



american composers orchestra

news release

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PRESS CONTACT: Christina Jensen PR
646-536-7864; christina@christinajensenpr.com

American Composers Orchestra
Derek Bermel, Artistic Director & George Manahan, Music Director

Announces 2014-2015 Season

Orchestra Underground Concerts at Carnegie Hall

November 21, 2014 & February 27, 2015 at Zankel Hall

Featuring performances by Shara Worden / My Brightest Diamond,
Meredith Monk Vocal Ensemble, Ian Williams, & Theo Bleckmann

World premieres by Ian Williams, Theo Bleckmann, A.J. McCaffrey, & Carman Moore

US premiere by Daniel Schnyder & New York premiere by Loren Loaicano

Plus music by Meredith Monk, Kurt Weill, & Sarah Kirkland Snider

ACO at Jazz at Lincoln Center

April 9, 2015 at the Rose Theater, Jazz at Lincoln Center

Featuring the New York premiere of Wynton Marsalis' *Blues Symphony*

The 24th Annual Underwood New Music Readings

ACO's annual roundup of the country's brightest young and emerging composers

May 7 & 8, 2015 at the DiMenna Center for Classical Music

Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute (JCOI)

Summer Intensive 2015

EarShot New Music Readings Nationwide

from ACO's National Orchestral Composition Discovery Network

coLABoratory: Playing It UNSafe

Laboratory for the research and development of cutting-edge new orchestra music

For more information: www.americancomposers.org

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

New York, NY – Under the leadership of Artistic Director **Derek Bermel** and Music Director **George Manahan**, American Composers Orchestra's (ACO) 2014-2015 season strengthens the orchestra's commitment to serve as a catalyst for the creation of new orchestral music, providing unprecedented opportunities for American composers to create new work and for audiences to discover it. Now in its 11th year at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall, **Orchestra Underground** continues as ACO's subversive and entrepreneurial redefinition of the orchestra as an elastic ensemble, and this year features the rarely performed orchestral music of pioneering composer and performer **Meredith Monk**, holder of the 2014-2015 Richard and Barbara Debs Composer's Chair at Carnegie Hall (*Monk's Sphere*, November 21). Orchestra

Underground brings cabaret, pop, and jazz traditions into the concert hall in a program featuring **Kurt Weill's** cabaret cult classic *The Seven Deadly Sins* sung by **Shara Worden** (*Sin & Songs*, February 27). For the first time in several seasons, ACO returns to performing with full symphonic forces outside of Carnegie Hall – the orchestra's April concert at **Jazz at Lincoln Center** will showcase the New York premiere of **Wynton Marsalis' Blues Symphony**.

ACO's 2014-2015 season includes seven world, US, and New York premieres by a diverse group of composers including **Wynton Marsalis, Ian Williams, Theo Bleckmann, A.J. McCaffrey, Carman Moore, Daniel Schnyder, and Loren Loaicano**, plus performances by **Shara Worden** (*My Brightest Diamond*), **Ian Williams** (*Battles*), **Theo Bleckmann**, and the **Meredith Monk Vocal Ensemble**. In addition to **Meredith Monk's Night** and **Kurt Weill's The Seven Deadly Sins**, ACO will also perform music by Worden's pop alter-ego **My Brightest Diamond** and selections from **Sarah Kirkland Snider's** haunting pastoral *Unremembered*. In April 2015, ACO gives the New York premiere of **Wynton Marsalis' Blues Symphony** at **Jazz at Lincoln Center**; the concert will also feature the world premiere of a new work commissioned from a past participant in ACO's **Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute**.

ACO also marks the 24th annual **Underwood New Music Readings**, one of the country's most sought-after programs for emerging composers, at the DiMenna Center for Classical Music on May 7 and 8, 2015. 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.

