American Composers Orchestra

Names Derek Bermel New Artistic Director & Renews George Manahan’s Music Directorship

Announces 2013-14 Season

Celebrating 10 Years of Orchestra Underground
With Concerts on October 25, 2013; February 20, 2014; April 4, 2014 at Carnegie Hall’s Zankel Hall

Plus the 23rd Annual Underwood New Music Readings
ACO’s annual roundup of the country’s brightest emerging composers
June 6 and 7, 2014 at the DiMenna Center for Classical Music

For more information: www.americancomposers.org

For the concert schedule and ticket information, see the end of this press release.

New York, NY – American Composers Orchestra (ACO) announced last night at its Spring Benefit at Tribeca Rooftop that composer and clarinetist Derek Bermel will be the orchestra’s new Artistic Director, commencing with the 2013-14 season. Bermel has been ACO’s Creative Advisor since 2009, and succeeds composer Robert Beaser who has been ACO’s Artistic Director since 2000 and was ACO’s Artistic Advisor from 1993. Bermel joins Music Director George Manahan, who has just renewed his contract with ACO for an unprecedented five years, in leading the ensemble in its mission to be a catalyst for the creation of new orchestral music.

ACO Board Co-Chair Astrid Baumgardner said of Bermel’s appointment, “Multi-talented composer, clarinetist, and artistic leader Derek Bermel is one of the beacons of today’s music scene. With his creativity, intelligence and charm, the orchestra is poised to scale new heights and make an important contribution to the contemporary music scene.” Board Co-Chair Annette McEvoy added, “Derek has the talent, know-how, and creativity to present compelling contemporary music for our dynamic audience, and I am thrilled that he will be leading us into the future.”

Grammy-nominated composer and clarinetist Derek Bermel has been widely hailed for his creativity, theatricality, and virtuosity. In addition to his new appointment with ACO, he will continue to serve as Director of Copland House’s Cultivate! Program for emerging composers. Bermel, an “eclectic with wide open ears” (Toronto Star), is recognized as a dynamic and unconventional curator of concert series that spotlight
the composer as performer. Alongside his international studies of ethnomusicology and orchestration, an ongoing engagement with other musical cultures has become part of the fabric and force of his compositional language.

Bermel first came to ACO's attention in 1994 as a participant in the Whitaker Emerging Composers Readings (now the Underwood New Music Readings) with his piece Dust Dances. ACO has since commissioned and premiered Bermel's work on numerous occasions, including his first professional orchestral commission and Carnegie Hall debut in 1998 with Voices, a clarinet concerto. ACO also commissioned and premiered A Shout, A Whisper, and a Trace (2009); Elixir (2006); and The Migration Series with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, which premiered to sold-out audiences in 2006. Bermel was ACO's Music Alive Composer-in-Residence from 2006-2009, joining ACO’s board and becoming the orchestra's Creative Advisor in 2009. In his role as Creative Advisor, Bermel excelled at programming ACO’s Orchestra Underground series at Carnegie Hall and ACO’s citywide new music festival SONiC, Sounds of a New Century, in 2011, which featured 21st century music by 120 emerging composers. Bermel has also been active in several of ACO’s composer development initiatives including serving as a mentor for the Underwood New Music Readings and EarShot programs, and serving as an artist-faculty member for the Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute.

Music Director George Manahan, who joined ACO in 2010, said of his five-year renewal with the orchestra, “Nothing could make me happier than to be continuing as Music Director of ACO. For me the work is filled with constant discovery and enjoyment. In no other conducting job do I get to explore so much new work. It certainly keeps me on my toes! And the ACO musicians are phenomenal. Nowhere else have I experienced the level of collaboration, commitment and experience that our players bring to new music. I can’t wait to see what surprises next season brings.”

Departing Artistic Director Robert Beaser has dedicated over 20 years to the orchestra, and will continue as ACO’s Artistic Advisor Laureate. Executive Director Michael Geller said, “ACO and the entire community of composers owe a great debt to Bob. He has been a key member of ACO's artistic team for over 20 years, and helped shape programs during the tenures of three ACO principal conductors. His work in launching and guiding our New Music Readings for 22 years has provided mentorship and career-building experience to over 100 young composers. I am thrilled that Bob will continue to play an integral role on ACO’s board, as artistic advisor laureate.”

During the 2013-14 season, ACO celebrates the 10th anniversary season of Orchestra Underground, its exploration of the orchestra as an elastic ensemble that can respond to composers’ unhindered creativity. For a decade, Orchestra Underground has challenged notions about what an orchestra is, embracing new technology, eclectic instruments and influences, altered spatial orientation, new experiments in concert format, and multimedia and multi-disciplinary collaborations. Since the opening of Zankel Hall, Carnegie Hall’s subterranean state-of-the-art auditorium, Orchestra Underground has played to sold-out audiences, bringing to life nearly 100 world premieres and newly commissioned works.

