

PODCAST Episode 356

Mon, Nov 13, 2023 3:47PM  1:04:29

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

music, jazz, album, play, bass player, blind, bass, ciara, song, teacher, guess, musician, bit, work, part, write, pop, braille, instrument, lessons

SPEAKERS

Rob Mineault, Ciara Moser, Ryan Fleury

 Rob Mineault 00:19

Hey and welcome to another episode of AT Banter. Man I really miss Steve's 'banter banter'. It's this big hole that he leaves. Maybe we should look into AI technology and sample Steve's voice and so that when he's not here he we can still have a 'banter, banter'.

 Ryan Fleury 00:47

Well how many episodes do we have where you can just take a banter banter out of one?

 Rob Mineault 00:51

No, we can't do that. We have promised the audience there there'd be no canned anything. No canned cowbell or canned Steve.

 Ryan Fleury 01:00

Oh, very sampling his voice, it's along the same lines, isn't it?

 Rob Mineault 01:05

Well, no, no, it's not. Actually that it's funny you mentioned that because did you hear? Are you a big Beatles fan?

 Ryan Fleury 01:12

I heard the new song.

R Rob Mineault 01:14

Yeah. Okay. So yeah, me too. So what's your opinion on this?

R Ryan Fleury 01:19

I think the technology is cool, that AI can separate his voice from the keyboard piano parts. But I don't know. Are we not done with the Beatles? I thought the song itself was okay. Yeah, I mean, the song .. they never released it for a reason.

R Rob Mineault 01:36

I kind of feel the same way. I think in terms of the actual song. It's like it'd be one of the ones like it'd be like the ninth track on a Beatles album that you would just kind of forget about. So here's my take on this whole thing. So I made the mistake of like watching the music video for this thing.

R Ryan Fleury 01:56

Yeah, I haven't done that yet.

R Rob Mineault 01:57

No, don't do it. And everybody don't do this. Just engage with the song without watching the music video because I don't know what they're thinking but they have like, they have like young George Harrison and like John Lennon dancing around an 80 year old Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr singing and it just it feels odd and a little bit ghoulish? I don't know, I just, but I don't know. Do we really need to to be to be rehashing .. I don't know. Do we need to be bringing people back from the dead to sing?

R Ryan Fleury 02:32

They took a 1980 guitar part that George did. And then you know, Lennon's vocals from 74. And, you know, put it all together for this new song, which I think that again, the technology is really cool that we can do that. But I don't know. Just let the Beatles be.

R Rob Mineault 02:49

No. See, this is where we this is where I disagree. I don't think that the technology is cool to do that. Let's not do that. Stop using AI in music. Like just stop it.

R Ryan Fleury 03:02

Come on. I'd rather listen to AI than Taylor Swift.

R Rob Mineault 03:04

No, you wouldn't.

R Ryan Fleury 03:14

Alright, anyway, let's get on with the show.

C Ciara Moser 03:17

Yeah, let's do it. Okay, now from the top and all the way through.

R Rob Mineault 03:23

Okay, hey, Ryan.

R Ryan Fleury 03:25

Yeah, Rob?

R Rob Mineault 03:26

Why don't you tell the fine folks at home what the heck we are doing today?

R Ryan Fleury 03:31

Well, today's show is all about the bass. Well, actually, it's about the woman who plays the bass guitar. Our guest today is Ciara Moser, professional bass player. And she has just recently released her debut album called "Blind, So What?" Ciara, thank you so much for joining us tonight.

C Ciara Moser 03:51

Thanks so much for having me.

R Ryan Fleury 03:52

It's great to have you here.

R

Rob Mineault 03:54

We are really excited to have you. Thanks again for joining us. I don't even know where to start, I've got so many questions for you. Why don't we just start in just giving us a little bit of a background about yourself and you know, your eye condition and a little bit of your vision journey.

C

Ciara Moser 04:12

Sure. Okay, so well, as you already heard. My name is Ciara Moser. I was born in Dublin, Ireland. My mom was Irish and my Dad is Austrian. They actually met while they were working on the cruise ships, as kitchen chef and waitress / stewardess manager. And so they've been traveling a lot but I was actually born in Dublin after they got off the ships for some time. And then when I was four, I moved to Austria. And then I was pretty much raised in Austria. I did all of my education like school, primary school or elementary school high school there and then also went to college in Vienna before I came to the US to go to Berklee College of Music. I was born with LCA. So that was Leber congenital amaurosis. I don't know if, if any of you know that I condition but basically it's like a genetic condition that affects the production of rhodopsin for the retina. So I was born fully blind. And well, I would say that I have like, like, light and dark.. So yeah, I see if it's like they are night or if the light is on or off. Maybe like, you know, here and there, like a few like contrasts or, or something like that. But I would, I would say it's more like light and dark. And I have two younger brothers, and the youngest is blind as well.

R

Rob Mineault 05:49

So now growing up, what was your kind of relationship with music? I mean, did you did you always sort of have a passion for it was, were your family members musical? How did this kind of relationship with music first start?

