

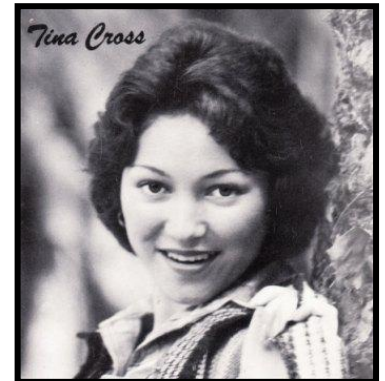
Tina Cross ONZM



Tina is one of New Zealand's most professional singers. She has performed throughout Asia, UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand appearing alongside Sammy Davis Jnr, Liberace, Meatloaf, Village People and Tom Jones. She sang the original theme song to the popular TV soap *Shortland Street* and over the years has been one of our top jingle singers. She works with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, the *Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra*, the *Christchurch Symphony* and the *Dunedin Sinfonia* and also appeared at the *Starlight Symphony*, *Coca Cola Christmas in the Park* plus Rotorua's *Lakeside*.

She's judged many popular TV shows including *Young Entertainers*, *Showcase*, *Smokefree Stage Challenge* and was vocal coach on TV2's *Do You Wanna Be A Popstar*. She is an Ambassador for *Women's Refuge* and Manurewa's *Totara Hospice*, is Patron of *North Shore Music Theatre* and was the past National Ambassador for *Dress For Success*, a charity organisation which helps disadvantaged women to get back into the workforce.

Tina Marie Cross was born in Auckland on 27 January 1959 to Phyllis Cross (b. Petricevich) and Joseph Cross. Phyllis, a mother and homemaker, later became a glove turner. Joseph was born in Tokomaru Bay on the East Cape and was a *MAF Fisheries* Inspector for the area. He died suddenly in 1982 and is buried at *Tuitini Marae* with his mother Noema (born Pahina) and brother Himiona. Tina has 6 brothers and sisters.



Phyllis, of Maori/Croatian descent, was born in Te Hapua the most northern settlement in the Far North. Her father, Walter Petricevich, founded the *Petricevich Motors* bus company which is still run by the family, taking tourists up the *Ninety Mile Beach*. Walter's sister was Dame Mira Szaszy, the first Māori woman to graduate with a degree from the *University of Auckland*. In 1993 she received an Honorary Doctor of Law from *Victoria University of Wellington*. She was a president of the *Māori Women's Welfare League*. Dame Mira was a huge inspiration to Tina, particularly during her early career. She certainly impressed upon her that if you are a person of courage and integrity and willing to work hard, you would be rewarded.



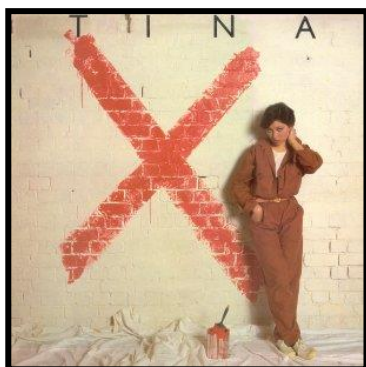
Tina was brought up in Otaru from the age of 4 except for a 3 year stint in Kaitiaki when the family moved there to care for her sick grandfather. Her father drove buses along *90 Mile Beach* and Tina and her sister were allowed to sing to the passengers. They later won a local talent quest performing *Quando, Quando, Quando*. She returned to *Penrose High School* in the 4th Form and went on to get UE. Tina sang in the school band, *Chalkdust*, which included Kim Hart; they performed in the final of the 1974 *Battle of the Bands Contest* and were offered spots on the *Smile* television show.

Ray Columbus discovered her while auditioning for the 1975 TV talent show *Opportunity Knocks* and Lew Pryme quickly signed her up. Lew's company, *Fuller's Entertainment Bureau*, also managed Rob Guest, Derek Metzger and Mark Williams. The following year Tina worked the variety circuit with *Colin Crompton's Wheel-Tappers*, toured with the *Steptoe and Son* show, appeared with Derek Payne and Marcus Craig on the television special *Something To Look Forward To* and performed on *Top of The World* with a cabaret act called *The Company*.



In 1978 she appeared on several episodes of *Ready to Roll* and won *Rising Star Award* at the *Entertainer of the Year Awards*. Tina's big break came in the 1979 *Pacific Song Contest* where she performed the winning song, *Nothing But Dreams*, written by VAC Benny winner Carl Doy as New Zealand's entry. The following year she represented New Zealand again with *Once Again With You*, a duo sung with Derek Metzger. It took second place,

In 1979 four of her singles charted well; *Make Love to Me*, *Everybody Let's Dance*, *Lay Back in Your Lovers Arms* and *Nothing but Dreams*. Tina released her first album, *You Can Do It* then sang at the Auckland *Royal Command Performance* before Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. She headlined on TVNZ and BBC Television with her own specials performing alongside Bill and Boyd and Gary Glitter then toured from Honolulu to Vancouver with Howard Morrison, Rob Guest, Derek Metzger and Kim Hart as part of a Government tourism promotion called *Come On To New Zealand*. During that same period Lew Pryme arranged a \$50,000 contract for her with *Polygram Records* and Tina won *Most Promising Female* at the *Recording Industry Association Awards*.



