

JONATHAN RUSSELL

BASS CLARINETIST | COMPOSER



BIOGRAPHY

Jonathan Russell is a composer, clarinetist, bass clarinetist, conductor, writer, and educator, known for his versatility, creativity, and passion. His wide-ranging and eclectic compositions build on influences from all over the musical map, unified by their directness of expression, emotional power, and visceral musicality. He has received commissions from ensembles such as the San Francisco Symphony, Peninsula Symphony, Imani Winds, Empyrean Ensemble, ADORNO Ensemble, Woodstock Chamber Orchestra, Wild Rumpus, New Keys, and the Great Noise Ensemble, and performances from numerous other ensembles and performers. His works are published by Potenza Music Publishing, BCP Music, and Peer Music, and his music has been recorded by the Sqwonk bass clarinet duo, the Kairos Consort, pianist Jeffrey Jacob, The Living Earth show, Imani Winds, and the Twiolins.

Jonathan approaches performing with the same intensity, passion, and omnivorous appetite as composing. Originally trained as a classical clarinetist, he also plays klezmer music, freely improvises, and is especially known for his unique and innovative approach to the bass clarinet. He is a member of two ground-breaking bass clarinet chamber ensembles: the heavy metal-inspired Edmund Welles bass clarinet quartet and the Sqwonk bass clarinet duo, which has commissioned numerous new works and released three albums. He has appeared as soloist with the Hudson Valley Philharmonic, the West Point Military Academy Band, the Princeton University Orchestra, Harvard's Bach Society Orchestra, the Woodstock Chamber Orchestra, the

San Francisco Composers Chamber Orchestra, the Great Noise Ensemble, the NakedEye Ensemble, the Omaha Symphonic Winds, and the Peninsula Symphony. He is also co-founder of the Switchboard Music Festival, an annual eight-hour marathon concert that brings together the San Francisco Bay Area's most creative and innovative composers and performers.

Jonathan frequently conducts his own compositions, as well as premieres of works by student and emerging composers. A dedicated educator, he has served on the Music Theory Faculty at San Francisco Conservatory and on the Composition Faculty at the Conservatory's Adult Extension and Preparatory Divisions. He has given lectures and workshops at universities and conservatories throughout the United States on his own compositions and new approaches to music theory, as well as bass clarinet and klezmer workshops, both on his own and as a member of Sqwonk and Edmund Welles.

Jonathan has served as Music Director for three dance productions with choreographers Janice Garrett and Charles Moulton. His work on their June 2011 production, *The Experience of Flight in Dreams*, earned him a nomination for an Isadora Duncan Dance Award in the category of "Outstanding Achievement in Music/Sound/Text." He has written concert reviews for the *San Francisco Classical Voice* and *Bachtrack*, opinion articles for *NewMusicBox*, and his article "The Bass Clarinetist as Composer" was recently featured in the fall 2014 publication of *The Clarinet*. He has a B.A. in Music from Harvard University and an M.M. in Music Composition from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. His primary composition teachers have included Paul Lansky, Dmitri Tymoczko, Dan Trueman, Barbara White, Steve Mackey, Dan Becker, Elinor Armer, Eric Sawyer, John Stewart, and Eric Ewazen. His clarinet teachers have included Janet Greene, Alan Kay, and Jo-Ann Sternberg. He is currently a PhD Candidate in the composition program at Princeton University and lives in London, UK.

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