

Pink Martini

Featuring China Forbes

30th Anniversary Tour

Feb 27 / Cobb Great Hall

Thomas M. Lauderdale, *piano*
China Forbes, *lead vocals*

Hunter Noack, *guest piano*
Thomas Barber, *trumpet*
Antonis Andreou, *trombone*
Nicholas Crosa, *violin*
Phil Baker, *upright bass*
Dan Faehnle, *guitar*
Timothy Nishimoto, *vocals and percussion*
Reinhardt Melz, *drums and percussion*
Miguel Bernal, *congas and percussion*

The performance will run approximately 115 minutes, with one intermission.

Program will be announced from stage.

Media Partner: Michigan Public

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Pink Martini

In 1994, in his hometown of Portland, Oregon, Thomas Lauderdale was working in politics, thinking he would run for mayor one day. 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. His aim? To provide more beautiful and inclusive musical soundtracks for political fundraisers supporting causes such as civil rights, affordable housing, the environment, libraries, public broadcasting, education, and parks.

One year later, Lauderdale called China Forbes, a Harvard classmate living in New York City, and asked her to join Pink Martini. They began to write songs together. Their first, “Sympathique,” was an overnight sensation in France and nominated for Song of the Year at the Victoires de la Musique Awards. To this day, it remains a mantra for striking workers: “Je ne veux pas travailler (I don’t want to work)”.

Pink Martini has sold well over 3 million albums worldwide on their own independent label Heinz Records (named after Lauderdale’s dog). 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 affirm the band's history of global inclusivity and collaborative spirit. In 2019, Pink Martini collaborated on a new release with the international singing sensation Meow Meow, entitled *Hotel Amour*, and also released two 5-song EPs, *Besame Mucho*, featuring regular guest singer Edna Vazquez, and *Tomorrow*, featuring regular guest singer Jimmie Herrod, a finalist on 2021's season of NBC's *America's Got Talent*. During their pandemic hiatus, the band released two new digital singles written by Thomas Lauderdale, China Forbes, and producer Jim Bianco, "Let's Be Friends," and "The Lemonade Song," which has over 10 million streams on Spotify alone.

Featuring more than a dozen musicians, Pink Martini performs its multilingual repertoire throughout the world. 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."

The band made its European debut at the Cannes Film Festival in 1997 and its orchestral debut with the Oregon Symphony the following year. Since then, Pink Martini has played with more than 50 orchestras internationally, including Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Pops, National Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, and the BBC Concert Orchestra at London's Royal Albert Hall. Other appearances include a performance at the official post-Oscars celebration Governors Ball, four sold-out concerts at Carnegie Hall, the opening party of the remodeled Museum of Modern Art in New York, multiple sellouts and a festival opening at Montreal Jazz Festival, and multiple appearances, including sellouts, at the Hollywood Ball and Walt Disney Concert Hall in downtown Los Angeles. In its 20th year, Pink Martini was inducted into the Hollywood Bowl Hall of Fame and the Oregon Music Hall of Fame. In 2024, the band is celebrating its 30th anniversary.

Thomas M. Lauderdale was raised on a plant nursery in rural Indiana and 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. Currently, Thomas is collaborating with the iconic Iranian singer, Googoosh on her forthcoming album. Spring of 2023 saw the long-awaited release of *Thomas Lauderdale Meets the Pilgrims*, his collaboration with Portland’s own surf-rock indie icons, Satan’s Pilgrims.

Lauderdale currently serves on the boards of the Oregon Symphony, Pioneer Courthouse Square, the Oregon Historical Society, and the Confluence Project with Maya Lin. He lives in Portland with his partner Hunter Noack.

China Forbes, was born and raised in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She graduated cum laude from Harvard, majoring in painting and English literature, with a minor in theater. After winning the Jonathan Levy Prize at Harvard for “most promising actor,” Forbes earned her Equity card appearing in New York regional theater and off-Broadway productions while also performing regularly as a singer/songwriter in NYC clubs. Her first album *Love Handle* (November Records) was released in 1995, and

she was chosen to sing "Ordinary Girl," the theme song to the TV spin-off of the movie, *Clueless* (ABC/UPN).

It was then that Harvard friend and classmate Thomas Lauderdale invited her to sing with fledgling Portland, Oregon band Pink Martini. China has fronted the little orchestra ever since. Co-writing many of Pink Martini's most beloved songs with Lauderdale beginning with "Sympathique (Je ne veux pas travailler)," the duo also composed "Lilly," "Hang on Little Tomato," "Una Notte a Napoli," "The Lemonade Song" and "Let's Never Stop Falling in Love," among many others. In 2000, "Sympathique" was nominated for song of the year at (the French Grammy awards) Les Victoires de la Musique.

Forbes's original song "Hey Eugene" appears on her second solo album '78 (Heinz Records), a collection of autobiographical folk-rock songs, and is also the title track of Pink Martini's third album. Her voice and songs have been featured prominently on acclaimed films and television soundtracks such as *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*, *Hitch*, *Emily in Paris*, *Parks and Rec*, *Money Heist*, *Sherlock* and season two of *The White Lotus*. She sings "Que Sera, Sera" over the credits of Jane Campion's film *In the Cut*, and her original song "The Northern Line" plays over the end credits of sister Maya Forbes' autobiographical directorial debut *Infinitely Polar Bear* (Sony Pictures Classics).

With Pink Martini, Forbes has appeared on *The Late Show with David Letterman*, *Later with Jools Holland*, *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, and twice on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. She has duetted with Rufus Wainwright, Michael Feinstein, Carol Channing, and Little Jimmy Scott. Singing in over 20 languages on nine Pink Martini studio albums, China has graced the legendary stages of Carnegie Hall, Red Rocks, the Hollywood Bowl, Paris's l'Olympia, the Sydney Opera House and Royal Albert Hall.

In 2021, China released her post-pandemic anthem "Full Circle," followed by her suicide prevention anthem "Rise," both featured tracks on her upcoming solo album *The Road*, released in May 2024. China Forbes is the recipient of the 2022 Ella Fitzgerald Award at the Montreal International Jazz Festival. Previous winners include Diana Ross, Etta James, Liza Minelli, Diana Krall, and Aretha Franklin.