



american composers orchestra

news release

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**American Composers Orchestra and BIS Records  
Co-Commission New Piano Concerto from  
Composer/Conductor José Serebrier**

**Symphonic *B A C H* Variations for Piano and Orchestra  
To Be Recorded by Pianist Yevgeny Sudbin**

**Made Possible by a Special Grant from Paul Underwood**

**José Serebrier: <http://www.cami.com/?webid=2479>**

**ACO: [www.americancomposers.org](http://www.americancomposers.org)**

New York, NY – **American Composers Orchestra (ACO)** announces a new co-commission in cooperation with the record label BIS, for Symphonic *B A C H* Variations for Piano and Orchestra, a piano concerto by composer and conductor José Serebrier. The ACO commission is made possible by a special grant from long-time ACO board member Paul Underwood. The Swedish label BIS will undertake the recording with pianist Yevgeny Sudbin, exclusive BIS artist, with an orchestra to be announced.

BIS previously commissioned José Serebrier's *Flute Concerto with Tango*, which they recorded with soloist Sharon Bezaly and the Australian Chamber Orchestra. American Composers Orchestra gave the US premiere in 2012. José Serebrier has received commissions from the Harvard Musical Association, National Endowment for the Arts, the Joffrey Ballet and many others. His works have been recorded by Leopold Stokowski, Sir John Eliot Gardiner and others.

Yevgeny Sudbin has been hailed by *The Telegraph* as “potentially one of the greatest pianists of the 21st century.” As BIS Records’ only exclusive artist, all of Sudbin’s recordings have met with critical acclaim and are regularly featured as CD of the Month by *BBC Music Magazine* or Editor’s Choice by *Gramophone*. His Scriabin recording was awarded CD of the Year by *The Telegraph* and received the MIDEM Classical Award for Best Solo Instrument Recording at Cannes. It was described by *Gramophone* as “a disc in a million” while the *International Record Review* stated that his Rachmaninov recording “confirms him as one of the most important pianistic talents of our time.” Sudbin was born in St. Petersburg in 1980 and began his musical studies at the Specialist Music School of the St Petersburg Conservatory with Lyubov Pevsner at the age of 5. He emigrated with his

family to Germany in 1990 where he continued his studies at Hanns Eisler Musikhochschule. In 1997, Sudbin moved to London to study at the Purcell School and subsequently the Royal Academy of Music where he completed his Bachelor and Masters degrees under Christopher Elton.

Paul Underwood, the supporter of this major new work, is a well-known figure on the new music scene. In addition to dozens of commissions and world premieres that he has underwritten, he has for many years been the lead supporter of ACO's annual Underwood New Music Readings, a program that provides career-building opportunities to emerging composers from around the country. The Readings have become a rite-of-passage for a generation of aspiring composers. The 2017 Underwood New Music Readings will be held June 21-23 in New York City. Though a performance of Serebrier's new concerto has not yet been scheduled, ACO's 2016-17 season includes the world premiere performances of two other Underwood commissions: David Hertzberg's *Symphony* on March 24 at Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall, and Carols Simon's *Portrait of a Queen* on May 23 at Symphony Space.

José Serebrier, now a world-renowned conductor and composer, first came to prominence when he won the Uruguayan National Orchestra's annual music composition contest (SODRE) with his *Legend of Faust* overture, which the then 14-year-old composed in only four days. Within five years he had been honored with many of music's most sought-after awards: a Koussevitzky Foundation Award in 1956, earned while a U.S. State Department Fellow studying at the Curtis Institute of Music and with Aaron Copland at Tanglewood; a BMI Young Composers Award that same year; and back to back Guggenheim Fellowships in music composition, at 19 the youngest person to have ever received a Guggenheim appointment.

During his years at the Curtis Institute and the University of Minnesota, Serebrier continued to garner accolades and awards for his compositions, including a Pan American Union Publication Award for his *Elegy for Strings*, which Leopold Stokowski premiered in New York at Carnegie Hall. In 1963 Maestro Stokowski again opened the American Symphony Orchestra's season at Carnegie Hall with a Serebrier composition, this time *Poema Elegiaco*.

