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From Times Online

October 28, 2008

10 things you probably didn't know about Pink Floyd

From his authoritative book on the hugely successful band, Mark Blake distills ten nuggets of trivia to astound the most devoted fan

1: The most famous roadie ever?

In 1967, Pink Floyd began employing roadie Pete Watts, who rose through the ranks to become their chief sound engineer. Watts can also be heard laughing between tracks on the band's Dark Side Of The Moon album. He died in 1976. His daughter Naomi accompanied the group on tour as a child, and went on to become a successful model and actress, starring in the movies, 21 Grams and Mulholland Drive.

2: As it begins, so it ends

The first and last voices ever heard on a Pink Floyd album belong not to any member of the band but to their managers. Floyd's 1967 debut, The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn, opens with the track Astronomy Domine and co-manager Peter Jenner narrating astronomical data through a megaphone. The last voice heard on the last Floyd album, 1994's The Division Bell, is that of the band's late manager Steve O'Rourke, speaking to guitarist David Gilmour's son Charlie on the telephone, and accidentally recorded on the Gilmour family's ansaphone machine.

3: The secret side of the Moon

The BBC's coverage of the Apollo moon landing in July 1969, included a TV programme titled But What If It's Made Of Green Cheese, for which Pink Floyd performed a still-unreleased track known as Moonhead.

4: Nothing is wasted

The front cover for heavy rock band Def Leppard's 1981 album, High 'n' Dry, depicts a man diving into an empty swimming pool, and was designed by Hipgnosis, the same company behind numerous Pink Floyd album sleeves. Years later, it was revealed that the cover had originally been proposed, and rejected by Pink Floyd for their Atom Heart Mother album in 1970. Instead, Floyd went with the now famous picture of a cow in a field.

5: Boars might fly, sows might not

When Pink Floyd's bassist and songwriter Roger Waters quit the band in the early 1980s, a lengthy legal battle ensued with Waters attempting to stop his former bandmates using the Floyd name and their famous 'flying pig' stage prop. Waters claimed that the pig had been his idea. To prevent being sued for breach of copyright, Floyd commissioned a new flying pig, with enormous testicles, to differentiate it from Waters' original female model.

6: Big in Japan

During the 1960s, Floyd frontman Syd Barrett's mother often took in lodgers at the family's house in Hills Road, Cambridge. These were usually students studying at the university, and included the future Prime Minister of Japan, Junichiro Koizumi.

7: Before Sharon Osbourne, there was the Floyd

Angered by Melody Maker's lukewarm review of their 1971 album,

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Meddle, Pink Floyd sent a gift to the paper's deputy editor, Michael Watts. Assuming it to be a Christmas present, Watts opened the parcel to be confronted with a wooden box concealing a spring-loaded boxing glove.

8: The hidden jazz element

Listen very closely to the fadeout of the Floyd song Wish You Were Here and you might still be able to hear the violin solo, played by jazz virtuoso Stéphane Grappelli, who happened to be recording in an adjacent studio to the Floyd at Abbey Road.

9: No Wings on the Moon

Several voices that can be heard talking between tracks on Pink Floyd's Dark Side Of The Moon. These include Floyd roadies Pete Watts and Chris Adamson and Abbey Road Studios doorman Gerry O'Driscoll; all of whom had been asked to answer random questions set by Roger Waters. Paul and Linda McCartney were also interviewed, but their answers were rejected from the final album on the grounds that they were, said Waters "trying too hard to be funny".

10: Of course, it had to come down to sex

Ummagumma, the title of Pink Floyd's 1969 double album, was a word invented by one of the band's entourage as a slang expression for sexual intercourse.

Pigs might fly, the inside story of Pink Floyd by Mark Blake is published in paperback by Aurum press this month, price £9.99



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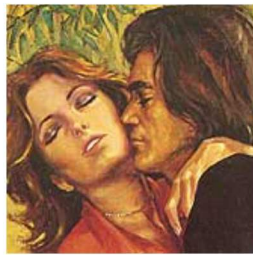
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