

GYAN biography 2010

Australian born international singer songwriter Gyan defines her own genre. With awards for song writing to cabaret, she blurs the lines between a quiet, sensitive Appalachian folk and a fresh cabaret noir with her introspective symphonic sketches.

She has been compared her to Joni Mitchell and Sufjan Stevens. Live, Gyan's poetic vocal style is complemented by a minimalist approach, rich in subtle textures utilising pianos, guitars and strings. Gyan infuses her song with a melancholy passion. There is something powerful yet waif like about Gyan, like she was the Bronte sister given healthy lungs... with a love of language, and ee cummings inspirations.

Like most artists starting out in the late 80s Gyan gigged around Sydney with her highly original band **Haiku**. After some success Gyan cut the safety ropes and decided to go solo.



Her first step was to enter the television show called Starsearch (the Australian Idol of the 80's). The wide eyed girl from Geelong went onto to win the grand final and with her substantial winnings Gyan bought her first home recording studio and put aside the next 12 months to hone her writing skills. When ready she met **Charles Fisher**, producer for **Midnight Oil**, **Hoodoo Gurus** and **Savage Garden**.

From that meeting in 1990 came her first contract and her debut album, '**Gyan**'. Her 12 months gestation proved fruitful for the **first album went platinum, winning an ARIA award for best new talent** and her first single 'Wait' achieved the status of being one of the most played singles of that year. It still is the ultimate anthem for the lonely girl!

In 1993 she released '**Reddest Red**' which received critical acclaim and led to another 2 years solid touring in Oz. In 1995 she left Australia to relocate to London, where she emerged from the acoustic underground to be wooed to the U.S. by **Desmond Child**, world-renowned producer of **Ricky Martin**, **Aerosmith**, **Cher**.

Gyan signed to Universal and wrote and recorded the album '**Suburban Opera**' with string arranger David Campbell (Aretha Franklin, Carole King, Beck, Hole), Kenny Arnoff (Smashing Pumpkins), Raul Marlow (Mavericks) and Jon Bon Jovi in studios from Bearsville Woodstock to Abbey Rd. UK. During this time she was also a vocalist for Ricky Martin and appears on his multi platinum self titled album as well as 'Sound Loaded'.

LeAnn Rimes subsequently covered Gyan's *Love is an Army* on the '**Twisted Angel**' album and performed the track live, televised nationally at the American, Country Music Awards. LeAnn is quoted 'of all the songs I've ever recorded this is my favourite.'

Gyan now resides back in Australia in a beach hideaway butting up against a dreamy National Park in northern NSW. Despite the poet-recluse life-style Gyan has continued to be involved in a variety of fascinating projects and collaborations. In 2007 **Gyan** sent a 'love letter' of sorts to celebrated cartoonist **Michael Leunig** – a CD of songs inspired by his poems. The result was the exquisite '**Billy The Rabbit**' album and book. The resulting live shows went on to sell out at the Sydney Opera House and win them a Sydney Theatre Award.

In 2009 she penned the gorgeously bent story behind artist M S Dawson's haunting drawings and paintings, for the book "How WEIRD is That..." which was short-listed for a Childrens Book Council of Australia award. Also in 2009 Gyan was invited by celebrated photographer Stu Spence, along with a number of other Australian music luminaries like Tim Freedman and Mark Seymour, to provide the 'soundtrack' to one of his images in his acclaimed 'As Yet Unclear' exhibition. (www.stuspence.com).

And now she has created the exquisite album Superfragilistically ...a beautiful collection of haunting neo-gothic tales and offbeat chamber folk lovingly conjured with her surfer/producer husband and members of the enigmatic Museagency collective (including James Cruikshank of The Cruel Sea, and Tim Gaze Morning of the Earth) Like a radar beam searching for gentle souls, Gyan calls siren-like from the deep undertow of the neo-folk wave currently sweeping the world.

What has been said about Gyan & Billy The Rabbit:

...Gyan has certainly evolved over the last decade. She is now a hugely gifted composer and a very fine singer in the...female sensitive... mode. Her decision to take 18 of Michael Leunigs...poem-drawings and turn them into songs is inspired... The result is a genuinely great and original Australian album that Leunig admirers will prize... **Bruce Elder, SYDNEY MORNING HERALD**

...lyrics with gentle commitment, in their deceptive directness ... somewhere between Celtic traditional ballad and Appalachian lament. **John Slavin, THE AGE**

The elfin Gyan is an unassuming performer who has the ideal persona and introspective voice to interpret Leunig's phenomenal ability to ask universal questions An unforgettable night of music from the soul. **Matt Byrne, ADELAIDE SUNDAY MAIL**

... collects 18 of Leunig's short poems together and infuses them with finely crafted melodies. The songs shift between a Waifs laidback sound and a more elaborate Sufjan Stevens vibe with guitars, gentle pianos, organs, melodic horns and small string sections ... The sentiment of each work is so well captured by Gyan that it's hard to imagine the music and poetry in a separate context. **Jason Kenny X-PRESS MAG**

.... with range, technique and tonal sensitivity, Gyan matches Leunigs poems with equally fractured beauty in what could be described as chamber folk or symphonic sketches. Billie Holiday and Lucinda Williams would approve... **Lesley Sly, SOUND AND IMAGE MAG**

.... Billy the Rabbit is a magical and unique journey through the mind of a gentle genius told from the voice of a beautiful and talented singer and is perhaps the most delicate and appropriate partnership between any two unique Australian artists. **Shelly Blake, THE PROGRAM**

.... Gyan's vocals are melancholic, shadowy and even a little eerie, a little reminiscent of Portishead's Beth Gibbons. The album is certainly a beautiful listen.... **Brooke Robinson, THE BRAG**

...It's been a long time since the last 'great Australian album', but for this reviewer at least, *Billy The Rabbit* breaks the drought. **Peter Hackney, SX Mag.**