

MUSIC**High school student's Bands4Change brings pop singer Kesha to Stroh Center**

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Artist Kesha will be performing at the Stroh Center on the campus of Bowling Green State University.

ASSOCIATED PRSES

It may be an understatement to call 18-year-old Maya Dayal an overachiever.

The Maumee Valley Country Day School senior's resume shows projects and trips many people won't accomplish over the course of a lifetime.

She's conducted independent studies in foreign countries such as India, Norway, Peru, Argentina, Ecuador, and Mexico since the age of 10. Closer to home, she's created clubs, started a global leadership program, and planned two large TEDx events — all while maintaining a 3.9 grade point average.

Now the high school student is bringing pop singer Kesha to Bowling Green State University for a performance at the Stroh Center through her recently founded organization Bands4Change. The pop music celebrity is best known for her hit singles "Tik Tok," "Your Love Is My Drug," "We R Who We R," and "Timber" with Pitbull.

In between traveling thousands of miles and organizing events, Dayal was busy writing a book called *Off The Beaten Path: My Roundabout Journey to Humanitarianism*, which details her trips and is meant to inspire other people to activism. Her book was published in 2016 and is available at Barnes & Noble and Amazon.

Friday's Kesha show will be Dayal's most visible humanitarian project yet. She and her mother were able to book the singer into the Stroh Center as Bands4-Change's first-ever concert event.

"Eventually [Kesha] agreed to do the show, and we immediately jumped on the opportunity," Dayal said.

Dayal started Bands4-Change in 2015 after interning at the Stranahan Theater a few months prior to learn about coordination logistics for planning larger-scale events.

She said she wants Bands4Change to create events that spotlight global issues and raise funds for charities.

"Our mission is to raise awareness for special issues, and we want people to start doing something, whether that's donating or going somewhere to learn about it," she said.

Bands4Change allows the artist to choose which charities benefit from its shows. Kesha chose the Humane Society International, National Eating Disorder Association, and the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network.

"These are things very personal to her and her life," Dayal said. "Before, I didn't know these charities were a thing, and this was a way to get people to learn about these issues."

It wasn't necessarily an easy process to book the pop star in Bowling Green. Dayal said she was rejected by various artists including pop duo twenty one pilots and rapper/songwriter G-Eazy, primarily because of Bands4Change's lack of experience in promoting shows or the artists thinking the organization was fake.

With the help of her mother, who took charge of negotiating and signing the contracts [Dayal wasn't yet 18 at the time of scheduling the show], along with acquiring a booking agent and producer, Kesha filled the spot.

Dayal said she thinks Kesha agreed to play the show because the pop star is passionate about animals and social issues.

"We just got lucky with Kesha," she said. "She took a chance on us, and we're really thankful for that. It's a great opportunity."

She added, "We wanted to show that no matter your age or location you can always try to make the world a better place."

As an added bonus for the local entertainment community, Bands4Change and Kesha hosted a contest to select two area artists as opening acts.

The contest invited bands to post a 3-minute song on the Bands4Change website for consideration. Of 15 entries, Toledo-area indie-rockers Light Horizon and Whitehouse acoustic duo Graduation Day were selected.

Zack Jacobs, guitarist of Light Horizon, said his band entered the contest by posting a link of Light Horizon's "Audio Afterglow," a song from its 2015 debut album *The Great Big Empty* filled with heavy electric guitar chords blended with clean vocals.

"It's kind of a fan favorite," he said.

While Jacobs said Light Horizon has opened for national acts such as He Is Legend, Smashing Satellites, and the Ataris, opening for Kesha will be the band's largest show in the four years it's been together. The Stroh Center has a 5,000-seat capacity.

"It's crazy to know Kesha or her people listened to something me and my best friends wrote," the 27-year-old guitarist said. "It's sort of surreal it's even happening. It's definitely a really cool opportunity. We're mentally preparing and practicing a whole lot to do the best set we can give."

Alex Severns, facility coordinator at the Stroh Center, said this is the first time a daughter and her mother have approached the venue to put on a concert.

He said standard pricing to rent the Stroh Center for a concert or event is about \$5,000, which includes staffing for the night.

The venue typically hosts two to three shows per year, not including sport events.

"They're fun to work with," Severns said. "They're excited about their first big show."

Layne Mouch and Michael Seymour, who make up the acoustic duo known as Graduation Day, will provide a feel-good, chilled-out set at the show.

Mouch said the duo entered the contest by posting the song "Finding Kansas," one of six songs on their recently-released self-titled EP.

Graduation Day's set is scheduled to last about 25 minutes; it will be the duo's biggest show to date.

"I think if we give it our best shot and play a perfect set, people will take time to listen to us," Mouch said. "It's been an uphill battle for us, and kind of getting our name out there has been difficult. I think an event like this will get our name out there no doubt."

While the two best friends write emotional acoustic songs, Mouch said more diversity will be brought into their set to fit the pop star's vibe.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and it's definitely important to have the crowd's attention," Mouch said. "We want to bring the best songs to the table and make people remember who we are when we leave the stage."

Kesha was unavailable for an interview before press time.

The singer has had eight Top 10 hits and has written her own music and songs for other artists including Britney Spears, Ariana Grande, and Miley Cyrus. She is an animal rights activist and an advocate for equality and was honored with the 2016 Human Rights Campaign Visibility Award.

Since 2014, she's been involved in a highly publicized legal battle between herself and her producer Lukasz "Dr. Luke" Gottwald after she tried to sue him claiming sexual assault and battery.

Early admission is at 6 p.m., and doors for the general public open at 7 p.m. Tickets are still available at \$45, \$55, and \$65 at www.ticketmaster.com or the BGSU Box Office by calling 1-800-745-3000.

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