

barbican do something different

music

contemporary spring 07

Syd Barrett

Madcap's Last Laugh

Thu 10 May 7.30pm

www.barbican.org.uk/contemporary

Free programme



Celebrating
25 years of the
Barbican

Syd Barrett

Excerpts from an uninterrupted performance

Singers include:

Gordon Anderson
Kevin Ayers
The Bees
Vashti Bunyan
King Creosote
Mike Heron
Robyn Hitchcock
Chrissie Hynde
Nick Laird-Clowes (musical director)
Captain Sensible
Sense of Sound Choir

House Band

Ted Barnes (guitar)
Andy Bell (bass)
Simon Finley (drums)
Adam Peters (keys, electric cello, co-musical director)

Additional Musicians:

Ben Coleman (electric violin)
David Coulter (saw, harps)
Ruby Wright (saw)
John Paul Jones (mandolin)
Monty Oxymoron (keys)
Kate St John (woodwinds)

Photos © **Mick Rock** from **'Psychedelic Renegades'** www.mickrock.com

Earth, Air, Fire and Water film by **Mark Boyle** and **Joan Hills / Boyle Family**

Lighting Design - **Peter Wynne Willson**

Film clip from *Syd Barrett - Crazy Diamond* by kind permission of **John Edington**

Special thanks to **Ian Barrett, Chrissie Hynde** and **Vernon Fitch**.

Produced by **Nick Laird-Clowes**
Associate Producer **Joe Boyd**

Profits from the concert will be donated to the mental health charity SANE nominated by the Barrett family.



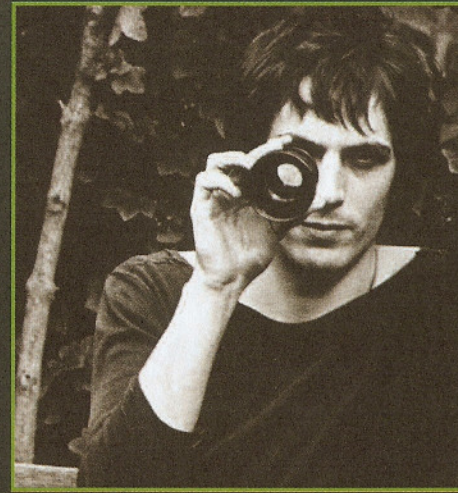
Syd Barrett tried to set us free.

So many things are impossible to imagine without Syd. The year of our Glorious Psychedelic Revolution began in August of 1966, with Pink Floyd playing those London Free School benefits in Powis Square. It ended with Syd on stage the following July, hands at his side, motionless, watching the lights play over the UFO audience, listening to the group behind him struggling to fill the void. Syd was beyond caring then.

But Syd was always beyond caring – in the best possible way. Syd's brilliant unconcern kept everyone around him honest. He didn't care about stardom, didn't care what the record company wanted, or the agency, or how the press or the fans told him he ought to do it.

David Bowie says Syd changed his life by the way he sang Arnold Layne just as he talked, not trying to sound black, or American, or cool, just sounding like himself singing about the way the lodger's knickers used to go missing in the Barrett backyard. Syd certainly changed the life of his fellow Floyds – he gave them escape velocity. Long after he was gone, his way with a chord and a melody shaped their music and their triumphs. They sang about him over and over again, to the millions of fans who knew the name but never heard the voice. Syd changed the lives of the Czechs of the Prague Spring that Tom Stoppard has called back to life in *Rock 'n' Roll*.

Last summer, after he died, Radio 4 aired a tape of Syd being cross-examined by Hans Keller on an ITV arts programme. Forget those snatches of



Syd's voice you hear on Madcap Laughs or other out-takes; Syd sounded nothing like that in the spring of 1967. He answers Keller's questions like a man born to be a radio pundit – clear and calm with no mumbled 'ums' and 'ers'. The interview was filmed a few weeks before Syd changed, before he altered himself into the damaged person we now think of when we think of Syd. I remember that voice, the calm Syd voice, not upset that an ignorant interviewer doesn't understand the Floyd's music, perfectly at home explaining the logic of rock 'n' roll volume levels to a snob as if he were talking to a child. Syd probably could have explained many things to all of us if we'd thought to ask him in that unforgettable year.

