

productionprofile

**Left:**

Manufactured by Ivor Taylor and Andy Bereza of Allen & Heath, the Floyd's MOD 1 sound console used by Alan Parsons (inset) to mix at front of house.

"But the performance of that rig was so pure; there was no pink noise, no graphic EQ to tailor the sound, it was literally down to how you drove the bottom, mid, and top."

As well as recalling the excellent quality of this PA's sound, Parsons casts his mind back to an American tour date in Detroit when many of the system's components were wiped out by pyrotechnics.

"By mistake, the flashpots at the front of the stage had been filled twice with explosives. The result was a double-strength explosion, which ended up injuring several people in the front row of the audience. Unfortunately for us, it also destroyed about 60% of the horns and bins, so we had to struggle on for the rest of the show with less than half our PA rig. Of course, we had a gig the next night and finding replacement gear was a major headache."

The aspect of Floyd's sound that Kluczynski remembers most was David Gilmour's guitar sound. "Gilmour was always loud, especially at Earls Court where, during the solo in 'Money', his four 4 x 12" cabinets were screaming away at such a level that we couldn't physically put him through the PA. Most of the time I'd mix the solos, because Alan was a bit shy of pushing up the faders compared to me, so I'd nudge his arm a bit!"

In complete contrast to today's standards, Pink Floyd employed just two outboard devices for use at FOH on the *TDSOTM* tours, and both of them were Echoplexes for the repeat vocals on 'Us And Them'.

Williams says: "The band members would treat their own sounds and produce effects on stage themselves, which is essentially what happened in the studio. So the sound heard through the PA was generally what came from David's amps, for example. Each of them had a stack of those dreadful Binson Echorecs and Echoplexes [based on circuitry designed for a GPO telephone switching device]."

"Rick Wright had a little keyboard mixer that had a couple of effects sends on it, which used to go into various Binsons, and there was a feed going from that to FOH. For the early *TDSOTM* concerts, he also had personal access to the Sound-In-The-Round via a joystick on his mixer."

As for microphones, Roger Waters insisted on their trademark rectangular Sennheiser MD409 dynamic cardioid vocal mics (gold one side, black the other). Parsons says: "The choice was certainly individual, and they didn't sound bad. Generally, we used dynamic mics. There were a lot of SM58s floating around for backing vocals, as part of a Shure set-up. At nearly every gig, I would have to re-position the mics a

foot away from the guitar cabinets, because the crew would always ram them right up against the grilles, which in my mind was ridiculous.

"I was always frustrated that whenever I got a really good sound on one gig, the crew would break down all the gear and load out at the end of the night, and all my settings would be lost. So I literally had to start from scratch every night, checking the mics through the desk. The crew would say, 'Oh, we've put the guitar on a channel over here, because that channel wasn't working,' so all of my previous checks were rendered useless.

"Drums were always critical, so I had this idea of buying a little six-channel Allen & Heath mini mixer which I took home with me every night in a briefcase!"

SOUND EFFECTS

Crucial to the *TDSOTM* concept, both on record and live, were the sound effects which included various human voices, a heartbeat, explosions, the 'Money' cash register and rattling coins (recorded by Waters and Mason in their home studios), and, for 'Time', the all-important clocks.

Parsons himself recorded the clocks for the album on an EMI portable 1/4" tape machine and later fed them through the live quad mix to the astonishment of audiences around the globe.

He says: "We went back to the album multitrack tape to copy those clocks and other effects for the live shows, and played them through the quad system on a TEAC four-track deck. For some reason, the board was mis-wired inside and instead of playing them through the PA as tracks 1,2,3,4, the board sent them out as 2,4,1,3. I was never able to remember exactly which order it was, so I always carried a test tape with me to ensure that the channels were all coming out in the right place."

Kluczynski had the job of cueing the TEAC four-track before the band progressed to eight-track Brennels when, he says: "Allen & Heath ceased to exist for a while as we knew it, and the key personnel had moved to Brennell, including Nigel Taylor [brother of Allen & Heath troubleshooter Ivor], who we later poached for our crew."

THE MONITORING 'VIRUS'

The 1972 and '73 *TDSOTM* tours were notable for the Floyd's first use of stage monitoring, although it remained minimal for some years. Never a fan of monitors, Kluczynski says that once the first wedges appeared, they began to spread like a virus and FOH engineers quickly realised a they had a struggle for

control on their hands.

Before the advent of monitoring, Kluczynski maintains, the band were able to hear each other clearly by keeping a sensible level on stage. "During a show, you could walk around the back of the Floyd stage and have a normal conversation, because overall they never played too loud, apart from David with his Hiwatt rig. The band literally heard themselves off the backline and what was coming back at them from the PA.

"They were very much into the environmental sound of the house and the pure feel of their music. Because they had no monitoring, there was never the battle between the instrument and the wedge. Subsequently to hear themselves, they kept the general level down, which was really good and incredibly well-disciplined."

Kluczynski continues: "The first monitor we brought in was when Dick Parry came on the tour as sax player. Dick had to have a monitor, because his instrument was so loud to him that he couldn't hear the band without one. The next addition of wedges came when our three female backing vocalists walked on stage and asked for a couple of Tannoys."

Williams says that it was the singers' wedges that prompted a bigger on-stage system. "David stood next to the girls and we ended up getting him a JBL three-way studio monitor. Then Rick also wanted a couple of speakers, and gradually, by the time we toured *Animals* in '77, monitoring became a serious part of the audio production, especially when Seth Goldman returned to become monitor engineer."

BAND INPUT

As the band earned a new level of fame through the multi-million selling *TDSOTM* album, the individual strengths of each of the four members began to show. Rick Wright generally kept a low profile but was never short of ideas, while Nick Mason acted as the conduit between the band and the road crew, often holding team meetings at his house in Highgate.

Meanwhile, Roger Waters developed into something of a conceptual genius, who became increasingly concerned about every visual aspect of the live production. And whilst sound quality was high on Waters' agenda, it was David Gilmour who, judging by many associates' comments, tended to have the most to say on the subject — his keen ears continuing to be the envy of the Floyd crew.

After a punishing 19-month schedule that included three American legs, two European legs, three journeys around the UK and a trip to the Far East and Australia, not to mention the actual recording of the album, the official tour of *The Dark Side Of The Moon* came to a close in Vienna on October 13 1973.

Pink Floyd would continue to feature the entire album on later tours, and their last performance of this seminal work as the Waters-Wright-Gilmour-Mason line-up was on July 5 1975 at their memorable outdoor show at Knebworth.

TPI**Photography sources:**

Alan Parsons, Martin Audio (Bill Webb), www.brain-damage.co.uk (Matt Johns), Allen & Heath (Victoria Wills) and Sennheiser UK (John Steven)