

3925 South Pointe Drive
Unit F
DeKalb, IL 60115



www.arcomusical.com
info@arcomusical.com
646.286.0332

ARCOMUSICAL PRESS KIT 2017-2018



"It doesn't take a lot to make beautiful music...sometimes all it takes is one single string."
- Maggie Molloy, Second Inversion



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ABOUT

Arcomusical is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that advocates the awareness and artistic advancement of the Afro-Brazilian berimbau and related African **musical bows**. Arcomusical's mission is supported by six pillars of activity:

performance
education
composition
publication
research
community

What is a musical bow?

Although the berimbau is a well-known instrument in Brazil, most people in the United States remain unaware of this instrument family and its elegant beauty and simplicity. Musical bows are the most popular and widespread traditional string instrument found throughout sub-saharan Africa, and the berimbau made its way to Brazil via the Transatlantic slave trade. The berimbau's closest relatives are found in southern Africa, specifically in the Portuguese speaking countries of Angola and Mozambique.

Organization Mission

In the Arcomusical mission resonate the recent words of the great congressmen and civil rights leader John Robert Lewis, quoting fellow civil rights pioneer Asa Philip Randolph:

"Maybe our forefathers and mothers all came to this great land in different ships, but we are all in the same boat now. We all live in the same house. The American house."

Arcomusical stands with the rich diversity of perspective, thought, and culture that truly make America great. Although these bows come from around the world, their musical transformation is happening right here in the unique cultural crucible of the United States. For Arcomusical, this is American music.





Performance

Projeto Arcomusical is a world music sextet reimagining the Afro-Brazilian berimbau through a repertoire of unique, powerful, original concert chamber music. Projeto Arcomusical formed in 2013 specifically to interpret MeiaMeia, the collaborative composition cycle co-composed by ensemble members Gregory Beyer and Alexis C. Lamb. A CD recording of MeiaMeia is now available on Innova Recordings. The ensemble has a myriad performances to its credit, highlights including: the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, universities and theaters in the United States, and capoeira schools and festivals of contemporary music in Brazil.

"Projeto Arcomusical doesn't miss a beat. The sextet is so tuned in to one another that at times it becomes difficult (if not impossible) to tell where one instrument ends and another begins. The players are so precise, so blissfully engaged with their instruments and one another that the individual pieces and the individual players melt away, and you begin to discover the uniquely captivating character of the instrument itself."

- Maggie Molloy, Second Inversion

Arcomusical Brasil is the sister-ensemble of Projeto Arcomusical, based in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. The group formed in early 2016 as the result of an invitation Beyer received to perform at the first Bow Music Conference in Durban, South Africa. Thanks to a visiting professorship at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Beyer had already worked with this group of very talented musicians. In preparation for Africa, he organized these musicians, applied for and received governmental travel grant funding from Música Minas. The experience so galvanized the ensemble that they officially became a part of Arcomusical NFP shortly after the conference and now continue to compose, collaborate, and perform repertoire that is increasingly their own. Just as Projeto Arcomusical functions in the United States, Arcomusical Brasil is fulfilling the Arcomusical mission in Brazil.



Gregory Beyer with Arcomusical Brasil.
Belo Horizonte, May 2017.



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Education

At universities, high and middle schools, Projeto Arcomusical offers educational residencies that include a wide range of activities meant to engage broadly and deeply in each community. Residencies activities include:

- multi-media informances
- capoeira classes
- Portuguese language presentations
- musical bow workshops
- composition seminars
- large ensemble rehearsals
- the "Lappy-bau" monochord box for young musicians



Projeto Arcomusical @ Bowling Green State University, March 2017.



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Composition

Arcomusical's unique compositions and collaborations have formed a **substantial body of repertoire (currently 44 works)** by nearly **twenty composers**. This catalog has changed the landscape of musical possibility for the berimbau musical bow, and is a critical component of the Arcomusical mission. It offers real music to share with communities at home and abroad. Fueled by our vision of harmony and equality in community, we also cherish collaborating with composers from underrepresented groups (e.g. people of color, women, and LGBT).



Elliot Cole in rehearsal with Projeto Arcomusical in DeKalb, IL, July 2017.



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Publication

Arcomusical is an **ASCAP** recognized publishing entity. We produce the scores to every work in our growing catalog and make them available for purchase through the [Arcomusical online store](#), facilitating public access to the repertoire for study and performance. To date, Arcomusical has sold scores to individual and institutional customers in two countries and five states, such as the New York Philharmonic, Chamber Music Silicon Valley, the University of New Mexico, and Bowling Green State University.

