

The Gig That Never Was: The Construction of Authenticity in Pink Floyd's *Live at Pompeii*

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Abstract: Pink Floyd's *Live at Pompeii* stands out as one of the most paradoxical examples of the representational strategies in the history of concert film and rock documentary. The starting hypothesis of the paper is that the exceptional features of the film itself are consistent with the special position Pink Floyd acquired in the British rock panorama of the early 1970s, and that the film paralleled a moment of transition in their artistic research and the development of new expressive means. From this point of view, authenticity here is considered as the result of combined textual signs triggering possible instances of authentication, outlining the boundaries of a conceptual space where genre definition, technological mediation and audiovisual construction interact dynamically to express the specific identity of a musician or of a band.

Keywords: Pink Floyd, *Live at Pompeii*, construction of authenticity

DOI: 10.13760/b.cnki.sam.2015.01.008

一场从未发生的演唱会：平克·弗洛伊德乐队《庞贝古城演唱会纪录片》之真实性建构

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摘要: 在演唱会电影和摇滚乐纪录片的历史上，平克·弗洛伊德乐队的《庞贝古城演唱会纪录片》因其独特的再现策略成为最富争议的作品之一。本文认为这部电影本身所独有的特征与 20 世纪

70年代初期平克·弗洛伊德乐队在英国摇滚乐坛中的特殊地位有关,同时这部电影也展现了该乐队在这一时期的艺术研究转向及其表现手法的不断创新和发展。在此假设基础上,本文认为此片的“真实性”应当被视为是组合文本符号所导致的结果:这类符号触发了“身份认证”的诸种可能实例,并廓清了由体裁定义、技术媒介以及视听建构方式所动态交互而成之概念空间的边界,并展现了乐队或音乐人的独特身份。

关键词: 平克·弗洛伊德,《庞贝古城演唱会纪录片》,真实性建构

If the live concert is one of the key moments for the recognition of authenticity in popular music^①, Pink Floyd's *Live at Pompeii* stands out as one of the most paradoxical examples of the representational strategies involved in such moments in the history of concert film and rock documentary.^② Shot without an audience in the empty Roman amphitheatre of Pompeii, near Naples, the film presents a typical Pink Floyd set from the beginning of the 1970s (Povey & Russell, 1997). It consists of five extended pieces—most of them highly improvisational—and a blues *divertissement* called *Mademoiselle Nobs*, “in homage to the Afghan hound, Nobs, coaxed into howling along to Gilmour's harmonica” (Blake, 2013, p. 168).^③ As these first hints suggest, the film relies very much on the band's reputation for eccentricity and desire for experimentation with multimedia. It undoubtedly also converged with the director's pristine and nonconformist conception of the whole operation:

This was a time when the big thing to do—so it seems to me anyway—or the big thing not to do, was to film a group and the audience reaction. It all

① Simon Frith (2012) defined this moment using the metaphor of “magic” connected to the formation of rock communities: “[...] magicians use stage ‘business’ to mislead the audience, to make what they do seem literally magical. Live music is akin to magic in that many mundane things must be organised—sound, lights, seating/standing places, etc. —for an audience to appreciate the musical performance itself as extraordinary, as something transcendent”. See also Frith (1998).

② The “working distinction” between the two genres, proposed by Kevin Donnelly (2013, pp. 173–174), is layered here in the different versions of the film itself, as outlined in the last paragraph commenting on the different versions of *Live at Pompeii*.

③ A similar track, *Seamus*, appeared on the album *Meddle* (1971), released not long before.

culminated in *Woodstock*, where you have I don't know how many millions of people. And this was it. It was the show and the public reacting to the show. And I thought after a while this gets boring, because it's always the same thing. [...] So, the main idea of the film was to do a sort of anti-*Woodstock* film where there would be nobody present, and the music and the silence, and the empty amphitheater, would mean as much, if not more, than a million crowd. (Darbyshire et al., 2003)

My aim in this article is to answer the question of what the experience of *Live at Pompeii* meant for the millions who were not present at the event itself, but who experienced it, then and in the following decades, as a bizarre concert film. My starting hypothesis is that the exceptional features of the film itself are consistent with the special position that Pink Floyd held in the British rock panorama of the early 1970s,^① and that the film simply made more evident a moment of transition in their artistic research and the development of new expressive means. This is related to authenticity, as a concept that refers to the result of particular textual strategies deployed to convey the specific identity of a musician or band. In other words, I consider authenticity here as the result of combined textual signs triggering possible instances of authentication (Moore, 2002), outlining the boundaries of a conceptual space in which genre definition, technological mediation and audiovisual construction interact dynamically.^② As the outcome of such factors, the value of authenticity has no absolute, fixed boundaries; rather, its specific definition is strongly tied to the particular features of any single musician, foreshadowing the presence of something “real” beyond the mediated text. As a discursive formation that lies at the core of most contemporary popular culture, it is involved in a complex negotiation between the performer, the performance and the audience in the definition of the star's personal identity.

