

The Beatles vs. Pink Floyd

This is an article published in HOT WACKS Supplement 4 (HOT WACKS Press 1996) ... I penned myself as "KEITH from Toronto" and wrote several items about Pink Floyd for the publication.

This demonstrates my collecting side as I am quite the Floyd/Beatles fan. It took forever to actually track down and hear all of the references mentioned in the piece.

I reformatted this article for the web and only made a few edits from the original, having the benefit of hindsight, some 8 years later ... you'll see the odd " KEITH 2006 NOTE" in brackets. Sorry it may be a bit hard to read on the screen. Perhaps I'll post a print only version of this.
Pink Floyd Verses The Beatles?
Still More Floyd Musings by Keith from Toronto

In one corner we have the group that began it all. They set off the 60's rock music invasion and merely changed the face of popular music for all time. If that wasn't enough, they also were a major influence for the group in the other corner.

So chalk up an early point for Pink Floyd.

Just kidding folks! Of course it's the Beatles who came first. But let me clarify what this article is about. It has nothing to do with an actual competition between Pink Floyd and the Beatles. Instead, I want you to think of all the similarities, oddities and parallels between the two bands. There are quite a few.

You can probably come up with some quick and easy ones.

- Both groups come from England
- Both had members that knew each other from their school days
- Both had more than one songwriter and one vocalist
- Both were five piece bands at one stage
- Both groups came out of the 1960s.
- Both experienced creative differences causing very public and not too pleasant splits involving their bass players

But get past these and you get down to the real comparison. Pink Floyd and the Beatles have many more things in common.

WHAT'S THIS GOT TO DO WITH BOOTLEGS?

(KEITH 2006 NOTE: HOT WACKS is about collecting bootlegs)

What's all this got to do with bootlegs you may ask? Well, it's through listens to the bands' unofficial material that helps complete our analysis. So, once again, dig out all your HOT WACKS books. Refer to all of the Beatles, solo Beatles, Floyd and solo Floyd sections in The Last Wacks Book XV and Supplements 1 through 4 for additional reference. And don't forget to include Syd Barrett just before the Beatles section.

While I usually confine myself to listens to cd boots only, this time out I previewed material released on vinyl going as far back as to what was circulating in 1976. In spite of the scads of cd material around, not everything has made it to the new format. All references in this article are for cd unless otherwise noted however. OK? With the housekeeping out of the way, we can begin.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Both the Beatles and Floyd had different names in their earliest incarnations. Pre-Beatles were the Quarry Men, Johnny and The Moondogs, the Beatals, Long John and The Silver Beatals, the Silver Beetles, the Beetles and, finally, the more familiar Beatles (with an "a").

Pre-Pink Floyd were called the T-Set, Sigma Six, Megadeaths, the Screaming Abdabs, the Architectural Abdabs, the Abdabs, Leonard's Lodgers, the Pink Floyd Sound and finally, Pink Floyd. See a pattern here?

Both groups had their eventual and final lead guitarists play in other bands. George Harrison played for the Les Stuart Quartet. Syd Barrett with Geoff Mott and the Mottoes and Those Without. David Gilmour with Jokers Wild.

Both groups also had members juggling instruments before settling on a final arrangement. Roger Waters says he ended up on bass by default - it was all that was left to try! While this is a bit different from Paul McCartney taking over from Stuart Sutcliffe, the bass does end up as the final instrument for both songwriters. (More on the two bass players later).

But back to the name thing. The Beatles were named by Stuart Sutcliffe - not John Lennon as myth has it (though everyone agrees it was John who came up with the b.e.a.t. spelling in the name).

Depending on who you believe, Stuart either took the name from

1. the movie THE WILD ONES, starring a young Marlon Brando (the name of bike gang in the film was the Beetles)

or

2. as a play on Buddy Holly's band - the Crickets

The Crickets variation is the most popular choice as truth but, note, the Beatles Anthology video makes a reference to THE WILD ONES version.

It was Syd Barrett who coined the name Pink Floyd, definitely based on early musical influences - blues players Pink Anderson and Floyd "Dipper Boy" Council (some say the odd combination happened on the spur of the moment as Barrett spied the names on records in his collection).

Ironically, both Stuart Sutcliffe and Syd Barrett would depart their respective groups before seeing wide spread success. Unfortunately, Sutcliffe did not live to see his band mates make good, dying on April 10, 1962 just the day before the band returned to Germany for a seven-week engagement at the newly opened Star Club in Hamburg.