C

Ciara Moser 06:02

So my parents are actually both not musicians, my dad is a cook. And then like later, he became like, hotel manager, catering, manager, and so on, on my mom is also like, in that kind of area, like she worked as a waitress, but also later as a manager. And now she works in a hotel, where she manages like the cleaning staff for two hotels and a spa resort. So they're not really in music. They've both learned instruments, throughout their education, but not really like focusing on it. And yeah, so what's actually brought me to music is that I guess, my parents saw like, a great importance in like, exposing us to as many things as possible, because as soon as they got to diagnose that I'm blind, they started like reading a lot, a lot, a lot of stuff about blindness. And they like noticed, okay, it's important, you know, to expose your child to as many experiences as possible to make it independent. And obviously, like music is something that pops into your head, like right away because of the connection with hearing. But also, it's like, really, really important, because of the whole, like, motor skill part, like the whole, like, part of the physical education or the, you know, the physical exposure that playing

an instrument gives you. So I started like, playing the violin at the age of two and a half actually already. Back then, I was actually afraid of it. That was kind of funny. My parents, like, you know, how it is like, a blind child is afraid of things that feel kind of like new to them. And so my parents would like, we had a trampoline in the living room that I was always using. Actually, even before I could walk, I was like jumping on the trampoline. So they just put the violin on the trampoline, so I had to kind of spend time with it. But it was great. And then I since then, I was always exposed to music, it was always like a really big part of my life. And I guess it for them. Like, it's not only because I'm blind, I think even if I if I, if I was born sighted music would have been a big part of my education just because I think it should be part of everybody's education. So yeah, I started learning piano at the age of eight. And I did a bunch of other like side things like a play record and stuff like that. And then I I started learning percussion when I was like 13. And then we actually started a band with my brothers and two friends of the family. And we discovered that we need a bass if we want to start a band. So I decided to play bass, and then I enrolled in this like high school that's actually specialized on pop music. So you play like in the first it's actually four years because it's like the second like period of high school. So you start playing with like, like, you start playing like pop rock covers. And then in the second year you already like write your own songs. And you also like spend time with a little bit of Latin music like salsa, and Samba. And then in the third year, like you get a little bit into like jazz. And then the fourth year you actually record your own CD. And that actually that school I got into because I was playing bass because all the other instruments they already had a lot of people and for bass they only have one person but they needed two bass players because the class is divided into bands. So I was actually lucky You too have bass as my primary instrument back then. And I think going to that school really was the main reason why I then decided to study. And then I went to Vienna, to study there, and then to Boston.

R

Ryan Fleury 10:14

So what was it about the bass guitar that made you stay with it?

C

Ciara Moser 10:20

Well, I saw, the main reason why I decided to stay with bass was the role of the instrument in the band. So I really love it, because it's the glue between everything, it's the foundation have the rhythm, but also the foundation of the harmony. So when I'm playing, I have to support the drummer, but at the same time, I have to support the harmony, the piano or guitar, and, of course, I have to be aware of the melody, which is like the main part of a song. And for me, like having to know, all of those components of a song and being like, kind of so like, all around all, like, in the music, like with every kind of part. For me, that's like, really, really important. And I just really love playing together with drummers, especially if they're good drummers. Because I just love the feeling of supporting a drummer with like my baseline, because you can make a groove feel so good if you're actually playing nice. And if you're actually supporting the drummer. And actually, that feeling like onstage when you play on a sec roof. Like that kind of like supportive and that kind of crew feeling, I think was the main decision why i i started to really want to pursue bass as my main instrument.

R

Rob Mineault 11:54

Yeah, it's funny. Ryan and I were we had we were having a whole bass discussion before the show. And I mean, it really I feel like it really is a very underappreciated part. I mean, it's so easy, like you take any song, and if you remove that baseline, you notice it immediately. But yeah, you know, it's not like you're the guitar, lead guitar or, you know, horns or anything else. I mean, the whole job of the bass is to sort of blend in and to just fill everything out. So, yeah, I think it is very underappreciated.

 Ciara Moser 12:29

It definitely under people like bass is an instrument that the people will not notice if it's there, but they will notice if it's gone.

 Ryan Fleury 12:40

Even on on your album, which we'll we'll get to, there's some songs in there. And I can't remember all of them off the top of my head, where I was sitting there thinking to myself, that needs to be brought up in the mix a little more. It's too soft, it's too quiet. And I know your engineers, you know, have way more experience than I do. But I like to hear the bass because I play some bass myself. And so I like to hear the bass guitar. And if it's too quiet, and like there's no bass bring it up. So yeah, it's definitely integral part of just about any music.

 Ciara Moser 13:15

Yeah, definitely.

 Rob Mineault 13:17

And hey, listen, it's got one less string, right?

 Ryan Fleury 13:20

Not necessarily.

 Rob Mineault 13:23

So okay, so I want to I want to go back a little bit and talk a little bit more about when you were a kid and when you were you were taking lessons because I'm super curious. Did you take lessons?