① As noted by Edward Macan: “[...] while considered proponents of psychedelic music by their contemporaries, actually represent a proto-progressive style, a ‘first wave’, as it were, of English progressive rock.” (1997, p. 23)

② For an example of a similar analysis applied to the audiovisual representation of musical genres, see Bratus (2013).

I . Setting the Stage in a Place and Time Apart

In discussing live performance in progressive rock, Paul Hegarty and Martin Halliwell (2011, pp. 119–135) referred to an idea proposed by the British theatre director Peter Brook, who in 1968 wrote *The Empty Space*, an essay on the search for a new dramatic language (1996). Brook distinguished between two types of theatre, which he labels “holy” and “rough” according to their expressive aims:

Holy theatre is an attempt to find a suitable language for invisible forms through the restaging of ritual; rough theatre recalls the “low” performance of vaudeville, comedy and theatre of noise [...]. We would argue that progressive rock of the 1970s combined versions of holy and rough theatre, fusing them in different ways and with divergent aesthetic and, at times, political ends. (Hegarty & Halliwell, 2011, p. 120)

Against this theoretical background, Hegarty and Halliwell chose to discuss *Live at Pompeii*, along with Led Zeppelin’s *The Song Remains the Same*, as the two main examples in the final part of the same chapter (pp. 125 – 134). Both of these audiovisual works—for various idealistic and pragmatic reasons—focus mainly on the performances of the bands rather than on the audience, but with relevant differences in their overall orientation. Whereas the Led Zeppelin film emphasises the instrumental virtuosity, flamboyant presence and special effects of the show, *Live at Pompeii* seems more interested in underlining the collective effect of the group playing together (or making noises with their electronic instruments, as David Gilmour does for most of *A Saucerful of Secrets*). Here, the setting of the stage is minimal; the first sequence of the film features only the sound equipment in the centre of the ancient arena, while the sound of a heartbeat and breathing is heard through the opening credits, and a series of circular spots for the numbers shot at night in Paris.^① This is not, after all, such a predictable choice for a band that in its early days hired a permanent light

^① Not entirely satisfied with the result of the songs recorded in Pompeii, Maben organised a second session with the band in December 1971, two months after the original shooting. (Manning, 2006, p. 68)

show technician as part of its crew (Mason, 2004, pp. 70 – 72)^①, and planned such complex theatrical shows as *Games for May*—Space Age Relaxation for the Climax of Spring (Queen Elizabeth Hall, 12 May 1967) and *The Massed Gadgets of Auximenes... More Furious Madness from Pink Floyd* (Royal Festival Hall, 14 April 1969) (Hodges & Priston, 1999, pp. 51 – 52 and 148 – 151). As a means of communication, the film constitutes a suitable alternative to the band's performance based on lights, projections, explosions and other spectacular effects. Free from the need to entertain an audience, the group could concentrate solely on the act of music making. Through the medium of cinema, they offered their fans a close up of a particular kind of performance, one more resembling a rehearsal than an “ordinary” live show. The film provides an insight into a sort of “private moment” with the band, related to the idea of unlimited access granted to the camera in the tradition of so-called “rockumentaries”, whose language is strongly indebted to that of US direct cinema and French *cinéma vérité* (Beattie, 2004, pp. 97–102; Saunders, 2007, pp. 52–53).^② However, this particular concert is special precisely because of its lack of non-musical visual attractions: the musicians convey “a sense of seriousness of purpose” (Covach, 2006, p. 3), a total dedication to the music that is also demonstrated by their independence from the technological paraphernalia typical of their live shows.

The estrangement from the collective ritual of live performance puts the band members in a neutral space in which they are free to concentrate solely on the performance. There is a move away from the level of collective celebration of the concert towards a higher form of shared personal ecstasy, made possible by the participation in the act of music-making within a small group. At the same time, it was the audiovisual representation that made tangible, and thus provided public access to, the “invisible forms” (of

① The first light show technician was Joe Gannon, who later became their first road manager, soon replaced by the more experienced Peter Wynne-Wilson in 1967.

