



american composers orchestra

news release

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Hilary Purrington Wins \$15,000 Underwood Emerging Composer Commission from American Composers Orchestra

Alexander Timofeev wins Audience Choice Award



Photos by Jiji Kim (Purrington) & Gennadii Zlatin (Timofeev) available upon request.

Hilary Purrington: www.hilarypurrington.com | Alexander Timofeev: www.timofeev.org
American Composers Orchestra: www.americancomposers.org

New York, NY – American Composers Orchestra (ACO) has awarded composer **Hilary Purrington** its **2017 Underwood Commission**, bringing her a \$15,000 commission for a work to be premiered by ACO in a future season. Chosen from six finalists during ACO’s 26th Underwood New Music Readings on June 22 and 23, 2017, in one of the most coveted opportunities for emerging composers in the United States, Purrington won the top prize with her work *Likely Pictures in Haphazard Sky*.

In addition, for the eighth year, audience members at the Underwood New Music Readings had a chance to make their voices heard through the Audience Choice Award. The winner this year was composer **Alexander Timofeev**, for his piece *Fantasma for Orchestra*. As the winner, Timofeev will also be commissioned by ACO to write a work to be premiered in a future season.

“Hilary Purrington’s music spoke in a highly personal voice,” said ACO Artistic Director **Derek Bermel**. “Her work unfolded assuredly, revealing an orchestral palette at once austere and lyrical.”

“Alexander Timofeev’s piece really appealed to many of us for its wonderful craft and orchestral command; we were sure that it would be a strong contender for audience favorite, said ACO President **Ed Yim**. “It is great that this annual reading puts trust both in the mentor composers to show us the future as well as in a well informed

and passionate public. And I'd like to take this opportunity to commend all the participants this year who each had strong and varied points of view.”

“The Underwood New Music Readings were beyond anything I expected or anticipated,” Purrington said. “I learned so much from our mentor composers, conductor George Manahan, and the extraordinary musicians of the American Composers Orchestra. I’m honored and thrilled to receive the Underwood Commission, and I’m very excited to compose for these incredible and fearless musicians!”

“It was an amazing experience to workshop my composition *Fantasme*, and a big honor to win the Audience Choice Award,” adds Timofeev. “The many comments and suggestions from the participating composers, mentor composers, and ACO musicians created an atmosphere of musical friendship and support. I felt very comfortable getting to know the talented people at ACO – a big musical family where everyone is an active supporter of new music.”

2017 Underwood Commission winner Hilary Purrington is a New York City-based composer of chamber, choral, and orchestral music. Her work has been recognized by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), and the National Federation of Music Clubs (NFMC), among others. In the summer of 2012, she received funding through a Wagoner Foreign Study Grant to study Music Composition and German Language at the Freie Universität Berlin, and in the summer of 2013, she participated as a Fellow at the Yale School of Music Norfolk Chamber Music Festival. Her music was performed at the 2016 NY PHIL BIENNIAL, and has been performed by many distinguished ensembles including the Peabody Modern Orchestra, Yale Philharmonia, American Modern Ensemble, and the ChoralArt Camerata. Recent commissions include new works for the Chicago Harp Quartet, the Musical Chairs Chamber Ensemble, and the Melodia Women’s Choir of NYC. Upcoming projects include commissions from Washington Square Winds, inFLUX, and the New York Youth Symphony. Purrington holds degrees from the Yale School of Music, The Juilliard School, and the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University.

2017 Audience Choice winner Alexander Timofeev (b. 1983) debuted as a composer at age 19 performing his Concerto for Piano and Orchestra (2003) with the National Philharmonic Orchestra of Moldova. He premiered his works at the Thailand International Composition Festival, Hariclea Darclee Festival and Voice Competition (Romania), Oxford Piano Festival (UK), Novye Imena (Russia), Northern Lights Festival (USA) and received awards for his compositions at Sergey Slonimsky International Competition (Russia), Valasske Mezirici International Festival and Cimbalom Competition (Czech Republic), and Carl Filtsch International Competition (Romania). He is the winner of the 2016 Richard Weerts Composition Competition, and a finalist of the 2016 Thailand International Composition Festival. His recent premieres include the Five Songs on Poems by Agnesa Rosca for Soprano and Piano (2015), Concerto for Two Pianos and Chamber Orchestra (2014), and Concerto for Cimbalom and Orchestra (2013). In 2008 Timofeev founded the International Society of Pianists and Composers, a non-profit organization that promotes contemporary music written for piano. Started as a creative circle of composers and performers, graduates of the Eastman School of Music, it now represents a growing network of musicians from over 20 countries. Timofeev completed his D.M.A. at the University of Maryland, College Park, and holds an M.M. from the Eastman School of Music and a B.M. from Rowan University. He currently resides in Philadelphia and is an Artist-in-Residence at Rowan University.