This season’s Orchestra Underground concerts include five world premieres and four New York premieres by emerging and established composers including Marcos Balter, Derek Bermel, Lisa Coons, Peter Fahey,
Gabriela Lena Frank, Ted Hearne, Amy Beth Kirsten, David Lang, and Ian Williams. ACO will also showcase Julia Wolfe’s Fuel with film by Bill Morrison, Christopher Theofanidis’ Bassoon Concerto with master bassoonist Martin Kuuskmann, Steve Reich’s landmark work Eight Lines, Gunther Schuller’s jazz-classical fusion Contours, and rarely heard Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas’ Alcancias.

In addition, ACO’s 23rd annual Underwood New Music Readings, one of the country’s most sought-after programs for emerging composers, will take place on June 6 and 7, 2014 at the DiMenna Center, and will this year be part of the first NY PHIL BIENNIAL. ACO’s New Music Readings will feature works by up to eight young composers, one of whom will receive a $15,000 commission to write a piece that will be performed by ACO in a future season. ACO’s nationwide expansion of its Readings program through EarShot, a national orchestra composition network, will also continue during the 2013-14 season with EarShot Readings taking place in partnership with the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus in September 2013, and in 2014 with the Berkeley Symphony in February and May, the Detroit Symphony in March, and the New York Philharmonic in June, also as part of the NY PHIL BIENNIAL.

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 more than 200 world premiers and newly commissioned works.

**ACO’s Orchestra Underground 10th Anniversary Concerts**

**Friday, October 25, 2013 at 7:30pm. Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall.**

American Composers Orchestra opens its 37th season – and the 10th anniversary season of its signature Orchestra Underground series in Zankel Hall – with a concert featuring the world premiere of the first orchestral piece by experimental-rock guitarist Ian Williams (Battles) and the world premiere of rising-star composer and ACO’s 2012 Underwood Commission winner Peter Fahey’s piece for orchestra and electronics. Julia Wolfe’s virtuosic multimedia work Fuel with film by Bill Morrison and Christopher Theofanidis’ Bassoon Concerto performed by Estonian virtuoso Martin Kuuskmann complete the program. This concert marks conductor Robert Spano’s first-ever appearance with ACO.

**About the Composers & Music**

Peter Fahey is the winner of ACO’s 2012 Annual Underwood Commission, which he won for his work Impressions. Born and raised in Ireland, Fahey studied composition with Eric Sweeney at the Waterford Institute of Technology, with David Horne and Anthony Gilbert at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England, and, informally, at the Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt Weimar, Germany. He has also attended the Darmstadt Festival; the TACTUS Young Composers’ Forum, Belgium; the Weimarer Meisterkurse Kompositions-Workshop; and the Aspen Music Festival and School Advanced Masterclass Program. Fahey moved to the U.S. to study with Roberto Sierra and Steven Stucky at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, and in spring 2012 was an exchange scholar at Columbia University. In addition to ACO, Fahey has worked with the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, Continuum, Ensemble Musiques Nouvelle, i0 Quartet, the Royal Northern College of Music Symphony Orchestra, and Talea Ensemble. Fahey is the winner
Christopher Theofanidis has had performances by many leading orchestras from around the world, including the London Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Moscow Soloists, the National, Atlanta, Baltimore, St. Louis, Detroit Symphonies, and many others. He also served as Composer of the Year for the Pittsburgh Symphony during their 2006-2007 Season, for which he wrote a violin concerto for Sarah Chang. Theofanidis holds degrees from Yale, the Eastman School of Music, and the University of Houston, and has been the recipient of the International Masterprize (hosted at the Barbican Centre in London), the Rome Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, six ASCAP Gould Prizes, a Fulbright Fellowship to France, a Tanglewood Fellowship, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters' Charles Ives Fellowship. In 2007 he was nominated for a Grammy for best composition for his chorus and orchestra work, The Here and Now, based on the poetry of Rumi. His orchestral concert work, Rainbow Body, has been one of the most performed new orchestral works of the last ten years, having been performed by over 100 orchestras internationally. He currently teaches at Yale University. Of his Bassoon Concerto, Theofanidis says, “I wrote my bassoon concerto for my good friend Martin Kuuskmann, whom I had known since 1992 from my days as a student at Yale, commissioned for Absolute Ensemble.” The virtuosic piece incorporates a style of melodic ornamentation heard in the Greek Orthodox Church, which is also found throughout the Balkan region, and requires the soloist to make use of circular breathing techniques. For more information, visit www.theofanidismusic.com.

