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American Composers Orchestra: Lines on a Point
Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of Orchestra Underground

George Manahan, Music Director

New York premiere of David Lang's statement to the court for choir and orchestra, with The Crossing

World premiere of Amy Beth Kirsten's strange pilgrims with The Crossing and film by Mark DeChiazza

World premiere of Lisa Renée Coons' Vera's Ghosts

Steve Reich's Eight Lines with pianists Margaret Kampmeier and Stephen Gosling

New York premiere of Ted Hearne's Ripple by The Crossing conducted by Donald Nally

Thursday, February 20, 2014 at 7:30pm
Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall | 57th & 7th Ave. | NYC

Tickets: $43 & 50 at www.carnegiehall.org, 212-247-7800, or the Carnegie Hall Box Office (154 West 57th Street, NYC)

For more information: www.americancomposers.org

New York, NY – American Composers Orchestra (ACO) continues its 37th season – and the 10th anniversary season of its signature Orchestra Underground series – with Lines on a Point led by ACO Music Director George Manahan on Thursday, February 20, 2014 at 7:30pm at Carnegie Hall’s Zankel Hall. Orchestra Underground, named for Zankel Hall (its subterranean state-of-the-art home) as well as the series’ subversive nature, seeks to reinvent the orchestra with new works that challenge convention, with diverse influences, unusual instruments and influences, multimedia and multi-disciplinary collaborations.

ACO explores minimalist and post-minimalist territory in this concert 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 Renée Coons’ Vera’s Ghosts featuring ACO’s strings. The Crossing takes center stage for the New York premiere of Ted Hearne’s Ripple for choir a cappella, conducted by Donald Nally. Lines on a Point is a play on words, as
well as descriptive of Steve Reich’s role as one of the formative figures of Minimalist music. With his music as its inception point, each composer’s work on this concert extends into an array of tangential musical lineages.

This season’s Orchestra Underground concerts include four world premieres and five New York premieres by emerging and established composers including Marcos Balter, Derek Bermel, Lisa Renée Coons, Peter Fahey, Gabriela Lena Frank, Ted Hearne, Amy Beth Kirsten, David Lang, and Fred Lerdahl. In addition to Steve Reich’s Eight Lines as part of this concert, ACO also showcases Julia Wolfe’s Fuel with film by Bill Morrison, Christopher Theofanidis’ Bassoon Concerto with master bassoonist Martin Kuuskmann, Gunther Schuller’s jazz-classical fusion Contours, and rarely heard Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas’ Alcancias. To date, Orchestra Underground has brought to life 80 world premieres and newly commissioned works.

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 more than 200 world premieres and newly commissioned works.

Ted Hearne: Ripple
(New York Premiere) For more information: www.tedhearne.com

Ted Hearne (b. 1982) 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. 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.

Ripple, for mixed voices, uses as its text one sentence from one of nearly 400,000 internal military cables known as the Iraq War Logs. This classified material was taken off a military server by PFC Chelsea Manning and released to the public in 2010 by WikiLeaks, in collaboration with The New York Times, The Guardian, and Der Spiegel. The cable states, “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 marine opened fire on the vehicle as it approached a checkpoint in Fallujah on July 22, 2005, and the occupants were, tragically, an unarmed Iraqi family.

Lisa Renée Coons: Vera’s Ghosts
(World Premiere, ACO Commission) For more information: www.lisarcoons.com

Lisa Renée Coons (b. 1979) 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. Presently an assistant professor of music composition at Western Michigan University, Coons received her PhD in Composition
from Princeton University; she also studied at SUNY Stony Brook and the University of Missouri-Kansas City. 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.

Of her new work, *Vera's Ghosts*, Coons says, "I have always been fascinated with the visual spectacle of coordinated movements in string ensembles; the physical gestures can be elegant or primal, sensual or violent, but they always add a dimension to the experience that cannot be felt in recorded sound. *Vera’s Ghosts* for the ACO strings will explore the possibilities at the intersection of the visual and the aural. It is a work about mental illness and dementia, using as a point of departure the idea of the conductor as protagonist."

