

Gyan Riley

guitarist and composer

Gyan Riley won his first guitar in a raffle when he was 12 years old. Shortly after learning all of the songs in his cassette collection by ear, he became the first full-scholarship graduate guitar student at the San Francisco Conservatory. Gyan's diverse work now focuses on his own compositions, improvisation, and contemporary classical repertoire. Gyan has been commissioned by the Kronos Quartet, New Music USA, the Carnegie Hall Corporation, the American Composers Forum, and the New York Guitar Festival. He has performed with Zakir Hussain, Lou Reed, John Zorn, the Kronos Quartet, Iva Bittova, the Bang-On-A-Can All-Stars, the San Francisco Symphony, the Philadelphia Chamber Orchestra, and his father, the composer/pianist/vocalist Terry Riley. Various tours have taken him throughout Europe, Canada, Latin America and the US, both as a soloist and in various ensembles. Gyan resides in New York City and frequently performs with the duo *Probosci*, the trio *Eviyan*, and the electric guitar quartet *Dither*. Gyan has four solo CD titles and many ensemble/collaborative recordings, most recently working with the Tzadik Records label in New York.

Quotations

“Beautiful and enigmatic” . . . “an alluringly intimate vibe created from the first note.”

“The music sounded complete, with a combination of elegant harmonies, textural interest and melodic lines soulfully rendered.”

-The New York Times

“Mind blowing chops . . .”

-Acoustic Guitar

“ . . . virtuosic meditation . . . ”

“ . . . a gifted performer . . . ”

-The New York Times

“At 32, Riley combines delightfully youthful patter with a mature artist’s dedication and musicianship. He also takes after his father, the great composer/pianist Terry Riley, in his eclectic musical programming and embrace of a welcoming compositional style that leaves listeners feeling good, as well as sated. Besides Riley’s winning persona, he’s a marvelous player. At the core of his artistry lies a remarkably smooth, soulful sound that speaks from the heart.”

- The San Francisco Classical Voice

“ . . . virtuosic and often arrestingly beautiful.”

-SF Gate

“His musical range reaches well beyond standard idiomatic clichés with almost improvisatory freedom.”

-Gramophone

“Hats off, gentlemen. A genius.”

-Guitarra Magazine

“Riley’s mastery of the guitar is mesmeric. His casual matter-of-fact playing style is breathtaking in its technical virtuosity.”

-The Sunday Business Post, Ireland

“ . . . never less than enthralling.”

-Oakland Magazine

“There’s no way to pigeonhole the music of guitarist Gyan Riley and his trio. His music has a beauty all its own.”

-SF Examiner

“Riley's sound is special and his style inimitable. His slow but expressive vibrato seems to wrap his listeners in an eastern meditational spell.”

“Riley can weave a long line of seemingly simple melodic motion that always maintains the listener's interest.” “All musical elements come together in Riley's hands with integrity and the elegant sound of a great player.”

-Soundboard Magazine vol. XXXVI, No. 4

“He brings to the performance of each work an astoundingly clean and at-ease technical facility, leaving the richness of each composition plenty of room to shine. Riley shows himself to be a highly skilled performer of music that is both deeply personal and profoundly inspired. They truly are beautiful, in the most complex and nuanced definition of the word.”

-Molly Sheridan, New Music Box

“Riley is a genuine virtuoso, and although his music often pushes the limits of guitar technique, he always plays with stylish grace.”

-Stephen Eddins, All Music

“It is not only an extraordinary capacity to interpret a wide variety of idioms with ease and integrity, depth of expression, inventive and adventurous improvising, interesting, intricate and deeply felt compositions; but also more subtle personal and spiritual qualities that make Gyan a unique and exceptional artist.”

-Dusan Bogdanovic

“He continuously gives us something to be thankful for.”

-BMI MusicWorld

“Riley's playing seems effortless, but he never sacrifices musicality in the name of technique. His music oozes with soul.”

-East Bay Express, February 2008

“ . . . his refined guitar patterns and sensitive melodic hooks have unexpected power and draw the listener in. For the CD's 55 minute duration, I found myself engrossed. Riley demonstrates that he's an effortless distiller of prevailing influences.”

-The Wire, February 2008

“ . . . virtuosic displays . . . like flamenco played with Buddhist pliability instead of Mediterranean bravura.”

-The Village Voice

“ . . . restrained virtuosity is a hallmark of his music and performing style.”

-The Classical Source, London

“ . . . Gyan Riley is a first rate concert guitarist.”

-Steve Reich

“ . . . transforms everything he touches into pure music.”

-Richard Robert, Les Inrockuptibles, Jan. 2003

“I have rarely heard such a perfect, unpretentious, modest and spontaneous playing of the classical guitar, and such a fresh individual interpretation.”

“ . . . the maturity and clarity of the playing is amazing. Although this is only Gyan's first album, and it's clear he will have a lot more in his pocket, I'm sure this will become a classic.”

-Psychedelic Folk, Belgium, July 2003

“No matter how you present it, Food for the Bearded is one beautiful, heartwarming album of classical guitar music. Gyan Riley comes through as a sensible instrumentalist and a composer as unclassifiable as his father, Terry Riley. Elements of Spanish classical, contemporary, French jazz, and Indian classical music all become part of Gyan Riley's style. Like his father, Gyan Riley emphasizes musicality over novelty without sacrificing creativity in the process. Recommended.”

-François Couture, All Music Guide, 2003

“His music is varied and engaging modern acoustic adventure, with classical, jazz, world, and otherworldly elements. Meditative or stirring, this is recommended for open ears.”

-The Beat, Vol. 27 no. 2, 2008