

Benjamin Barson

Curriculum Vitae

benjaminbarson@gmail.com, benbarsonmusic.com

EDUCATION

PhD 2020, University of Pittsburgh, Department of Music.

Dissertation: “Brassroots Democracy and the Birth of Jazz: Hearing the Counter-Plantation in Black Atlantic Sonic Culture, 1791-1928,” defended 11/30/2020

MA 2017, University of Pittsburgh, Department of Music.

BA 2010, Hampshire College, African American Studies.

POSITIONS

- 2024 Assistant Professor of Music, Bucknell University
- 2023-2024 Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, Society for the Humanities and the Africana Studies and Research Center, Cornell University
- 2022-2023 Fulbright Postdoctoral Scholar, el Instituto de Investigaciones Culturales-Mueso, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Mexicali, México
- 2021-2022 Adjunct Faculty, University of Pittsburgh
- 2022 Adjunct Faculty, Chatham University
- 2022 Adjunct Faculty, Duquesne University
- 2020 – 2021 Artist-in-Residence, Asian and Asian American Studies Institute, University of Connecticut-Storrs.
- 2020 (Spring) Artist-in-Residence and Visiting Professor, Joint Appointment with the Department of Music and Asian-American Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- 2017 – 2020 Teaching Fellow, University of Pittsburgh, Department of Music.
- 2015 – 2017 Graduate Research Assistant, University of Pittsburgh, Department of Music.

BOOKS

- 2024 *Brassroots Democracy: Maroon Ecologies and the Jazz Commons*. Forthcoming, Wesleyan University Press.
- 2022 *The Cargo Rebellion: Those Who Chose Freedom*. PM Press. Co-authored with Jason Chang, Alexis Dudden, and Kimberly Inthavong.

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

- 2024 “La frontera sónica: explorando la historia de las conexiones mexicanas y afroamericanas en la práctica del jazz,” in Ed. Miguel Olmos Aguilera, *Paisaje sonoro de las fronteras: ruidos, sonidos y musicalidades* (Tijuana, México: COLEF).
- 2024 Book Review, *The Williamsburg Avant-Garde: Experimental Music and Sound on the Brooklyn Waterfront* by Cisco Bradley, in *Critical Studies in Improvisation/ Études critiques en improvisation*.

- 2024 Book Review, *Jazz à la Creole French Creole Music and the Birth of Jazz* by Caroline Vézina, in *Journal of Popular Music Studies*.
- 2023 “Sounding Affective Consensus: New Orleans’ Black Longshoremen Union and the Strike as an Affective Form, 1872-1907,” *The Journal of Extreme Anthropology* vol.7, no. 2, Autumn/Winter 2023.
- 2023 “El viento sónico común: escuchando las relaciones comunitarias y los movimientos migratorios de la revolución haitiana en el jazz de Nueva Orleans y Haití,” *REMHU, Revista Interdisciplinar da Mobilidade Humana*, Brasília, v. 31, n. 67, abr. 2023, p. 83-101.
- 2023 Book Review, *Encountering US Empire in Socialist Venezuela*, in *Contracorriente* Vol. 20 No. 4 (2023): Fall 2023.
- 2022 “‘I’ve Got the Haitian Blues’: Mamie Desdunes and the Gendered Inflections of the Common Wind,” in Eds. James M. Reddan, Monika Herzig, and Michael Kahr, *Routledge Companion to Jazz and Gender* (New York: Routledge).
- 2022 “‘You Can Blow Your Brains Out and You Ain’t Goin’ Nowhere’: Jazz, Collectivism, and the Struggle for Ecological Commons in Louisiana’s Sugar Parishes” in Salvatore Engel-Di Mauro, et. al, Ed., *Routledge Handbook on Ecosocialism* (New York: Routledge).
- 2022 Book Review, *Universal Tonality: The Life and Music of William Parker* by Cisco Bradley, in *Critical Studies in Improvisation/ Études critiques en improvisation* vol. 15, no. 1 (2022):
- 2020 “The Poetic Justice of Fred Ho: Tracing the Influence of The Black Arts Movement Poets,” in Eds. Diane C. Fujino and Matef Harmachis, *Black Power Afterlives: The Enduring Significance of the Black Panther Party* (Chicago: Haymarket Press).
- 2020 “La Lucha Yaqui: A Conversation with Mario Luna Romero,” *Edge Effects*, ed. UW-Madison Center for Culture, History, and Environment (CHE), May 5.