**David Lang: statement to the court**

*(New York Premiere)* For more information: [www.davidlangmusic.com](http://www.davidlangmusic.com)

Musical America's 2013 Composer of the Year and Carnegie Hall's Debs Composer's Chair for 2013-2014, David Lang (b. 1957) is one of America's most performed composers. His opera, orchestra, chamber and solo works are by turns ominous, ethereal, urgent, hypnotic, unsettling and 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. Lang has worked with Anonymous 4; Trio Mediaeval and the Norwegian Radio Orchestra; Shara Worden, Bryce Dessner, Nico Muhly, and Owen Pallett; Maya Beiser and the Norrlands Symphoniorkester; the London Sinfonietta with Peter Greenaway; and Kronos Quartet; Santa Fe Opera; the New York Philharmonic; the Netherlands Chamber Choir; the Boston Symphony; the Munich Chamber Orchestra; at Tanglewood; the BBC Proms; The Munich Biennale; the Settembre Musica Festival; the Sidney 2000 Olympic Arts Festival and the Almeida; Holland, Berlin, and Strasbourg Festivals; in theater productions in New York, San Francisco and London; alongside the choreography of Twyla Tharp, La La La Human Steps, The Netherlands Dance Theater and the Paris Opera Ballet; and at Lincoln Center, the Southbank Centre, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Barbican Centre, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music. ACO has commissioned and premiered two of Lang's works: *Bonehead* in 1990 and *how to pray* in 2002. David Lang is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the Pulitzer Prize, Rome Prize, the BMW Music-Theater Prize (Munich), and a 1999 Bessie Award. He is co-founder and co-artistic director of New York's legendary music collective Bang on a Can.

David Lang’s *statement to the court* for mixed choir, percussion and strings is based on a speech delivered by pioneering American Socialist Eugene Debs, addressing a court that had just found him guilty of sedition for speaking out against American participation in World War I. Lang says, "What I love about this speech is that it is both critical of the political world that Debs lives in, and at the same time, optimistic about it. 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." The work is dedicated to Francis Richards, of ASCAP.
Amy Beth Kirsten: *strange pilgrims*  
*(World Premiere, ACO Commission)* For more information: www.amybethkirsten.com

After spending a decade playing in clubs and bars in Chicago, singer-songwriter Amy Beth Kirsten (b. 1972) entered the graduate program in music composition at Roosevelt University in 2002. Those earlier years as a performer and vocalist created the foundation for a compositional language rooted in the voice and breath. Many of Kirsten’s chamber works require instrumentalists to vocalize and play simultaneously, and her purely instrumental works often experiment with melody and timbre. Recent projects include the debut of HOWL, a cross-disciplinary ensemble founded by Kirsten and long-time collaborator, vocalist Lindsay Kesselman; *Colombine's Paradise Theatre*, a fully staged music-theatre piece for eighth blackbird, directed by Mark DeChiazza; *kiss to the earth*, an imaginary ballet for three players and a ghost for the Calyx Piano Trio; and a song cycle *spun* for the cello-piano duo TwoSense, with a libretto by the composer after Mary Howitt’s cautionary tale *The Spider and the Fly*.

Kirsten was the recipient of the 2011 Guggenheim Fellowship in Music Composition. Additional awards include a Rockefeller Foundation Artist Fellowship, a Fromm Foundation Commission, as well as project funding from The MAP Fund, ASCAP Foundation, The Leonard Bernstein Family, New Music USA, Chamber Music America, and The National Endowment for the Arts. Also a published poet and librettist, Kirsten lives and works in New Haven, CT. She teaches music composition privately and at the HighSCORE summer festival in Pavia, Italy.

Amy Beth Kirsten describes *strange pilgrims* for mixed choir and orchestra as a meditation on creativity and its relationship to the spirit. She says, “This is my second collaboration with filmmaker Mark DeChiazza and my first with cinematographer Mark Andrews. One of our aims was to allow a harmonious conversation to unfold – a conversation between text, music, and image – so that all the elements would be inextricably linked to each other. We started with this poem I wrote, began to exchange ideas, those ideas became ninety seconds of music, which inspired photographic images, which inspired a musical and visual concept and structure.”

Steve Reich: *Eight Lines*  
*For more information: www.stevereich.com*

Steve Reich (b. 1936) has been called “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). Born in New York and raised in New York and in California, Reich graduated with honors in philosophy from Cornell University in 1957. He studied composition with Hall Overton, and at Juilliard with William Bergsma and Vincent Persichetti. Reich received his M.A. from Mills College, where he worked with Luciano Berio and Darius Milhaud. With the help of a grant from the Institute for International Education, he studied drumming at the Institute for African Studies at the University of Ghana. He studied Balinese Gamelan Semar Pegulingan and Gamelan Gambang at the American Society for Eastern Arts in Seattle and
Berkeley, California. Later he studied the traditional forms of cantillation (chanting) of the Hebrew scriptures in New York and Jerusalem, influences reflected in his landmark work Tehillim. Steve Reich was awarded the 2009 Pulitzer prize in Music for his Double Sextet.

