

## PERFORMER BIOS

**Rachael Elliott** grew up in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom and is now based in Durham, North Carolina. She teaches bassoon at Duke University and performs in a variety of ensembles, including Clogs, Dark in the Song, Heliand Consort, and the Vermont Contemporary Music Ensemble.

Described as “one of the sharpest executors of new-music currently on the scene” (WQXR) and “the Jaco Pastorius of the bassoon” (*The Guardian*), Elliott has toured widely throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia with Clogs, and recorded five critically acclaimed albums, including their 2010 release, *The Creatures in the Garden of Lady Walton*. Her debut solo CD, *Polka the Elk*, was released in 2011 and contains five world premiere recordings of music by David Lang, Padma Newsome, and Tawnee Olson, with a cameo appearance by Clogs. [www.bassoonproject.org](http://www.bassoonproject.org).

**Michael Harley's** playing been called “spectacular” (*Washington Post*) and “exquisite” (*Columbus Dispatch*). As a founding member of the contemporary music chamber orchestra Alarm Will Sound, called “one of the most vital and original ensembles on the American musical scene” by the *New York Times*, Harley has worked with and premiered pieces by many of today's most accomplished composers, including John Adams, Derek Bermel, Donnacha Dennehy, Michael Gordon, Aaron Jay Kernis, Meredith Monk, Steve Reich, Roger Reynolds, Wolfgang Rihm, and Augusta Read Thomas. He has played at notable venues around the world, including New York's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, Amsterdam's Muziekgebouw, Johannesburg's Town Hall, Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie, St. Petersburg's Hermitage Theatre, and London's Barbican Hall (with the indie rock group Dirty Projectors).

A graduate of Goshen College, the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and the Eastman School of Music, Harley teaches bassoon, chamber music, and music literature classes at the University of South Carolina, where he also serves as artistic director of the award-winning Southern Exposure New Music Series. He lives in Columbia, SC, with his wife, flutist Jennifer Parker-Harley, and daughters Ella and Lucia.

**Dr. Lynn Hileman** is assistant professor of bassoon and music theory at West Virginia University, co-director of the WVU Double Reed Ensemble, and a member of the Laureate Wind Quintet. She is also principal bassoonist of the Binghamton Philharmonic Orchestra and makes up one half of the contemporary bassoon duo Tuple.

Hileman is dedicated to reinvigorating concert music through the performance of post-classical contemporary and experimental music, orchestral and chamber music, and electronic music and interdisciplinary arts. As a soloist she is in demand throughout the United States as a recitalist specializing in contemporary music, most recently appearing at the Washington State University Festival of Contemporary Music and the Florida Electroacoustic Music Festival. She also co-founded and is former president of A\W, a gallery and performance space in Rochester, New York specializing in multimedia and experimental works.

Hileman holds degrees from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor (BM), Yale University (MM), and the Eastman School of Music (DMA), where she was awarded the Andrew G. Bogiages Memorial Prize in Bassoon in 2004. She spends her summers practicing, traveling, baking vegan pastries, and serving on the faculty of the Hartwick Summer Music Festival in Oneonta, New York.

**Dana Jessen** is a San Francisco-based bassoon soloist, chamber musician, improviser, and composer. Hailed as performing with “conviction and authenticity” (*Boston Music Intelligencer*), she has collaborated with composers, improvisers, visual artists, robots, poets, filmmakers, and chamber musicians around the world. Jessen is co-founder of the EAR Duo and has performed with the Calefax Quintet, Lucky Dragons, Amsterdam Contemporary Ensemble, Callithumpian Consort, Harvard Group for New Music, Bik Bent Braam Ensemble, Mobtown Modern, Braam/de Joode/Vatcher Trio, and the HET Ensemble. She is the founder and artistic director of the New Music Bassoon Commissioning Fund, an organization dedicated to expanding the current bassoon repertoire through consortium commissioning projects. Through this groundbreaking organization, she has recently invited 30 bassoonists from all over the world to participate in the project's first commission, an hour-long composition for seven bassoons by composer Michael Gordon.

Jessen's recent performance highlights include appearances at Brooklyn's Roulette, the On Wings Festival of Wind Music in the Netherlands, Belgium's Logos Foundation, Berlin's Universität der Künste, the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Lisbon's Musicbox Nightclub, New York City's The Stone, Oslo's Sound of Mu, and Amsterdam's World Minimal Music Festival at the Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ. She has been artist-in-residence at the Atlantic Center for the Arts, Amsterdam's STEIM, De Lindenberg Productiehuis, the Omi International Arts Center and has received grants through Meet the Composer Foundation, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, and the Netherland America Foundation. Her recordings as a bassoonist and improviser can be heard on RIOJA, Evil Rabbit, and the New World record labels.

Dana holds an MM in bassoon performance with academic honors from the New England Conservatory of Music and an MM in improvisation from the Artez Hogeschool voor de Kunsten in the Netherlands. She lived in Amsterdam for three years as the recipient of a 2009-2011 HSP Huygens Fellowship and 2008-2009 J. William Fulbright Fellowship where she researched contemporary and improvised music.

