

First, a relevant note: None of this has anything to do with the album, *Keep on Making Music* Tom Nieu, Leiza Rea and I, as “The Night Sweepers,” built together and made available to listeners, who can find it on the internet. During that entire venture, Floyd was lost somewhere in Florida and totally out of touch with the rest of us. Having made that clear, I’ll go on with the story.

About Our Guitarist

Our guitarist’s name is Floyd. He wanted to call himself Pink Floyd in celebration of the time he rented a boat and rowed across the lake in his swimming suit. He didn’t take anything along to cover his skin. He turned pink and painful all over, with epsom-salt soaks and massive peeling, itching, burning and all that horrid stuff soon to follow.

I told him that name was taken, so he settled on Pink Flamingo. First, he wanted to say Pink Penguin. “You, know, those birds with long necks that stand on one leg and turn their head upside down to dredge underwater.”

“Floyd, I think you’re talking about flamingoes.”

“Well, what’s the difference, anyway? I think they all have feathers. You know what I mean.”

We all got in the van and drove around until we found some plastic pink flamingoes on a lawn. Floyd said, “Yeah, that’s the one.”

After that, his musical name was Pink Flamingo, but he couldn’t keep it straight and still sometimes called himself the Pink Penguin. Or sometimes, when he was really down, The Black Floyd, not talking about skin color, but about his mood.

He’s a moody guy, I guess. I try to keep our conversations on music. Sometimes, music can be very moody, too, but I try to avoid most of the darker stuff. It inhabits me too readily, and others too, I assume.

Sometimes he called his guitar Blue Seal though he meant to name it Lucille like B.B. King, or Lucille 2 or Lucille too, so people wouldn’t get him mixed up with King, about which no one thought there was danger, because he wasn’t anywhere near as good as B.B. King on guitar, we all figured.

We often can’t find Floyd when time to record comes.

Sometimes, he goes to Florida, thinks he really is a flamingo and mixes with the herd out on the sandbars. We have to find him, lead him away, wash off all the feathers he's stuck on himself, talk to him a lot, try to get and hold his attention.

Maybe there's alcohol involved in there somewhere. I'm not sure. I thought I smelled some several times, but I wasn't sure. He kept his head turned away from me, acted like he was dragging his bill through the sand, the way flamingos do.

I think he misunderstood instructions and drank a lot of epsom salt syrup way back, or maybe he smoked some salts. I couldn't get a clear answer from him when I tried to find out what happened.

He played good guitar in several practice sessions, but I couldn't afford to go to Florida a lot of times, looking for him. I would have given the effort up to mold him into what I was doing right away, but his price is right, something I could afford if he ever played for me and I had to pay him.

He says he'll show up, but usually he doesn't, and so far, every time he does, something goes wrong with his equipment, dead battery in his guitar, broken plug for his amplifier, stuff like that, so I learned more guitar as fast as I could, and I mostly play my own guitar when I get ready to record some of my songs.

My performance isn't professional, but it's what there is, what we can afford so far, so we'll go ahead with that for now while we continue to hope Pink Flamingo will get his act together and play his guitar with us, for us.

That hope is probably like hoping we can put off the end of this material world a little longer, but none among us talks about that much, because we keep trying to focus our view on positive stuff and keep moving ahead, find joy in every day's existence. Like those guys who roll stones say in their song, "You can't always get what you want, but if you try sometimes, you just might get..."

Joy is worth shooting for, even if many people get it mixed up with alcohol and drugs and all that stuff, where it isn't anyway.