In addition, ACO continues its groundbreaking research and development lab for composers in spring 2015, **coLABoratory: Playing It UNSafe**. ACO's **Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute (JCOI)**, which extends the orchestra's exploration of the intersection of jazz and improvised music and the symphony orchestra, also continues in 2015. ACO's **EarShot**, a national network of new music readings with other orchestras across the country, builds on its current season of growth in the 2014-2015 season.

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 700 American composers, including nearly 300 world premieres and newly commissioned works.

ACO's 2014-2015 Concert Highlights

Friday, November 21, 2014 at 7:30pm.

Orchestra Underground: Monk's Sphere. Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall.

American Composers Orchestra, led by Music Director **George Manahan**, opens its 38th season with **Orchestra Underground: Monk's Sphere** at Zankel Hall featuring a rare performance of the orchestral music of pioneering composer and performer **Meredith Monk**, holder of the 2014–2015 Richard and Barbara Debs Composer's Chair at Carnegie Hall, with the **Meredith Monk Vocal Ensemble**. Monk protégé **Theo Bleckmann**, a longtime member of the Meredith Monk Vocal Ensemble, contributes a new work

commissioned by Carnegie Hall for the occasion. The concert also features the world premiere of the first orchestral piece by experimental-rock guitarist **Ian Williams** (Battles), a world premiere by rising-star composer and ACO's 2013 Underwood Commission winner **A.J. McCaffrey**, and the New York premiere of **Loren Loiacono's** *Stalks, Hounds*.

About the Composers & Music

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* for orchestra and electronics, commissioned by ACO, explores the realm between live performance and material that has been electronically enhanced. This is his first work for orchestra.

A.J. McCaffrey is a songwriter and composer of instrumental, vocal and electronic music. His orchestral work *Thank You for Waiting* was chosen for ACO's Underwood New Music Readings, and he was subsequently awarded the 2013 Underwood Emerging Composers Commission. His works are theatrical in nature, employing harmonically rich and lyrically striking sound worlds to create dramatic narratives. His enthusiasm for other art forms has led to stimulating collaborations with filmmakers, theater companies, writers and visual artists, including Shakespeare & Company, Northern Light Productions, Ilana Halperin, and E. Tracy Grinnell. McCaffrey's music has been performed by the New Fromm Players, the Radius Ensemble, the Atlantic Chamber Ensemble, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Alarm Will Sound, and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, among others. A fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center and Aspen Music Festival and School, McCaffrey has been a featured composer on Tanglewood's Festival of Contemporary Music and the New Gallery Concert Series. In addition to his concert music projects, McCaffrey is a songwriter, vocalist, and multi-instrumentalist with the alt-rock band Planes Intersect. He holds degrees in music from the University of Southern California, Rice University, and The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. He has studied composition with Richard Lavenda, James MacMillan, Donald Crockett, and Stephen Hartke. McCaffrey's new work for ACO, *Scrabbling Upwards and Slithering Back*, is inspired by his experiences as a new father. He says, "The piece as a whole moves through the shifting instrumental colors and moods, from delirium to sleepiness, that one might encounter in a typical day of parenting."

Loren Loiacono is currently pursuing her Doctorate in composition at Cornell University, where she studies with Steven Stucky, Roberto Sierra, and Kevin Ernste. She received her MM and BA from Yale University, where her teachers included Martin Bresnick, David Lang, Ezra Laderman, Christopher Theofanidis, Kathryn Alexander, and Michael Klingbeil. Her works have been performed by such ensembles as the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic, Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, Yale Philharmonia, Yale Symphony Orchestra, 5th House Ensemble, and the Argento Ensemble, and her music has been

featured on NPR. Loiacono has received awards from ASCAP, Minnesota Orchestra Composers Institute, the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts, and an honorable mention from the American Composers Orchestra Underwood New Music Readings. In 2013, she was selected for a New York Youth Symphony First Music Commission, culminating in the premiere of a new work at Carnegie Hall in spring 2014. She has been a fellow at the Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Copland House's CULTIVATE, the Chamber Music Conference of the East, and she received the 2010 Susan and Ford Schumann Fellowship from the Aspen Music Festival. Loiacono's work *Stalks, Hounds* explores how a musical gesture, when taken out of context, can be transformed from meaningful to alien.

