



PROJETO ARCOMUSICAL E-PRESS KIT 2016-2017



Gregory Beyer, Director
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Arcomusical is a non-profit organization that advocates the artistic advancement of the Afro-Brazilian berimbau and related musical bows. Our mission is supported by five pillars of activity:

composition
performance
research
publication
community

The berimbau is one member of the “bow” family of musical instruments found all over the world. Its closest relatives are found in southern Africa, specifically in the Portuguese speaking countries of Angola and Mozambique.

Arcomusical has developed a vibrant culture for creative berimbau performance. Through transcription, **composition**, collaboration, and commission of new works, Arcomusical places the berimbau in diverse performance contexts. To date, Arcomusical has created over thirty new works for the berimbau.

Having created a diverse and substantial repertoire for contemporary berimbau **performance**, Arcomusical has become a **publishing** entity offering scores ranging from solos to sextets, from concerti to mixed ensembles, and from acoustic to fixed and interactive multi-media environments.

Arcomusical began in 1999 when its Director, Gregory Beyer, fell in love with the berimbau via the music of famous Brazilian percussionist, Naná Vasconcelos (1944-2016). What began as a simple transcription of a track from Vasconcelos' 1980 ECM recording, “Saudades” gradually blossomed into a 200+ page DMA thesis. Completed in 2004, the thesis discusses the berimbau in three musical contexts: Brazilian, African, and contemporary. In 2007, Beyer traveled to Recife to conduct an interview with Naná Vasconcelos that was subsequently published in Percussive Notes, the **research** journal of the Percussive Arts Society.

Arcomusical is now a central locus for a global **community** interested in research and creative uses for the berimbau in Capoeira and beyond. In Brazil, the United States, and around the globe, Arcomusical is creating important connections inside the world of Capoeira Angola and among the expanding circle of creative musicians who use the berimbau as a primary vehicle for expression.

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RECENT AND UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

2016-2017 SEASON

- **October 5, 7:30PM**
 - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, Urbana-Champaign, IL
- **October 6, 12PM**
 - Illinois State University, University Galleries, Normal, IL
- **October 6, 7PM**
 - Secluded Garden Music SERIES @ Tre Kronor Restaurant, Chicago, IL
- **October 8, 8:45PM**
 - Ear Taxi Chicago Festival of New Music, Harris Theatre, Chicago, IL
- **October 23, 8:30PM**
 - CD Release Event at Constellation, Chicago, IL
- **November 17, 7:30PM**
 - Lewis University, Arts & Ideas Series, Romeoville, IL
- **March 29, 8PM**
 - Baldwin Wallace University, Berea, OH
- **March 30, 12:30PM**
 - William Patterson University, Wayne, NJ
- **March 31, 10AM**
 - Princeton University
- **March 31, 7:30PM**
 - UMASS Amherst
- **April 1, 12PM**
 - Boston Conservatory
- **April 1, 8PM**
 - National Sawdust, Brooklyn, NYC

SELECT PAST PERFORMANCES

- **2015**
 - Winter Festival, Ouro Preto and Mariana, Brazil
 - Fundação de Educação Artística, Belo Horizonte, Brazil
 - Instituto Inhotim, Brumadinho, Brazil
 - Barracão d'Angola, Serra Grande, Brazil
 - International Capoeira Angola Foundation Conference, Chicago
- **2014**
 - Percussive Arts Society International Convention, Indianapolis
 - Gebhard Woods Folk Music Festival, Morris, IL

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MeiaMeia (Portuguese for “half” “half” i.e. “half a dozen” of one, “half a dozen” of the other) is a twelve work chamber music cycle for an instrument called the Arcomusical, an elegant species of tunable berimbau handcrafted in the United States. The berimbau, commonly associated with the Afro-Brazilian martial game of Capoeira Angola, is but one member of the “bow” family of musical instruments found all over the world.



Composed between 2013 and 2015, MeiaMeia is the collaborative project of Gregory Beyer and Alexis Lamb, who met as professor and student (respectively) at the Northern Illinois University (NIU) School of Music. Through support from the NIU Undergraduate Artistry and Research Apprenticeship Program (UARAP), Beyer and Lamb worked intensely for two and a half years to develop the music.

Together they succeeded in creating a rich and sophisticated musical language that is like nothing ever before played on musical bows anywhere in the world. Performed by the ensemble, Projeto Arcomusical, the music is fresh, playful, rhythmic, colorful, and soulful. Everywhere Projeto Arcomusical performs, from the United States to Brazil to Africa, the music is met with accolades. Witnessing a performance of Projeto Arcomusical is a unique experience. The level of concentration, communication, and joy of chamber music performance is palpable.

Richly captured by first-rate audio engineer Dan Nichols of Aphorism Studios, the sounds of the Projeto Arcomusical on this recording will capture your attention and provoke your imagination from start to finish.

MeiaMeia is released on Innova Recordings and available globally.

We dedicate this album to the great **Naná Vasconcelos** (1944-2016), the original inspiration for everything for which Arcomusical stands. Naná's vision gave wings to the musical bow in a profound way that has left an indelible impact on an multiple generations of bow musicians.

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PRAISE

“Arcomusical’s dedicated, enthusiastic music making was a delight to watch. Standing in a semicircle and performing without music, the ensemble demonstrated the kind of communication one might expect from a seasoned string quartet, as buoyant, effervescent Afro-Brazilian textures leapt forth from their instruments.”

– Tim Sawyer, Chicago Classical Review, October 9, 2016

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“Arcomusical, an instrumental sextet based at Northern Illinois University, introduced listeners to new music for the berimbau, a Brazilian musical bow of ancient African origin, on which were produced haunting, repetitive sequences of plucked resonances.”

– John von Rhein, Chicago Tribune, October 9, 2016

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"Co-composers and performers Gregory Beyer and Alexis Lamb have successfully and significantly extended the art of the musical bow in MeiaMeia, a dazzling suite of chamber works for berimbau. The musical inspiration for this project is directly linked to Naná Vasconcelos (1944 - 2016), the extraordinary Brazilian percussionist who revolutionized the berimbau by advancing its playing techniques and broadening its exposure through his work as a pioneering cross-cultural artist. Vasconcelos's approach is re-contextualized in MeiaMeia's original compositions, works that embrace minimalist music aesthetics alongside subtle abstractions of the music of capoeira. Combining these influences and more, MeiaMeia offers listeners a unique experience in melodic bow music performance. Those familiar with berimbau music in and outside the tradition will surely agree that MeiaMeia is a groundbreaking work."

- Jason Finkelman, Director, Global Arts Performance Initiatives, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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"Arcomusical. Such a beautiful word, signifying such a beautiful sound, entity, creation. I've had the pleasure of watching and listening to Projeto Arcomusical grow and develop over the past several years, and what remains with me most is joy – the performers' joy, the joyous compositions, the joy of honoring tradition while forging new trails, the joyful collaborations with composers and capoeiristas, and the joyful sounds delivered to the audiences. Experiencing Projeto Arcomusical is an opportunity I know you will want to take advantage of time and time again. Experience joy – experience Arcomusical."

- Rich Holly, Executive Director, Arts NC State

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