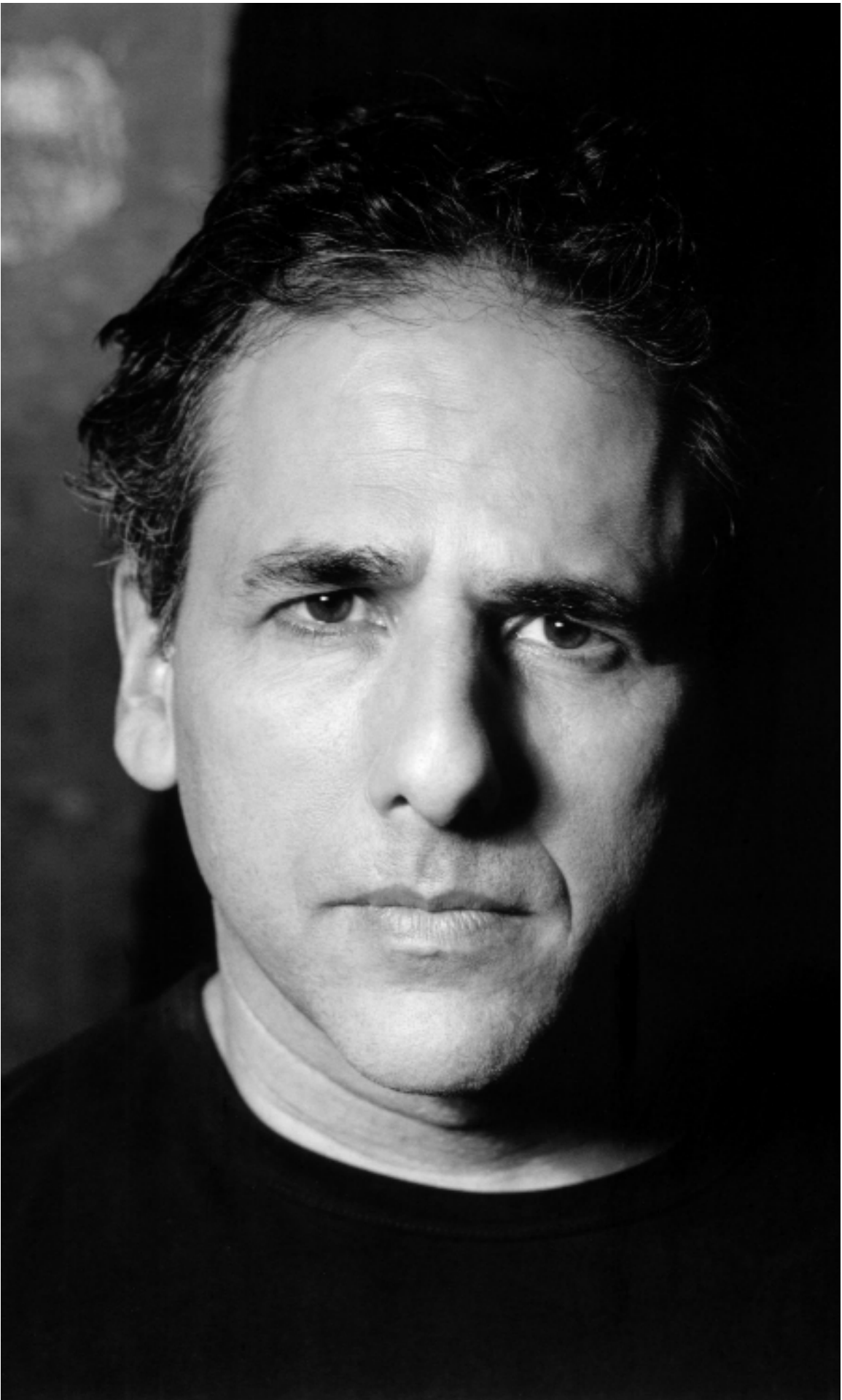


Michael Gordon

Biography and Works



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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 and works conceived specifically for the recording studio. Transcending categorization, his music represents the collision of mysterious introspection and brutal directness.