The New York Times has lauded composer and singer **Theo Bleckmann** as "a vocalist of inventive instinct and assiduous musicality." The Grammy-nominated and ECHO award recipient makes music that is accessibly sophisticated, unsentimentally emotional and seriously playful, leading his work to be described as "from another planet" (*The New York Times*), as "magical, futuristic" (*AllAboutJazz*), and "brilliant" (*New York Magazine*). Bleckmann has released a series of albums on Winter & Winter, including recordings of Las Vegas standards, Weimar art songs and popular "bar songs" (with pianist Fumio Yasuda), a recording of newly-arranged songs by Charles Ives (with jazz/rock collective Kneebody), his acoustic Solos for Voice "I dwell in possibility" and his highly acclaimed *Hello Earth*, the music of Kate Bush. His most current project is a song cycle dealing with the delicate subject matter of death, *songs in the key of d* featuring harpist Zeena Parkins. Bleckmann has collaborated with such musicians, artists, actors and composers as Laurie Anderson, Uri Caine, Philip Glass, Ann Hamilton, John Hollenbeck, Sheila Jordan, Phil Kline, David Lang, Kirk Nurock, Frances MacDormand, Ben Monder, Michael Tilson Thomas, Kenny Wheeler, John Zorn, the Bang on a Can All-stars, and Meredith Monk, with whom Bleckmann worked as a core ensemble member for over 15 years. Bleckmann's piece for ACO, *My Brightest Garment*, is an orchestral song about death as a vanishing act. Bleckmann, the composer, lyricist, and vocalist, will use live electronic processing during the performance.

Meredith Monk is a composer, singer, and creator of new opera and music-theater works. A pioneer in "extended vocal technique," Monk has been hailed as a "magician of the voice" and "one of America's coolest composers." Her groundbreaking exploration of the voice as an instrument and eloquent language in and of itself expands the boundaries of musical composition. Recently Monk was named an Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters by the Republic of France. She has also received the Founders Award from New Music USA and has been named Composer of the Year by *Musical America*, a Doris Duke Artist, and one of NPR's 50 Great Voices. In addition, Monk has created vital new repertoire for orchestra, chamber ensembles, and solo instruments. She has received commissions from New World Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Kronos Quartet, Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, and the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Monk has made more than a dozen recordings and her music has also been featured in films by Jean-Luc Godard and the Coen Brothers, among others. Her work has been presented by Lincoln Center Festival, BAM, Houston Grand Opera, London's Barbican Centre and at major venues from Brazil to Syria. Monk's numerous honors include a Grammy nomination for *impermanence*, a MacArthur "Genius" Award, two Guggenheim Fellowships, a San Francisco Symphony commission, an American Music Center Letter of Distinction, an ASCAP Concert Music Award, and induction into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She holds

honorary Doctor of Arts degrees from Bard College, the University of the Arts, The Juilliard School, the San Francisco Art Institute, and the Boston Conservatory. Monk has been appointed as Carnegie Hall's 2014-2015 Richard and Barbara Debs Composer's Chair. Her work *Night* was originally composed in 1996, and was later revised with a richer orchestration scored for voices and an unusual ensemble of instruments that includes saxophones, synthesizer, bowed psaltery, and a variety of percussion instruments.

Friday, February 27, 2015 at 7:30pm.

Orchestra Underground: Sins & Songs. Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall.

American Composers Orchestra, led by Music Director **George Manahan**, features guest vocalist **Shara Worden** (My Brightest Diamond) in *Orchestra Underground: Sins & Songs* at Zankel Hall, bringing the world's cabaret, pop, and jazz traditions into the concert hall. The program includes **Kurt Weill's** cabaret cult classic *The Seven Deadly Sins*, songs by Worden's pop alter-ego **My Brightest Diamond**, a haunting song cycle by **Sarah Kirkland Snider**, the US premiere of **Daniel Schnyder's** Dracula-inspired *draKOOL*, and the world premiere of **Carman Moore's** *Tata Madiba*, commissioned by ACO and honoring Nelson Mandela.

