

Marc Mommaas, tenor saxophonist and composer was born in Tegelen, Netherlands on Sept. 12th, 1969. He grew up in Amsterdam and since 1997 made NYC his home.

His father Henk Mommaas, was a well-known painter/artist in the Netherlands and developed his career in Amsterdam. His mother Carolien Collette is a pianist, opera singer and educator. His grandfather on his mother's side was a professional multi instrumentalist playing flute, viola da gamba, recorder, organ, spinet and harpsichord and taught at the conservatory of Maastricht. His grandmother on his mothers side was an opera singer and his great grandfather an organ player.

Although always surrounded by music and playing accordion and chromatic harmonica he first became an athlete (swimming). Training ten times a week built up his discipline and concentration while competing all over Europe gave him a taste of the joys of visiting different countries experiencing their cultures. At 16 years of age injuries in his shoulders stopped him in his track and he returned to music. He decided on tenor-saxophone.

His first hero was Ben Webster who he shook hands with at a Sunday afternoon concert when he was 3 years old by climbing on stage to say goodbye and to thank him for the music. His first teacher was Ronnie Rem (an alto saxophonist) who introduced him to Stan Getz, Bill Evans and Charlie Parker, followed by flutist and saxophonist Peter Guidi who became his mentor and introduced him to Coltrane, Rollins and Cannonball Adderley. He also had some lessons from Jasper Blom (saxophonist and educator, teaches on the conservatory of Amsterdam). Coming from a rebellious artist background the self-taught road appealed more to him than the common conservatory route. During Marc's musical study he managed to combine his musical development with a university education.

After finishing his education (Master-degree in Comm. Science/Business/Economics at the University of Amsterdam, 1995) he visited New York City to continue his musical career. There he studied with wellknown musicians David Liebman, Garry Dial, and Dick Oatts. He returned to Holland where he continued to work as a freelance musician.

After receiving two grants (Stichting Podium Kunsten, Prins Bernard Cultuur Fonds/Anjer Fondsen, 1997) he returned to New York where he continued his musical development by participating in master classes and studying composition, harmony and piano with Garry Dial who became his main mentor. Not ready to return to the Netherlands Mommaas extended his stay by applying at the Manhattan School of Music. He received a full scholarship (2000) where he pursued his Master's in Jazz Performance and upon graduating was awarded the 'William H. Borden Award' (2002), given to one student out of the graduating class for outstanding achievement. He also participated in the Lake Placid Seminar (1997) and the Aspen Snowmass Jazz Sessions (2001) for which he received full scholarships.

New York City became his home from where he would expand his wings. He frequently tours Europe, Scandinavia and Canada with different formations and tours on a regular basis with his band "Global Motion", making his first recording as a leader in 1999. In 2002 the renowned percussionist/drummer from New York City, Tony Moreno joined the band. Global Motion also includes alternating bass players John Hebert from New Orleans and Jay Anderson from New York City, and pianist Nikolaj Hess from Copenhagen. In 2006 Balance was released by Sunnyside Records, a long anticipated duo recording with Nikolaj Hess which received critical praise. The third release by Sunnyside records and fourth release as a leader is Landmarc, a guitar project including three guitarists, Nate Radley, Vic Juris and Rez Abbasi, and on drums Tony Moreno. Compositions are written without bass function and is a testament to the depth in Mommaas' rhythmic language.

Mommaas' goal in his art form has always been to create boundless freedom of expression, not restricted by any technical or intellectual limitations. Balancing harmonic depth, a natural talent for melody and an endless pallet of rhythmic colors Mommaas has created his own sound both as a performer and composer. As an artist he feels the importance of connecting with his environment by presenting a musical language that is in balance with the time we live in. He attracts students from all over the world and is co-founder of HJW (Hudson Jazzworks) and NYJW (New York Jazz Workshops).

“Now **Marc Mommaas** finds himself at the zenith of his musical powers with *Landmarc*, a recording that best exemplifies the kind of “**tradition in transition**” artistry that modern jazz is all about. “It is the artist’s goal to translate the emotions, ideas and energy that we live in into an uplifting, sincere and powerful sound with relevance.”

----- **By Eugene Holley** (2010)