It's said that if a butterfly flutters left instead of right one morning, the ripple effects will eventually alter the history of mankind. You can't really analyze how Syd changed everything just by being Syd, but when I think back to the year in which I knew him, I can feel his ripples. Everyone at those early Floyd shows was just a bit different afterwards; you could sense it in the streets of Notting Hill. The crowds at the early UFO shows were so happy Syd was there in front of them; so many things were changing by the week, but Syd seemed untouched, the still centre around which the hurricane blew. His unconcern with their enthusiasm was the key, the way his songs were so casually offered. Which isn't to say he didn't yearn – he yearned for love and companionship and he was unashamed about it. Everyone yearns – he just stated it as a simple obvious fact.

*You're the kind of girl that fits in with my world
I'll give you anything everything if you want things*

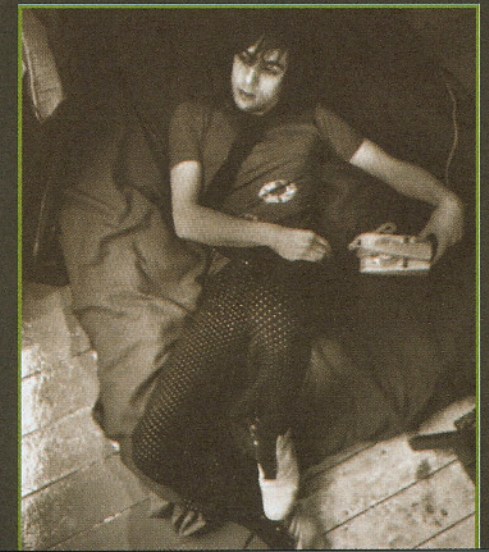
Syd had nothing against people wanting things, he just didn't seem too bothered about them himself. In 1967 we thought we were at the beginning of something, something really big. We didn't realize we were nearing the end. Everything we created in those years of optimistic freedom wound up on a corporate website. The four doomed gastronomes in *La Grande Bouffe* saw it coming. Albert Ayler saw it coming. Stuart Brand and his *Whole Earth Catalog* – maybe - saw it coming. I think Syd saw it coming, like the small animal that runs out of the forest two days before the earthquake.

Tonight, with our eyes wide open, we are turning Syd's songs into something you can buy a ticket to. We can't help ourselves. It's the only way we know how to tell his ghost we loved him. But if we're very lucky, there may come a moment or two when performer and audience are just there, not caring if anyone likes or remembers it, or if anyone is filming or recording it. Maybe for an instant we'll just be there. Syd won't know or care, but perhaps we'll walk slightly differently as we leave.

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Produced by the Barbican

Media partner, Plan B magazine



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Tonight's concert is part of the **only connect** series, the Barbican's innovative series that brings together the worlds of film, music and art by inviting exceptional musicians, composers, artists and filmmakers to develop collaborations and present new work.

'Give a big hand to Only Connect, a series of events designed to cross borders and break down barriers, challenge idle preconception and encourage exceptional artists to experiment, collaborate, provoke, stimulate and entertain.' Time Out

For more details visit www.barbican.org.uk/onlyconnect

There will be an interval in tonight's concert. No smoking in the auditorium. No cameras, tape recorders or other recording equipment may be taken into the hall.



Celebrating
25 years of the
Barbican



The Barbican Centre is provided by the City of London Corporation as part of its contribution to the cultural life of London and the nation.

barbican do something different



Celebrating the
Barbican's 25th birthday
www.barbican.org.uk/25

The Barbican is 25 in 2007 and to help celebrate we have arranged a wide variety of special events and activities.

Visit www.barbican.org.uk/25 for full details of our special birthday events, to find out more about the history of the Barbican or for the chance to win some great prizes over the coming year.

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