② In the theoretical framework sketched by David Baker, the camera's freedom of access is an audiovisual counterpart of the centrality of such a value in the rock lifestyle, which coalesces with mobility and authenticity in the broader concept of transitivity (2005). See also Bratus (2010).

psychedelic sounds, in this case) at the core of Brook's conception of "holy theatre". In this context, the abstractness of Pink Floyd's music is the element that links the songs with the choice of Pompeii as their setting. Their songs are so far from any concept of what "popular" would mean for a mainstream audience that the decision to perform them in the ruins of a Roman amphitheatre (for no one but the band and its absent audience) fits perfectly with a conception of music as primarily a matter of personal introversion. Their long drone or pattern-based compositions, such as *Careful with That Axe, Eugene*—an extended form based on the textural elaboration of a single harmonic aggregate (Cotner, 2002)—and *A Saucerful of Secrets*, are mostly planned as sequences of musical events whose duration is determined during the performance, while the transitions from one to the next are marked by musical signals acting as formal thresholds. In *Careful with That Axe, Eugene*, this function is assigned to the descending melodic fragment played by Richard Wright at the beginning of the organ improvisation (19'24"),^① and at the reprise of the texture of the first part before the instrumental "fading out" of the song (23'29"). It recurs once more three bars after Roger Waters whispers the complete title of the song (21'50") at the beginning of the shouted central section. This compositional feature also affected the specific mode of interaction between the musicians documented in *Live at Pompeii*, in which the recourse to eye contact and evident non-verbal communication is very limited, or perhaps ignored, again favouring an idea of music making in which the sound itself acts as the connective tissue for their relationships. In popular music, patterns of gaze and other forms of body language play an important part in expressing the essential characteristics related to generic norms and conventions (Kurosawa & Davidson, 2005, p. 115–118). Thus, in the situation here, the main focus shifts from seeing to hearing, again underlining the mystical quality of sound and its capacity to forge inexplicit bonds between the participants in its production. Even though, in the specific example

① Gb₅–F₅–Eb₅, followed by Db₅–Cb₅–Bb₄, alluding to a F Phrygian scale over the drone on the chord of D minor. Here and in the rest of the article, I refer to the time code of the 2003 *Director's Cut* DVD edition of *Live at Pompeii*.

described above, Roger Waters seems to glance at Nick Mason after he has finished “singing” the text, calling for his intervention, the reaction of the drummer is neither evident nor immediate, as only a few seconds later he starts with a fill, preceding the introduction of a stronger 4/4 groove on cymbals and tom toms.

The sensation of an inexplicable and unspoken form of sacred representation is also conveyed by the particular place chosen for the performance. The ruins of Pompeii, indeed the very idea of southern Italy, as a geographical location in which ancient history lives side by side with modernity—a trait also emphasized by the technological apparatus brought by Pink Floyd to play their set—seems to imply a conjunction between opposite spatial and temporal indications made possible only by the performance of the band and its specific features. Firstly, according to the characteristics of the music, which is organised around slowly developing processes that reinforce the sense of remoteness and fixedness that is intuitively tied to the past and the inexorable flow of time. Secondly, the music develops a relationship with the space, which is coherent with the same idea; the silence of the Roman remains is gradually (and gently, so to speak) overwhelmed by a musical logic in which soft, transparent textures are layered one on the top of another. Thirdly, by alternating the images of the band with those of the ancient dead city—of its architecture, as well as the mosaics, statues and paintings testifying to its everyday life—and of the natural forces represented by Vesuvius and its volcanic activity, the internal audiovisual logic of *Live at Pompeii* creates a relational space in which those disparate elements are in communication with each other. The result is the creation of an intricate chronotope (Bakhtin, 1981) linking the musical explosions of *Careful with That Axe, Eugene* with the flaming eruption of Vesuvius, the state-of-the-art recording equipment with the masks of the ancient inhabitants of Pompeii, the boiling of sulphuric water with the synthetic sounds in the central part of *Echoes*—thus creating a space and a time “apart” for the band playing in front of the cameras.

