

Press Reviews

"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**

"[Blues For Tahrir] is an exciting album that is both emotive, musical and thought provoking."
--- **Jazz Weekly, July 2015**

Voted a Rising Star in 63rd Annual Critics Poll for "clarinet" and "miscellaneous instrument" categories.
--- **DownBeat, August 2015**

"Marcus...is clearly what the jazz polls call a "rising star" - as a composer-arranger and as a bass clarinetist. His solos are highlights of this album. 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**

"Todd Marcus is not only one of the great individualists in jazz, he's also a great composer...But it transcends genre: it's Middle Eastern, and it's cinematic, and it has a mighty angst-fueled majesty that under ideal circumstances also ought to reach the rock audience that gravitates toward artsy bands like Radiohead or Pink Floyd."
--- **New York Music Daily, May 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..."
--- **Michael J. West, DC City Paper, September 2014**

Voted Rising Star in 62nd Annual Critics Poll for "clarinet" and "miscellaneous instrument" categories
--- **Downbeat, July 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."
--- **Michael J. West, DC City Paper, September 2013**

Voted Rising Star in 61st Annual Critics Poll for "clarinet" and "miscellaneous instrument" categories
--- **Downbeat, August 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 straightahead 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**

"One of the best albums of 2012...Displaying the [bass clarinet's] ability to sound crisp and clear, Marcus swings through a set of modern tunes that are equally joyful and engaging. Slight influence of Middle East music just

adds to the intrigue. Straight-ahead jazz, but nothing straight-forward about it. An album that keeps getting better to my ears with each subsequent listen."

--- **Dave Sumner, Bird is the Worm, Top 20 Jazz Albums of 2012**

"Here's a record [*Inheritance*] with a lot of hidden layers...

It's distinct and studied but merges into the modern mainstream."

--- **Patrick Jarenwattananon, 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."

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

"[*Inheritance*] shines a much brighter spotlight on Marcus' improvising – hard-nosed and rhythmic and almost always revelatory."

--- **Giovanni Russonello, CapitolBop.com, November 2012**

"I'm impressed with [Marcus'] approach and imagination, not to mention his technique."

--- **John Poses, Columbia Daily Tribune, 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**

"The bass clarinetist's original tunes and the top-notch, lively musicians in the orchestra deliver one of the most satisfying big-band sounds in the region."

--- **Baltimore City Paper, January 5, 2011**

"Marcus has deftly helmed [a] nine-piece orchestra, which features some of the region's more notable players."

--- **Baltimore Sun, October 20, 2011**

"...masterfully performed solos...If you need to get your blood pumping, this [music] will fit the bill."

--- **Examiner.com, November 26, 2010**

"Powerful, intricate jazz flowing through a bass clarinet"

--- **The B Daily, February 2010**

"... one of the finest [CDs] to come out in late 2006....a fabulous ear and brain cleaner.

We dug the freshness of the approach...Truly refreshing in a world of sameness."

--- **Linda Yohn, WEMU Music Director, February 2007**

"[Marcus] was self taught as an arranger and player. In one respect you'd never guess this was the case, for his music is organized, balanced and mature. On the other hand, there is a fire, which resonates on this recording. His bass clarinet playing has an original sound, and his arranging has a style of his own...[The band's] energy is awesome and the ensemble has a bright future.

--- **Rich Holland, Jazz Radio 247.com, February 2007**

"While the bass clarinet has been used often since Dolphy, it is typically used by a saxophonist or clarinetist as a second or third instrument...Very few performers have used the instrument exclusively, but one such performer is the Baltimore-based American musician and bandleader Todd Marcus."

--- **Wikipedia Encyclopedia, entry on "Bass Clarinet"**

"[T]he Baltimore-based Marcus has fashioned a career on the bass clarinet of blending traditional bebop and swing with some world music touches that make him deserving of wider recognition. A sampling of his CD, "In

Pursuit of the 9th Man," on HiPNOTIC Records label shows off his skills as a composer and arranger as well as a musician."

--- Jazzreview.com, October 2005