 Ciara Moser 13:37

Oh, yeah. So in violin, I took lessons with like, three different teachers, one in Ireland, and then one in Austria. But then that was only for one year. And then I started with Susanna Eigner. She

was my teacher until I was like 18. And I took recorder lessons. I took Yeah, like drum lessons. And then I would the violin teacher I was I also played a little bit of viola and I took classical piano lessons, I think from the age of like seven or eight until I was like 13. And then a little bit of like jazz piano lessons, even though I'm not even daring to say that because I don't really feel like I play jazz piano. But I played piano and learned like some jazzy songs. And then bass lessons. Well, I had like percussion and drum lessons with the same teacher and then bass lessons I had I first studied with a guy called Stefan Masdar, he was actually studying in the US himself. For some time when I studied with him, he he had moved back to Austria. And and that was like, Yeah, that was private lessons. And then I started in high school and the pop high school I was talking about where we also had private lessons included. And I had lessons with a really good teacher, and he, I would say gave me like most of the foundation that I still rely on when I play bass now. Like I learned most of the foundation of that technique like slap technique or playing certain styles and groups on bass. And then later, I did study at in Vienna with Billy Lang and Gina Schwartz, who are like the main teachers at that University. And I also, when I was still in high school, I studied with a guy called Fanti. He's like, plays like a lot of sloop bass and like funk stuff. And then later during university, because Billy Lang, who is like the electric bass teacher at a university in Vienna, he's more like a funk person. And I wanted to study jazz. And Gina Schwartz is a jazz player, but she plays mainly double bass. So I started to study with another guy about a half an hour away from Vienna, and I was like, commuted to take lessons with him. Because I wanted to get more into jazz electric bass stuff. And then when I came to Berkeley, everything kind of exploded. And I started with like, the craziest teachers so many people. Steve Bailey was a great supporter of mine. So I had a lot of teachers. Yes.

R

Ryan Fleury 16:32

And so one of our biggest questions, or my, one of my biggest questions is why jazz?

C

Ciara Moser 16:40

It's interesting, because I definitely didn't start with jazz. And if I would have heard straight ahead, jazz when I was 10, or 11, I would feel like I'm in an elevator or, you know, listening to an old radio station. And I definitely did not understand that kind of music. Because it was not in my family, like people didn't, you know, like, a lot of those famous jazz musicians nowadays, they have like, jazz in their family, like, since they're like seven. I know, like, all of my mentors talking about that. Oh, yeah. When I was young, like they were playing jazz, and I was hearing it a blah, blah. And I'm like, I was I really never heard that kind of music until I was maybe 16. I mean, of course, I heard it, you know, like, sometimes my parents did bring me to concerts or something, like expose me to stuff but not really, like regularly at home. So I yeah, I mean, the way I started, because my main, like, music education when I was a kid was in classical music, which is kind of obvious, because in Austria, that's what you're exposed to, like, that's what all of the, we have, like a whole system, like a whole network of music schools, but it's all built upon like classical music education. And so I only got into like pop music with the violin, actually, when I was like 11 or 12, when one of the music teacher, the guitar teacher at the music school did like a pop concert, and my ballet teacher was like, maybe you should look into improvising a bit. So I played my first pop concert. And that's how we actually started the band where I then played bass. But yeah, so and then when I actually got into playing bass, of course, the first things I played were like more like rock funk, pop blues, kind of like, you know, typical things you play when you when you play bass, and when you play in a band. And then I

started playing with through the high school I went to I started playing in a funk band called Round Corners. And then with the guitarist, his name was Andy. I started to play in his Guitar Trio, which was like fusion. So we played music by Scott Henderson. I don't know if if you know those kind of names Scott Henderson, Guthrie Govan sometimes like funkier stuff as well, but it was all instrumental. And it was more towards the like, I would say rock funk fusion, but all instrumental. So that was the first time I got into more like virtuos playing. And I actually like enjoyed it because it was still very closely connected to just like groovy like pop rock funk music, right? Just without vocals. But then I started also to kind of attend those workshops that we have yearly in Austria, and they have those like big band workshops. It's like, also from the music schools, from the music school network. They have those workshops that they organize, and those were like very clear. There was a lot of like funk and stuff, but they were like very clear, dedicated to jazz as the main focus and and big and playing and, like ensemble playing but in like a, you know, technical way and rituals kind of way and focusing on not not only like because when we hear jazz we often think about swing. But that's like very rarely the case nowadays if you go to jazz concerts that people really only play swing for the whole concert. But yeah, that's where I got into jazz. And then of course, when I studied when I started studying, you do play more jazz, because the thing is that the truth is, we don't listen to jazz nowadays anymore. People do not listen to that kind of music. But the but actually, fact is that jazz is the foundation of this kind of music. Like, we there was like classical music, and an African music. And I mean, that's like very, very broken down. Because I know there's so many more components to that. But like in America, basically. Yeah, the first thing that started the whole, like, jazz thing for me is probably like, ragtime and blues. And then, you know, later we had like, all of the swing era and bebop, and like all of those time periods. And then like, I guess like rock pop music really started with like, things like The Rolling Stones or something. And it's all coming from blues. And from, from jazz. It's all kind of like connected, because that was before like rock and pop was a thing. It was to commercial music back then. And so yeah, and then, for example, like, fusion was just like a combination of jazz and rock. And so yeah, I guess that's why I think jazz is so important also, when you study music, so for me, it was definitely like an important thing to look into the those kinds of styles and to be familiar with jazz, but then I really became like a fan. And I enjoyed playing it. And I enjoyed the challenge, because I feel like that's a big thing about jazz, you always look for a challenge and how to expand your knowledge and how to expand your skills.

