



# The World-Famous Franky Fritz Band

*C.J. Levesque*

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Franky—youthful World War II veteran, bandleader from New Orleans, and single father—is driven to musical success by taking inspiration from his boyhood hero, jazz legend Bix Beiderbecke, and from being shunned by his bride at the altar.

Franky's formula for musical success is as counterintuitive as it gets: Play music that's past its time, market his band's New Orleans roots even though the group favors big band and swing over New Orleans Dixieland jazz, and wear the tuxedo from his foiled wedding everyday and all day—recalling Dickens' Miss Havisham, spending her days at home in her wedding gown.

Meanwhile, infant daughter Ariel shows up, seemingly out of nowhere. From then on, she's along for the ride throughout the band's triumphs and mishaps, traveling on endless road adventures with a motley crew of male jazz players.

And then there's Bobbi, a one-of-a-kind female vocalist who keeps Franky in line and serves as a mother figure to Ariel. Opposites in temperament, Bobbi and Franky flaunt sexual energy on stage and never stop bickering off.

The “little big band that could,” as the ensemble might be called, finally breaks through. But as the story's interwoven time periods reveal, nothing stays the same. By the late 1960s, Ariel has become a headstrong young adult—pulled by the forces of that turbulent decade. Franky's jazz livelihood is dying at the hands of rock 'n' roll. In both career and family, Franky must face the music.

Often comical and always poignant, *The World-Famous Franky Fritz Band* chronicles the adventures of a single father and his daughter traveling the country during the jazz era, straight through to the time when that unique American period has drawn to a close. This story is about the music of generations, and the nature of love—familial, friend, romantic. It's a different kind of jazz novel, one that examines the evolution from one musical form to another, and the transition from everything old to all that's new. *The World-Famous Franky Fritz Band* follows the path that starts at innocence and leads to a universal choice—the one between bitterness and wisdom.

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