

TODD MARCUS

BASS CLARINETIST • COMPOSER



“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.”
— *New York Times*

Baltimore based jazz musician, composer, and bandleader Todd Marcus demonstrates virtuosity and versatility as a modern jazz instrumentalist breaking new ground. He is one of the few artists worldwide to focus on the bass clarinet as a main instrument in modern jazz with his large and small ensembles and has been voted a Rising Star by jazz’s DownBeat magazine annually since 2013.

In concert his straight-ahead playing and compositions swing with fiery intensity balanced with delicate introspection. His music offers a strong melodic sensibility, draws from elements of his community work, and often incorporates the Middle Eastern influences of his Egyptian American heritage. Marcus’ work charts new ground while also featuring work of jazz masters from Thelonius Monk and Charlie Parker to George Gershwin.

His compositions reflect a social consciousness beginning with his 2015 album *Blues for Tahrir* that merged jazz with Middle Eastern music to capture Egypt’s revolution of 2011. At home in Baltimore, Marcus doubles as community activist in his west Baltimore community of over 20 years (at his nonprofit Intersection of Change) and his 2018 album *On These Streets* offers a musical portrait of the strengths and challenges of the neighborhood where the death of community member Freddie Gray in April 2015 led to the city’s subsequent civil unrest.

Marcus has performed internationally and led his jazz orchestra and smaller ensembles in a host of venues. He has appeared at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York, SFJazz in San Francisco, and the Cairo Jazz Festival in Egypt. Based in Baltimore, he performs at Keystone Korner, the Creative Alliance, Baltimore Museum of Art and Walters Art Museum as well as The Kennedy Center and Blues Alley in Washington, D.C. He regularly works along the east coast corridor from New York City to Richmond. He was a featured guest at ClarinetFest2023 and the first World Bass Clarinet Convention in Rotterdam, Holland where he was recognized for both his compositions and unique solo voice.

He has worked with other jazz artists such as Gary Bartz, Bennie Maupin, Don Byron, Larry Willis, Ralph Peterson, Warren Wolf, Sean Jones, and Orrin Evans. Marcus is also a strong clinician who offers workshops and residencies focused on composition and soloing, incorporating Middle Eastern music in jazz, integrating other influences in music, and community development.

ENSEMBLES

- **Todd Marcus Jazz Orchestra:** bass clarinet, alto sax, tenor sax, flute, trumpet, trombone, piano, bass, drums, and optional vocalist
- **Todd Marcus Quintet:** bass clarinet, choice of clarinet/guitar/vibraphone/saxophone/trumpet, piano, bass, and drums
- **Todd Marcus Quartet:** bass clarinet/clarinet, piano, bass, and drums
- **Todd Marcus Trio:** bass clarinet/clarinet, bass, and drums
- **Todd Marcus Duo:** bass clarinet/clarinet and piano

Size of Ensembles: 2 – 10 musicians

Fee Range: \$750 – \$10,000

Educational/Residency Fee: \$750 – \$10,000

Minimum Stage Dimensions: 15'x15'

Audio Support Equipment: professional sound system (microphones, monitors, mixing board)

Lighting: basic stage lighting system with assortment of colored gels

Preferred: presenter supplies piano, drum set, music stands. Rehearsal Space is optional.

Each ensemble is also able to provide interactive educational clinics and workshops for students and adults in conjunction with concert performances.

BOOKING CONTACT: Sean Johnson • 443.522.0378

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BIOGRAPHY

Todd Marcus has carved out a new place in jazz as the leading artist to present the bass clarinet with a modern straight-ahead jazz approach. His music swings hard with a great intensity balanced by a strong lyrical sensibility. His unique work features Middle Eastern influences reflecting his Egyptian American heritage and includes arrangements of jazz standards.

Born and raised in New Jersey, Marcus began music at age six with piano lessons and clarinet at age 10. In high school he was introduced to jazz but was told clarinets were not allowed in the school jazz band and was turned away. His move to Baltimore to study political science at Loyola University however brought a chance to join the school's jazz ensembles and he quickly took to the music.

In 1997 Marcus left college to live and work in west Baltimore, focusing on community work with Habitat for Humanity and then Intersection of Change. By night he continued his study of jazz, teaching himself theory and improvisation and switched to the bass clarinet after hearing a record by jazz legend Eric Dolphy. In 1998 Marcus returned to New Jersey to complete his college degree in urban studies at Rutgers University but spent the majority of his time at the school's jazz department.

Since 1999 Marcus has lived in Baltimore, devoting himself to dual careers as a jazz artist and community activist. His music career has blossomed to include six critically acclaimed albums, multiple ensembles, composition and arranging commissions, and prestigious national grants. His community work has taken a similar trajectory where, as the Executive Director of Intersection of Change, he has worked to address poverty in his community. The non-profit has established Martha's Place, a recovery program for women overcoming substance abuse and homelessness, Jubilee Arts which offers arts programs for children and adults, and Strength to Love II which runs an urban farm. The group's work has also achieved significant community revitalization by renovating multiple abandoned buildings, vacant lots and beautification projects creating green spaces and murals.



Todd Marcus Jazz Orchestra

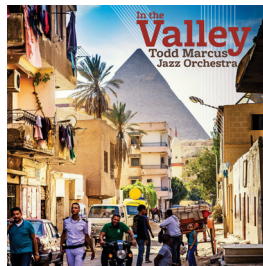
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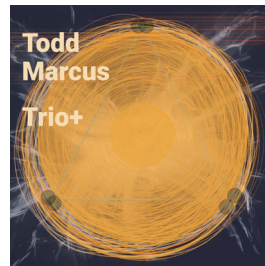
TODD MARCUS

BASS CLARINETIST • COMPOSER

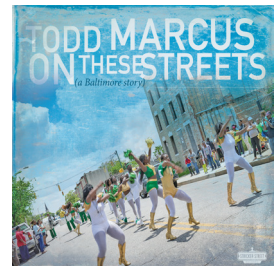
Marcus's albums have earned critical acclaim and radio play and show he is not only a gifted composer/arranger but also a fiery soloist. His quartet album *Inheritance* was selected as one of the top 10 jazz CDs of 2012 by NPR which also lauded his 2019 trio album saying, "Trio+ is crisp and tight and varied and has more good melodies than we can dip into, plus a lot of very good bass clarinet playing." His jazz orchestra album *Blues for Tahrir* was selected as one of the top 40 albums of 2015 by JazzTimes magazine which wrote of his 2022 album *In the Valley* saying, "A new Todd Marcus recording is always a treat, not only for his prowess as a restlessly creative bass clarinetist but also for his original compositions that often explore the fertile ties between jazz and Egyptian music."



2021



2019



2018

PRESS

"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." — *New York Times*

"Composer Todd Marcus has two things that immediately set him apart: he's one of the very few bandleaders to focus on the bass clarinet as his main instrument, and he draws on his Egyptian American heritage for textures not usually found in the jazz idiom... Gorgeous and exciting, [his work] showcases a player and composer at the top of his game." — *The Big Takeover*

"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*

"Each successive release from bass clarinetist Todd Marcus presents a new and deeper marvel of composing, arranging, and performing." — *Musically Speaking*

"This is music that is smart, heartfelt and alive with ardent conviction." — *The New York City Jazz Record*

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