About the Underwood New Music Readings

The 26th Annual Underwood New Music Readings were under the direction of ACO’s Artistic Director, composer **Derek Bermel**, and were conducted by ACO Music Director **George Manahan**, with **Libby Larsen**, **David Rakowski**, and **Trevor Weston** as mentor composers. The conductor, mentor composers, and principal players from ACO provided critical feedback to each of the participants during and after the sessions. In addition to the Readings, the composer participants took part in workshops with industry professionals. This year’s New Music Readings attracted over 250 submissions from emerging composers around the country.

For over a generation, ACO's **Underwood New Music Readings** have been providing all-important career development and public exposure to the country's most promising emerging composers, with over 150 composers participating. Readings alumni have gone on to win every major composition award, including the Pulitzer, Grammy, Grawemeyer, American Academy of Arts & Letters, and Rome Prizes. Orchestras around the globe have commissioned ACO Readings alumni.

The New Music Readings have served as a launch pad for composers' careers, a tradition that includes many of today's top composers, such as **Ellen Taaffe Zwilich** and **Joseph Schwantner**, both of whom received Pulitzer Prizes for ACO commissions; and ACO's own Artistic Director **Derek Bermel**, as well as composers **Lisa Bielawa**, **Anthony Cheung**, **Anna Clyne**, **Cindy Cox**, **Sebastian Currier**, **Jennifer Higdon**, **Pierre Jalbert**, **Aaron Jay Kernis**, **Hannah Lash**, **Ingram Marshall**, **Carter Pann**, **P.Q. Phan**, **Tobias Picker**, **Narong Prangcharoen**, **Paola Prestini**, **David Rakowski**, **Daniel Bernard Roumain**, **Christopher Rouse**, **Huang Ruo**, **Eric Samuelson**, **Carlos Sanchez-Guiterrez**, **Kate Soper**, **Gregory Spears**, **Joan Tower**, **Ken Ueno**, **Dan Visconti**, **Melinda Wagner**, **Wang Jie**, **Dalit Warshaw**, **Randall Woolf**, **Nina Young**, and **Roger Zare**.

The 27th Annual Underwood New Music Readings are scheduled for June 21-23, 2018 in New York City.

In addition to Hilary Purrington and Alexander Timofeev, the 2017 Underwood New Music Readings participants were:

James Diaz: *From infinity*

New York-based composer James Diaz (b. 1990) is the winner of the 2015 National Prize of Music in Composition by the Ministry of Culture of Colombia for his Concerto for Percussion Trio and Orchestra, *Saturn Lights*. As winner of the 2014 Prize of Music in Composition for the reopening of the Teatro Colón, his orchestral piece *Ecllosion* was premiered by conductor Claudio Cruz and the National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia and recently has been recorded by the conductor Cecilia Espinosa and the EAFIT Symphony Orchestra for the upcoming album, *New Colombian Music for Orchestra*. studied composition with Moisés Bertrán, Harold Vázquez and Gustavo Parra at the National Conservatory of Music, where he received his B.M. in Composition in 2015. He was a two-time Composition Fellow at the International Winter Festival of Campos do Jordao, Brazil; and is currently pursuing an M.M. in Composition at the Manhattan School of Music, where he is studying composition with Reiko Fueting.

Nick DiBerardino: *Mercury-Redstone 3*

Rhodes Scholar Nick DiBerardino (b. 1989) composes music that is diverse in style but always oriented toward meaningful narrative arcs. DiBerardino has received recognition from many institutions, including the Music Teachers' National Association, the National Federation of Music Clubs, the New York Art Ensemble, the Boston New Music Initiative, PARMA Recordings, the New York Youth Symphony, ASCAP, and the American Composers Forum. Recent accolades include winning the Portland Chamber Music Festival Composition Competition, garnering a soundSCAPE Composition Prize, and receiving a Horizon Award from Connecticut's Westport Arts Advisory Committee. DiBerardino's orchestral music has been programmed by the Curtis Symphony Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, and the Minnesota Orchestra. He earned his bachelor's degree at Princeton University and an M.Phil with distinction the University of Oxford, and also holds an M.M. from the Yale School of Music. DiBerardino is pursuing a Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in composition at the Curtis Institute of Music, where he has studied with Jennifer Higdon and David Ludwig.

Martin Kennedy: *Siren, blind*

Martin Kennedy (b. 1978) began his training at Indiana University, where he received a B.M. in both Composition and Piano Performance. He went on to earn an M.M. in Composition at Indiana University and a Doctor of Musical Arts at the Juilliard School where he was a C.V. Starr Doctoral Fellow. Kennedy's music has been performed internationally by numerous artists and ensembles, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra Teatro Comunale di Bologna, South Dakota Symphony Orchestra, Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra, Wisconsin Philharmonic, Bloomington Camerata, Symphony in C, and Tuscaloosa Symphony. He is the recipient of several prestigious prizes, including the ASCAP Foundation Rudolf Nissim Prize, the '2 Agosto' International Composition Prize, a BMI Student Composer Award, five ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards, the Suzanne and Lee Ettleson prize, the ASCAP Raymond Hubbel Award, fellowships at the MacDowell and Yaddo Artist Colonies, an Aaron Copland Award, and two Indiana University Dean's Prizes in Composition. Previously a member of the academic faculty at Washington University in St. Louis, he is currently the Director of Composition and Theory at Central Washington University in Washington State.

