

Kurt G Johnson

Highly accomplished professional music composer, educator, performer, and former Columbia Records recording artist who possesses a diverse and carefully curated education rooted in comprehensive studies of key musical elements, including the melodicism of Hindustani Raga, the harmonies of Jazz Guitar, and the rhythms of African Drumming. Dedicated to facilitating the natural unfolding of innate musicality and creativity in all students by valuing the journey more than the destination. Appreciates music as a medium to develop whole humans and build community both locally and globally.

Skills & Expertise

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Successful music educator, inspiring new levels of creativity, joy, confidence and musicality in students of all ages and backgrounds• Songwriter, composer, in-demand studio musician and performer• Innovation through cross-collaborating music with nature, movement, and visual arts• Recording Engineer proficient in all areas of music technology• Years of experience producing concerts by both students and professional musicians• Children's music composer, collaborator and producer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lifelong learner; continually augmenting musical and cultural education through formal, in-depth study of various musical systems, instruments, ethnomusicology and global music projects• Classroom management and facilitation of music clinics and workshops for Rochester public and private school classrooms• Multi-instrumentalist proficient in Guitar, Banjo, Pedal Steel Guitar, Piano, Voice, Drums, Percussion, Mbira, Organ, Tabla, Electronics, Synthesizers, Bass and Slide Guitar• Long-time practitioner of mindfulness meditation, Eastern philosophy, and religious studies
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Experience

Music Educator

Music Instruction

- Highly sought-after music teacher known for inspiring students musically and motivating them creatively while exceeding parental expectations at Rochester Contemporary School of Music (RCSM) (one of Rochester's top music preparatory schools), the Hornell YMCA, and through Clinics and Master Classes in and around the Rochester area.
- Augmented music faculty to enrich public- and private-school music programs; led improvisation clinics; mentored concert, jazz and rock bands; provided advisement in music careers and professional musicianship.
- Extensive experience with both individual and group lessons for students of all ages in traditional and non-traditional settings; classes and workshops have included Songwriting, Music Appreciation, Music Theory and Ethnomusicology, as well as lessons on many instruments.

Skills assessment, Mentorship, Student performances

- **Mentor and Leader.** High degree of success helping students of all ages overcome performance anxiety and learn to enjoy the creative, collaborative and performance aspects of musicianship. Guided students in crafting, arranging, rehearsing and performing original and existing compositions for concerts in and around the Rochester community. Providing accompaniment as needed and facilitating the entire concert production process.
- **Core Faculty Member of RCSM's Summer Institute.** Facilitated the complete Summer Institute experience from the audition process to the grouping of students based on ability levels and common interests, through weeks of intensive camp, culminating in a final concert of each band playing six original songs. Extremely popular with students and parents, and known for building core musical and transferrable skills such as: work ethic, collaborative creativity, accountability, problem solving and interpersonal skills to navigate relational dynamics.
- **Primary Guitar Instructor and Band Mentor** for National Corporate Battle of the Bands at *ShoreTel*. Motivated, inspired and prepared highly-stressed tech professionals with no musical training to compete locally, regionally and nationally in the company's annual Battle of the Bands competition.

Community building, program innovation

- Enhanced musical community by providing custom programming that grew participation and enthusiasm: Women's Ukulele Group, Kids Percussion Ensemble, various Guitar Ensembles, and the Y's first Guitar Club.
- Enriched the musical community at the YMCA by helping to attract a multimillion dollar donation, thus bringing creative arts programming to the community.
- Led group improvisation workshops at annual Upstate NY Dance Festival; produced many cross-collaborative performances that have successfully strengthened communities and inspired innovative thinking.

Music with Children

- **Co-founder, producer, and recording artist on *Paradise, Uganda***, a musical collaboration with under-served, at-risk children living on the streets of Kampala, Uganda. Involved first-hand travel to Uganda to work with children and draw out their innate creativity. Provided the skills and resources necessary to bring their voices and songs to life. Helped build confidence and connections with neighboring villages and communities through a unique collaborative process. Led singalongs at various orphanages and ultimately recorded and produced a full-length record of the children's songs both in Kampala and stateside.
- **Founding member of Rochester's annual, sell-out holiday production of Emmet Otter's Jug Band Christmas and Other Jim Henson Favorites.** Provides creative direction, performance oversight and collaboration for this multi-media show including daytime family shows, kid participation and a kids' talent contest to benefit a local charity of the winner's choosing.
- **Co-writer, performer, and recording artist** for the original children's musical *Once in A Blue Moon*; cast of 11 children aged 8-16; debuted in Boston, October 2017.

Performer, Composer and Recording Artist

- **Contract Recording Artist for 30th Century Records, a Columbia/SONY label** owned, operated and curated by Grammy Award Winning Producer Brian Burton (AKA Danger Mouse). Actively collaborated with Grammy-Award-Winning Drummer/Producer Patrick Carney of *The Black Keys*.
- **Multi-Instrumentalist Composer and Session Musician**, providing musical beds for commercial video as well as independent short films, as well as composing, performing and recording instrumental overdubs for countless clients.
- **Seasoned Touring Musician**, able to balance performance roles with operational, organizational and relationship management roles, i.e. tour management, budgeting, logistics, and promotions.
- **Performer** at NPR's World Café, and national music conferences such as South by Southwest, Non-Comm, and AAA National Radio Conferences.
- **Pit Member** with various school ensembles and organizations such as the Rochester Gay Men's Choir, Webster Theatre Guild, and Rochester Broadway Theatre League.

Education

Bachelor's of Professional Studies - Music Composition for Film, TV, and Games / Berklee College of Music Boston, MA | 2020 - Present

- Competitive program with some of the nation's top faculty, designed to aid students in gaining the practical skills to compose, arrange, and orchestrate effective dramatic music for visual and interactive media

Dual Degree Honors Graduate - Diversity and Community Studies; Cultural Studies Degree & Liberal Arts Degree / MCC, Rochester NY | 2009 - 2012

Dean's List | Concentration in Ethnomusicology | Writing Intensive Certificate

- Interdisciplinary degree that employs a holistic, unified perspective to understand the complex diversity of human cultural expression, emphasizes comparative approaches and cross-cultural perspectives.
- Includes study of social organization, material and expressive culture such as art, music, folklore, and symbolic language, religious, ritual and ceremonial traditions.

Independent Studies / Eastman Community School of Music, Rochester NY | 2010 - 2012

- Two years of private study with head of Jazz Guitar, Bob Sneider at The Eastman School of Music.
- Studied Mbira with Mbira dzeMugomo Guru and Zimbabwean Mbira Master Musekiwa Chingodza.

North Indian Hindustani Raga / Ali Akbar College of Music, San Rafael CA | 2007 - 2009

- Prestigious college offering education in the classical ragas of Northern India at the highest professional level through immersive and disciplined programming.
- Rigorous study of North Indian Hindustani Classical Music with world-renowned performer, educator and composer Maestro Ali Akbar Khan and tabla master Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri.
- Studied Instrumental and Vocal Raga, Rhythms and Percussion, Indian Music History and Hindi language.
- Achievements awarded with highly competitive Work Study and coveted Student Residency position.

Master Classes, Various Locations Nationally | 2003 - Present

- Intense study under jazz legends David Liebman, Slide Hampton, David Baker and contemporary music giants Tony Trischka, Gordon Stone, Kenny Werner, David Friesen, Fred Hamilton, and Corey Christiansen.
- Jazz Theory with Head of Jazz Studies at University of Oregon, Mike Denny, (2005-2007), Eugene OR.
- Jamey Aebersold Jazz Intensive at University of Louisville, 2006, Louisville KY.

Employment Summary

- 2003 – Present | Freelance Session Musician and Educator / Various Locations Nationally
- 2015 – 2018 | Columbia Recording Artist / SONY MUSIC, NYC
- 2011 – 2017 | Founding Instructor of Guitar, Banjo, Lap Steel, Mandolin, Music Theory and Ethnomusicology / Rochester Contemporary School of Music, Rochester NY
- 2012 – 2017 | Music Instructor / YMCA, Hornell NY
- 2013 – 2015 | Director of Music for A+S Dance Works / NYC

References - Available Upon Request