

**Lea DeLaria at Vixen, Provincetown, MA**  
**Performance Review By Alan Bennett Ilagan**

*You know Lea DeLaria has balls and a big, brash voice, but did you know she's got soul too? The real fireworks in Provincetown this summer are at Vixen, where DeLaria's show sets a slow-burn jazzy fire to an already-hot season.*

My boyfriend will never forget the first time he met Lea DeLaria. It was a summer weekend in Provincetown and he was walking down the beach when he happened upon a very topless DeLaria, who proceeded to poke fun at his spiky (and no doubt hideous) hairstyle. That she did it all with her boobs hanging out endeared her to him forever.

It's that outrageous outspoken attitude and swagger that first put DeLaria on the map, but it's her talent as a vocalist and performance artist that has made her one of the entertainment industry's most respected and admired stars.

She's brash, she's bold, she's ballsy – and she's got pipes reminiscent of a cross between Ethel Merman and Billie Holiday. She's held her own with the brightest luminaries of the Great White Way, standing her ground with such Broadway stars as Julie Andrews, Liza Minnelli, and Audra MacDonald, and she's stolen on-screen scenes from the likes of Goldie Hawn and Bette Midler.

Her vocal pyrotechnics can currently be heard at her summer run at Vixen in Provincetown, where she's been entralling crowds with her voice and bawdy humor. As on her last two albums, (“Play It Cool” and “Double Standards”), DeLaria delivers a show in the style that suits her – a bluesy, jazzy, swing set that she can wrap her rhythm around. With a powerhouse voice that can go from a delicately tender vocal caress to a full-out rafter-rattling bellow, she mostly sticks to a smoky, sultry mode of singing in the tradition of Billie Holiday, Shirley Horn, and Ella Fitzgerald. She alternately elicits gasps with her over-the-top comedy and sighs with the gentle way she coos a standard. (She does some pretty impressive scatting too.)

Her takes on tunes by the unlikely likes of Green Day, The Doors, Jane's Addiction, and The Pretenders form the bulk of this show, but jazz and soul hold it all together. She's set to give the same treatment to a future album of David Bowie covers. Like Bowie, DeLaria is a bit of a chameleon herself - channeling her creative energy into stand-up comedy, movies, Broadway musicals, and singing.

For her Provincetown engagement she's backed by a talented trio of New York youngsters (John Notar on keyboards, Jeff Ratner on bass, and Josh Junta on percussion), who provide solid musical support, as well as an uncanny ability to not only follow but anticipate DeLaria's next musical move. As she herself admits, “These boys know how to *swing!*”

So does DeLaria, who finds compelling ways around wildly disparate songs, unifying them with a soulful jazz touch and a torch-singer delivery. When the spotlight shines on those sparkling blue eyes and she croons a heartbreaking tune, DeLaria transcends the vapid gloss of much of today's entertainment, reaching back to a time where talent trumped glitz and glamour, and music really mattered.