It was also a day in April but six years later (April 6) when Pink Floyd officially announced the departure of Syd Barrett.

The reason? Not from Barrett's literal death but rather his slowly dying mental capacity.

Sadly, it was too much drugs and not enough rock and roll that ruined another good one in Syd Barrett.

(KEITH 2006 NOTE: Sadly, Syd Barrett passed away in 2006 and George Harrison has left us as well)

Fans of both bands will surely agree that the loss of these two individuals represents a loss of true genius. While Sutcliffe was not respected for his musical abilities, he was for his art and his influence on John Lennon's persona.

Just as Barrett was respected for his music (less so for his art abilities) and the affect he had on all four remaining Floyds. Why, there is a little bit of Syd Barrett that continues to haunt Floyd and Roger Waters even to this day.

Syd and Stu are an odd parallel to be sure. We can take it even further by noting both individuals answered to a three letter name beginning with an "S". (Syd is not the true name for Roger Keith Barrett but he did answer to "Syd")

As for the band make up itself, the Beatles were active as a five piece for a couple of years while all five official Floyds only worked together for a few months (January to April 1968). It's worth pointing out though, that Ringo Starr's appearance on the scene, replacing Pete Best (and well after Sutcliffe had departed to study art in Germany), was as natural a fit as David Gilmour's.

In both situations, the groups played or socialised with their new members before. In Gilmour's case, he and Syd were old friends from high school and shared many a guitar lick together. It is also rumoured that Gilmour's band, Jokers Wild, often played on the same bill as Floyd.

Once, at a party for the girlfriend of Storm (Floyd album designer) Thorgerson, the group even played together as a "super group". Or so say some Floyd history books. They also say Paul Simon played at this party. Hmmm?

Ringo would occasionally sit in on drums with the Beatles in their Hamburg, Germany days. Ringo was playing with Rory Storm and the Hurricanes at the time. This group also shared the stage with the Beatles during time at the Kaiserkeller club and played with the Beatles as a "super group" on occasion.

The Beatles first producer, George Martin, felt Pete Best was the weak link in the Beatles sound. His view helped prompt Best's outing (they got their manager, Brian Epstein, to do the "deed").

In Syd's case, it was also an inability to perform that was the problem. He'd become too unreliable at live gigs to play on stage. After an attempt at him being, more-or-less, just the songwriter for the group, he was asked to go.

As for Floyd's first managers, they decided to stick with Barrett. Both Peter Jenner and Andrew King felt Syd was the key player in the group and the others would amount to very little.

Wrong!

Is this decision as foolish as Decca records not signing up the Beatles? (See below for more on Decca records and signing up the bands.)

By the way, departed Beatles drummer Pete Best can be heard playing on the Tony Sheridan MY BONNIE sessions, with the Beatles credited as the Beat Brothers. These sessions have long been available beyond bootlegs and also feature John Lennon singing AIN'T SHE SWEET as well as a fine instrumental by Harrison and Lennon called CRY FOR A SHADOW (this song is on the Beatles Anthology 1).

A FEW YEARS BEFORE

But let's back up a few years before those recordings.

The earliest recorded material featuring the Quarry Men is found on several boots. Titles include THE QUARRY MEN AT HOME (Chapter One CO 25190, 1992), LIVERPOOL MAY 1960 (KTS FU 207, 1994) and segments found on the Box Set ARTIFACTS (BIG MUSIC, KTS, set one, BIGBX 4018, 1993).

There are many other titles featuring the material as well. What you should look for is the period 1958 to 1960. Also note, most of the boots list the material as coming from Liverpool, England and state "recorded at Paul McCartney's house".

In the book, BLACK MARKET BEATLES, this is refuted information (the authors say the material comes instead from rehearsals in the Fall of 1960 in Hamburg). The Beatles Anthology 1 features three examples of songs from this period and states they were recorded in Liverpool at Paul's house.

Here's more support. Hunter Davies, official Beatles biographer, in his book, THE BEATLES, second revised edition, says Astrid Kirchherr (Hamburg friend, lover to Stu and first photographer of the group) owns a copy of a tape Stuart gave her featuring John, Paul, George and Stuart rehearsing at the Liverpool Art College.

Could this in fact be the real source for this early material? Perhaps.

According to Kirchherr, John talked the college into buying a tape recorder for the band to use. Whatever the source, there is one significant song worth pointing out.

Check out the release on bootleg of the first (for certain) Liverpool material recorded by John, Paul and George (also with Stu) in 1958, THAT 'LL BE THE DAY. (There's Buddy Holly and the Crickets again.)

