

P!nk photographed Sept. 17
in Santa Barbara, Calif.

Styling by Kim Bowen.

After wrapping her high-flying, globe-spanning, record-breaking Beautiful Trauma World Tour, P!nk is wrestling with her place in pop — and wondering where she goes from here
BY NOLAN FEENEY PHOTOGRAPHED BY RUVEN AFANADOR

ROAD WARRIOR



TO GET TO P!NK'S HOUSE

in Middle of Nowhere, California, you pass through what feels like every documented biome on earth, watching as palm trees give way to cacti and as tree-covered mountains flatten into dusty grasslands. You follow a 10-step, bullet-point list of instructions involving multiple gates that, from the outside, appear to only lead to horses and dragonflies. Her assistant — who spent about five years doing logistics for the Obama administration — will likely pick you up in a golf cart and drive you across the 200-acre property. And when you finally get to P!nk's house — so neatly tucked into a grapevine-covered hill that it's almost shocking when you finally round a corner and see it — you may find her, as she was one balmy September afternoon, goofing around on her kitchen floor with her 2-year-old son, Jameson.

"Hey, can I have a kiss?" she asks the wriggling toddler before getting up to greet me. P!nk's a hugger with a dimpled smile and silvery platinum Peter Pan hair that is more iridescent in person. Her home looks like a psychedelic Mexican restaurant, or, as she puts it later, "like Dr. Seuss threw up": The walls are yellow and turquoise, the pillows every other hue on the visible spectrum. Some Halloween decorations are up early, but it can be hard to tell what's seasonal and what's permanent; on her kitchen table lies a crystal ball and a half-burnt bundle of sage. She leads me over to a lunch spread, retrieved from her favorite restaurant in town, and opens a bottle of a biodynamic white wine that tastes sweet but looks, well, a little like urine. "It's pretty funky and weird," she says, "but I like funky and weird."

P!nk doesn't like to talk about the details of where she lives — after all, getting a few hundred miles away from the fishbowl of Los Angeles was the main reason she and her husband, former motocross racer Carey Hart, moved here in 2013 with their now-8-year-old daughter, Willow. "I was like, 'I want Willow to go to a school for hippies and be a naked farm kid climbing trees,'" she says. (Their precise whereabouts, however, aren't exactly unknown to those who follow P!nk's second, semisecret career as a winemaker, which she prefers to keep separate from music so her bottles can stand on their own merits.)

Having a far-flung retreat like this has been particularly handy lately: P!nk is unwinding here after the two most chaotic — and arguably most successful — years of her life. In August, she wrapped

the 157-date Beautiful Trauma World Tour, which is not only the biggest of her career, but one of the biggest ever: After pulling in \$397.3 million, according to figures reported to Billboard Boxscore, it's the highest-grossing tour by a woman this decade and the second in history, following Madonna's 2008-09 Sticky & Sweet Tour. The trek, whose European leg also marked the first all-stadiums run of P!nk's career, now sits just outside the top 10 highest-grossing tours of all time, putting the singer in the same class as The Rolling Stones, U2 and AC/DC. Amid all that, she also found time to record her eighth album, *Hurts 2B Human*, which became her third consecutive No. 1 on the Billboard 200 this spring.

That such milestones are arriving two decades into her career makes them even more unlikely. The singer born Alecia Beth Moore is neither a veteran act who debuted in the 1970s or '80s — she's younger than almost every performer on the top 10 tours list — nor a newcomer enjoying early success in an industry fraught with ageism and sexism. On the Beautiful Trauma World Tour, P!nk played roughly as many arena shows in New York as, say, Ariana Grande will have by the end of her Sweetener World Tour. "I'm in that weird in-between place, but I've always been in that weird place," says P!nk. (Literally: Her first band in high school was called Middleground.) "Even when it was me, Britney, Christina and Jessica Simpson, no one really knew what to do with me."

The fact that she is now outperforming those artists by several metrics, from her *Billboard* chart positions to the venues she plays, may come as a surprise to some. Before becoming one of the genre's most reliable and family-friendly (if sometimes foulmouthed) entertainers, P!nk was the edgy enfant terrible to those pop princesses. But it is also not a coincidence. The story of P!nk's touring life is the story of P!nk, intertwined with almost every aspect of her career. By honing a reputation for gravity-defying spectacle and not competing for the role of reigning diva, she has become one of the most competitive overall artists of her graduating class. "I don't think I would still have a career if I wasn't good at touring because I've never won at any other angle — I've never been the 'it' girl. I've never been selling perfumes or clothes or dolls," says P!nk, who will receive the Legend of Live and tour of the year honors at the 2019 Billboard Live Music Summit and Awards. "I have really

made a career out of keeping my head down and beating the pavement."

