

# The Free Lance-Star

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Whether you listened to "The Wall" in the womb or have somehow never even seen someone wear a cheap "Dark Side of the Moon" T-shirt from Wal-Mart, "The Pink Floyd and Syd Barrett Story"--released on deluxe edition DVD earlier this month by MVD Visual--is worth the time it takes to view the short documentary.

As a fan, I found myself quickly clicking over to the bonus features and then moving to the second DVD of supplemental material.

Barrett was an extremely intriguing character, from his childhood talents in art and music, to the reclusive years, up until his death in July 2006.

The documentary delves into Barrett's story through the eyes of those who knew him best. It shows his musical genius on the album "Piper at the Gates of Dawn," which skyrocketed the band to stardom, and his drug-exacerbated schizophrenia, which threatened to tear the group apart.

Clips of interviews with fellow band members Roger Waters, David Gilmour, Nick Mason and Rick Wright, along with other prominent figures in Barrett's life such as former girlfriends and landlords, make up the bulk of the documentary, and seem extremely candid and heartfelt.

Important moments in Barrett's gradual dismissal from the band are told straightforwardly by those who instigated them. ("One time we just didn't pick him up," says Waters.) And a new angle is given on catastrophes like the fateful United States tour, to which Barrett's unstable condition caused a premature end.

These are combined with a great soundtrack of familiar Pink Floyd and Syd Barrett solo material, striking images and video footage. Even the narration itself--done by BBC journalist Kirsty Wark--is enjoyable and a refreshing change from the droning or simply unpleasant norm of documentary narration. (Think VH1's "Fabulous Life of ".)

This documentary is basic enough for the casual listener who mistakenly refers to "Another Brick in the Wall (Part Two)" as "The Wall," to understand and enjoy. But it's detailed enough that the well-versed fan who actually owns "The Division Bell" would find more than a few new stories--or at least points of view--to discover.

Unfortunately, the film seems to be over soon after it begins.

Fortunately, there are a few hours of supplemental material included, such as full-length versions of the interviews that had been spliced and inserted into the documentary. These unedited gems will help bridge the time until you inevitably pull out "The Wall" or "Live at Pompeii."