

More about

www.danasmusicplayground.com

Dana Cohenour is widely recognized as one of the pioneers of independent children's music. Her five albums for kids have won 20 national awards and wide acclaim from critics, educators and parents alike. With her dog pal Rowdy (a lovable giant costumed character), Dana has toured the nation, greeting thousands of young fans who love to sing, jump and play along with her highly interactive songs and bubbly personality. Incorporating both familiar favorites and original songs from her five popular recordings, Dana's dynamic performances stimulate imaginations, inspire interaction and introduce children to nearly every style of music.

Dana grew up in Lakewood, Colorado, where she started piano, dance and tumbling lessons at an early age. She credits her dance teacher, Ethel Barker, with providing her the tools to become an expressive and confident performer. This foundation, along with the oversized ham bone which she inherited from her grandfather, sparked an early desire to make a life upon the stage.

Dana earned a bachelor's degree in music and theater from the University of Northern Colorado. Soon after graduating, she began her career starring in Broadway musicals in regional and stock productions around the country including Bucks County and Pocono Playhouses; her leading roles included "Man of La Mancha" (at the Aladdin Theater in Denver), "Sound of Music," "Little Mary Sunshine," "Fiddler on the Roof," and "West Side Story." A gifted pianist and songwriter, she entertained for many years as part of the New York City and European cabaret scenes before embarking on her family music career.

Inspired by the birth of her first nephew Tyler, Dana began to focus her songwriting and performance skills exclusively on the young audiences with whom she has always felt a special connection. "I wrote and recorded a few lullabies as a gift for my new nephew, and through the process, realized that I loved writing for young children. Envisioning little smiles and open imaginations filled me with inspiration. I felt I had truly found my niche, especially once I started performing for live audiences of children. To me, hearing children's laughter and watching them jump into your music is a reward beyond measure." Encouraged by the success of her debut album, *Gather Your Dreams* (1994), Dana made a commitment to bring high quality, meaningful and fun music to children and families while introducing kids to numerous musical genres. Her first independent label, Real Music for Kidz, was born.

As Dana moved from singing at toy stores to performing at larger venues, she learned the importance of engaging her young audiences with movement and participation. High-energy and interactive songs became the emphasis of Dana's next two recordings, *Dana's Best Sing & Play-A-Long Tunes* and *Dana's Best Travelin' Tunes*. Drawing on her piano-bar days and her love of composers such as Duke Ellington, Cole Porter and the Gershwins, Dana next decided to focus on making jazz accessible and fun for children. Combining classic jazz and cool original songs, *Dana's Best Sing & Swing-A-Long Tunes* became an instant hit with kids and parents alike.

Dana's Best Rock & Roll Fairy Tales came along soon after. "I wanted to inspire a love of literature and reading in children. Many of the classic fairy tales have lots scary elements. In setting the stories to rock and roll beats and re-working them in a slightly softer fashion, I hoped to bring out the humor and morals in the tales and bring them new life. Plus, I just love rhyming and doing crazy character voices!"

After spending 18 years in the New York City area, Dana moved to Washington state with her husband, Jason and son, Jack. Though she counts being "Jack's Mom" as her primary focus these days, she still continues to perform nationally with her own show and also with PBS TV characters such as Curious George, Clifford and the Berenstain Bears and others in her musical story time shows that incorporate her original songs.

To share her love of music, Dana developed her **Music Playground** program for youngsters from ages 1 to 4. These fun and engaging music and movement classes incorporate an introduction to rhythm, rhyme and basic sign language. Dana offers classes at OPUS Performing Arts School in Bellingham, WA and loves every moment she spends singing and playing with her adorable little buddies. "I learn as much from them as they do from me," Dana quips.

Music Playground is now Dana's independent label; the first album release is *Dana's Best Jump & Jam Tunes* (April 2017). Visit www.danasmusicplayground.com for the latest news about upcoming releases, videos and concerts.

Dana's Discography

- Gather Your Dreams – 1994
(currently available as Dana's Best Lullabies and Morning Songs)
- Dana's Best Play-a-Long Tunes -- 1995
- Dana's Best Travelin' Tunes – 1996
- Dana's Best Sing & Swing-a-Long Tunes (Classic & Cool Jazz for Kids) – 1997
- Dana's Best Rock & Roll Fairy Tales – 1999
- Dana's Best Jump & Jam Tunes -- 2017

Awards for Dana's music

KIDS FIRST ENDORSEMENT

PARENTS' CHOICE APPROVED!

MIDWEST BOOK REVIEW "CHOICE PICK!"

NATIONAL ASSN FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG

CHILDREN (NAEYC) SONG OF THE MONTH

National Parenting Publications: Gold Award (NAPPA)

Four-time winner

Parents' Choice: Silver Award

Two-time winner

International Songwriting Competition

3rd Place Winner

Early Childhood News: Directors' Choice Award

Children's Music Web Awards:

Three-time winner

Best Music For Young Children

Best Music For Young Children

Best Song For Young Children

Dr. Toy's Best Vacation Product