

A PIECE FOR ASSORTED LUNATICS

MARK CUNNINGHAM RECALLS PINK FLOYD'S ORIGINAL LIVE PERFORMANCES OF THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

Recorded over the course of seven months with the working title of *Eclipse (A Piece For Assorted Lunatics)*, *The Dark Side Of The Moon* catapulted Pink Floyd from their enigmatic cult status to the stadium rock elite. Released in March 1973, it signified the first major switch from their earlier experimental material and set a new precedent for record production upon which Floyd continued to build.

As was the case for many bands who moulded their new songs on the road for some time before committing them to tape, the Floyd performed an embryonic version of *Dark Side* both prior to and during their sessions at Abbey Road throughout the whole of 1972.

The live rehearsals for this new concept piece were initially held in January 1972 at the now-defunct Rainbow Theatre in London's Finsbury Park, and they were notable for the first use of their new sound and lighting rigs, designed to take the band's performances in new directions.

A spotlight operator for the notorious Chip Monck at Woodstock, Arthur Max soon joined the Floyd crew as lighting director after the band discovered him in 1970 at New York's infamous Fillmore East, where he was employed as Bill Graham's in-house lighting man.

The band had become tired of their previous oil slide projection techniques and were looking for something new, and Max's inventive ways of exploiting the still basic theatrical lighting fixtures — Pars and spotlights — gave the Floyd a wider potential for visual innovation.

In his lavish 2004 book, 'Inside Out: A Personal History of Pink Floyd', drummer Nick Mason stated that Max was responsible for introducing the Genie tower to the band's live production.

Mason wrote: 'Arthur had seen these hydraulic towers being used to change light bulbs in a factory, and adapted the principle to allow them to carry racks of spotlights. For shows that had insufficient set-up time for rigging regular stage lighting, or were out on a field on a stage made out of flat-bed trailers, these towers were a godsend. The fact that they could also be raised as an opening to the show was the icing on the cake.'

Also part of the visual mix were fire effects generated by igniting a mix of paraffin and meths, and a gas-powered system — neither of which would ever pass current Health & Safety regulations!

After the album was released, the Floyd's visual production was extended to include a crashing model Spitfire designed by Derek Meddings of 'Thunderbirds' fame, and the legendary circular screen ('Mr. Screen' in the Floydian vernacular), on to which a series of creative movie sequences — filmed specifically to accompany each song — were projected. This was one of the earliest examples of the kind of in-concert video that proliferates today.

MJK & THE QUAD SQUAD

As Pink Floyd were preparing for their touring onslaught of 1972, another new crew member arrived on the scene. Mainly known today as the founder of MJK Productions, and the man at the helm of productions such as *The BRIT Awards*, as well as the recipient of the 2005 TPI Lifetime Contribution Award, Mick Kluczynski had worked with a number of Scottish bands since 1965, one of whom received an offer to record in London in 1971 as Cliff Bennett's backing band. Kluczynski accompanied them but the whole deal soon fell to pieces.

One of the band members, Chris Adamson, survived by working as Floyd's road manager and arranged for Kluczynski to also join their small team as part of the 'Quad Squad'.

"There was no formal crew, just four of us loosely employed to handle all aspects of the sound and rigging," says Kluczynski. "My first job was to empty the tour manager's garage, and return all the old WEM PA columns to Charlie Watkins, because we had just taken delivery of the latest generation of PA. The 2 x 15-inch bins had a Vitavox horn on the top and a JBL 075 bullet super tweeter, and I used to carry these things on my back up into balconies!

"When we played the first Earls Court show, we used our maximum number of Kelsey and Martin bins and horns. The bins were three high, with 13 at each side of the stage, and in the centre piece where there were bins missing was a column of JBL horns. On top of those, we had a row of double Vitavox horns, on the back of which were throats that we had made up, which took two Electro-Voice 1829 drivers in the same throat. Electro-Voice claimed it wouldn't work, but we got up to four in one throat.

"One quad section would drive two horns in one phase direction, and another quad section would drive another two in the opposite phase direction. But EV wouldn't believe it until they saw 15,000 people walk out of Earls Court at the end of the night dazed and speechless."

In an A/B text during rehearsals, the band's existing WEM amplifiers came second place to the new American Phase Linear models, discovered by Kelsey, and so yet another injection of quality was given to their PA. It was common for Pink Floyd to modify off-the-shelf equipment for their own purposes, thereby creating unique products.

Along with Crown and BGW, Phase Linear became one of the few brands of amplification taken seriously by the top touring bands of the early '70s. Whilst the Phase Linear 400 and 700 models were taken on board by the Floyd, because of their superior sound quality, in their regular domestic format they were unfit for the rigours of the road due to their slight physical construction and the weight of the transformers on their chassis. To compensate for this,

the band's technicians designed a new metal chassis into which the amp would fit, while the mains transformer was removed from the amp and supported horizontally on the outside of the chassis.

Acclaimed by critics as "rock's first conceptual masterpiece", *The Dark Side Of The Moon (TDSOTM)* was officially premiered as *Eclipse* over the four nights of February 17-20 at the Rainbow.

The standard show at the time consisted of two sets: the first featured earlier numbers such as 'Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun', 'Careful With That Axe, Eugene', and 'Echoes'; the second consisted of what was to later be known as *TDSOTM* (then without the 'Eclipse' finale which was yet to be written). 'One Of These Days' was reserved as a breathtaking encore.

Kluczynski recalls that his first show as a crew member, the opening night of this tour at the Brighton Dome, ended in disaster. He says: "In those days, we didn't understand how to separate power sufficiently between sound and lights. That was the only show that we had to cancel and re-organise, because we were all sharing the same power source. The Leslies on stage sounded like a cage full of monkeys, because they were sharing a common earth.

"It was the very first show that any band had done with a lighting rig that was powerful enough to make a difference. So we had this wonderful situation where the fans were actually inside the auditorium, and we had Bill Kelsey and Dave Martin at either side of the stage screaming at each other in front of the crowd, having an argument."

BOARD DECISION

Another vital piece of kit added to the Floyd inventory at this time was a 24-channel mixing console manufactured by Ivor Taylor and Andy Bereza of Allen & Heath, a new company which took its name from a defunct toolmaking firm. Bereza, the man responsible for inventing what became the Portastudio, originally built mixers at home in the late 1960s under the trading name of AB Audio and was responsible for the board used in the live soundtrack recording of the cult movie 'A Clockwork Orange', as well as mixers for bands including the Bee Gees.

The Allen & Heath business grew steadily in its first year with its small six-channel boards. Then an opportunity arose for the company to build a quadraphonic desk for The Who. This news filtered into the Floyd camp, and an order was placed for a custom quad board in advance of the first *TDSOTM* rehearsals.

Future Floyd production director Robbie Williams, who joined the crew in January 1973 just as sound man Seth Goldman took a long break to work with ELP, Three Dog Night, and T. Rex, remembers his first sighting of the desk. "This board was actually the