

## **PINK MARTINI BIOGRAPHY**

In 1994 in his hometown of Portland, Oregon, Thomas Lauderdale was working in politics, with the intention of eventually running for office. Like other eager politicians-in-training, he went to every political fundraiser under the sun... but was dismayed to find the music at these events underwhelming, lackluster, loud and un-neighborly. Drawing inspiration from music from all over the world – crossing genres of classical, jazz and old-fashioned pop – and hoping to appeal to conservatives and liberals alike, he founded the “little orchestra” Pink Martini in 1994 provide more beautiful and inclusive musical soundtracks for political fundraisers for causes such as civil rights, affordable housing, cleaning up the Willamette River, funding for libraries, public broadcasting, education and parks.

One year later, Lauderdale called China Forbes, a Harvard classmate who was living in New York City, and asked her to join Pink Martini. They began to write songs together. Their first song – “Sympathique” (*Je ne veux pas travailler*)- became an overnight sensation in France, was nominated for “Song of the Year” at France’s Victoires de la Musique Awards, and to this day remains a mantra (“Je ne veux pas travailler” or “I don’t want to work”) for striking French workers. Says Lauderdale, “We’re very much an American band, but we spend a lot of time abroad and therefore have the incredible diplomatic opportunity to represent a broader, more inclusive America... the America which remains the most heterogeneously populated country in the world... composed of people of every country, every language, every religion. Except for Native Americans, all of us are immigrants from every country, of every language, of every religion.”

**“PINK MARTINI IS A ROLLICKING AROUND-THE-WORLD MUSICAL ADVENTURE... IF THE UNITED NATIONS HAD A HOUSE BAND IN 1962, HOPEFULLY WE’D BE THAT BAND.”– THOMAS LAUDERDALE, BANDLEADER/PIANIST**

Featuring a dozen musicians, with songs in 25 languages, Pink Martini performs its multilingual repertoire on concert stages and with symphony orchestras throughout Europe, Asia, Greece, Turkey, the Middle East, Northern Africa, Australia, New Zealand, South America and North America. Pink Martini made its European debut at the Cannes Film Festival in 1997 and its orchestral debut with the Oregon Symphony in 1998 under the direction of Norman Leyden. Since then, the band has gone on to play with more than 70 orchestras around the world, including multiple engagements with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, the Boston Pops, the National Symphony at the Kennedy Center, the San Francisco Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Sydney Symphony at the Sydney Opera House, and the BBC Concert Orchestra at Royal Albert Hall in London.

Other major appearances include the grand opening of the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s Frank Gehry-designed Walt Disney Concert Hall, with return sold-out engagements for New Year’s Eve 2003, 2004, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2016 and 2018; sold-out concerts at Carnegie Hall; the opening party of the remodeled Museum of Modern Art in New York

City; the Los Angeles Philharmonic's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary party in 2018; the Governor's Ball at the 80th Annual Academy Awards in 2008; three sold out shows with the Sydney Symphony at the renowned Sydney Opera House; sold-out concerts at Royal Albert Hall in London in 2011, 2013 and 2016, multiple sold-out appearances, and a festival opening, at the Montreal Jazz Festival, two sold-out concerts at Paris' legendary L'Olympia Theatre in 2011 and 2016; and Paris' fashion house Lanvin's 10-year anniversary celebration for designer Alber Elbaz in 2012. In 2014, Pink Martini was inducted into both the Hollywood Bowl Hall of Fame and the Oregon Music Hall of Fame.

Television appearances include *The Late Show with David Letterman*, *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, *Later with Jools Holland*, and a feature on *CBS Sunday Morning*. The band created a nationally-broadcast 2015 NPR holiday concert special, *Joy to the World: A Holiday Spectacular*, and has been featured on multiple New Year's Eve broadcasts on NPR's *Toast of the Nation*.

Pink Martini has sold over 3 million albums worldwide on their own independent label Heinz Records (named after Lauderdale's dog). The band's debut album *Sympathique* was released in 1997, and quickly became an international phenomenon, garnering the group nominations for "Song of the Year" and "Best New Artist" in France's Victoires de la Musique Awards in 2000. Pink Martini released *Hang On Little Tomato* in 2004, *Hey Eugene!* in 2007 and *Splendor in the Grass* in 2009. In November 2010 the band released *Joy to the World*—a festive, multi-denominational holiday album featuring songs from around the globe. *Joy to the World* received glowing reviews and was carried in Starbucks stores during the 2010 and 2011 holiday seasons. All five albums have gone gold in France, Canada, Greece and Turkey.