The version on the ARTIFACTS Box Set comes from two separate radio broadcasts of the song with the excerpts edited together. It is known that the group recorded an acetate at Liverpool's Kensington Recording Studio in 1958, also taping a Harrison/McCartney tune called IN SPITE OF ALL THE DANGER.

It's presumed that Paul McCartney himself owns the original copy of this material. (The Beatles Anthology 1 features full versions of both songs in a scoop on all the Bootleggers - thanks Paul.)

As for Pink Floyd, we have to advance eight years to October 1966. The group went to the Thompson Private Recording Company, in London, to record their earliest material. What survives is often referred to as coming from the "original EMI acetate". But this has nothing to do with the record company, just the manufacturer of the acetate itself.

The Thompson tapes feature a Syd Barrett original, LUCY LEAVE and also KING BEE, by blues man Slim Harpo. This material is available on several boots. Check out MAGNESIUM PROVERBS (The Gold Standard NIGHT TRIPPER GD - 10, 1994), A SAUCERFUL OF OUTTAKES (Chapter One CO 25195, 1994) or PINK FLOYD JEWEL BOX 4 (Home Records HR - 5947 - 3, 1994).

Compare the two groups and you can hear few common denominators at this point. The quality of the Floyd material is superior so let's go to the Beatles Decca audition for a fairer comparison.

Both have short songs (the norm for the day).

The Decca audition tapes were made in Decca's North London recording studios (Pete Best plays on these and not Ringo). As is notorious in bootlegdom, the early underground releases were not actually the true Decca auditions at all, so be careful. What you want to hear is the 15 songs captured on January 1, 1962 including THE SHEIK OF ARABY, MONEY and BESAME MUCHO.

Yellow Dog's, THE SILVER BEATLES THE ORIGINAL DECCA AUDITION TAPES 1962 AND THE CAVERN CLUB REHEARSALS (Yellow Dog, YD 011, 1991) is a great release to use for this particular Beatles/Floyd taste test.

Most notable is the better recording quality. But there is a decidedly different sound to the group itself here.

Beatleologists often comment that George Martin added something to the Beatles sound. You can quickly hear how Martin's efforts would pay off. The Beatles later releases of the same songs have a far less derivative "late 50 sound" than what is recorded at Decca. Listen to MONEY for the best example. There is more going on than just the switch of drummers between Decca and EMI just over a year later. While the Beatles early EMI material sounds dated too, it at least sounds like the 60s (in fact creating the mould for the others to follow, including Pink Floyd).

But back to Decca. To be fair, time was tight for the group at this audition and they may have been less inclined to approach the session as if it were just like a stage performance. (Apparently Manager Brian Epstein chose all the material to be recorded and in what order - thinking to feature each members' talents - but note, there were no vocals for Pete Best) Maybe it was just nerves. Whatever, the songs aren't really up to speed. (Note, the Beatles Anthology 1 features only five songs from this session but adds rare versions of BESAME MUCHO and LOVE ME DO, recorded at EMI with Pete Best on drums.)

Now, all you Beatle fans may strike me down for saying it, but they really don't sound like they are the next big thing here. Do they? Please, don't let hindsight interfere with your analysis either. Indeed, by putting the groups together, I think there's an edge to Pink Floyd.

LUCY LEAVE is infectious. Ask yourself which group you would sign? Who sounds most original? You do have to factor in the fact that the Beatles had hit big by the time Syd Barrett and the rest of Floyd recorded their material.

But could the early years of Beatles recordings on the scene have made such a difference in approach for Floyd? You be the judge.

A second Floyd example of early material is also found on A SAUCERFUL OF OUTTAKES. Here we get a much longer version of INTERSTELLAR OVERDRIVE (an early Floyd signature tune and recently released commercially as PINK FLOYD LONDON '66-'67) than what was released on their first official album, PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN.

The band recorded the material in February 1967 at the Sound Techniques Studio, Chelsea, England. This is still before they signed a record deal. The demo material helped seal their contract with EMI however. Polydor records was interested in the group but, after hearing the results of the Sound Techniques sessions, EMI outbid everyone else and signed Floyd.

Ironically, one of the executives making the decision for EMI was Beecher Stevens, who allegedly had worked for Decca and was a part of the crowd of decision makers who turned down the Beatles. Does signing Floyd make up for this earlier mistake?

