



american composers orchestra

news release

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PRESS CONTACTS:

Kate Mockler, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra
716.242.7819 | kmockler@bpo.org

Katy Salomon, ACO
646.536.7864 x2 | katy@jensenartists.com

EarShot and Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra Announce the 2016 Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute (JCOI) Readings



**Presented in collaboration with
American Composers Orchestra**

**Tuesday, September 20, 2016
Private Working Rehearsal – Press Only**

**Wednesday, September 21, 2016 Afternoon
Composer Workshops at Kleinhans Music Hall
Free with Required RSVP to rparkinson@bpo.org**

**Wednesday, September 21 at 7pm
Run-Through Performances**

**Kleinhans Music Hall
3 Symphony Circle | Buffalo, NY
Admission: Free and open to the public
Information: <http://bit.ly/BufaloJCOI>**

Read the *Wall Street Journal* feature on JCOI: <http://on.wsj.com/12iNufw>

“the potential to shift the course of concert music” – NPR

Buffalo, NY – **American Composers Orchestra (ACO)** in cooperation with **EarShot**, the National Orchestra Composition Discovery Network, will present the third **Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute (JCOI) Readings** in 2016. The **Earshot Buffalo Philharmonic Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute Readings** will be conducted by Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra Resident Conductor **Stefan Sanders** and will take place at Kleinhans Music Hall. The Readings include a private, working rehearsal on **Tuesday, September 20**, four free, public workshops for composers in Kleinhans Music Hall on **Wednesday, September 21** from **1:30-4pm**, and a free, public run-through of the composers’ pieces on **Wednesday, September 21 at 7pm**. The Readings will be led by mentor composers **Nicole Mitchell** (University of California, Irvine), **Anthony Cheung** (University of Chicago), and **Anthony Davis** (Artistic Director, ACO).

The selected composers are: **Amina Figarova** (b. 1966), an Azerbaijan-born, New York-based pianist and composer who studied classical piano performance at the Baku Conservatory as well as jazz performance at the Rotterdam Conservatory, Netherlands, and attended the Thelonious Monk Institute’s summer jazz colony in Aspen; **Gene Knific** (b. 1992), a pianist, composer, and arranger based in

Kalamazoo, Michigan who has won seven *DownBeat* awards for his performances and compositions; Los Angeles-based saxophonist and composer **Hitomi Oba** (b. 1984), who holds an MA from UCLA in Music Composition and whose album, *Negai*, received a *Swing Journal* jazz disc award; London-born, Philadelphia-based **Anthony Tidd** (b. 1972), who has performed with Steve Coleman, The Roots, Rudresh Mahanthappa, Wayne Krantz, Meshell Ndegeocello, Common, and Jill Scott, and has produced albums by The Roots, Macy Grey, Zap Mama, and The Black Eyed Peas; and Buenos Aires-born, Brooklyn-based **Emilio Solla** (b. 1962), who has recorded more than 40 albums performing with Paquito D’Rivera, Arturo O’Farrill, Cristina Pato, and Billy Hart, and whose latest album, *Second Half* (2014), was nominated for a 2015 Grammy Award for Best Latin Jazz Album. Composers will receive feedback from orchestra principal musicians, conductors, librarians, and mentor composers, throughout the Readings.

The free workshops on **Wednesday, September 21** include “Be Prepared: Introduction to professional score and parts production” and “Copyright and Commissioning Basics” with Bill Holab of Bill Holab Music Services, “Support Structures for Composers” with American Composers Forum’s Director of Programs William J. Lackey, and “The Real Path to Programming” with New Music USA Composer Advocate Frank J. Oteri and BPO Resident Conductor Stefan Sanders. To RSVP for the free workshops, email Robin Parkinson at rparkinson@bpo.org. More information can be found at www.bpo.org.

Three orchestras, including the **Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra**, will workshop, rehearse, and give public readings of new works for symphony orchestra written by sixteen jazz composers. JCOI is a new development in the jazz field, led by **ACO** in partnership with the **UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music** in Los Angeles and the **Center for Jazz Studies at Columbia University** in New York. While many jazz composers seek to write for the symphony orchestra, opportunities for hands-on experience are few. 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.

