



Björn Meyer - Bassplayer - six-string electric bass-guitar

He grew up next to a piano outside Stockholm, sang in a boys choir, played trumpet in the Swedish youth music program and guitar in local garage-rock bands. The first encounter with the electric bass was shortly before his eighteenth birthday. A few notes, played on a left-behind instrument, opened up the door to an irresistible, resonating universe of sounds that changed everything. After finishing a degree in Computer Science he decided to “take a year off” and pursue his passion for the bass — a year that has lasted unbroken since 1989.

His unmistakable musical handwriting draws largely from a curiosity towards “anything from music-styles, playing techniques, electronics, the construction of the actual instruments all the way to the inner windings of a string”. In addition, Meyer also considers the interaction between acoustic space and the electronic properties of the bass guitar an important part of the musical experience.

Meyer has integrated his distinct voice in the most diverse contexts, in- and outside the natural habitat of his instrument. More often than not, he has found himself in settings challenging traditional distinctions such as acoustic or electric, composed or improvised, ancient or contemporary. He has worked alongside Persian harpist and singer Asita Hamidi and is a long term collaborator with Tunisian oud master Anouar Brahem. He has spent more than twentyfive years with Swedish nyckelharpa player Johan Hedin and percussionist Fredrik Gille in Bazar Blå, co-defining the sound of contemporary Swedish folk music. For more than a decade he was a founding member of the minimalistic “ritual groove” collective Nik Bärtsch’s Ronin and thus helped shape what has become known as “Zen-funk”.

In the autumn of 2017 — after more than thirty years spent with the electric bass-guitar, and six ECM releases as a sideman with Anouar Brahem The Astounding Eyes of Rita (2009) and Souvenance (2015) as well as with Nik Bärtsch's Ronin Stoa (2006), Holon (2008), Llyria (2010) and Live (2012) — his first solo album Provenance saw the light of day. Produced by Manfred Eicher in the rich acoustics of Auditorio Stello Molo RSI in Lugano.

Meyer — based in Switzerland since 1996 — was awarded the Swiss Music Prize 2019 as well as the Canton Bern Music Prize 2018.

In recent years he has co-founded the quartet NEN with Mats Eser, Chrigel Bosshard and Ania Losinger with her unique instrument XALA, as well as the trio Amiira, with Samuel Rohrer on drums and Klaus Gesing on bass clarinet and soprano saxophone.

He works in the quartet of Afghan-German singer Simin Tander, in duo with Swiss vocal acrobat Andreas Schaerer, with German cellist Anja Lechner and composer-musician Don Li from Bern.





Björn Meyer - Solo - Live

“Electric bass in Acoustic space”

To experience a solo performance by Björn Meyer has consequences. You are invited to an irresistible universe of sounds that will definitely challenge any preconceived ideas about what an electric bass guitar is capable of as a solo instrument. Deep pulsating ambiances, outer-worldly sonorities, nordic inspired folksongs, archaic sounding anthems, high energy outbursts and minimal pattern-structures, all melted into one, obvious unity.

Björns solo work not only takes his instrument to new levels of sonic possibilities, but is also concerned with the experience of sound in acoustic spaces: “Even though the instrument is technically non-acoustic, the music is deeply influenced by the properties of the space where it is played. The many different ways in which acoustics affect my compositions and improvisations have always been sources of surprise and inspiration. There is definitely a second member in this solo project — the room!”

Since the release of Provenance, Björn has performed numerous solo concerts in Europe, Japan and Iran. He has performed in concert halls, clubs, at festivals, in churches and TV studios — Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, Ronnie Scott's in London, Pit Inn in Tokyo, Cully Jazz Festival in Switzerland to name a few.

Written

“.. Meyer has taken a unique approach to composition for solo bass guitar. It is one that will move the instrument forward as much as it will move the listener emotionally.” - John Marley, Jazz Views

“.. Anyone who knows Björn Meyer from his collaboration with Nik Bärtsch's Ronin or Anouar Brahem will have no doubts about his performance art, which is mature, imaginative, and geared towards wide-awake communication. The only question is whether he can captivate attention for an entire album. He can! ...” - Michael Engelbrecht, Deutschlandfunk DE

“.. In the depth everything vibrates, at the same time silver threads of sound are shimmering on top. Meyer shows an electric orchestra-sound under a sound-microscope.” - Christoph Merki, Tages-Anzeiger ZH

“.. Meyer manages to make his tools sound not quite like a bass or a guitar, yet similar and distinct from both. Eloquent and evocative, Provenance may be simple at heart but opens a world of beautiful sonics to savor.” - Geno Thackara, All About Jazz

“.. Provenance demonstrates that melodic high-jinks and emotional intensity aren't just for those who inhabit the treble stave. Meyer's bass sings.” - Rob Mallows, London Jazz News UK

“.. The album is often stunningly beautiful; bittersweet tones and deeply affecting melodies brought to life with Meyer's unique guitar-like use of the bass. Highly recommended.” - Karl Ackermann, All About Jazz

Current Releases

Amiira - Curious Objects (Arjunamusic)

Homayoun Shajarian | Fardin Khalatbari - in Oblivion (Hermes Records)

Simin Tander new Quartet - Unfading (Jazzhouse Records)

Bazar Blå - Malmö 1999 (Bazaarpool)

Björn Meyer Solo - Provenance (ECM)

Anouar Brahem - Souvenance (ECM)