Deeply passionate about the sonic potential of the traditional orchestra, Gordon's orchestral works include *Rewriting Beethoven's Seventh Symphony*, a radical reworking of the original, commissioned by the 2006 Beethoven Festival in Bonn and premiered by Jonathon Nott and the Bamberger Symphony; and *Sunshine of Your Love*, written for more than 100 instruments divided into four microtonally tuned groups. Under the baton of composer/conductor John Adams, The Ensemble Modern Orchestra toured *Sunshine of Your Love* to seven European capitals in 1999. Gordon's string orchestra piece *Weather* was commissioned by the Siemens Foundation Kultur Program, and after its tour was recorded and released on Nonesuch to great critical and popular success. His interest in exploring various sound textures has led him to create chamber works that distort traditional classical instruments with electronic effects and guitar pedals, including *Potassium* for the Kronos Quartet and *Industry* for cellist Maya Beiser. Also for Kronos, *The Sad Park*, written in 2006, uses the voices of child witnesses to September 11, 2001 as its subject. Gordon's monumental, 52-minute *Trance*, originally written for the UK-based group Icebreaker, was debuted in 1997 and recently performed twice in New York City by the ensemble Signal.

Michael Gordon's interest in adding dimensionality to the traditional concert experience has led to numerous collaborations with artists in other media, most frequently with filmmaker Bill Morrison and Ridge Theater. In *Decasia*, a commission from Europaischer Musikmonat for the Basel Sinfonietta, the audience is encircled by the orchestra and projected images. A large-scale, single-movement, relentlessly monumental work about decay — the decay of melody, tuning, and classical music itself — *Decasia* has become a cult favorite since its premiere in 2001, and is frequently performed at music festivals, art museums, and film festivals around the world. Gordon and Morrison's work together also includes two film symphonies centered on cities: *Dystopia* (about Los Angeles) in 2008 for David Robertson and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and *Gotham* (about New York City) in 2004 for the American Composers Orchestra.

Works for theater and opera include *What To Wear*, a collaboration with director Richard Foreman, which premiered at the REDCAT Theater in Los Angeles; *Aquanetta*, about the 1940's B-movie starlet for Oper Aachen; *Lost Objects*, an oratorio for baroque orchestra in collaboration with David Lang, Julia Wolfe, and director Francois Girard, which was

seen at the 2004 Next Wave Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM); and *Van Gogh*, vocal settings from the letters of Vincent van Gogh, recorded by Alarm Will Sound. Most recently, Gordon again collaborated with Ridge Theater on the multi-performer song cycle *lightning at our feet*, co-commissioned by Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts at the University of Houston and the Brooklyn Academy of Music for the 2008 Next Wave Festival. *lightning at our feet* straddles arts media, giving Dickinson's poetry mobility in music while encompassing her words in a world of visual imagery.

Gordon's music has been featured prominently in the dance works of Emilio Greco I PC; Wayne McGregor (for Stuttgart Ballet, Random Dance); Pina Bausch's Tanztheater Wuppertal; Heinz Spoerli (for Zürich Ballet); Ashley Page (for The Royal Ballet and The Scottish Ballet); and Club Guy & Roni, who co-commissioned Gordon's percussion sextet *Timber* along with the percussion ensembles Slagwerk Den Haag and Mantra Percussion. This work, an evening-length tour de force for six 2x4s, toured with dance throughout 2009/2010 and was premiered in its concert version in June 2011. The full percussion sextet was released in August 2011 on Cantaloupe Records.

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. His music has been performed at the Kennedy Center, Theatre De La Ville, Barbican Centre, Oper Bonn, Kölner Philharmonie and the Southbank Centre. The recipient of multiple awards and grants, Gordon 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. His recordings include *Weather* (Nonesuch), *Light Is Calling* (Nonesuch), *Decasia* (Cantaloupe), *[purgatorio]* POPOPERA (Cantaloupe), *Van Gogh* (Cantaloupe), *Trance* (Argo/Cantaloupe), and *Big Noise from Nicaragua* (CRI).