With the class of 2016, 100 jazz composers have benefited from the Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute, and so far 27 new jazz works for orchestra have been created and workshopped. By seeking out composers who identify primarily with jazz rather than the symphonic world, JCOI encourages exceptional composers with alternative perspectives and diverse influences to consider writing for the orchestra. In so doing, it attracts an extremely diverse group of composers. Composers of color regularly account for a third of the JCOI applicant pool, as opposed to 3% in the general “concert composer” population. JCOI composers are also more diverse in age – the youngest JCOI participant so far was a high school student, while the most senior, Rufus Reid, is a revered elder-statesman of jazz. ACO’s first JCOI 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*

The 2016 JCOI Readings are the culmination of a process that began in August 2015, when 36 jazz composers of all ages were selected from a national pool of applicants to attend the week-long Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute Intensive, a series of workshops and seminars devoted to orchestral composition held at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music in Los Angeles. After completing the Intensive, sixteen composers were given the opportunity to put what they learned into practice by composing a new symphonic work for the JCOI Readings in 2016. The composers, working in jazz, improvised, and creative music, were chosen based on their excellent musicianship, originality, and potential for future growth in

orchestral composition. Each of three orchestras (**Naples Philharmonic, May 25 & 26, 2016; American Composers Orchestra, June 15 & 16;** and the **Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, September 20 & 21**) will workshop and perform between four and seven composers' new works.

About the Composers & Their Works

Amina Figarova: *The Journey*

For more information: www.aminafigarova.com

Amina Figarova (b. 1966) is a New York-based, Azerbaijan-born pianist and composer whose group is fast developing a reputation on the international scene, with appearances in the U.S. and around the world, including the Newport Jazz Festival, Chicago festival, New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, Capetown Jazz festival and North Sea Jazz Festival, to name a few. Amina has studied as a classical concert pianist at the Baku Conservatory as well as Jazz Performance at the Rotterdam Conservatory, Netherlands and Berklee College of Music; she has also attended the Thelonious Monk Institute's summer jazz colony in Aspen. Amina has composed a musical, *Diana*, as well as several other projects, including *Tehora* for Israeli singer Shlomit Butbul. Amina's recorded releases include 13 albums of her original compositions earning her the *Down Beat* Rising Star Composer in the Critics Poll of 2014 and 2015.

Amina Figarova describes her new piece as a, "journey full of hope and blues, it's a journey to unknown and known, it's a sacrifice for a better life, and this is why I call this work *The Journey*. The first 'theme' is of questions and making decisions. *The Journey* moves in a train-like motion in the string section and 'voices' of hope in the horn section. There is more tension and intensity that develops into a spiritual theme of the unknown and of sacrifice moving toward a more energetic, edgy and percussive part exhibiting conflict and extreme emotions."

Gene Knific: *Relapse*

For more information: www.geneknific.com

Pianist, composer and arranger, **Gene Knific** (b. 1992) has performed worldwide presenting an extensive and diverse repertoire with a wide array of artists including Joe Lovano; Western Jazz Quartet in Russia at The St. Petersburg Conservatory and Jazz Philharmonic; Copenhagen Opera House; Montmartre Jazzhus, Denmark; International Society of Bassists Convention, San Francisco, California; the 2011 and 2012 Amelia Island Jazz Festival, Florida; Schlern International Music Festival, Italy; Mozambique International Festival of Music; Elkhart Jazz Festival; and Fontana Chamber Arts Summer Series. Gene leads The Gene Knific Trio in original works and unique explorations of classical and modern genres and has also performed in trio/quartet settings with Kevin Mahogany, Roseanne Vitro, Kate Reid, Bobby Shew and is the pianist of touring/recording ensemble, The Tom Knific Quartet.

An active composer in both jazz and chamber music settings, Gene has also written for the Stamps Foundation Distinguished Ensembles featuring guitarist/singer Steve Miller; *Expanded Improvisation* for Violin and Piano and Piano Quintet; a string quartet; and a hybrid work for jazz and chamber ensemble. Gene has also received a grant from the Knight Foundation for the production of a self-produced feature film and is also the recipient of 7 *Down Beat* Music Awards for his performances and compositions in jazz and contemporary categories. Gene graduated with highest honors from the University of Miami Frost School of Music with degrees in jazz performance and composition, where he studied with Shelly Berg, Martin Bejerano, Lansing McLoskey, and Terence Blanchard.

Of his new piece, Gene writes, "*Relapse* is a new work for orchestra inspired by my research on the use and struggle with drugs by many of the master musicians and innovators in jazz. The music reflects struggles with addiction, the various psychological effects of using, and the public association of drugs with jazz with reference to various interviews, biographies, and articles on the subject."