Drawing inspiration from folk, classical, and rock genres, Julia Wolfe’s music brings a modern sensibility to each while simultaneously tearing down the walls between them. Her music is distinguished by an intense physicality and a relentless power that pushes performers to extremes and demands attention from the audience. In the words of the Wall Street Journal, Wolfe has “long inhabited a terrain of [her] own, a place where classical forms are recharged by the repetitive patterns of minimalism and the driving energy of rock.” Wolfe has written a major body of work for strings, from quartets to full orchestra. Her quartets, as described by the New Yorker magazine “combine the violent forward drive of rock music with an aura of minimalist serenity [using] the four instruments as a big guitar, whipping psychedelic states of mind into frenzied and ecstatic climaxes.” The influence of pop culture can be heard in many of Wolfe’s works and she has collaborated with theater artist Anna Deveare Smith, architects DillerScofidio+Renfro, filmmaker Bill Morrison, Ridge Theater, director Francois Girard, Jim Findlay, and choreographer Susan Marshall among others. Her music has been heard at BAM, the Sydney Olympic Arts Festival, Settembre Musica (Italy), Theatre de la Ville (Paris), Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall, and has been recorded on Cantaloupe, Teldec,
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Julianna Wolf is a composer, pianist, and music director. She is co-founder of New York's music collective Bang on a Can. Wolfe's piece Fuel, a collaboration with filmmaker Bill Morrison, was premiered in April 2013 by Ensemble Resonanz in a former warehouse in Hamburg, Germany. Fuel weaves a tapestry of images and music with fierce and propelling energy and incorporates film shot in the US and in Hamburg. Like all ports, Hamburg relies on the standardized shipping container as its medium of commerce. Fuel presents these containers as a metaphor for world commerce, communication, and globalization of world markets. For more information, visit www.juliawolfemusic.com.

Ian Williams is a guitarist from a rock background. His status as a rock musician has always existed in the realm of hyphenated distinctions (experimental-rock, electro-rock, post-rock, math-rock, etc.), although none quite fit. His music has always balanced somewhere between complexity and accessibility, falling more to one side or the other each time. In 2002, he started the band Battles, in which he plays guitar, keyboard and electronics. Battles has released two full albums and a series of EPs with Warp Records. In the past Williams was a key member of the group Don Caballero which was based in Pittsburgh from 1992-2000. He played guitar and released five albums with them over that time. He also spent a number of years in Chicago where he had an experimental band called Storm and Stress, which existed from 1995 until 2000 and released two albums. In 2000, he moved to Brooklyn, NY where he currently resides. His new work Clear Image No. 1 for orchestra and electronics, commissioned by ACO, explores the realm between live performance and material that has been electronically enhanced.

About the Conductor
As Music Director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Robert Spano has enriched and expanded its repertoire and elevated the ensemble to new levels of international prominence. In 2012, Spano became Music Director of the Aspen Music Festival and School and is also a Fellow of the Aspen Institute as part of the Harman-Eisner Artist in Residence Program. Spano has appeared with Seattle Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony and Orchestra of St. Luke's among many others, and was the Music Director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic from 1996 to 2004. With a discography of 16 critically acclaimed recordings for Telarc and Deutsche Grammophon, Robert Spano has garnered six Grammy Awards. In February 2011, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Naxos created ASO Media and the label's first recording was released in April 2011. Musical America's 2008 "Conductor of the Year," Spano is on the faculty of Oberlin Conservatory, and has received honorary doctorates from Bowling Green State University, the Curtis Institute of Music, Emory University, and Oberlin. For more information, visit www.robertspanomusic.com.

About the Soloist
Estonian bassoonist Martin Kuuskmann has premiered eight bassoon concertos written especially for him and has collaborated with composers Daniel Schnyder, Helena Tulve and jazz icon John Patitucci among others. He has appeared with orchestras such as Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, the Järvi Festival Orchestra, Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, 1B1 Ensemble New York Philharmonic series, as well as with the Macao Orchestra, Nordic Symphony Orchestra, Absolute Ensemble,
Riga Sinfonietta, Graziioso Chamber Orchestra and the Symphony Orchestra of the Norrlandsoperan. Kuuskmann has recorded reconstructed bassoon concertos by J.S. Bach with co-soloist, renowned violist Lars Anders Tomter and the 1B1 Ensemble, and has recorded Theofanidis’ bassoon concerto with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project under Gil Rose. His solo album Nonstop and other albums are available on the ERP, Erdenklang, CCnC and Chesky record labels. A graduate of the Yale and the Manhattan Schools of Music, Kuuskmann teaches at the Manhattan School, Cornish College of Arts in Seattle, serves as the woodwind coach of the Baltic Youth Philharmonic, and teaches regularly at the Arosa Music Academy in Switzerland. For more information, visit www.martinkuuskmann.com.