R

Ryan Fleury 22:12

Yeah, I would think with jazz to it, it would give you more room for improvisation as well more freedom of expression, then, you know, pop or rock, which is you know, D, C, D or E A, B or whatever, right? You got your 3-4-5 chords. Jazz is so much more expressive.

C

Ciara Moser 22:33

Yeah, I totally agree. I mean, I that's that that's definitely a thing. Like if you get to, if you get to a technical level, or to like a skill set you have on your instrument, you want to like, you know, grow and you want to challenge yourself. And I think it is also a challenge to play very, very good pop music, or rock music, even though it's maybe not like fast or something, while it can be fast. But like, even though it's maybe not like technically as challenging, but I think it is technically challenging to play a tight pop groove on the bass. And it's the same challenge as if I will try to play like a swing. I don't know walking based on 300 BPM. But definitely I think

those challenges both have their How do you say that word in English? Like, I both want to face though, I want to face both of those challenges. I kind of want to like, yeah, for me, for me, that's both very, like, both of those challenges are like very, very exciting. And and I think you can learn from both for both, like I can learn from jazz, right pop music and the other way around as well, because I don't like pop musicians who play jazz, or I don't like jazz musicians who try to play pop, but they actually don't know anything about it. And the other way around. So I mean, of course I appreciate everybody and I respect everybody who wants to try that out. But like generally, I think there should be more like an all around idea of music and of like looking into different styles.

R

Ryan Fleury 24:21

You said you just made a comment about playing a run or walking baseline at 300 BPM. Did they asked you at Berklee on doing that because I don't think I can do that.

C

Ciara Moser 24:32

They don't test do you on that. I mean, at Berklee there are like certain curriculum, like curricular like requirements that you have to fulfill but playing swing on 300 bpm is definitely not part of that. It's more something you would do among friends and be like, oh, can I actually do this?

R

Ryan Fleury 24:52

Gives me a challenge to work towards.

C

Ciara Moser 24:54

Oh my god. I should work on that too.

R

Rob Mineault 24:59

Uh, well do you ever like So do you ever, like get in a mood? Like, I'm kind of in a pop mood today? Or I'm in a jazz mood? Do you just kind of get in a certain mood to play?

C

Ciara Moser 25:11

Yes. I think yeah, that's funny because I think for me that's different. Like, for listening to music, I am not sure what exactly defines my mood, like what, why I'm in certain moods, but sometimes I just want to hear something, like really simple and like driving. But sometimes I'm also really like in this analytic mode, and I really want to hear some like complicated stuff. You know, and then I just yeah, and it's, it's actually interesting because it doesn't even depend on the time of the day. But then other days in the morning, I just want to hear like Ariana Grande or, I don't know, Pentatonix or something.

R Rob Mineault 26:09

Taylor Swift?

C Ciara Moser 26:11

Why not? Actually, I haven't listened to Taylor Swift so much. But, for example, I went to the Ed Sheeran concert, like, I'm a super secret fan of his, because I think he writes amazing songs. And I just, yeah, I commit to both, like, I really love both things. And but also, what I found out is that listening is definitely a routine. So of course, if you play somebody jazz the first time, they'll be like, What is this, but I think that I'm even, I noticed that I can, if I listen to a certain style of music more, or Yeah, I will get more familiar with it. And I'll also want to listen to it more, because I'm starting, I start to understand more parts of it. And I want to like kind of get the hang of it more. And for playing I guess it depends what I'm working on. Well, it also depends on my in a practicing mode, or am I just in like a playing mode, right? If I'm just in like a playing mode, I just play whatever I hear. And if I'm in a practicing mode, it's just like, then I really have like a routine. And I'm like, Okay, I want to work on this more right now. And, yeah, I really schedule my my practice time, as well.

R Rob Mineault 27:26

You had a really interesting quote on your website that I kind of want to talk to you about, you say, "I can't read music in the visual sense. So I absorbed the music directly in imprint it within." I'm really curious about, you know, when you were taking lessons, and when, you know, when you were in those early years, when you were sort of first learning everything, obviously, you couldn't read the music. So they were using, I'm assuming, like the Suzuki method or or, you know, your training or however it worked? What was that? And I mean, I guess what did any of the private instructors were there any accessibility issues? Or were they ever concerned with that? Or was it a pretty simple process to just sit you down with something and let you go?

C Ciara Moser 28:17

I guess, it depends on the instructor. In that case, I would say like, generally, the better the instructor is, the less problem it is like, because I feel like and also the better of a musician instructors. Because I think that if like, if you have like, if you have a good musician, as a teacher, they will know that you can learn everything by ear, because they also have good ears, and they're a good musician, and they will understand that. So like that's the first thing that I feel like it's important to know. And also, my parents, like when they looked for a teacher for me, they would literally call like the whole country if they could. So like for my violin lessons, we commuted like 45 minutes every week, which in Austria is far because the next Music School is five minutes by car, no matter where you live, maybe 10. But for my parents, it was not about being close. It was about having the quality because if you have an educator who works with a blind student, you want them to actually be ambitious and be qualified and not qualified to work with a blind person but actually more qualified for their job. Because if

