

Laura Pursell

SINGER • ACTOR • SONGWRITER

Singer/Actor Laura Pursell was born and raised in Nashville, TN surrounded by music (her father is pianist Bill Pursell, who had the hit record "Our Winter Love" (1963) and was a go-to sideman in Nashville for Marty Robbins, Patsy Cline, Chet Atkins, Boots Randolph, Johnny Cash, and many, many others.

At 18, she was cast as Dick Van Patton's niece in a nationally televised Christmas special, "The Gift of Song", starring a host of country music stars. Relocating to LA in the early 90's, she studied at the South Coast Repertory and Beverly Hills Playhouse with Jocelyn Jones and Jeffrey Tambor, and has starred in countless stage productions all over LA, including "Blue Moon Dancing" by Ed Graczyk, "In the City for the Summer" (Variety singled out her gritty performance), and the farcical, outrageous "And Then There was Nun" which played to sold out houses for 2 extensions, where she did a hilarious sendup of Gloria Swanson. She was a member of the Company of Angels, LA's oldest repertory theatre, for 8 years, winning a Dramalogue Award for her saucy, sword-wielding performance in the mainstage production of "Zastrozzi".

Laura appeared in an iconic video for Weird Al Yankovic, spoofing Tanya Harding in the "Mmmm Mmmm" song (where she did her own figure skating). She appeared in several episodes of "Days of Our Lives" and had a small but pivotal role in "The Landlady" starring Talia Shire. In 2013, was cast as one of the three leads in a hilarious coming-of-middle-age web series called "Living the Dream" available for viewing on YouTube. In 2015, she had the starring role in "Only the Moon Howls", a dramatic and moving one act which won the Encore! Award at the Hollywood Fringe Festival. Her performance was singled out for its "deep emotional access" and hailed as "heartbreaking", "truthful", "sensitive" and "vulnerable". The film version of the piece is planned for late 2015.

In the mid-90's, while doing children's musical theatre with the Imagination Company, she given a singing role. Learning tunes on the fly, she was soon headlining at coffee houses. She was taken under the wing of legendary showman/producer Leonard Reed (inventor of the "Shim Sham Shimmy") and learned the art of vocal phrasing and movement. The wedding circuit was followed by benefits and fundraisers. In 2001, she landed a plum role, singing for Betty and President Gerald Ford in Palm Springs. Over the years, she has recorded and performed with some of the greatest jazz musicians on the west coast, including the great drummer Earl Palmer, pianists George Gaffney, Ross Tomkins, Marty Harris, and Karen Hernandez; trumpeter Carl Saunders; trombonist Andy Martin; guitarists Doug MacDonald, Larry Koonse, Barry Zweig, Ron Anthony, and John Pisano; saxophonists Rusty Higgins and Brandon Fields; bassists Dave Carpenter, Trey Henry, and John Belzaguy; (and of course her dad, pianist Bill Pursell).

She has performed in St. Petersburg, Russia, Dublin Ireland and in west coast venues such as Spazio, Vitello's, The Money Tree, Barone's, Monteleone's, The San Ysidro Ranch (Santa Barbara), Vicky's of Santa Fe (Palm Springs) and the Canyon Club. She appeared with Gary Tole's "Legends of Swing" orchestra and the Doug MacDonald's 13-piece "Jazz Coalition". She currently performs every Thursday at Mixology 101 in the Grove at the LA Farmer's Market with a stellar jazz trio.

Laura has recorded 5 CD's since 1999. "It Had to Be Swing" is a collection of swinging standards features some of LA greatest players and received generous radio airplay on jazz stations throughout the country. "Unkissed" is a collection of pop country tunes crafted by some of Nashville's preeminent songwriters. "That's What Christmas Used to Be" is a jazzy big band serving of Christmas standards with arrangements by such luminaries as Bob Florence, Scott Lavendar and Kim Richmond.

In 2007, she paired up with Andrew Bonime of Cloudshine Music and wrote the lyrics to all of his melodies, and the result was her 4th CD, "Somewhere in this Room". Critically praised as a concept piece, this CD was chosen as one of the Top 25 Indie Releases of 2008 by Indie-Music.com, and they performed a live version of the entire album at the famed Canyon Club in Agoura Hills.

In 2009, Doug MacDonald and his Jazz Coalition included her in the "Fourth Stream" CD, singing the jazz standard "Invitation" with a live orchestra.

In 2014, she was back in the studio, recording with her dad, the Nashville String Machine, and a rhythm section boasting the best players in Nashville. "The Very Last Dance Hall Left in L.A." is a 10-track collection of jazz, country and pop standards, with 2 original tunes. This was a historic recording. It brought her dad back to re-record a tune he had actually recorded with Patsy Cline ("Strange"). He also revisited a tune he had previously recorded as a solo artist for Columbia ("I Can't Help it if I'm Still in Love With You"). And the co-writer of "Strange" (Fred Burch) helped shape the lyrics to the title track.

In addition to acting and singing, one of Laura's fiercest passions is figure skating. Laura started figure skating at age 10 but shelved it when she began focusing on acting. She returned to the sport in 2013 after many years off the ice. In 2015, she placed 3rd in her division (a field of 19 competitors) at the Adult National Championships in Salt Lake City. She is a member of the Los Angeles Figure Skating Club and trains 5 days a week at Pickwick Gardens in Burbank.