

**ROGER WATERS,
MMRDA Grounds,
Bandra Kurla Complex, Mumbai
18th Feb 2007.**



Rode a 20-hour journey from Bangalore. Nelson Elangbam came to pick me up, and made the day even better with the '*soibum eromba*' his mother had prepared. From his house we hurried to Bandra, gates were already opened when we reached; we zig-zagged to the front till the barrier in front of the stage.

The projection on the huge screen on the stage showed an old radio, a liquor bottle, a tumbler, a cigarette and an ash tray, with some back ground music being played. We thought it must be an ad of Royal Challenge or something. It was a still screen for long, but smoke began to rise from the cigarette, a hand turned the dial of the radio – we looked on amazed; the screen was very much a part of the show – the Floydian screen.

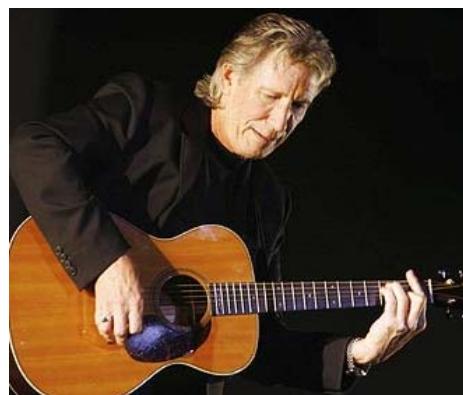


The sun had set, it was already dark, and eagerly we waited. It was about 7:30 pm, the background music came to a halt, there was silence and on the darkened stage came Roger Waters with the rest of his band members. So elegantly dressed in a black blazer with a black T-shirt underneath, Waters instantly started talking with the music – a long distorted power chord came blazing... quieten and slowed down after hitting few more chords... came the voice of the genius – “So you, thought you, might you like to go to the show...” that was “*In the flesh*” from The Wall, the crowd went wild, the show began.

He performed two sets of play list.

Set One:

- 1.*In the Flesh*
- 2.*Mother*
- 3.*Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun*
- 4.*Shine On You Crazy Diamond*
- 5.*Have a Cigar*
- 6.*Wish You Were Here*
- 7.*Southampton Dock*
- 8.*The Fletcher Memorial Home*
- 9.*Perfect Sense, Parts 1 and 2*
- 10.*Leaving Beirut*
- 11.*Sheep*



Waters performed a collection of his works with Pink Floyd and his solo albums – from the very old “*Set the controls for the heart of the sun*”, from Syd Barrette day’s album “A Saucerful of Secrets” released in 1968 to his recent “*Leaving Beirut*” released in 2005. He changed from bass to acoustic guitar for songs like ‘*Mother*’ and ‘*Wish you were here*’.



The audience sang along from *Mother*’s - “*Mother should I trust the government?*” to the unforgettable line of *Wish you were here* - “*And did you exchange a walk on part in the war for a lead role in a cage?*”

Old black and white video footage of the early days of Pink Floyd was shown on the screen during ‘*Set the controls for the heart of the sun*’, where young Waters and the rest of the Floyd were seen smiling and playing in a field. Dave Kilminster did the guitar works beautifully in ‘*Shine on your crazy diamonds*,’ a song for Syd Barrett - the guiding light of the early band line-up. In “*Fletcher Memorial..*” words from the oppressed common men written on the wall, anti-war propagandas, faces of Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussian, George Bush.. came on the screen..

‘Leaving Beirut’ - a song about his experience when he was 17 years old - in 1961 how he and his friends got stuck in middle east, and how an Arab family had helped them. This song is an anti war song, the words of the song were put up on the screen like a comic book, like a graphic novel. As these lines came - “*Oh George! Oh George! That Texas education must have f***ed you up when you were very small*”, the crowd cheered on and gave a big applause.

When he played ‘*Sheep*’, an inflatable pig was flown above the crowd. ‘*Sheep*’ is from the ‘*Animal*’ album - in this conceptual album pigs are depicted as the owners of large corporations (upper class), the dogs as the ruthless men who run the corporations (mid-upper class), and the sheep being the working class, the lowliest rung on the class ladder.

The words seen written on the pig that flew were:

**In FEAR build WALLS
Kafka rules
Habeas Corpus matters
Impeach Bush now
Saab jaati ek hain
Get rid of caste system
Only dimly aware
Save our Beacon
Free at Last.**



[Had Waters known about AFSPA, he would have made his statement on the flying pig]

He and his band took a 15 minutes break before playing set 2 – the full album of DSOTM:

Set Two (The Dark Side of the Moon):

1. *Speak to Me*
2. *Breathe*
3. *On the Run*
4. *Time*
5. *Breathe (Reprise)*
6. *The Great Gig in the Sky*
7. *Money*
8. *Us and Them*
9. *Any Colour You Like*
10. *Brain Damage*
11. *Eclipse*



The heartbeat sound could be heard; it was ‘*Speak to me*’, a song about an unborn child wanting to be spoken to, wanting advice in an adventure called – life. Came next, the airy and smooth ‘*Breathe*’, followed by the most psychedelic of all – ‘*One the run*’.

