

Floydian Theory

Billboard Shines Some Light On 'Dark Side Of The Moon' As It Cracks 1,500 Weeks On The Chart

On March 17, 1973, a band in musical transition named Pink Floyd hit the Top 200 chart with the release of its new album, "Dark Side of the Moon." It entered the chart at No. 95, the top debut that week. And then a funny thing happened: **It never left.**

Or almost never, anyway.

More than 14 years later—736 weeks to be precise—in July 1988, it finally fell off The Billboard 200. Add in a later run on that chart and another 759 weeks on the Top Pop Catalog Albums chart, and Pink Floyd, with this issue, reaches the staggering plane of 1,500 weeks on the charts.

It's difficult to contextualize just how singularly dominant a chart—and cultural—force the album has been. The runner-up for time served on The Billboard 200 is several years behind (see sidebar). Pink Floyd's lead in

total chart weeks is greater than Bob Marley's second-place spot by an almost 2-1 margin.

"Dark Side" is the 900-foot bunny of Energizer rabbits. Label sources say the album has sold roughly 40 million copies worldwide—on the short list of the all-time top sellers—and still routinely moves 8,000-9,000 copies on a slow week. The charts on this page document its nonstop retail and radio presence: The album still often outpaces the low end of The Billboard 200, and every song on the more than 30-year-old record still gets radio play, with some among the most-played songs at classic rock stations monitored by Nielsen BDS.

"You'd think that after 30 years, there would be some burn on the album," says Fred Jacobs of Jacobs Media, a radio consul-

tancy that frequently advises classic rock stations. "The fact is, in most classic rock music tests, tracks from 'Dark Side' populate the top 20, 25 songs, and usually something ends up being in the top five or 10."

Several factors contribute to the album's staying power beyond the obvious fact that it is a classic recording.

Unlike other top sellers—the Beatles, for example—Pink Floyd only has one or two records that most fans buy upon discovering the band ("The Wall" would be another). And older fans have frequently been compelled to repurchase the record, as it is reissued in new packages or on new platforms.

Capitol, which controls "Dark Side of the Moon" in the United States, is working on promotions for the album on Apple's iTunes Music Store; the song "Money" routinely sells about 1,000 digital copies per week.

Capitol still actively coordinates sales campaigns around holidays, band anniversaries and events. And the iconic imagery of "Dark Side" even helps perpetuate the world's fascination with the album.

Asked to describe the sales pattern for "Dark Side" merchandise, Norman Perry, president of Anthill Trading, which handles Pink Floyd's merchandising, says, what else? "Perpetual."

Additional reporting by Christa Titus and Ray Waddell.

Waters Revisits The 'Dark Side'

In an exclusive Billboard Q&A, former Pink Floyd frontman **ROGER WATERS** dishes on an album that changed his band forever and made his wife cry. **RAY WADDELL** holds court.

Why do you think this record has struck such a chord with so many different generations?

Musically, this thing has really stood the test of time. There was something about the symbiosis of the musical talents of the four of us that worked really well. But also, in terms of the lyrical content, philosophically it holds an appeal to each successive generation because it feels like it gives you permission to question things, maybe, which is something that is very appealing to us as we hit puberty and drift beyond it into real life.

Did you feel like you had accomplished your goals in the studio?

When the record was finished, I took a reel-to-reel copy home with me, and I remember playing it for my wife then, and her bursting into tears when it was finished. And I thought, "This has obviously struck a chord." I was kinda pleased by that. I thought to myself, "Wow, this is a pretty complete piece of work," and I had every confidence that people would respond to it.

The imagery is a big part of the album's legacy.

Storm Thorgerson and Aubrey Powell designed it at Hipgnosis. They came in with like six or seven ideas for album covers and threw them on the floor in the control room, and we all, as one man went, "That one!" There wasn't any conversation. There is just something

so cool about it.

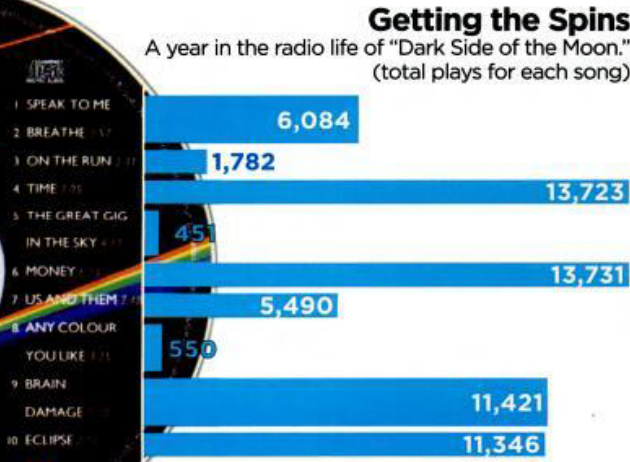
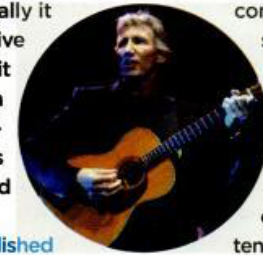
Did "Dark Side" mark a turning point for Pink Floyd in the studio?

Yeah. Up until "Dark Side," we were a very cohesive team. We were very much a band, we worked very closely together, and we were content to do that. ["Dark Side"] marked a

watershed in that, after that [recording] became more and more problematic. With "Dark Side" we had sort of achieved what we'd set out to achieve as young men going into the music business. After that we clung together out of fear more than out of hope.

You plan to play the album in its entirety on your upcoming tour. How did that come about? It was a request from Formula 1 in France. They wanted a big event to go on July 14, the day before the French Grand Prix, at Magny-Corse, about 100 kilometers south of Paris. Somebody rather fancifully suggested Pink Floyd playing "Dark Side of the Moon," and somebody else rather fancifully approached various people who said, "Are you fucking insane? It's not going to happen." So they asked me . . . The more I've worked on it, the more the idea has grown on me. I'm going downtown as we speak to work on visuals for "Dark Side of the Moon" and the rest of the show. I've got a great band together, and I have every hope that we will do the work justice.

Go to billboard.com for additional comments from Waters on "Dark Side of the Moon," his upcoming tour and thoughts on a Pink Floyd reunion.



Total detections of the songs on "Dark Side of the Moon," in all radio formats, according to Nielsen BDS for the year ending April 20.

The Mainstays

How impressive is 1,500? The runners-up are years—literally—behind. A look at the other acts with 500-plus chart weeks:

Bob Marley & the Wailers, "Legend"	845 weeks
Metallica, "Metallica"	748 weeks
AC/DC, "Back in Black"	727 weeks
Journey, "Journey's Greatest Hits"	660 weeks
Queen, "Greatest Hits"	636 weeks
Bob Seger & the Silver Bullet Band, "Greatest Hits"	597 weeks
Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, "Greatest Hits"	545 weeks

Buy the Numbers

Weekly sales of "Dark Side of the Moon" for the history of SoundScan. (in thousands)