While crediting George Martin for being able to capture the sound of the Beatles on records, we have to credit Joe Boyd for Floyd. Their first studio releases reflected the sound he generated at Sound Techniques Studios, something Norman Smith was not able to duplicate as well at Abbey Road Studios when he took over as Floyd's "in house" producer at the insistence of EMI (note, Smith was the engineer who was also working with George Martin and the Beatles).

Smith did provide all of the same recording techniques the Beatles were using however. And much of Floyd's early studio work reflects Beatle shades, with double tracked vocals and such. But I would say that the Norman Smith sound is not derivative of Pink Floyd's true sound. That comes later and post Syd Barrett.

But back again to our direct comparison. We soon have both bands working in the same Abbey Road studios (actually next door to each other). Floyd is allowed to observe the Beatles in action too. A privilege not everyone got in 1967.

On one occasion at least, Paul, George and Ringo dropped in on Syd, Roger, Rick and Nick. The three Beatles offered up some moral support to the four Floyds while they were recording the PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN album.

As for the music itself, take the songs listed as SCREAMING GUITAR BLUES and SHUFFLE BOOGIE BLUES on the LIVERPOOL MAY 1960 Beatles cd mentioned earlier. Compare these to Floyd's INTERSTELLAR OVERDRIVE from the Sound Techniques sessions. Both are long and show the two acts in improv mode.

Another studio personnel connection is Alan Parsons. Coincidentally, Parsons began working at Abbey Road studios as a tape operator/second engineer while the Beatles were working on the ABBEY ROAD album. He graduated to first engineer by the time of DARK SIDE OF THE MOON, contributing many of the connections and segue bits found on the Floyd's most successful album. Sound connections not altogether dissimilar to side 2 (or songs 7-17 on the cd) of the Beatles ABBEY ROAD album.

Parsons also worked for a time as Floyd's live concert mixer. What great sound those gigs must have had!

While the SCREAMING GUITAR BLUES and SHUFFLE BOOGIE BLUES are just jams and on acoustic guitar, they do feature competent playing and have an honest, early rock n' roll "feel". No one should ever say the Beatles were bad musicians, even at this early point with mistakes intact. I like the sparks we get here far better than what we get with Decca.

LONG AND SHORT

Certainly the greatest difference between the Beatles and Floyd is the actual length of songs.

While the early Floyd on records went after shorter pieces and even the singles market, the later version, minus Syd, is best known for album length cuts.

The Beatles, of course, will forever claim the greatest ability to pen spectacular pop tunes - considerably shorter but no less complete. While this may be a telling difference between the bands in the long run, all of the material noted so far lets you judge ability and potential.

Can you imagine the Beatles having even greater success with longer, improvised pieces?

Interesting thought but maybe an impossibility in 1962. Even in 1967, it is pressure from EMI that forces Floyd to record far shorter versions of their on stage material. Ironically, it's the Beatles who help break the radio barrier over long cuts with the release of HEY JUDE in 1968.

You can hear a semi live performance of this song as played on the David Frost show on STRAWBERRY FIELDS FOREVER (Fab 4 Records FAB 5555, 1989) - great live vocal by Paul.

LIVE ON STAGE

And this leads us to live performances. Here, the similarity between the bands is weakest.

For the Beatles, concerts were almost as short as their songs. Again, we have to consider that the Beatles really began it all. There were no huge stadium tours before the Beatles. No huge amps. No fancy lights (though Floyd was working on it).

We really have to go back to Hamburg and the Star Club material (recorded by fellow rocker, Kingsize Taylor on a cheap tape recorder - was it the same one used to capture the 1960 rehearsals from two years earlier?) to get a feel for what the Beatles were capable of doing in an extended set.

The Star Club performances in late 1962 have been widely bootlegged but are also available on commercial release, most commonly on vinyl as LIVE AT THE STAR CLUB. To compare the bands, we go "pre-stadium" for Floyd as well. A good example is material featured on A SAUCERFUL OF OUTTAKES. Listen especially to ASTRONOMY DOMINE taken from a May 12 concert (Games For May event) in London.

This features Floyd's first use of quad sound and is something Norman Smith turned the band onto by accident in the studio.

Apparently he played back some of their material through four speakers in the control room and forever changed the way the group wanted to present their material to an audience. So Smith deserves some credit at least for providing such divine inspiration for Floyd.

What I find interesting here though, is that the Beatles stopped touring mostly because they became fed up with their inability to play live what they were doing in the studio. Ironically, Floyd took up the challenge and pushed the envelope to recreate all their studio sounds live. It may look and sound easy now but go back to 1967 and consider how radical and revolutionary surround sound would have come across. While the conditions for both bands were very different, let's give credit to Floyd in wanting to bring absolute control over the sound to the live playing environment.