PUBLICATIONS FOR MUSIC AND THEATER POPULAR MEDIA

- 2019 “Answering the Call: Antiphony Between the Music and Social Movements.” by *NewMusicBox*, September 26. ([Link](#))
- 2019 “Building a Solidarity Economy through Revolutionary Music: the Making of Mirror Butterfly.” *NewMusicBox*, September 19. ([Link](#))
- 2019 “Fighting for Our Senses: Ears, Bodies and Hearts in the struggle to redefine Reality.” *NewMusicBox*, September 12. ([Link](#))
- 2019 “Artivism and Decolonization: A brief Theory, History and Practice of Cultural Production as Political Activism.” *NewMusicBox*, September 5. ([Link](#))
- 2019 Anticolonial Creative Collaboration and the Development of Mirror Butterfly. *Howlround Theater Commons*. August 15. ([Link](#))
- 2019 “Fighting for Our Senses: Musical Activism and the Struggle to Redefine Reality,” *New Observations*, Vol 133: 38-40.

AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS & RESIDENCIES

- 2023–2024 Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship, Cornell University, Society for the Humanities
 2022–2023 Fulbright-García Robles Postdoctoral Scholar Award
 2020–2021 University of Connecticut-Storrs Asian and Asian American Studies Institute
 Artist-In-Residence
 2020 Graduate Student Summer Research Fellowship, Humanities Center, University
 of Pittsburgh
 2020 International Peace Research Association (IPRA) UN Peterson Scholarship
 2020 University of Wisconsin-Madison Interdisciplinary Artist-In-Residence, Spring
 2019–2020 Opportunity Fund Operational Support Grant.
 2019–2020 Andrew Mellon Predoctoral Fellowship, University of Pittsburgh.
 2019 Kelly Strayhorn Theater “Futuremakers” Residency, Pittsburgh. June – Sep.
 2018 Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Project Stream Grant. Oct.
 2018 Community Supported Arts Program, New Hazlett Theatre, Pittsburgh, Oct.
 2018 New Sun Rising Launching Culture Grant, Oct.
 2018 Tinker Fellowship, the Tinker Foundation, Summer.
 2018 Johnny Mandel Prize for Jazz Composition (1st prize), ASCAP, Feb.
 2018 Fred Ho Research Fellowship, University of Connecticut-Storrs, Feb.
 2018 Finalist, Morton Gould Composition Award, ASCAP, Feb.
 2017 Fred Ho Composer Award, ASCAP, June
 2017 Summer A&S Fellowship, University of Pittsburgh, June
 2017 Tinker Fellowship, the Tinker Foundation, Summer

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2024 ““All them scabs should be shot”: foregrounding the political in the “post-
 political” history of early jazz,” Society for American Music 50th Annual
 Conference, Detroit, MI, March 20–24.
 2023 “Brassroots Democracy’s Temporalities from Below: Affective Sedimentation of
 “Behind-the-Beat’ in Early Jazz,” American Studies Association Annual
 Conference, Montreal, Canada, November 2nd.
 2023 “Improvisation and its Discontents,” SEM Annual Meeting, Ottawa, Canada,
 October 22.
 2023 “Cultures of Asian Indenture: Musical Hybridity and Resistance in the Plantation
 Americas,” for presentation at “Maritime Solidarity: Past and Present,”
 Amsterdam, International Institute of Social History, September 22-23, 2023.
 2023 “El viento sónico común: la revolución haitiana y el grito de dolores en la música
 de Nueva Orleans en los siglos XIX-XX,” IX Coloquio interdisciplinario sobre la
 Música EDAUTEMUS, UNAM, México City, April 11, 2023.
 2022 “La frontera sónica: explorando la historia de las conexiones mexicanas y
 afroamericanas en la práctica del jazz,” Coloquio: Paisaje sonoro, música, ruidos
 y sonidos de las fronteras, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Tijuana, November
 24, 2022.

