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APRIL 15, 2013

American Composers Orchestra announces
2013 Spring Benefit
Celebrating 10 Years of ACO’s Orchestra Underground

Wednesday, May 22, 2013 at 6:30pm
Tribeca Rooftop | 2 Desbrosses Street, NYC
Tickets: $500 per person at www.americancomposers.org/benefit2013 or by phone at 212-977-8495 x204. Festive Attire Recommended.

New York, NY – American Composers Orchestra (ACO) will hold its 2013 Spring Benefit on Wednesday, May 22 at 6:30 pm at Tribeca Rooftop (2 Desbrosses Street, Manhattan), celebrating 10 years of Orchestra Underground – ACO’s enterprising and elastic ensemble that challenges conventional notions about symphonic music. Originally created for the opening of Zankel Hall, Carnegie Hall’s subterranean state-of-the-art auditorium, ACO’s Orchestra Underground has played to sold-out audiences, bringing to life more than 70 world premieres and newly commissioned works in the last decade.

ACO’s Spring Benefit will begin with a cocktail reception, followed by dinner and performances by some of the composers whose music has been premiered by Orchestra Underground, including Derek Bermel (clarinet), Lisa Bielawa (vocals), Kenji Bunch (viola), Uri Caine (piano), Paquito D’Rivera (saxophone), Susie Ibarra (drums), Gabriel Kahane (guitar/vocals), Joan La Barbara (vocals), Joshue Ott (projections) and Daniel Roumain (violin). ACO’s Spring Benefit will be a rare opportunity to hear these composers, who are also accomplished performers, in such an intimate setting.

ACO’s Spring Benefit committee includes Astrid and John Baumgardner, Derek Bermel, Anthony B. Creamer III, Guggenheim Partners, Gina Hubbell, Ellen and James S. Marcus, Tess Mateo and Gary Brewster, Annette McEvoy, and Frederick Wertheim.

The venue for ACO’s Spring Benefit, Tribeca Rooftop at 2 Desbrosses Street, is a 15,000 square-foot loft-style penthouse with panoramic views of the Hudson River, Empire State Building, SoHo, and downtown Manhattan.

Tickets to ACO’s Spring Benefit are offered at $500 per person, and may be purchased at www.americancomposers.org/benefit2013 or by calling Barbara Burch, 212-977-8495 x204.

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About Orchestra Underground

Through Orchestra Underground, ACO has commissioned and premiered more than 70 innovative new works by American composers in the last decade. The series challenges conventional notions about symphonic music, embracing multidisciplinary and collaborative work, novel instrumental and spatial orientations of musicians, new technologies and multimedia. It allows ACO to support the development of new repertoire, and provides fertile working ground for artists who have not traditionally had access to the orchestral ensemble. Through Orchestra Underground, ACO has collaborated with many composers, performers, technologists, laptopists, painters, lighting designers, sound and video artists. Orchestra Underground attracts a diverse group of concert-goers that is younger than the traditional symphony audience (The New York Times reported, “the young and near-young were everywhere.”), playing to sold-out houses during its first 10 seasons, and bringing the orchestra into unchartered territory.

About ACO’s Spring 2013 Benefit Performers

Described by the Toronto Star as an "eclectic with wide open ears," Grammy-nominated composer and clarinetist Derek Bermel has been widely hailed for his creativity, theatricality and virtuosity. Bermel's works draw from a rich variety of musical genres, including classical, jazz, pop, rock, blues, folk, and gospel. Hands-on experience with music of cultures around the world has become part of the fabric and force of his compositional language. As ACO's Music Alive composer-in-residence for three years and then continuing as creative advisor, Bermel has served as a key member of ACO’s artistic team and has co-curated Orchestra Underground since 2007. The series premiered his ACO commission A Shout, A Whisper, A Trace in 2009.

ACO commissioned Lisa Bielawa to write a new work for its first Orchestra Underground concert in 2004. She wrote The Right Weather as Zankel Hall, where the work would receive its world premiere, was still under construction. Bielawa is a 2009 Rome Prize winner and was appointed Artistic Director of the San Francisco Girls Chorus in 2013. She has been the vocalist in the Philip Glass Ensemble since 1992, is the choirmaster for the touring production of Einstein on the Beach, and performs frequently in her own work and in the music of numerous composer colleagues.

