

## The Barr Brothers

### Bio

Over the last several years, The Barr Brothers have increasingly become one of the western world's most distinguished purveyors of eclectic modern-Americana. Fronted by the poly-rhythmic, jocular drumming of Andrew Barr, the songs and guitar playing of brother Brad Barr, and the innovative harp wizardry of Sarah Pagé--who has single-handedly redefined the instrument and its context. The group has been expanding and contracting its sound and its size from their home base in Montreal, QC. Bass, pedal steel, keyboards, and horns come in and out of the mix freely. Equally at home in solemn Arcadian ballads, swampy North African improvs, or classic rock and roll revelry, The Barr Brothers continue to embrace and enchant audiences with their methodical-yet-whimsical approach to music making.

The two brothers and Sarah began performing Brad's songs around North America, bringing in other friends on other instruments when needed, spinning these otherwise bedroom-folk songs into an intricate, open terrain. The link they maintain to the past fuses wonderfully with poetic insight into the conditions of the present, while incorporating everything from Malian rhythms to the Elmore James-esque slide guitar. Homemade percussion instruments reminisce the likes of Tom Waits' five-years-buried muffler and a Jockey Full of Bourbon, while reviving Celtic folk traditions, polyrhythmic harp interplay, and the fire of West African Blues.

Their self-titled debut album *The Barr Brothers* (2011) dances a fine line between the crossroads of Robert Johnson, Arthurian ballads, and the poetic sensibilities of Leonard Cohen. Their sophomore album, *Sleeping Operator* (2014) delves deeper into the connections between the Delta blues and its ancestry in West and North Africa, while still rooting itself in the softness of Appalachian folk and the soaring resilience of a song's connective tissues. The group's favourite misfits of the album were released on the five-track collection *Alta Falls* (2015), that drifts further northward, having been partially recorded in Iceland by Valgeir Sigurðsson (Björk, Sigur Rós, Nico Muhly). It reveals ethereal folk and layered vocal harmonies whose warmth is suggested by the red vinyl it is pressed onto.

The success of this natural yet unfamiliar convergence of influences has enabled The Barr Brothers to perform in, among other places, the Levon Helm studios of Woodstock NY, the legendary Red Rocks Amphitheater, twice on the "Late Show with David Letterman", Japan, Europe, the UK, as well as earning them two Juno nominations in 2013 and 2015 for Adult Alternative Album of the Year. In this next year, these vast and varied influences will find themselves experimenting yet again with the recording of a third full-length album, and will further be celebrated as Mali's Bassekou Kouyaté and partner Amy Sacko come to join forces with the group. Two unprecedented collaborative performances are set to take place in Quebec City and Montreal in the summer of 2017 (as part of the Festival d'Été de Québec and Festival International de Jazz de Montréal respectively), where both figurative and literal blending of these musical traditions will be on full brilliant display.