

Bio

Michael Dessen is a musician and educator based in southern California. His work includes composing for his own ensembles, collaborating with diverse artists as a trombonist/improviser, exploring emerging technologies such as telematic performance and dynamic scores, publishing scholarly research and writing, and helping build spaces for cultural innovation and exchange as a university professor and administrator. 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 currently serves as Chair of the Department of Music, Director of the Gassmann Electronic Music Studios and Jazz Program Coordinator.

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: <i>Decolonizing Art Music: Scenes from the Late Twentieth-Century United States</i>	
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 Positions

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

Composition Awards and Commissions

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

Selected Recordings

<i>Digibone Forest</i> , solo trombone and computer (Accretions Records)	2019
<i>Somewhere In The Upstream</i> , featuring Chris Tordini and Dan Weiss (Clean Feed Records)	2018
<i>Resonating Abstractions</i> , featuring Chris Tordini and Dan Weiss (Clean Feed Records)	2014
<i>Forget the Pixel</i> , featuring Chris Tordini and Dan Weiss (Clean Feed Records)	2011
<i>Between Shadow and Space</i> , featuring Chris Tordini and Tyshawn Sorey (Clean Feed Records)	2008
<i>Lineal</i> , 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, many others	1996-present

Selected Telematic Projects

- Tele-Espacios Activos X, 2023
- Sites: Manizales, Colombia (within the Festival Internacional de la Imagen) and Irvine, CA
 - Role: Co-director, composer, performer
 - Musicians/artists: Mario Humberto Valencia, Oscar Villota, Tata Ceballos, Michael Dessen, Chieh Huang, Lisa Yoshida, William Fastenow, Rebecca Larkin, Shivangi Cancean
- Changing Tides 3 2023
- Sites: Seoul, South Korea and San Diego, CA
 - Role: Co-director, composer, performer
 - Musicians: Jean Oh, Aram Lee, Ju Hee Go, JoonSu Kim, Donghyeok Kwak, Wilfrido Terrazas, Michael Dessen, Joshua White, Mark Dresser, Gerald Cleaver
- Widening the Embrace: A Reduced Carbon Footprint Concert 2023
- Sites: Brooklyn, NY and San Diego, CA
 - Role: Co-director, composer, performer
 - Musicians: Fay Victor, Ingrid Laubrock, Patricia Brennan, Michael Dessen, Joshua White, Mark Dresser, Gerald Cleaver
- Changing Tides 2 2020
- Sites: Seoul, South Korea and San Diego, CA
 - Role: Co-director, composer, performer
 - Musicians/artists: 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/artists: Ensamble Música Contemporánea Universidad de Caldas directed by Yovanny Betancur, Wilfrido Terrazas, Juan David Rubio, Michael Dessen, Mario Humberto Valencia
- Interconnections for Peace 2018
- Sites: Seoul, South Korea; New York, NY; and San Diego, CA
 - Roles: Co-director, composer, performer.
 - Musicians/artists: Yoon Jeong Heo, Jean Oh, Aram 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 ~40 telematic concerts 2007-present

Publications

"Thinking Telematically: Improvising Music Worlds Under COVID and Beyond." *Jazz Perspectives*, June 8, 2022.

"Networked Music Performance: An Introduction for Musicians and Educators." Featured on the *SmartMusic Music Educators Blog*, September 2020.

"New Polyphonies: Score Streams, Improvisation and Telepresence." *Leonardo Music Journal*, v.20, November/December 2010.

"Asian Americans and Creative Music Legacies." *Critical Studies in Improvisation / Etudes Critiques en Improvisation*, 1:3, 2006.

"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.

Selected Conference Activity

"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.

"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 Taught at UC Irvine

Graduate courses

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

Undergraduate courses

- *Improvisation*: Intro for upper-division music majors combining practical and theoretical work
- *Jazz Orchestra*: Directing jazz big band (AY 2023-24)
- *Jazz Combos*: 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

Awards at UC Irvine

Distinguished Faculty Award for Teaching 2022-23
 Campus-level award given to one tenured faculty per year by the UC Irvine Academic Senate

Educational Projects and Partnerships

Fulbright Specialist residency, Bogotá, Colombia 2023

- Three-week residency sponsored by the US Fulbright Specialist Program and the Jazz emphasis in the Faculty of Arts at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana
- Taught small group jazz intensive course, culminating in a concert
- Offered workshops/consulting on networked music technologies for education and performance

Co-director, Puentes Telemáticos / Telematic Bridges 2017-present

- Links high school music students from Santa Ana, CA and Manizales, Colombia in hybrid/telepresent classroom for bilingual summer course on music/technology
- Uses advanced networking tools for telematic performance and improvisation workshops, and a collaborative DAW for group composition and production projects
- 1-week courses in 2017 and 2018, 3-week courses in 2021 and 2022
- Currently working to expand to year-round, bi-weekly program

Service at UC Irvine

Department Chair (Robert and Marjorie Rawlins Chair of Music) 2015-2019, 2023-present

Jazz Program Coordinator 2023-present

Director of Gassmann Electronic Music Studios 2021-present

Core PhD/MFA faculty, Integrated Composition, Improvisation and Technology (ICIT) 2008-present

UCI Academic Planning Group, member 2021-2022

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies, Trevor School of the Arts 2014-2015

Co-designed MFA and PhD in Integrated Composition, Improvisation and Technology (ICIT) 2008, 2014

Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Music 2020, 2011-2012

Networked Music Support Supervisor (COVID), 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

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

Authored widely used documentation for networked music production 2013-2020

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