I'm sure if the Beatles had begun to tour again, as discussed during the LET IT BE sessions, they would have found a less frenzied audience and experienced far more satisfaction in actually playing live again. They could have done what Floyd did. Too bad they didn't. All we have after their last live gig at Candlestick Park in San Francisco 1966 (see CANDLESTICK PARK Masterdisc MDCD - 007, 1993), is the great roof top concert recorded atop the Apple building in 1969.

This event of course is seen and heard in the LET IT BE film.

On bootleg, we get the full roof top audio portion on several titles including GET BACK (GHOST Records CD 53-43, 1991). Some absolutely great playing, especially by John and George.

By the way, I use the Harrison roof top version of the solo on ONE AFTER NINE '0 NINE to prove how good a lead player George Harrison really is. The material is vintage early 1960 (see LIVERPOOL MAY 1960, mentioned earlier, for the first version of this song, Yellow Dog's, THE SILVER BEATLES THE ORIGINAL DECCA AUDITION TAPES 1962 AND THE

CAVERN CLUB REHEARSALS for further evolution and, finally, THE BEATLES SESSIONS (Masterdisc MDCD 002, 1994) for the full blown studio version also released on Anthology 1).

Although the song is over 25 years old, Harrison's lead playing is contemporary to this day. For my mind, George does the concise, tightly worked lead guitar solo better than almost anyone.

True, Harrison might not wail like a Clapton or a Gilmour but what style would you want on songs like ONE AFTER NINE 'O NINE anyway? And, to his credit, Harrison called in his buddy Clapton to play on WHILE MY GUITAR GENTLY WEEPS and he provided just what was needed. (A solo Paul McCartney would use David Gilmour as session lead guitarist on more than one occasion years later.)

You can hear an entirely different version of GENTLY WEEPS, minus Clapton, on THE BEATLES SESSIONS mentioned above and yet another version (only Harrison on acoustic) on ARTIFACTS, set one, disc 4 (4201). Expect this to be on Anthology 3.

(KEITH 2006 NOTE: The acoustic version is indeed on Anthology 3)

Calling on others is something Gilmour and Waters never hesitated to do, even when both were in Floyd; something less likely for McCartney or Lennon to do, especially while in the Beatles.

(KEITH 2006 NOTE: Guest musicians did happen in the Beatles, especially later on with Billy Preston sitting in on tracks. I think, in retrospect, this was unfair comment by me)

EGOS

Which brings us to egos. The most obvious comparison between bands is the break up of partnerships between Lennon and McCartney and Waters and Gilmour. The fact that both McCartney and Waters played bass may be just a coincidence but is it really?

In a recent interview in BASS Player magazine (August 1995), McCartney talks about the power the bass player has over a band. In effect, he says the band can't go anywhere without the bass leading them there. Is this a metaphor for his asserting leadership? I think it might be.

Of course, Roger Waters is no spring chicken in this regard either. As bass players go, both McCartney and Waters provided significant control of the band over and above the actual result of playing the bass in a foursome.

As an aside though, listen to Floyd without Roger Waters and you do miss his driving bass. Guy Pratt (Floyd touring band) is obviously highly competent but I'd say he has yet to exert the kind of presence McCartney is talking about. This may be the only other weak link left in the new Floyd's sound (along with less spectacular lyrics). Just gear it up a notch Guy and David.

(KEITH 2006 NOTE: Pratt played on both the Floyd tours sans Waters and was with Gilmour on his ON AN ISLAND tour in 2006 - I probably should have added that Gilmour has often said he played many of the bass parts on recorded Floyd songs. I refer though to Waters with Floyd live. You could also hear it when the band reunited for the LIVE 8 shows in 2005.)

With the break up of the respective creative partnerships in the Beatles and Floyd, we do lose that magical thing (whatever it is) that really made the groups tick. Ignoring the valuable contributions of a George Harrison or a Rick Wright, this argument centres on the most prolific forces in the group only. When these players could no longer cooperate that was that.

They may not have had to continue to like each other but they did have to like working together. What we hear and see in the LET IT BE film is as much tension as anything else. But the

outcome is still remarkable. This echoes the experiences for Floyd in making the WALL. Any, what I call, "good" tension was falling apart.

Geez, speaking of tension and falling apart, Richard Wright actually got booted out of Pink Floyd during the WALL period. Not unlike Ringo's sudden departure during the making of the WHITE ALBUM.

