

Roger Waters May Face Protest at Hamptons Performance

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by Pat Rogers

[Pink Floyd](#) co-founder and renowned musician Roger Waters may have to pass through protesters on the way to his performance at Bay Street Theater in Sag Harbor on Friday, October 30, 2015. The Simon Wiesenthal Center has called for a protest against Waters's appearance and to give the performer "an empty hall" in response to Waters's role as an "anti-Israel boycott leader," according to a statement [published on its website](#).

Waters appears as part of Bay Street Theater's "Portrait Series". The concert series is organized and hosted by former SNL band leader and local resident [GE Smith](#) and produced and curated by his wife, the musician [Taylor Barton](#). Waters is also a Hamptons residence and his concert has been sold out for weeks. Ticket sales will be refunded to anyone who no longer wishes to attend.

Backlash to Waters's appearance stems from his support of the [Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions](#), a campaign issued by a Palestine civil society's call to a "...campaign of boycotts, divestment and sanctions against Israel until it complies with international law and Palestinian rights," according to its [website](#), along with Waters's urging of musicians not to appear in Israel, according to the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center "...confronts anti-Semitism, hate and terrorism, promotes human rights and dignity, stands with Israel, defends the safety of Jews worldwide, and teaches the lessons of the Holocaust for future generations," according to its [website](#).

Bay Street Theater doesn't investigate the political or personal views of the artists, performers or panelists appearing on its stage before booking, said Bay Street Theater Executive Director Tracy Williams.

"We are a cultural center and we welcome our performers for their contributions to culture," said Williams. "It doesn't go beyond that. It's not a political discussion."

The Simon Wiesenthal Center began urging ticket holders to request refunds and the show to be boycotted through [a call to action statement](#) posted on their website on October 27, 2015.

Protests are expected to take place outside of Bay Street on Friday from 3 p.m. throughout the evening, said Janet Lehr, owner and gallery director of [Vered Gallery](#) in East Hampton, N.Y. and an organizer of the protest.

“There is no room in this world for anti-Semitism,” said Lehr. “When it was, it was despicable. Let Israel and the world’s Jews and all their many non-Jewish supporters close one of the ugliest chapters in the history of mankind.” Lehr continued, “The Roger Waters of this world who preach boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel need not be tolerated in our midst.”

The Roger Waters concert session will strictly be a musical one. Waters will not address the crowd on his views—political, personal, musical or otherwise—according to his agent, said Williams.

Bay Street expressed it could provide a future opportunity for dialogue in order to explore the issue as one that’s important to the community, said Williams.

Separately, the Bay Street Board expressed their position in a statement issued a few days ago: “...Mr. Waters is a renowned musician, singer/songwriter, composer, and multi-instrumentalist for over 40 years, and is perhaps best known as co-founder of Pink Floyd. While we welcome his musical talents, the Bay Street Board of Trustees does not endorse certain political views of Mr. Waters. We most certainly support the cultural contributions he has made, as well as his right to free expression and we look forward to him sharing his musical talents with our audience.

“Bay Street Theater remains committed to its mission, and the right to free speech and artistic expression. We also respect the rights of others who may feel differently and will refund their tickets for the evening.”

Pink Floyd was [founded in 1965](#) by Roger “Syd” Barrett, Roger Waters, David Gilmour, Nick Mason and Rick Wright. Their studio albums include “Dark Side of the Moon”; “Wish You Were Here”, “Animals” “The Wall” and others.

Bay Street’s “Portrait Series” continues on November 7, 2015 with featured artist [Ethan Hawke](#).

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