



american composers orchestra

news release

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## American Composers Orchestra Orchestra Underground: *Border Vanguard*s



Luciana Souza. Photos available in high resolution at [www.christinajensenpr.com](http://www.christinajensenpr.com)

**George Manahan, Music Director**

**Gunther Schuller's *Contours***

**New York premiere of Gabriela Lena Frank's  
*Manchay Tiempo***

**Silvestre Revueltas' *Alcancias***

**World premiere of Marcos Balter's *Favela***

**New York premiere of Derek Bermel's *Mar de Setembro* with vocalist Luciana Souza**

**Friday, April 4, 2014 at 7:30pm  
Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall | 57<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. | NYC**

**Tickets: \$43 & 50  
at [www.carnegiehall.org](http://www.carnegiehall.org), 212-247-7800,  
or the Carnegie Hall Box Office  
(154 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street, NYC)**

**For more information: [www.americancomposers.org](http://www.americancomposers.org)**

New York, NY – **American Composers Orchestra (ACO)** continues its 37<sup>th</sup> season – and the **10<sup>th</sup> anniversary season of its signature Orchestra Underground** series – with *Border Vanguard*s led by ACO Music Director **George Manahan** on **Friday, April 4 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, reinvents the orchestra with new works that challenge convention, with diverse influences, unusual instruments and influences, multimedia and multi-disciplinary collaborations.

ACO shifts its focus to Latin and jazz-influences in this 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 childhood 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.

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**. To date, Orchestra Underground has brought to life 70 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.

## **Gunther Schuller: *Contours***

**Gunther Schuller** (b. 1925) 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 has traveled throughout the world, leading major ensembles from New Zealand to Holland to St. Louis. 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. Schuller has led the Bach Festival, in Spokane, Washington as Artistic Director since 1993.

Schuller broke new ground by combining jazz and the orchestra, launching the musical Third Stream. *Contours* was composed from 1955-1958. 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.

## **Gabriela Lena Frank: *Manchay Tiempo***

### **(New York Premiere)**

Identity has always been at the center of **Gabriela Lena Frank's** (b. 1972) music. Born in Berkeley, California, to a mother of mixed Peruvian/Chinese ancestry and a father of Lithuanian/Jewish descent, 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. She writes challenging idiomatic parts for solo instrumentalists, vocalists, chamber ensembles, and orchestras. In 2009, Frank was a recipient of the prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship to assist in research and artistic creation. Frank has collaborated with a broad range of artists, including the Brentano String Quartet, Chanticleer, David Finckel and Wu Han with the ProMusica Orchestra, the Houston

Symphony, Silk Road Project, Aspen Summer Music Festival, Da Camera Society of Houston, the Seattle Symphony; and the Kronos Quartet.

Frank attended Rice University in Houston, Texas, where she earned both a B.A. (1994) and M.A. (1996). She studied composition with Paul Cooper, Ellsworth Milburn, and Sam Jones, and piano with Jeanne Kierman Fischer. At the University of Michigan, where she received a D.M.A. in composition in 2001, Frank studied with William Albright, William Bolcom, Leslie Bassett, and Michael Daugherty, and piano with Logan Skelton.

Of *Manchay Tiempo*, Frank says, "As a young child, I was in the habit of coining my own labels for feelings and sensations especially vivid to me. *Manchay Tiempo* (actually 'mancha-dempo') was my word for the strange mix of terror and tenderness that my nightly dreams visited upon me. I associated it with one recurring dream involving my Peruvian-born mother, who in the dream is but a hair's-breadth away from some unspeakable danger...Years passed, and I forgot about 'mancha-dempo.' But as a college student, I caught a TV documentary about Sendero Luminoso, a Maoist-inspired group wreaking murderous havoc in my mother's country during the late 1970's and 1980's... I realized that at some earlier point, I had seen this program and interpreted it with a child's imagination...And there it was — manchay tiempo, a hybrid of Spanish and Quechua signifying a 'time of fear.'"

## **Silvestre Revueltas: *Alcancias***

**Silvestre Revueltas** (1899-1940) was born in Santiago Papasquiaro, Durango, a small town in the north of Mexico, 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 México, 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 made an 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. Dissonance, dance rhythms, irony and expressiveness, a topsy-turvy collage-like rhythmic/structural character – there are few pieces like it in twentieth century music. It is a piece filled with references to the folk music and the real sounds of modern Mexico. Revueltas works often invoke mariachi groups and other types of "orquestas típicas," and include elements that are so Mexican and folkloric, but fresh and vital in Revueltas's treatment.

## **Marcos Balter: *Favela***

**(World Premiere, ACO Commission) For more information: [www.marcosbalter.com](http://www.marcosbalter.com)**

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** (b.1974, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) has been

featured at ACO's SONiC Festival in 2011, Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, Chicago Symphony Orchestra's MusicNOW, Köln Philharmonie, New World Symphony Center, Teatro de Madrid, Tokyo Bunka Kaykan, Teatro Amazonas, Morgan Library, Le Poison Rouge, and the Museum of Contemporary Art of Chicago, among others. Recent festival appearances include those at Acht Brücken, Aldeburgh Music Festival, Lockenhaus Kammermusik festival, Aspen, Frankfurter Gesellschaft für Neue Musik, Darmstadt Ferienkurse, Color Field, Musica Nova, and MATA's Interval Series. 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. He is currently the Director of the Music Composition program at Columbia College Chicago. For more information, please visit the composer's official website at [www.marcosbalter.com](http://www.marcosbalter.com) .

Of his new work Balter says, "The title is *Favela*, which is the term used to describe shantytowns in Brazil, my native country. The idea is to create 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."

## **Derek Bermel: *Mar de Setembro***

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

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).

*Mar de Setembro* sets the work of the great Portuguese poet Eugénio de Andrade. Bermel says of Andrade's poetry, "When I first encountered the work of the Eugénio de Andrade, I was struck by the direct lyricism of his language, his bold depictions of the natural world's sensuality. Andrade's translator of 25 years, Alexis Levitin, introduced me to his heir Gervásio Oliveira Moura, who generously approved my use of the poems. Throughout the daunting and humbling task of setting Andrade's work, it was comforting to know that the songs would be performed by Luciana Souza."

### **About Luciana Souza**

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 Pasión 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](http://www.lucianasouza.com).

### **About George Manahan, Music Director**

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 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." 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 ACO**

Now in its 37<sup>th</sup> 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 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](http://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](http://www.vimeo.com/channels/orchestraunderground). More information about American Composers Orchestra is available online at [www.americancomposers.org](http://www.americancomposers.org).

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**american composers orchestra**

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## 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 (57<sup>th</sup> St. & 7<sup>th</sup> 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: February 2-3, 2014. 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 (57<sup>th</sup> St. & 7<sup>th</sup> 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 (57<sup>th</sup> St. & 7<sup>th</sup> 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)

**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. 37<sup>th</sup> 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.*