**Dr. Jeffrey Lyman** has established himself as one of the premier performers, teachers, and historians of the bassoon in the US. He has been associate professor of bassoon at the University of Michigan since 2006, and prior to that held positions at Arizona State University and Bowling Green State University. He holds an undergraduate degree from Temple University and his MM and DMA from the University of Michigan. He has been a member of numerous orchestras across the country and has performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the Opera Company of Philadelphia, the Savannah Symphony, the ProMusica Chamber Orchestra of Columbus, the Grand Rapids Symphony, and the Michigan Opera Theatre, to name a few.

He has appeared at the Moscow Autumn Festival, the Festival dei Due Mondi (Spoleto, Italy), Académie Européenne d'Été de Musique (Toumon, France), Colorado Music Festival, Vermont Mozart Festival, Bellingham Music Festival, Saint Bart's Music Festival, and the Chamber Music Conference and Composers' Forum of the East at Bennington College, among others.

Lyman is also known as an author and advocate of new music, and has many publications and commissions to his credit, including works by Yuri Kasparov, John Steinmetz, John Allemeier, David Gompper, Bill Douglas, and Kathryn Hoover. As an author, Lyman is a frequent contributor to the publications of the International Double Reed Society, and his article topics range from textual issues in the music of Stravinsky and Canteloube through 19th century bassoon treatises and their impact on bassoon design to the biography of bassoonist and winemaker Gérard Faisandier. His article "After Shostakovich, What Next?," an annotated bibliography of recent music by Moscow composers, helped to spread that repertory around the world. His most recent major project is a mixed-media web-based survey of the history of the bassoon in Mexico titled *El Bajón en México*.

**Saxton Rose's** virtuosic interpretations of traditional repertoire and his dedication to new music have afforded him a prolific and varied career as soloist, orchestral, and chamber musician. He is artist/professor of bassoon at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, principal bassoonist of the Winston-Salem Symphony, and the bassoonist of Zéphyros Winds, an acclaimed New York-based wind quintet. He was principal bassoonist of the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra from 2003 to 2008.

Rose performs and teaches throughout the world. This past season he performed the Mozart Bassoon Concerto with the National Symphony of Colombia in Bogotá, recitals in Costa Rica and Mexico, as concerto soloist with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Caldas, Colombia, and in Berlin at the Philharmonie with Alarm Will Sound. Other recent engagements as concerto soloist have been with the National Symphony of Panamá, the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra, and with the Winston-Salem Symphony. His training includes courses in Germany, Austria, and Italy with some of Europe's most distinguished bassoonists, including Gustavo Núñez and Sergio Azzolini. Rose graduated with highest honors from the class of Stefano Canuti at the Conservatorio Agostino Steffani in Castelfranco Veneto, Italy.

**Maya Stone** is a bassoonist who is passionate about the musical art form and loves to teach it. She enjoys many styles and genres of music, and has commissioned several contemporary works, most recently a series of gospel music pieces by Mark Lomax II, William Menefield, and Raymond Wise. Stone gives several recitals and master classes around the US each year, is the second bassoonist of the Huntsville Symphony, and performs at the International Double Reed Society Conference.

Stone is currently a visiting assistant professor of bassoon at the University of Missouri's flagship campus in Columbia. She has held full-time positions previously at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, Middle Tennessee State University, and Austin Peay State University in Tennessee. Stone holds a DMA in bassoon performance from the University of Texas at Austin, an MM in bassoon performance and woodwind specialty from Michigan State University, and a BM in music education from the SUNY Potsdam Crane School of Music.

## COMPOSER BIO

**Michael Gordon's** music merges subtle rhythmic invention with incredible power embodying, in the words of *The New Yorker's* Alex Ross, "the fury of punk rock, the nervous brilliance of free jazz and the intransigence of classical modernism."

Over the past 25 years, Gordon has produced a strikingly diverse body of work, ranging from large-scale pieces for high-energy ensembles to major orchestral commissions to works conceived specifically for the recording studio. Transcending categorization, this music represents the collision of mysterious introspection and brutal directness.

His orchestral and chamber works include *Rewriting Beethoven's Seventh Symphony*, *Sunshine of Your Love*, *Potassium*, *Industry*, *The Sad Park*, and *Trance*, among others. Works for theater and opera include *What To Wear*, *Acquanetta*, *Lost Objects*, and *Van Gogh*. He has also had numerous collaborations with artists in other media, most frequently with filmmaker Bill Morrison and Ridge Theater.

Gordon has been commissioned by Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, the BBC Proms, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Settembre Musica, the Holland Music Festival, the Dresden Festival, and the Sydney 2000 Olympic Arts Festival, among others. The recipient of multiple awards and grants, he has been honored by the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Born in Miami Beach in 1956, Gordon holds a bachelor of arts from New York University and a master's in music from the Yale School of Music. He is co-founder and co-artistic director of New York's legendary music collective Bang on a Can.