Both events arising from the bass players' badgering on and on about Ringo and Richard's poor playing. Of course, Ringo came back. Richard didn't (at least until Roger departed). Say, there's another fluke connection. Ringo is actually a Richard too.

To grasp what gives (or gave) here, just take in the LET IT BE movie and compare it to THE WALL REHEARSALS (ROTATION ROTA 04, 1994) or BEHIND THE WALL (STONEHENGE STBX 022/23/24, 1994) or BRICK BY BRICK (Great Dane GDR CD 9313, 1994). You'll hear a very similar sounding Roger Waters, as leader, to Paul McCartney in LET IT BE.

Now, there may be nothing wrong with asserting control but if you can't motivate your colleagues, you've got problems. The above examples demonstrate the beginning of the end for both bands. While we're talking about LET IT BE, refer to the Floyd cd, JUST WARMIN' UP (Octopus OCTO 055, 1995). This demonstrates David Gilmour in charge and he is a tad more playful in his methods. Like Lennon, McCartney and Harrison on LET IT BE, there is also some monkeying around with words - "Shine on you crazy bastard" is an example.

RESPECT

In spite of it all, most times in Floyd, respect for individual musicianship stayed constant. Even during the breakup between Waters and Floyd, and through Gilmour's and Nick Mason's resurrection in 1987, Waters and Gilmour never put each others abilities down.

This can't be said for Lennon and McCartney. Lennon's song: HOW DO YOU SLEEP is cutting via wicked lyrics such as "the sound you make is musak to my ears" and "the only thing you done was yesterday". These are not great testimonials to McCartney. Check out IMAGINE - THE ALTERNATE ALBUM (Sidewalk Music SM 89009), IMAGINE THE SESSIONS (VIGOTONE VT-CD 08) or JEALOUS GUY - THE IMAGINE SESSIONS (LUNA Records LU 9308, 1993) for rehearsals and alternate takes of this song.

While you're at it, listen closely to Gilmour's singing on LOST FOR WORDS on the JUST WARMIN' UP cd. You get a real intense "they tell me to go fuck myself" at the end of this song. We all assume, of course, Gilmour is referring to Roger Waters referring to Gilmour. But, again, no where in any lyrics does Gilmour ever slag Water's ability as a writer.

There is one other comparison worth noting here. In both groups, the other band mates seemingly let the bass players lead them or, as Hunter Davies says, "steer them into new projects". When the rest of the members finally refused to be steered, and steered so absolutely, a split was inevitable.

Some critics trash Floyd for continuing without Waters. The loudest of these is Roger Waters himself. He even uses an analogy between the Beatles and Floyd, saying continuing would be like three of the Beatles going on ... "It would not be Beatles nor is it Floyd".

But let's look at this in light of John Lennon's murder. Now that we've all heard the new Beatles recordings for their own official biography and anthology, how do you feel?

Is this the Beatles? Certainly they try to be - using Lennon demo tapes and adding their own voices and instruments to the mix.

But they even went further than this to capture the "Beatles sound".

Added material was recorded in the Abbey Road studios of old - going as far as to rebuild the studio and returning the glazed sewage pipes that acted as acoustic reflectors and gave the room its specific ambient sound.

The new songs are FREE AS A BIRD, REAL LOVE and GROW OLD WITH ME (yet to be worked on).

(KEITH 2006 NOTE: This last song never got finished apparently)

Some bootlegs feature these in Lennon demo form. The FREE AS A BIRD demo also showed up on the internet before Anthology 1 was released - Scott Chatfield posted the song at <http://www.moosenet.com/beatles.htm> (Obvious Moose Beatles Page) as did Sam Choukri, on his John Lennon page, <http://www.missouri.edu/c588349/johnpage.htm>.

(KEITH 2006 NOTE: These links long gone from the net but kind of cool I was quoting the Internet at the time of writing)

Where did they get the song? Well, FREE AS A BIRD shows up on the yet to make it onto cd, LOST LENNON TAPES, VOL 19 (BAG Records 5091). Anyone who followed the radio series in detail will have heard it and had an opportunity to tape the song off-air too.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT (White Fly WF 001/3), a three disc set, lists the song "REAL LIFE (sic?) piano demo". (The set also features HOW DO YOU SLEEP mentioned above.)

PILL (Missing In Action MIA ACT.12) lists REAL LOVE. This cd also features GIRLS AND BOYS, supposedly the first version of the song. The commercially released IMAGINE soundtrack album also features a Lennon only version of the song.

