

MARKUS BURGER

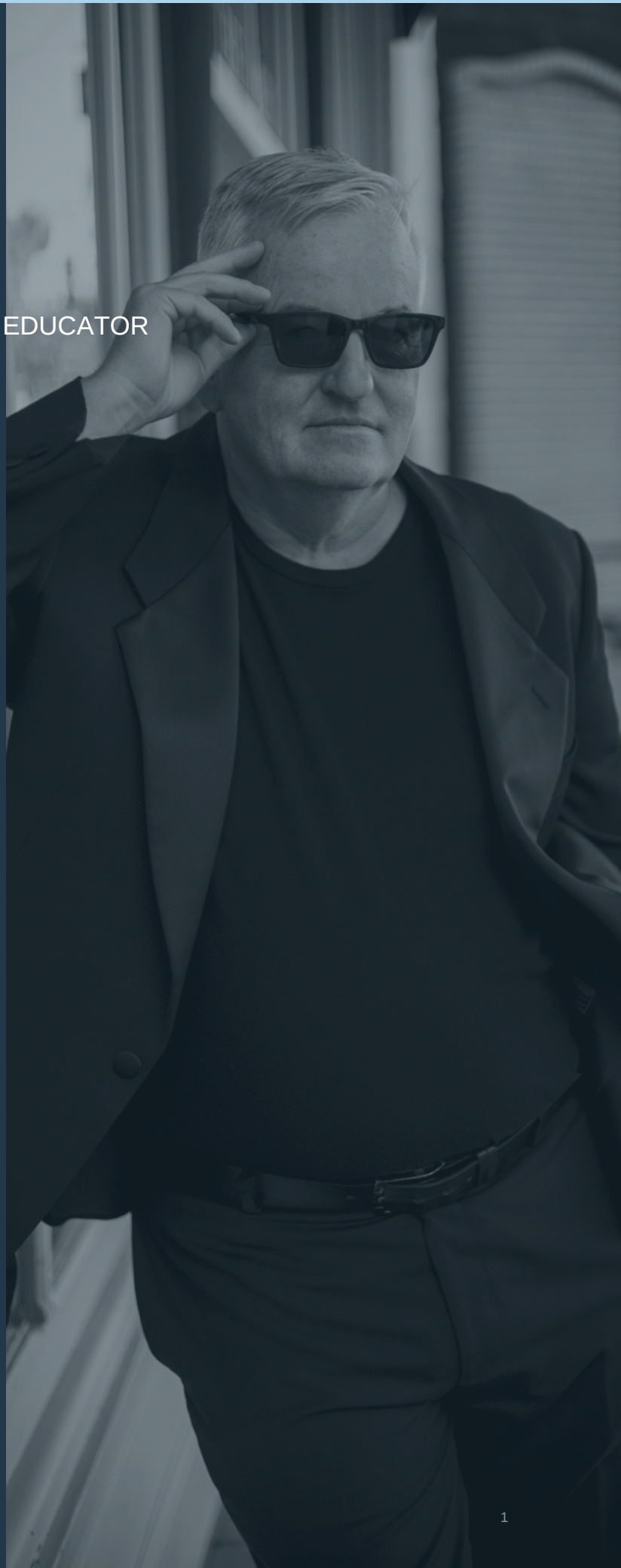
PIANIST | COMPOSER | PRODUCER | EDUCATOR

EUROPEAN LYRICISM.
JAZZ IMPROVISATION.
A GLOBAL MUSICAL VOICE.

CAREER AT A GLANCE

- Bösendorfer Artist and Challenge Records recording artist
- 19 albums as leader; 50+ albums produced
- Grammy ballot recognition in 2006, 2007 and 2008
- International performances across Europe, the Americas, Africa, Iceland, Russia and Ukraine
- Director of Music Technology Studies at Fullerton College

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Biography & Artist Profile

A CAREER BUILT BETWEEN WORLDS

German-born pianist, composer, producer and educator Markus Burger creates lyrical modern jazz shaped by European classical color and the spontaneity of improvisation. Based in greater Los Angeles, his music moves from stillness to momentum - intimate, cinematic and deeply melodic. His language draws on J.S. Bach and Claude Debussy as naturally as Keith Jarrett, Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Pat Metheny, Stevie Wonder and Sting.

A Bösendorfer Artist and Challenge Records recording artist, Burger has recorded 19 albums as a leader and produced more than 50 releases for labels including Jazzline, Challenge Records, ACM Records, Lipstick Records and New Morning Records. His projects - Spiritual Standards, Accidental Tourists and the North Atlantic Jazz Alliance - connect composition, improvisation, cultural memory and international collaboration.



SIGNATURE SOUND

Melodic clarity, harmonic depth, contemplative space and improvisational freedom.