II. Music in the Making: The Body in the Performance

One of the main tasks that audiovisual representation accomplishes in

popular music is to make the star physically available to his or her fans, providing a kind of personal closeness—albeit only virtual—that aims to satisfy the fans’ desire for close contact with the object of their desire. Referring to the later form of music video, the Italian semiotician Paolo Peverini explained how in this representational context the body is crucial because it is subjected—through visual manipulation—to processes of resemantisation “ [...] by superimposing on the distinctive traits of a strong, stable identity, the sensuous traces of original subjectivities, fragments of an audiovisual identity in a permanent ongoing elaboration” (2004, p. 149).^① By playing with such mobility, a music video layers the star’s persona with new meanings as an intermedial construction, in which the body represents the primary referent, and its visual transformations are meant to add new elements and characterisations to stimulate the spectators’ interest.^② Something similar happens in a filmed performance such as *Live at Pompeii*, in which we find several audiovisual features that serve to present the body of the performer from new perspectives, normally inaccessible to the audience of a live show. The specific characteristics of such visual treatment are clearly not as transformative and radical as they are in a music video, for at least two reasons. The first is technological, as at the beginning of the 1970s special effects in video-making were still in their early, analogue phase. The second is historical, considering that the spectators of a live concert in those days had very little possibility of seeing the musician up close, even during a live show, especially one with huge crowds. In such a cognitive and performative context, showing a musician from such a perspective was enough to give fans an unprecedented experience intended to authenticate an experience that bore the physical signs of close—and thus personal—contact with the body of the star. This can be related to what Allan Moore called “first person authenticity”, a case of authentication that “ [...] arises when an originator

① Original quotation: “[...] sovrapponendo ai tratti distintivi di un’identità forte, stabile, le tracce sensibili di soggettività inedite, i frammenti di un’identità audiovisiva in costante elaborazione.” The English translation is mine.

② For a thorough discussion of the role of music video in enhancing the visual representation of the star, see also Vernallis (2004).

(composer, performer) succeeds in conveying the impression that his/her utterance is one of integrity, that it represents an attempt to communicate in an unmediated form with an audience” (2002, p. 214). In this case, proximity represents both the opportunity for the audience to relate to the band in an unprecedented way, giving the impression of direct involvement in the performative act, and also a clear demonstration of the reality of the audiovisual recording, as the reproduction of an original experience captured by the camera.^①

In *Live at Pompeii*, several traits point to such a valorisation of the body of the performer, especially by focusing on the most salient physical activities related to sound production. The most obvious is the attention to the singer in the few sections of the songs with lyrics. Here, the words are not only an expression of the verbal content, but also highlight a particular utterance, giving some sort of primacy to the vocal part in the course of the performance.^② The concentration on the figural level of the musical structure is particularly evident in the central part of *Echoes pt. 1* (5'25"–7'24"), in which Richard Wright and David Gilmour sing the verses of the song together. In the film version, this section alternates between close-ups of the two musicians. They do not look directly at the camera, but at a point off-screen, beyond the boundaries of what is visible for the spectator, and avoiding any form of eye contact with him. The same could be said for *Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun*. Here, close-ups of Roger Waters are alternated with shots of a camera circling around Nick Mason's drum kit, with David Gilmour's guitar on the right side and Roger Waters standing in front of the microphone to the left, defining a small space in which the louder parts of the musical textures are contained (thus excluding Richard Wright's soft and eerie keyboard sounds).

The focus on the physical action related to the production of sound is at the core of the visual strategies used in the film, as shown by the recurrent

① For a discussion of the ethical and aesthetical issues related to the divide between fiction and reality in the processes of authentication, see Montani (2011).

② On the relevance of the voice as the sound symbol for a body, cfr. Frith (1998, pp. 183–202).

reference to Nick Mason as the central character of the band's music making.^① In the texture-based, often unsung musical structures presented by Pink Floyd, this choice is imposed by the music itself: the percussive patterns of the drummer are the most spectacular physical movements, with an aural consequence, and acquiring an obvious relevance to the communication of the corporeal dimension of music. In the guitar solo of *Echoes pt. 1* (7'50"—9'50"), the camera cuts between three images, rapidly alternated to make the sequence more visually interesting: a close-up of David Gilmour's fretboard and hands, and two different framings of Nick Mason behind the drum kit. Following the character of the music, in the closing section of the solo (from 9'00"), when the interaction between the two instruments is tighter and more intense, the visual rhythm is also faster, with more than 30 editing cuts in the space of 50 seconds. A similar audiovisual strategy is presented during *One of These Days (I'm Going to Cut You into Little Pieces)*, the song that also has the highest pace in terms of beats per minute and overall intensity. In this case, the act of producing the most important musical element—the *ostinato* on A₁ and B₁, played by Roger Waters on bass guitar with a classic Binson echo unit (Mason, 2004, p. 149)—is completely ignored in the images, probably because it is achieved mostly through electronic (and consequently, invisible and acousmatic) means. All of the attention is devoted to Nick Mason, with a momentary break from 47'34" to 48'15", when the visual flow abruptly slows down during the brief vocal part, with a pre-recorded sample of his voice slowed down and low-pitched, calling for a strict parallelism between the treatment of images and sounds. With the guitar solo that follows from 48'27", the previous audiovisual situation is restored: even when David Gilmour appears on screen, he is behind the drum kit in the background.

