

Bio

Michael Dessen composes for improvisers, performs on trombone and computer, explores creative music technologies, and works to expand spaces for cultural innovation in higher education. His teachers include Yusef Lateef, George E. Lewis, and Anthony Davis, and he is a Professor at the University of California, Irvine, where he co-founded an MFA and PhD program in Integrated Composition, Improvisation and Technology (ICIT), and served for four years as chair of the Department of Music.

Education

- PhD in Music**, Critical Studies/Experimental Practices, University of California, San Diego 2003
 • Committee: George E. Lewis (chair), Anthony Davis, Nancy Guy, George Lipsitz, Bennetta Jules-Rosette
 • Dissertation: *Decolonizing Art Music: Scenes from the Late Twentieth-Century United States* [\[abstract\]](#)
- Master of Music**, Jazz Composition, University of Massachusetts, Amherst 1996
 • Composition studies with Yusef Lateef
- Bachelor of Music**, Trombone Performance, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, New York 1989
 • Graduation with Highest Honors and Performers Certificate

Academic Appointments

- University of California, Irvine**, Trevor School of the Arts, Department of Music 2006-present
 Professor, 2019-present
 Associate Professor, 2011-2019
 Assistant Professor, 2006-2011
- Amherst College**, Amherst, MA 2006
 Lecturer, Black Studies and Music Departments
- Hampshire College**, Amherst, MA 2002-2006
 Visiting Assistant Professor of Music, 2004-2006
 Adjunct Assistant Professor of Music, 2002-2004
- University of California, San Diego** 1998-2001
 Associate in Music
- University of Massachusetts, Amherst** 1996-1997
 Lecturer

Composition Awards and Commissions

- New Music USA Project Award** 2016
 To record *Somewhere in the Upstream* with the Michael Dessen Trio
- Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute** 2013
 To compose *Slippages*, read by the La Jolla Symphony with conductor Steven Schick
- Fromm Foundation Composition Commission** 2012
 To compose *Somewhere in the Upstream* for the Michael Dessen Trio
- Chamber Music America New Jazz Works Award** 2011
 To compose *Resonating Abstractions* for the Michael Dessen Trio

Selected Recordings

- Alien Friends Music*, solo trombone and computer (Accretions Records) 2019
- Somewhere In The Upstream*, featuring Chris Tordini and Dan Weiss (Clean Feed Records) 2018
- Resonating Abstractions*, featuring Chris Tordini and Dan Weiss (Clean Feed Records) 2014
- Forget the Pixel*, featuring Chris Tordini and Dan Weiss (Clean Feed Records) 2011
- Between Shadow and Space*, featuring Chris Tordini and Tyshawn Sorey (Clean Feed Records) 2008
- Lineal*, featuring Vijay Iyer, Mark Dresser, Susie Ibarra, Terry Jenoure, Bob Weiner and Jorge Roeder 2007
- Sideperson recordings with Yusef Lateef, Mark Dresser, Anthony Davis, Marty Ehrlich and others [\[discography\]](#)

Selected Telematic Projects

Changing Tides 2

2020

- Sites: Seoul, South Korea and San Diego, CA [\[video\]](#)
- Role: Co-director, composer, performer
- Musicians: Bae Il Dong, Jungpyo Lee, Yoon Jeong Heo, Jean Oh , Aram Lee, Min Wang Hwang, Bo Sul Kim, Stephanie Richards, Wilfrido Terrazas, Joshua White, Mark Dresser, Michael Dessen

Tele-Espacios VI, 2019

2019

- Sites: Manizales, Colombia (within the Festival Internacional de la Imagen) and Irvine, CA
- Roles: Co-director, composer, performer
- Musicians: Ensemble Música Contemporánea Universidad de Caldas directed by Yovanny Betancur, Wilfrido Terrazas, Juan David Rubio, Michael Dessen

Interconnections for Peace

2018

- Sites: Seoul, South Korea; New York, NY; and San Diego, CA
- Roles: Co-director, composer, performer.
- Musicians: Yoon Jeong Heo, Jean Oh, A Ram Lee, Min Wang Hwang, and Ji Young Yi; Yoon Sun Choi, Jane Ira Bloom, Matthias Ziegler, David Taylor, Satoshi Takeishi, and Sarah Weaver; Mark Dresser, Nicole Mitchell, Stephanie Richards, Michael Dessen

Spooky Interaction, Lesson II, by George E. Lewis

2016

- Sites: Pittsburgh, PA and Irvine, CA
- Roles: Co-producer, performer
- Musicians: Geri Allen, George E. Lewis, Nicole Mitchell, Francis Wong, Michael Dessen

Virtual Tour: A Reduced Carbon Footprint Concert Series

2013

- Sites: San Diego, CA in duo (3 concerts) with Zurich, Switzerland; Stony Brook, NY; Amherst, MA.
- Roles: Co-director, composer performer
- Musicians: Mark Dresser, Nicole Mitchell, Myra Melford, Michael Dessen, Jane Ira Bloom, Ray Anderson, Min Xiao Fen, Matt Wilson, Sarah Weaver, Gerry Hemingway, Matthias Ziegler, Marty Ehrlich, Jason Robinson, Bob Weiner

Performer, composer, and/or producer on over 30 telematic concerts [\[list\]](#)

2007-present

Publications

"Networked Music Performance: An Introduction for Musicians and Educators." Featured on the *SmartMusic Music Educators Blog*, September 2020. [\[web\]](#)

"New Polyphonies: Score Streams, Improvisation and Telepresence." *Leonardo Music Journal*, v.20, November/December 2010. [\[pdf\]](#)

"Asian Americans and Creative Music Legacies." *Critical Studies in Improvisation / Etudes Critiques en Improvisation*, 1:3, 2006. [\[web\]](#)

"Improvising in a Different Clave: Steve Coleman and AfroCuba de Matanzas." In *The Other Side of Nowhere: Jazz, Improvisation, and Communities in Dialogue*, ed. Ajay Heble and Daniel Fischlin. Wesleyan University Press, 2004.

