

different, and what's surprisingly the same, about performing with the Balls and performing with symphonies?"

With symphonies, there's much less swearing. It suits me, and it suits the symphony, because there is a stodgy cool-headed traditionalism that is thick in symphonies around the country and the world. They kind of want to stick with the dead Austrians and the classics. They tend to be stuck in the way they think things ought to go. And here comes rock 'n' roll sex thug Storm Large. I pay homage to the classics, I sing beautiful showtunes and classical numbers, but I throw in a little bit of stuff to break it up. Maybe against their better taste, they enjoy it, and it brings in a younger audience and new, fresh blood in to the symphony that they need.

What's similar is the joy of filling the room with the vibrations of the bones in your face and your throat and your head; evoking emotions out of other people just with the vibrations of music.

Stephen Marc Beaudoin of Portland's PHAME Academy asks how you had to adjust your persona to fit Pink Martini? (Or do you?)

I do. I definitely hem it in. Thomas coaches me; he gives me things to think about, like, I want you to perform as though you're in front of 8-year-olds or 80-year-olds. I say, Thomas, those grandmas have been through some shit, and they can handle it. However, Pink Martini is not my band, it's a collective, and it's not about the singer, it's not about just the one, it's about the entire musical experience of the evening. I don't feel like I am compromising my authenticity by not telling filthy jokes or swearing or being my cabaret self, but by being basically a pin-up chanteuse and focusing on the material, the music as opposed to my band, where I am the focal point, and I am the engine. I am by far not the most important element in Pink Martini. I am as important as the brass or as the strings. It's a support slot. And it's fun; it's so fun because it's glamorous and still really sexy in its own way, in a very mature way.

I feel like you've simply been hitting success after success in the past five or so years. What do you want to do next? What's scary?

Everything is scary right now — being an artist, I'm constantly terrified that I'm not really famous, I'm certainly not rich, I'm just really busy because I don't pigeonhole myself as one thing.

I think I'm a better singer than a writer, certainly a better singer than actress. I'm a horrible guitar player, horrible bass player, horrible piano player. I'd like to learn to accompany myself on guitar and piano, so I can play Tom Waits songs and Nick Cave songs. So when I go to a hotel and get drunk, I can be Tom Waits for a second, only with nicer boots.

I broke up with my fiancé back in April. We still totally love each other, it was absolutely for the best, but I think I'm going to take a vow of celibacy to just focus on creativity that really feeds me as opposed to sexual creativity that really feeds me but has been a little distracting of late. I'm going to focus on creating things other than orgasms.



STORM LARGE AND PINK MARTINI PERFORM JULY 1 AT THE CUTHBERT AMPHITHEATER

PHOTO BY JAMES CHIANG