

Press Reviews

“Todd Marcus, one of the few bass clarinetists in modern jazz, has almost made a point of understating his skill as a player throughout his recording career. His first albums aimed to incorporate his ethnic heritage into his art, wedding Egyptian music theory with big-band jazz. *On These Streets*, his 2018 release, was an immersive, moving reflection of his work as an activist, organizer, and resident of West Baltimore. Marcus’ instrument was more his group than his horn on these records, as he used the ensembles to weave rich narratives through the arrangements. However, the bass clarinet is front and center on *Trio+*, a strong postbop showcase for Marcus’ unquestionable command of the instrument in a small-combo setting.”

--- **JazzTimes, February 2020**

“[Marcus’s album] *Trio+* is crisp and tight and varied and has more good melodies than we can dip into, plus a lot of very good bass clarinet playing.

--- **NPR, December 2019**

“One of the only improvisers to make the quiet, papery-voiced bass clarinet his primary instrument. One of the only nationally known jazz musicians to have remained in Baltimore. One of the only artists in a conspicuously conscious age to actually work full time as [a community organizer](#). All right, now let go of all that and just listen. On “*Trio+*,” his new album, Marcus’s burly projection and loose-cannon improvising style make the case for him on their own.”

--- **The New York Times, November 2019**

“Mr. Marcus is probably the most inventive bass clarinetist working in straight-ahead jazz today...[and] lives in Baltimore, where he is a guiding light on the city’s jazz scene who doubles as an activist and organizer.”

--- **The New York Times, August 2017**

"This is music that is smart, heartfelt and alive with ardent conviction."

--- **The New York City Jazz Record, January 2016**

"Marcus...is clearly what the jazz polls call a "rising star" - as a composer-arranger and as a bass clarinetist...In Marcus' hands, the bass clarinet is no longer a specialty instrument. Its unique timbral richness becomes incisive, fully capable of forceful expression."

--- **JazzTimes, August 2015**

"Listeners won't have any trouble recognizing Marcus's compelling gifts for composing and arranging."

--- **The Washington Post, May 2015**

"...an endlessly fascinating voice from Baltimore who's captured national attention on the jazz scene..."

DC City Paper, September 2014

"Baltimore-based Todd Marcus, the virtuoso bass clarinetist and composer, is a master of straight-ahead jazz."

--- **Baltimore Sun, January 2014**

"...two weeks ago, Todd Marcus proved once again what a beast he is on the bass clarinet."

DC City Paper, September 2013

"It's the unbridled ferocity with which [Marcus] plays that makes [his album *Inheritance*] stand out. From the beginning, the disc is an explosion of straight-ahead jazz, with superb supporting roles played by the rest of his band."

--- **Downbeat, January 2013**

"Marcus' mastery of the regular clarinet...turns the licorice stick into an instrument of power and expressiveness."

--- **Jazz Times, December 2012**

"Here's a record [*Inheritance*] with a lot of hidden layers...
It's distinct and studied but merges into the modern mainstream."

--- **NPR, Top 10 Jazz Albums of 2012**

"The [bass clarinet] has been used for freewheeling, wailing improvisation in free jazz (c.f. Eric Dolphy) and fusion (c.f. Bennie Maupin). But it has rarely been used for playing well-defined melodies at brisk tempos, and that's where Marcus has broken new ground."

--- **Baltimore City Paper, November 2012**

"[an] incredible bass clarinet player, arranger, and composer"

--- **The Urbanite, February 2012**

"Todd Marcus, a musical autodidact, plays the clarinet and bass clarinet (rarities in the jazz world) with a sharp ease. His tidy but sprawled-out compositions have a similar preternatural comfort about them. As a result his swingin' punchy post-bop often comes off both comforting and challenging."

--- **CapitolBop.com, July 2011**