The familiar sound of the alarm bells that often wakes us up from deep slumber...came in the 360° quadraphonic sound system that Waters had brought along to Mumbai. The sound of the ticking hand of the clock followed. The sudden drums and vocals took the crowd off guard. Went the familiar line “*Ticking away the moments..*”.



Slowly with the keyboard started the song “*The great gig in the sky*”. With the great visuals on the huge screen at the backdrop, the song took us to the stars and galaxies in the universe – it was the kind of experience we get while reading Stephen Hawking’s “*A brief history of Time*” - with our minds travelling to the outer space asking questions about black holes, about the origin of Time..?

The sound of cash registering came with Waters very own riff at the beginning of ‘*Money*’. Dave Kilminster, the lead guitarist took the vocal part for this song and Waters was going from one side of the stage to the other. So old he is - 63 years of age, so sporting he was - to have come away from the main stage towards the crowd.



With his trademark head movement with the beat of the song playing the bass guitar, he came so close towards the crowd that we could almost touch him. Those moments were so touching – the creative genius whose songs have influenced so much of our lives was right there, just right there – with his sympathetic eyes, with sweat rolling down on his wrinkled face, smiling as he played the guitar, moving his fingers up and down the fret. The Israeli babes on the left,

the Bangladeshi guys on the right, a bald old man behind, joined us screaming ecstatically "Roger, we love you".

He played all the songs of the *Dark Side*.... bowed down and left the stage. Nobody moved and kept shouting repeatedly "We want more", the voice got louder and louder... After 2 minutes or so, he and his band came back again, and the crowd gave a much louder applause.

Encore:

1. *The Happiest Days of Our Lives*
2. *Another Brick in the Wall, Part II*
3. *Vera*
4. *Bring the Boys Back Home*
5. *Comfortably Numb*

They picked up their instruments, and came the sound of the helicopter from the '*The Happiest Days of Our Lives*' I knew '*Another brick in the wall - 2*' was coming. The crowd went berserk, I was getting goose bumps – it was the song whose audio tapes got worn out by my constant rewind/play – rewind/play I did as a kid; it was the song my school headmaster forbade us to play in school. The crowd sang along with so much of joy and excitement. He then started off with another one from '*The Wall*' called *Vera* - about Vera Lynn whose optimistic songs gave hopes during the bleakest times of World War II. The drum beat of the marching soldier followed, a picture of a soldier came up on the screen, it was '*Bring the Boys Back Home*'. With every strum on each chord – it was all Boom Boom, Bang Bang - firework and smoke simulated bomb blast of war scenes on the stage. Next, he played his final song of the show – '*Comfortably numb*' which is considered as one of the best in the history of rock music, leaving some 20,000 people who came for the show so very comfortably numb.



Boom Boom - Bang Bang : Theater like fireworks on the stage

It was concert of a life time indeed – it was not just a staggering rock concert but an ultimate rock theater full of musical performance filled with theatrical staging, a dazzling array of special effects and thought-provoking lyrics.

The show was made more nostalgic, having met my high school friends Rohen Irom and Victor Langpoklakpam, after 13 years, which reminded us of O Henry's "*After 20 Years*", a story from our Class X text book. There were no Jack and Bob (the characters of the story) :-), we gave each other a lasting hug for the night and left saying "See you in Bangalore on March 17th at Iron Maiden's".

Connecting back to Manipur – it was *Metal Teens* who played ‘*Time*’, time and time again at many a concert, with Leishangthem Boss, the Guitar God of my generation playing David Gilmore’s haunting solos; Calcutta’s *Shiva* performed to near perfection ‘*Another brick in the Wall – 2*’ in one concert at DM College ground, on one rainy night where the audience braved the rain and the mud, with their shoes going deep in the muddy-swampy ground.

The Dazzling Side of Waters



Waters has written on various themes for Pink Floyd’s conceptual albums and his words have made many positive impacts on our lives.

I have been listening to Floyd since I was 11-12 years old. Not all words of Waters end on a positive note as his words touches different aspects of life; but some of their songs have made lives better.

Whiling away the day, getting lost with new world we see, new found freedom we get... finally ending up not doing well in what we are supposed to do - like studies or anything that we are ought to do, is something most teens go through. I have seen it, and I have gone through it. But one song of Pink Floyd – gave me pin pricks, woke me up, made me think, made me run and run to catch up with the sun, and I did catch up. It was the timeless – ‘*Time*’. Thanks Roger.



*Ticking away the moments that make up a dull day
You fritter and waste the hours in an offhand way
Kicking around on a piece of ground in your home town
Waiting for someone or something to show you the way*

When we stand on the cross road, wondering which way to go – few lines from ‘*Wish you were here*’, make it so easy for us to tell ourselves ‘Hang on, Boy. Don’t give up.’ and do what we believe in and stand for, discarding the idea of compromising and taking up the road more travelled just because everybody takes that.

