
Simone Baron & Arco Belo



“EGO-LESS, GENRE-AGNOSTIC AND WITHOUT EXPECTATIONS, IT’S THE SOUND OF THE FUTURE, TODAY”

JazzTimes[®]
AMERICA'S JAZZ MAGAZINE

MISSION

A genre-fluid chamber ensemble dedicated to redefining the concert form

BIOGRAPHY

Arco Belo is a group of high energy improvisers dedicated to redefining the concert form. Drawing its name from the words bow and bellow, the GenreFluid ensemble captures an irreverent sound melding reeds, strings and percussive timbres. Led by pianist, accordionist and composer Simone Baron, their adventurous compositions reimagine a sound at the junction of avant chamber music, creative jazz, Brazilian and Jewish diasporic music.

Since 2016, the ensemble has performed for audiences across the US, including at The Kennedy Center, Strathmore, and Brevard Music Center. Arco Belo has toured the west coast and south east to critical acclaim, winning grants from South Arts, the Maryland State Arts Council and Chamber Music America. Their debut album *The Space Between Disguises* was released in November of 2019 and lauded as editor's pick in both *Downbeat* and *Jazz Times* magazines.



PERSONNEL

Simone Baron, piano & accordion

Minnie Jordan, violin

Carrie Frey, viola

Raphael Boden, cello

Eli Heath, double bass

Patrick Duke Graney, percussion

Lucas Ashby, percussion, drumset

SPECIAL GUESTS

Christylez Bacon, beatbox, spoken word

Petros Klampanis, double bass

Sara Caswell, violin

Keita Ogawa, percussion

John Hadfield, percussion

Mark Schatz, banjo

Sandeep Das, tabla

PRESS

“**ego-less, genre-agnostic** and without expectations, it’s the **sound of the future**, today”

“music that **truly synthesizes traditions** rather than simply flirting with them”

“[they] stitch all the pieces together like an **expert hip-hop producer**, cross-fading strains of art and folk music traditions from across the U.S. and Europe...That kind of intricate synthesizing work—as any observer of the late, great producer J Dilla could tell you—comes from deep, borderline-obsessive knowledge of all the related material.”

– JazzTimes (Editor’s Pick), October 1, 2019, by Jackson Sinnenberg

“...an accordion-fueled musical stew that’s as tasty as it is hard to define...the music has an inviting, accessible quality that will appeal to many **big-eared listeners**”

“listeners who seek to explore **far-flung musical vistas** might want to stamp their passport for a border-hopping trip with Arco Belo”

– Downbeat Magazine (Editor’s Pick), January 2020, by Bobby Reed

“The bandleader showcases her **impressive agility**...a **splendid recording**, confirming that she’s a blossoming talent and inventive composer on the rise”

– Downbeat Magazine, January 2020, by Kerilie McDowell

“the lushness and epic sweep of classical music, the edge of the Balkans, the rhythmic complexity of jazz and the vividness of a film score...a **tour de force**”

– Lucid Culture, January 31, 2020

“Baron’s musical forecast shines brightly!”

– WholeNote Toronto, February 4, 2020, by Tina Kliik

“**stunning**...exquisite playing...**heartbreaking**”

–London Jazz News, January 17, 2020, by Jane Mann

“..more unusual still is Baron’s refusal to compromise either the structures of classical composition or the personality-driven dynamism of jazz and improvised music. Her music is not a crossover between the two worlds, which are so often pitted against each other, “classical” and “jazz.” **It’s fully in both, all at once....**

In any Arco Belo performance, an audience experiences Baron’s vision as a composer through **complex** and **compelling string arrangements** and gradually developing themes. Yet there is a **spark** in Baron’s playing, and in the playing of each member of her carefully assembled group, that **guarantees each performance will be different from the next.**”

—Capital Bop, March 7, 2022, by Jamie Sandell

"The Space Between Disguises is a musical statement emblematic of an increasingly non-binary musical world. A superb pianist and accordionist, ...Baron's genre-bending arrangements are as intriguing as her compositions.”

— Jazziz Playlist (This week in Jazz), November 1, 2019, by Matt Micucci

“Filled with deep introspection and slight sadness, suggesting loneliness or a search for meaning and belonging... her approach to jazz and to music in general [was] immediately exciting, as well as admittedly perplexing, but there was also a **quiet relatability** about it; you’re not quite sure how she came to these sounds, but somehow you feel like you understand her.”

— CapitalBop, October 28, 2019, by Jenna Henderson

“Sidestepping pigeonholing comes naturally to Baron... her approach to the accordion is decidedly **forward-thinking**: rather than hew to established tropes, she strives to divest the instrument of its familiar status and allow it to speak with a **fresh voice.**”

—Textura, December 7, 2019, by Ron Schepper

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Arco Belo is dedicated to working with emerging composers, performers, and audiences. They have given concerts and workshops for undergraduate and graduate students at institutions including Georgetown University, the Boulanger Initiative's inaugural board retreat, the Composers Online Institute, and elementary, middle and high school programs across the country.

The following classes and workshops are offered as stand-alone events or in combination with public performances:

- Hands-on workshops, coachings and masterclasses for composer-performers of varying levels on contemporary repertoire and techniques with an emphasis on genre-fluid improvisation, dramaturgical approaches to more open improvisations, and crafting solo cadenzas * (see below for details)
- Readings, workshops, and recordings of student composer works at the undergraduate and graduate levels
- Graphic score notation workshops * (see below for details)
- Pre-concert talks / Post-concert talkbacks
- Seminars on entrepreneurship and professional development
- Hands-on workshops focusing on the collaborative/creative process, including samples from notation explanations, and staging demonstrations
- Demonstration of active listening techniques, with live interpretation of graphic and/or text scores and discussion of music as a medium for communication
- Public or private chamber music coachings or masterclasses
- Public or private individual instrument lessons and studio masterclasses in violin, viola, cello, accordion, piano, bass, drum set & percussion

SAMPLE WORKSHOP OFFERINGS

COMPOSER READINGS

The ensemble offers reading sessions and feedback meetings with student composers, discussing a wide variety of topics ranging from notation, fluid compositional forms, and textural/instrumental possibilities to multimedia integration.

GENRE-FLUID IMPROVISATION WORKSHOP

A holistic and multi-pronged approach to improvisation targeted specifically for classical or jazz performers at high school and undergraduate levels:

- developing your own cadenzas
- investigating dramaturgical approaches to free improvisation
- theatrical and performance art aspects of free improvisation
- growing and strengthening our relationship with groove/time through groove meditation exercises and polyrhythmic exercises
- soloing over complex subdivisions/odd meters while maintaining melodic construction and space
- how to create magic solos (magic = story + pocket)

GRAPHIC SCORE NOTATION WORKSHOP

How can we unlock and de-mystify the role of the composer? Graphic notation can empower everyone to connect to their inner creativity.

Participants are handed paper and coloring materials and guided to represent an improvised sound/gesture in two dimensional form. The ensemble then workshops and performs the scores. Participants are invited to the performance, where the ensemble will perform one of the pieces from the workshop live in the concert.

Note: This workshop has been offered to a wide variety of age groups and is highly customizable