## GROUP BIO

Making their debut in 2012, the *Rushes* Ensemble consists of bassoonists Dana Jessen, Michael Harley, Jeffrey Lyman, Rachael Elliott, Saxton Rose, Lynn Hileman, and Maya Stone. A new force in contemporary music, this unique septet of bassoonists is dedicated to expanding and diversifying the future of bassoon repertoire through commissioning projects and collaborations. The ensemble takes its name from Michael Gordon's *Rushes*, a 60-minute work for seven amplified bassoons commissioned through the New Music Bassoon Commissioning Fund. The *Rushes* Ensemble will be releasing the premiere recording of Michael Gordon's *Rushes* on Cantaloupe Records in November 2012. Upcoming engagements include performances at the November Music Festival in 's-Hertogenbosch, Amsterdam's Ostadetheater, the Hague's Korzo Theater, and the Concertgebouw Brugge.

PERFORMANCE

**Rushes**

Michael Gordon

World Premiere

Saturday, September 15, 2012

**THE RUSHES ENSEMBLE:** Rachael Elliott, Michael Harley, Lynn Hileman, Dana Jessen, Jeffrey Lyman, Saxton Rose, Maya Stone – bassoon

NOTE

The premiere of a piece is unique. As a performer, the premiere is usually the most nerve-wracking. For a composer, it is the moment when the sound imagined becomes the sound heard. And for the audience, it is a time of discovery and unlimited potential. The anticipation percolates when the piece is only a few minutes long, but when it is an instrumental composition that lasts an hour, it takes on heightened intensity.

There are, of course, mental and physical playing demands placed on performers and technical and stylistic writing challenges for the composer. And there is also the participation of the audience—experiencing music as it unfolds, and listening to that which has never been heard.

If one ponders all that has led to this moment of premiere—Michael Gordon spending months or more on this piece, thinking and writing, the virtuosic bassoonists toiling away uncounted amounts of time practicing and rehearsing—it may lead to an examination of how the listener participates in the equation. It is the listeners that receive what is being shared and reflect upon what was heard, and if they liked it or not, and why.

And this exchange—a composer who hears what was once a thought in his head, musicians sharing sounds they've refined and perfected, and an audience that listens to something no audience has heard before—happens collectively, at the same time, within the hour. For the composer and performer, the “new” has trickled in over time, but the audience is able to experience the full power of the adage “You only hear a piece for the first time once.”

Perhaps *Rushes* is aware of that feeling—referring to the euphoric sensation of energy that flows during moments of excitement or elation. But the title also takes its name from tall grass and reeds, inspired in part by the reeds that produce sound on a bassoon. The length of the piece allows Gordon to slowly build a landscape for the listener to inhabit—maybe a field as the wind blows by. Intricately layered rhythms pushing against one another are transferred into a palpable texture that bubbles and murmurs instead of clashes. The similar timbres of the seven bassoons meld together into a swirling type of super-instrument that pushes forward, simultaneously demanding attention and inviting wandering.

The composer and performers have been in residency at EMPAC for the past week, rehearsing and recording *Rushes*, which will be released on Cantaloupe Records.

—Argeo Ascani, Associate Curator, Music

# EMPAC 2012



Tuesday  
September 18  
7:30 pm  
FREE

PERFORMANCE: WORK IN PROGRESS

## **Triptych 0811**

Ella Fiskum Danz

A work in progress by Norwegian dance company Ella Fiskum Danz that explores the inner life of dreams, reality, and ambition.



EMPAC Rensselaer

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## EMPAC STAFF

Johannes Goebel / Director

Geoff Abbas / Director for Stage Technologies

Eric Ameres / Senior Research Engineer

S. Argeo Ascani / Associate Curator, Music

David Bebb / Senior System Administrator

Peter Bellamy / Senior Systems Programmer

Michael Bello / Video Engineer

Eric Brucker / Lead Video Engineer

Ash Bulayev / Curator, Dance + Theater

John Cook / Box Office Manager

David DeLaRosa / Production Technician

Laura Desposito / Production Administrative Coordinator

Zhenelle Falk / Artist Services Coordinator

William Fritz / Master Carpenter

Kimberly Gardner / Manager, Administrative Operations

Michele Genovesi / Guest Services Coordinator

Ian Hamelin / Project Manager

Ryan Jenkins / Event Technician

Shannon Johnson / Design Director

Pamela Keenan / Production Technician

CathyJo Kile / Business Manager

Carl Lewandowski / Production Technician

Eric Chi-Yeh Lin / Lead Stage Technician

Stephen McLaughlin / Event Technician

Jason Steven Murphy / Communications Specialist

Andrew Rarig / Graphic Designer

Candice Sherman / Business Coordinator

Avery Stempel / Front of House Manager

Jeffrey Svatek / Audio Engineer

Stephanie Tribu-Cromme / Event Technician

Todd Vos / Lead Audio Engineer

Pete Wargo / Manager, Information Systems

David Watson / Web Developer

Michael Wells / Production Technician

Emily Berçir Zimmerman / Assistant Curator



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Saturday  
September 15  
8 pm

PERFORMANCE

**Rushes**

**Michael Gordon**

CURTIS R. PRIEM EXPERIMENTAL MEDIA AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

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