ARTIST, AMBASSADOR, EDUCATOR

Burger toured throughout Africa, Russia, Brazil, Iceland, Ukraine, the United States and Europe and has performed for ambassadors, consuls, cultural institutes, universities and international festivals. From 2013 through 2016, he served as a Musical Ambassador of the Luther Decade in the United States, presenting programs that brought Bach, chorales and contemporary improvisation into dialogue.

"I value silence as much as sound - the space between notes is where the music breathes."

- Markus Burger

Career Impact

SELECTED MILESTONES

19

ALBUMS AS LEADER

50+

ALBUMS PRODUCED

350

MUSIC-TECH STUDENTS

3

GRAMMY BALLOTS

SELECTED COLLABORATORS

Kenny Wheeler, Brad Mehldau, Peter Erskine, Bob Magnusson, Joe LaBarbera, Norma Winstone, Charlie Mariano, Clark Terry, Jan von Klewitz, Simon Phillips, John Tchicai, Doug Webb, Marshall Hawkins, Wolfgang Haffner, Dieter Ilg and many others.

SELECTED STAGES & FESTIVALS

Walt Disney Concert Hall; Morgan Library, New York; Bösendorfer Saal and Mozart Haus, Vienna; Hallgrímskirkja, Reykjavík; Bach Festivals in Leipzig and Arnstadt; Berlin Jazz Festival; St. Petersburg, Kyiv, Donetsk and Kharkiv; Brasília Cathedral; festivals in Italy, Romania, Germany and beyond.

EDUCATION + PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

Professor at Fullerton College since 2005 and Director of Music Technology Studies, Burger has guided major upgrades to the college's piano area and led the Music Technology program since 2009. The program now serves approximately 350 students. His teaching connects musicianship, recording, synthesis, production, entrepreneurship and emerging technology.

SELECTED CLINICS & GUEST LECTURES

San Diego State University; universities and conservatories in Lübeck, Dijon, Kyiv, Donetsk, Vilnius, Porto, Lisbon, Cologne, Berlin and Bucharest; CSU Sacramento; Sacramento City College; Cosumnes River College; and the Idyllwild Summer Jazz Academy.

RECOGNITION + SERVICE

Winner of the Bach Award of the City of Erfurt; recipient of German state jazz-youth awards in North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate; founder of the Wittlich International Jazz Festival; ten-year board member of Cologne's JazzHaus Initiative.

Selected Quotes

press highlights • artist statements • industry recognition

“

In jazz anything goes. Even Johann Sebastian Bach is fair game, according to the gospel of Markus Burger.

- Cam Miller, San Diego Union-Tribune

“

Markus Burger is a pianist for whom expressive sound is the essence of his style, and we are pleased to count him among our exclusive circle of Bösendorfer artists.

- Bösendorfer Artist Management

“

You are amazing - a one-man entertainment machine with grace, talent, humility, and humor. You made so many people happy.

- Jorge Puente, Smithsonian
Washington, D.C.

“

Markus Burger has taken the meditative style of Ludovico Einaudi and transported it to a higher, more agile level. What makes this especially convincing are his honest, deeply personal compositions.

- Christoph Spendel

I have always loved melodies that awaken inner images. I value silence as much as sound - the space between notes is where the music breathes. My motto has always been: less is more.

- Markus Burger

Selected recommendations from German diplomatic missions and cultural partners underline the strength of Markus Burger's concert and workshop formats in embassy, consulate, church, university and cultural-institute contexts.

- 01** All guests were delighted by your performance and virtuosity. Your arrangements of well-known German chorales, church songs and Christmas songs connect Christian music with contemporary jazz.

- Consulate General of Germany, Marseille, 2026

- 02** The concert and accompanying masterclass created a distinctive musical experience and a sustainable impulse for the young music scene.

- German Embassy Bucharest, 2025

- 03** It was an extraordinary event in every respect. The hall was filled with enthusiastic listeners, and many weeks later guests were still speaking about the evening.

- Consulate General of Germany, St. Petersburg

- 04** The concert succeeded impressively in bringing the audience closer to German church music through interpretation by church musician, classical scholar and jazz pianist Markus Burger.

- German Embassy Paris

The format is flexible, easy to customize, and suitable for embassy programs, university workshops, Goethe-Institut events, churches, cultural centers and international exchange projects.

Key Projects

Spiritual Standards

Chorales, Bach materials, hymns and sacred melodies reimagined through modern improvisation; a proven program for embassies, churches, festivals and cultural institutions.

Accidental Tourists

Lyrical modern jazz and European melodic language with master collaborators including Bob Magnusson, Peter Erskine, Joe LaBarbera and Kenny Wheeler.

North Atlantic Jazz Alliance

Cross-Atlantic ensemble collaborations that connect European and American improvisational traditions.

Classical & Folk Programs

Bach/Luther repertoire, German folk songs and chamber collaborations, adaptable for concerts, lectures, choirs and outreach events.