Yucong (Zoe) Wang: *Blackbird*

Yucong (Zoe) Wang (b. 1993) began studying piano at age six and composition when she was 11. In 2011, she entered the Shanghai Conservatory as the top-ranked student, studying composition with Professor Gang Chen and Professor Huang Lv. In 2013, she entered the Eastman School of Music to pursue a B.M. in composition.

Wang's compositions have been performed at many concerts in Shanghai, at the Eastman School of Music, the George Eastman House, the Strong National Museum, and the University of Oregon. In 2016, she collaborated with the Deviant Septet, and her piece, *The Ecstasy of Six Persian Poems*, was performed by the septet at the Warren and Patricia Benson Forum on Creativity. In the same year, she was commissioned to write a piece for the 2016 Toy Hall of Fame at the Strong National Museum. Her past composition awards include second prize in the Confucius Award Composition Competition (2009) for her Chinese instrumental trio, *Yi*, and first prize in the Young Promise Composition Competition (2011) for her mixed quintet, *The Reverse of 12 Hours*. She also received the Eastman School's Belle Gitleman award in 2016 for her chamber pieces, *Five Wright Songs* and *The Ecstasy of Six Persian Poems*.

About ACO

Founded in 1977, American Composers Orchestra is the only orchestra in the world dedicated to the creation, performance, preservation, and promulgation of music by American composers. ACO makes the creation of new opportunities for American composers and new American orchestral music its central purpose. Through concerts at Carnegie Hall and other venues, recordings, internet and radio broadcasts, educational programs, New Music Readings, and commissions, ACO identifies today's brightest emerging composers, champions prominent established composers as well as those lesser-known, and increases regional, national, and international awareness of the infinite variety of American orchestral music, reflecting geographic, stylistic, and temporal diversity. ACO also serves as an incubator of ideas, research, and talent, as a catalyst for growth and change among orchestras, and as an advocate for American composers and their music. ACO programs seek to innovate and experiment, educate students and the public, and open the orchestra to diverse new influences and audiences.

To date, ACO has performed music by 800 American composers, including 350 world premieres and newly commissioned works. Among the orchestra's innovative programs have been SONiC: Sounds of a New Century, a nine-day citywide festival in New York of music by more than 100 composers age 40 and under; Sonidos de las Américas, six annual festivals devoted to Latin American composers and their music; Coming to America, a program immersing audiences in the ongoing evolution of American music through the work of immigrant composers; Orchestra Tech, a long-term initiative to integrate new digital technologies in the symphony orchestra; Improvise!, a festival devoted to the exploration of improvisation and the orchestra; coLABoratory: Playing It UNSafe, a new laboratory for the research and development of experimental new works for orchestra; and Orchestra Underground, ACO's entrepreneurial cutting-edge orchestral ensemble that embraces new technology, eclectic instruments, influences, and spatial orientation of the orchestra, new experiments in the concert format, and multimedia and multi-disciplinary collaborations.

Composer development has been at the core of ACO's mission since its founding. In addition to its annual Underwood New Music Readings and Commission, ACO also provides a range of educational and professional development activities, including composer residencies and fellowships. In 2008, ACO launched EarShot, a multi-institutional network that assists orchestras around the country in mounting new music readings. Recent and upcoming EarShot programs have included the Detroit, Berkeley, La Jolla, Nashville, Memphis, Columbus, Colorado, San Diego Symphonies, the New York Philharmonic, New York Youth Symphony, and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. Recently, EarShot introduced an initiative to provide career development and commissions for emerging female composers, and launched an online archive featuring audio excerpts, program notes, and score samples by more than 140 composers whose works have been performed through the EarShot Network. The Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute, launched in 2010, supports jazz artists who desire to write for the symphony. For more information visit www.EarShotnetwork.org.

Among the honors ACO has received are special awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and from BMI recognizing the orchestra's outstanding contribution to American music. ACO is the 2015 recipient of the Champion of New Music Award given by American Composers Forum. ASCAP has awarded its annual prize for adventurous programming to ACO 36 times, singling out ACO as "the orchestra that has done the most for American music in the United States." ACO received the inaugural MetLife Award for Excellence in Community Engagement, and a proclamation from the New York City Council. ACO recordings are available on ARGO, CRI, ECM, Point, Phoenix USA, MusicMasters, Nonesuch, Tzadik, New World Records, InstantEncore.com, Amazon.com and iTunes. ACO's digital albums include *Playing It UNSafe* (March 2011), *Emerging Composers Series: Vol. 1* (February 2012), *Orchestra Underground: X10D* (June 2012), *Orchestra Underground: Tech & Techno* (July 2014), and *SONiC Double Live* (July 2016), a collection of

premiere performances from its groundbreaking SONiC: Sounds of a New Century festival. ACO has also released *Orchestra Underground: A-V*, a groundbreaking album of multimedia works available for free streaming at www.vimeo.com/channels/orchestraunderground. More information about American Composers Orchestra is available online at www.americancomposers.org.

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