Reich writes of Eight Lines: “Eight Lines is structured in five sections, of which the first and third resemble each other in their moving piano, cello, viola and bass clarinet figures, while the second and fourth sections resemble each other in their longer held tones in the cello. The fifth and final section combines these materials. The transitions between sections is as smooth as possible with some overlapping in the parts so that it is sometimes hard to tell exactly when one section ends and the next begins. In the first, third and fifth sections there are somewhat longer melodic lines in the flute and/or piccolo. This interest in longer melodic lines composed of shorter patterns strung together has its roots in my earlier music as well as my studies in 1976-77 of the cantillation of the Hebrew Scriptures.”

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, 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 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.” Last season, 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 The Crossing, choir

Winner of the 2009 and 2011 ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming, The Crossing is a 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. The Crossing has presented innovative partnerships with Lyric Fest, Piffaro, red fish blue fish, Philadelphia Virtuosi, and Tempesta di Mare Baroque Chamber Orchestra. The choir is the recipient of a 2012 Knight Foundation Challenge Grant to create projects at the Icebox of Crane Arts Center in Northern Liberties. The Crossing’s concerts are regularly broadcast on WRTI 90.1 FM; their “Christmas Daybreak” – an hour-long Christmas Concert in collaboration with Pig Iron Theatre Company, hosted by Bill McGlaughlin – was broadcast internationally and will be released as a recording this coming Autumn.

About Donald Nally, director, The Crossing

Donald Nally begins his new role as director of choral organizations at Northwestern University this autumn. In addition to his role as conductor of The Crossing he is also chorus master of The Chicago Bach Project, an annual performance of the Bach master works. Nally has served in many prestigious international positions: as chorus master at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Welsh National Opera, and for many seasons at the Spoleto Festival in Italy. He was also chorus master at the Opera Company of Philadelphia, music director of the Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia, and director of Cincinnati’s Vocal Arts Ensemble. Nally is the recipient of the 2002 Margaret Hillis National Award for Excellence in Choral Music. Over the last three seasons, Nally’s ensembles have been listed in the Top Ten Classical Music Events by the major newspapers of Chicago, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati. In the 2011-12 season, Nally conducted the opening of the International Festival of Sacred Music in Riga with the Latvian State Choir, was visiting professor in conducting at Indiana University and at the University of Illinois, and received the alumni merit award from Westminster Choir College and the 2012 Louis Botto Award for Innovative Action and Entrepreneurial Zeal from Chorus America. His book, Conversations with Joseph Flummerfelt, was published in 2011.

About ACO

Now in 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
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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 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 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.

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. 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. More information about American Composers Orchestra is available online at www.americancomposers.org.
Amy Beth Kirsten’s work is commissioned by ACO, with video by Mark DeChiazza commissioned by Amy Beth Kirsten and ACO. The premiere performance is supported by the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University and with public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts. The premiere of Lisa Renée Coons’ work is supported by the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University and with public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts.


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American Composers Orchestra  
2013-2014 Season Highlights

EarShot: September 19-21, 2013. Mandeville Auditorium, UC San Diego (San Diego, CA)  
JCOI La Jolla Symphony & Chorus New Music Readings  
Steve Schick, conductor  
Rand Steiger, 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; Bill Morrison, film
FRED LERDAHL: Spirals (New York Premiere)  
JULIA WOLFE: Fuel (with film by Bill Morrison)  
CHRISTOPHER THEOFANIDIS: Bassoon Concerto  
PETER FAHEY: A Mirror to Kathleen’s Face (World Premiere, Underwood Commission)

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 RENEE COONS: Vera’s Ghosts (World Premiere, ACO Commission)  
AMY BETH KIRSTEN: strange pilgrims with video by Mark DeChiazza (World Premiere, ACO Commission)

EarShot: 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 REVUELTA: Alcancias  
MARCOS BALTER: Favela (World Premiere, ACO Commission)  
DEREK BERMEL: Mar de Setembro (New York Premiere)

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

EarShot: 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, repertoire and dates subject to change.