In *Echoes pt. 1* and *One of These Days* there is another significant detail that illustrates the audiovisual strategies that Adrian Maben uses to depict the bodily significance of live performance. The musicians are subjected to the

^① See Railton and Watson (2011, pp. 132–133), for another example of the crucial relevance accorded to the body of the drummer in the music video of the Stroke's song *Reptilia*.

□ 符号与传媒 (10)

process of transfiguration and resemantisation by splitting the screen into squares or showing small boxes with superimposed images to present different contemporary actions simultaneously. Both of these techniques are used in the first part of the guitar solo in *Echoes*, as shown below.

Table 1 *Audio – visual Construction*

Time Code	Full-screen Image	Box (right lower corner)	Split Screen (9 boxes fill the screen)
00 : 07 : 50	close-up, David Gilmour's guitar		
00 : 07 : 53		Nick Mason, from the front	
00 : 07 : 57		Nick Mason, from the rear	
00 : 07 : 59		Nick Mason, from the front	
00 : 08 : 03		Nick Mason, from the rear	
00 : 08 : 07		close-up, David Gilmour's guitar	
00 : 08 : 10			Close-up, David Gilmour's guitar
00 : 08 : 34	close-up, David Gilmour's guitar		
00 : 08 : 38	Nick Mason, from the rear ^①		
00 : 08 : 41	close-up, David Gilmour's guitar		
00 : 08 : 45			Close-up, David Gilmour's guitar
00 : 08 : 50	close-up, David Gilmour's guitar ^②	Nick Mason, from the front	
00 : 09 : 00	Nick Mason, from the rear		

This specific audiovisual construction is used to bring the spectator into

① This moment is marked by the rhythmic fill on cymbals and toms segmenting the different sections of the song.

② The image is gradually recomposed by eliminating the boxes of the split-screen, with the exception of the box with Nick Mason in the lower-right corner.

the live action happening on stage, in between the two main instrumental parts facing each other in the culminating moment of the song. The multiplication of the performer is also intended to magnify his action on the instrument, as a way of reaching a form of transcendence that is larger than life, and perhaps also referring to a psychedelic imagery that contrasts starkly with ordinary perception. Again, in the first seconds of *One These Days* (45'00"), the percussive patterns underlying the repetition of the same pitch on bass guitar provide an aural counterpart that triggers the multiplication of the image of Nick Mason playing the drums. The polyrhythmic texture of his part is visually represented by the contemporary presence of several simulacra of the musician, further emphasising his centrality in the presentation of the live performance.^① A conflation between the two technical procedures of the contemporary presentation of different images and multiplications is presented at 49'13", when the nine boxes into which the image is divided (three rows and three columns) show the same image in each row; in the first Nick Mason is framed from above, in the second from the front, in the third from the left, with David Gilmour in the background. Here, the body of the performer is empowered by its contemporary presentation from perceptually impossible multiple angles, giving the spectator an experience that is, paradoxically, detached from reality and closer to the action captured by the camera in which "[...] the multiplication of scopic models offers us a confirmation that film is capable of 'embracing' the world" (Casetti, 2013, p. 38).

III. Circles in Motion: Visual Style and Representational Strategies

The focus on what is visually interesting in sound production is evident throughout the live footage of *Live at Pompeii*. The audiovisual construction of the first section of *A Saucerful of Secrets* very closely resembles the logic already operating in the guitar solo of *Echoes pt. 1*. In the initial part of the track (28'35"—29'00") we see only Roger Waters violently smashing a set of cymbals, and a barefoot David Gilmour making sliding *glissando* sounds on

^① The same process is applied several times in the course of the track, at 46'21", 46'30", 46'44" and 46'51".

his guitar with a metal bottleneck. The rhythm of the editing between these two shots is fast, with a single cut lasting no more than about a second. A similar pace is maintained in what follows, as other visual elements are added, presenting the other musicians as the texture of the piece thickens. At 29'00" a detail on the centre of the cymbal is introduced, at 29'10" Nick Mason is presented from above and at 29'43" Richard Wright is seen playing random clusters on the piano keyboard. A longer shot is shown at 30'38", when Roger Waters approaches the large gong, whose image is then paired with the sun (31'07"). After this climactic point, the editing becomes slower as the music becomes quieter, before the beginning of the second part of the song from 32'55". In this excerpt we see how the representational strategies are again focused on the action of the single musician as part of a musical context, reconstructed by alternating cuts that underline the individual contribution within a shared, collective musical project. The presentation of the musical performance from a limited number of points of view is a recurrent feature in the film, focusing on single members of the band, with less attention paid to the band playing together. This visual style is curiously reminiscent of the main features of later music videos, as Michel Chion observed in his fundamental text on audiovisual analysis, in which he explained the difference between narration in cinema, television and this brief form of visual communication:

