American Composers Orchestra Celebrates Philip Glass at 75
With a Concert on the Composer’s Birthday

Featuring the US premiere of Glass’ Symphony No. 9

and the New York premiere of Arvo Pärt’s Lamentate

Dennis Russell Davies, ACO’s conductor laureate
Maki Namekawa, piano soloist

Tuesday, January 31, 2012 at 8pm
Carnegie Hall | 57th and 7th Avenue | NYC

Tickets: $14.50-$82 at www.carnegiehall.org,
212-247-7800, or the Carnegie Hall Box Office
(154 West 57th Street, NYC)

Philip Glass: www.philipglass.com
American Composers Orchestra: www.americancomposers.org

New York, NY – American Composers Orchestra (ACO) presents Philip Glass at 75 on Tuesday, January 31, 2012 at 8pm at Carnegie Hall’s Stern Auditorium. The concert, led by ACO co-founder and Conductor Laureate Dennis Russell Davies, celebrates iconic American composer Philip Glass’ 75th birthday with the US premiere of his Symphony No. 9. The premiere is particularly appropriate amid a year of celebrations of Glass’ music – it takes place on the composer’s actual birthday. Symphony No. 9 is paired with Arvo Pärt’s Lamentate in its New York premiere, with piano soloist Maki Namekawa.

Glass’ latest symphony is writ large for substantial orchestral powers – piccolos are doubled, the horn section fortified, and bass, brass, and timpani doubled; a tour de force by any standard. In Glass’ own words, the piece is “big and unrelenting.” While Symphony No. 9 is not programmatic, it does include a reworked theme from Glass’ score for the film Rebirth, a documentary about September 11 by director Jim Whitaker which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2011.
The concert is a homecoming in many ways. Philip Glass (who now serves on ACO’s Board of Directors) wrote his first purely orchestral work – his Violin Concerto – on a commission from ACO in 1987. He and ACO co-founder Dennis Russell Davies have been musical collaborators for over 40 years. Davies has been involved in the commission and/or recording of all of Glass’ symphonic works. Over the years, ACO has premiered many of Glass’ most significant orchestral pieces including The Voyage (world premiere, 1993), Concerto for Saxophone Quartet (New York premiere, 1998), The White Raven (US premiere, 2001), Symphony No. 6 "Plutonian Ode" (world premiere, 2002), and Passages (world premiere, 2002).

American Composers Orchestra also recorded Glass’ Symphony No. 4 (“Heroes”) for Point Music in 1997 (released by Universal in 2003); the piece is based on the music of David Bowie and Brian Eno. In 1999, the orchestra recorded Glass’ The CIVIL WarS for Nonesuch, a piece originally conceived by director Robert Wilson for the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, with Wilson and Laurie Anderson as narrators.

The first half of ACO’s January 31 concert features Estonian composer Arvo Pärt’s Lamentate for piano and orchestra. Pärt composed this dramatic work in 2002 in response to Anish Kapoor’s massive and enigmatic sculpture Marsyas, created for the Turbine Hall at the Tate Modern in London. Pärt explains, “In the presence of Anish Kapoor’s work, of which I have grown deeply fond, I sense a sort of completeness in its harmonious and so naturally flowing form, and in the rather paradox effect of floating lightness in spite of overwhelming dimensions. With its trumpet-like form, the Marsyas sculpture itself is suggestive of music.”

Founded in 1977, American Composers Orchestra remains the only orchestra in the world dedicated exclusively to the creation, performance, preservation, and promulgation of music by American composers. To date, ACO has performed music by more than 600 American composers, including 200 world premieres and newly commissioned works.

**About Philip Glass**

Philip Glass, born in Baltimore, Maryland, is a graduate of the University of Chicago and the Juilliard School. In the early 1960s, Glass spent two years of intensive study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger and, while there, earned money by transcribing Ravi Shankar’s Indian music into Western notation. Upon his return to New York, he applied these Eastern techniques to his own music. By 1974, Glass had a number of significant and innovative projects, creating a large collection of new music for his performing group, the Philip Glass Ensemble, and for the Mabou Mines Theater Company, which he co-founded. This period culminated in Music in Twelve Parts, followed by the landmark opera, Einstein on the Beach, created with Robert Wilson in 1976.

Since Einstein, Glass has expanded his repertoire to include music for opera, dance, theater, chamber ensemble, orchestra, and film. His score for Martin Scorsese’s Kundun received an Academy Award nomination while his score for Peter Weir’s The Truman Show won him a Golden Globe. His film score for Stephen Daldry’s The Hours received Golden Globe, Grammy, and Academy Award nominations, along with winning a British Academy Film Award in Film Music. The critically acclaimed films The Illusionist and
Notes on a Scandal were released last year, with Notes earning Glass an Oscar nomination for best original score.

In 2004 Glass premiered the new work Orion – a collaboration between Glass and six other international artists opening in Athens as part of the cultural celebration of the 2004 Olympics in Greece, and his Piano Concerto No. 2 (After Lewis and Clark) with the Omaha Symphony Orchestra. Glass’ latest symphonies, Symphony No. 7 and Symphony No. 8, premiered in 2005 with the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, and Bruckner Orchester Linz at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, respectively. 2005 also saw the premiere of Waiting for the Barbarians, an opera based on the book by J.M. Coetzee. Glass’ orchestral tribute to Indian spiritual leader Sri Ramakrishna, The Passion of Ramakrishna, premiered in 2006 at Orange County Performing Arts Center.

