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Enter the House of Floyd



By Graham Haworth
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For all those reasons, it's both surprising and completely understandable that there are few tribute bands to the Floyd. How can you accurately recreate a Pink Floyd show without totally bankrupting yourself in the process?

The House of Floyd has that answer.

"We do this not only for the love of the music, but because it's hard to do," said Mark Showalter, sax/keyboard/vocalist for the San Francisco Bay Area-based House of Floyd.

Showalter, a pro musician who spent a couple years touring with Gregg Allman and who has over a quarter century's worth of experience in the musically fertile Bay Area scene, assembled a talented group of musicians who share his passion for Floyd (including his wife Sheri on vocals and Angie Montgomery, who Showalter said "nails 'Great Gig in the Sky.'") Showalter was also savvy enough to know that the band needed someone to run the lights and video shows. Showalter has a degree in video editing, and he said he's wanted to do a visual show ever since seeing Pink Floyd live many years ago.

"We have a computer-generated light show, lasers and video screens,"

Showalter explained. "We're running two laptops, and the video guy mixes and matches things as we play. We have a live camera, we've got some current events clips so we can inject some of our political views, and we also use some footage of Pink Floyd from throughout the years. It takes us about four hours to set everything up."

Musically, House of Floyd runs the gamut from Syd Barrett-era Floyd — "See Emily Play," "Set the Controls For the Heart of the Sun" — to the Roger Waters-less "Division Bell" album and most points in between. All told, the band can play for three and a half hours, and are always adding to their Floyd repertoire.

"Our problem is, we love all the songs so much, we never want to eliminate songs from our set list when we add new ones," joked Showalter. "We play entire albums, like 'Animals' and 'Dark Side of the Moon,' plus most of the hits from 'The Wall.' Asking us to play a 90-minute set is torture for us."

So while rumors of a Pink Floyd reunion remain exactly that, the Floyd void — at least in the Bay Area — is expertly filled.

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{ IF YOU GO: 9 p.m. Saturday, 6275 Highway 9, Felton. Tickets are \$10. Details: 603-2294 or www.donquixotesmusic.com. }

There are few groups in rock history with the staying power of Pink Floyd. The mystique of the recently deceased mad genius Syd Barrett, the mammoth success of "Dark Side of the Moon," live shows with mind-blowing laser lights displays and inflatable props and an album like "The Wall" — made when the band members were barely talking to each other — are just a handful of reasons why generation after generation discovers and latches onto the music of Pink Floyd.