About the Composers & Music

Kurt Weill (1900-1950) began his career in the early 1920's, after a musical childhood and several years of study in Berlin. His works with Bertolt Brecht made him famous all over Europe. He fled the Nazis in 1933 and continued his indefatigable efforts in Paris and in the U.S. until his death. Certain threads tie together his career: a concern for social justice, an aggressive pursuit of highly-regarded playwrights and lyricists as collaborators, and the ability to adapt to audience tastes no matter where he found himself. His most important works include *The Violin Concerto*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, *The Pledge*, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, *Lady in the Dark*, *Street Scene*, and *Lost in the Stars*. Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins* explores sloth, pride, wrath, gluttony, lust, covetousness, and envy through two characters – Anna I (who sings) and Anna II (who dances) – as they travel to seven cities in America and encounter a different sin in each.

Shara Worden received a BA in Opera from the University of North Texas. After moving to New York, she began studying composition with composer/performer Padma Newsome from Clogs and The National. During this time she composed music for several off-Broadway theater productions. Her band, My Brightest Diamond, has released *Bring Me The Workhorse*, *A Thousand Shark's Teeth* and *All Things Will Unwind* and she will soon release *This is my Hand*. Recent years have found Worden in the role of composer as much as songwriter. She recently composed a baroque opera, *You Us We All*, which was co-produced by Hamburg International Summer Festival and deSingel International Arts Campus and will be performed again at the Holland Festival in 2014. She has also received commissions from yMusic, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Young New Yorkers' Chorus, Brooklyn Rider, and Nadia Sirota. Additionally, many composers, songwriters and filmmakers have sought out Worden's distinctive voice, including David Lang, Sarah Kirkland Snider, Sufjan Stevens, The Decemberists, David Byrne and Fatboy Slim, as well as Matthew Barney and Jonathan Bepler. Worden received the 2012 Kresge Artist Fellowship in the performing arts.

Composer **Sarah Kirkland Snider** writes music of direct expression and vivid narrative that has been hailed as “rapturous” (*The New York Times*), “haunting” (*The Los Angeles Times*) and “strikingly beautiful” (*Time Out New York*). Her works have been commissioned and performed internationally by ACME, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, the Brooklyn Youth Chorus, the Hague Philharmonic/Residentie Orkest, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, the Knights, Psappha, Roomful of Teeth, Utah Philharmonia, Signal, Shara Worden and many others. Upcoming projects include commissions for the North Carolina Symphony Orchestra and the Princeton Symphony Orchestra, a work for Pierrot ensemble, and a work for the Young People's Chorus of New York. Her debut album, *Penelope*, featuring Shara Worden and Signal, was named to dozens of top 10 lists internationally. Her music also appears on the Grammy Award-winning eponymous debut album by Roomful of Teeth. Snider has an MM from the Yale School of Music. ACO and Shara Worden will perform songs excerpted from Snider's 13-song cycle *Unremembered*, featuring poetry by New York-based poet Nathaniel Bellows. Snider describes the work as, “A cycle about memory, innocence, and the ways we cope with an unpredictable world.” *Unremembered* has been recorded by vocalists Padma Newsome, D.M. Stith, and Shara Worden for release on New Amsterdam Records in fall 2014.