Embassy & Cultural Programming

Frequent performances and workshops for German embassies, consulates, Goethe-Institut programs and cultural partners. Spiritual Standards has been presented in connection with German diplomatic missions and as part of the Luther Decade, connecting Bach, chorales, spiritual repertoire and contemporary improvisation.

Teaching, Workshops & Outreach

concerts can be paired with clinics, masterclasses and lectures



All workshops can be adapted to conservatories, universities, embassies, cultural institutes, jazz festivals and community outreach settings. Formats range from 60-minute lecture-demonstrations to half-day masterclasses and multi-day residencies.

From Bach to Jazz

- Motivic improvisation using Bach, Handel and jazz standards
- Repetition, variation, sequencing and reharmonization
- Practical exercises for classical players entering jazz language

Film Scoring & Sound Design

- Leitmotif from opera to Hollywood and contemporary cinema
- Composing emotional themes for image, character and narrative
- Sound design, DAWs and portfolio-building for media careers

Music Production Basics

- Home studio setup: computer, interface, microphone and monitoring
- Logic Pro, Pro Tools, Ableton Live and GarageBand workflows
- Recording, editing, mixing and gradual equipment upgrades

Music Entrepreneurship

- Building a musical brand and a sustainable creative career
- Networking, cultural partnerships, grants and international projects
- Using local musical traditions as inspiration for new work

A presenter can select one topic as a stand-alone event or combine several modules into a residency. Each format includes live piano demonstration, listening examples, practical exercises and moderated discussion.

Music as a Bridge Between Cultures

Cultural diplomacy through concert programming, sacred music, jazz improvisation and cross-border collaboration.

From Bach to Jazz: Improvisation as a Creative Method

How Baroque motivic development can become a practical pathway into jazz vocabulary and contemporary composition.

Improvisation for Classically Trained Musicians

Tools for overcoming notation-dependence: motifs, call-and-response, modal improvisation, harmonic recontextualization and ensemble dialogue.

Composition & Production in the Digital Age

Creative workflow from sketch to demo to release: DAW setup, microphones, interfaces, MIDI, editing and distribution-ready production.

Film Music, Leitmotif & Storytelling

From Max Steiner and Bernard Herrmann to John Williams and Hans Zimmer: how themes carry character, memory and dramatic meaning.

Creative Practice with AI in Music

Responsible use of AI for ideation, arrangement, mockups, teaching materials and creative reflection without replacing musicianship.

Career Pathways for Musicians

Portfolio strategy, teaching, media composition, remote collaboration, cultural grants, audience-building and entrepreneurship.

Ensemble Work & Collaborative Production

How small motifs become shared vocabulary inside jazz, classical, folk and cross-cultural ensemble settings.

Albums & YouTube Listening Links

Spiritual Standards

Spiritual Standards

[Open on YouTube](#)

Spiritual Standards

Secunda

[Open on YouTube](#)

Spiritual Standards

Tertia

[Open on YouTube](#)

Spiritual Standards

Quarta: Songs from the New World

[Open on YouTube](#)

Spiritual Standards

Quinta: Songs Inspired by Martin Luther

[Open on YouTube](#)

Accidental Tourists

Songs Inspired by People and Places

[Open on YouTube](#)

Accidental Tourists

The L.A. Sessions

[Open on YouTube](#)

Accidental Tourists

The Alaska Sessions

[Open on YouTube](#)

Accidental Tourists

The Banff Sessions - A Tribute to Kenny Wheeler

[Open on YouTube](#)

Markus Burger

The Vienna Sessions

[Open on YouTube](#)

Markus Burger

Ultreya

[Open on YouTube](#)

North Atlantic Jazz Alliance

NAJA

[Open on YouTube](#)

Septer Bourbon

Fishing for Compliments

[Open on YouTube](#)

Septer Bourbon

The Smile of the Honeycakehorse

[Open on YouTube](#)

FEATURED LISTENING

Mat Marucci & Markus Burger

Genesis

[Open on YouTube Music >](#)

Contact & Booking

AVAILABLE FORMATS

SOLO PIANO | ENSEMBLE | WORKSHOPS
RESIDENCIES | CULTURAL PROGRAMS

SHORT BIO

Markus Burger is a German-born pianist, composer, producer and educator whose lyrical modern jazz bridges European classical tradition and contemporary improvisation. A Bösendorfer Artist and Challenge Records recording artist, he has recorded 19 albums as a leader, produced more than 50 releases and performed internationally across Europe, the Americas, Africa, Iceland, Russia and Ukraine. His work combines concert performance, cultural diplomacy, education and music technology through projects including Spiritual Standards, Accidental Tourists and the North Atlantic Jazz Alliance.

BOOKING + PRESS

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High-resolution photographs, recordings and additional press materials available on request.

MUSIC AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN CULTURES