She promoted *Nothing but Dreams* in Australia then worked with *Gerry and the Pacemakers*. Tina won the 1980 *VAC Professional Performer of the Year Award*, also known as the *Shure Golden Microphone Award*, and released her second covers album, *Tina X*, which included Kiwi musicians Frank Gibson Jr, Dave McRae and Bruce Lynch. At the *Ace of Spades* she appeared in cabaret with Marcus Craig, Doug Aston and Rob Guest. In December she appeared at the *Royal International Hotel* with Doug Aston then performed in American Samoa for the Governor. She met her future husband, Wayne Sullivan, when she was working in Apia at the *Tusitala Hotel* and he was sailing the Pacific. His parents were staying in the hotel and introduced the pair. 'He had really long hair, was broke and had two

different coloured thongs on.' He was not easy to forget!! 1981 had her touring New Zealand with Eddie Low then in 1982 she hosted the TV show *Nothing but Dreams* which included Chic Littlewood and Derek Metzger.

Tina and Wayne moved to Sydney together in 1983 where she released *Ring Around My Finger* and won the 1983 *Johnny O'Keefe Encouragement MO Award* then recorded *New Blood* and *Playing With A Fun Girl* produced by Dave Skinner from *Roxy Music*. Her first *BBC TV* special showed and the next year she appeared on *Pebble Mill* five times and hosted her own special in the *Night Music* series. She teamed up with composer-pianist Leon Berger in 1984 and formed the new wave band *Koo De Tah* whose 1985 single *Too Young For Promises* reached number 6 on the Australian National Charts. Leon and Tina had first met at the 1979 *Pacific Song Contest* where he was representing Australia. Their self titled album was released in 1986 and they were finalists in the 1997 *Clear Music and Entertainment Awards*. Vocal-cord nodules and life on the road took their toll and the group disbanded in 1987 when Tina launched a corporate cabaret act and toured India and Asia. She married Wayne in 1988 and they moved back to Auckland in 1990. They have two children, Sean born in 1990 and Leah in 1993.

In 1990 she worked with *Moonlight Sax* man, Brian Smith and in 1994 was singing with *The Cotton Club* and pairing up with Suzanne Lynch in a Manhattan Transfer styled act called *Tux Delux*. She won the *VAC Top Female Vocalist Award* in 1994 and again in 1995 when Tina began taking lead roles in New Zealand musicals. She starred as Grizabella in *Cats* and Columbia in the *Rocky Horror Show*. That year she also recorded a CD of songs from musicals dueting with fellow cast members, produced by Carl Doy. After the opening night of *Rocky Horror Show* her car was hit by a drunk driver. She received 2 sprained ribs, stitches and bruises and was out of the show for 3 weeks. She and Derek Metzger appeared with the *Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra* then she produced and performed in a short season of *The World Goes Round* at *Sky Theatre*. In 1998 Cross was the evil stepmother Dahlia in the Australian production of *Sisterella* at Melbourne's *Regent Theatre* and in 1999 appeared in *Sirens* and *Christmas in the Park*. She also sang with Jackie Clarke at the *Famous Spiegelent*.



Tina played Roxy Hart in the 2001 NZ tour of *Chicago*, joined the 2003 tour of *Boogie Nights* with the UK cast, played Beth Heke in the 2004 musical stage version of *Once Were Warriors* and then took on the role of Velma Kelly in the 2005 version of *Chicago*, this time starring with Michael Barrymore. 2005 saw the creation of *The Lady Killers* with Jackie Clarke, Suzanne Lynch and Taisha, and more recently with Annie Crummer. They released their album, *Black is Back* in 2009.

Tina was awarded the *Queen's Order of New Zealand Merit* (ONMZ) in 2007 for services to the music industry. This was followed by an NZSO *Nothing But Dreams* tour featuring herself and Carl Doy as a tribute to 30 years since their *Pacific Song Contest* Win. She competed in Television's *Dancing with the Stars* in 2008 with partner Aaron Gilmour then reprised her role as Grizabella in the 2009 production of *Cats*. Critics raved about her rendition of *Memory*, now one of her signature songs. Next was the role of Gigi for the 2011 *North Shore Theatre* production of *Miss Saigon*.



In November 2009, while rehearsing for a *Christmas in the Park* concert, her handbag was stolen. It contained her most precious possession, a whalebone tiki which had belonged to her father. Luckily a group of boys from *Western Springs College* found it hanging in a tree a couple of kilometres away and returned it to her. Three were Maori who said they didn't want to touch the tiki as it may have been an indication of tapu in the area.

In 2014 she launched *Lay Down Your Heart*, an album of original songs written by Tina including one by her son Sean Sullivan and another co-written with her record producer Barbara Griffin. One song, *Walk Away*, was written specifically to bring awareness and funds for *Women's Refuge*. Tina Cross performed at the 2014 *VAC* awards evening and was presented with the *Benny Award* which she so aptly deserved.