Born in Miami Beach in 1956, Gordon holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from New York University and a Masters of Music degree from the Yale School of Music. He is Co-Founder and Co-Artistic Director of the internationally-renowned Bang on a Can Festival.

Gordon's music is published by Red Poppy (ASCAP) and distributed worldwide by G. Schirmer, Inc.

— September 2012

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Opera and Music Theatre

Acquanetta (2005) 1h 10'
Text: (English) Deborah Artman
Solo: Coloratura Soprano, Mezzo soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass/Baritone
Chorus: SATB chorus
2(2pic).2.3.1+cbsn/2321/2perc/kbd.ebgr/str
Performance materials on rental

Chaos (1994) 1h 20'
Text: Libretto by Matthew Maguire
Solo: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, 2 Baritones
audio playback or tape
Performance materials on rental

Van Gogh (1991) 1h 5'
Text: (English) Libretto based on letters of Vincent Van Gogh. Video by Elliot Caplan.
Solo: Soprano, Tenor, Bass
cl(bcl), perc, egtr, pf(org), vn, va, vc, db
Performance materials on rental

What to Wear (2006) 1h 5'
Text: (English) Libretto by Richard Foreman
Solo: 2 Sopranos, Alto, Tenor
Chorus: 6-voice female chorus
2kbd, perc, egtr, 2vn, db
Performance materials on rental

Dance

Popopera (2009) 20'
Recording for dance; Six electric guitars
Performance materials on rental

Orchestra

Decasia (2001) 1h 10'
Text: Film by Bill Morrison, the Ridge Theater
Film by Bill Morrison; screened at Sundance 2002 Festival
3(3pic).33.2ssx.2/2442/2perc/egtr.bgtr.4kbd/str + amp
Performance materials on rental

Dystopia (2007) 29'
Text: Film by Bill Morrison
2(2pic)+2pic.2+ca.2+bcl.asx.0+cbn/4331/5perc/pf.org.hp.bgtr/str
Performance materials on rental

Gotham (2004) 27'
Text: Film by Bill Morrison
2(afl.pic)200/2320/pf/2perc/egtr.5 str eb.egtr/str(min.33331)
Performance materials on rental

Rewriting Beethoven's Seventh Symphony (2006) 22'
3.2.3.2+cbn/4.3.3.1/timp.4perc/eb/str
Performance materials on rental

Romeo (1992) 9'
2222/2220/timp.perc/str
Performance materials on rental

Sunshine of Your Love (1999) 9'
444.4asx.4/4442/2timp.4perc/2egtr.2eb/4kbd/str
Performance materials on rental

Weather (1997) 1h 10'
Text: Multimedia video component by Elliot Caplan
str (min 6.3.3.3.1); tp in mvt 3; mov 2 + electronics, mov 3 + audio playback
Performance materials on rental

Large Ensemble (7 or more players)

Acid Rain (1986) 8'
1(pic,afl).01(Ebcl,bcl).0/0000/eorg/str(1.1.1.1.1)
Performance materials on rental

Cold (2011) 17'
Available for performances after January 2014
1(pic).1.2.1(cbn)/1.2.1.0/2perc/2kbd/str (1.1.1.2.1)

Four Kings Fight Five (1988) 23'
011+bcl.0/perc/egtr.kbd/vn.va.va; amp
Performance materials on rental

Love Bead (1997) 10'
1(pic).1(ca).0+bcl.0+cbn/1110/sampler.ebgr.egtr/vn.va.vc (all instruments amplified)
Performance materials on rental

Trance (1995) 50'
2(2pic,2panpipe).00.3sx.0/0440/3kbd.acn.egtr.bgtr/perc/vn.vc+amplification + audio playback
Performance materials on rental

vera, chuck, and dave (1998) 11'
1020/1211/2perc/pf/egtr.eb/vn.vc
Performance materials on rental

