

# Matt Jenson

**Keyboardist, Composer, Arranger, Singer, Educator**

[www.mattjenson.com](http://www.mattjenson.com) [www.liquidrevolution.net](http://www.liquidrevolution.net)

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Growing up in rural New Hampshire injected Matt with a deep spiritual connection communicated by the simplicity, beauty and truth of nature. As a child he had the opportunity to visit extended family in Boston and with that cultural exposure, he fell in love with the musical styles of the African diaspora: Jazz, Blues, Reggae & Afro-Latin Music. Later as a young man with a penchant for seeking the deeper understanding of life, he became extremely interested in the socio-political-economic and psychological-emotional conditions of human kind. This, combined with his intense creative drive, provides the bedrock for nearly all of Matt's artistic output as a talented keyboardist, singer, composer, arranger, educator and producer.

Just before the turn of the century, Matt completed a masters degree in Jazz studies at the New England Conservatory of Music where he studied with (the late) Geri Allen, Dave Holland and Ran Blake, and then began his professional career playing keyboards in the various Boston jazz and blues music scenes. Quickly noticed for his groove and ability to get funky as well as for his arranging chops, Matt headed to the bandstand most notably with the great blues guitarist Ronnie Earl. After making his mark on that scene, the maestro of New Orleans soul, singer Johnny Adams came knocking and Matt found himself playing sold out houses in the US and Europe. The double barreled Blues and Soul Ph.D. he got from those as well as his work with Mighty Sam McClain, Cyril Lance, Julien Kasper and Johnny Neel, allowed Jenson to settle back in Boston and flush out some ideas he'd been having regarding his attraction to Caribbean music, especially his simmering love for Bob Marley and an equally intense attraction to Afro-Cuban music. The universe came with an answer to Matt's musical loves and almost simultaneously he had the opportunity to study piano with his idol, the iconic Latin piano player Eddie Palmieri and to plumb the depths of Bob Marley's life and music.

In regards to the latter, Matt joined the piano faculty at the Berklee College of Music (2001) and created a smash hit performance studies class entitled, "The Music and Life of Bob Marley." Each semester he directs a select ensemble of 13 talented young musicians and teaches them about the socio-political circumstances around Bob's life. The ensemble has performed at nearly every major performance venue in Boston, at reggae festivals in Canada, Vermont, Rhode Island and Massachusetts and took part in the Kingdom Rise, Kingdom Fall conference on Caribbean spirituality at Harvard University. Matt constantly engages his students to understand the powerful connection music has to social justice movements and to challenge them to tackle current issues using Marley's experience as inspiration. This class has given Matt many opportunities to deepen his understanding of Marley's life and music, including numerous trips to Jamaica where he has connected with many who were in Marley's inner circle. Most notably Matt has performed with Judy Mowatt and worked with Rita Marley taking part in the "Africa Unite" event in Ghana, West Africa in 2007. (Matt also teaches the class in a 3 day or week long intensive format.)

Most recently (2017) Matt received the prestigious "Newbury Comics Faculty Fellowship" at Berklee and is producing a ground breaking course entitled "The Art of Reggae" focusing on nuts and bolts of how to play this music properly taking care to honor its cultural roots.

Matt is an inspired music educator who has developed very creative and concise methods to teach blues, jazz, pop, rock, funk and R&B influenced piano, Hammond organ, improvisation, theory, composition and arranging. Any students wanting to learn Afro-Cuban styles and Reggae will find a wealth of information and hand-outs that are taken from his deepest passions. In all of Matt's teaching he aims to plant a seed in his student's minds, hearts, souls and music that will bring clarity, truth and healing to the planet and to human-kind.

As a musical artist, Matt is a multi/culti/genre musician with unbridled passion and drive to positively transform humanity, just as he himself has been transformed by the music, humanity and socio-political message of his own mentors.

His original compositions, arrangements and lyrics appear in his collaborative work with the band Rebel Tumbao that organically and soulfully merges roots Reggae with Afro-Cuban style...and include some KILLER Latin arrangements of Bob Marley's music! Matt's contribution to reggae's long mission of revolutionary consciousness-raising, lies with his now touring Liquid Revolution band expressing the cry of alternative global thinking in this era of climate change and extreme economic injustice. Not only do Matt's poetically insightful songs strike at the heart of these issues, but his tunes about joyful expressions of love, spirituality and the lessons to be learned from simple stories of every day life all offer a vision for a bright future.

On the lighter side, Matt's local party band Combo Sabroso (Los 4, the smaller version) has been delighting audiences with creative, fun and extremely grooving covers in the Latin and Reggae styles for a couple of decades!

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