

# BlaBla Bio Fred Frith

Multi-instrumentalist, composer, and improviser Fred Frith has been making noise of one kind or another for almost 50 years, starting with the iconic rock collective Henry Cow, which he co-founded with Tim Hodgkinson in 1968.

Fred is best known as a pioneering electric guitarist and improviser, song-writer, and composer for film, dance and theater. Through bands like Art Bears, Massacre, Skeleton Crew, Keep the Dog, the Fred Frith Guitar Quartet and Cosa Brava, he has stayed close to his roots in rock and folk music while branching out in many other directions.

His compositions have been performed by ensembles ranging from Arditti Quartet and the Ensemble Modern to Concerto Köln and Galax Quartet, from the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra to ROVA and Arte Sax Quartets, from rock bands Sleepytime Gorilla Museum and Ground Zero to the Glasgow Improvisers' Orchestra.

Film music credits include the acclaimed documentaries *Rivers and Tides*, *Touch the Sound* and *Leaning into the Wind*, directed by Thomas Riedelsheimer, *The Tango Lesson*, *Yes and The Party* by Sally Potter, Werner Penzel's *Zen for Nothing*, Peter Mettler's *Gods, Gambling and LSD*, and the award-winning (and Oscar-nominated) *Last Day of Freedom*, by Nomi Talisman and Dee Hibbert-Jones.

Composing for dance throughout his long career, Fred has worked with Rosalind Newman and Bebe Miller in New York, François Verret and Catherine Diverrès in France, and Amanda Miller and the Pretty Ugly Dance Company over the course of many years in Germany, as well as composing for two documentary films on the work of Anna Halprin.

Theater credits include the Creation Company in New York and François-Michel Pesenti's Théâtre du Point Aveugle in Marseille, where he spent six months in 1990 working with "jeunes rockers en chômage des quartiers défavorisés" (young unemployed rock musicians from the ghettos) on the opera *Helter Skelter*.

Fred has performed works by and sometimes alongside composers John Luther Adams, Gavin Bryars, Sylvie Courvoisier, Alvin Curran, George Lewis, René Lussier, Jose Maceda, Meredith Monk, Terry Riley, and Christian Wolff; improvised with Paolo Angeli, Lotte Anker, Derek Bailey, Chris Brown, Lol Coxhill, Chris Cutler, Janet Feder, Joëlle Léandre, Miya Masaoka, Phil Minton, Ikue Mori, Butch Morris, Bob Ostertag, Evan Parker, Zeena Parkins, and Camel Zekri, to name a few; collaborated with classical virtuosos Evelyn Glennie, Katia Labèque, Viktoria Mullova, and Werner Bärtschi; and—as session musician—recorded on albums by, for example, Brian Eno, The Residents, Robert Wyatt, The Swans, Violent Femmes, Material, Negativland, John Zorn, Matthew and the Unfortunates, and Half Japanese.

He is currently performing with the Fred Frith Trio and Frelosa.

The recipient of Italy's Demetrio Stratos Prize for his life's work in experimental music and an honorary doctorate from the University of Huddersfield in his home county of Yorkshire, Fred currently teaches in the legendary epicenter of American experimental music, Mills College in Oakland, California; in the improvisation master's program at the Musik Akademie in Basel, Switzerland; and as visiting faculty in the Universidad Austral in Valdivia, Chile, where he has been collaborating on the creation of a new School of Music and Sound Art.

He is the subject of Nicolas Humbert and Werner Penzel's much loved *Step Across the Border*, cited by *Cahiers du Cinéma* as one of the 20th century's hundred most influential films.