

Albums of 1975: Pink Floyd - Wish You Were Here

It was sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas, probably early December 1975. In the basement of the house I grew up in, working on remodeling the basement with adding insulation and suspended ceiling. The project had good approval from **Mom** and **Dad**, led by brother **Brian**, who was always instrumental in acquiring good deals on home refurbishments. He had such a knack for this, eventually building a contractor business in **California** years later. At the time he formed **InnerDesign** — dealing with quality home design items. Also he started remodeling restaurants in **Minneapolis**. He got available family members involved — **Craig**, **Jill**, his wife at the time **Renée** all doing nearly everything — and young me for demolition and moving stuff around (in Dinkytown, 1976)

That December of '75 had us working in the basement, which served as a good recreation space. We even had a pool table down there! Having good times working on the remodeling, while playing cassettes of recently released albums that brother Craig taped from art school friends acquisitions. The recent batch included **Springsteen**, **Lou Reed**, **Todd Rundgren**, **Bowie**, **Grateful Dead**, and one I never knew of with the peculiar name of **Pink Floyd**.

I remember when the tape began, I was instantly transfixed by the intro. Long, hypnotic ambient sound that pulled my consciousness in with such an irresistible pull, leading in with a soothing audio seduction lending to wanting more — and it certainly delivers more — how the guitar enters with unparalleled skill, and climbing towards the vocals. What lyrics! This was *Shine On You Crazy Diamond*. I seemed to have levitated to another level — though I was not conscious of this quite yet. The crescendos — jubilant, triumphant. I'm hooked! The sonics throughout *Welcome To The Machine*; I was a science fiction kid, I'd first seen *2001: A Space Odyssey* on the giant screen of the **Cooper Theater** earlier that year. (Thanks **Craig**!) - and now this.

The title track surprise makes one think the sound went out from an electrical short! The acoustic title track is perfect. Then the return of the first song sequence of such drama with that remarkable sound of wind and the band locked in. Wow... and wow.

This. Is. The. Best.

The outro synthesizer sound is emotional. I'm drifting, and play it again! This

time while perusing the album cover in the stack nearby: the man is on fire! Where's the band? Surrealistic and mysterious, appealing to my sci-fi proclivities. The inside has lyrics and more pictures and a postcard! Who's this **Waters**? I became a Floyd freak before seeing members look like, but that didn't matter. The next one was *Dark Side of the Moon*, in Craigs album collection but I didn't know it before this. (he still lived at the family home this year) Another work of art.

It took over a year later to buy my own copy, after listening to that cassette hundreds of times. I took a bus to **Musicland** (a local chain of record stores) and found it. This was after the black plastic covering it originally came in was common, so I didn't experience that, except for seeing stacks of them in a different record shop later on. The sticker revealing its content — The mechanical robot hands shaking. Now that I have the vinyl, it was an experience to place that image of robot hands onto the platter, feeling technical sophistication, lowering the stylus on the start, sounding much richer than the tape. It's immersion time. Ever since 50 years ago, it remains a real treat.

I didn't know anything about **Syd Barrett** until several years later acquiring the first two albums in 1978, from friend **Tom Berg** — a real Floyd freak with a big record collection, who had an extra copy of *A Nice Pair*.

Until knowing it's about Syd, I myopically/naively felt it was about me — like several others worldwide who this album spoke to on a personal level. It still feels personal, though I now understand its origins from widely documented sources. The Floyd mystique is big on *Wish You Were Here*. Eventually I acquired the entire catalog, and beyond, collecting live audience recordings by the score.

1975 was a year of discovering albums that has been with me ever since. The year I became a huge fan of **Todd Rundgren** — the *Todd* album totally gripped me earlier that year. (Another through Craig!) I didn't consciously realize it yet, but *Todd* is like a one-man *white album*, and not many can fit such stylistic diversity in one double LP. The kaleidoscopic *A Wizard / A True Star* amazed, and 1975's *Initiation* influenced my mindset. For good. *Todd Rundgren's Utopia* remains a prog example extraordinaire. I discovered more of his catalog that time, with those four as the main standouts.

Bowie became essential that year, with *Diamond Dogs* as the hook. It has progressive elements, and such dramatic science fiction dystopia. Bowie's other albums were readily absorbed then too, *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy*

Stardust and The Spiders From Mars, Space Oddity, Alladin Sane, Hunky Dory, and onwards for years of more favorite shape-shifting albums. Other artists discovered then were great but didn't last with me. *Blues For Allah* fascinated, but didn't hook me as a keeper until 1982.

Wish You Were Here was pivotal in its cerebral way. Yeah that's it — cerebral music. It affected my consciousness in an advancing manner. Good for a 12 year old kid, with feral social skills at best. I was spellbound, and that still holds. It has deeply cosmic qualities; ancient yet very modern.

I consider it a meditative experience to absorb it entirely with the attention usually reserved for watching a movie or reading a book.

It's a masterpiece. Try it!

- Dean Gustafson, December 2025

