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Category: Home > Reviews > Rock > Music > Documentary > Biography > Psychedelia > Pink Floyd – The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn: 40th Anniversary Edition (2 CD Set) + The Pink Floyd & The Syd Barrett Story (2006/DTS DVD Set)

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Pink Floyd – The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn: 40th Anniversary Edition (2 CD Set) + The Pink Floyd & The Syd Barrett Story (2006/DTS DVD Set)

Picture: C Sound: B/C Extras: C+ Main Program: B Music: B

There are only so many commercially successful bands you can call great and Pink Floyd is one of them, but there has always been the specter of what might have been if Syd Barrett had not left the band, let alone the unfortunate personal events that followed in his own life. In 1967, the Barrett version of the band issued the Psychedelic Rock classic **The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn** and though it was not the outright groundbreaker The Beatles' **Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band** was, it was still a very strong, solid album and one of the very few psychedelic projects that has stood the test of time.

It was not even a Top 40 album in the U.S., but serious music and Rock fans in particular took notice and the band solidified its reputation as a formidable force in the music business with it. Capitol Records has issued 2 and 3-disc sets of the classic, with the 2-CD set we received featuring the album in mono and stereo versions. It is one of those cases where both versions sound so good that it is hard to choose between the two. There are those purists who might go for mono, but the stereo mixes are not just off-hand ideas trying to fit a new technology and Barrett actually wrote most of the material.

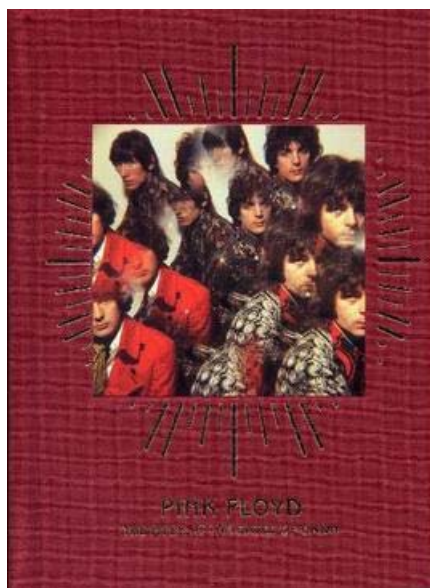
The songs include:

- 1) *Astronomy Domine*
- 2) *Lucifer Sam*
- 3) *Matilda Mother*
- 4) *Flaming*
- 5) *Pow R, Toc H*
- 6) *Take Up Thy Stethoscope & Walk*
- 7) *Interstellar Overdrive*
- 8) *The Gnome*
- 9) *Chapter 24*
- 10) *The Scarecrows*
- 11) *Bike*

What is more interesting about the album, is that not only does it qualify as psychedelic, but also has a harder Rock edge than many such releases at the time and also more than qualifies as Progressive Rock showing how creative, rich and ahead of their time the band was even then. The album pushed the idea of imaginative images that could rival The Beatles, Yes and even The Beach Boys at the time and the most painful thing now is that we lost Barrett's flowing talents so soon that the hugeness of the loss has yet to be properly calculated, but it is a big one.

At the same time, a new DVD set boldly entitled **The Pink Floyd & The Syd Barrett Story** (2006) tries to outdo the **Under Review** segment on Barrett's career in this new set from MVD and Zeit Media. Instead of outdoing it, it complements it as producer/director/editor John Edginton does not just try for a chronological look at the lives coinciding with music releases, but tries a character study in the midst of the career that became two when Barrett left in 1968.

The main program runs about 49 minutes, which is not as long as **Under Review's**



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installment, but close. The best thing is that it has a different route and offers different footage than the other program, which is equally archival and makes for a great companion with limited overlap to the other release.

The letterboxed 1.78 X 1 image may feature a great wealth of classic and rare footage, but it is just too soft overall for whatever reason, even when color is good. The sound is here in DTS and Dolby Digital 5.1 mixes, but it is really, really stretching out the often monophonic and rough sound, though even new audio is flattened for some reason. The PCM 16/44.1 2.0 sound on the two CDs fare much better, sound like remastered transfers and are as good as the 25+-year-old audio format can deliver. Too bad these were not SACDs. The controversial remix of **Dark Side Of The Moon** remains the biggest selling SACD to date.


A lyrics booklet is all you get with the 2-CD set as an extra. Running three hours, the extras on DVD 2 even offers Robyn Hitchcock and Former Blur member Graham Coxon performing his songs among the elongated, additional interviews. Roger Water, David Gilmour, Richard Wright and Nick Mason are the remaining interviewees and they say things here they have not said anywhere else.

For more on the **Under Review** segment, our coverage can be found at this link:

<http://www.fulvuedrive-in.com/review/3529/Syd+Barrett+--+Under+Review>

- Nicholas Sheffo

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