Music video editing returns repeatedly to the same motifs, typically playing on four or five basic visual themes. Rather than serving to advance action, the editing of music videos turns the prism to show its facets. The rapid succession of shots creates a sense of visual polyphony and even of simultaneity, even as we see only a single image at a time. [...] The thing that most closely resembles the polyphonic simultaneity of sound or music on the visual level is the rapid succession of single images. Upon seeing a fast montage, the spectator's memory functions like an ideal mixer—far superior to a machine—of visual impressions interlinked in time. (1994, pp. 166—167)

Relying on such basic perceptual mechanisms, music on screen can render the act of being played by several people at the same time and in the same place. There is no need to present all of the action, as the brain reconstructs

the overall action by collecting the partial perspectives it is given and reconstructing them in relation to the sounds we hear. What is interesting from a cognitive perspective is the kind of cerebral activity that such a choice implies. The activity triggered by this sort of audiovisual representation is closer to a sort of “emotional realism” (in which the emotional quality arises precisely from the detachment between images and sounds), rather than to “perceptual realism”, in which the mediation is presented as a faithful recording of a real event (Grodal, 2009, pp. 250–270). Most of the sounds we hear in *Live at Pompeii* are acousmatic; nevertheless, they are part of a complex experience reconstructed by spectators from the material traces that they are able to see and hear. The core strategy used in *Live at Pompeii* to represent the live performance as authentic does not focus on giving the impression of being there, but on the creation of a virtual audiovisual construction around the imagery and auratic presence of Pink Floyd as a cultural catalyst for such key words as psychedelia, sci-fi inspired music, temporal and spatial displacement.

The same idea also resonates with another salient characteristic of the film, in which the same underlying schema seems to be developed at many levels. Instability and detachment from the ordinary spatio-temporal coordinates are connected here by the circular motion at the core of the visual representation of many tracks, most notably in the already mentioned example of *Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun*. Here, the camera endlessly circles around the musicians as the song progresses, clockwise in the first part of the song and counterclockwise from 1° 12' 20", anticipating the last verse of the song sung by Roger Waters. The structure of the song is also cyclical; it begins and ends with the same riff played on electric guitar, organ or bass guitar after an improvisational middle section on a pedal F harmony, and its verses repeat just two basic cells to form a circular pattern.



Fig. 1 A1



Fig. 2 A2



Fig. 3 B

The overall structure of the verse is A1–A1–A1–A1 // A2–A2–A1–A1 // B–B–A1–A1, with an underlying logic modelled on the 12-bar tripartite blues progression, as A2 is the transposition on the upper fourth of the first riff, and B the contrasting cadential element with its descent from Bb to the modal centre F.^① The musical features of this riff also stress the idea of constant motion and return to the same path. In A1 and A2, the centrality of F and Bb as the cornerstone for the undulating movements of a melodic semitone upwards and tone downwards excludes any possible interpretation of these pitches as sensitive notes leading to other modal points of reference. Again, in the B riff, the single pitches of the preceding riffs coalesce into an overall arched profile beginning and ending on F, and with its apex again in Bb. The tension between stability and instability is also at the core of the rhythmical dimension of these repeated patterns. After the beginning of the first beat of the bar, the A riff emphasises a syncopated motion by positioning the main melodic movements. The eighth note F on the second beat (in A1, as the Bb in A2) is only a passing tone to reach the Gb on the second upbeat, leading to the tonal centre on the third and fourth. The riff ends with the upward movement from Eb to F again on the second upbeat, with a metrical suspension meant to solicit the subsequent repetition of the entire rhythmical structure. The same can be observed in the final part of the B riff, in which the syncopation is even more marked by the choice to begin the motif with

^① Here the scale is a Locrian F scale (F–Gb–Ab–Bb–Cb–Db–Eb) in which the fifth grade is diminished, thus it is a recourse to the perfect fourth and also for the descending pattern that brings the structure back to the first idea, A1.

quarter notes on the first, second and third upbeats.^①

From the point of view of visual representation, the idea of a circle is a recurrent feature in the filming of the song and in the entire concert film; here in the images of the sun evoked by the lyrics of the song (with some cuts from 1° 08'20" and again from 1° 13'26"), in *A Saucerful of Secrets* coupled with the gong (from 31' 01"), which is also the first instrument we see at the beginning of *Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun* (1° 04'54").^② Again, the camera lingers on the sound sources that are more visually interesting, using them to point to a chain of possible meanings linking Roger Waters' spectacular, physical action on the percussion instrument to the sci-fi overtones alluded to in the lyrics and the song titles, to the overall idea of circular motion and altered perception evoked by the psychedelic atmosphere of the music. The endless recurrence of the same elements is a characteristic embedded in the structure of the film itself, as made clear by the decision to split *Echoes* into two parts at the beginning and end, further increasing the sensation of temporal displacement that creates a sort of never-ending day during which the performance takes place.^③ Linking the beginning and the end of the film, the approaching movement of the camera in the first seconds is coupled with the distancing in the last moments of the movie; thus, the first and last shots recall a process of recursive and endless motion, which is also evoked by the circular space of the amphitheatre in which the action is shot.^④

① Out of five notes, only the Gb at the beginning of the second bar is positioned on the downbeat.

