

SHORT BIO

Max Allard is a banjoist, multi-instrumentalist and composer from Chicago. His musical influences span from bluegrass to electronic music. Max's solo debut album, *Odes / Codes* was released in January 2022 and produced by Jayme Stone. He followed that in 2023 with his release of *March Maxness, 31 Tracks in 31 Days*.

"A new mature and poetic voice on the 5 string banjo. Beautiful compositions and a very nice touch." —Béla Fleck

Max has performed all over Chicago as a solo artist and in a duo with his brother Otto Allard. He toured the midwest with the Minneapolis based progressive bluegrass band Barbaro. Max is the winner of the 2018 RockyGrass Banjo Competition and the 2019 FreshGrass Banjo Award. In 2022, Max was awarded the inaugural J.D. Crowe Scholarship from the IBMA Foundation. Max has studied extensively with banjo greats including Béla Fleck, Tony Trischka, Noam Pikelny, Alan Munde, Greg Liszt, Ryan Cavanaugh, and Alison Brown, among others. Max is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in composition at Oberlin Conservatory.

From January 2023 to January 2024, Max recorded three different albums belonging to a trilogy project by composer Jesse Jones. They feature Jesse on his own instruments, mandolinist Jacob Jolliff, contrabassist Craig Butterfield, pianist Xak Bjerken, composer Elizabeth Ogonek, and musical polymath Mark Stewart. The albums are comprised of compositions written by Jones, Butterfield, and Allard. The first album in the trilogy will be released under the name EZRA on March 1, 2024 with Adhyâropa Records.

LONG BIO

Max Allard has been composing and learning music for as long as he can remember: figuring out tunes on his toy instruments, or making music from half filled water glasses or pots and pans. After many years of asking for a piano, he finally got one at the age of six. But Max vividly remembers picking up the banjo at eleven and the guitar a few years later.

He has always been interested in harmony, and he brings the influences of many genres, cultures and styles of music to his compositions. Max plays an unclassifiable mix of bluegrass, jazz, new acoustic, classical and pop.

Max released his debut solo record **Odes / Codes** in January 2022. It is made up of material that he wrote in 2020 and reflects the contemplative feeling of that year, capturing moods of melancholy, nostalgia, longing, and hopefulness. It's an example of a new way of thinking for the banjo and how it fits in non bluegrass music.

Here's what Béla Fleck had to say of the album:

"A new mature and poetic voice on the 5 string banjo. Beautiful compositions and a very nice touch."

In March 2021, Max embarked on a challenge of writing and recording one new piece per day for every day for the entire month. These were home recordings and ranged in style to include many of the genres that interested Max: from solo banjo and acoustic guitar to looped electric guitar, piano, multi-tracked tunes with banjo, guitar, bass and harmonium, and even a piece featuring the trombone. Called **March Maxness**, this was originally an exclusive release for his Patreon supporters, but it will be released to the public on March 1, 2023.

Max has performed all over Chicago as a solo artist and in a duo with his brother Otto Allard. He toured the midwest with the Minneapolis-based progressive bluegrass band Barbaro. In February of 2020, Max and Otto had the thrill of opening for Sam Bush at the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago. In June of 2022, Max returned to the Old Town School of Folk Music for the album release show for **Odes / Codes**.

Max is the winner of the **2018 RockyGrass Banjo Competition** and the **2019 FreshGrass Banjo Award**. He was selected to participate in the **2020 Acoustic Music Seminar** (part of the Savannah Music Festival). In **2022**, Max was awarded the **inaugural J.D. Crowe Scholarship from the IBMA Foundation**.

Max was hired by composer Warren Leming to reimagine his 2001 album **A Rich Man's War and a Poor Man's Fight** with new instrumentation. Max and his brother Otto arranged the 15 tracks they play on, and they worked to help usher this project through production. The project **Warren Leming's A Rich Man's War and a Poor Man's Fight: Songs and Tunes Inspired by the Civil War** was released in April 2020.

In December 2020, Max participated in a YouTube project called the **12 Days of Licksmas**, in which Eli Gilbert invited Max and 4 other banjo players to

take part in a series of writing, presenting and applying banjo licks into tunes each day for 12 days, recording videos of that and cross posting them to their YouTube pages. In total, there are 72 videos (12 each from 6 pickers).

Max released his EP **Soleil** in 2019, and his EP **Rooster** in 2020. Max scored the 2021 documentary film **Hog Haven**, directed by Christopher Beeson. Max's music was also used to score the Illinois Public Media documentary **County Fair**.

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