they're qualified for the job as an educator, then it means that they're able to work with a blind person. And the way I did it was basically call and response like the Suzuki method is also kind of built on call and response because it's like learning your music like a mother language. So you hear it, and then you play it. So yeah, my teachers would always play me phrases. And I would repeat those phrases. And we would do that until I was like, we will start with like a short phrase, and then maybe like, add a second phrase to it, and then practice the first and second phrase, and so on. So basically just learning by hearing the notes, and then memorizing like that. And it's interesting, because every teacher had like, different ways of teaching me like, the things by ear, and some teachers would understand better, how much I could take in in one go than others. That was kind of interesting, like how much like how long the phrase could be that they would play me like how much I could actually hear and how much I could take in. And of course, that varies like the varied from, like, my also musical experience, or like skill set, like on how old I was. And also, the older I got, the better I got in like, expressing what I needed, like, oh, play me this or play me this, like, with the right rhythm or because sometimes teachers would also like they would play only the notes without the rhythm, because they would think I would want to hear it slower. But then for me, for example, it's really important to hear something in the rhythm. So I can actually understand how the melody works. Because like, hearing the notes of the melody is fine, but like, without the rhythm, it won't sound like the melody sounds like those kinds of things. And then yeah, I don't know. I mean, it's really different also from instrument to instrument, depending on what I'm what I'm learning, because, for example, a violin, the teacher would sometimes tell me like, oh, third finger on the A string, second finger on the G string, and so on, like telling me to fingerings. And also in, in the piano lessons, he would sometimes record me, like the right hand, the left hand, then both hands together. And then if there was like passages where the fingering wasn't very clear, he would like record. Yeah, he would record like the passage is slow, but tell me the fingers he was using. And yeah, recording devices were definitely a big thing. And also, for my blind friends who were in music school, I guess, that was always a big thing. Like recording, I did learn braille notation, actually, my violin teacher, she went to school for the blind in Vienna, to learn Braille music, in order to teach it to me. So I do know how to read Braille music, but I never used it, really, I mean, except for my theory exams, and then later at Berkeley for some ear training classes. But I think it was important for me to learn, especially because I made music. I did music as my career and I think it's important to know how to read music.

R

Ryan Fleury 32:51

Yeah, and that was gonna be my next question is, did you use music Braille? Or the lime lighter technology to go and get your Masters? How do you learn music? Now, if somebody says, Ciara, we're going on tour next month, here's, you know, 25 songs you need to learn? What is that process like now? Is there technology involved?

C

Ciara Moser 33:17

So I did learn Braille music, as I said, but I don't use it at all anymore. I mean, I think it's just important to know it, because I think it's also like a different channel to absorb music through reading. And I think even reading braille is more similar to reading, like visually, then hearing it and learning it. So I think it was important to understand this kind of structured intake of notes, you know. So, yeah, so the technology. Well, I still try to go mainly from the recordings, if I can, and also nowadays with the technology that people have, it's way easier to get to

recordings, or at least demo tracks of the songs that people, right, because everybody has to record demos anyways. But I do use Sebelius as well. I was actually part of the testing team. Are I am still part of the testing team, actually. And I yeah, I'm really, really enjoying to use that. I actually just found out that MuseScore apparently is accessible since some time, like since a few months, but I haven't really spent time on it yet. But definitely I use Sebelius. And if somebody doesn't have a recording or no demo, I asked them to send me like the Sebelius file. Or if they use another notation software, they can like export it as a music XML file. And so then I can read the chart. The only thing that I really find annoying is that, like, it's not going to be very, like learning in real time. Because, for example, if I go into Sebelius chart, and I play the song, and a lot of times, you'll have like a chord chart, you know, where you only have the chords written. So those, the software doesn't tell me the chords. So they, I can actually only play it if, if, if there's a written out baseline. And if there are the chords, I will have to actually like, scroll through the whole chart with the keyboard like the the keys like the Tab key, and let the computer reads the chords because there is no braille translation for Isabella is yet. So I'll kind of have to like read it, and then play it, which is kind of weird, because it's like it takes way, way longer than just listening to it. So sometimes, because it's even faster to do that, then like reading it, 100, like letting the computer read it 100 times, sometimes I would even like write the root notes in this rebellious file that I got, like where the chords are just like write the root notes, so I can hear them and then I'll just play it in real time and listen to it because it'll sound way more. Like it'll make way more sense to just hear it a lot of times are actually always great.

 R Rob Mineault 36:27

So, okay, well, why don't we now we have to touch start to talk about the album.

 C Ciara Moser 36:31

Yes.

 R Rob Mineault 36:33

So where to start? Okay, well, let's, you know, let's start with the name. Tell us a little bit about the name and why you chose it.

 C Ciara Moser 36:40

Blind, So What? Well, I guess I'm blind. So what has been kind of the slogan that has always been part of me. Because I always believed I could do anything. And no matter, you know, if I'm blind or whatever, or not, or disabled or not, or, and my, my parents always gave us that. Like, they always taught us to have that attitude. And because they're both like very positive people themselves. And actually, it's kind of funny, my, my dad was definitely like, the inspiration for our my mom and dad were the inspiration for that name. Because we always like filmed everything like, they filmed everything, when when I was young, what my brothers and I were up to, like, sometimes they would just have the camera on what we were like playing in the backyard, or why we were practicing our instruments or something. And my dad always made