② Patterns of circularity are also recurrent in the audiovisual representation strategies of live performance from the psychedelic era. A striking example of such a choice, linked to patterns of death and transfiguration, are provided by the numerous cinematic uses of the Door's song *The End*, as presented by Maurizio Corbella in his recent intervention " 'Can You Picture What Will Be?' An Intermedial Analysis of *The End*" (*The Doors*, 1967) given at the symposium "Play it Again, Sam. The Song in Cinema" (Kiel, 21–22 February 2014).

③ The spatial and temporal coordinates are even more confused by the choice to alternate songs shot in Pompeii (*Echoes* in the morning, *A Saucerful of Secrets* in the afternoon and *One of These Days* at dusk) and in Paris (*Careful with That Axe, Eugene*, *Mademoiselle Nobs* and *Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun*), surrounded by complete darkness.

④ Not to mention the sound of the heartbeat heard on the opening and closing credits, added to the 1974 version of the film, which provide a connection to the circular structure of *The Dark Side of the Moon* and its parable of an unending cycle of life, madness and death.

IV. Conclusion: The Many Lives of *Live at Pompeii* and the Problem of Authenticity

The first version of the film ever screened, consisting exclusively of the film of the live performance, premiered in 1972 at the Edinburgh Festival. Maben was still not satisfied with the overall result and he met up with the band again the following year during the studio work for their groundbreaking album *The Dark Side of the Moon* to shoot some additional footage (Blake, 2013, p. 169). The sequences filmed in the Abbey Road studios provided the director with enough material to finish the editing of the movie, intercutting the live sequences with interviews with the band members about their working methods and their thoughts on topics such as technology, success, money and music. Some additional sequences were staged to document the recording of certain songs on the album, such as Roger Waters experimenting with the VCS3 synthesizer for *On the Run* (from 17' 13"), Richard Wright playing the piano part for *Us and Them* (from 40' 13") and David Gilmour overdubbing the solo guitar of *Brain Damage* (from 57' 32"). Significantly, the only musician not presented playing in the studio is Nick Mason, whose presence in the live sequences recorded in Pompeii and Paris is overwhelming. Whereas the live performance emphasises corporeality and bodily action, a studio recording implies a level of premeditation and careful attention to individual details that is simply not possible in the moment of collective music making. In this way, the contrast between the extemporaneous act of playing in the empty amphitheatre and the individual compositional activity of cutting a record is starkly marked. It also witnesses the moment of transition in the band's history from the more live-oriented, improvisational compositions of their early years to their focus on the form of the concept album, which became their primary interest in the years to come. The primeval energy evoked by linking the moment of the live concert with the outburst of natural energy represented by the volcanic activity of Vesuvius is now opposed to the reflexive activity of recording, and coupled with the reflections of the band's members on their own identity as professional musicians and on their position in the music industry.

The second version of the film was theatrically released in 1974 as the first official version of *Live at Pompeii* (Povey, 2007, p. 125), but was eventually surpassed in 2003 by a new Director's Cut version, in which new images and some sequences shot backstage during the recording for the film in Paris were added. The table below compares the three versions and shows how the new parts affected the overall structure of the movie.

Table 2 Comparison of Three Versions, *Live at Pompeii*

Timecode	1972	1974	2002
00 : 00 : 00	Opening credits		
00 : 02 : 12	<i>Echoes, pt. 1</i>		
00 : 12 : 56		Recording of <i>On the Run</i> (Roger Waters)	
00 : 18 : 49	<i>Careful With That Axe, Eugene</i> *		
00 : 25 : 53			Studio Europasonor/ Avenue des Ternes, Paris
00 : 27 : 59	<i>A Saucerful of Secrets</i>		
00 : 37 : 25		Recording of <i>Us and Them</i> (Richard Wright)	
00 : 44 : 49	<i>One of These Days</i> (<i>I'm Going To Cut into Little Pieces</i>)		
00 : 50 : 29			Studio Europasonor
00 : 54 : 49	<i>Mademoiselle Nobs</i>		
00 : 57 : 32		Recording of <i>Brain Damage</i> (David Gilmour)	
01 : 04 : 54	<i>Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun</i> *		
01 : 14 : 46			Studio Europasonor
01 : 17 : 11	<i>Echoes, pt. 2</i>		

* Tracks recorded in Paris.

