

MATT JENSON - Unmarked Routes

(Please use all 4 of these words including the hyphen for your promotional title line.)

ONE LINE – DESCRIPTION 1

Unmarked routes through sonic hypnogy.

ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION 2

Ambient neo classical dub piano and electronics.

DESCRIPTION 1 (STANDARD VERSION)

Matt Jenson - Unmarked Routes, is a new musical endeavor that merges Matts long background with Jazz, Blues, Afro-Cuban and Jamaican musical styles with an expansive neoclassical ambient new sound that incorporates the use of modern electronics and acoustic instruments. The music is at once subtle and contemplative yet expansive, rhythmic and hypnotic with a stunning level of personality and emotion.

DESCRIPTION 2 (TRIPPY VERSION)

Matt Jenson - Unmarked Routes; A dematerialized sonic hypnogogic experience, luxuriating in atmospheres and drone-tones of awe and fascination, where thoughts and feelings of division have no safe harbor. A low-lit bath of sound, where iridescent, gauzy melodies collide in slow motion with decolonized electronic soundscapes, a piano, hushed voices and maybe a string quartet and kaleidoscopic dancers. Where lo-fi, dubbed-out, faded trance rhythms superimposition themselves in your being with the lucid assurance that a beautiful outcome will bloom if together we direct our attention to it.

UNMARKED ROUTES AND MATT JENSON DESCRIPTION AND BIO COMBINED

When Matt was in high school he remembers walking around on late nights during the Summer, sauntering through the New Hampshire (USA) country side, under a moon-lit sky with the smell of pine trees, cut grass, the sound of a gently babbling brook showing up along his path. Occasionally, after returning from what we now call a nature bath, he would come upon a 1am radio show on National Public Radio called, "Music from the Hearts of Space" and become completely transfixed by the wild spaciousness delivered on the sonic vibrations of massive synth pads, beautifully merging string lines, subtle hand-percussion rhythms, perhaps a few spoken word snippets shining through a din of cavernous reverb. The tracks floating out of the radio that had a level of compositional adventure ignited a fire that would later propel Matt into exploring avant-garde classical composers such as Arnold Schoenberg, Igor Stravinsky and Bela Bartok while he was completing his Jazz Studies masters degree in piano at New England Conservatory of Music.

Since then, his musical path has taken him on a long and varied route, starting with a stretch of time playing deep roots blues, southern rock and funk, then pursuing a calling to Afro-Cuban styles, then falling deeply for the music and life of Bob Marley (and nearly all the roots and branches of the reggae idiom), touring and recording with the jazz-fusion reggae band

Groundation, leading his own reggae and Latin bands and becoming a professor of piano at Berklee College of music.

Unmarked Routes is a radical departure from all that defined the middle part of his career, or, perhaps it's more like a returning to the organic experience of his childhood. A return to the sense of being touched by something deeply universal, perhaps in a hypnagogic state – the trippy place between wakefulness and sleep - where immense feelings of awe, gratitude and connectedness shine forth on a sonic bed of simple and direct universal beauty.

MATT JENSON BIOGRAPHY

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 and 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 last 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 and then with the maestro of New Orleans soul, singer Johnny Adams and with this Matt found himself playing sold out houses in the US and Europe. The double barreled Blues and Soul Ph.D. he got from those experiences allowed Matt 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 styles. 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 while teaching studio piano lessons, labs on Hammond organ playing and Afro-Cuban styles, he created a smash hit performance-studies class entitled, "The Music and Life of Bob Marley." Each semester he takes a flock of 13 talented young musicians from across the globe on a deep dive learning to play roots reggae properly and uncovering how the revolutionary life that Marley lived directly informed the music he and his band created.

This class has given Matt many opportunities to deepen his overstanding of Marley's life and music, including numerous trips to Jamaica where he has connected with many who were in Marley's inner circle. He has written full arrangements for about 40 of Marley's songs and the

ensemble has performed throughout New England at clubs and reggae festivals. He teaches the class in many formats outside of Berklee, most notably at the ecstatic northern California summer immersion camp, Jazz Camp West.

Matt is an inspired music educator who has developed very creative and effective methods to teach blues, jazz, pop, rock, funk and R&B influenced keyboard playing. His approach helps musicians develop their improvisation, theory, composition and arranging skills. During the covid-19 pandemic Matt developed and launched his popular online reggae educational platform, Art of Reggae with complete courses on all aspects of reggae keyboard playing and a course on reggae guitar playing by Tuff Lion that deeply honor the Afro-Jamaican culture from whence this music arose. (www.artofreggae.com)

Matt's original compositions, arrangements and lyrics appear in his collaborative work with the band Rebel Tumbao that soulfully merges roots reggae with Afro-Cuban style and include some killer Latin arrangements of Bob Marley's music. His contribution to reggae's long mission of revolutionary consciousness-raising, lies with his Liquid Revolution band, having released the album "Dragonfly Taxi" complete with political satire ads connecting the offering of original compositions. In 2018 Matt joined the San Francisco based jazz-fusion powerhouse reggae band Groundation, touring Europe, Brazil, Hawaii and the West Coast (USA) multiple times. He helped compose the songs for the band's 10th album, 'One Rock' (and the subsequent dub version of the album, 'Dub Rock') contributing horn and string arrangements and performing nearly all the keyboard parts on the album. Matt's deep love of jazz and reggae has found an outlet with his Ernest Ranglin/Monty Alexander influenced band Mix Up Mix Up presenting reggae-jazz originals and creative arrangements of popular rock, soul, R&B and jazz tunes. Lastly, Matt's been leading his popular Latin and Reggae dance band, Combo Sabroso, for over 20 years, hitting audiences with booty shaking Salsa and reggae covers.

Starting in 2024, Matt has turned his artistic attention to the world of ambient electronic music, working his way up the learning curve of electronic sound design on keyboards with a whole lot of knobs and blinking lights, and a lap top computer, intimately merging them with the piano and other acoustic instruments, injecting the music with shades of all the his previous musical experience, with the intention to deliver awe inspiring sonic beauty in this time of human and planetary transition. This project is called UNMARKED ROUTES.