



COURTESY OF THOMAS LAUDERDALE

In a moment, Lauderdale's playing style can shift completely.

the birth of Pink Martini, a Portland-based group that would go on to perform mostly classical, jazz, and old-fashioned pop music in more than a dozen languages. They soon found themselves performing at fundraisers for every possible progressive political cause: civil rights, affordable housing, library funding, education.

Though Lauderdale's loudest feature may be his flamboyant exuberance, his greatest skill is bringing people together. Before the undergraduate Houses

were randomly populated, Lauderdale orchestrated a one-time party between Adams and Eliot, the "preppy" House. After college, he said, Pink Martini became like "Adams House on the road," and he branched out in his social leadership role. In 1997, "Sympathique," a single he co-wrote with bandmate China Forbes '92, became a hit in France, allowing Pink Martini to tour overseas. This spring and summer, they will perform in Turkey, South Korea, France, Belgium, and Hungary, switching between popular songs from across the world and those written by Lauderdale and friends in myriad lan-

Off the Shelf

Recent books with Harvard connections

Matters military. Having really negotiated with North Korea (see "The Korean Nuclear Crisis," September-October 2003, page 38), and later served as secretary of defense, Ash Carter (now director of the Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs) offers insights into running the Pentagon, U.S. strategic challenges, and more, in **Inside the Five-Sided Box: Lessons from a Lifetime of Leadership in the Pentagon** (Dutton, \$29). Useful background heading into 2020—or for whenever the public and its leaders next take military and defense issues seriously. From a soldier's perspective—far from the secretary in the hierarchy, but proximate to the Pentagon—U.S. senator Tom Cotton '99, J.D. '02 (R-Arkansas), a veteran (and prospective presidential candidate after 2020), writes about **Sacred Duty: A Soldier's Tour at Arlington National Cemetery** (Morrow, \$28.99).

100 Poems, by Seamus Heaney, Litt.D. '98 (Far-

rar, Straus and Giroux, \$25). A useful collection of the late Nobel laureate's work, from first to last, selected by his family members—the first in several projected volumes by the publisher, including a biography. Until the latter appears, Adam Kirsch's "Seamus Heaney: Digging with the Pen" (November-December 2006, page 52) provides a superb point of entry into the life and poetry.

Young Castro: The Making of a Revolutionary, by Jonathan M. Hansen (Simon & Schuster, \$35). A fresh life, based on Cuban archival sources and interviews, of the

origins of the larger-than-life figure whose nationalist uprising in his island country ultimately steered into its present, communist gridlock. The author is a senior lecturer on social studies.

Alfred Stieglitz: Taking Pictures, Making Painters, by Phyllis Rose '64, Ph.D. '70 (Yale, \$26). The veteran essayist and biographer (Virginia Woolf, Josephine Baker, et al.) briskly portrays the pioneering photographer who made an even greater impact with his gallery, 291,

The master photographer: "Spring Showers," by Alfred Stieglitz, c. 1900, gelatin silver print

through which Americans came to know Picasso and other foundational modern artists.

Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven but Nobody Wants to Die, by Amy Gutmann '71, Ph.D. '76, and Jonathan D. Moreno (Liveright, \$27.95). U Penn's president, a political philosopher, and her faculty colleague, a medical ethicist, draw on the old song title to point out that although Americans "view the afterlife [as] an ideal place where no one has to pay the price of achieving eternal perfection," it ain't that way. Given merited concern about, say, the misuse of CRISPR technology to "perfect" embryos, their accessible exploration of American health care and bioethics is important and timely.

Evolution or Revolution? Rethinking Macroeconomic Policy after the Great Recession, edited by Oliver Blanchard and Eliot University Professor Lawrence H. Summers (MIT, \$39.95). Having attained "normalcy" after the protracted recovery from the financial crisis and Great Recession—and therefore a period suitable for both reflection and worry about the next, inevitable downturn—a pair of leading macroeconomists present colleagues' best thinking about monetary and fiscal policy, and about the need for heightened focus on inequality and political economy. Academic, but not impossible.

Coffee Lids, by Louise Harpman '86 and Scott Specht (Princeton Architectural Press, \$19.95 paper). During the next crisis, the macroeconomists (see prior item) may



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guages. His home itself is a monument to togetherness. *Portland Monthly* described it as “one of the city’s most important cultural hubs,” known for dinners, private concerts, benefit auctions, and “his legendary annual holiday party, replete with a towering tree, caroling, and arguably the most eclectic and influential gathering of Portlanders to be found.”