Preface to *Yusef Lateef's Songbook*, FANA Publications, 2005. [\[pdf\]](#)

Conferences

"Puentes Telemáticos / Telematic Bridges: Experiments in intercultural, telepresent and creative music pedagogy," co-presented with Juan David Rubio, *NowNet Arts Conference*, online, 2021.

Panelist/presenter, "Music Enabling Technology," *2021 Network Performing Arts Production Workshop*, online, 2021.

Panelist/presenter, "Flying Toward the Sound: Geri Allen's Work in Telematics," with Mount Allen, George E. Lewis, Nicole Mitchell, Francis Wong and Aaron Johnson. *Feed the Fire: A Cyber Symposium in Honor of Geri Allen*, University of Pittsburgh, 2020.

"Intimate Distance and a Wide Beat: Reflections on Telematic Music," *NowNet Arts Conference*, Stony Brook University, 2018.

Presentation on recent creative work in telematic music, *International Society for Electronic Arts (ISEA)* conference, Universidad de Caldas, Manizales, Colombia, 2017.

Panelist (remote), "The State of Telematic Art," *Refest 2.0* at NYU, New York, NY, 2017.

"Jazz and Telematics," co-presented with Mark Dresser, *Jazz Educators Network Conference*, San Diego, CA, 2015.

"Institutionalizing "new territories"? Jazz, Improvisation, Race, and Power in Higher Education." Invited colloquium presentation, University of Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 2007.

Roundtable organizer and chair, "Improvisation, transculturalism, and social change: Asian American Creative Music and the San Francisco Bay Area," with Deborah Wong, George Yoshida, Mark Izu, Donna Lee Kwon, John Carlos Perea, and Jason Robinson. *American Studies Association* annual meeting, Oakland, CA, 2006.

South Asia Humanities Conference, panel on South Asian and African American music with Paul Gilroy, Arjun Appadurai, Vyjayanthi Rao, Rudresh Mahanthappa and Vijay Iyer. Yale University Center for British Art, 2003.

"'Downtown,' Improvisation and Cultural Mobility." *Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology*, Detroit, 2001.

"Cross-Cultural Experimentalism: Grupo Afro-Cuba de Matanzas and Steve Coleman's Mystic Rhythm Society." *Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology*, Toronto, Ontario, 2000.

"Experimentación e identidad cultural en una colaboración musical," *Simposio Sobre Cultura Cubana: Identidad y Nacionalidad*, Santiago, Cuba, 2000.

Co-organizer, "Improvising Across Borders: An Inter-disciplinary Symposium on Improvised Music." UC San Diego, 1999.

Courses at UC Irvine

Graduate courses

- *Networked Music Performance*: Practical seminar on multi-site musical performance via internet
- *Critical Studies in Music*: Theoretical seminar introducing scholarly literature from diverse fields
- *Improvisation*: Seminar on open forms of improvisation
- *Experiments in Telematic Music*: Inter-campus seminar on creating music for networked, telepresent environments
- *Creative Practices, Composition*: Seminars and lessons on integrated composition, improvisation and technology
- *Graduate Ensemble*: Medium-sized ensemble creating/performing original works

Undergraduate courses

- *Improvisation*: Intro for upper-division music majors combining practical and theoretical work
- *Jazz combo*: Small group jazz performance
- *Introduction to Music*: Large lecture (up to 400 students), also offered online, on diverse topics
- *Jazz Trombone*: Individual lessons for jazz trombone majors
- *Musicianship*: Aural skills sequence for music majors
- *Composition and Advanced Composition*: Intro class and individual lessons
- *Fundamentals*: Music theory basics

Selected syllabi available online [\[web\]](#)

Intercultural Education for Youth

Puentes Telemáticos / Telematic Bridges, Co-director

2017-present

- Bilingual summer course on music/technology
- Links youth from Santa Ana, CA and Manizales, Colombia in hybrid/telepresent classroom
- One-week courses in 2017 and 2018, three-week course in 2021 [\[video\]](#)

Service at UC Irvine

Robert and Marjorie Rawlins Chair of Music (Department Chair)

2015-2019

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies, Trevor School of the Arts

2014-2015

Director of Gassmann Electronic Music Studios and Series

2021-present

UCI Academic Planning Group member

2021-2022

Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Music	2020, 2011-2012
Networked Music Support Supervisor (Pandemic Lockdown), Department of Music	2020-2021
UCI Academic Senate Council on Faculty Welfare, Diversity, and Academic Freedom	2014-2015
UCI representative, systemwide University Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity	2014-2015
Advisory Board Member, UC Institute for Research in the Arts (UCIRA)	2012-2015
Member, UCI Salary Equity Committee	2014-2015
Co-designed MFA and PhD in Integrated Composition, Improvisation and Technology	2008, 2014
Panelist, Southern California Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education	2013, 2014
UCI Academic Senate Committee on International Education, chair and member	2011-2012, 2010-2011
School of the Arts Faculty Research Grants Committee, chair and member	2011-2012, 2009-2011

Networked Music Consulting

Author of widely used documentation for networked music production [web]	2013-present
Consultant, California Jazz Conservatory	2020
Consultant residency, Seoul Institute of the Arts, Korea	2015
Consultant, Mary Lou Williams Cyber Symposium, directed by Geri Allen	2014
Consultant for startup Musicianlink	2008-2009