fun of us and said, oh, maybe one day, he's gonna make a movie and call it a word that means blind, so what in German. And then what happened was, I was like, into all those Youtubers and stuff like that, like, a little bit before the pandemic already. And I was like, man, if I actually created my own YouTube channel, you know, it will be so cool. Because I feel like people would really love that kind of content. And I think the world needs that kind of content. But then I didn't really have the resources because I would need somebody who would like help me with the camera work and stuff. So I decided to do this podcast that I also called Blind So What where I just talk about like life as a blind person and how you manage to go shopping and so on and so forth. Yeah, and then I guess the name was was boring like through through through that podcast and the idea for the movie and so that slogan Blind So What has been kind of like, yeah, with me all that time. And for me, there wasn't even a question what the name of the album will be. And, yeah, I guess I even if I do a workshop or something, or a masterclass somewhere else, like, for example, in Chela, Panama, I did some workshops I called it Blind So What. So I think it's like, an all around the name. And it's not only like for the album, but for a lot of things that I can do in my life that I will do in my life.

R

Rob Mineault 39:21

When you're doing something like producing your album and you're you know, you're sort of beginning your career as a as a performer, there's a little bit of back end stuff like you know, you're you're marketing yourself, you're building a brand for yourself as as a performer and as a musician. So, in your mind, sort of how did your identity as a musician that is blind, how did that kind of impact you building out that brand?

C

Ciara Moser 39:49

A lot. One of the big reasons I did like record this album, was that I for years like of being a bass player and a side woman I, I have been planning to do my own project. But it just kind of started to take shape. When I, when I studied at Berklee, and I did my masters there, I guess what always struck me was that, like, as a blind musician, like, especially in the professional musicians life, it's definitely harder to get called, because people don't really understand that you don't have any limits as a bi person, especially in music like that people don't understand that music is the place where we don't have any limitations. And I don't even want to call it limitations because I don't feel like a blind person has limitations. But like, especially in music, like we are equal or even more, you know, two sided people. And so, for me, it was always like, weird that still, if I'm doing music, which is actually such a, you know, a fair field for us. Why am I still like facing those, you know, stereotypes and those like, kind of like discriminatory behaviors from people? So, yeah, I guess. I mean, it definitely was not the reason why I wrote the album. But it was definitely one of the inspirations to like, create more like awareness, right, in the fields of like, musicians. And generally, like, generally, in the whole world, like, for me, the only way that we can actually like, fight for inclusion, I think, is to create more awareness in the whole society. Because I mean, of course, definitely, like, there has to be so many things, the done, like, in terms of like technology and accessibility, but I think the main focus that has definitely been left out a lot of times, is the whole society. And I mean, that starts like, in a very, very young, like, age already, like in education, there can be so many things done. Well, I'm kind of drifting off a little bit, but basically, like, I kind of saw myself responsible then of like, also like, adding my parts to the puzzle in terms of like, inclusion. And I feel like people always like, told me, Oh, Ciara, you should really do your own thing. Because

people when they heard me play and perform, like, especially as as a bass player, they always, for some reason had this like, wow effect. And, and I guess, it's, it's definitely, you know, multiple different components playing to the game. Because like, there's a female bass player, which is already pretty unique. I mean, there are not so many. And then with the six string bass, you know, but then she's blind. And she's not like looking at anybody, like, when I play, I just, like, look straight, because I don't have to look at the bass, I don't have to look at the people. So the people also often don't know that I'm blind in the first place. And then they're, like, confused, but at some point, they realize, and they're like, Oh, my God, this is crazy. So I definitely like, besides the album started to create a brand by like, the moment I started to play music, and the moment I started to put myself out there. So I was actually always really lucky that I didn't have to worry about branding, specifically, because it happens automatically, even though I do care. And I mean, the reason I care is like, I mean, that's the reason why, like, why I started things like the podcast or why I wanted to start a YouTube channel, because I am thinking in a business way, and I know that it has like a lot of potential. But while it does happen automatically, to a certain extent, which is like a big advantage. And then yeah, and then that kind of helped me to like all of those things combined, like kind of helped me to find also the concept for the album. And then of course, in in the, in the last instance going to study at Berklee. The reason why I actually went to study at Berklee is that they have a Music Technology course. And I mean, according to my knowledge until now, it's like the only place where you can really in like a college course learn all of this music technology like Pro Tools, Logic. And where you have a teacher in front of you has like all of this, like resources and material and teaches you those things. And for me, like coming from Austria, where technology is definitely like, yeah, there's definitely a lot of stuff where people are behind in terms of technology and accessibility. So that for me reading about that course, was like, the reason why I decided to go to Berklee. But then I heard about the Master's program that I did at the Berklee Global Jazz Institute, which is basically about musically, music and social change. And you do, it's like a performance pro Masters. And you do like, you, you do a project in the end of the, in the pro in the end of the program. It's a Master's program that takes a year, and it's, it's fully paid, and they take 20 people per year. So and you have like four ensembles, in each like that those 20 people are divided into four ensembles. And in the project that you do, in the end, you have to write music, and also do research about a topic. And so and, and they want you to be very, like close, and kind of, yeah, close to the topic, in whatever way like you can be related to the topic, or just, I mean, of course, like then people also take topics that they're just really interested in. But definitely, most of the best final projects in that program. For me were like the people who really, you know, we're kind of connected to the project in some ways. Like, for example, one of my friends did, like a project about social media affecting people's eating disorders, and she had an eating disorder herself. And you could really see like, the deep connection to that. So for me, it was like 100%, clear from the beginning that I want to do something with blindness. And also, like, for me, like, that was, I guess, the project, or was one of the main, like, reasons why I wanted to do the program, because the program is not like a typical performance program. But it's a program that really, like sees you as a whole person, like the musician, but also the person, right? And yeah, so there, I guess through all of the mentoring with all of those, like you've studied with like a lot of great jazz artists like Danilo, Paris is the director of the Institute. And through all the mentors I had there, I really like shaped my whole idea, because I knew I wanted to do something. And I knew I wanted to, I knew I had this kind of branding, but I didn't really know how could I actually combine it with being like a musician and a bass player, right? Because it's hard to like, find a way to just because for me, like, being a musician wasn't connected to being blind, necessarily. Like I was just a musician. Why should that be connected? Like, so I tried to I had actually Danilo Perez, the artistic director gave me this like really great input of because he was like, very fascinated by how I do things, especially by like, how I memorize music. And he gave me like this really great