In Fall 2011 the band released two albums – *A Retrospective*, a collection of the band's most beloved songs spanning their 18-year career, which includes eight previously unreleased tracks, and *1969*, an album of collaborations with legendary Japanese singer Saori Yuki. *1969* has been certified platinum in Japan, reaching #2 on the Japanese charts, with the *Japan Times* raving "the love and respect Saori Yuki and Pink Martini have for the pop tradition shines through on every track." The release of *1969* marked the first time a Japanese artist hit the American Billboard charts since Kyu Sakamoto released "Sukiyaki" in 1963.

The band has collaborated with numerous artists, including Phyllis Diller, Jimmy Scott, Carol Channing, Rita Moreno, Jane Powell, Rufus Wainwright, Japanese legends Saori Yuki and Hiroshi Wada, Henri Salvador, Chavela Vargas, New York performer Joey Arias, puppeteer Basil Twist, Georges Moustaki, Henri Salvador, Michael Feinstein, Charo, Doc Severinsen, filmmaker Gus Van Sant, Courtney Taylor Taylor of The Dandy Warhols, clarinetist and conductor Norman Leyden, Italian actress and songwriter Alba Clemente, DJ Johnny Dynell and Chi Chi Valenti, Faith Prince, Mamie Van Doren, the original cast of *Sesame Street*, the Portland Youth Philharmonic, Mariachi Aztlan of Pueblo High School in Tucson, Arizona; the Jefferson High School Gospel Choir; the Royal Blues of Grant High School; the Pacific Youth Choir of Portland, Oregon; and

Karen Early (who played sleigh bells and crash cymbals on the band's holiday album and the band's collaborative album with Japanese singer Saori Yuki, respectively).

Pink Martini has an illustrious roster of regular guest artists: NPR's Ari Shapiro, host of *All Things Considered*; Cantor Ida Rae Cahana (who was cantor at the Central Synagogue in NYC for five years); koto player Masumi Timson; harpist Maureen Love; and Kim Hastreiter (the publisher/editor-in-chief of *Paper* magazine).

In January 2012 bandleader Thomas Lauderdale began work on Pink Martini's seventh studio album when he recorded the Charlie Chaplin song "Smile" with the legendary Phyllis Diller. The album, titled *Get Happy*, was released in September 2013 and features 16 globe-spanning songs in nine languages. The band's beloved vocalist China Forbes anchors the recording, and she was joined by her co-lead singer Storm Large, recording with Pink Martini for the first time, along with a cavalcade of special guests including Rufus Wainwright, Philippe Katerine, Meow Meow, The von Trapps & Ari Shapiro.

And while still in the studio for *Get Happy*, Lauderdale simultaneously began work on the band's eighth studio album, *Dream a Little Dream*, featuring Sofia, Melanie, Amanda and August von Trapp, the actual great-grandchildren of Captain and Maria von Trapp, made famous by the movie *The Sound of Music*. These siblings have been singing together for over a dozen years and have toured all over the world in concert. Drawn into the magical orbit of Thomas Lauderdale, they now live together in a house in Portland, Oregon and have been frequent guest performers with Pink Martini for the past several years. The album, released in March 2014, traverses the world, from Sweden to Rwanda to China to Bavaria, and features guest appearances by The Chieftains, Wayne Newton, "Jungle" Jack Hanna, and Charmian Carr (who played Liesl in the original *Sound of Music*).

In 2016, Pink Martini released its ninth studio album, *Je dis oui!*, which features vocals from China Forbes, Storm Large, Ari Shapiro, fashion guru Ikram Goldman, civil rights activist Kathleen Saadat, and Rufus Wainwright. The album's 15 tracks span eight languages (French, Farsi, Armenian, Portuguese, Arabic, Turkish, Xhosa and English), and affirms the band's 23-year history of global inclusivity and collaborative spirit. In 2018, Pink Martini released a special 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of its first album *Sympathique*, featuring the band's iconic arrangement of Ravel's "Bolero", now in the public domain and finally reinstated on the album after a 20-year absence. In 2019, Thomas Lauderdale and members of Pink Martini collaborated on several new albums. *Hotel Amour* is the long awaited collaboration between Thomas Lauderdale and the international singing sensation Meow Meow and features guest appearances by Rufus Wainwright, The von Trapps, Barry Humphries (of Dame Edna fame), and the inimitable late French pianist and composer, Michel Legrand. *Tomorrow* with Jimmie Herrod and *Besame Mucho* with Edna Vazquez feature the bands newest vocalists along side the rest of Pink Martini's band. Both EPs were released in October 2019 and were recorded coproduced by China Forbes and Thomas Lauderdale in Portland, Oregon.