**Thursday, February 20, 2014 at 7:30pm. Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall.**

ACO explores minimalist and post-minimalist territory in this concert led by Music Director George Manahan and anchored by Steve Reich’s landmark work Eight Lines with pianists Margaret Kampmeier and Stephen Gosling, as well as the New York premiere of statement to the court by David Lang, 2013–2014 holder of the Richard and Barbara Debs Composer’s Chair at Carnegie Hall, performed by ACO with celebrated Philadelphia chamber choir The Crossing. The concert also includes two world premieres commissioned by ACO — Amy Beth Kirsten’s strange pilgrims for orchestra and choir with video by Mark DeChiazza, and Lisa Coons’ Shadow Studies featuring the ACO strings. The Crossing takes center stage for Ted Hearne’s Ripple for choir a cappella, conducted by Donald Nally.

**About the Composers & Music**

Lisa Renée Coons is a composer and sound artist with a special affinity to noise composition, collaboration, and experimentation. She is dedicated to progressive art and focuses on partnerships with other artists and musicians as a means of developing innovative new works. Coons’ music was featured as part of ACO’s citywide SONiC festival in 2011, performed by electric guitar quartet Dither. Presently an assistant professor of music composition at Western Michigan University, Coons received her PhD in Composition from Princeton University, her Master’s from SUNY Stony Brook and studied at the University of Missouri-Kansas City during her undergraduate degree. Before joining WMU she was a Jackie McLean Fellow and visiting professor at the Hartt School in the University of Hartford. Her portfolio includes music for acoustic and electronic instruments, turntables, traditional ensembles, and her own welded percussion sculptures. Coons’ new work Shadow Studies, commissioned by ACO, celebrates the visual spectacle of the string players in an orchestra. She explains, “Shadow Studies is a study in both the visceral aspects of sound production and aural phenomena particular to the string orchestra. The idiomatic strengths of string instruments to shift and blend timbrally is explored geographically – passing different colors and ideas spatially between players – as well as choreographically, by exploiting the balletic possibilities in the movement of the bows.” For more information, visit www.lisarcoons.com.

Ted Hearne is a composer, conductor and singer with sensibilities in experimental, rock, and traditional classical music. His Katrina Ballads was awarded the 2009 Gaudeamus Prize, and named one of the best classical albums of 2010 by Time Out Chicago and The Washington Post. Hearne’s diverse projects have paired him with electronic artists Philip White and J.G. Thirlwell, jazz musician Rene Marie, filmmaker Bill Morrison, and the French synthpop band M83, among others. He is a founding member of the composer collective Sleeping Giant, the leader of his independent rock project Delusion Story, and one half of the
explosive electronic/vocal duo R WE WHO R WE. Hearne has recently conducted the Wet Ink Ensemble, Ensemble Pamplemousse, International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), and Red Light New Music. Recent and upcoming commissions include works for Los Angeles Philharmonic, eighth blackbird, A Far Cry, European Contemporary Orchestra, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Albany Symphony, The Crossing and Ensemble Klang, and a new work for the Brooklyn Philharmonic and hiphop legend Erykah Badu. Hearne’s piece that The Crossing will perform is entitled Ripple, and uses as its text a sentence from one of the 400,000 internal military cables known as the Iraq War Logs: “The marine from Post 7 was unable to determine the occupants of the vehicle due to the reflection of the sun coming off the windshield.” The occupants were a family of Iraqi civilians. For more information, visit www.tedhearne.com.

Amy Beth Kirsten moved from the Midwest to the East Coast in 2004 to attend Peabody Conservatory. In the preceding ten years, she was a singer-songwriter in Chicago and played at many of the city’s nightclubs. Since then Kirsten has written music for orchestra, chamber ensemble, opera, and for solo instruments. Color, memory, voice, words, and breath are fascinations that are intrinsic to her musical language. Her work Strange Angel was part of ACO’s Underwood New Music Readings in 2007. She has received awards and grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, Fromm Foundation, The MAP Fund, ASCAP, and from the state of Connecticut. In addition to the world premiere of strange pilgrims, her piece for ACO, the 2013–14 season includes premieres by eighth blackbird, Calyx Piano Trio, cellist Jeffrey Zeigler, and a song cycle for the duo TwoSense. Kirsten lives and works in New Haven, CT. She teaches privately and at the HighSCORE Festival in Pavia, Italy. Of strange pilgrims which incorporates video by Mark DeChiazza, she says, “strange pilgrims is a meditation on the process of discovery and its relationship to the spirit. The title of the piece comes from Gabriel Garcia Márquez’s collection of the same name, which explores themes of otherness and isolation. In the solitude of creating music, comes the knowledge that a composer’s dream can only be realized with the dedication of the remarkable ‘others’ who give the vision life.” For more information, visit www.amybethkirsten.com.

