

John Simon was born in Philadelphia, PA, where he has studied piano since the age of 8. He received both a Bachelors (1976) and Masters Degree (1978) in Music Composition at the Ester Boyer College of Music at Temple University in Philadelphia. John studied classical piano performance with Sophia Melvin and composition with Clifford Taylor, Robert Morgan and Paul Epstein. He founded the Temple University Electronic Music Studio, where he taught graduate and undergraduate classes in Electronic Music. Using a large “C” Series Moog modular synthesizer, John’s many compositions explored the avant-garde of the electronic genre.

John wrote the score for the film Forever Furness, produced by Robert Steele, which won first prize for music in the film competition sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

In the 1970's, John played swing and bluegrass upright bass for seven years with The Skookil Express. The Skookil Express played throughout the Philadelphia area, and were featured at the Philadelphia Folk Festival. With fellow musicians drawn from the halls of the Ester Boyer College of Music John formed the group Melisma, which performed extensively throughout the Philadelphia area in the 70's, and cut an album, now a collector's item, Like Trolls. The group performed original songs, with a strong emphasis on vocal harmonies. Melisma was very eclectic, performing material ranging from Renaissance madrigals to be-bop, from Leonard Bernstein to Joni Mitchell. Instrumentation included piano, bass, drums, percussion, dulcimer, flute and guitar.

In 1979, John moved to Mendocino County, Northern California, where he formed the jazz fusion group Synaps from 1982 through 1987. Synaps featured jazz vocalist Paula Samonte and performed original music composed by John. He also performed with High Tide, a Mendocino based jazz fusion group. John's passion for creativity has driven him to form and join many groups exploring original and experimental music. He produced Tempting Fate, with singer Cat Austin, which featured 10 of John's songs. He was a member of The Fourth Stream, a modern jazz ensemble with drummer Kendrick Freeman and bassist Wolfgang Wein, again featuring singer Cat Austin.

John is well known as an accomplished soloist and a preferred accompanist for many vocalists and instrumentalists in the Bay Area. He has appeared with a diversity of musicians and groups, including Spirogyra, David Sanborn, The Braxton Brothers, Ray Obiedo, Little Anthony, The Coasters, Terry Bradford, Cat Austin, Linda Kosut, Nancy Tierney, Bonnie Brooks, Paula Samonte, Kelly Brandeburg, Janie Roberts, the Ukiah Symphony Orchestra, the Gene Krupa Big Band, the Blue Note Collective, the Blue Moon Dance Band and many others.

John is a “working musician,” the keyboardist for many different commercial rock, dance and jazz groups throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and the Northern California wine country.

John was a member of the faculty at Sonoma State University for seven years, and at the Santa Rosa Junior College for eleven years, teaching jazz piano as well as jazz vocal repertoire and accompaniment techniques. He is in his 12th year as music director for Saint Francis Solano Catholic Church in Sonoma. John has also been the musical director for theatrical productions of “A Chorus Line”, “Godspell”, “Pippin”, Rent, as well as “Future Perfect Tense”, an original musical he co-authored.

John owns and operates a busy recording studio, J Dog Studio, in Sebastopol, California. He composes music in both the jazz and electronic mediums.