

JONATHAN RUSSELL

BASS CLARINETIST | COMPOSER



PRESS QUOTES

“The Debussy [*Premiere Rhapsodie*]...performance gave increasing energy, leading to a smashingly tangy conclusion from a lurking opening. **Russell is a real virtuoso with true command over his instrument’s range of expression....** Russell’s [clarinet and cello double] concerto...has the plain harmony, and the dark and woody air...of American nationalist composers of the mid-20th century. **Long, expressive...melodic lines** from the soloists played over gently throbbing beats for orchestra. The piece reached its highlight whenever the clarinet and cello played in unison. They sounded gorgeous together....The second movement was livelier....The rhythmic figure continued to lurk underneath until it **was interrupted by an episode of klezmer folk music**, both soloists making their instruments dance engagingly. The climactic theme of the movement was a unison trio for clarinet, cello and trumpet, of all things. Russell made that work too.”

—David Bratman, *The San Mateo Daily Journal*

“Jonathan Russell’s *Sonata for Bass Clarinet and Piano* was a **jazzy crowd pleaser....**”

—Seth Gilman, *New York Music Culture Examiner*

“...[Jonathan Russell’s] *Twelve Bean Groove Machine*...was **excellent fun, with great sounds and textures popping out...**”

—Matthew Cmiel, *New Music Box*

“The San Francisco-based bass clarinet duo **Sqwonk** has been building an excellent reputation in the past few years...With their second album, *Black*, they have proven that **this reputation is well-deserved**. Jeff Anderle and Jon Russell make use of the full range of technical and expressive opportunities afforded by the bass clarinet, and the result **pushes the envelope of what bass clarinet music can be**....Anderle and Russell’s **mastery of their instruments** is evident in everything from the frantic and technical *KNEE GAS (ON)* to the mournful, lyrical lines of *Sojourn of the Face*...The duo’s repertoire consistently demands perfect production of complicated interwoven lines, acrobatic leaps, and sensitive lyricism in difficult registers; suffice it to say that Anderle and Russell **rise to meet the challenge in every instance**.”

— *Will Cicola, The Clarinet*

“The program continued with the Sqwonk Bass Clarinet Duo presenting a world premiere of the wind ensemble arrangement of...Jonathan Russell's *Bass Clarinet Double Concerto*. **It is a testament to Russell's writing and the assertive playing of the duo that this work was the most successful on the program.**”

—*Clarinet Cache, August 8, 2012*

“...the [Living Earth Show guitar and percussion] duo then performed the world premiere of Jonathan Russell’s *Repetitive Stress*...a **fantastically distorted perpetual motion of awesome**.”

—*Kelsey Walsh, I Care If You Listens*

“Jonathan Russell’s *String Quartet*...uses that traditional ensemble for **music influenced by the rhythms and harmonies of modern progressive rock**....Alongside...idiomatic minimalist gestures, things such as dramatic twists and turns, intricate phased rhythms, and a poignant cello solo to fade out at the end kept the piece **engaging and unique**.”

—*Beeri Moalem, San Francisco Classical Voice*

“Jonathan Russell's [woodwind quintet] arrangement...of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*...is a **masterful arrangement**....the rhythmic and harmonic completeness was a **musical miracle**.”

— *Jeffrey Rossman, CVNC*