



Bristle // Archimera

Queen Bee Records QB-008 // Release Date May 16, 2025

Formats: Limited Edition CD and digital download

- 1 - **Lines of Work** (8:13)
- 2 - **Wraparound** (6:04)
- 3 - **Basset** (11:05)
- 4 - **Thicket** (7:04)
- 5 - **Flight II** (6:15)
- 6 - **Vape Trail** (11:44)

Tracks 1 & 3 composed by Wright

Tracks 2, 4 & 6 composed by McKean

Track 5 composed by Dina Maccabee and
Jesse Olsen Bay, arr. Wright



Randy McKean, alto sax, Bb & bass clarinets
Cory Wright, tenor sax, Bb & alto clarinets, flute
Murray Campbell, violin, oboe & English horn
Lisa Mezzacappa, acoustic bass

In its first release in 10 years, the Northern California chamber jazz ensemble **Bristle** unleashes **Archimera**, a hybrid creation epitomizing its unique four-as-one group aesthetic and showcasing its wide-ranging sonic explorations that combine innovative composition and virtuosic improvisation in surprising and fresh ways. **Archimera** is Bristle's answer to the riddle what do you get when a Midwestern sax nerd mind melds with a SoCal reed master, a Staten Island metal-turned-jazz bass player, and a Scottish fiddler/orchestral oboist?

Archimera presents the band commanding a dizzying array of instruments and approaches yet operating as a single entity as it navigates the wily, playful and extraordinarily unique compositions of co-leaders Randy McKean and Cory Wright. In Wright's Fluxx-like choose-your-own-adventure creation **Lines of Work**, the players determine the piece's twists and turns by shouting instant instructions to one another, finally arriving at a multi-instrumental tag team round robin. McKean's compositions **Wraparound**, a shifting array of angular puzzle pieces, and **Thicket**, a Zen-like etude of near-unison melodies, epitomize Bristle's ability to play as one instrument. Wright's cinematic **Basset**, inspired by the close relative of the alto clarinet, the basset horn, envisions a literal fox hunt, with crafty strings pitted against hound-like low reeds. Wright's elegiac arrangement of iconic Bay Area songwriting duo Ramon and Jessica's **Flight II**, and McKean's snapshot of a winter month in Banff, Canada, **Vape Trail**, end the album with an ephemeral vanishing point.

Archimera is the fourth release in a series of 12 recordings featuring Bay Area creative composers and musicians, released monthly from February 2025 through February 2026 by bassist Lisa Mezzacappa's micro label Queen Bee Records.



Bristle, the Northern California based sax-and-strings-fueled chamber jazz quartet of **Randy McKean, Cory Wright, Murray Campbell, and Lisa Mezzacappa**, channels the individual virtuosity of its members into intricate group interactions that blur the line between composition and cooperative game strategies. Formed in 2009, Bristle has toured throughout California and the Pacific Northwest, from Seattle to Bakersfield, bringing their Art Ensemble meets Kronos Quartet sound to the SF Bay Area's Garden of Memory and West Oakland Sound Series, Sacramento's In the Flow Festival and the California Gold Country's Col. MaCaw's Magical Cure-All. Their music, called "fun and thought-provoking" (*Memory Select*), and full of

"shrewd harmonic twists" (*Downtown Music Gallery*), is featured on their CDs **Bulletproof** (Edgetone, 2012) and **Future(s) Now(s)** (Queen Bee, 2014), the latter named one of the Top California Jazz Releases of 2014 by KQED.

Band photo: Myles Boisen / CD cover art: Callum McKean

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