

Walker Art Center and Liquid Music presents



HUG

featuring Devendra Banhart, Gyan Riley, and Noah Georgeson

Wednesday
Oct 14, 2026

McGuire Theater
7:30 pm

About HUG

The three musicians who wrote and recorded HUG—Devendra Banhart, Gyan Riley and Noah Georgeson—are not related by blood, but they sure act like it.

Friends for decades, it only takes a few minutes for their family/non-family dynamics to reveal themselves:

“I don’t even like these people,” Devendra jokes during a recent video call. “I didn’t choose them; I love them. They’re my brothers, my family. It’s irrevocable.”

Over the course of the conversation, the three tease each other as much as they sing each other’s praises. Noah and Devendra gently rib Gyan for being the prodigy of the group; all three are retiringly self-deprecating about their own role in the making of this largely instrumental new album.

Whatever it is that connects these three, you can hear it in the banter as much as you can in the music. The record is almost like a bait and switch: You read the spine and—especially if you’re familiar with the work of Devendra or Gyan or Noah—you think, this is a guitar trio. But HUG doesn’t particularly sound like any of these artists, and if it’s a guitar trio, then it’s one without too many guitars. HUG is more than the sum of its parts—because these artists know how to play with each other.

About the Films

HUG is thrilled to have partnered with the Harry Smith Archives to feature the abstract films of Smith at their live performances. Smith is a singular figure of the American avant-garde who moved fluidly between disciplines, assembling a body of work that resists containment—from visionary abstract cinema to his groundbreaking *Anthology of American Folk Music*. Deeply engaged with mysticism, folklore, and systems of hidden knowledge, Smith approached art as a form of spiritual inquiry—where sound, image, and pattern become tools for re-enchanting the world. Over the course of fifty years he made innovative use as an outsider to recording and distribution technologies, becoming a pioneer of collecting, organizing, and sequencing images and artifacts that structure the ways we share culture today. He created a life and practice outside of institutions and capitalism.

Banhart had this to share on Harry Smith’s influence on his work: “When I was 18, Andy Cabic gave me a copy of *American Magus* and said ‘all roads lead to Harry’.... Hard to be pithy when describing the massive scope of Harry’s influence. Go forth and look into his fearsome works! For this coming up HUG tour, we are thrilled and honored to be projecting a few Harry Smith Abstractions for your viewing pleasure!”

Early Abstractions (16mm) is a collection of seven short animated films created by Smith between the years of 1939 and 1956. *Heaven & Earth Magic* (16mm) is an experimental cutout animated feature film from 1962. Both films will be projected behind the band as they present songs from HUG.

Artist Bios

Singer-songwriter and visual artist Devendra Banhart is an exceptionally versatile, idiosyncratic voice in the contemporary alternative music world. He rose to prominence as a central leader of the creative indie-folk and “freak folk” music movements during the early 2000s. His diverse, multicultural upbringing, both in the US and Venezuela, profoundly shaped his eclectic, genre-blending musical style. Banhart’s early discography is characterized by its minimalist lo-fi production, surrealist lyrics, and nomadic acoustics. Over subsequent decades, his sonic palette expanded to include distinct elements of psych-rock, Tropicalia, traditional folk, glam rock, and electronic music on celebrated albums like *Rejoicing in the Hands*, *Cripple Crow*, and *Mala*. Recognized for his unique, heavy vibrato vocals and bohemian persona, Banhart sings fluently in both English and Spanish languages. Beyond his prolific music career, he is a dedicated visual artist, exhibiting his complex drawings globally. He continues to record, write, tour, and collaborate, continually exploring new avenues for expression.

Gyan Riley won his first guitar in a raffle when he was 12 years old, and it soon became difficult for his parents to wrestle it from his hands. He first immersed himself in classical guitar, gaining a scholarship to the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. In his twenties he turned to composition, and has since written music for the Kronos Quartet, New Music USA, the Carnegie Hall Corporation, the American Composers Forum, and the New York Guitar Festival, as well as documentary filmmakers Ken Burns and Lynn Novick. Riley has performed with Zakir Hussain, Lou Reed, John Zorn, Bill Frisell, the Kronos Quartet, Lee Ranaldo (Sonic Youth), Devendra Banhart, Julian Lage, Nico Muhly, Glenn Kotche (Wilco), Arooj Aftab, and his father, the renowned composer Terry Riley. He performed with Paul Simon and Sabrina Carpenter for the 50th Anniversary of Saturday Night Live, and is a core member of Paul Simon’s band for the 2025 US Tour: A Quiet Celebration. Riley has eight of his own CD titles and dozens of collaborative recordings. *Winter Sun*, his first album as a vocalist, was released in 2025.

Noah Georgeson has a knack for hearing what a song needs. It is not a style that defines the California producer and composer’s approach to music as much as a sensibility. He likens it to the Japanese phrase wabi-sabi, meaning “beauty that is imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete.” Collaborators look to him “to mess up the sound of a record,” he says, and surface those weird moments, textures, and signatures that often surprise and stick around in your mind, becoming singular and timeless. An in-demand producer, mixer, and musician, Georgeson was part of the 2000s indie-folk movement, marked by breakthrough records with Joanna Newsom, his former bandmate, Vetiver, Mason Jennings, Little Joy, and Devendra Banhart, a creative partnership that flourishes to this day. His work has seen recognition from the Grammys, Latin Grammys, and JUNO Awards, plus an Emmy nomination for the theme music to the Netflix series *Narcos*.

Jorge Balbi was born 1986 in Lima, Peru. Currently residing in Los Angeles, California. Performance credits include Matt White, Teepee, David Poe, Maxim Ludwig, Sam Friend, Hana Kim, The Black Apples, and Paulina Rubio, whose album ‘Gran City Pop’ received a 52nd Grammy Awards Nomination for Best Latin Pop Album. Producers worked with include Mark Rains, Emile Kelman, Zach Ziskin, Albert Ovadia, and Chris Rodriguez. Jorge Balbi is happy to be an endorser of Istanbul Agop Cymbals!

About Liquid Music

Liquid Music is a leading producer of special projects in contemporary music, an internationally recognized laboratory for artists from across genre and disciplinary spectrums. This creative institution nurtures and realizes bold ideas from performers and composers, inspiring audiences to discover, learn and be transformed.

Land Acknowledgment

The McGuire Theater and Walker Art Center are located on the contemporary, traditional, and ancestral homelands of the Dakota people. This site, which was once an expanse of marshland and meadow, holds meaning for Dakota, Ojibwe, and Indigenous people from other Native nations, who still live in the community today. We acknowledge the discrimination and violence inflicted on Indigenous peoples in the Americas, the colonial history of museums in the United States, and the Native displacement that allowed for the founding of the Walker. By remembering this dark past, we recognize its continuing harm in the present and resolve to work toward reconciliation, systemic change, and healing in support of Dakota people and the land itself.

Walker Art Center Acknowledgments

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*deceased



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