

Matt Lax-Guitarist/Singer/Songwriter
www.nearlybeloved.com

Born (1963) in Oxnard, CA and raised all over California and Texas, Matt began playing the guitar at age 9 with lessons from his older brother Paul. Matt grew up playing bluegrass and blues living in California and Texas. When the family moved back to CA, Matt played in his first serious band, **The Aptos high Jazz Band** in his senior year of high school. They were the big band state champions of California and played at the **Montreux** and **North Sea Jazz** Festivals. They recorded an album under the direction of **Don Keller** and with some help from **Bill Berry, Carl Fontana, Dave Frishberg, Frankie Capp, and Monty Budwig.**

After kicking around Europe for 6 months, Matt lived briefly in Austin Texas and soaked up the best of the Americana Scene circa 1982, where Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Townes Van Zandt, Steve Earle and the rest of Austin's best musicians, singers and songwriters held court. At 19, Matt moved to LA and played with one time Philadelphia teenage sensation **Maureen Gray** at live shows and recordings. Matt played briefly in the Ghanain high life band **Sankorfa**, (along with bass player **Paul Olguin**). Sankorfa helped spawn the LA world beat scene and its most auspicious offspring, **The Bonedaddys.**

Matt moved to San Francisco in 1983 and sought out the African expat. players in the thriving music scene in Oakland. His dedication paid off when he joined **Zulu Spear** in 1984, and played with them for most of the next ten years. Matt penned several songs for the band including the title track for their **Capitol Records debut "Welcome to the USA"**. Zulu Spear played extensively on the west coast and throughout the US sharing dates with **King Sonny Ade, Jimmy Cliff, The Neville Brothers, Burning Spear, The GE Smith Band, Lou Reed, KRS 1, Carlos Santana, Hugh Masekela, Dave Brubeck, Pharoah Sanders, Bela Fleck and the Flecktones, Sistah Souljah, The Wailers,** and scores of other great artists. The highest honor for the band was playing for **Nelson Mandela** at the Oakland Coliseum when he spoke and thanked the Bay Area for doing their part to end the evil of apartheid. Zulu Spear played countless rallies and benefits to this end.

Matt began writing his own songs seriously around 1990 after rediscovering country and folk music. He wrote a great many songs that year, played in **The Trailer Park Rangers**, and started his own group **Matt Lax and Nearly Beloved**. Nearly Beloved released its first CD "**Wanderer's Dream**" in 1997, "**Hurricane and a Tumbleweed**" in 2002, and will release "**Where's Bob**" in early 2012. Nearly Beloved has played at **The Hardly Strictly Bluegrass** festival and countless venues, clubs and house concerts throughout the bay area. They've appeared live on **KPFA, KWMR, KALX, KRSH, KCRW,** radio stations.

Over the years Matt has played guitar on the Bay Area music scene with the bands **Kotoja, Wazobia, Attaboy, Radio Noise, Three Mile Grade, Ped-Xing, The Susan James Band, The Trailer Park Rangers, Long Island Lulu, Paul Pena, Lisa Kindred, Samba N'Go, The Amandla Poets,** and **Trio Max.**

Matt teaches full time for the San Francisco Unified School District at Juvenile Hall, lives in Mill Valley with his wife and two cats, and has a weekly local gig at Vasco Restaurant.

"Was that you playing those wild guitar licks up there?"- John Lee Hooker to Matt at JJ's club in San Jose 1991.