Daniel Schnyder is known as a composer/performer with a dynamic reputation in both jazz and classical fields. He has recorded more than ten CDs of his own music and has toured and recorded with many classical musicians, world music artists and jazz players. Schnyder's orchestral works and his chamber music compositions have been performed and recorded all over the world. He has received commissions from Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Tonkuenstler Orchestra in Vienna, the Radio Symphony Orchestra in Berlin, The Norrlands Operan in Sweden, the Chicago Sinfonietta, the Vienna Art Orchestra the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, the Opera of Bern, the NDR Orchestra in Hannover, the NDR Big Band in Germany, the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, the New York-based Absolute Ensemble under the direction of Kristjan Järvi, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, among others. Schnyder wrote *draKOOL* after seeing a cartoon movie with his children about a monster party at Count Dracula's Castle in Transylvania.

The New York Times described **Carman Moore** as a composer who not only defies categories, but “treats them with disdain.” Moore earned his BM at Ohio State University and studied composition privately with Hall Overton and at The Juilliard School with Luciano Berio and Vincent Persichetti where he earned his MM. Moore began composing for symphony and chamber ensembles while writing lyrics for pop songs, gradually adding opera, theatre, dance, and film scores to his body of work. He has received commissions from New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, the Costa Rican Ministry of Culture, the Lincoln Center Institute, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He was recently awarded the MacDowell and Guggenheim Fellowships. Moore has taught at Yale University, Queens and Brooklyn Colleges, Carnegie-Mellon University, Manhattanville College, and The New School for Social Research. He has taught children with the Lincoln Center Institute and Jazzmobile. Moore has served as board member and/or adjudicator for several major organizations, including Composers Forum, the Society of Black Composers (of which he was a Founder), The MacDowell Colony, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Moore's work for ACO, *Tata Madiba*, honors the great statesman Nelson Mandela.

Thursday, April 5, 2015 at 8pm.

Blues Symphony & Beyond. Rose Theater, Jazz at Lincoln Center.

ACO, led by Music Director **George Manahan**, will perform a concert titled *Blues Symphony & Beyond* at Jazz at Lincoln Center. The concert will feature the New York premiere of *Blues Symphony* by **Wynton Marsalis**, Jazz at Lincoln Center co-founder and Artistic Director. *Blues Symphony* is the first work by Marsalis composed exclusively for symphony orchestra. The concert will also feature the world premiere of a new work commissioned from a past participant in ACO's groundbreaking **Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute** (JCOI), which gives jazz composers the opportunity for vital hands-on experience working with a symphony orchestra.

About the Composers & Music

Wynton Marsalis is an internationally acclaimed musician, composer, bandleader, educator and a leading advocate for American culture. He is the first jazz artist to perform and compose across such a wide spectrum, from New Orleans to bebop to modern jazz. Famed classical trumpeter Maurice André praised Marsalis as "potentially the greatest trumpeter of all time." He has performed with Sarah Vaughan, Dizzy Gillespie, Sweets Edison, Clark Terry, Sonny Rollins, Ron Carter, Herbie Hancock, Tony Williams and countless other jazz legends; he studied under master drummer and bandleader Art Blakey. Marsalis' love of the music of Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and others drove him to pursue a career in classical music as well. Marsalis has produced over 70 records that have sold over seven million copies worldwide, and he has won nine Grammy Awards for both classical and jazz records. Marsalis has performed with the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Pops, The Cleveland Orchestra, Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and London's Royal Philharmonic. He is a prolific and inventive composer whose inventive interplay with melody, harmony and rhythm, along with his lyrical voicing and tonal coloring, assert new possibilities for the jazz ensemble. Marsalis received The National Medal of Arts, the highest award given to artists by the United States Government. He was the first jazz musician ever to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music for his epic oratorio *Blood On The Fields*. Marsalis co-founded Jazz at Lincoln Center and serves as its Artistic Director and as Music Director for the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. Marsalis' *Blues Symphony* (Symphony No. 2) celebrates the blues through the prism of different moments in American history, and is the first work by Marsalis composed exclusively for symphony orchestra without his on-stage participation and without an improvising jazz combo. Marsalis last collaborated with ACO in 2006 when the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra joined ACO in a program of Gershwin and the world premiere of *The Migration Series* by Derek Bermel.

