

Polka the Elk CD Release Concert

Rachael Elliott & friends

New music for two bassoons, vibraphone and piano



PROGRAM

With Eyes Cast Down
(2004)

Padma Newsome
b. 1961

Press Release
(1992)

David Lang
b. 1957

Bed and Rest
(2006)

Padma Newsome & Clogs

À mon seul désir
(2005)

Tawnie Olson
b. 1974

Polka the Elk
(2001)

Padma Newsome

NOTES

With Eyes Cast Down is a seven-movement suite for bassoon, piano, harpsichord, strings and voices, and was commissioned from Padma Newsome by my parents in 2004. We'll perform Padma's new reduction for bassoon and piano. The short movements span a range—from delicate to tempestuous—and the piece is suffused in a melancholic atmosphere. The lyrics are drawn from a poem, also by Padma:

Please tell me the way I can be a friend.
With eyes cast down I stand before you.
I bathe your feet in rose-coloured water,
And bring leaves and and garments, swans and flighted birds.

Let us sit now on rugs and woven fabrics,
Until we become like sand and stream.

Absolute this time, without substance, care, or love.

Sleep now, that we may rest.
Sleep in clasped fingered silence,
We talents of the air, soft and tongued.

Sleep in this mist of times remembered,
This present of times remembered.

(*Polka the Elk* program notes, cont.)

Press Release was written in 1991 for bass clarinetist, Evan Ziporyn, and arranged for solo bassoon the following year. David Lang writes, “the original idea behind this piece was that of a high melody alternating with a low bass line, so that you get a high pop and a low pop switching back and forth as fast as possible, and these two worlds coexist.”

Bed and Rest is a little song-without-words for guitar and bassoon. Padma composed it in 2005, and Clogs arranged it for guitar, bassoon, piano and marimba. Clogs recorded it while making our recent album, *The Creatures in the Garden of Lady Walton*. Since it didn't fit onto the final record, Clogs graciously allowed me to include *Bed and Rest* on my new CD. (Many thanks to Bryce, Thom and Padma!) The melody, in D minor, floats above a seductive, trancelike pattern heard in the guitar, or piano, or vibraphone.

À mon seul désir is named after the last of the Lady and the Unicorn tapestries in the Musée de Cluny. Tawnie Olson writes that the piece “is inspired by the early days of marriage when you're still trying to figure out how to communicate.” After a peaceful opening, the dialogue between the piano and bassoon becomes quite heated, and eventually jubilant. The music comes full circle with a return to the quiet material at its close.

Padma Newsome wrote **Polka the Elk** for bassoonists Janet Polk and Rachael Elliott, who premiered it ten years ago. The music is humorous in the same way that watching someone take herself too seriously can be funny. The character of Polka lets loose on occasion, with some improvisation, chasing her tail, tripping through the fields, and some very unladylike sounds. The piece was commissioned with support from the Vermont Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

CREDITS

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