Leopold Stokowski and José Serebrier had first met when the conductor chose *Symphony No. 1*, which Serebrier had composed at age 17 as a last-minute substitute for the world premiere of Charles Ives' *Symphony No. 4*, which the Houston Symphony had still found unplayable. Three years later, the maestro chose Serebrier as Associate Conductor of his American Symphony Orchestra in New York. José Serebrier was the conductor at Leopold Stokowski's side at the podium for the premiere of that difficult Ives composition, a piece so complex it required several conductors. However, a few years later Serebrier alone conducted the London Philharmonic Orchestra's performance of Ives' *Symphony No. 4* to rave reviews; his recording of it with that orchestra (the first time he had recorded anything) was nominated for a Grammy award, the first of 46 he has received so far in his career. He has won the Latin Grammy for "Best Classical Album of the Year" for his recording of his *Carmen Symphony* after Bizet with the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra on the BIS label.

José Serebrier has made international tours with the Russian National Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Juilliard Orchestra, National Youth Orchestra of Spain, Orchestra of the Americas, etc. and US tours with the Pittsburgh Symphony, American Composers Orchestra and others.

Born in Uruguay of Russian and Polish parents, Serebrier has composed over 100 works and is one of the most recorded classical artists ever, as both conductor and composer with over 300 releases on Warner Classics, SONY, BIS, Naxos, Linn, Reference Recordings, and more. He has received commissions from the Harvard Musical Association, National Endowment for the Arts, the Joffrey Ballet and many more. His works have been recorded by Leopold Stokowski, Sir John Eliot Gardiner and others. Prior to his work with Leopold Stokowski, José Serebrier was Apprentice Conductor with Antal Dorati and the Minnesota Orchestra; after his four-year tenure

with Stokowski he was appointed by George Szell Composer-in-Residence of the Cleveland Orchestra under a Rockefeller Foundation grant. They met when Szell was in the jury of the Ford Foundation American Conductors Competition which Serebrier won together with James Levine. The French critic Michel Faure has written a new book about José Serebrier, published in France by L'Harmattan.

## **About BIS Records**

Founded in 1973, BIS Records is one of the most highly respected classical labels in the world, praised for the sound quality of its recordings, whether released on regular CDs or as Hybrid SACDs with optional surround sound. The label takes pride in the versatility and variety of its catalogue, which to date includes more than 1900 titles - BIS is the only large record label with a strict non-deletion policy - with repertoire ranging from the most contemporary to music of the Middle Ages, and from mainstream classical (the Three Bs ...) to the downright esoteric. They often undertake projects of daunting complexity, such as the Sibelius Edition with its 68 discs documenting every note the Finnish master ever wrote, and the 55-disc series of Bach's sacred cantatas, recorded in a chapel in Kobe, Japan, by the Bach Collegium Japan and Masaaki Suzuki. BIS is a truly international label. With its headquarters in Sweden, BIS makes recordings all over the world, including Singapore, Sydney, São Paulo, Minneapolis, Rotterdam, Cologne, Vienna, and a certain medieval church 80km north of Stockholm, loved by musicians such as Dame Emma Kirkby, Ronald Brautigam and New York Polyphony.

## **About ACO**

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.

To date, ACO has performed music by more than 800 American composers, including nearly 350 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, Columbus, 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). 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](http://InstantEncore.com), [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) and iTunes. ACO's digital albums include *Playing It UNsafe* (March 2011), *Emerging Composers Series: Vol. 1* (February 2012), *Orchestra Underground: X10D* (June 2012), *Orchestra Underground: Tech & Techno* (July 2014), and *SONiC Double Live* (July 2016), a collection of premiere performances from its groundbreaking SONiC: Sounds of a New Century festival. ACO has also released *Orchestra Underground: A-V*, a groundbreaking 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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This press release is available online at: <http://www.americancomposers.org/press-media/>

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### **american composers orchestra**

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