Underwood New Music Readings

Thursday and Friday, May 7 and 8, 2015. DiMenna Center for Classical Music.

ACO will hold its **24th Annual Underwood New Music Readings** for emerging composers on Thursday and Friday, May 7 and 8, 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. The world premiere of 2013 Underwood Commission winner

A.J. McGaffrey's new work for ACO, *Scrabbling Upwards and Slithering Back*, will be featured on ACO's season opening Orchestra Underground concert on **November 21, 2014** at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall.

Each composer participating in the Underwood New Music Readings 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, Kate Soper, and Jennifer Higdon.



The proceedings are open to the public free of charge. On the first day of Readings a working rehearsal will be presented from **10am to 1pm on Thursday, May 7**; the second Readings will take place on Friday evening, **May 8, at 7:30pm**, during which all selected pieces will be polished and performed in their entirety. ACO's Artistic Director Derek Bermel directs the readings; George Manahan conducts. The deadline for composers interested in applying to the Underwood New Music Readings is Monday, December 1, 2014. Application guidelines and other information will be available in September at www.americancomposers.org/underwood2014.

Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute (JCOI)

Summer Intensive, August 2015. UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, Los Angeles, CA.

The next installment of ACO's Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute (JCOI) commences with a weeklong Intensive involving 35 jazz composers to be held in August 2015. Renowned flutist and composer **James Newton** directs the program, which is produced in collaboration with the Center for Jazz Studies at Columbia University and the Herb Alpert School of Music at UCLA.

Participants in the Intensive will include some of the most forward-looking jazz composers working today, selected from submissions nationwide. The Intensive will feature seminars led by visiting composers and conductors working in both jazz and classical music, and will address various topics related to the 21st-century orchestra such as composition and notation techniques, electronics, improvisation, and a historical review of American orchestral music. Other important topics include the culture of working with a symphony and how to work with a conductor as an interpreter and collaborator. JCOI aims to provide new resources for both jazz and classical music, promoting the emergence of composers trained in both jazz and new orchestral techniques.

In the season following the Intensive, ten to fifteen participating composers from the JCOI Intensive will go on to write new music for orchestra embracing their work at the Intensive and their backgrounds in jazz and improvised music. These new works will be unveiled by ACO and additional orchestras throughout the country in a series of New Music Readings organized by ACO's EarShot network.

This is the third installment of the JCOI program and it remains a unique development in the jazz field. While many jazz composers seek to write for the symphony orchestra, opportunities for hands-on experience are few. The first JCOI, which took place in New York during the 2010-2011 season, was the subject of two features on National Public Radio, which reported that what the composers discovered while at the Institute has “the potential to shift the course of concert music.” Listen online at: www.npr.org/2010/12/19/132146455/teaching-the-symphony-to-swing

Already 68 composers have participated in the first two installments of the program; 25 of those have gone on to compose new works for symphony orchestra and had those pieces workshopped and performed by the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, La Jolla Symphony, and ACO. Several JCOI alumni have continued to work with orchestras and have won awards for their jazz-infused work. Nicole Mitchell, for example, has been commissioned to write new orchestral music, and won a prestigious Herb Alpert Award. Erica Lindsay, another alumna, recently wrote a new piece that was read by the Detroit Symphony with Leonard Slatkin conducting. In ACO's upcoming season an additional JCOI alumnus composer will be commissioned to write a new work which will be premiered by ACO at Jazz at Lincoln Center on April 9, 2015 as part of ACO's concert *Blues Symphony & Beyond*. More info about the JCOI Intensive will be posted this fall at www.americancomposers.org/jcoi.

