

Heinrich Frans

 By [Martin Myers](#)

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Heinrich Frans entered the music industry as a professional singer as a member of the St George's Cathedral Choir at the age of 11.

His career spans from solo performances with the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra (under the direction of Bernard Gueller), live performances as lead and backing vocalist for Allou April, Ernie Smith, Wanda Baloyi, The Camillo Lombard Collective, Mynie Grové, and recording sessions as lead and backing vocalist for Vusi Khumalo and Ivan Mazuze.



He also performed as lead and backing vocalist for international artists Jonathan Butler, Kirk Whalum, Oleta Adams, Diana Ross, Bebe Winans, Josh Groban, and Mark Fransman.

Frans has just released a three-track EP entitled *Life-Stories*. He also currently works as an audio engineer, artist manager, and booking agent alongside film score composer and pianist Kyle Shepherd. In addition, he also acts as a music mentor on the Western Cape department of arts and culture's roadshow alongside Selwyn Bartlett and Craig Parks.

I spoke to him about his work last week.

■ ***What does music mean to you?***

Music is the life force behind my existence. It means the world to me. It is the very reason that I am alive today.

■ ***What is the most enjoyable aspect of your work?***

Some of my current work involves serving composer, pianist and film score composer Kyle Shepherd as his in-house audio engineer, artist manager, and booking agent. Cliché as it may come across; I do feel as though I have the absolute best job in the world. Aside from all of the administrative tasks involved in my daily routine, nothing beats being seated in a studio for an entire day whilst listening to Kyle Shepherd compose the most beautiful music to South Africa and the world's most revered feature films.

[Heinrich Frans - feature artist - Tea with Madiba](#) from [Mondé World Films/Chace Studios](#) on [Vimeo](#).

■ ***What drives you: ego or humility?***

Humility drives me. I have always treated music as a craft. Anyone who respects a craft understands that the learning never ends. The more one learns, the more one realises how much more there is to learn.

■ ***Any funny moments on stage?***

I recall a concert where I performed as a backing vocalist alongside one of my musical heroes, Jonathan Butler. He had secured the services of veteran keyboardist Vince Evans. Vince has shared stages with everyone from the great Prince to Lalah Hathaway. I cannot recall the exact song we were performing at the time. If my memory serves me correctly, it may

have been Jonathan's *African Moon*. Vince was playing two keyboards simultaneously. Unfortunately, the keyboard stand he was given collapsed with both keyboards plummeting to the floor. Chaos ensued. Two consummate audio engineers along with their stage crew raced to the stage to pick up both keyboards off the floor and reposition the collapsed keyboard stand. Once both of the keyboards and keyboard stand was repositioned, unfortunately, it collapsed a second time. By this point, it was Vince's turn to play a solo. In true 'the show must go on' fashion - Vince knelt down on his knees and played the solo of his life on the floor of the stage - without batting an eyelid. Needless to say, the crowd went wild.

▣ ***What is your most treasured possession?***

It would have to be my music collection and recently acquired Focusrite | Clarett 8PreX audio interface.

▣ ***It's your round, what are you drinking?***

Nashville, Tennessee's finest. Jack Daniels with a splash and a half of Coca-Cola.



▣ ***What makes you stand out?***

I care deeply about the preservation of music as a tool for edification. I do *not* mean this in a religious sense at all. I recall a time when music could change one's life for the better. The music from Mark Fransman's *Strait and Narrow* is a primary example of music that serves as a tool for edification as it quite literally saved my life. Music of this nature is a scarce commodity these days.

▣ ***Nicknames?***

Oh boy. I am a 'fluffy' teddy bear now but was even 'fluffier' in high school. I was nicknamed, 'Big Jack' in high school - after the pie company, of course.

▣ ***Pick five words to describe yourself?***

Artistic, diverse, discerning, caring, and soulful.

▣ ***What is your favourite word?***

I have three favourite words, masala steak gatsby.

▣ ***Top of your bucket list?***

Thanks to my extensive involvement in professional choirs and other spheres over the years, I am well travelled. However, I have yet to visit the Big Apple, New York City.

▣ ***Your greatest achievement?***

Maintaining my sanity in a world where there is increasingly less of a sustainable platform for art and its creators.

▣ ***What do you complain about most often?***

The lack of a sustainable platform for art and its creators.

▣ ***What is your fear?***

Losing my ability to hear.

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