The newest version shows some re-editing of the original sequences, with state-of-the-art (at the time) computer-generated sequences of planets, satellites and a simulation of what Pompeii would have looked like before the

eruption of 79 AD. Some black and white footage shot in Paris, documenting the overdubbing made for the soundtrack of the film, is interspersed with the original performative sequences, as in the sung verse of *Echoes pt. 1* (5'25"–7'27"), perhaps in an attempt to speed up the visual rhythm of the sequence. As Table 2 shows, the effect of the new sequences was to provide images to isolate each song from the other, and thus to further reaffirm their quality as performances floating in an indistinct space and time. The Director's Cut also introduces a stronger connection between the music and the sci-fi imagery of spaceships, rockets and planetary systems, adding a contrasting visual counterpart to the earthly connotation evoked by the ruins of the city and the eruption of Vesuvius. This is seen most clearly at the beginning and end of the film, where the original long, slow movement of the camera towards the group is partly replaced by a zoom from outer space to Earth, reversed in the final moments of the film.

To conclude, I briefly return to my initial question: if a live rock music show is a privileged moment in the recognition of authenticity, what kinds of strategies are used in *Live at Pompeii* to evoke such a value? Can a show with no audience succeed in presenting itself as an authentic moment of personal connection with the band in the performance? In my view, to answer these questions, authenticity has to be considered as a semiotic problem, related to the effect that certain attributes of a text can trigger in the reader. Here, there is a further complication, in that we have to deal with an audiovisual object in which sound and image dynamically interact in an unstable production of meaning that can be only partially mapped, and perhaps never fully grasped. However, consideration of the problem in these terms has the merit of bringing the issue back to an analytical horizon that can be explored with the instruments of close reading and interpretation:

If authenticity is a property of the listening experience rather than simply of the track listened to, if it is not inherent to the music, it follows that it cannot be taken for granted, that it needs to be carefully considered. [...] authenticity is a matter of interpretation that is made and fought from within a particular cultural and, thus, historicized position. Like all meanings, it is *ascribed*, not *inscribed*. (Moore, 2012, p. 266)

In the representation of the live show, we face the depiction of a performative act in which the audience of a specific performer recognises his unmistakable individuality, as defined in the moment of music making, but which is also consistent with his previously built reputation. In other words, what I propose is that here, authenticity is the result of an intermedial imagery in which instances of authentication refer back to the “debt” that mediated texts always owe to the real events and performing human beings they are trying to reproduce within the semiotic web of larger cultural discursive formations, relying on the hiatus between reality, its representation and the processes of meaning production (Montani, 2011). The audiovisual construction of *Live at Pompeii* alludes to, rather than witnesses, the event that lies at its origin. From this point of view, the construction of the film is carefully planned to convey the authentic image of the band as it is interpreted by the director and expressed by his choices in terms of audiovisual strategies. As shown in the tripartite structure of the article, I have analysed this process by referring to three different levels of referentiality, each implying a different temporal relationship with the performance:

(1) the connection with the past, linking the idea of ancient Classic civilisation with psychedelic imagery and spatio-temporal displacement by setting the action in the ruins of Pompeii and within its threatening natural environment;

(2) the idea of music making as something happening in the here and now, related in the first place to the physical act of sound production, focusing especially on the drummer and on the band members’ unusual ways of playing their instruments; and

(3) the strategies used in the audiovisual construction to stress the relevance of a chain of meanings related to the idea of circular motion, instability and altered perception.

Different versions of the film show a progressive refinement of such basic ideas, adding further levels of interpretation and increasing the number of elements involved in the depiction of the band in the moment of the performance, and in their everyday lives. On the one hand, it is the contrast

between these two moments that makes the live concert more powerful as a place set apart from ordinary perception and connecting the musicians in a sort of collective entity floating in time and space. On the other hand, the analytical presentation attempts to frame the instances of mediated authentication of the performance as related to a complex negotiation between temporal categories, showing its connection with the past and ideas related to musical styles, witnessing its close proximity with the extemporaneous act of music making and carefully planning the conditions for the experience of the spectators. Starting from this general framework, further research will focus on the construction of authenticity as a general category arising from the texts themselves, linking performative utterances, meaning production and value judgments in the definition of a unique, inimitable and unmistakable identity ascribed to a particular performer.

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