

Mark O'Connor



Saxophonist Mark O'Connor, an Austin, Texas native, has been part of the Chicago and Milwaukee music scenes since 1996 as a performer, composer and educator. His debut CD on Blujazz productions, *Mirage*, spent eight weeks on the national jazz radio charts and garnered such praise as "With his hearty sound and bristling ideas, O'Connor can bowl over even a jaded follower of post-bop jazz." – Neil Tesser, Author, *The Playboy Guide to Jazz*, and, "A very good saxophonist he is... melodically and rhythmically engaging lines... expressiveness and melodic sensitivity." – *Jazz Times Magazine*. O'Connor has performed with such notables as Rufus Reid, Arturo Sandoval, Henry Butler, Steve Turre and Joe Williams. O'Connor's quintet, formed in 2001, has performed at numerous venues throughout the Midwest including The Green Mill has performed at such venues as The Green Mill, The Elbo Room, The Skokie Theatre, The Chicago Cultural Center and The Rogers Park Jazz Festival in Chicago; The Elephant Room in Austin, TX and The Jazz Estate in Milwaukee.

As an educator, O'Connor has conducted clinics in Chicago, St. Louis, Whitewater, WI, Austin, TX and Cedar Falls, IA on topics ranging from saxophone playing to jazz improvisation to jazz ensemble playing. He has served as guest artist for the jazz ensemble at St Louis Metro High School, and guest artist and conductor for the Moraine Valley Community College Jazz Ensemble and University of Northern Iowa Jazz Panthers. O'Connor has taught private saxophone lessons for fourteen years at many Chicago area high schools and community colleges such as New Trier High School, Naperville North and Naperville Central High Schools, Lake Zurich High School and Moraine Valley Community College.

At present, he is involved with the band program at Victor J. Andrew High School in Tinley Park, IL teaching private saxophone lessons and conducting jazz band; and at Lincoln-Way Central High School in New Lenox, IL conducting saxophone sectionals and private saxophone lessons. O'Connor holds a Bachelor's degree in Jazz Performance from the University of North Texas where he studied with well known jazz educators Dan Haerle and Fred Hamilton; a Master's degree in Saxophone Performance from Eastern Illinois University where he studied with New Orleans piano luminary Henry Butler and Chicago pianist and producer of *Mirage*, Mark Maegdin. Currently, O'Connor is working on two major projects – his latest CD, *Suspended Reality*, which will be released this March on OA2 Records; and his doctoral dissertation regarding tenor saxophonist Joe Farrell.