Musical America’s 2013 Composer of the Year and recipient of Carnegie Hall’s Debs Composer’s Chair for 2013–2014, David Lang is one of America’s most performed composers. Many of his works resemble each other only in the fierce intelligence and clarity of vision that inform their structures. His catalogue is extensive, and his opera, orchestra, chamber and solo works are by turns ominous, ethereal, urgent, hypnotic, unsettling and very emotionally direct. Much of his work seeks to expand the definition of virtuosity in music — even the deceptively simple pieces can be fiendishly difficult to play and require incredible concentration by musicians and audiences alike. ACO has commissioned and premiered two works by Lang at Carnegie Hall: Bonehead in 1990 and how to pray in 2002. Lang’s the little match girl passion, commissioned by Carnegie Hall for Paul Hillier’s vocal ensemble Theater of Voices, was awarded the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for music as well as a 2010 Grammy for the subsequent recording. “There is no name yet for this kind of music,” wrote Los Angeles Times music critic Mark Swed of Lang’s work, “but audiences around the globe are hearing more and more of it.” Lang is co-founder and co-artistic director of New York’s legendary music collective Bang on a Can. His work has been recorded on the Sony Classical, Harmonia Mundi, Teldec, BMG, Point, Chandos, Argo/Decca, and Cantaloupe Music labels, among others. ACO and The Crossing give the New York premiere of Lang’s work statement to the court, which sets a speech by Eugene
Debs, the pioneering 19th century American Socialist and founder of the International Workers of the World, in which he addresses the court that has just found him guilty of sedition for speaking out against American participation in World War I. Lang explains, “What I love about this speech is that it is both critical of the political world the Debs lives in and at the same time optimistic about it. He sees the problems around him and yet is confident that through dedication things can be improved. I wanted to try to capture this duality of feeling in my setting of the text – the clear-eyed recognition that things are not what they should be, the hopefulness that, with hard work, things can be made a lot better.” For more information, visit www.davidlangmusic.com.

**Steve Reich** was recently called “our greatest living composer” by *The New York Times* and “the most original musical thinker of our time” by *The New Yorker*. From his early taped speech pieces *It's Gonna Rain* (1965) and *Come Out* (1966) to his and video artist Beryl Korot’s digital video opera *Three Tales* (2002), Reich’s path has embraced not only aspects of Western Classical music, but the structures, harmonies, and rhythms of non-Western and American vernacular music, particularly jazz. “There’s just a handful of living composers who can legitimately claim to have altered the direction of musical history and Steve Reich is one of them,” states *The Guardian* (London). In April 2009 he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music for his composition *Double Sextet*. ACO performs Reich’s landmark work from 1983, *Eight Lines*, with pianists *Margaret Kampmeier* and *Stephen Gosling*. Reich has said that *Eight Lines* has its roots in his earlier work as well as in his studies in the 1970s of the cantillation (chanting) of the Hebrew Scriptures. For more information, visit www.stevereich.com.

**About the Guest Artists**

Winner of the 2009 and 2011 ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming, *The Crossing* is a twenty-four-member professional chamber choir conducted by Donald Nally. Formed by a group of friends in 2006, the ensemble was the resident choir of the Spoleto Festival, Italy in 2007 and has since expanded such collaborations exponentially, appearing last September at Miller Theatre of Columbia University in the American premiere of James Dillon’s *Nine Rivers* with the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), at Bang on a Can’s first Philadelphia Marathon in 2010, and with Network for New Music during The Crossing’s annual Month of Moderns festival in 2012. The Crossing frequently commissions works and has presented recent world premieres by William Brooks, Ėriks Ešenvalds, Paul Fowler, Kamran Ince, Gabriel Jackson, David Lang (Pulitzer 2008), Lansing McLoskey, David Shapiro, Kile Smith and Lewis Spratlan (Pulitzer 2000). Upcoming premieres include works of John Luther Adams, Gavin Bryars, Gene Coleman, Ted Hearne, Chris Jonas, Francis Pott, and Joby Talbot; upcoming collaborations include PRISM Saxophone Quartet, Ensemble N_JP, Sun Spits Cherries, the Association of Anglican Musicians, Arts at The Park (New York), Dolce Suono, and Toshimaru Nakamura. For more information, visit www.crossingchoir.com.

**Friday, April 4, 2014 at 7:30pm. Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall.**

ACO shifts its focus to Latin and jazz-influences in this April Orchestra Underground concert featuring *Gunther Schuller*’s groundbreaking first use of jazz in a classical setting in *Contours* and rarely heard Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas’ *Alcancias*. Gabriela Lena Frank’s *Manchay Tiempo*, inspired by the composer’s recurring nightmare, has its New York premiere, as does Derek Bermel’s *Mar de Setembro*
featuring Brazilian pop star singer **Luciana Souza**. The world premiere of **Marcos Balter**’s new ACO-commissioned piece *Favela*, inspired by life in his native Brazil, completes the concert.

