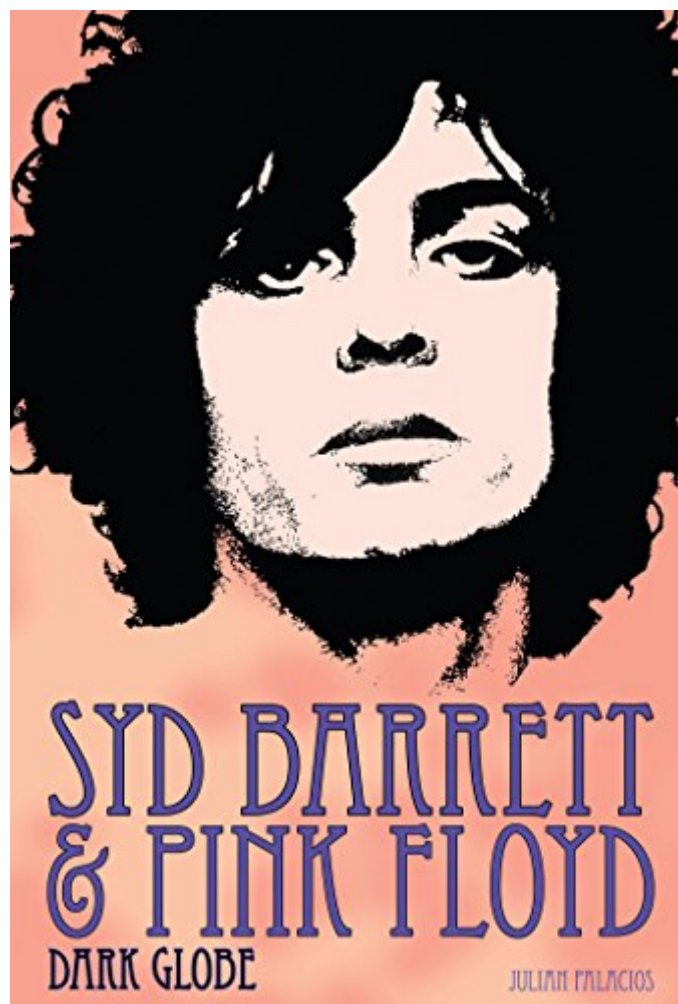


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Syd Barrett & Pink Floyd: Dark Globe



Synopsis

Syd Barrett was an English composer and purveyor of some of the most intriguing music ever written. Famous before his twentieth birthday, Barrett led the charge of psychedelia onstage at London's famed UFO club. With a Fender Telecaster and a primitive Binson echo unit, Barrett liberated the guitar from being, in critic Simon Reynolds's words, "a riff machine," and turned it into a texture and timbre generator. His inspired celestial flights of improvisation, and his more structured and whimsical short songs indicated a mind of unusual inventiveness. Chief in Barrett's mind was a Zen-like insistence on spontaneity; each performance had to be unique, and Barrett strived to push his music farther and farther out into the zone of complete abstraction. This in-depth analysis of Pink Floyd founding member Syd Barrett's life and work is the product of years of extensive research. *Lost in the Woods* traces Syd's swift evolution from precocious young art student to acid-fuelled psychedelic rock star, and examines the myriad musical and literary influences that he utilised in composing his hypnotic, groundbreaking songs. A never-forgotten casualty of the excesses, innovations, and idealism of the 1960s, Syd Barrett is one of the most heavily mythologized men in rock, and *Lost in the Woods* offers a rare portrayal of a unique spirit in freefall.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Julian Palacios' biography of Syd Barrett is a stunning achievement in every way. Not only does it humanize the life of a man who has been mythologized for over 40 years, it also gives a wonderfully vivid snapshot of the London underground scene of 1966-1967. Like its more well known San Franciscan counterpart of the same time period, London was alive with psychedelic rock bands, a unique fashion sense, peace, love and hippies, but also tarnished with a dark underbelly of drugs and violence. Out of this brief period of time came the underground piper, Syd Barrett and his band The Pink Floyd. Mostly told through the eyes of his colleagues, friends and family members as well as expert "Syd-ophiles", not to mention Mr. Palacios' own painstaking research, the reader will get an almost frightening sense of the real Roger Keith Barrett; not just Syd the psychedelic guru. "Dark Globe" is a book you won't be able to put down, but you'll also want to take your time and savor it, not just for the story of Syd itself, but also for Palacios' at times almost stream of conscious prose. There is something distinctly Joycean about the tale of Syd and the way it is told. You'll also get musical and lyrical analysis of all of Syd's major accomplishments and read about the frustrations experienced by those wanting to help Syd during his brief solo career. The tone of the book is largely sympathetic to Syd's mental deterioration, but no punches are pulled either. For many interviewees describe Syd's at times violent and inexplicable behavior, his strange relationship with women and his own inability to come to terms with his sudden fame.

This book concentrates most heavily on Syd Barrett, and not so much the band Pink Floyd, and this is easily one of the most disturbing biographies I have ever read. After reading at least four different books about Syd Barrett, some which covered Syd and also Pink Floyd, I was left wanting. How about an in depth view of Syd Barrett and also the London Underground scene where The Pink Floyd first made their mark? In my opinion, this book fills that need, probably as fully as possible. This is a history that is hard to uncover, so much of it being undocumented and never filmed. The author uncovers all he can and, yes, at times it reads like everything is included but the kitchen sink. There are some things - true or not - I would rather not have known about Syd Barrett. Tighter editing would certainly have created a stronger read. Especially in the last forty pages of the book, it does feel redundant. What can be written about a man who, for two-thirds of his life, closed the door on the world and chose to live within his own mind? Having read the highly regarded "A Very Irregular Head," this book on the other hand feels like the much more in depth portrayal. Yes, the

author makes intuitive leaps, but, even so, this is much more engaging and, at times, a far more disturbing biography. On the other hand, I really like the book's presentation, aside from the cover illustration that shows Syd looking rather miserable. Beautifully printed - OK, the photo selection is negligible - but the overall style is Art Nouveau down to the title font, Desdemona. And yes, the print is small, but that also means the book is dense. I love that. The author offers a vivid portrayal of the London Underground scene and the UFO Club where Syd and The Floyd reigned circa 1966-1967 (or thereabouts).

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