



WILLIE J. ALLEN JR. | Times

Former Pink Floyd frontman Roger Waters performed *The Wall*, the band's 1979 album, complete with an epic stage show, before 14,539 Tuesday in Tampa.

Waters gives all for 'Wall'

Pink Floyd devotees are rapt by the rock legend's performance of the entire rock opera.

TAMPA — With all slightly buzzed respect, the greatest cultural impact of Pink Floyd's *The Wall* is that the rock opera's double-vinyl gate fold spread gave '70s and '80s music fans somewhere relevant to roll their suspicious cigs.

I'm not demeaning the proggy grandeur of the 1979 opus, mind you. But the album's ultimate strength is not its music but its mystique, its cerebellum-tingling aura, its over-the-top sprawl. For all the album's self-serious themes of isolation and madness, war and woe, it's stoneriffic getting lost in the fun house.

And when Floyd lyricist and *Wall* architect Roger Waters brought the album's mondo concert embodiment



SEAN DALY
Times Pop Music Critic

to a sold-out St. Pete Times Forum on Tuesday — building that titular monolith brick by brick, track by track, a narrative that blocked out the stage by intermission — 14,539 blissed-out fans were giddy in the anticipation of watching him knock that sucker down.

Now 67, Waters wrote the album, and crafted the whirly, swirly stage show, as a diatribe about the distance between fan and rock star. It's still angry and even more politically caustic. And yet, despite his moods, Waters has always been showman enough to keep those same fans happy, giving them a killer

sound system and effects that would make George Lucas drool in his beard.

The 110-minute show opened with machine-gun pyro, flag-waving soldiers and a plane crashing into the stage. Waters got even less subtle after that, telling the story of Pink, an unhappy boy who loses his father in World War II (like Waters) and turns into an unhappy rock star who loses his mind (like Waters).

The still-handsome British rock god worked in and out of the conceptual tale, doing a fairly good job of balancing spectacle with emotion. He duetted with himself — via a video circa 1980 — on *Mother*. He grinned as local students from the Patel Conservatory made up the rebellious choir for *Another Brick in the Wall Part 2*. And later he led the crowd in a joyous clap-along for *Run Like Hell* (which I never thought of as a "joyous clap-along" kind of song, but hey, Roger said, "Enjoy yourself!" so we did).

Another Brick featured the first

appearance of giant, and fantastically creepy, inflatable marionettes based on the original album art by Gerald Scarfe: the horrific schoolmaster, then a domineering mother, then a naked insectoid seductress, then a really mean pig.

Several members of a crack backing band — which played in front of the wall for the second act — made up for the absence of David Gilmour, Waters' former bandmate; they added vocals for *Goodbye Blue Sky*, ripped off guitar solos on *Comfortably Numb*.

Alas, significant chunks of the finale were confusing, tedious and really Pink Floyd-y. Or maybe I was just too sober. Whatever the case, when the wall finally tumbled — a staging lesson in contained chaos — it was a great relief. And no doubt one heck of a mess to clean up.

Sean Daly can be reached at sdaly@sptimes.com or (727) 893-8467. His Pop Life column runs every Sunday in *Floridian*.