On stage with Meow Meow, with whom Lauderdale released the joint album *Hotel Amour* in March, he is the backbone, the steady pulse of the show. Throughout the selections, she runs through the audience, picking out men and parading them onto the

stage, locked with them arm-in-arm. Then they become part of the performance. During one dramatic song, she gets four men to high-kick alongside her, like a line of Rockettes. Later, a group lifts her up and spins her around, in a sitting position, on their shoulders. By the end, she is crowdsurfing—getting passed, parallel to the ground, through the auditorium. Lauderdale has his eyes trained on her through all of these moments, adjusting the tempo, volume, or timbre to keep the performance steady, adding to the spectacle without distracting from it.

He said he thrives in this low-key role. “I think I’m a good accompanist because

I breathe with whomever I’m accompanying, and a lot of accompanists don’t do that,” he explained. “I like supporting, especially singers.” During delicate songs, he plays softly with warm phrases. When it’s upbeat, he doesn’t just play the piano—he slaps, flicks and bops it like he’s playing whack-a-mole. His support isn’t exclusively musical. When Meow Meow gets into a split-legged position and feigns being stuck, Lauderdale holds a bottle of wine just out of her reach, inspiring her to get up and finish the performance.

In the end, his goal is to get everyone in the crowd laughing at and enjoying the same

consume a lot of strong coffee. This unusual gem of a book takes seriously the business of designing disposable cups and lids. Copiously illustrated, with mind-boggling detailed diagrams, and the resulting products. You will never ignore your coffee topper again.

The Weil Conjectures: On Math and the Pursuit of the Unknown, by Karen Olsson ’95 (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$26). A genre-defying exploration of the siblings Simone and André Weil, philosopher and mathematician, respectively, mashed up with a memoir of the author’s own undergraduate math infatuation, carried off in the style and skills she has since honed as a novelist and former editor of *The Texas Observer*.

Democracy and the Next American Economy, by Henry A. J. Ramos, M.P.A. ’85 (Arte Público/University of Houston, \$22.95 paper). A progressive, in search of “where prosperity meets justice” (the subtitle), surveys the socioeconomic landscape and an array of social-justice organizations in pursuit of an agenda for federally guaranteed rights to basic social goods; a unifying civic culture; refreshed democratic institutions; environmental sustainability; and more. Given current crabbed and ugly discourse, it is hard to see how existing institutions could act on his list, but that doesn’t invalidate the making of it.

D-Day Girls, by Sarah Rose ’96 (Crown, \$28). A deft, appealing account of the under-recognized role of spies who aided the resistance, sabotaged the Nazi armies,

helped turn the tide of World War II. You’re in good hands from the get-go, in Trafalgar Square, as “under the eternal gaze of Admiral Lord Nelson...Mrs. Odette Samson” races to an appointment at the War Office on July 10, 1942, “the 1,043rd day of the world’s worst war.”

Unequal Europe, by Jason Beckfield, professor of sociology (Oxford, \$99). Globalization aside, Beckfield’s searching research leads him to conclude that the internal integration of Europe has prompted “a new era of restructuring welfare states in a way that signals the beginning of retrenchment and the ending of Europe’s long-term trend to income egalitarianism.” Thus, just as U.S. critics have taken to bashing the Old World for its supposed sins of socialism and petty regulation in the name of greater equality, both “flaws” are fading away. More generally, an important analysis of the institutional bases of social outcomes, such as the distribution of income among households.

Chinese Architecture: A History, by Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, Ph.D. ’81 (Princeton, \$65). A large-format work of scholarship and accompanying beautiful photographs and illustrations, by the professor of East Asian art and curator of Chinese art at the University of Pennsylvania. Important, indeed invaluable, as China’s explosive urban and industrial growth has transformed its cities and countryside, and destroyed much of its traditional building.



The master architects: Hall for Worship of the Ancestors, Beijing, early fifteenth century with many later repairs

This America: The Case for the Nation, by Jill Lepore, Kemper professor of American history (Liveright, \$16.95). Having recently produced *These Truths*, an enormous reinterpretation of the nation’s entire history (see the review, “True Lies,” September-October 2018, page 64), Lepore focuses more tightly (138 small pages) on what the community really is, the nature of patriotism, and the American traditions that matter—lest they be perverted by illiberal nationalism.

Don’t Read Poetry: A Book about How to Read Poems, by Stephanie Burt, professor of English (Basic Books, \$30). As the subtitle suggests, Burt attempts, accessibly and successfully, to demystify poetry by focusing readers’ attention on individual poems, and the reasons for creating and engaging with them: feelings, character, wisdom, and so on. The author, who serves as poetry editor for *The Nation*, was profiled in “‘Kingmaker’ to Gatekeeper” (November-December 2017, page 78).