Hitomi Oba: *September Coming*

For more information: www.hitomioba.com

Saxophonist and composer **Hitomi Oba** (b. 1984) was raised in Berkeley, California. Hitomi completed her MA at the University of California Los Angeles in Music Composition after receiving her BA in Ethnomusicology/Jazz Studies. Recent projects include her small ensembles, sixteen-piece jazz orchestra, *Jazz Nexus*; electro-acoustic pop duo, *Nova*; and the jazz opera, *STRANGE FELLOWE*. Her second jazz album, *Negai*, released under Japanese label M&I and distributor Pony Canyon, received a prestigious *Swing Journal* 42nd Annual Jazz Disc Award. Commissions include those for the Los Angeles Asian American Jazz Festival, Kenny Burrell's Los Angeles Jazz Orchestra Unlimited, and the Indian classical /jazz collaborative Aditya Prakash Ensemble. Hitomi is one of the co-founders of the new music collective, LA Signal Lab, comprised of fellow composer-performers with backgrounds in both jazz and classical traditions. Hitomi currently teaches music theory at UCLA, integrating Western classical, jazz, American popular music, and various world musical genres.

Hitomi writes, "*September Coming* is inspired by the workshops, discussions, and music experienced during the August week-long intensive. The most intriguing idea I took away from the program was to use my own musical voice as an improviser to guide my composing. In *September Coming*, I explore ways in which to express the momentum and gestures of my improvisational language through the orchestra. Much of the material and direction in the piece is derived from transcriptions of my own improvisations. I focused on preserving the arcs of the phrases, finding creative ways to notate the implicit musical nuances, and using the orchestration to further enhance the intentions of the improvised material."

Emilio Solla: *Ñandú*

For more information: www.emiliosolla.com

Since his start as a band leader in Buenos Aires, **Emilio Solla's** (b. 1962) has led groups such as Solla & Afines, Bien Sur!, La Inestable de Brooklyn, Apertura and more. He is also an active free-lance arranger and pianist in different projects in NY. Emilio has performed all around Europe, Japan, the US and Latin America to rave reviews in many of the most important Jazz houses and Festivals. As a composer, Emilio's symphonic work has been included at the Palau de la Musica during the Barcelona Jazz Festival in 2014, with upcoming concerts at the Chicago Symphony Hall, Rutgers University in 2015 as well as a concert in Buenos Aires of his *Suite Piazzollana*. Emilio has recorded more than forty CDs as a band leader on Fresh Sound Records and has composed, arranged, and performed with Paquito D'Rivera, Arturo O'Farrill, Edmar Castañeda, Pablo Aslan, Cristina Pato, Chris Cheek, Donny Mc Caslin, Billy Hart, Jeff Ballard, John Ellis, Ryan Keberle and many others. La Inestable de Brooklyn's first CD, *Second Half* (2014) was nominated for a 2015 Grammy Award as Best Latin Jazz Album.

Emilio is currently a Faculty Member at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music and has given clinics in Jazz Composition at Emory University, Bates College, Gotenburg Music School (Sweden), Jazz & Pop Conservatory (Helsinki, Finland) along with past teaching positions in Argentina and Spain. Emilio got his

degree in Classical Piano at the National Conservatory of Music in Buenos Aires and his MA in Jazz Composition at Queens College in New York.

Of his new work Emilio says, “*Ñandú* started as an idea for a piano solo piece some time ago, and is based on an Argentinean folk dance known as *Malambo*. As many of the north-west folk dances of my country, it is based on a superposition of the time signatures 3/4 and 6/8. In this particular dance, the gaucho (cowboy) shows his skills with a set of boleadoras, a throwing weapon made of weights on the ends of interconnected cords, designed to capture animals by entangling their legs. The ñandú is a typical bird of the Buenos Aires plain land (very similar to the ostrich) which is still hunted with this ancient method. The traditional *malambo* is played only with percussion or, if accompanied by guitar, the harmony is a very basic loop with no melody which just serves the purpose of showcasing the dancer skills. Based on that simple idea, I have explored many possibilities of rhythmic displacement and harmonic development.”

Anthony Tidd: *The Beginning of the End*

Anthony Tidd (b. 1972) is a Philly transplant, originally born and raised in London, England. A well-known name on the jazz scene and veteran touring bass player, he has graced stages alongside many staple names including, Steve Coleman, The Roots, Rudresh Mahanthappa, Wayne Krantz, Meshell Ndegeocello, Common, and Jill Scott, to name a few. Anthony has also made a name for himself in the music production world, producing records for well-known artists such as, The Roots, Macy Grey, Zap Mama, The Black Eyed Peas, Jill Scott, and Ursula Rucker, as well as composing scores for major film and television projects over the years. As Director of his Creative Music Program and curator his popular concert series *Sittin’ In*, both hosted at the prestigious Kimmel Center, Anthony now divides his time between all of the above, as well saving some to educate the next generation of musical talent.