Glass maintained a dense creative schedule throughout 2007 and 2008, unveiling several highly anticipated works, including a music theater piece, Book of Longing, based on Leonard Cohen’s book of poetry, a score to Woody Allen’s film Cassandra’s Dream, and an opera about the end of the Civil War titled Appomattox, which premiered at the San Francisco Opera. The English National Opera, in conjunction with the Metropolitan Opera, remounted Glass’ Satyagraha, which appeared in New York in April 2008 and then returned to London again in March 2010.

Glass’ most recent opera, based on the life and work of Johannes Kepler premiered in September 2009 in Linz, Austria and was brought to the New York in November 2009 by The Brooklyn Academy of Music. His Symphony No. 10 will receive its European premiere in France in the summer of 2012.

About Dennis Russell Davies
Internationally acclaimed musician Dennis Russell Davies is avidly sought out for his extraordinary breadth of repertoire, technical brilliance and fearless music-making. A maverick in his field, he is hailed as “one of the few conductors whose unquestioned commitment to music of our age has not severed his connections to the standard repertory.” An esteemed presence who consistently remains at the forefront of both orchestral and operatic worlds, Davies is also an accomplished pianist, and is in demand by orchestras, composers and fellow musicians worldwide for his inspiring collaborations and interpretive mastery.

A frequent guest conductor with major orchestras and opera companies throughout the world, Davies has held music directorships of prestigious orchestras worldwide for over 40 uninterrupted years. He is currently Chief Conductor and Music Director of the Bruckner Orchester Linz, Chief Conductor of the Linz Opera, and Music Director of the Basel Symphony Orchestra in Switzerland. Additionally, Davies is Professor of Orchestral Conducting at the Salzburg Mozarteum, as well as Conductor Laureate of the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra. In the U.S., he continues as Conductor Laureate of the American Composers Orchestra, which he co-founded.

As conductor and pianist, Davies has released over 60 recordings, earning numerous awards. Recent recording highlights include the complete Bruckner Symphonies with the Bruckner Orchester Linz for Arte Nova/SONY BMG, and the complete Haydn Symphonies with the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra for SONY
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Classical/SONY BMG, bringing the 11-year Mercedes-Benz Haydn recording project to conclusion. With the completion of these two cycles, Davies has recorded the complete symphonies of Bruckner, Haydn and Philip Glass.

Dennis Russell Davies was born in Toledo, Ohio, and graduated from The Juilliard School. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

About Maki Namekawa, piano
Maki Namekawa's dedication to the works of leading international contemporary composers and her commitment to audience development have secured her a notable place among today's artists. As a soloist and chamber musician at home in both classical and current repertoire, Maki Namekawa appears regularly at the Klavier Festival Ruhr, Ars Electronica Festival in Linz, ZKM Karlsruhe, and the Musikverein in Vienna. Since 2005 she has appeared with her duo-partner Dennis Russell Davies at the Lincoln Center Festival, Benaroya Hall in Seattle, Herbst Auditorium in San Francisco, Radial System in Berlin, Colmar Festival in France, and the Theater an der Wien in Vienna.

Recent orchestral appearances include repeat engagements with the Concertgebouw Orchestra and Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, as well as concerts with the Munich Philharmonic, Bruckner Orchestra Linz, Munich Chamber Orchestra, Dresden Philharmonic, and the Bochum and Erfurt Symphony Orchestras. During the 2011-12 season she appears for the first time with the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra and performs the opening concert of the Ravenna Festival.

Namekawa has recorded extensively for the Orange Mountain Music, Klavier Festival Ruhr, and Brucknerhaus labels, and has performed frequently for the major radio networks in Germany, Switzerland, France, and Holland. She pursued her piano studies at the Kunitachi Conservatory in Tokyo under Mikio Ikezawa and Henriette Puig-Roget. She continued her studies at the Musikhochschule Karlsruhe with Werner Genuit and Kaya Han, and later at the Cologne Musikhochschule with Pierre Laurent Aimard. She is married to Dennis Russell Davies.

About ACO
Now in its 35th year, 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.

To date, ACO has performed music by more than 600 American composers, including 200 world premieres and newly commissioned works. Among the orchestra's innovative programs have been SONiC:
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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; 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 multidisciplinary 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 additional educational and professional development activities, including composer residencies, and the Van Lier Emerging Composer Fellowship. In 2008, ACO launched EarShot, a multi-institutional network that assists orchestras around the country in mounting new music readings. Recent EarShot programs have included the Nashville and Memphis Symphonies, Colorado Symphony, New York Youth Symphony, and Buffalo Philharmonic. 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. ASCAP has awarded its annual prize for adventurous programming to ACO 34 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 Audience 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, and InstantEncore.com, Amazon.com and iTunes. More information about American Composers Orchestra is available online at www.americancomposers.org.

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This press release is available online at: www.americancomposers.org/press


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