In June, as she walked to the stage during the first of two sold-out shows at London's Wembley Stadium, her longtime manager, Roger Davies — who has steered the careers of Tina Turner, Cher, Sade and Joe Cocker — told her, "This is as good as it gets." So now the singer who has long aimed to outdo herself with every performance and project is wrestling with two big questions: What happens when a former underdog no longer has anything to prove? And where does a performer at the height of her profession go from here? As she settles into what she hopes will be a year off (as long as her prolific writing and recording habits don't get in the way), she'll give it some thought. But if there's one thing she knows by now, it's that nothing in her career has ever precisely turned out the way she planned.

"This is the longest-running fluke in history," she says, her mouth curling into a mischievous smile. "And I'm into it."

A string of photos of P!nk — from her bright-eyed grade-school years to her fuchsia mohawk days — hangs over her kitchen table. It's something her kids put together for her surprise 40th birthday party a few days earlier, when Hart orchestrated a sushi dinner and an outdoor viewing of *Pretty in Pink*, and she doesn't have the heart to take it down. The photos are a reminder of how many musical lives P!nk has lived in her career: the R&B troublemaker, the grungy rebel, the social commentator calling out "Stupid Girls" and George W. Bush, pop's patron saint of both misfits and cool moms.

When Davies took P!nk on as a client in 2001, she was at a crossroads, eager to trade the Destiny's Child-esque sounds of her debut for the angsty pop-rock of that year's blockbuster *M!ssundaztood*. Davies, a mild-mannered Melbourne, Australia, native with a sly sense of humor, was drawn to her ambition and strong sense of self. His vision for her focused on two goals: building her up as a touring artist and developing an international fan base. "Roger was one of the first to identify that you can sell records and make a ton of money, but you'll sell more records if you can tour effectively," says Brad Wavra, P!nk's North American promoter and senior vp touring at Live Nation.

At that point, P!nk hadn't toured much, and what little she had done was limited to North America and involved singing to a track. So, in accordance with Davies' plan, P!nk started playing club shows and, later, festivals across Europe to generate buzz and highlight the old-school showmanship that set her apart from what was dominating MTV. In the early 2000s, "no pop artists were doing festivals," says John Fleckenstein, co-president of RCA Records, P!nk's label. "She played a rock show doing pop songs. She put it in front of them in a way where they would say, 'Wow, I never would have gone to a P!nk show, but she's really good.'"

P!nk was willing to play anywhere, even if it meant downgrading venue sizes or paying her dues as an opener long after many other artists

THE TEAM

MANAGEMENT

RDWM
Roger Davies, founder
Dane Hoyt, day-to-day manager

BONUS MANAGEMENT
Bill Buntain, president (tour coordinator)

LABEL

RCA RECORDS
John Fleckenstein, co-president
Keith Naftaly, president of A&R
Wendy Goodman, senior vp promotion

PROMOTERS

LIVE NATION
Brad Wavra, senior vp touring (North American promoter)

MARSHALL ARTS
Barrie Marshall, founder (European promoter)

HAIR BY PAMELA NEAL, LINGERIE & DRESS BY EXCLUSIVE ARTISTS, MAKEUP BY USA LAUDAT, USING INUDA COSMETICS AT EIGHTEEN MANAGEMENT, MANICURE BY MICHELLE SANDERES, SET DESIGN BY CHARLOTTE WALINGOR

Hakan Akkya jacket,
Saint Laurent shirt, Fleur du Mal bodysuit, Naked Wardrobe bodysuit, House of Emmanuel earrings, Rinaldy A. Yundardi earring.

might agree to do so. By 2004, her early ground-work abroad had paid off, as she headlined arenas in Europe and Australia (see story, page 54) while touring behind 2003's hard rock-leaning *Try This*. But after that album underperformed in the United States, she kicked off her next North American tour a few years later playing for audiences of about 1,200 — one-tenth of some of her previous European shows — at spots like the 9:30 Club in Washington, D.C. “I didn’t care what it looked like, I didn’t care what I was making, I wanted to play,” she says. “Because you can play arenas and get used to that, but can you play a club? Can you get back to the roots of the sweat and the cigarette smoke and fucking rock out?”

