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About Marc

Location: Texas

Occupation: Podcaster, Writer, Programmer

Bio:

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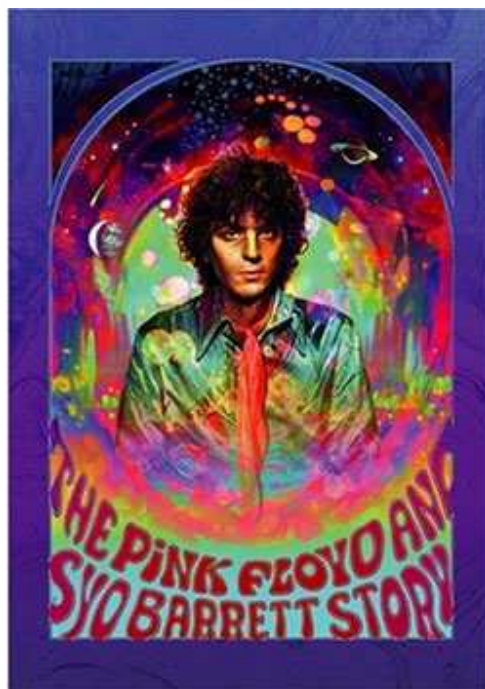
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The Pink Floyd and Syd Barrett Story

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By [Marc](#)



If I needed yet another reason to stay away from LSD, this documentary is it.

Many people don't realize that there was another Pink Floyd before *Dark Side of the Moon*. Not in the literal sense, but musically they had two identities and it can likely be attributed to one man: Syd Barrett, Pink Floyd's first lead singer.

The Pink Floyd and Syd Barrett Story is really the story of Syd Barrett and how he affected his band. Barrett was a mop-headed musical talent that, along with Bob Kose, Roger Waters, Nick Mason and Rick Wright started The Pink Floyd Blues Council, a bluesy combo named after a couple of blues musicians that played on an album together. Barrett quickly spun the band away from blues rock and into psychedelic rock that was blooming in the 1960s, leading to the band's first album *Piper at the Gates of Dawn*. Unfortunately Syd himself was also spinning away because of the schizophrenia he suffered from and psychedelics - not the music, but drugs like LSD. The stress of recording and constant touring took its toll and Barrett began visibly falling apart, at one point opting to stare silently at the audience instead of singing. By the time the band started recording the second album, *A Saucerful of Secrets*, the band had stopped taking Barrett on tour because of his instability, instead using David Gilmour to fill in. Barrett worked on the album but during recording the band decided they'd had enough and Gilmour replaced him permanently. Even though they forced him out, Barrett and his tragedy became a spectre over Pink Floyd, influencing and leading to their greatest albums in the Seventies. Syd attempted a solo career in the early Seventies, but then disappeared into a life of seclusion in Cambridge, England where he remained gardening and living off royalties for thirty years until his death in July 2006. The band only saw Barrett one other time after forcing him out, seven years later while recording "Shine on You Crazy Diamond" for the *Wish You Were Here* album, which was focused on Barrett's story. Barrett had shaved his body completely, even down to the eyebrows, and had gained considerable weight; Gilmour was the only band member that recognized him.

The documentary is surprisingly impactful, candid and infinitely interesting but too short at only 45 minutes. I understand that the film is focused on the enigmatic Barrett, but documentarian Jonathan Edington leaves you with the feeling that there's more to be told, especially about Pink Floyd post-Syd Barrett. Luckily the extras give you more with the uncut interviews with the band members and leave you filling full, but not bloated as hoped. Extras also include a textual biography of Barrett, an image gallery of Pink Floyd memorabilia and acoustic performances of Barrett songs from Blur guitarist Graham Coxon and Robyn Hitchcock.

The Pink Floyd and Syd Barrett Story tells you almost everything you would want to know about Syd Barrett, if not Pink Floyd. Still, the re-release of this 2004 documentary is incomplete because, unless I missed it, there was no mention of Syd's death or the tribute concert that was held. You can stop short of calling it the definitive edition that it claims to be. Still, it weaves a rich cautionary tale of Barrett and how he was a prisoner of his own psychoses, but it left me thinking: maybe we're the prisoners and Syd Barrett was someone who truly knew the taste of freedom.



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