### **Thomas M. Lauderdale**

Raised on a plant nursery in rural Indiana, Pink Martini bandleader Thomas M. Lauderdale began piano lessons at age six with Patricia Garrison. When his family moved to Portland in 1982, he began studying with Sylvia Killman, who to this day continues to serve as his coach and mentor. He has appeared as soloist with numerous orchestras and ensembles, including the Oregon Symphony, the Seattle Symphony, Portland Youth Philharmonic, Chamber Music Northwest and several collaborations with Oregon Ballet Theatre. In 2008, he played Gershwin's Piano Concerto in F with the Oregon Symphony under the direction of Christoph Campestrini.

Active in Oregon politics since a student at U.S. Grant High School (where he was student body president), Thomas served under Portland Mayor Bud Clark and Oregon governor Neil Goldschmidt. In 1991, he worked under Portland City Commissioner Gretchen Kafoury on the drafting and passage of the city's civil rights ordinance. He graduated with honors from Harvard with a degree in History and Literature in 1992. He spent most of his collegiate years, however, in cocktail dresses, taking on the role of "cruise director" ... throwing waltzes with live orchestras and ice sculptures, disco masquerades with gigantic pineapples on wheels, midnight swimming parties, and operating a Tuesday night coffeehouse called Café Mardi.

Instead of running for political office, Lauderdale founded Pink Martini in 1994 to play political fundraisers for progressive causes such as civil rights, the environment, affordable housing and public broadcasting. In addition to his work with Pink Martini, Lauderdale has most recently completed two long awaited collaborations with dear friends. In 2018 he completed *Love for Sale*, an album of jazz standards with singer/civil rights leader Kathleen Saadat, that began as a gift to a few friends and ended up being a Billboard Jazz charts-ranking album the month it was released.

In 2019, Thomas Lauderdale and members of Pink Martini collaborated on a new release with the international singing sensation Meow Meow. The album *Hotel Amour* - the culmination of almost a decade of work- features guest appearances by Rufus Wainwright, The von Trapps, Barry Humphries (of Dame Edna fame), and the inimitable late French pianist and composer, Michel Legrand.

Lauderdale currently serves on the boards of the Oregon Symphony, Pioneer Courthouse Square, the Oregon Historical Society, Confluence Project with Maya Lin and the Derek Rieth Foundation.

### **China Forbes**

China Forbes was born and raised in Cambridge, Massachusetts where she graduated cum laude from Harvard and was awarded the Jonathan Levy Prize for "most promising actor". She headed to New York City and appeared in regional theatre and off-Broadway productions, also fronting her first band in numerous NYC clubs. Her solo album "Love Handle" was released in 1995 and she was chosen to sing "Ordinary Girl," the theme song to the TV show *Clueless*.

It was that same year Harvard classmate Thomas Lauderdale invited her to sing with Pink Martini, and she has since written many of the band's most beloved songs with Lauderdale, including "Sympathique," "Lilly," "Clementine," "Let's Never Stop Falling in Love," and "Over the Valley" to name a few. Her original song "Hey Eugene" is the title track of Pink Martini's third album and many of her songs can also be heard on television and film. She sang "Qué Será Será" over the credits of Jane Campion's film "In the Cut" and her song "The Northern Line" appears at the end of sister Maya Forbes' directorial debut "Infinitely Polar Bear" (Sony Pictures Classics). Both films star Mark Ruffalo by coincidence.

With Pink Martini, China has appeared on The Late Show with David Letterman, Late Night with Conan O'Brien, The Tonight Show with Jay Leno and Later with Jools Holland. She has performed songs in over 20 languages and has sung duets with Rufus Wainwright, Michael Feinstein, Carol Channing and many other wonderful artists. She has performed in venues from Carnegie Hall to Red Rocks, the Hollywood Bowl to Paris's l'Olympia and Sydney Opera House. China also performs Opera recitals annually with members of the Oregon Symphony in its free community outreach program "Classical Up Close". Her second solo album "'78" came out on Heinz Records in 2008, a collection of autobiographical folk-rock songs.

China is currently at work on another solo album of original material, as well as preparing her first solo concert with symphony orchestra. Originally scheduled for May 2, 2020, this concert with the Oregon Symphony has been postponed to November 18, 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic.