



american composers orchestra

news release

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American Composers Orchestra Announces



**25th Annual Underwood
New Music Readings**
Tuesday, June 14, 2016 at 7:30pm

**2016 Jazz Composers Orchestra
Institute (JCOI) Readings**
Thursday, June 16, 2016 at 7:30pm

**Miller Theatre at Columbia University
2960 Broadway, NYC**

**Free and open to the public, reservations suggested
212.977.8495 or www.americancomposers.org**

Press photos available upon request.

New York, NY – In June, **American Composers Orchestra** (ACO) continues its commitment to serving as a catalyst for the creation and development of new orchestral music with two Readings sessions of brand new orchestral works by 14 composers hailing from across the country, held at Miller Theatre at Columbia University (2960 Broadway, NYC). ACO's **25th Annual Underwood New Music Readings** will take place on **Tuesday, June 14 at 7:30pm** and ACO's third **Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute (JCOI) Readings** will take place on **Thursday, June 16 at 7:30pm**. Both Readings, during which the new pieces will be polished and performed in their entirety, are open to the public free of charge, giving audiences a chance to look behind the scenes at the process involved in bringing brand new, stylistically diverse orchestral music to life (reservations at www.americancomposers.org suggested). Both Readings are conducted by ACO Music Director **George Manahan**. Mentor composers for the Underwood New Music Readings are ACO's Artistic Director **Derek Bermel**, and composers **Sarah Kirkland Snider** and Stephen **Hartke**. Mentor composers for the JCOI Readings are **Bermel, Anthony Davis, Gabriela Lena Frank, and James Newton**. Newton leads JCOI as the program director. **George Lewis** is director emeritus. Each composer participating in these 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.

2016 Underwood New Music Readings & Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute

In addition, the Readings offer composers, students, or anyone interested in learning more about the business of being a composer **Career Development Seminar** on Tuesday, June 14 from 10am-4pm at Columbia University's Dodge Hall. Workshop topics include Intellectual Property, Copyright Law and Commissioning Agreements; Engraving and Self-Publishing; Support and Fundraising for Composers, New Developments with Record Labels; and Publicity and Promotion. The cost for the Seminar is \$20 (includes box lunch). Reservations can be made at www.americancomposers.org.

Upon the occasion of the 25th annual Underwood New Music Readings, lead funder Paul Underwood reflects on the program's long history of nurturing the careers of emerging composers, saying, "I've been privileged to hear so much fantastic music written by incredibly talented composers over the years. The interesting thing to me is the process – how these pieces come into being. Very, very few pieces of music are perfect right from the start. It's the hands-on experience with a great orchestra, with the conductor, with a team of experienced composers guiding the process, that helps composers grow – and turns a good piece into a great one. That's why programs like the Underwood Readings are important, and why I am so committed to this work. I especially appreciate the dedication of the musicians, staff and mentor-composers. I couldn't be more proud of ACO's track record providing that crucial experience to young composers for a quarter-century."

25th Annual Underwood New Music Readings

For over a generation, ACO's **Underwood New Music Readings** have been providing all-important career development and public exposure to the country's most promising emerging composers, with over 150 composers participating. Readings alumni have gone on to win every major composition award, including the Pulitzer, Grammy, Grawemeyer, American Academy of Arts & Letters, and Rome Prizes. Orchestras around the globe have commissioned ACO Readings alumni.

The New Music Readings have, for 25 years, served as a launch pad for composers' careers, a tradition that includes many of today's top composers, such as **Ellen Taaffe Zwilich** and **Joseph Schwantner**, both of whom received Pulitzer Prizes for ACO commissions; and ACO's own most recent Artistic Directors **Robert Beaser** and **Derek Bermel**, as well as composers **Lisa Bielawa**, **Anthony Cheung**, **Anna Clyne**, **Cindy Cox**, **Sebastian Currier**, **Jennifer Higdon**, **Pierre Jalbert**, **Aaron Jay Kernis**, **Hannah Lash**, **Ingram Marshall**, **Carter Pann**, **P.Q. Phan**, **Tobias Picker**, **Narong Prangcharoen**, **Paola Prestini**, **David Rakowski**, **Daniel Bernard Roumain**, **Christopher Rouse**, **Huang Ruo**, **Eric Samuelson**, **Carlos Sanchez-Guiterrez**, **Kate Soper**, **Gregory Spears**, **Joan Tower**, **Ken Ueno**, **Dan Visconti**, **Melinda Wagner**, **Wang Jie**, **Dalit Warsaw**, **Randall Woolf**, **Nina Young**, and **Roger Zare**.

This year, seven of the nation's most promising composers in the early stages of their professional careers have been selected for ACO's Underwood New Music Readings from 200 submissions received from across the country. The selected composers – **Katherine Balch** (b. 1991), **Lembit Beecher** (b. 1980), **Paul Frucht** (b. 1989), **Sarah Gibson** (b. 1986), **Joel Rust** (b. 1989), **Carlos Simon** (b. 1986), and **Michael Small** (b. 1988) – represent a broad spectrum of musical backgrounds and sound worlds. One composer will be selected to receive a \$15,000 commission for a new piece to be performed by ACO during an upcoming season. The world premiere of 2014 Underwood Commission winner **Andy Akiho's** piece for ACO took place in October 2015 as part of ACO's citywide SONiC festival in New York. The world premiere of 2015 winner **David Hertzberg** will take place on March 24, 2017 at Carnegie Hall.

2016 Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute Readings

ACO's **Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute** is a new development in the jazz field, and a natural outgrowth of the orchestra's long-running interest in creative and improvised music, and expanding the range and influences in orchestra music. JCOI is 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. The composers whose works will be read by ACO on June 16 are **Jonathan Finlayson** (b. 1982), **Brian Friedland** (b. 1982), **Ethan Helm** (b. 1990), **Guy Mintus** (b. 1991), **Ben Morris** (b. 1993), **John La Barbera** (b. 1945), and **Dawn Norfleet**.

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 34 jazz composers of all ages were selected from a national pool of applicants to attend the weeklong 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.

Read About the Selected Composers & Listen to Their Music:

Underwood New Music Readings

Katherine Balch: *Leaf Catalogue*

www.americancomposers.org/2016/03/23/katherine-balch

Katherine Balch writes music that explores lyricism through textural soundscapes. Her recognitions include several ASCAP Morton Gould Awards, New England Conservatory's Donald Martino Prize, and Fontainebleau's Prix du Composition. She is currently pursuing her Master's at Yale School of Music, studying with David Lang.

Lembit Beecher: *Chopin's Ocean*

www.americancomposers.org/2016/04/05/lembit-beecher

Born to Estonian and American parents, **Lembit Beecher** grew up under the redwoods in Santa Cruz, California. Since then he has lived in Boston, Houston, Ann Arbor, Berlin, New York and Philadelphia, earning degrees from Harvard, Rice, and the University of Michigan. Recent awards include a MacDowell Colony Fellowship, the S&R Foundation Washington Award Grand Prize, a residency at the Penn Museum sponsored by the American Composers Forum, and a grant from the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage.

Paul Frucht: *Dawn*

www.americancomposers.org/2016/04/05/paul-frucht

A 2015 recipient of a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, **Paul Frucht** is currently a D.M.A candidate at Juilliard, where he also earned a Master of Music Degree in 2013, studying with Robert Beaser. Paul earned a Bachelor of Music Degree from NYU, where he studied with Justin Dello Joio. Paul is currently an adjunct faculty member at NYU and is artistic director of the Danbury Chamber Music Intensive.

Sarah Gibson: *Talking To The Time*

www.americancomposers.org/2016/03/23/sarah-gibson

Sarah Gibson is a Los Angeles-based composer whose works have received recognition including the Victor Herbert ASCAP award, NFMC Marion Richter American Music Composition Award, and first place in the 2010 Percussive Arts Society Composition Contest. Sarah received B.M. degrees in Composition and Piano from Indiana University and a M.M. and D.M.A. in Composition, both at USC.

Joel Rust: *Beyond The Heart*

www.americancomposers.org/2016/04/05/joel-rust

Joel Rust has received commissions from the Melos Sinfonia, the Park Lane Group, the Choir of Gonville & Caius College Cambridge, Filthy Lucre, and Discantus. He is currently studying for a Doctorate at New York University. In 2013 he gained a Master's at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he studied with Julian Anderson. He graduated from the Emmanuel College, Cambridge in 2011, before spending a year at Harvard on a Herchel Smith Scholarship.

Carlos Simon: *Plagues of Egypt*

www.americancomposers.org/2016/03/23/carlos-simon

Carlos Simon, a versatile composer, arranger and musician, combines the influences of jazz, gospel, and neo-romanticism in his music. He was named the winner of the 2015 Marvin Hamlisch Film Scoring Contest and received his Master's Degree at Georgia State University studying with Nickitas Demos and his Bachelors Degree at Morehouse College studying with Robert Tanner.

Michael Small: *Eastern Point*

www.americancomposers.org/2016/03/23/michael-small

Michael Small's works often draw on visual or literary sources and seek to place the listener's imaginative journey at the heart of the work's narrative. Michael received a BMus (Hons) from the Royal Northern College of Music and studied with David Horne, before moving the United States to study with Steven

Stucky at Cornell University.

Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute

Jonathan Finlayson: *If Not for the Moon*

<http://www.americancomposers.org/2016/05/05/jonathan-finlayson>

A disciple of the saxophonist/composer Steve Coleman, **Jonathan Finlayson** has performed alongside notables including Mary Halvorson, Henry Threadgill, Von Freeman, Jason Moran, Dafnis Prieto and Vijay Iyer. He began playing the trumpet at age 10, and attended the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music where he studied with Eddie Henderson, Jimmy Owens, and Cecil Bridgewater.

Brian Freedland: *Dreamscapes*

<http://www.americancomposers.org/2016/05/05/brian-friedland>

Boston-based **Brian Friedland's** music is rooted in jazz piano traditions but also shows his love of genres ranging from Balkan Folk to classical minimalism. In addition to leading several jazz ensembles, his projects include an ongoing series of comedic songs inspired by commercial products and a quartet that blends sonic exploration, funky grooves, and keyboard drums.

Ethan Helm: *The Glorious Train Ascending*

<http://www.americancomposers.org/2016/05/05/ethan-helm>

New York-based saxophonist and composer **Ethan Helm** makes music that flirts with the boundaries of familiarity in jazz and concert music, creating points of sound where diverse traditions become inseparable. He co-leads the jazz quintet Cowboys & Frenchmen and his latest quartet album, *The Spoon*, was released last summer.

John La Barbera: *Morro da Babilônia*

<http://www.americancomposers.org/2016/05/05/john-la-barbera>

John La Barbera is a renowned composer/arranger who has worked in the jazz world for over four decades. His music has been performed by Buddy Rich, Woody Herman, Count Basie, Dizzy Gillespie, Mel Torme, Chaka Khan, Harry James, Bill Watrous, Phil Woods, and many more. His Grammy® nominated big band CD *On The Wild Side*, along with his albums *Fantazm* and *Caravan*, have been met with tremendous artistic and commercial success.

Guy Mintus: *Portrait of a Moroccan Cantor singing about Love or Memories from a Place I've Never Been*

<http://www.americancomposers.org/2016/05/05/guy-mintus>

Israeli-born, New York-based jazz pianist and composer **Guy Mintus** focuses on music as a gateway to cross-cultural understanding and has collaborated with master musicians from Turkey, Greece, Iran, Morocco, Azerbaijan, Cuba, India and Mali. He has been recognized by ASCAP, Downbeat Magazine, BMI, and the America-Israel Cultural Foundation, among many others.

Ben Morris: *Old Seven Mile*

<http://www.americancomposers.org/2016/05/05/ben-morris>

Ben Morris has won the ASCAP Morton Gould Award, two Klezmer Company Orchestra Composers' Prizes, and three Festival Miami Composers' Awards. A recent graduate from the University of Miami, he is currently pursuing his Master's at Rice University as a Brown Fellow. He has studied with Lansing McLoskey, Eric Ewazen, Stephen Hartke, Chet Biscardi, Missy Mazzoli and Brian Lynch, among others.

Dawn Norfleet: *Seed*

<http://www.americancomposers.org/2016/05/05/dawn-norfleet>

Dawn Norfleet is a jazz flutist, vocalist, and composer residing in Los Angeles who is on the faculty at the Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County and the Colburn School of Performing Arts. After graduating from Wellesley College, "Dr. Dawn" studied classical musical composition and earned a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology from Columbia University.

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.

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), *Orchestra Underground: X10D* (June 2012), and *Orchestra Underground:Tech & Techno* (July 2014). ACO has also released *Orchestra Underground: A-V*, a groundbreaking 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.

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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This press release is available online at: www.americancomposers.org/press.

2016 Underwood New Music Readings & Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute

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ACO is a member of the League of American Orchestras and EarShot, the National Orchestral Composition Discovery Network.



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