

Terry Riley - Dark Queen Mantra (2017)

Written by bluesever

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Terry Riley - Dark Queen Mantra 1. *I. Vizcaino* 2. *II. Goya with Wings* 3. *III. Dark Queen Mantra*
Stefano Scodanibbio - Mas Lugares (su Madrigali di Monteverdi) 4. *I. Allegro* 5. *II. Io mi son giovinetta* 6. *III. Largo* 7. *IV. Quell'augellin, che canta* 8. *V. Che se tu se' 'l cor mio*
Terry Riley
9. *The Wheel & Mythic Birds Waltz*
Gyan Riley - guitar Del Sol String Quartet: Charlton Lee - violin Kate Stenberg - violin
Kathryn Bates Williams - viola Rick Shinozaki - cello

For the Del Sol Quartet, this album is a culmination – and also the start of an ongoing musical journey. Terry Riley doesn't limit his music within a final double-bar but allows it to keep on growing – he's already composed more music for us to play together. As a quartet, we've found new energy and growth through the experience of performing Terry's quartets off-book, by memory. As musicians, we've found an inspiring example – Terry has the strength to follow his own path balanced with the humility and curiosity of an eternal student. For our 25th anniversary festival, we are focusing on Terry's music and honored that Terry and Gyan will be joining us.

Like so many worthwhile endeavors, this album began with a friendship. Del Sol violist Charlton Lee first met guitarist Gyan while playing in an ensemble led by the composer/bassist Gavin Bryars. "I'd been wanting to find more opportunities to play with Gyan ever since we met," Charlton explains. "And with Terry's 80th birthday on the horizon it seemed a perfect time to commission a new piece for all of us to play together."

For the other dimension of this album, we had long been aware of Stefano Scodanibbio's awesome abilities as a trailblazing double-bass virtuoso, we had our first chance to perform his

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music thanks to Gyan. Gyan curated a memorial concert celebrating Stefano's music at The Stone in New York City and invited us to participate.

Del Sol String Quartet Hailed by Gramophone as “masters of all musical things they survey” and two-time winner of the top Chamber Music America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, the Del Sol String Quartet shares living music with an ever-growing community of adventurous listeners.

Recognized as a “vigorous champion of living composers,” Del Sol has premiered well over 100 works through its extensive commissioning and innovative performances. The composers represent a diverse range of contemporary voices, including Terry Riley, Mason Bates, Frederic Rzewski, Ben Johnston, Gabriela Lena Frank, Chinary Ung, Tania León, Ken Ueno, Peter Sculthorpe, Reza Vali, Mohammed Fairouz and Per Nørgård.

Guitarist Gyan Riley'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. /p>

Terry Riley Composer and performer Terry Riley is one of the founders of music's minimalist movement. His early works, notably “In C,” pioneered a form in Western music based on structured interlocking repetitive patterns. The influence of Riley's hypnotic, multilayered, polymetric, brightly orchestrated Eastern-flavored improvisations and compositions is heard across the span of contemporary and popular music.

Stefano Scodanibbio was a brilliant inventor of new musical possibilities, virtuoso performer, and phenomenal improviser. He came to prominence in the 1980s, premiering solo contrabass works by Brian Ferneyhough, Iannis Xenakis, Salvatore Sciarrino, Giacinto Scelsi, Gerard Grisey and others. His bass technique was so inventive that Luigi Nono used the indication “arco mobile à la Stefano Scodanibbio” in the score of Prometeo. He composed over fifty works, principally for strings. --- sonoluminus.com

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The late-life creativity of Terry Riley is cause for celebration in troubled times, and this release by California's Del Sol Quartet makes a fine place to start exploring it. As with Philip Glass and Steve Reich, Riley's musical language has evolved since his days as the West Coast pioneer of minimalism, but a basic personality has remained constant. Dark Queen Mantra, performed here with Riley's son, Gyan Riley, on guitar, is flavored by Spanish idioms, but is in no way a neoclassical work. If you had to compare it to anything, it would compare to Reich's Jewish-themed works, but really it is sui generis. You might sample the melodic "Goya with Wings" second movement, which was inspired by paintings of Francisco Goya. Mas Lugares (su madrigali di Monteverdi) by Italian Stefano Scodanibbio, a friend of Riley's, makes an unusually good pairing with Riley: it stands in the same relationship to Monteverdi as Riley does to his Spanish models. The finale, The Wheel & Mythic Birds Waltz (which is not a waltz at all), is an older work originally performed by the Kronos Quartet; the entire program shows how the San Francisco scene that group helped nurture has remained vital and continued to develop. Recommended, and not only for admirers of Riley's work. ---James Manheim, allmusic.com

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