inspiration, inspirational idea of connecting, like, things in my life with music, where I understand that, but I never thought about it like, exactly like, particularly in terms of blindness. And it was really interesting to like, for example, think about when I memorize where I walk, like, you know, the way to the train station or something, if that's connected to when I memorize music. And so I was like, inspired and encouraged to find those parallels between like, my life as a blind musician and my life as a band person. And then like, put that into the project. And most of the songs on the album are actually yeah, about those about that. So yeah, like the final project was like about four songs or five songs, I think. And then from that, I went on and and finished the whole album after I finished the Masters.

 Rob Mineault 49:50

You know, I love that I love that about the album and this is exactly what we need to spread into the mainstream is education about what the lived experience of being blind is like. I suspect you have many more albums in you. Yeah. And speaking of that, then what's next? What are you working on now? Do you do you have an idea around the next album, or what's going on?

 Ciara Moser 50:15

So I am writing a lot of tunes. Like, musically, there's not really a limit of like, I don't have enough material or something. The thing is that now because I had this really great concept, I am actually kind of also challenging myself, and looking for something new. That can be interesting, because I definitely, I like just composing music without thinking about it, and just, you know, writing whatever I hear. But also, I do like to compose with a certain costs. And that's, I guess, what I also learned at the Berklee Global Jazz Institute, a lot that we can, like music can affect people like so, so much in, like, in a way, like music is responsible for our mental health. And under, and I think that is, like, really, really important. And so I feel like if I want to put myself out there, I really want to do that. But also, like, I mean, why not just record, you know, like, just some YouTube videos or whatever, like, record an EP with some tunes I wrote, I mean, I'm totally open to doing that as well. But I'm definitely thinking of like, a new concept. But I was thinking of like, looking at how blindness is accepted in like, different cultures, and places. And then collaborating with musicians who play like, maybe even blind musicians, but it might be hard to find enough of them, but to kind of play not play the music from that country, but to kind of be inspired by the music from that culture or country and, and also kind of combine that. Because I think like the acceptance of blindness and the ways people deal with blindness is so different in like, everywhere, like even coming from the US from Europe, it's so different. So something like that is kind of my idea but they could go many ways. And I'm open to other things as well. But yeah, I'm thinking about it.

 Rob Mineault 52:53

Well, I'm smelling a Ryan and Ciara team up. You can break out your bass guitars?

 Ryan Fleury 53:04

I don't know how to start lessons with Ciara. Have you listened to her album?

R Rob Mineault 53:12

We'll get you up to 300 BPM.

R Ryan Fleury 53:16

I can do 300 BPM, it's just gonna be sloppy. So I had one more question for you, Ciara. So are you the lady with the green cane? Do you have a green cane?

C Ciara Moser 53:31

No, my cane is pretty white.

R Ryan Fleury 53:35

Okay, so what the title for that song come from?

C Ciara Moser 53:39

It's a poem by Fran Gardner that I found online because I had like, we had a studio session where we recorded five of the tunes. And so I was like, Oh, actually, you know, it would be nice to record three tunes per day, because we had like, two days. And so I was like, why don't we just try something out and improvise over a poem? But um, yeah, like improvised music. And so I looked up this I looked up a bunch of poems about disability and I actually didn't find that many. But then I found this by Fran Gardner and I talked to her if I could use it, and she was really nice. And she had actually had somebody else with disability using that poem to write a song. So that's kind of interesting. Yeah, but basically, that's what happened. It's just like an improvisation.

R Ryan Fleury 54:42

I have an idea for your next album, but it's it's an idea that all I'm probably the only person who wants it.

C Ciara Moser 54:51

You want me to play on 300 ppm for the whole album?

R Ryan Fleury 54:53

No, no, well, no. Well, I'll just suddenly mentioned it as the one song that stand out to me on the

no, no, well, no. Well, I just quickly mentioned it so the one song that stood out to me on the album was called Humanity. And there was a section in Humanity that is very ambient. It was your bass, very light percussion on the drums and very soft kind of light. I think it was acoustic guitar might have an electric guitar, but it was very, very gentle guitar. And it was just the three of them happening. And the reverb, the ambience of that song of that section anyway, really stood out to me. And I thought, you know, this would make a really great, you know, three or four piece instrumental album, if it was just ambient music like that. It it was very nice.