- 2022 “Exploring la frontera sónica in New Orleans,” American Musicological Society Annual Conference, New Orleans, November 13, 2022.
- 2022 Boundaries, Borderlands, and Belonging: Translocality and the Navigation of Cultural Movements, Intersections, and Conflicts, Reiterkaserne - Kunst Universität Graz (KUG) and Online, A Symposium supported by ASEA-UniNet and the Institute for Ethnomusicology, KUG, September 10, 2022.
- 2022 “Bass Cultures: Music and Transnational History from Below,” for presentation at the Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, March 31.
- 2021 “The Sonic Common Wind: tracing the Afterlives of the Haitian Revolution in New Orleans Jazz” for presentation at the 2021 Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society (AMS), online, November 21.
- 2021 “Artivism: A Workshop on How to Create Social Change through the Fusion of Arts and Activism” for presentation at the Identifying the Missing Power of Asian American in Connecticut (IMPAACT) Conference, online, November 13.
- 2021 “You Can Blow Your Brains Out and You Ain’t Goin’ Nowhere”: Early Jazz and the Struggle for Ecological Commons in Louisiana’s Sugar Parishes” for presentation at the 66th Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, Atlanta, Georgia, October 28-31.
- 2020 “Jazz Pedagogy as Decolonizing the Academy” Delivered at the “Youth Leadership for Peace” workshop at the International Peace Research Association’s 28th Biennial General Conference “Peace Technology: Positioning the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Emerging Technologies in Fostering Global Peace,” Multimedia University of Kenya, Jan.
- 2020 “Interdisciplinary Artists Using Performance to Express Environmental Art” Delivered at the a2ru 8th Annual National Conference “Land and Equity: The Art and Politics of Place,” University of Wisconsin-Madison, Oct. 20.
- 2020 “Mirror Butterfly: Moving beyond Musical Anthropometrism,” Delivered at the Environmental Justice in Multispecies worlds: Land, Water, Food Conference at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, March 8.
- 2019 “Jazz as Black Atlantic Communication: Haitian Jazz in the Interwar Period,” Delivered at the Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Conference, University of Indiana-Bloomington, November 8.
- 2019 “Music as Ecological Solidarity,” Delivered at the Mesopotamian Water Forum, University of Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, April 7.
- 2018 “Music as a Solidarity Practice: Challenging Borders and Empire through Transnational Cultural Collaboration.” Delivered at re:Routes: 2018 Network of Ensemble Theatre National Gathering and Symposium, Tucson, AZ, November 2.
- 2017 “Migrating Modernities: Jazz, Cuba, and Music in Haiti.” Delivered at Annual Meeting of the Caribbean Philosophical Association Annual Conference, Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), June.

2014 “Music and Indigenous Politics in Mexico.” Delivered at Annual Meeting of the Caribbean Philosophical Association Annual Conference, Riviera Maya, June.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