**About the Composers & Music**

Praised by *The Chicago Tribune* as “minutely crafted” and “utterly lovely” and *The New York Times* as “whimsical” and “surreal,” the music of composer **Marcos Balter** has been featured at ACO’s SONiC Festival in 2011, Lincoln Center’s Mostly Mozart Festival, Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s MusicNOW, New World Symphony Center, Teatro Amazonas, Morgan Library, and the Museum of Contemporary Art of Chicago, among others. Past honors include commissions from Meet the Composer, Chamber Music America, The Fromm Foundation at Harvard University, The Holland/America Music Society, The MacArthur Foundation, and the Art Institute of Chicago, fellowships from the Tanglewood Music Center/Leonard Bernstein Foundation and the Civitella Ranieri Foundation (USA/Italy), as well as first prizes in several national and international composition competitions. Former composition teachers include Augusta Read Thomas, Amy Williams, and Jay Alan Yim. Having previously taught at the University of Pittsburgh, Northwestern University, and Lawrence University, Balter is currently the Director of the Music Composition program at Columbia College Chicago. His piece commissioned by ACO, *Favela*, takes its title and inspiration from the term used to describe “shantytowns” in Brazil, the composer’s native country. He explains, “The piece creates a big sonic shantytown, with ‘musical shacks’ that are at once independent from one another and connected by a sense of unity. Each ‘musical shack’ musically mimics the makeshift-like construction of actual shacks, with different kinds of material (instruments and performers) being as fully optimized as possible, some more modest, and some more developed than others.” For more information, visit www.marcosbalter.com.

In addition to his commissions from American Composers Orchestra, **Derek Bermel** has received commissions from the Pittsburgh, National, Saint Louis, and Pacific Symphonies, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, WNYC, eighth blackbird, the Guarneri String Quartet, Music from Copland House and Music from China, De Ereprijs (Netherlands), Jazz Xchange (U.K.), violinist Midori, and electric guitarist Wiek Hijmans, among others. His many honors include the Alpert Award in the Arts, Rome Prize, Guggenheim and Fulbright Fellowships, American Music Center’s Trailblazer Award, and Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; commissions from the Koussevitzky and Fromm Foundations, Meet the Composer, and Cary Trust; and residencies at the Institute for Advanced Study, Yaddo, Tanglewood, Aspen, Banff, Bellagio, Copland House, Sacatar, and Civitella Ranieri. His discography features three critically acclaimed discs: an all-Bermel orchestral recording that includes his clarinet concerto *Voices* (BMOP/sound); *Soul Garden* (New World/CRI); and his most recent disc, *Canzonas Americanas*, with Alarm Will Sound (Cantaloupe). Bermel’s work *Mar de Setembro* sets the work of the great Portuguese poet Eugénio de Andrade, and will be performed by ACO with Brazilian songstress Luciana Souza. Bermel says of Andrade’s poetry, “I was struck by the direct lyricism of his language, his bold depictions of the natural world’s sensuality.” For more information, visit www.derekbermel.com.

Born in Berkeley, California, to a mother of mixed Peruvian/Chinese ancestry and a father of Lithuanian/Jewish descent, **Gabriela Lena Frank** explores her multicultural heritage most ardently through her compositions. Inspired by the works of Bela Bartók and Alberto Ginastera, Frank is something of a
musical anthropologist. She has traveled extensively throughout South America and her pieces reflect and refract her studies of Latin American folklore, incorporating poetry, mythology, and native musical styles into a western classical framework that is uniquely her own. Frank’s piece, Manchay Tiempo, attempts to render a mysterious recurring dream Frank has had since childhood – one that she discovered has roots in a documentary film she viewed long ago, telling of the horrors of the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso), a Maoist-inspired terrorist group in Peru.

Silvestre Revueltas was born in Santiago Papasquiaro, Durango, a small town in the north of Mexico, in 1899 and studied at the National Conservatory of Music in Mexico City and the Chicago College of Music. With Carlos Chávez he organized the first concerts of contemporary music in Mexico in 1924 and 1925, and in 1929 Chávez offered him the position of assistant conductor of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Mexico, which he held until 1936. Working together they were able to do much to promote Mexican music, offering a rich repertoire including works by the most outstanding and prominent names of the period. At the same time Revueltas began a very successful career as a prolific composer producing a series of works that constitute a vivid example of his extraordinary contribution to the form of the national Mexican symphonic poem, with compositions that show his originality and freshness of inspiration, together with his technical mastery. The title of Revueltas’ collage-like work Alcancias translates as “piggy banks,” or alternatively, as “brothel keepers.” Filled with motives from Mexican folk music, Alcancias displays Revueltas’ vital and radical approach to orchestral music.