*And did they get you trade your heroes for ghosts?
Hot ashes for trees? Hot air for a cool breeze?
Cold comfort for change?
And did you exchange a walk on part in the war for a lead role in a cage?*

Here are some brief notes on some works of Waters, compiled with reference from many entries at various Pink Floyd and Wiki sites

**Breathe, breathe in the air
Don't be afraid to care
Leave but don't leave me
Look around and choose your own ground**

Breathe, breathe in the air - One should take in as much in life as one can, just as one breathes in air. Also however, it emphasizes the importance to simply breathe; not to get so caught up in the rest of life that one forgets to relax.

Don't be afraid to care - Many people go through life with fear to get too close to other people because they are afraid they will be hurt.

Leave but don't leave me - Parents often have a hard time with their children growing up and leaving home. All parents want their children to grow up to be successful adults, and live their own lives. In this sense they do want them to leave, however no parent wants to be truly left by their children.

Look around, choose your own ground - make your own decisions based upon information you observe, not merely what you are told.

**For long you live and high you fly
And smiles you'll give and tears you'll cry
And all you touch and all you see
Is all your life will ever be**

"Yes, this is all there is to life, so make the most of it. Smile, cry, see and touch everything you can. Live your life as fully as you can. Seize each day." The ultimate outcome of our lives when all is said and done is the effect we have had on the people and environment around us.

**Female announcer, announcing flights at airport, including 'Rome'
Live for today, gone tomorrow, that's me
[Laughter]**

The man missed his flight, but he missing that flight saved his life as he missed the crash. This also serves as a reminder of the role that chance plays in our lives. The future is so uncertain even on the most fundamental levels. That which we have no control over only determines success in life partially by our own choices, and partially.

**Ticking away the moments that make up a dull day
You fritter and waste the hours in an offhand way
Kicking around on a piece of ground in your home town
Waiting for someone or something to show you the way**

It's funny how when we are bored we wish time would go by faster, but there are other times when we are enjoying ourselves or in a rush and wish it would go slower. "Life is too short" many say, with so much to touch and see how can we ever complain of boredom? We should spend all of our time pursuing a full life, not wasting a moment of it.

**Tired of lying in the sunshine staying home to watch the rain
You are young and life is long, and there is time to kill today
And then one day you find, ten years have got behind you
No one told you when to run, you missed the starting gun**

Roger discusses how when you are young and death isn't even on the horizon, you seem to have all the time in the world. Roger stated in an interview "I had the strangest feeling growing up - and I know a lot of people share this - that childhood and adolescence and one's early adult life are preparing for something that's going to happen later. I suddenly thought at 29, Hang on, it's happening, it has been right from the beginning, and there isn't suddenly a line when the training stops and life starts. 'No one told you when to run, you missed the starting gun."

**Home, home again
I like to be here when I can
When I come home cold and tired
It's good to warm my bones beside the fire**

Describes late life, the narrator coming home "cold and tired" and resting by the fire, more in tune with the "ride the tide" philosophy of taking it easy, enjoying the simple pleasure of just being home.

**And I am not frightened of dying, any time will do I don't mind. Why should I be frightened of dying? There's no reason for it, you've gotta go sometime.
I never said I was frightened of dying.**

Positive portrayal of death - The music of the song is both soothing and uplifting. This song suggests that while there will always be sorrow surrounding death; it is not to be feared.

**Money, get away
Get a good job with more pay and you're O.K
Money it's a gas
Grab that cash with both hands and make a stash
New car, caviar, four star daydream,
Think I'll buy me a football team.**

**Money it's a crime
Share it fairly but don't take a slice of my pie
Money so they say
Is the root of all evil today
But if you ask for a rise it's no surprise that they're giving none away**

It's a song about someone who greatly desired money and material possessions. Waters wanted that mankind will evolve into a more cooperative and less competitive beast...disappearing in a puff of smoke.

**Us, and them
And after all we're only ordinary men
Me, and you
God only knows it's not what we would choose to do**

Forward he cried from the rear

***and the front rank died.
And the General sat, and the lines on the map
moved from side to side***

Humanism - "Us and Them" refers to the human tendency to partition themselves, a behavior that stems from the natural human inclination to interact with people that have things in common with them, whether it is a common interest, belief, or heritage. Where it goes wrong is when people begin to consider those who are different from them to be inferior, or are afraid of them because they do not know them. This is the root of the destructive behavior Waters depicts in this song.

***We don't need no education
We don't need no thought control
No dark sarcasm in the classroom
Teachers leave them kids alone
Hey! Teachers! Leave them kids alone!
All in all it's just another brick in the wall.
All in all you're just another brick in the wall.***

Many people fail to understand this song and take it as anti-education anthem. This song is a criticism to certain types of teachers and systems that ridicule an imaginative child for doing what are best at, say writing poetry or playing guitars; whose outcome is a loss of individuality and the moulding of each child into identical cells in the body of society, who know the definition of an acre yet who cannot produce an original, imaginative thought throughout the majority of their lives.

Photo Courtesy: Most of the photos are stills captured from the videos taken by Raju Athokpam from his mobile phone. Nelson and I had to take turns to record, as his arms got tired holding the camera phone up so high recording most part of the show. Thanks Raju. It was so good to have seen your spirit - coming all the way down to Mumbai from Noida just for show. Few close up photos are taken from TOI, Rediff, Ian Ritchie's blog and buddy Duran Thiayam.

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