

# NEW FOCUS RECORDINGS

Bassoonist **Dana Jessen** and composer **Taylor Brook** collaborate on an album length work, **Set**, that fuses through composed material, improvisation, and electronics to create an immersive musical experience that encapsulates several of the most topical concerns in contemporary music.

## Track List

Taylor Brook: **Set**

1. Introduction and Song I	7:05
2. Improvisation I	7:46
3. Song II	6:33
4. Improvisation II	10:01
5. Song III	4:06
6. Improvisation III	8:06
7. Song IV	5:08

Dana Jessen, bassoon; Taylor Brook, composition & electronics

*Total Time:* 48:45

## Program Notes

Bassoonist Dana Jessen and composer Taylor Brook team up for a collaborative album length electro-acoustic work, **Set**, that combines through composed and improvised sections. Much attention in the composed sections is devoted to an exploration of a range of extended techniques on the bassoon that Jessen has cultivated. The improvised sections are framed by guidelines and rules that Brook provided and computer improvisation that accompanies the instrumental soloist. In these ways, the boundaries between composer and performer are blurred.

The opening Song begins with a series of clarion calls in the bassoon that are answered by a chorus of bassoons in the electronics supporting the soloist with blocks of sound. Brook and Jessen explore the myriad colors the bassoon has at its disposal on any given note, reveling in the transformation of sustained pitches. Steady drone textures provide context for Jessen's expressive playing and the rich overtones embedded in the bassoon's sound. The second half of the movement features more nuanced figuration in the solo part over a wider sonic palette in the electronics, including active, non-pitched breath sounds, before closing with a poignant passage for solo bassoon alone.

## Dana Jessen & Taylor Brook: Set

a collaborative electroacoustic album length work by bassoonist Dana Jessen & composer Taylor Brook

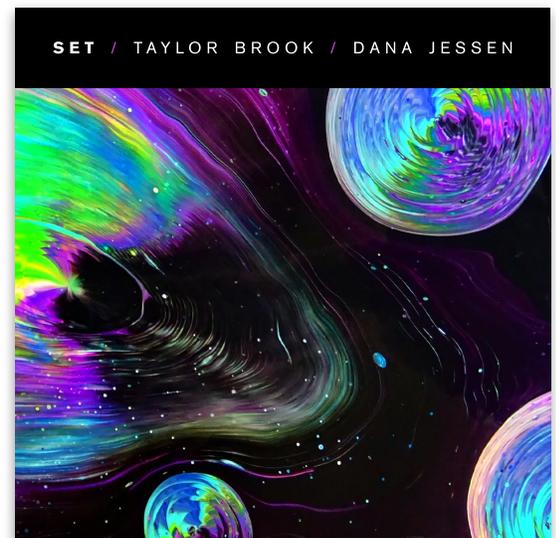
US Street Date	7/28/2023
UPC Code	690277901218
Catalog Number	FCR371
Audio Resolution	44.1kHz, 16 bit; 48kHz, 24 bit
MSRP	\$16.99
Featured Track	Track 7

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SET  
DANA JESSEN, BASSOON / TAYLOR BROOK, ELECTRONICS

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TOTAL 48:45

Music written in 2019 by Taylor Brook / Recorded April 5, 2022 in Clonick Hall, Oberlin, OH  
Recorded by Andrew Tripp / Mixed by Taylor Brook / Mastered by Murat Çolak at GERYON  
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In the improvised first interlude we hear responsive material in the computer part reacting to Jessen's more punctuated material. Jessen develops a pointed repeated note idea for the movements opening minutes before long tones are shadowed by ghostly pitches in the electronics that form a harmonic halo around the solo line. The interlude elides smoothly into the timbral trills in the opening of the second piece (track three). A two note descending motive anchors exploration into some wonderfully rich multiphonic sonorities. Brook and Jessen allow these complex timbres to breathe and evolve, inviting the listener to focus their attention on different component pitches that emerge. Variable delays in the electronics reinforce the expansive context.

The second interlude establishes walls of sound through extended trills and forceful multiphonics. Brook's electronics mirror Jessen's lines with a harmonizer, tracking their contour and lending the texture a futuristic sheen. The interlude finishes with a passage where Jessen's voice emerges from behind the bassoon, blurring yet another boundary. Similar walls of sound created by extended trills shape the third Song, merged with Morse code-like irregular tongued notes that are echoed in the electronics. Much of Jessen's material in this improvisation is more linear and soloistic, featuring pitch bends and swooping passagework.

The final Song creates an unsettling, dystopian sound world, as Jessen plays quick, chromatic repeated figures that are answered by quick fire delay processing. The occasional quarter tone passage in the live part gives the sense that the delayed signal is subject to the Doppler effect, bending the pitch as the signal moves further "away." After this activated passage, the piece seems like it will close with sustained unisons over a drone, but just before it ends, Jessen slides up one half step for a slightly brighter final sonority.

*Set* is a focused, contemplative piece that explores expressive contrasts within a relatively restricted set of musical materials. The symbiotic process of collaborative composition and responsive improvisation makes for a piece that feels very much as if it is a unique outgrowth of the relationship between these two artists and the specific moment of the recording.

## Bios

Hailed as a "bassoon virtuoso" (Chicago Reader), **Dana Jessen** tirelessly seeks to expand the boundaries of her instrument through original compositions, improvisations, and collaborative work with innovative artists. Over the past decade, she has presented dozens of world premiere performances throughout North America and Europe while maintaining equal footing in the creative music community as an improviser. Her solo performances are almost entirely grounded in electroacoustic composition that highlight her distinct musical language. As a chamber musician, Dana is the co-founder of the contemporary reed quintet Splinter Reeds, and has performed with Alarm Will Sound, Amsterdam's DOEK Collective, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, and the Tri-Centric Ensemble, among many others. A dedicated educator, Dana teaches at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and has presented masterclasses and workshops to a range of students from across the globe.

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**Taylor Brook** writes music for the concert stage, electronic music, music for robotic instruments, generative music software, and music for video, theatre, and dance. His music is often concerned with finely tuned microtonal sonorities as well as unique approaches to the integration of electronic sound and digital media. Brook enjoys collaborating with performers and ensembles on the development of new works, including Mira Benjamin, Jeffrey Gavett, Corey Hamm, Dana Jessen, Andy Kozar, Vicki Ray, Quatuor Bozzini, Del Sol Quartet, JACK Quartet, PARTCH ensemble, and many others.