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She credits an opening slot on Justin Timberlake’s 2007 arena tour with putting her back in pop’s good graces and paving the way for her own stateside arena shows in 2009. (“My first tour was opening for *NSYNC — had the time of my fucking life — and 10 tours later, I was opening for Justin,” she recalls. “The day I saw him at rehearsals, I was like, ‘Well, I’ve come a long way!’”) By then, she had scored her first solo No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 with 2008’s middle-fingers-up anthem “So What.” She had also started flying through the air: In 2004, after watching Cher’s dancers perform on aerial silks during the icon’s *Living Proof: The Farewell Tour*, she began working with aerialist Drea Weber (who helped choreograph the show) to learn how to do the same. As a kid, P!nk spent eight years doing gymnastics — “I got kicked out because I had a ‘nonteamlike attitude,’” she says with an eyeroll — and this seemed like a way to fulfill her Olympic fantasies. “And then it just graduated into other things.”

Those “other things” have included strapping herself into a harness and flying around venues at a peak speed of about 40 feet per second, which she started doing in 2009 and reprised every night of the *Beautiful Trauma World Tour*; drenching herself in water and spinning high above the audience at the 2010 Grammy Awards in a kind of

next-level baptism; and performing 200 feet off the ground on the side of a building for the 2017 American Music Awards. And those are just the physical stunts, not counting the prop cars, giant inflatables, pyrotechnics and interpretive dance routines — as well as an arsenal of top 20 hits and powerhouse vocals — that make her concerts and TV appearances must-sees. “There are very few artists I stay till the end for,” says Wavra, “but I stay until the end for P!nk every night.”

P!nk thinks that one day, she’ll take her high-wire act as far as it can go and have no choice but to scale back. “What the fuck else can you do except light yourself on fire?” she deadpans. (That point, says Davies, is “probably at least 10 years away.”) And she knows there are P!nk haters out there who joke about her acrobatics, saying she relies on them as a crutch (even though there are stripped-down, no-frills moments at her concerts, too). For now, though, she likes zooming around venues, getting

close to all of her fans — not just the ones who bought the pricier seats. “It makes it an experience as opposed to a musical concert,” she says. “The most important part of the show, no matter what, is if you can strip all the smoke and mirrors away and sound good live. But, shit, when you can have the smoke and mirrors I have, why not?”

Her stage setup is designed “to maximize the sellable seats,” says Wavra, which allows P!nk to keep her ticket prices reasonable without sacrific-

ing production value. “Roger and P!nk understand what that last thousand seats could mean when you’re doing 180 shows.” Though her worldwide average ticket price of \$128.64 is, as P!nk puts it, “still fucking expensive,” she says she has fought members of her team “very hard” to keep prices from reaching the higher numbers they could likely charge. Growing up the unruly daughter of an ER nurse mother and Vietnam vet father in working-class Doylestown, Pa., P!nk saw the sacrifices

her mom made to take her to musicals in Philadelphia. Now, before her shows, she spends her vocal warmup time on Twitter reading about who’s coming to see her and what they might be celebrating — a reminder to give them their money’s worth.

“I always tell people before we go out, ‘I don’t give a shit about the *what*, I don’t give a shit about the *who*, all I care about is the *why* — why we are here and why we are doing this,’” she says. She eases into an impromptu minispeech with an



“My first concert was Billy Joel, and my dream concert was Madonna,” says P!nk. “She was an *entertainer* — she wasn’t just a singer or a dancer.”

Piers Atkinson headpiece, Malcolm McLaren shirt, Calvin Klein tie, Brian Lichtenberg bodysuit, Amiri shirt (around waist), Danskin tights, Santee Alley earrings.

almost trancelike intensity, staring out the kitchen window and tapping her knuckles on the table to punctuate her sentences. “We are going to be connected to ourselves and to each other. And we’re going to connect to the fucking audience and the one person whose life is going to change tonight. Who’s going to feel like they have a place in the world. Like they belong. Like diversity is OK. Like being your true self is OK. Like being fucking loud is OK. Like crying is OK. Like being not the best but feeling great is OK. It’s all fucking OK. That’s what we do. That’s magic.”

In April, while she was still on the road, P!nk released her eighth album, *Hurts 2B Human*. Arriving only 18 months after *Beautiful Trauma*, the set marks the shortest time between albums in her career. During down weeks between tour legs, she’d pop over to L.A. for writing sessions. She turned a room in her house into a makeshift studio and invited singer-songwriter Wrabel to come work with her. At first, P!nk thought she’d put out an EP, but the number of songs kept climbing. “I just never stopped writing,” she says.