Work List

Michael Gordon

Water Instrumental (Heavy Water) (2008) 6' 40"
Part II of 'Water'
 1.1.1.0+cbn/1.1.0+btbn.0/vib+Bass Drum/pf/egtr/
 str (1.1.1.1.1)
Performance materials on rental

Who By Water (2004) 18'
 0+pic.1.2.1/1110/3perc/egtr.kbd/2vn.vc.db
Performance materials on rental

Yo Shakespeare [large version] (1992) 11'
 2fl(2pic,2panpipe), 2sx, acn, 3kbd, perc, egtr, bgtr, vn, vc
Performance materials on rental

Works for 2-6 Players

ac dc (1996) 10'
 fl, cl, pf, vn, vc
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

Clouded Yellow (2010) 10'
 2vn, va, vc

for Madeline (2009) 9'
 cl, vib, pf, egtr, vc, db

Gene Takes a Drink (2012) 6'
 cl, perc, pf, egtr, vc, db; video component

I Buried Paul (1996) 11'
 cl, perc, syn, egtr, vc, db
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

Idle (2004) 5'
 3vn + audio playback

The Light of the Dark (2008) 13'
 fl, cl, vn, vc, perc, pf
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

The Low Quartet (1985) 8'
 bcl, bsx, tbn, db
 Alt: any four low instruments
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

The Low Quartet (bass clarinet version) (1985) 8'
 3bcl+bcl(cbcl)
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

Potassium (2001) 15'
 2vn, va, vc +amplification +electronics
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

The Sad Park (2006) 30'
 2vn, va, vc; +amplification +audio playback +electronics
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

Strange Quiet (1985) 14'
 cl(bcl), egtr, kbd, perc, vn, va
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

Thou Shalt!/Thou Shalt Not! (1983) 18'
 cl[bcl], egtr, eorg, perc, vn, va
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

Timber (2009) 55'
available for performances after October 2012
 6perc (2 African log drums, 4 wooden Simantras)

Tinge (2004) 4'
 3vn + audio playback

Tree-Oh (2011) 6'
 3vn
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

Weather One (1997) 20'
 str (21111)
Performance materials on rental

Solo Works (excluding keyboard)

Industry (1992) 11'
 cello, electronics
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

Light is Calling 7'
 violin and audio playback
Performance materials on rental

Light is Calling 7'
 cello and audio playback
Performance materials on rental

Paint It Black (1988) 11'
 double bass
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

XY (1998) 10'
 percussion solo
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

Solo Keyboard(s)

Sonatra (2004) 18'
 pf
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

Chorus a cappella / Chorus plus 1 instrument

The Bird Watcher (2011)

Chorus: SSAATTB a cappella

Every Stop on the F Train (2007)

5'

Treble Voices

Performance materials sold by Rental Library

He Saw a Skull (2008)

4' 50"

Text: (English) Talmud (Pirkei Avot 2:7)

Part III of 'Water'

Chorus: SSSAAATTTBBB

Performance materials sold by Rental Library

XVI (1993)

15'

Text: Morton Feldman

Chorus: SATB, 16 singers

Performance materials sold by Rental Library

Chorus and Orchestra/Ensemble

Exalted (2010)

10'

Chorus: children's chorus

2vn, va, vc

Performance materials on rental

Tephilat Geshem

(Prayer for Rain) (2008)

13' 30"

Text: (Hebrew)

Part VIII of 'Water'

Chorus: SATB

1.1.1.0+cbn/1.1.0+btbn.0/2perc/pf/egtr/str(1.1.1.1.1)

Performance materials on rental

Solo Voice(s) and up to 6 players

Lightning at our Feet (2008)

1h 15'

Text: Emily Dickinson, arranged by Daniel Zippi

Four voices and chamber ensemble

Performance materials on rental

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