GROW OLD WITH ME is found on the official MILK AND HONEY album but another version is on the bootleg, JOHN'S LOST HOME DEMOS, VOL 1 (John Records John 001).

The Beatles new recording (if they finish it off) could be yet a third version of this song as there were many. Yoko states on the liner notes to MILK AND HONEY that only a few different demos of GROW OLD survived a robbery. The one used on the MILK AND HONEY album is the one that "was meant to be"

The three surviving Beatles are using material originated by Lennon. But what if the reconstituted Floyd decided to record material from any of Roger's solo albums? Would this lessen Roger's criticism? Just a thought.

Actually, I concede that groups who carry on after an integral member leaves are definitely not the same. (So long Grateful Dead, we'll miss you.) Indeed, they can never be the same. As to whether they should try to continue or not, well, Gilmour's version of Floyd is doing quite well.

(KEITH 2006 NOTE: Roger Waters is touring DARK SIDE OF THE MOON in 2006 - is this any more fair than Gilmour doing the set in 1994?)

And the surviving Beatles? Well, while critics and purists may have a hard time with it, I think I can speak for most everyone else when I say go for it, PLEASE!!! How about the Beatles Next Generation with the kids?

But let's end on a less speculative note.

INFLUENCE

It's no secret the Beatles were a great influence on Syd Barrett and Roger Waters. Both mention John Lennon in particular as a force in their musical upbringing.

Did you know Syd Barrett had to miss a Beatles performance because of an interview for art college? Art, as a career choice before music takes over, really echoes John Lennon's background.

But, if the situations had been reversed, I have no doubt Lennon would have taken in the show rather than the interview.

There is one other thing in common between the two groups I should mention.

Both groups developed their particular style through extended stays as house bands in clubs. We had the Beatles at the Cavern Club in Liverpool and their stints at the Top Ten and Star Clubs (among others) in Hamburg, Germany. Floyd, following the pattern, became the house staple at the UFO club in London. Of note, this is the club frequented by none other than the Beatles themselves.

The Beatles response to Pink Floyd was enthusiastic too. On the *MAGNESSIUM PROVERBS* cd mentioned earlier, we hear McCartney defend the band in a brief clip into track 8:

"What they're saying and what they're doing is sort of nothing strange about it, it's just dead straight. But it's that they're talking about things that are a bit new, you know. And they're talking about things which people don't know too much about yet.

"And so, they tend to get, you know, people sort of put them down a bit and say, 'wah', 'weirdo', 'psychedelic' and things. But it's really just what's going on around and they're just trying to look into it a bit.

"So next time you see the word, you know, like sort of any word, any new, strange word; like, 'psychedelic', you know, 'drugs'. The whole bit, you know, 'freak out music' and all of that. Don't immediately take it as that, you know. Because your first reaction is gotta be one of fear, you know?"

Scary stuff this Floyd. Reactions much like that of some parents to the scruffy Silver Beatles (e.g. "Teddy Boys, the lot of them").

Going further, Nicholas Schaffner in his book, *SAUCERFUL OF SECRETS THE PINK FLOYD ODYSSEY* (Dell Publishing, 1991), quotes International Times publisher Barry Miles (known simply as Miles) as saying McCartney went as far as to figuratively pass the mantle over to Floyd in 1967.

Supposedly McCartney acknowledged that the Beatles were a little more restricted in their ability to marry rock and roll with electronics. Psychedelic music indeed!

Let's advance that train of thought even further. There are two Beatle songs that reflect a Floydian ambience. Clearly *WHAT'S THE NEW MARY JANE* and *REVOLUTION NUMBER*

NINE are unlike any other Beatle songs. You may want to add YOU KNOW MY NAME, LOOK UP THE NUMBER here too.

Of course, you can hear REVOLUTION NUMBER NINE on the WHITE ALBUM with its collection of sounds and repeating words but there is an alternate version to this. OFF WHITE VOL 3 (Red Phantom RCD 1138, 1993) has a second mix. Both versions go well with Roger Water's SEVERAL SPECIES OF SMALL FURRY ANIMALS GATHERED TOGETHER IN A CAVE AND GROOVING WITH A PICT found on the legitimate UMMAGUMMA Pink Floyd release. You'll need to find one of the many bootlegs to feature it before you can hear MARY JANE however. A few titles include OFF WHITE VOL 3 as well as the ARTIFACTS box set noted earlier (cd 4, #4021). There are several different mixes of the song too.

