
RUSHES ENSEMBLE

featuring **Michael Gordon's "Rushes"**



"a boldly different sonic landscape"

—Joshua Kosman, San Francisco Chronicle

Rushes is an extraordinary concert-length *tour-de-force* that draws listeners into its immersive sound world of hypnotic undulations, rich overtones, and pulsating harmonies. Written for and performed by the acclaimed **Rushes Ensemble**, Michael Gordon's masterpiece for seven bassoons continues to dazzle audiences across Europe and the USA.

REVIEWS

"Gordon's intricate *Rushes* flows like a river with constantly varying ripples and waves"

—David Patrick Stearns,
The Philadelphia Inquirer

"The effect was hypnotic and engrossing [...] I found myself sitting as close to the group as possible, so I could feel the sound as much as hear it."

—Dan Ruccia, *Indy Week* (Durham)

"an ensemble of seven bassoons is a conspicuous novelty. *Rushes*, to its credit, makes one wonder what took so long."

—Matthew Guerrieri, *The Boston Globe*

"The music at Friday's premiere danced in space around the ring of bassoonists, and when their tones hit a certain sweet spot [...] the overtones became as much a part of the music as the pitches on the page, like the chiming of an invisible set of crystal bells."

—Daniel Stephen Johnson,
Musical America

"an hourlong hallucinogenic work for seven bassoons"

—Corinna da Fonseca-Wollheim,
The New York Times

"I wondered if the spiritual successor to Reich's early Minimalist experiments might in fact be the composer Michael Gordon [...] *Rushes*, written for seven bassoons, manages to achieve a grandiosity of colors from such restricted means."

—Will Robin, "The Week's 8 Best Classical Music Moments on YouTube," 10/20/17,
The New York Times

CONCERT OPTIONS

1. Michael Gordon's *Rushes*

stand-alone concert, 56 minutes running time

2. Michael Gordon's *Rushes* and *Timber*

Rushes Ensemble and Mantra Percussion,
double-bill feature, 110 minutes running time

Staging Note: For an immersive and intimate listening experience, *Rushes* and *Timber* are performed in-the-round whenever possible, with audience encircling performers. With Presenter's permission, listeners are invited to move about during the performance to more deeply engage in the somatic experience of these pieces. Creative lighting is encouraged.

3. Pre- and Post-Concert Engagement

Optional talks and Q&A offered at no additional fee:

- The story behind the creation of *Rushes*
- How performers tap into "Flow"
- What the heck is a Bassoon, anyway?
- Striving for inclusivity & diversity in classical music

Performers mix with audience after concert and at reception



"The score, with tens of thousands of notes, looks a bit like an Escher drawing or a very long weaving pattern for a loom."
—Michael Gordon, describing *Rushes*

Education and Outreach

Masterclasses and Workshops

Rushes Ensemble offers bassoon lessons, masterclasses, and chamber music coaching for classical and new music groups.

Presentation and workshop topics include:

- Improvisation lab
- Get out of your head and into flow
- Cultivating diversity and inclusion in your music
- Canons, Chases, Rounds: live looping lab for instrumentalists and vocalists
- Innovate! New music from commission to premiere
- Radical Mid-Century Modernists: Four French Women Make Their Mark at the Paris Conservatoire
- Sustainable Musicianship: Aligning Mental Health with Optimal Performance



Composition Workshops & Residencies

Composers are invited to write for 1, 2, 3, or 4 bassoons, with completed scores due **one month** before the ensemble residency. Members of Rushes Ensemble and composers engage in a collaborative open workshop-rehearsal of their pieces concluding with a recorded reading of each piece. Composers receive a recording of their piece from the session. A longer residency may include Rushes Ensemble performing the world premiere of new compositions on a live concert featuring new music by composition fellows. Composers receive a recording of their piece from the live performance.

Program Bio

Rushes Ensemble is an all-star septet comprised of leading performers of contemporary bassoon music in the United States: Dana Jessen, Michael Harley, Maya Stone, Lynn Hileman, Jeffrey Lyman, Rachael Elliott, and Saxton Rose. The group debuted in 2012 with the world premiere performance of Michael Gordon's *Rushes* at the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center in Troy, New York. Their premiere recording of the work was released by Cantaloupe Records in 2014.

Rushes Ensemble has appeared throughout Europe and North America at venues including November Music, Korzo Theater and GLOW Festival in the Netherlands; Surround Festival in Brugge, Belgium; Vancouver New Music Festival; Duke Performances; Oz Arts in Nashville; Big Ears in Knoxville; Peak Performances in Montclair, NJ; and National Sawdust and Park Avenue Armory in New York.

"rarely does one get to see a group that has been steadily performing the same work to the point of absolute mastery."

—*Vancouver Classical Music*
