, the sheep were in fact parachutes with weighted feet that were shot into the air by a six inch mortar, then inflated mid-flight by a second, delayed ignition — obviously not an option these days!

It was this that led Chesters and Booker to pursue the idea that the sheep themselves could be parachutes and so came up with the concept of a compressed air cannon. The extended team inevitably had fun testing the flying sheep over the fields of Norfolk but as the

experiments progressed it became clear that this method could be hard to control in inclement weather.

As with all the best challenges, Hangman then received two key pieces of information: a) that no one could recall the original sheep ever working more than once; and b) that what Waters really hoped to see was some kind of conveyor belt of sheep, as if in an abattoir.

"In order to create the impression that the sheep are in some kind of macabre procession before they fall, we needed to find a way of flying them over and across the audience at the same time," said Hangman co-founder, Chesters.

Various concepts were explored, including a catenary that would slide a herd of sheep down over the audience and flying two separate sets of sheep on different planes to create the illusion of a procession. However, using LiteStructures' 60ft high rehearsal studio and playing with huge stock of on-site trussing allowed Hangman to experiment and settle on a final concept. The dramatic effect was to be achieved by building a unique motorised conveyor system.

Allowing the sheep to travel up and over bends of up to 90°, the system was to be flown on a truss, cantilevered out more than 20 feet over the audience. That was the theory anyway.

On the eve of the Hyde Park show, however, a demonstration of the sheep in action proved unsatisfactory and the idea — for now, at least — was vetoed from on high, producing numerous boxes of flat-packed sheep feeling rather deflated in the production office.

The system is designed to be extended so it can be flown over a much greater distance and could reach across a large arena, therefore, it is hoped that once the tour reaches America, the concept will return — possibly with slightly more show-friendly beasts.

Not all was lost for Hangman, though. The company also manufactured the drapes for the tour. These comprised black masks, totalling 1,000 square metres, and various projection gauzes including the trademark six metre diameter circular screen.

"This could have been a difficult project without the continued support from Mark Ward and Andrew Zweck throughout," said Chesters. "As it was, despite some typically rock'n'roll deadlines, we've had a great time because impossible stage effects are exactly what we enjoy doing most!"

STAGE DEBUT

This year's season of Hyde Park shows saw Tez Sheals-Barrett make her debut as Star Events Group's production manager for the duration, after working her way through a variety of company roles since 1997. The company supplied the Vertech VT2020 stage that resided in the park for the Foo Fighters, *Wireless* and *Hyde Park Calling* dates, although a series of add-ons and modifications kept the Star crew busy for the whole stretch.

Said Sheals-Barrett: "For *Wireless*, we took out the Foes' FOH towers and swapped them for spot mast towers. We also took out the ego ramps and



Special guest Nick Mason on drums