Alexis C. Lamb
©2015 Arcomusical (ASCAP)

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Score cover to Alexis C. Lamb's sextet, "Apenas seja."





Research

What drives the Arcomusical mission is Dr. Gregory Beyer's deep fascination with the instrument itself and its Brazilian and African roots. His 2004 DMA thesis, "O Berimbau: A Project of Ethnomusicological Research, Musicological Analysis, and Creative Endeavor," is a 220+ page manuscript that discusses musical bows in Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, and South Africa; provides over 50 pages of transcriptions; and details the creative work Beyer developed parallel to his research. More recently, during a sabbatical year and Fulbright work in Brazil, Beyer generated another 100+ pages of transcriptions of historic and contemporary berimbau playing within capoeira music. It was this effort that attracted the attention of Mestre Cobra Mansa in late 2015 and resulted in the invitation to present and perform at the [First Bow Music Conference](#) in Durban, South Africa, in February 2016. There, [Arcomusical Brasil](#) had the opportunity to present and learn from bow musicians and scholars from around the globe.

[Research relationships](#) within this network of musicians and scholars are now ongoing, resulting in interviews, articles, and the development of future gatherings.

On another research front, Arcomusical has developed an ongoing collaboration with woodworker and luthier [David "Snappy" White](#). The result is a unique, hand-crafted, tunable musical bow that Arcomusical performs exclusively in its performances and on its recordings. These instruments, lovingly referred to as "[Snappy-Baus](#)" or "[Arcomusical](#)" are available for purchase through the [Arcomusical online store](#). A question posed by many early enthusiasts of our work concerned access to both instruments and music. By making both available on the Arcomusical website, we are delivering a service that will allow bow music culture to grow in the United States and abroad.

Future research plans for Arcomusical involve stronger community development and specific publications. Regarding community growth strategies, Arcomusical will build upon its experience in South Africa in February 2016 to develop deeper relationships within the African bow community. For example, Arcomusical seeks within the next five years to establish [Arcomusical Africa](#): an ensemble on the African continent to deliver a uniquely African perspective on the revitalization of these instruments to create meaningful modern music. Regarding publication plans, Arcomusical is currently collaborating with Brazilian historian [Matthias Assunção](#) on the publication of an article comparing bow music making over a fifty year span in both Brazil and in Angola.





"Ngabona belung' uyajabul' umoya wami. Ha! Ngibona belungu, Shay' umakwheyane."
(I see white people, my soul rejoices. Ha! I see whites playing my musical bow.)

- Baba Bhemani Magagulu, Swazi musician, concert performance with Arcomusical Brasil.
Bow Music Conference, Durban, South Africa, February 2016.

Community

The multiple circles of community that Arcomusical has developed as a result of the above mentioned programs include the worlds of **capoeira**, **composition**, **research**, **students**, and **performers**. As Arcomusical's national and international reputation grows, the organization is now critically interested in deepening its roots and impact in the local community of DeKalb and northern Illinois.

Arcomusical will give its first local community performance at the DeKalb Public Library on December 1st, 2017. For this seasonal concert, the group will arrange popular holiday music to play alongside its concert repertoire. Furthermore, Arcomusical has joined the **DeKalb Chamber of Commerce** and has reached out to join the DeKalb County Nonprofit Partnership. In the summer of 2018, Arcomusical will be involved in the Farmer's Market series of performances in both DeKalb and Sycamore.





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.





PRAISE

about Projeto Arcomusical Performances

"It was a huge treat to witness the April 2017 master class/performance by Greg Beyer and Arcomusical—on so many levels! All at once, our students, faculty, and guests were offered a window into traditional Afro-Brazilian music, the traditional berimbau, considerations for a modern instrument builder, forming a new type of chamber group, composing new music with stylistic integrity, and even how to put on a presentation that tells a beautiful story, informs, emotionally engages, and entertains! Arcomusical played a generous program of music that revealed a range of expressive possibilities, as well as their virtuosity as performers. A wonderful group!"

**- Nancy Zeltsman, Head of Percussion and Marimba,
Boston Conservatory at Berklee**

"Arcomusical's music making is elegant, colorful, bold, vibrant, inspiring, and centered. The individual and collective world-class expertise of Arcomusical's musicians make their performances sparkle!"

- Augusta Read Thomas, University Professor of Composition in the Department of Music and the College, The University of Chicago

"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

about the Arcomusical musical bow

"The berimbaus designed by Greg Beyer and David "Snappy" White are in one word, AMAZING! David's attention to detail and craftsmanship is extraordinary and the sound is just beautiful. These instruments are quite simply the best."