Beautiful Trauma had marked a career-best for P!nk, earning a higher-than-forecast 408,000 equivalent album units during its first week in 2017, according to Nielsen Music — at the time, the year’s biggest debut from a female artist. That sizable sum was in part thanks to a concert ticket/album sale redemption offer that included the cost of the CD in the price of a ticket for the *Beautiful Trauma* World Tour and allowed fans to redeem a copy. (Only redeemed copies could count as sales.) With her tour winding down and no new dates for a similar bundle — and with little time for promotion on the road — P!nk’s team warned her not to expect *Hurts 2B Human* to go No. 1. “Our whole conversation was, ‘Don’t beat yourself up if it doesn’t do as well as the last one,’” she recalls.

Yet not only did it top the Billboard 200, fans bought it: Of the 115,000 equivalent album units it earned in its first week, 95,000 were album sales. That ratio of sales to total units — about 83% — is unusually high compared with figures for other chart-topping albums this year, especially so among pop albums. It’s a reminder that performing to an arena every night is truly a great way to market new music, but also that P!nk’s what-you-see-is-what-you-get authenticity still resonates deeply. “She’s not trying to be a pop artist from 10, 15 years ago,” says Fleckenstein. “And people are running along with her.”

P!nk has another theory as to why her fans still buy albums: “We’re old!” she says, chuckling. “Older artists don’t stream.” She’s exaggerating, of course, but her management and label have thought carefully about how to ensure her place in an industry that’s moving further away from physical albums and even digital downloads. Before the release of *Beautiful Trauma*, “We spent a lot of time making educational tours to the Spotify and Apple offices to make sure they were aware of the potency of Alecia,” says Fleckenstein. (She later partnered with Apple Music for a documentary about the making

of the album to coincide with its release.) He’s also confident she’ll over-index in the voice-activation space as Amazon devices and competitors become more common in homes, noting that P!nk is “one of those rare artists that appeal to the entire family, and that is a bull’s-eye for in-room playback.”

Still, she’s perhaps already well-equipped to transition to the streaming economy. P!nk’s albums have always covered diverse styles, but *Hurts 2B Human* especially embraces the eclectic tastes of the streaming era, touching on everything from thumping dance-pop (the Cash Cash collaboration

she’d win two more in later years, but these were her first solo nominations. “I was with Carey, and I was holding on to his arm so fucking tight because I wanted it so bad,” she says. But this was the year Norah Jones swept the Grammys with *Come Away With Me*, and as Jones started to pick up what would become an armful of trophies that night, P!nk began to break down.

Then, Robin Williams, who was sitting in front of her, turned around “and launched into a 15-minute stand-up routine for me,” she says. “He made fun of everybody that walked by. He was so compassionate

“I’ve never had a plan. This was a dream that got away from me. I’ll do whatever. I’ll open for Justin Timberlake again, I don’t give a shit.”

“Can We Pretend”) to rootsy piano ballads (the Chris Stapleton duet “Love Me Anyway,” which RCA serviced to country radio in September). And while a team-up with an artist like Khalid on the title track might resemble a label-orchestrated bid for new listeners, RCA chairman/CEO Peter Edge says it is P!nk asking for those sessions, not them: “She said, ‘It’d be great to finish this with Khalid. Could you make an introduction?’”

P!nk relishes playing the role of studio den mother to next-gen songwriting talent like Julia Michaels and Wrabel, but she is often self-effacing when she talks about her own contributions to the industry, despite having her fingerprints all over popular music. With her open-veined songwriting and rebellious spirit, she became the 21st century’s archetypal pop outsider, operating within the top 40 machine on her own terms. And before today’s divas were naming names and airing their dirty laundry in song, P!nk was calling out L.A. Reid for wanting to change “everything” about her (2001’s “Don’t Let Me Get Me”) and casting Hart in the video for the song inspired by their short-lived split (“So What”) while they were still separated.

Yet if you ask P!nk about her own legacy, she’ll probably shrug it off like so: “People know me, and I have songs that people would recognize, [but] they’d recognize the song — they wouldn’t know who sang it.” But now, with the No. 1 albums and the stadiums and the 2017 MTV Video Vanguard Award, doesn’t she feel like she finally got invited to the party? She shakes her head. “I was the kid who wasn’t invited over to anybody else’s house because their parents hated me,” she says. “You grow up with that fucking chip on your shoulder.”