- 2024 “Black Ecologies / Black Geographies,” Emerging Scholars in Africana Studies Conference, Gettysburg College, March 2.
- 2021 La Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Ensenada, “La Frontera Sónica: la Conexiones Entre Jazz del siglo XIX y músicos de México y sus implicaciones sobre el mundo Afro-Mexicano.” Nov.
- 2021 UConn-Storrs Asian and Asian American Studies Institute, “Afro Yaqui Music Collective in Critical Conversation,” with respondent Loren Kajikawa, June.
- 2020 University of Pittsburgh Humanities Center, “The Subaltern Can Swing: Tracing the Haitian Revolution’s Afterlives in New Orleans Jazz,” with respondents Robin D.G. Kelley and Jeffery O.G. Ogbar, Nov.
- 2020 UConn-Storrs Asian and Asian American Studies Institute, “Frontline Report: Indigenous Resistance to Mega-Projects In Mexico And Hawaii,” Nov.
- 2020 Duke Kunshan University Humanities Research Center, “Art Equals Politics: Vignettes of Culture, Decolonization, and Black and Brown Liberation,” July.
- 2020 UConn-Storrs Health Disparities Institute, “Black Art Heals,” July.
- 2019 National Jazz Museum of Harlem, “Jazz and Social Justice: A Salon with Music.” Curated by Larry Blumenfeld (of the *Wall Street Journal*), Oct.
- 2019 Penn State-Allegheny Campus, “Music as a Solidarity Practice: Challenging Borders and Empire through Transnational Cultural Collaboration,” Oct.
- 2019 University of Wisconsin-Madison, “Artivism: Decolonizing Performance and Intercultural Solidarity,” Sep.
- 2019 The East Side Freedom Library, St. Paul, MN, “Building a Movement that Moves: Art, Music, and Decolonization Movements in the United States,” Sep.
- 2019 University of Hawai’i, “Artivism: Decolonizing Performance and Intercultural Solidarity,” Mar.
- 2019 Hampshire College, “Musical Collaboration as Ecological Solidarity,” Mar.
- 2019 University of Massachusetts, “Artivism: Decolonizing Performance and Intercultural Solidarity,” Mar.
- 2016 FOMMA Theater, Fortaleza de la Mujer Maya, Chiapas, Mexico, “Liberación Artística y la Lucha Yaqui,” June.
- 2014 University of Vermont, “Latin American Music and Resistance in the Music of Nueva Canción,” Dec.

DECLARATIONS / REPORTS FROM GRASSROOTS POLITICAL GATHERINGS

- 2020 “The Boriken Declaration: A report back from the Gathering of the Americas: Resistance, Environments, Decolonization, Indigeneity” Puerto Rico, January 2020 ([Link](#))

- 2019 “Report from the Mesopotamian Water Forum” April 2019 ([Link](#))
- 2019 “Final Declaration of Mesopotamia Ecology Movement: Water is under assault in Mesopotamia” April 2019 ([Link](#))
- 2017 “The First Ecosocialist International: Combined Strategy and Plan of Action,” October 31 – November 3, 2017, Cumbe of Veroes, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela ([Link](#))

INTERVIEWS & MUSIC REVIEWS

- 2021 “What Can Music Do During Climate Collapse?” Jayson Greene, *Pitchfork*, April 22. ([Link](#))
- 2021 “Afro Yaqui Music Collective returns with second round of revolutionary jams,” Scott Mervis, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, April 1. ([Link](#))
- 2021 “Afro Yaqui Music Collective: Maroon Futures,” Raul de Gama, *Jazz de Gama*, March 19. ([Link](#))
- 2020 “A new multimedia work ties together themes of extraction, ancestry, and resistance,” Scott Gordon, *Tone Madison*, June 30. ([Link](#))
- 2020 “Rectifying the erasure of pioneering historian Arturo Schomburg, one poem and song at a time,” Jordan Snowden, *Pittsburgh City Paper*, Oct. 24. ([Link](#))
- 2020 “Mirror Butterfly: Afro Yaqui’s Call to Action for Migrant and Climate Justice,” Jacob Kopcienski, *I Care if You Listen*, January 30. ([Link](#))
- 2019 “Afro Yaqui Music Collective Works to Resurrect Silenced Voices,” Christian Kriegeskotte, *I Care if You Listen*, November 8. ([Link](#))
- 2019 “Review: Afro Yaqui Music Collective – Mirror Butterfly: The Migrant Liberation Movement Suite.” John Pietaro, *Jazz Right Now*, September 26. ([Link](#))
- 2019 “Afro Yaqui aims for worldly, revolutionary sound,” Kaisha Jantsch, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, August 1. ([Link](#))
- 2019 “Global connections The Afro Yaqui Music Collective launches a musical revolution from Pittsburgh,” Jason Vrabel, *Postindustrial*, July 8 ([Link](#))
- 2015 “Return to *SOURCE*: Contemporary Composers Discuss the Sociopolitical Implications of Their Work,” Collaboration with Alyce Santoro, *Leonardo Music Journal*, Vol 25 (December 2015):100–101.
- 2012 “Listen Up! Ben Barson and Vitaly Golovnev,” *New York City Jazz Record*, June.