It's rumoured Syd Barrett appears on the original recording but this is not the case. The song does resemble a bit of Syd's style however. Mary Jane is slang for Marijuana (echoes of Syd's LET'S ROLE ANOTHER ONE having to be changed to CANDY AND A CURRENT BUN for commercial release) and the whole song could easily fit with the likes of Syd's APPLES AND ORANGES which has an "I thought you might like to know" nod to the Beatles' SGT PEPPER in its lyrics.

There's also JUGBAND BLUES, VEGETABLE MAN or even Water's CORPORAL CLEGG for comparison.

Let's use VEGETABLE MAN here. You can find this on the TOTAL ECLIPSE BOX SET (Great Dane Records GDR CD 9320A) as well as on other collections featuring Floyd BBC material circa 1967 and 68, including, again, MAGNESIUM PROVERBS.

Syd's use of the "Vegetable man where are you?" refrain is truly the forerunner for John's "What a shame Mary Jane had a pain at the party". Just nonsense for both and note the sustained echo endings in each song. The time period for these two recordings is exactly a year apart (August 1967 for Syd and August 1968 for John). Who's copying who now?

MORE

And there are a few more comparisons left. The Beatles began using sound effects around the time of REVOLVER and throughout SGT PEPPER. Floyd came to the fore during the same period and (as noted before, via Producer Norm Smith) began using sound effects regularly in what would become a Floyd signature pattern.

The Beatles mostly left this approach after PEPPER Certainly, the most common cross over period between bands is through the Beatles PEPPER and MYSTERY TOUR albums. Consider the songs FLYING, the end bit of LOVELY RITA, or even George's BLUE JAY WAY - all have a resemblance to Floyd.

One of the Beatles' strengths was their ability to assimilate trends and make them uniquely "Beatle trends" (to become even more widely copied by others). In the above examples, I think we see the Beatles lending their stamp of approval on the direction Floyd wanted to go. And go Floyd did.

IN THE END BOOTLEGGERS LOVE BEATLES MORE

Well, in the end you can love both bands equally. There doesn't have to be a winner and loser here. But Bootleggers may love the Beatles just a bit more.

Consider the higher volume of Beatles bootleg material available.

In The Last Wacks alone, Beatles' listings number 62 pages compared to Floyds' 19. Obviously, the "inner circle" of the Floyd camp is far tighter in loyalty and in preventing leaks compared to the Beatles camp. Unfortunately, the one thing we don't have for our comparison, is an abundance of Floyd alternate and rehearsal takes.

We do have loads of material being developed by Floyd in live performance however. While the Beatles did their work in the studio and brought it to the live arena, Floyd worked their material extensively before live audiences (while simultaneously exploring in the studio).

Listen to the early versions of DARK SIDE OF THE MOON for proof. See SPEAK TO ME (Silver Shadow CD 9314, 1993) for a great sounding, early live and pre-DARK SIDE OF THE MOON show in Japan. There is also the more famous Rainbow Theatre show where DARK SIDE premiered as ECLIPSE. See PINK FLOYD LIVE (The Swinging Pig TSP-CD-049, 1994) for one of the best sounding versions of this February 1972 performance.

BACKWARDS TAPES

Finally, we have both groups using backward tape loops. Remember the "Paul is dead. Miss him. Miss him" clue found on the WHITE ALBUM?

Play I'M SO TIRED backwards and you'll hear it.

Compare this to what you hear when you play EMPTY SPACES from the WALL album backwards, just before the song YOUNG LUST. You'll hear: "Congratulations. You have just discovered the secret message. Please send your answers to Old Pink, care of the funny farm, Chalfont."

Coincidence that both of these albums were double albums with mostly white covers? Of course it is.

And let's not forget the connecting of songs. The whole concept of the "concept album" takes off with SGT PEPPER but Floyd caps the process off with DARK SIDE OF THE MOON. By the way, Paul McCartney was interviewed for the talking odds-and-end bits for DARK SIDE but his material didn't make it onto the final record.

Had enough? You know, there are probably more things in common between the bands but I think that's it for one day.

End words to Paul McCartney: "The love you take is equal to the love you make" and to Roger Waters: "It's tough banging your head on some mad buggers Wall". Agreed!

Until next time, I'll see you in the trenches.

Address any responses c/o HOT WACKS P.O. Box 544 Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 5R1.

KEITH 2006 NOTE: I did get some mail in particular from Syd Barrett fans. Beatle – Floyd lovers – send me a mail whinersmusic@gmail.com if you like on this – the debate continues ...