**- Scott Ney, Director of Percussion,
Center for the Arts, University of New Mexico**



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about MeiaMeia

"In a breathtakingly stunning effort, the Projeto Arcomusical ensemble has crafted a work of such unique beauty, I find it difficult to focus my thoughts amidst a flood of adjectives that spring to mind in response to the auditory joyful discovery this CD provides...Projeto Arcomusical takes the berimbau way beyond Brazil in its path toward new musical expression while assuring the musical bow's connectivity to its roots in both Brazil and Sub-Saharan Africa. I find myself without hesitation in offering Projeto Arcomusical the highest recommendation I could humbly fathom."

- N. Scott Robinson, Percussive Notes, May 2017

"No one else has approached the instrument with a view of enlarging this soundscape...but Projeto Arcomusical. And that is the existential value of this repertoire and its capture on record."

- Raul da Gama, World Music Report, May 2017



For booking, contact Arcomusical Artistic Director, Gregory Beyer:
greg@arcomusical.com



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2017-2018 PERFORMANCE SEASON

• October 10, 11:30AM

- Interactive Performance,
Beach Museum of Art, Kansas
State University, Manhattan, KS

• October 11, 7:30PM

- Concerto Performance, KSU
Wind Ensemble and Chorus,
McCain Auditorium, Kansas
State University, Manhattan, KS

• October 23, 7PM

- Recital Performance,
Chamber Music on the Fox,
Seigle Gallery, Elgin Artspace
Lofts, Elgin, IL

• October 29, 3PM

- Recital Performance, Lakeside
Arts Park at the Dole, Crystal
Lake, IL

• November 5, 7:30PM

- Recital Performance,
Performing Arts Center,
Western Washington University,
Bellingham, WA

• November 6, 7:30PM

- Recital Performance, Cornish
College of the Arts, Seattle,
WA

• December 1, 7PM

- Public Holiday Concert,
DeKalb Public Library, DeKalb,
IL

• March 10, 4:30PM

- "One Tree Many Branches"
Recital Series, Lutheran
Church of the Ascension,
Northfield, IL

• March 25, 3PM

- "Latin IS America," Cook
Recital Hall, Michigan State
University, East Lansing, MI

• April 29, 8:30PM

- Recital Performance,
Constellation Chicago,
Chicago, IL

SELECT PAST PERFORMANCES

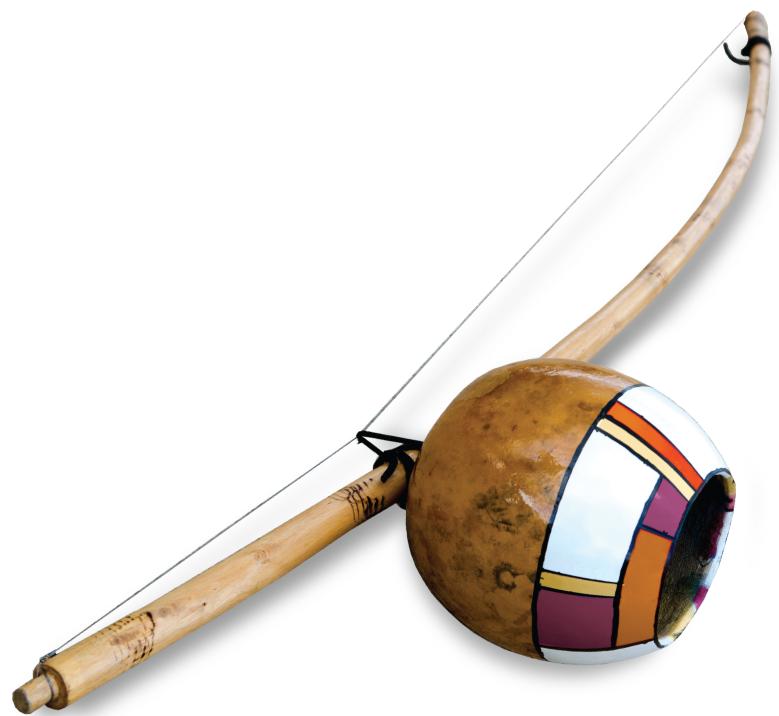
2016-2017

- National Sawdust, Brooklyn, NY
- Boston Conservatory, Boston,
MA
- The Juilliard School, NYC
- Princeton University, Princeton,
NJ
- UMASS-Amherst, Amherst, MA

2015-2016

- Winter Festival, Ouro Preto and
Mariana, Brazil
- Fundação de Educação
Artística, Belo Horizonte, Brazil
- Instituto Inhotim, Brumadinho,
Brazil
- Barracão d'Angola,
Serra Grande, Brazil





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