Kenji Bunch’s The Devil’s Box received its world premiere at Orchestra Underground’s launch of ACO’s New York City-wide SONiC: Sounds of a New Century Festival in 2011. He is widely recognized for performing his own groundbreaking works for viola. A founding member of the Flux Quartet and Ne(x)tworks, he also has a deep interest in vernacular American music and improvisation, he also plays bluegrass fiddle and sings with the band Citigrass, and works with many prominent rock, jazz, folk and alternative/ experimental artists.

ACO commissioned Uri Caine to write his Double Trouble for piano and orchestra, premiered in 2008 at Orchestra Underground. He is known for his improvisational, jazz-inflected permutations on music by composers such as Mozart, Beethoven, Mahler and Bach. The wide-ranging composer-pianist has played in bands led by Philly Joe Jones, Hank Mobley, Johnny Coles, Mickey Roker, Odean Pope, Jymmie Merritt, Bootsie Barnes and Grover Washington and, in addition to ACO, has received commissions from the Vienna Volksoper, The Seattle Chamber Players, Relache, The Beaux Arts Trio, the Basel Chamber Orchestra, Concerto Koln and served as the Director of the Venice Biennale for Music.

Paquito D’Rivera’s Conversations with Cachao was a highlight of ACO’s Orchestra Underground season in 2010 and continued the orchestra’s long-time emphasis on performing works, such as jazz, that lie outside the traditional orchestra repertoire. D’Rivera is a giant of Latin jazz, celebrated for his soaring improvisations and technical mastery on clarinet and saxophone, as well as his energy-infused compositions that pulsate with the spirit of his native Cuba. His recordings have won nine Grammy awards and his ensembles perform worldwide.

Susie Ibarra wrote the ACO-commissioned Pintados Dream (The Painted's Dream), a concerto for drums, live-painting/projections and orchestra, for Orchestra Underground in 2007. Ibarra has been nominated "Best Drummer" by such publications as Village Voice, Downbeat, Jazziz and The Wire. She is known as a performer in avant-garde,
jazz, world and new music, and as a composer she incorporates diverse styles and influences of Philippine Kulintang, jazz, classical, poetry, musical theater, opera and electronic music.

Gabriel Kahane’s delightfully quirky *Crane Palimpsest* was commissioned by ACO and premiered at Orchestra Underground in 2012. Kahane is a musical polymath, invested equally in the worlds of concert, theater and popular music. His recent, critically acclaimed recording “Where are the Arms” was hailed by *The New York Times* for its “extravagant poise and emotional intelligence.” He has performed or recorded with artists ranging from Sufjan Stevens, Rufus Wainwright, Chris Thile, and Brad Mehldau to Jeremy Denk, Alisa Weilerstein and composer/conductor John Adams.

Joan La Barbara’s *In solitude this fear is lived* – a sound painting for voice, orchestra and electronic sonic atmosphere – was a highlight of ACO’s Playing It UNSafe initiative in 2011. La Barbara is a pioneer in exploring the human voice as a multi-faceted instrument – expanding traditional boundaries, developing a unique vocabulary of experimental and extended vocal techniques: multiphonics, circular singing, ululation and glottal clicks that have become her signature sounds.

Multidisciplinary artist Joshua Ott provided live visuals for Anna Clyne’s *TENDER HOOKS* in 2008’s Playing It UNSafe. He created the animated logo and SONiC: Thicket, a hands-on musical/visual game, for ACO’s 2011 SONiC: Sounds of a New Century Festival. Ott creates visual improvisations with superDraw, software of his own design. His work has been featured at Paris’s Le Cube, the Playgrounds Audiovisual Art Festival in the Netherlands and the Ars Electronica Animation Festival. He has performed at LA’s Live Cinema Nights: Silver Lake Film Festival, in the Boston Cyber Arts Festival and at venues throughout New York City.

ACO commissioned Daniel Roumain’s *Call Them All: Fantasy Projections for Film Laptop and Orchestra* in 2006 at Orchestra Underground. He came to the attention of ACO through his participation in its 1997 Whitaker New Reading Sessions, which won him its annual Whitaker Commission for emerging composers. *The New York Times* has called him “about as omnivorous as a contemporary artist gets” with his collaborations spanning the worlds of Philip Glass, Cassandra Wilson, Bill T. Jones, Savion Glover, and Lady Gaga.

**American Composers Orchestra**

Now in its 36th 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 opportunities for American composers and new American orchestral music its central purpose. Its programs include 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 awareness of the variety of American orchestral music, reflecting geographic, stylistic and temporal diversity. ACO 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 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 “Orchestra Underground: X10D” (June 2012), an album featuring unusual and extended solo instruments with the orchestra.

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