It’s not that she never craved the validation, however. She remembers the 2003 Grammys, when she was up for two awards for *Missundaztood* and “Get the Party Started.” She had already won a Grammy as a part of the “Lady Marmalade” squad, and

and lovely to me that it ended up being one of my favorite moments of my career. I was so glad I fucking lost. My Grammy would be sitting down at my guesthouse collecting dust, but I have the memory of Robin Williams being an amazing person.” This is the lesson she learned: If you spend all your time and energy trying to get to where you think you’re supposed to be, you’ll never get to where you really want to go.

P!nk once said she would stop touring once Willow was school-age. Seven years, two tours and one additional kid later, that clearly hasn’t happened yet. “There have been many times when I have been sitting in the corner of arena bathrooms crying and saying to myself, ‘There’s a reason why women don’t do this, there’s a reason why moms don’t do this,’ because it’s fucking impossible at times,” she says. “The last couple of months, Willow was over it. She wants to be home and do BMX and swim team and gymnastics and all the shit that an 8-year-old wants to do. So she was asking to go home, and that’s when I knew: From here on out, it changes.”

P!nk isn’t sure what her future touring life might look like. She’s open to a Las Vegas residency, which offers an easy schedule for pop-star parents and a stage production freed from touring logistics. (On the European stadium leg of the *Beautiful Trauma* World Tour, she had three different versions of her stage show in circulation — one being broken down, one being set up and one already in transit to another city.) “Think about the show I could do in Vegas,” she says gleefully. On the other hand, she has heard that crowds in Vegas can be rough, and, besides, she loves to travel: to find cool wine bars in far-off places, to organize field trips with members of her roughly 150-person touring family on days off. “On the last

“The surprising thing about this last tour was there were a lot more straight men than I’ve ever been used to,” says P!nk. “Maybe they feel like I’m the best friend from college or something?”

Nour Hammiar jacket.

tour we took everyone to this theme park in Stockholm; we do art nights," says Davies. "That's what has made these long tours really enjoyable."

P!nk is sure of one milestone that is no longer on her bucket list: playing the Super Bowl halftime show. After singing the national anthem at the 2018 game, she was approached about the 2019 headlining slot, though it never came to fruition. Today, between the rampant social-media criticism that such large-scale performances invite ("Everybody that does it gets so persecuted") and the NFL's treatment of former quarterback Colin Kaepernick following his protests of police brutality, the gig no longer appeals. "I'd probably take a knee and get carried out," she says, echoing stars like Rihanna and Cardi B, who have turned down Super Bowl opportunities in solidarity with Kaepernick and other players.

"They should give it to Janet Jackson," she suggests. "That's who should be doing the Super Bowl. There's rumblings around J. Lo, Rihanna — they all deserve it. They should only give it, because of the controversy, to African-American or Latina women for a while." (A few days after our conversation, the NFL will announce Jennifer Lopez and Shakira as the 2020 performers, the first since the NFL and JAY-Z announced a partnership in which the rapper will consult on live entertainment and social-justice initiatives.)

There will definitely be many more albums: P!nk says she owes RCA two more on her contract and hopes to re-sign with the label afterward. While P!nk recorded *Hurts 2B Human*, she also linked up with singer-songwriter Dallas Green — who records under the name City and Colour and with whom she has a side project called You+Me — and wrote several songs for their next, still unfinished release. But after that? "I always said I was going to go out on top, so maybe this it." She lets the thought of touring retirement hang in the air for a long moment. "But then you look at Bette Midler, and you're like, 'She's having so much fun, maybe I'll never quit!'" She lets out a deep, staccato laugh. "I've never had a plan. This was a dream that got away from me. I'll do whatever. I'll open for Justin Timberlake again, I don't give a shit."

For the time being, she'll stick to shuttling Willow around to her various extracurriculars, getting Jameson into preschool ("They're going to call me: 'Um, Mrs. Hart? Your son ate the school pet again. Can you come get him?'") and appreciating what most pop stars can only dream of: having time and room to become her most realized self outside of her 20s — and proving that success and comfort in your own skin aren't mutually exclusive.