EarShot New Music Readings Nationwide **from ACO's National Orchestral Composition Discovery Network**

During the 2014-2015 season, ACO continues to spearhead **EarShot** in collaboration with the American Composers Forum, League of American Orchestras, and New Music USA. EarShot helps orchestras around the country identify and support promising composers in the early stages of their careers. EarShot advises organizations on the programs that would best suit their needs – from new music readings to composer residencies and competitions – and assists with planning, identifying composers through its extensive nationwide calls, and program design and execution. To date, over fifty composers have been selected for New Music Readings with orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Berkeley Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Colorado Symphony Orchestra, Memphis Symphony Orchestra, Nashville Symphony Orchestra, Pioneer Valley Symphony (MA), New York Youth Symphony, and the San Diego Symphony. Orchestras participating in EarShot during the 2014-2015 season will be announced in summer 2014.

coLABoratory: Playing It UNsafe **Laboratory for the research and development of cutting-edge new orchestra music**

ACO's **coLABoratory: Playing It UNsafe** is the first and only professional research and development lab to support the creation of cutting-edge new American orchestral music through “no-holds-barred” experimentation and extended collaboration. Through a unique incubation process of laboratory workshops, public readings, and critical feedback, coLABoratory creates a new paradigm for the creation of orchestra music. Free, public coLABoratory lab-workshops held in 2015 will yield four to six new orchestral works which will be premiered by ACO beginning in the 2015-2016 season.

coLABoratory: Playing It UNsafe does away with the limitations often associated with orchestral premieres that can squelch composers' creative impulses – limited rehearsal time, restrictive instrumental possibilities, proscribed programmatic or thematic ideas – and most importantly, the overwhelming pressure on composers to do something “safe.” Past participant Sean Friar, who went on to win a Rome Prize in Music, and whose coLABoratory: Playing It UNsafe project was profiled in *The Wall Street Journal*, said, “A lot of us wouldn't have the guts to write these pieces if we knew that we were just going to write it, have a couple of rehearsals with the orchestra and BAM!... concert. Because they'd probably fail.”

For the upcoming installment of coLABoratory, ACO will issue a nationwide call for proposals in fall 2014. Conductor George Manahan, composers Robert Beaser and Derek Bermel along with a panel of mentor composers, will select up to six composers. In between the lab-workshops, the composers will have the invaluable opportunity to hone and revise, adapt, and develop their works. More info about coLABoratory: Playing It UNsafe will be available this fall at www.americancomposers.org/coLAB.

About Derek Bermel, Artistic Director

Described by the *Toronto Star* as an “eclectic with wide open ears,” Grammy-nominated composer and clarinetist **Derek Bermel** has been widely acclaimed 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. Bermel currently serves as the Artistic Director of the American Composers Orchestra and has been ACO's Artistic Adviser since 2009.

In addition to his commissions from American Composers Orchestra, 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).

About George Manahan, Music Director

Going into his fifth 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, Manahan has introduced works by composers on the rise including Adam Silverman, Elodie Lauten, Mason Bates, and David T. Little. Among his many world premieres are 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*.

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 that 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." In 2013, Manahan was awarded the Alice M. Ditson Award for his outstanding commitment to the work of emerging composers.

George Manahan's 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*. 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 38th 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 700 American composers, including nearly 300 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 and upcoming Earshot programs have included the Detroit, Berkeley, La Jolla, Nashville, Memphis, Colorado, San Diego Symphonies, the New York Philharmonic, New York Youth Symphony, and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. For more information visit www.EarShotnetwork.org. The Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute, launched in 2010, supports jazz artists who desire to write for the symphony.

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 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), and *Orchestra Underground: X10D* (June 2012), an album featuring unusual and extended solo instruments with the orchestra. ACO's latest groundbreaking release is *Orchestra Underground: A-V*, an album of multimedia works available for free streaming at www.vimeo.com/channels/orchestraunderground. ACO's next digital album, *Orchestra Underground: Tech & Techno*, will be released in summer 2014. More information about American Composers Orchestra is available online at www.americancomposers.org.