Gunther Schuller has developed a musical career that ranges from composing and conducting to his extensive work as an educator, jazz historian, administrator, music publisher, record producer and author. Schuller was principal French horn at the age of 17 with the Cincinnati Symphony, and rose to that position seven years later with the Metropolitan Opera. In 1959 he gave up performing to devote himself primarily to composition, and has since been rewarded with the Pulitzer Prize (1994), two Guggenheim fellowships, the Darius Milhaud Award, the Rodgers & Hammerstein Award, the William Schuman Award from Columbia University for lifetime achievement, a MacArthur Award, numerous Lifetime Achievement awards and is an original member of the American Classical Music Hall of Fame. As a conductor, Schuller travels throughout the world, leading major ensembles from New Zealand to Holland to St. Louis, including ACO on several occasions. Schuller has written dozens of essays and four books, including renowned jazz history studies and a volume on the art of conducting, entitled The Compleat Conductor. Schuller also founded and led the New England Ragtime Ensemble, and is largely responsible for the renaissance of Scott Joplin and other ragtime greats. He has led the Bach Festival, in Spokane, Washington as Artistic Director since 1993. Schuller’s work Contours was composed from 1955 to 1958. Within the piece is a brief “jazz” variation in the movement titled Partita, which was the first time Schuller placed any type of jazz element in one of his “classical” compositions. The piece retains his style of expressive free atonalism throughout.

About the Guest Artist
Grammy winner Luciana Souza is a leading jazz singer and interpreter. Born in São Paulo, Brazil, in the late sixties, she grew up in a family of Bossa Nova innovators—her father was a singer and songwriter and her mother was a poet and lyricist. Souza’s work as a performer transcends traditional boundaries around musical styles, offering solid roots in jazz, sophisticated lineage in world music, and an enlightened
approach to classical repertoire and new music. Souza has performed and recorded with greats including Herbie Hancock, Paul Simon, James Taylor, Bobby McFerrin, Maria Schneider, Danilo Perez and many others. Her longstanding duo work with Brazilian guitarist Romero Lubambo has earned her accolades across the globe, and her complete discography contains more than 50 records as a side singer. *Entertainment Weekly* writes, “Her voice traces a landscape of emotion that knows no boundaries.” Luciana Souza has been a prominent soloist in two important works by composer Osvaldo Golijov – *La Pasion According to St. Mark* and *Oceana*. She has performed with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Brooklyn Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Atlanta Symphony, and Los Angeles Philharmonic. For more information, visit www.lucianasouza.com.

**Underwood New Music Readings**

**Friday and Saturday, June 6 and 7, 2014. DiMenna Center (450 W 37th St., NYC).**

ACO will hold its 23rd Annual Underwood New Music Readings for emerging composers on Friday and Saturday, June 6 and 7, at the DiMenna Center. In what has become a rite of passage for aspiring orchestral composers, up to eight composers from throughout the United States will be selected to receive a reading of a new work, and one composer will be selected to receive a $15,000 commission for a work to be performed by ACO during an upcoming season. Each participating composer receives rehearsal, reading, and a digital recording of his or her work. Review and feedback sessions with ACO principal players, mentor-composers, guest conductors, and industry representatives provide crucial artistic, technical, and conceptual assistance. To date, more than 100 composers have participated in the New Music Readings, including such award-winning composers as Melinda Wagner, Derek Bermel, Randall Woolf, Daniel Bernard Roumain, Sebastian Currier, and Jennifer Higdon. This year, the Readings are part of the NY PHIL BIENNIAL.

The proceedings are open to the public free of charge. The first day of Readings, a working rehearsal, will be presented from **10am to 12:30pm on Friday, June 6**; the second day of Readings will take place on **Saturday evening, June 7, at 7:30pm**, when all selected pieces will be polished and performed in their entirety. ACO’s artistic director, Derek Bermel, directs the readings. The deadline for composers interested in applying to the Underwood New Music Readings is Monday, December 2, 2013. Application guidelines and other information will be available in September at www.americancomposers.org/nmr.

**About George Manahan**

In his fourth season as Music Director of the American Composers Orchestra, the wide-ranging and versatile George Manahan has had an esteemed career embracing everything from opera to the concert stage, the traditional to the contemporary. In addition to his work with ACO this season, Manahan continues his commitment to working with young musicians as Director of Orchestral Studies at the Manhattan School of Music as well as guest conductor at the Curtis Institute of Music.
Manahan was Music Director at New York City Opera for fourteen seasons. There he helped envision the organization’s groundbreaking VOX program, a series of workshops and readings that have provided unique opportunities for numerous composers to hear their new concepts realized, and introduced audiences to exciting new compositional voices. In addition to established composers such as Mark Adamo, David Del Tredici, Lewis Spratlan, Robert X. Rodriguez, Lou Harrison, Bernard Rands, and Richard Danielpour, through VOX Manahan has introduced works by composers on the rise including Adam Silverman, Elodie Lauten, Mason Bates, and David T. Little.