"I didn't like 13. I don't really remember digging 21. Thirty was kind of weird," she reflects. "Forty was the first birthday I've had where I've been like, 'Fuck yeah, this is awesome! Yes! I know *exactly* who I am!' And now I can just chill out a little bit. And then 60 is going to be like, 'Fuck that, turn it back up.' I'm going to be on roller skates, with fucking rollers in my hair, house plants everywhere." She pauses to glance up at the string of old photos, still hanging over her, then tilts her head back to laugh one more time. **B**

ON TOP DOWN UNDER

How P!nk won scores of Aussie fans — and learned that an extended stay halfway around the world pays dividends

BY ERIC FRANKENBERG

P!nk vividly remembers one of the first times she played a show in Australia. "You expect someone in the front row to be like, 'Yeah, I love this song!'" she recalls. "Instead they were like, 'Tell them to turn your fucking microphone up!'" She was thrilled to recognize kindred spirits in the crowds. "I think they can smell bullshit a mile away, and I've never handed them any," she says.

Merely a few years later, in 2009, her fan base Down Under had grown so much that she became the Brisbane Entertainment Centre's biggest-selling artist ever, earning a unique honor from the venue: a row of six toilets, dubbed the "Pink Ladies."

Since then, P!nk's touring presence in Australia and New Zealand has only grown. On her latest worldwide trek, the Beautiful Trauma World Tour in 2018, P!nk spent over two months in Australia and New Zealand — 42 shows. That's a recent high for the region that only she has previously surpassed, with 46 dates on the Truth About Love Tour in 2013-14 and an astounding 59 shows on her 2009 Funhouse Tour. And though her overall show count has decreased during her last three tours in the region, increased ticket sales and prices (including a recent \$143.65 average for Australia — significantly higher than that of other visiting pop tours) have continued to pump up her grosses.

According to Billboard Box-score, P!nk is the highest-grossing act of the 2010s in Oceania with about \$135 million — well above the next-highest, Bruce Springsteen, with around \$85 million, and vastly greater than any of the region's homegrown stars. That this particular artist has found such astounding success halfway around the globe "is not a fluke, nor a product of a market change or quirk," says Michael Coppel, chairman of Live Nation Australasia. "There is an uncanny synchronicity between P!nk's personality and her outgoing, upfront

nature that meshes well with the Aussie ethos."

Her 42 concerts in 2018 were split among five cities in Australia and two in New Zealand, with the singer playing an average of six arena shows in each. Her extended stays in Oceania are especially impressive given the limited route that U.S. artists generally take across the continent, compared with the relatively endless expanse of stops that the North American market offers; P!nk played 46 shows in the United States and Canada on the same tour in 2018. (Because Australia and New Zealand have a limited number of markets — and due to the high costs of moving concert productions across continents — Australian ticket prices have historically been higher than their U.S. equivalents.)

The venues P!nk played in 2018 ranged in capacity from 7,548 in Brisbane to 37,470 in Dunedin, New Zealand, the lone stadium on her Oceania sweep. Ultimately, she sold 559,361 tickets, 98% of the total combined capacity. Her five headline tours have all taken place during the region's winter, ruling out open-air stadiums but also ensuring less competition, as the timing coincides with the height of summer festival season stateside.

P!nk is far from the only marquee star to have seized upon the market opportunity in the region. Katy Perry played 25 Australian shows on her 2014-15 Prismatic World Tour, planning multiple concerts in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, much like P!nk. In 2018, Ed Sheeran sold over 1 million tickets in Australia on his record-setting ÷ (Divide) Tour, earning \$82.6 million from 18 stadium shows. The same year, Taylor Swift prioritized Australia over a full-blown European tour, grossing \$27 million in five stadiums across the continent on her Reputation Stadium Tour.

"The distance isn't [considered] as far as it used to be," says veteran promoter Michael Gudinski, chairman of Melbourne-based entertainment agency Mushroom

Group (which owns concert promoters including Frontier Touring Group). "A lot of acts go through here to South America; a lot of acts come from Asia to here. It is a lot easier to tour here than going country by country in Europe or Southeast Asia."

And while P!nk's routes in the region have focused on arenas that typically top out at 15,000 tickets, Elton John will play a mix of major markets and countryside towns when he travels there in November for 40 dates (34 in Australia and six in New Zealand).



P!nk onstage at Perth Arena in Australia in 2018.

Though his show count narrowly falls behind P!nk's, his potential grosses could be record-breaking, as he will cover a more even mix of arenas and stadiums.

Overall, grosses in Oceania have increased tour-over-tour for P!nk, Sheeran and Swift, as well as a host of other acts making extended visits to Australia and New Zealand. "Australian audiences appreciate the tyranny of distance that artists have to travel," says Matthew Lazarus-Hall, senior vp Asia Pacific at AEG Presents. "There is an affection or brand loyalty that can be harnessed."

Additional reporting by Nolan Feeney and Alexei Barrionuevo.