Ticket Info

Single tickets to the Carnegie Hall concerts priced at \$43 and \$50 will go on sale on August 25, from CarnegieCharge at 212-247-7800, www.carnegiehall.org, or at the Carnegie Hall Box Office. Single tickets for the Jazz at Lincoln Center concert will be available through the JALC Box Office and at www.jalc.org beginning on March 1, 2015. The Underwood New Music Readings are open to the public, free of charge, but reservations are recommended and can be made online at www.americancomposers.org. ACO Inside Track Memberships will be available beginning on June 1, 2014 for \$180, and will include a ticket to each Orchestra Underground concert in Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall, the Jazz at Lincoln Center concert, and reserved seating at the Underwood New Music Readings. ACO Inside Track Memberships are available at www.americancomposers.org/membership.



american composers orchestra

2014-2015 Season Highlights

Friday, November 21, 2014 at 7:30pm – Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall

Orchestra Underground: Monk's Sphere

George Manahan, Music Director and Conductor

Theo Bleckmann, vocals

Ian Williams, electronics

Meredith Monk Vocal Ensemble

IAN WILLIAMS: *Clear Image* (World Premiere, ACO/Goelet Commission)

AJ McCaffrey: *Scrabbling Upwards and Slithering Back* (World Premiere, ACO Commission)

LOREN LOICANO: *Stalks, Hounds* (NY Premiere)

THEO BLECKMANN: *My Brightest Garment* (World Premiere, Carnegie Hall Commission)

MEREDITH MONK: *Night*

Friday, February 27, 2015 at 7:30pm – Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall

Orchestra Underground: Sins & Songs

George Manahan, Music Director and Conductor

Shara Worden / *My Brightest Diamond*, vocals

KURT WEILL: *The Seven Deadly Sins*

MY BRIGHTEST DIAMOND: *Whoever You Are; We Added It Up; Looking at the Sun*

SARAH KIRKLAND SNIDER: Selections from *Unremembered*

DANIEL SCHNYDER: *draKOOL* (US Premiere)

CARMAN MOORE: *Tata Madiba* (World Premiere, ACO Commission)

Thursday, April 9, 2015 at 8pm – Rose Theater, Jazz at Lincoln Center

American Composers Orchestra: Blues Symphony & Beyond

George Manahan, Music Director and Conductor

WYNTON MARSALIS: *Blues Symphony* (NY Premiere)

Additional Works TBA

Thursday & Friday, May 7 & 8, 2015 – The DiMenna Center for Classical Music

Underwood New Music Readings

George Manahan, Music Director and Conductor

Derek Bermel, Artistic Director

ACO's annual roundup of the country's brightest young and emerging composers.

Plus:

Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute

Summer Intensive 2015

EarShot New Music Readings

from ACO's National Orchestral Composition Discovery Network

coLABoratory: Playing It UNSafe

Laboratory for the research and development of cutting-edge new orchestra music

Artists and repertoire subject to change.

American Composers Orchestra: 2014-2015 Season Announcement

Support for American Composers Orchestra is provided by The Achelis Foundation, The Herb Alpert Foundation, American Express Foundation, The Amphion Foundation Inc., ASCAP, The ASCAP Foundation Irving Caesar Fund, The Bay and Paul Foundations, Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, BMI, BMI Foundation, The Booth Ferris Foundation, Edward T. Cone Foundation, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, Fromm Music Foundation, Fund for the City of New York, Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation, Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts, Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, Jephson Educational Trust, Jerome Foundation, John and Evelyn Kossak Foundation, the estate of Dorothy Lander, Louis Vuitton, LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton Inc, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The New York Community Trust, Open Society Foundations, Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Taproot Foundation, Virgil Thomson Foundation and the Paul Underwood Charitable Trust. ACO programs are also made possible with public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

american composers orchestra

Derek Bermel, Artistic Director | George Manahan, Music Director
Dennis Russell Davies, Conductor Laureate | Robert Beaser, *Artistic Advisor Laureate*
244 West 54th Street, Suite 805
New York, NY 10019-5515
Phone: 212.977.8495 | Fax: 212.977.8995 | Web: www.americancomposers.org

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