SELECTED PERFORMANCES

- 2022 Institute for Cultural Research Museum, Mexicali, October.
- 2022 “Noches de Jazz”, la Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Ensenada, Nov.

- 2020 City of Asylum Artist Showcase (Online), May.
- 2020 Café Coda, Madison, WI, March.
- 2020 Performance with the Chamber Orchestra of Pittsburgh
- 2019 The National Jazz Museum of Harlem, October.
- 2018 Millennium Stage, Kennedy Center, November.
- 2018 ASCAP “Songwriters: the Next Generation” at the Kennedy Center, April.
- 2018 ASCAP Jazz Awards, Vibrato Jazz Club, Los Angeles, February.
- 2018 Springfield (MA) Jazz Festival with Magdalena Gomez, August.
- 2017 Caribbean Philosophical Association Annual Conference, BMCC, June.
- 2017 Mary Lou Williams’ “Zodiac Suite” with Geri Allen, University of Pittsburgh.
- 2017 Lincoln Center’s “Boro-Tech” Program, New York, NY.
- 2012 Fred Ho’s “Sweet Science Suite,” Guggenheim Museum, NY.

ALBUMS

- 2021 [*Maroon Futures \(Neuma Recordings\)*](#)
- 2018 [*Mirror Butterfly: the Migrant Liberation Movement Suite \(Innova Recordings\)*](#)
- 2017 [*Return to the Source \(Carnegie Stacks\)*](#)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Pittsburgh, Department of Music

- Afro-Pop Ensemble, Fall 2021-Spring 2022.
- Introduction to World Music, Spring 2022.
- Jazz Improvisation 1 & 2, Spring 2021.
- Music Production and Recording, Fall 2015 – Spring 2022.
- History of Jazz, Fall 2017-Spring 2022.

Chatham University, Department of Music

- Diatonic Tonal Harmony (Sight Signing Lab), Spring 2022

Duquesne University, Department of Music

- Global Popular Music, Spring 2022

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of the Arts Interdisciplinary Artist in Residence

- Artivism: Intercultural Solidarity & Decolonizing Performance, Spring 2020.
- Jazz Ensemble, Spring 2020.

AS A COMMUNITY EDUCATOR

- 2018-Present Saxophone Instructor with the Pittonkatonk Education Program (Pittsburgh) with a focus on McKees Rocks High School
- 2015-2018 Saxophone Instructor with Hope Academy of Arts and Music (Pittsburgh)
- 2010-2011 Teacher and Marketing Assistant at Afro Latin Jazz Alliance (New York)

SERVICE

- 2019 Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award Review Panel, Columbus, Ohio, Dec.
- 2018 Community Supported Artists Program Review Panel, Pittsburgh, PA., June.
- 2016 School at the Arts Institute of Chicago Crit. Panel, Chicago, IL, Dec.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM)
Caribbean Philosophical Association (CPA)
Network of Ensemble Theaters (NET)
Organization of American Historians (OAH)

LANGAUGES

English—Native Speaker
Spanish—Fluent, Read, Write, Speak
Haitian Creole—Beginner