



### **Cheyenne's Underground Symphony**

The Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra recently treated its audience to its first-ever “Underground Symphony” performance. Under the baton of Maestro Intrilligator, the Orchestra accomplished the feat by teaming up with the Patti Fiasco Band and lead singer Alysia Kraft, the band’s star performer. The event happened on Friday, March 18, at the spectacularly renovated Lincoln Theater. It was wild. It was a treat for the ears—and for the eyes, enhanced by a laser-light show

and a fog machine that slightly distorted the multi-colored lights. The friend who invited me suggested we choose seats in the balcony, where we enjoyed an excellent view. Many attendees lingered on the first floor, where small tables and tiny seats were set aside for people wanting refreshments. Many preferred standing room; they danced, hooted and whistled, and followed the star's admonition to "shake, shake, shake."

The maestro looked trim and fit. "He may be pumping iron," my friend speculated. Aware that his audience's view of him is confined mostly to his backside, Intrilligator keeps his wavy black hair at a pleasing nape length. For this performance he'd opted for form-fitting black leather pants and black tee-shirt, and he bounded about like a rocker. His orchestra, too, got into the act, with musicians swirling the occasional French horn and tuba in the psychedelic lights.

"They prepared for this show for months," said my friend, who has access to some inside scoop. "They had to learn every one of her songs."

Indeed, Maestro Intrilligator highlighted the lead singer by mentioning that March is Women's History Month, and his orchestra highlights female composers. He raised the arm of Patti aka Alysia Kraft and informed attendees that she composes all of her own material.

Kraft was born and raised in Encampment. Her bass guitarist, Niles Mischke, is from Cheyenne, and so, some songs pay homage to Wyoming roots. The band alternates between rock and roll with a dose of rockabilly, the blues, and the occasional ballad. On Friday, after acknowledging her fans' support for her as a gay musician, Alysia sang the soulful "Wyoming is for Lovers," in which she wailed the "Wy" and the "o" in poignant melancholy. It brought to mind *Brokeback Mountain*, Annie Proulx's heart-rending tale of being gay in Wyoming.

The second half of the intermission awarded attendees with a special exhibition. The orchestra's First Violinist (a First Violinist always performs as the orchestra's concert master, making sure all instruments are tuned to her perfectly-pitched violin) played electric violin for the occasion, evoking the raucous fiddle of "The Devil Went Down to Georgia." She teamed up with the orchestra's First Cellist who, for the intermission performance, played electric bass. The duo was augmented by Fiasco's drummer, who let loose on what appeared to be an oblong pine box, where his hands hit the front of the box. When the trio ended their stunt and the drummer picked up his "box," we saw that it had a sound hole cut into one side; hence, the resonance. I imagine the drummer prefers the box to, e.g., a congo drum, because the box has no rim that might impinge on a hand's palm.

After the intermission, Kraft offered a duet with Guitarist Dee Taylor, a grizzled performer with a full beard. The two traded insults in song—"the shit you dish out" was a line from the guitarist—worthy of a couple long married . . . or co-performers of long standing.

The time was 9:50 PM and band, orchestra, and singer had just finished their second song after intermission, when a smoke alarm began an insistent warning. "It's probably part of the special effects," I said to my friend, but the warning persisted. People started leaving the balcony, saying it's a fire alarm, so we did, too. In the foyer and on the sidewalk attendees milled about, uncertain, but my friend and I decided to head for the hills although no fire trucks were in

evidence. Later we concluded it must have been the output of the fog machine that triggered the warning. “It was awfully smoky down on the first floor,” my friend reminded me. The next day she learned that, after a seemingly endless interval of smoke-alarm warnings, the audience drifted back in and the musicians finished their performance with another half-hour of hits.

Kraft and her band maintain a presence on Pandora. “Put Pandora on your phone or computer, search Patti Fiasco, and her radio station comes up. They play her music and artists with music similar to hers,” prompts my friend. I note the Patti Fiasco are getting fine reviews.

The “Underground Symphony” turned into a memorable evening (in more ways than one) for all involved.

[https://www.thecheyennepost.com/opinion/cheyennes-underground-symphony/article\\_49e5a13c-aa0f-11ec-ac98-93a9c97524ac.html](https://www.thecheyennepost.com/opinion/cheyennes-underground-symphony/article_49e5a13c-aa0f-11ec-ac98-93a9c97524ac.html)

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