

Patti's biography, updated in 2022. If you quote it later, be sure to update the numbers of years! It is oriented toward teaching, but omit the last two or three paragraphs and it becomes general.

Patti Cathcart

In 2022 Patti Cathcart celebrates 44 years with her guitarist/husband Tuck Andress as the duo Tuck & Patti. Their worldwide success following the 1988 release of their first CD, **Tears of Joy**, and their lifetime dedication to exploring what can be done with just a voice and guitar, has guaranteed that she is most commonly known as "Patti of Tuck & Patti."

A Bay Area native, Cathcart knew at age six that singing would be her life work. By age 10 she was directing choirs; she played violin in school orchestras for 11 years. She also taught herself some piano and guitar, even performing as a solo folksinger, as well as in musicals and bands during high school. Inspired by attending Woodstock in 1969, Patti passed up the opportunity to break the gender barrier at Princeton University, instead immersing herself in the historic San Francisco musical scene.

"Growing up in the Bay Area during the historic 60's was an awe-inspiring experience. I saw Big Mama Thornton, Otis Redding, Muddy Waters, Albert King, Carlos Santana, Janis Joplin, the Beatles, the Who, Cream, Blind Faith, Derek and the Dominoes, Sly Stone, Billy Preston, Aretha Franklin, Jimmy Reed, B. B. King, Dr. John, the Rolling Stones, Stevie Wonder, Wes Montgomery, Thelonius Monk, Roland Kirk, Miles Davis, Sarah Vaughn, Carmen McCrae and so many others. It was an unbelievable education. The Fillmore, Carousel Ballroom and Winterland were like home to me. I was at Woodstock and Altamont. Bill Graham always watched out for me. Jimi Hendrix called me "Foxy Lady" on my birthday one year. I was at every show he ever performed in the Bay Area. I jammed with hundreds of musicians. It was a very exciting time.

"From the beginning I have listened to all styles of music: Gospel, classical, jazz, soul, folk, blues, rock, country, music of other cultures; everything. My first love as a jazz singer was and always will be Ella Fitzgerald, but Sarah Vaughn, Carmen McCrae, Nina Simone and countless others have affected me deeply, as well as Joni Mitchell, Laura Nyro and singers of all different styles. John Coltrane's A Love Supreme changed my life. Stevie Wonder set me on my songwriting path. Miles Davis, Roland Kirk, Yma Sumac--the more influences I list, the more I can think of that I'm leaving out. I always say that once I hear it, it's mine the next day. Al Jarreau's Live In Europe" album was a moment of truth for me; the moment I heard it I felt that he had raised the bar for all jazz singers, and knew I had to go back to the drawing board. He inspired me to start exploring mouth percussion. Of course Bobby McFerrin blew everyone's mind. We were fortunate to hear and work with him a lot back when we were all playing the same small clubs in the Bay Area.

"Most of my professional career before meeting Tuck was with lots of Bay Area original bands, but, coming out of the San Francisco music scene, I would often play with bands that would play one continuous song for a whole set, just evolving

from one thing to another. In the bands I played with, you had to be an all around musician, able to improvise in any style. We would make up songs on the spot and never look back. I was not very often in more tightly formatted bands that would play just one style, like jazz, soul, top 40 or rock. A couple of notable exceptions were when my band "33" became T-Bone Walker's backup band in the last years of his life, and when I was one of the founding members of "Kingfish," a Grateful Dead offshoot band, along with Dave Torbert and Matthew Kelley, and later joined by Bobby Weir."

Patti met Tuck in 1978, and they immediately started performing as a duo. Often labeled as jazz, they actually defied categorization, because they chose simply to do whatever songs they liked, regardless of genre. They were married in 1981. They waited until 1987 to record, despite offers of deals, because "the duo format was new to both of us and we wanted to get good enough that it would stand on its own as music, not just as a duo." Their joint career took off the next year with the first of several albums on Windham Hill Jazz, then Epic and Sony/BMG. In 1999 they started their own label, T&P records, and since then have licensed to other labels worldwide, most notably Universal. They produce, record and mix in their own Menlo Park studio, and have recently done this for other artists, too.

Known for individual virtuosity in service of the greater goal of expressing love, hope and gratitude through music, Tuck and Patti have achieved a rare symbiotic musical relationship that sends critics scrambling for a reference point. They have been compared to every legendary duo you can imagine--from Fred & Ginger to the late Leonard Feather's ringing "Not since Ella Fitzgerald met Joe Pass on stage has there been so felicitous a mating as Tuck & Patti."

Headlining jazz festivals, concerts and clubs, they have shared the stage with countless artists such as Miles Davis, Count Basie, George Benson, Chick Corea, Donovan, Jimmy Scott, Art Ensemble of Chicago, St. Vincent, Joan Baez, Herbie Hancock, Diana Krall, Cab Calloway, John McLaughlin, Archie Schepp, McCoy Tyner, Sarah Vaughan, Simply Red, B.B. King, Lou Rawls, Kenny Rankin and Cyndi Lauper. Grammy nominees and recipients of a variety of awards, they nonetheless maintain that the greatest honor they've received has been the encouragement from so many of their heroes to trust and pursue their dream, rather than try to fit into anyone else's concept.

Patti says that all her skills have been further honed in the "intense crucible" of the duo. As Tuck puts it, "We go with our strengths. In the studio Patti is the producer, composer and arranger; I am the orchestra and engineer. Much of my unusual style is simply trying to render all the parts that Patti is hearing in her head." On stage what she describes as the "nakedness of the duo format" has challenged her to dig far more deeply, as musician, technician, performer, communicator and human being, than she ever expected.

Their relentless touring schedule, including 55 tours of Europe and 35 of Japan, has kept Patti and Tuck out of the teaching scene for most of the last 34 years. Recently they have committed to reserving some time to teach again, both privately and in group situations. She considers it both a responsibility and a joy to pass on what her unusual experience has taught her. She says:

"I believe that good technique is essential to expression. At the same time, I realize that every singer has a unique instrument, and I am committed to helping you navigate the path to finding your own voice, in an atmosphere of trust, support and honesty, while never forgetting that this is supposed to be fun!

"Together we will explore: The physical mechanics of singing, warming up, breath control, intonation, increasing your pitch, dynamic and expressive ranges, effective practice, vocal health, the song, the melody, the harmony, the rhythm, the lyrics, learning how to hear, listen, respond and interact, communicating your intent, connecting with the listener, opening to improvisation, choosing your material, using stage fright.... These are only a few of the issues facing every singer. Let's sing through them all. I am dedicated to helping singers of any style discover the ability to share what lies in their hearts, an unabashedly honest expression of a message of love and hope through the medium of music."

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