

"Wish You Were Here" Pink Floyd



By Douglas Baldwin

Syd Barrett, Pink Floyd's founder and pathetic drug casualty, is the focus of *Wish You Were Here*, an album that shows the band at the peak of its form. The "you" of the title refers to Syd, and Roger Waters' lyrics evoke a longing for the presence of the charismatic Barrett that is ironically hidden in the postcard cliché of the title. Meanwhile, David Gilmour introduces a brilliant cast of acoustic

guitars, from the distant AM radio-like broadcast of the opening 12-string to the almost cheerful sung-and-played outro solo.

FOR SIMPLICITY'S SAKE

"Wish You Were Here" certainly ranks among the most played songs in guitar-dom. The opening melody is simple yet memorable, and the chords supporting the verses and chorus are the kind most first-year players can grab. However, a beginner can be

put off by the precisely notated transcription of the recorded performance. Try to focus at first on the distinct melody lines and the simply strummed chords that follow them, minimizing the complex rhythms and fragmentary string groups. Doing so results in a reinterpretation of the intro like the one in **Fig. 1**. Note the addition of the low G at the beginning, almost certainly lopped off of the original recording to mimic the radio-like "broadcast." Also note how simple the fingering is: the 3rd and 4th fingers are glued to the 2nd and 1st strings at the 3rd fret throughout the intro. The verse is also quite simple: an eight-measure pattern consisting of C, D, Am, and G chords. Ignore the alternate bass notes at first (C/G, D/F#) and the form will arrive more quickly.

IT'S IN THE DETAILS

Trimming a guitar part down to its most elemental form may be good for beginners, but it should only function as a prelude to learning the song in greater detail. In "Wish You Were Here," David Gilmour ushers in one brilliant solo section after another, often applying typical electric-guitar

techniques (bends, hammer-ons, and pull-offs) to acoustic instruments, with great success. The opening solo, for example, abounds with slides, sustained notes, and vibrato—all of which would be buried in a less intimate setting. Note in particular how Gtr. 2 glides from Celtic phrasing in the first two measures to R&B-style parallel 4ths in the next pair to one the coolest blues-rock phrases in the history of acoustic guitar (atop the Em7–A7sus4 change). When first attempting those 3rd-string bends, try using extra light strings.

A bottleneck slide is used for the solo at 2:24, and again at 4:10. Gilmour, a student of traditional blues guitar, almost certainly used a glass bottleneck, sawn from a wine bottle and sanded smooth. Today, you can purchase a glass slide at any music store. Place it on your fret hand's 4th finger and rest the other fingers behind the slide, on the open strings. Place the slide directly over the fretwire—not between the frets, as the fingers would normally go—and be sure not to press down too hard with the slide. (You might even need to raise the action of your guitar to achieve a clear, non-buzzy tone.) As you pick each note, use both your fret hand and the free fingers of your picking hand to mute unwanted strings. And pay close attention to Gilmour's unison singing with his playing at 4:10, an extremely effective musical technique and a skill that demonstrates that he knows and feels every note he's playing. Barrett may not have been quite all there, but Gilmour certainly was. **B**



ALBUM
Wish You Were Here
(Columbia)

Fig. 1

TONE ZONE

GUITAR 3: Solidbody
PICKUP/POSITION: Single-coil/Bridge
GAIN: 3
EQ: Bass/Mid/Treble: 5/5/5



WISH YOU WERE HERE

As Recorded by Pink Floyd

(From the Columbia Recording WISH YOU WERE HERE)

By Roger Waters and David Gilmour



Lyrics

Verse 1

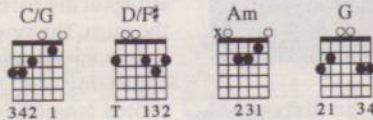
So, so you think you can tell
Heaven from Hell,
Blue skies from pain.
Can you tell a green field
From a cold steel rail?
A smile from a veil?
Do you think you can tell?

Verse 2

Did they get you to 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?

Verse 3

How I wish, how I wish you were here.
We're just two lost souls
Swimming in a fish bowl,
Year after year,
Running over the same old ground.
What have we found?
The same old fears.
Wish you were here.



Gtrs. 3 & 4: Open G tuning:
(low to high) D-G-D-G-B-D

Intro

Slow Rock ♩ = 60

Gtr. 1
(12-str. acous.)

Em7
Rhy. Fig. 1

G5

mf
let ring throughout

Em7

G5

Em7

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Wish You Were Here

Em7 G5

Em7 A7sus4

Em7 A7sus4 G

2:56 Verse 3

Gtrs. 1 & 2: w/ Rhy. Fig. 2
Gtr. 4 tacet

Gtrs. 1 & 2: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1 (last bar)

Interlude

Gtrs. 1 & 2: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1

4:10 Guitar Solo/Outro

Gtrs. 1 & 2: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1
Em7

Gtr. 4

Wish You Were Here

G5 Em7

G5 Em7

A7sus4 Em7

Begin Fade

A7sus4

Gtrs. 1 & 2: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1 (1st 6 bars)

Fade Out