Of his new piece Anthony writes, “My goal in composing *The Beginning of the End* is to express some of the compositional ideas and techniques that I have been using over the years in other formats, namely Quartet, Quintet, Big Band, within an orchestral setting. More specifically, I will translate sounds, rhythms and melodic materials common in a ‘jazz’ improvisation context into *The Beginning of the End* by experimenting with ideas not necessarily to be perceived by the listener as being in ‘strict time’.”

About the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra

As Buffalo's cultural ambassador, the Grammy Award-winning Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra under the leadership of music director JoAnn Falletta presents more than 100 concerts each year. Since 1940, the orchestra's home has been Kleinhans Music Hall, a National Historic Landmark with a reputation as one of the finest concert halls in the United States. During the tenure of JoAnn Falletta, the BPO has rekindled its history of radio broadcasts and recordings, including the release of 37 new recordings on the Naxos and Beau Fleuve labels. For more information about the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, visit www.bpo.org.

About American Composers Orchestra

Founded in 1977, **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. www.americancomposers.org

About EarShot

EarShot, the National Orchestral Composition Discovery Network, initiates partnerships with orchestras around the country; provides consulting, production, and administrative support for orchestras to undertake readings, residencies, performances, and composer-development programs; identifies promising orchestral composers, increasing awareness and access to their music; supports orchestras' commitment to today's composers and enhances national visibility for their new music programs. EarShot is coordinated by American Composers Orchestra in collaboration with American Composers Forum, the League of American Orchestras, and New Music USA (formerly the American Music Center and Meet The Composer). It brings together the artistic, administrative, marketing, and production resources and experience of the nation's leading organizations devoted to the support of new American orchestral music. www.earshotnetwork.org

About American Composers Forum

The American Composers Forum is committed to supporting composers and developing new markets for their music. Through granting, commissioning, and performance programs, the Forum provides composers at all stages of their careers with valuable resources for professional and artistic development. By linking communities with composers and performers, the Forum fosters a demand for new music, enriches communities, and helps develop the next generation of composers, musicians, and music patrons. For more information, go to www.composersforum.org.

About the League of American Orchestras

The League of American Orchestras leads, supports, and champions America's orchestras and the vitality of the music they perform. Its diverse membership of approximately 800 orchestras across North America runs the gamut from world-renowned symphonies to community orchestras, from summer festivals to student and youth ensembles. The only national organization dedicated solely to the orchestral experience, the League is a nexus of knowledge and innovation, advocacy, and leadership advancement for managers, musicians, volunteers, and boards. Its conferences and events, award-winning *Symphony* magazine, website, and other publications inform music lovers around the world about orchestral activity and developments. Founded in 1942 and chartered by Congress in 1962, the League links a national network of thousands of instrumentalists, conductors, managers and administrators, board members, volunteers, and business partners. For more information, visit www.americanorchestras.org.

About New Music USA

On November 8, 2011 a merger was completed between two eminent champions of new music in the United States, the American Music Center and Meet The Composer. The result is an exciting new organization that will serve music-makers and their audiences in the twenty-first century. Its mission is to increase opportunities for composers, performers and audiences by fostering the creation, dissemination, and enjoyment of new American music, both nationally and internationally. New Music USA places special emphasis on broadening the public

community for the music and musicians they serve. New Music USA will maintain all core programming of AMC and MTC. More information can be found at www.newmusicusa.org.

About the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music

With its three outstanding departments of Ethnomusicology, Music and Musicology, **The UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music** aspires to educate the whole student through productive collaborations between performance and scholarship, a cross-cultural, global understanding of the art of music, and preparatory training for a broad range of careers in music after graduation. Public concerts, lectures, symposia, master classes, and musical theater and opera productions, are a hallmark of The UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music. Each department hosts a calendar of events open to the entire community, enriching the lives of both those on stage and those in the audience, and contributing to the quality of life in the city and beyond. The UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music was formed in 2007, with the support of a \$30 million endowment from the Herb Alpert Foundation, made possible through the generosity of the renowned performer, producer and philanthropist Herb Alpert and his wife Lani Hall Alpert.

www.schoolofmusic.ucla.edu

About the Center for Jazz Studies at Columbia University

The **Center for Jazz Studies at Columbia University** sees jazz as a music without borders and ultimately without limits, a model for the integration of forward-thinking models of scholarly inquiry with innovative teaching and community dialogue. Its direction, which emphasizes the themes of internationalization, technology, and community, is realized by promoting research by innovative scholars in the arts, humanities, and sciences; encouraging excellence in the teaching of music and culture; and presenting public events that complement and extend the Center's research and teaching. The Center for Jazz Studies views the interdisciplinary expansion of the intellectual conversation surrounding jazz, and especially its lifeblood practice, improvisation, as tracing a path toward the development of new knowledge that illuminates the human condition. www.jazz.columbia.edu

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