 C Ciara Moser 55:40

That's so interesting, because I was actually thinking of holding the instrumentation of the next album, like a little bit smaller, and maybe even working in some duo or trio settings. Just because there's more freedom. And with this music that I wrote for the first album, I was definitely because I started writing it like a few years ago. But like now I definitely listen to like also more like experimental and like, not only free but like more like, like, not like free jazz. But like I would say music that goes to places.

 R Ryan Fleury 56:31

Almost like a almost like a jazz like lounge dinner club type of sphere, right, three or four, four piece. Yeah. So that's, that's the song that stood out to me. So I look forward to more of that.

 C Ciara Moser 56:57

I'm glad. Thank you.

 R Rob Mineault 56:59

The name of the album is Blind, So What, the name of the podcast is Blind, So what? I'm sure people can find them on Spotify. I know for a fact. I found them. Where else can they find them? Anything at all that you would like to plug?

 C Ciara Moser 57:17

Yes. So. So my website is www.ciara-moser.com. So there you can find like, I would say like all the information you know, in a box. And for the album. It's available on every streaming platform that you can imagine - Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon, so whatever you guys are using, you can just type the name name of the album and you'll find it. And also, the podcast is available on Spotify and Apple Music. So if you have one of those, you can check that out. I do have CDs of the album, but I only sell them at the concerts because sending them out would be a little bit much of a logistic issue. And yeah, I'm pretty active on Instagram. My Instagram is just @moserciara.

R Rob Mineault 58:28

Well, thank you again so much for coming out and talking with us. Please come back anytime. We'd love to have you because I didn't even get through half of my questions.

C Ciara Moser 58:45

I'm down to come back anytime. Thanks so much for having me.

R Rob Mineault 58:48

All right. Best of luck Ciara

C Ciara Moser 58:50

Thank you so much for having me. You guys. Have a great rest of your night, too. We'll stay in touch for sure. Thanks.

R Rob Mineault 59:00

She's way too cool for us.

R Ryan Fleury 59:02

And there's still so much like you know, depending on how geeky you want to get right we could have talked about you know, the bass is and why she chooses what she plays. And you know, we didn't talk about the music label stuff and it was great. It was great. Such a cool very easygoing guest.

R Rob Mineault 59:19

Yeah

R Ryan Fleury 59:21

Well, next album, we'll have her back and we'll go through it track by track with her live on the air.

R Rob Mineault 59:26

I don't know man. We can have her back and think of album concepts for her. 45 minutes of just us coming up with really bad concepts.

R

Ryan Fleury 59:39

Sounds like a plan. Yeah, I see.

R

Rob Mineault 59:42

I always thought I always thought the bass was like a very underrated.

R

Ryan Fleury 59:48

They never get they never get the stardom right. The lead guitar player is running guitar solos up and down. The drummer is doing his little solo thing. rhythm guitars holding his ground, you know, unless you're, you know, Flea or Floyd, you know and you've got these outstanding baselines and techniques that you know are really stand out ish that people recognize then yeah, you don't like, like name me the bass player for Lynard Skynard.

R

Rob Mineault 1:00:20

Exactly nobody. I can name you can barely name a bass player at all for anybody and it's it's just like you mentioned Flea. I thought Flea was the guitar player. I don't even realize he's the bass player. Okay, maybe that's what our team-up project with Ciara - we start a bass guitars podcast.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:00:56

How do you pick a bit? How do you take your base? Pick your first base?

R

Rob Mineault 1:01:00

Exactly. I didn't even know that there were bass guitars with six strings.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:01:04

Yeah, I've got a four string of five string string eight strings. Oh, yeah, it's nuts out there. Yeah, active bass. passive bass..

R

Rob Mineault 1:01:13

Like that's what we need. We need to write an entire album about the lived experience of a bass player. An unsung hero. That's our new concept album. We'll work on that. Let's workshop that and we'll send it over to Ciara and who knows. Maybe next year, we'll all have an album. I

don't know what I would contribute to it. I'll design the album cover. Well, listen that ran late so let's get the hell out of here.

R Ryan Fleury 1:01:50

Yep, let's go have dinner.

R Rob Mineault 1:01:53

Hey, Ryan.

R Ryan Fleury 1:01:54

Yes Rob?

R Rob Mineault 1:01:58

Where can people find us?

R Ryan Fleury 1:02:00

They can find us online www.atbanter.com

R Rob Mineault 1:02:04

They can also drop us an email if they so desire at cowbell@atbanter.com We didn't even explain the cowbell to Ciara.

R Ryan Fleury 1:02:23

People probably wonder why we have a cowbell.

R Rob Mineault 1:02:27

This is how much of a professional she is because it didn't even faze her. She was just a consummate professional. Where else can they find us? So Facebook and X and - oh man, that's the first week I think I got x instead of Twitter. Finally. Wow, Elon, your strategy has worked. Eight months after you made the change. They can also find us on Mastodon. And go hug a bass player. That is your job your dear audience, give the bass players of the world some love.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:03:31

And check out Ciara's album on Spotify.

R

Rob Mineault 1:03:36

I love it. All right, that is going to do it for us this week. Big thanks to Ciara for joining us, and we will see everybody next week.