

Barbaro

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Barbaro's music is at once lively and intimate, perfect for twirling around the dance floor or cooking with someone you love. The Minneapolis based rising stars have created their eclectic sound through original songwriting craft, with inspiration derived from bluegrass, jazz and chamber music. Barbaro's musical vision explores their collective life experiences through intricate instrumentation, creatively bending traditional music into a style that is all their own. Their album, *Dressed in Roses*, released January 2020, "Stands as a true testament to their musical identity and the sound that has launched one of the Midwest's most in-demand acoustic acts."

Barbaro quartet members are Kyle Shelstad (vocals and guitar), Rachel Calvert (vocals and fiddle), Jason Wells (vocals and bass), and Isaac Sammis (banjo).

In 2018, Barbaro released their first EP as well as claiming two awards: the John Hartford Memorial Festival Band Contest and the Minnesota Bluegrass and Old Time Music Association's Americana-Roots Band Contest.

2020 marked the release of Barbaro's debut album, *Dressed In Roses*, produced by Adam Greuel. Recorded at Wild Sound Studios in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the songs of *Dressed In Roses* showcase Barbaro's spirit of fearless exploration through layered musical textures that continually reimagine the Americana, and bluegrass experience. Lee Zimmerman wrote, "Dressed in Roses provides a bountiful bouquet and a remarkably rich one at that. Make no mistake — it's just that good."

Barbaro was selected as an Official Showcase Artist for Folk Alliance International 2020, AmericanaFest 2021, and IBMA World of Bluegrass in 2020 and 2021. With Barbaro being highlighted as one the Top 10 Artists to see at the 2021 IBMA World of Bluegrass.

In 2021, the band released a collaborative EP titled, *Dressed in Roses*, featuring artists from Humbird, Front Country, Gully Boys, Fireside Collective, Chicken Wire Empire, and Kind Country. No Depression highlighted Barbaro's new EP on their Now Hear This list and *Adventures In Americana* writes, "The idiosyncratic song choices give *Under The Covers* the feeling of a great night of karaoke – if instead of a tinny synthesized backing track you had some of the best bluegrass musicians in the Midwest playing live and a bar packed with talented professional singers coming up to perform every song."

2022 has been a year of acceleration for Barbaro having been selected to take part in the 2022-23 season of the American Music Abroad (AMA) program. The AMA is an initiative sponsored by the U.S. Department of State in which U.S. musicians are selected to represent characteristically American music genres by bringing that music to more than 140 countries around the world. They have spent their summer on the road performing at national festivals like MerleFest, Grey Fox Bluegrass Festival, and Strawberry Music Festival.

Accolades

U.S. Department of State's American Music Abroad Artist 2022-2023 Season

Official Showcase Artist for Americanafest 2021

Official Showcase Artist for the IBMA World of Bluegrass 2020, 2021

Official Showcase Artist for Folk Alliance International 2020

1st Place - John Hartford Memorial Festival Band Contest 2018

1st Place - Minnesota Bluegrass Roots Band Contest 2018

Press

“Barbaro brighten the Midwest bluegrass scene.” - *Carter Shilts*, [The Bluegrass Situation](#)

“Dressed in Roses provides a bountiful bouquet and a remarkably rich one at that. Make no mistake — it’s just that good.” - *Lee Zimmerman*, [Bluegrass Today](#)

“The Winona, Minn.-rooted neo-bluegrass quartet homes in on its own unique brand of rootsy acoustic music on its new album, “Dressed in Roses,” which is dressed in elegant yet understated violin and banjo parts alongside singer/guitarist Kyle Shelstad’s Mumford-meets-Paul Simon type of songwriting.” - *Chris Riemenschneider*, [Star Tribune](#)

“Barbaro is a unique blend of original, crafty songwriting that makes them an odds-on favorite for a breakout year.” - *Smouse*, [Music in Minnesota](#)

“Barbaro’s first full-length studio album, Dressed in Roses, stands as a true testament to their musical identity and the sound that has launched one of the Midwest’s most in-demand acoustic acts.” - *Carter Shilts*, [Bluegrass Situation](#)

“Barbaro budge beyond the bounds of bluegrass.” - *Mike Pengra*, [Minnesota Public Radio](#)

“Minnesota-based string band Barbaro have been selected to take part in the 2022-23 season of the American Music Abroad (AMA) program.” - *Luke Taylor*, [Minnesota Public Radio](#)

“Characterized by their minimal, acoustic setup, Barbaro is an integral part of Minneapolis’ up-and-coming folk / old-time scene. Fusing bluegrass, jazz and chamber music, Barbaro’s sound is representative of the American folk identity.” - *Ridge Bethea*, [Music Mecca Magazine](#)

“When I listen to Barbaro I find myself leaning in to the sound... trying to figure out where this unique blend came from, and where it’s going next!” -*Mike Pengra*, *Minnesota Public Radio*

“The idiosyncratic song choices give Under The Covers the feeling of a great night of karaoke – if instead of a tinny synthesized backing track you had some of the best bluegrass musicians in the Midwest playing live and a bar packed with talented professional singers coming up to perform every song.” - *Carol Roth*, [Adventures in Americana](#)

“On Minneapolis-based Barbaro’s forthcoming debut album... sonic journeys unravel in unexpected ways.” - *Joshua A. Miller*, [Shepherd Express](#)

“2018 was a year of acceleration for Barbaro as a band, and they don’t have plans to slow down any time soon.” - *Minnesota Bluegrass Magazine*

“Fast Rising Minnesota newgrassers... features fleet-fingered playing (expected) and also a gift for dynamics and restraint (not always a bluegrass hallmark).” - [Isthmus](#)

“Barbaro use a traditional bluegrass stage to create new tunes that blend newgrass, country and jazz styles.” - *Wisconsin Public Radio*