In May 2011 Manahan was honored by the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) for his “career-long advocacy for American composers and the music of our time has enriched and enabled Concert Music both at home and abroad.” His recent Carnegie Hall performance of Samuel Barber’s *Antony and Cleopatra* was hailed by audiences and critics alike. *The New York Times* reported, “the fervent and sensitive performance that Mr. Manahan presided over made the best case for this opera that I have encountered.”

George Manahan’s wide-ranging recording activities include the premiere recording of Steve Reich’s *Tehillim* for ECM; recordings of Edward Thomas’s *Desire Under the Elms*, which was nominated for a Grammy; Joe Jackson’s *Will Power*; and Tobias Picker’s *Emmeline*. His enthusiasm for contemporary music continues today; he has conducted numerous world premieres, including Charles Wuorinen’s *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, David Lang’s *Modern Painters*, and the New York premiere of Richard Danielpour’s *Margaret Garner*. As music director of the Richmond Symphony (VA) for twelve years, he was honored four times by the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) for his commitment to 20th century music.

**About ACO**

Entering its 37th season, 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: 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 additional 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 Earshot programs have included the Nashville, Memphis, Colorado, San Diego Symphonies, the New York Youth Symphony, and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. 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 35 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), and the orchestra’s latest release, Orchestra Underground: X10D (June 2012), an album featuring unusual and extended solo instruments with the orchestra. More information about American Composers Orchestra is available online at www.americancomposers.org.

**Ticket Info**

Subscriptions for the Orchestra Underground concerts in Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall are available for $120 and $141 and can be purchased at CarnegieCharge 212-247-7800, www.carnegiehall.org, or at the Carnegie Hall Box Office. Single tickets are priced at $43 and $50, and go on sale for subscribers and donors on August 19 and to the general public on August 26.

The Underwood New Music Readings on June 6 and 7 at the DiMenna Center are open to the public, free of charge, but reservations are recommended and can be made online at www.americancomposers.org.

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2013-2014 Season Highlights

September 19-21, 2013. Mandeville Auditorium, UC San Diego (San Diego, CA)
JCOI La Jolla Symphony & Chorus New Music Readings
  Steve Schick, conductor
  Derek Bermel, Anne LeBaron, Anthony Davis, mentor composers

Friday, October 25, 2013 at 7:30pm. Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall (57th St. & 7th Ave., NYC)
Orchestra Underground
  Robert Spano, conductor
  Martin Kuuskmann, bassoon; Ian Williams, electronics; Bill Morrison, film
IAN WILLIAMS: Clear Image No. 1 (World Premiere, ACO Commission)
JULIA WOLFE: Fuel (with film by Bill Morrison)
CHRISTOPHER THEOFANIDIS: Bassoon Concerto
PETER FAHEY: A Mirror to Kathleen’s Face (World Premiere, Underwood Commission)

February 2-3, 2014. The Osher Studio at Berkeley Repertory Theatre (Berkeley, CA)
EarShot/Berkeley Symphony UnderConstruction Readings

Thursday, Feb. 20, 2014 at 7:30pm. Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall (57th St. & 7th Ave., NYC)
Orchestra Underground
  George Manahan, Music Director & Conductor
  The Crossing, Donald Nally director; Margaret Kampmeier and Stephen Gosling, pianists; Mark DeChiazza, video
TED HEARNE: Ripple for choir a cappella (New York Premiere)
DAVID LANG: statement to the court for choir, strings and bass drum (New York Premiere)
STEVE REICH: Eight Lines
LISA COONS: Shadow Studies (World Premiere, ACO Commission)
AMY BETH KIRSTEN: strange pilgrims (with video by Mark DeChiazza) (World Premiere, ACO Commission)

March 9-10, 2014. Orchestra Hall (Detroit, MI)
EarShot Detroit Symphony Orchestra New Music Readings

Friday, April 4, 2014 at 7:30pm. Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall (57th St. & 7th Ave., NYC)
Orchestra Underground
  George Manahan, Music Director & Conductor
  Luciana Souza, vocalist
GUNTHER SCHULLER: Contours
GABRIELA LENA FRANK: Manchay Tiempo (New York Premiere)
SILVESTRE REVUELTAS: Alcancias
MARCOS BALTER: Favela (World Premiere, ACO Commission)
DEREK BERMEL: Mar de Setembro (New York Premiere)

May 4-5, 2014. The Osher Studio at Berkeley Repertory Theatre (Berkeley, CA)
EarShot/Berkeley Symphony UnderConstruction Readings

June 3, 2014. Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (Lincoln Center Plaza, NYC)
EarShot New York Philharmonic Orchestra New Music Readings

June 6 (10am) & June 7 (7:30), 2014. The DiMenna Center. (450 W. 37th St., NYC)
Underwood New Music Readings

ACO’s annual roundup of the country’s brightest young and emerging composers.
  George Manahan, Music Director & Conductor

Artists and repertoire subject to change.