‘The Dark Side of the Moon” returns to Hardin Planetarium

bgdailynews.com/2025/08/27/the-dark-side-of-the-moon-returns-to-hardin-planetarium

David Horowitz August 27, 2025

DAVID MAMARIL HOROWITZ

david.horowitz@bgdailynews.com

A 360-degree, full-dome-style Pink Floyd music video show made for planetariums — yet rarely picked up by them — has returned to Western Kentucky University’s Hardin Planetarium for a second time.

The show for the album, “The Dark Side of the Moon,” is happening Fridays and on some Saturdays through mid-July, Planetarium Specialist Chris Chandler said. Funds will primarily go toward a new projector, he said — “the beating heart of any planetarium … A planetarium that doesn’t upgrade its equipment disappears.”

The planetarium is one of nine statewide, and regular programming is free to the public, as Western pays the bills, Chandler said. The Pink Floyd show is the sole exception, at $15 a ticket. Still, nearly every show sold out when the planetarium first presented it in 2023.

Pink Floyd had wanted an official music video for the album 50 years after its 1973 release during a time without music videos — an experience that suited the time’s space race-era excitement, and the band wanted the show for planetariums, Chandler said. So, he said, Pink Floyd collaborated with a company specializing in three-dimensional, computer-generated planetarium imagery.

The Hardin Planetarium had been one of few planetariums nationwide to acquire the license for the full visual show, he said.

It opens with a 15-minute interpretation of the visual context from Chandler. Then, across the domed planetarium screen, the show begins.

Chandler recalled his first thoughts watching a short demo sent out by Pink Floyd back in 2023:

“That has a meaning,” he remembered himself thinking to himself — and the show is full of subtextual meaning and connections between sights and sounds.

In one instance, for example, an astronaut is waved goodbye as he disappears on Mars, Chandler said. Guitar is overlaid in the foreground, while a second guitarist, hardly audible, remains in the background.

The intentionality — in that case, a tribute to Pink Floyd's deceased lead singer Syd Barrett — is central to the show, according to Chandler.

In another instance, the song "Time," the audience orbits Saturn, also known as the Roman god of calendar and time, Chandler said.

The planetarium anticipates showing off the show license after two and a half months. Several weeks in, it's raised about a third of the $120,000 goal.

The planned projector will have twice the resolution and be 70% brighter, which will help people notice a richer depth of color, Chandler said.

Once the fundraiser is complete, the planetarium likely won't need another for 10 years, he said.

The previous projector lasted 40 years, the current projector is 13 years old and the people's expectations are constantly developing, Chandler said. So, planetariums need to stay up to date periodically, and upgrades can't come as slowly, he added.

Funds will also help upgrade the lens and computer as well as the museum, which surrounds the show area.

Bowling Green resident Patti Priddy, who first heard the album when she was 12, described the show as "wonderful." She especially appreciated seeing the representation of the band members' feelings for Barrett.

Crissy Priddy said her favorite part was Chandler's narration of what to expect — an introduction that provided a different perspective, and made her think, she said.

"Come out — you don't want to miss it," she said.

Tickets are available at https://www.wku.edu/hardinplanetarium/dsotm-info.php

Print Article