

Dean Fransen

Producer, Composer, Arranger, Orchestrator, Conductor, Music Director, Pianist, Keyboard Artist, Vocalist, and Educator

It was meeting **Henry Mancini** and **Leonard Bernstein** in Los Angeles while studying music at California State University at Northridge that motivated Dean Fransen to dedicate his life to music. As a young multi-instrumentalist, Fransen first focused on the trumpet but was later drawn toward the piano where he began songwriting, arranging and composing. He began passionately teaching music part time at Agoura High School (his own alma mater) while still attending college classes. Meeting producer **David Foster** (Josh Groban, Michael Bublé, Celine Dion, Andrea Bocelli) film composer **Bill Conti** (Rocky) and TV composer **Patrick Williams** (Mary Tyler Moore Show) led Mr. Fransen to study film scoring with **Bob Drasnin** (CBS FOX). In 1986 he became the music librarian for composer **Lee Holdridge** (Neil Diamond, John Denver, and Barbra Streisand). As an apprentice to Stan Sheldon, Fransen helped prepare music notation for the ABC Television show Moonlighting (Bruce Willis and Cybil Shepherd) and Elton John's concert "Live in Australia". He studied record production at UCLA with **John Boylan** (Linda Ronstadt, Boston, Little River Band). Mr. Fransen has performed and directed music for over 30 years with a wide array of notable artists and groups such as, Harry Connick, Sr, The Nelson Riddle Orchestra, The Fifth Dimension, Regis Filbin, Nell Carter, Jennifer Holliday and Rosemary Clooney. Fransen is the **Co-Founder and Music Director** for the New York based national touring ensemble called **Brother Josephus and the Love Revolution**. He is currently the **Co-Founder and Music Director** of a music mentorship program in New York called the **Global Music Academy Orchestra** which is powered by the **Daisy Jopling Music Mentorship Foundation** (a non-profit organization). Fransen co-produced, administrated, arranged, orchestrated and conducted Daisy Jopling's Awakening Show in 2016 at The Paramount Hudson Valley Theater and in 2017 at **Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall**. The program includes Rhythm Specialist **Michael Feigenbaum**, and has included special guests stars from the Broadway stage such as **Joni Blondell** (42nd Street) and **Justin Sargent** (Spider-man Turn Off the Dark). Fransen currently teaches workshops and mentors musicians of all ages and all levels.

Mr. Fransen started as a professional keyboard artist and music director on luxury cruise ships and toured the world extensively (128 countries and all 50 United States) while entertaining in a multitude of musical settings. Between tours he formed, led, and composed for his original 7-piece electric-acoustic instrumental fusion ensemble in Los Angeles called "Port Of Call". Fransen's band was one of the first to apply a brand new MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) technology on stage such as the KAT (MIDI mallet instrument), the EVI (Electric Valve Instrument, and the electric MIDI violin. Fransen's writing created a very accessible electric-acoustic blend that featured top-notch LA musicians like Glenn Garrett, Charlie Bisharat, Craig Hara, Trey Henry, Jim Donica, Billy Hulting, Brian Kilgore, Rod Harbour, Dave Hooper and Dave Tull.

Fransen spent a couple of years in the LA theater scene as the Music Director for The Magnificent Moorpark Melodrama and Vaudeville Company. While there he conducted musical theater workshops for all ages and wrote original works for the theater with Bob Fraser (including a full-length sci-fi comedy-adventure musical). These live theater productions included elaborate keyboard improvisations with live actors on stage.

In 1998, Dean Fransen's jazz trio, with bassist Trey Henry and drummer Kendall Kay, was awarded third place in the John Coltrane Music Competition. Soon thereafter his crafty approach caught the attention of **The Walt Disney Corporation** and from 1998-2000 his Jazz trio was featured on board the Disney Magic cruise ship. This led to a CD he produced in LA featuring bassist Chris Clarke and drummer Mark Ferber entitled Dean Digs Disney (due for independent re-release in 2020).

Fransen moved to New Orleans in 2000 and formed his jazz combo there featuring **Jason Marsalis**, **Roland Guerin** and **Brice Winston**. He became the music contractor, conductor, and Music Director for both the **Ritz-Carlton Hotel** and **The Jimmy Maxwell Orchestra**. In 2001 he appeared on stage at the **New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival** with **Harry Connick, Sr.** In 2002 he formed and led the band for the Krewe of Rex parade float featuring the King of the Mardi Gras.

Mr. Fransen also engaged in the New Orleans theater scene as Music Director for Stage to Stage Inc., where he formed the Nouveau Vaudeville Orchestra, led summer workshops, and wrote a children's musical for the stage. Mr. Fransen soon became the **Music Director for Harry Connick Sr.** and traveled with a national touring show called "**A Tribute To The Music Of Frank Sinatra**" **Featuring Harry Connick Sr. and The Nelson Riddle Orchestra**.

Some other highlights of Mr. Fransen's live performance credits include a stint in 2003 as an on-stage performer for the national tour of the **Broadway Show "Fosse"**. In 2006 he was **Music Director** for the US show "**I Can't Stop Loving You**", produced by the Spirit of Ray, Inc. featuring the Music of Ray Charles.

Mr. Fransen's recording experience is extensive. His diverse arranging, composing and keyboard artistry can be heard on recordings alongside drummer **Vinnie Colaiuta**, trumpeter **Ken Ross**, and guitarist **Chris Cortez**, with whom he co-led the New Orleans based ensemble **Groovopolis**. He has helped produced recordings for various artists in a wide variety of musical genres ranging from jazz and blues to world, rock, folk and country music. Some examples of recordings that Mr. Fransen has produced in New Orleans and Los Angeles and Co-Produced in New York include:

"Up from New Orleans" - Doctor Dean and His Music Machine

"Addicted to Love Songs" - Deb Bowman

"Revolution of Love" - Brother Josephus and the Love Revolution