



american composers orchestra

news release

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Andy Akiho Wins \$15,000 Underwood Emerging Composer Commission from American Composers Orchestra

Kyle Peter Rotolo wins Annual Audience Choice Award

**Deadline for the 2015 Underwood
New Music Readings: December 19, 2014**
Info: www.americancomposers.org/unmr2015

Andy Akiho: www.andyakiho.com | Kyle Peter Rotolo: www.kylepetermusic.com
American Composers Orchestra: www.americancomposers.org

For high-resolution photos of Akiho and Rotolo: www.christinajensenpr.com (in ACO's gallery)

New York, NY – **American Composers Orchestra** (ACO) has awarded composer **Andy Akiho** its **2014 Underwood Commission**, bringing him a \$15,000 purse for a work to be premiered by ACO in the 2015-2016 season. Chosen from seven finalists during ACO's 23rd Underwood New Music Readings on June 6 and 7, 2014, in one of the most coveted opportunities for emerging composers in the United States, Andy won the top prize with his work *Tarnished Mirrors*.

In addition, for the fifth year, audience members at the Underwood New Music Readings had a chance to make their voices heard through the Audience Choice Award. The winner this year was composer **Kyle Peter Rotolo**, for his piece *Apophis*. As the winner, Kyle has been commissioned to compose an original mobile phone ringtone which will be available to everyone who voted, free of charge.

ACO Music Director **George Manahan** said, "When the musicians of ACO and I performed Andy Akiho's *Tarnished Mirrors*, we discovered a work of intense pulse – music with syncopations, cross-rhythms, and metric modulations. His clarity of orchestration reflected a deep understanding of idiomatic writing for the individual instruments and an original palette of colors. We look forward to performing a new commissioned work of Andy's next season."

"Andy Akiho is an exciting fresh voice in the new music scene," adds Underwood New Music Readings mentor composer **Julia Wolfe**. "His high voltage works incorporate speedy cross-rhythms, beautiful timbres, and tuneful fragments that weave together with a very personal voice. In addition to composing,

Akiho is also a steel pan virtuoso and his work is informed by this tradition in new and inventive ways. His broad musicianship brings a rich array of sounds and sensibilities together in highly original work.”

Upon winning the Underwood commission, Andy Akiho said, “My experience in the Underwood Readings was truly inspiring. I learned so much from my innovative colleagues, mentor composers, George Manahan and the performers in ACO. I am grateful that I had an opportunity to have my orchestral work read and workshopped by such an amazing orchestra, and I really look forward to writing a new piece specifically for them.”

Andy Akiho was born in 1979 in Columbia, South Carolina and now resides in New York. His musical interests run from steel pan to traditional classical music. Recent engagements include commissioned premieres by the New York Philharmonic’s CONTACT! series and Carnegie Hall’s Ensemble ACJW, a performance with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and three concerts at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. His rhythmic compositions have been recognized with awards including the 2014-15 Luciano Berio Rome Prize, a 2012 Chamber Music America Grant with Sybarite5, the 2011 Finale & ensemble eighth blackbird National Composition Competition Grand Prize, the 2012 Carlsbad Composer Competition Commission for the Calder Quartet, the 2011 Woods Chandler Memorial Prize (Yale School of Music), a 2011 Music Alumni Award (YSM), the 2010 Horatio Parker Award (YSM), three ASCAP Plus Awards, an ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composers Award, and a 2008 Brian M. Israel Prize. Akiho is a graduate of the University of South Carolina (BM, performance), the Manhattan School of Music (MM, contemporary performance), and the Yale School of Music (MM, composition). He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at Princeton University. His compositions have been featured on PBS’s “News Hour with Jim Lehrer” and by organizations such as Bang on a Can, American Composers Forum, and The Society for New Music. Of Akiho, Bang on a Can co-founder David Lang says, “His music is attractive and smart and full of invention. One of the hardest working composers I have ever met.” *Tarnished Mirrors* was his first non-concerto work for orchestra. He was a featured composer/performer in ACO’s 2011 SONiC Festival of emerging composers.

About the Underwood New Music Readings

The 23rd Annual Underwood New Music Readings were under the direction of ACO’s Artistic Director, composer **Derek Bermel**, and were conducted by ACO Music Director **George Manahan**, with ACO’s Artistic Director Laureate **Robert Beaser**, **Olly Wilson**, and **Julia Wolfe** as mentor composers. The Readings were part of the inaugural NY PHIL BIENNIAL. The conductor, mentor composers, and principal players from ACO provided critical feedback to each of the participants during and after the sessions. In addition to the Readings, the composer participants took part in workshops and one-on-one sessions with industry professionals. This year’s New Music Readings attracted over 300 submissions from emerging composers around the country. In addition to Andy Akiho, the participants were:

Melody Eötvös was born in 1984 in Australia and is now based in Bloomington, Indiana. Her work draws on both multimedia and traditional instrumental contexts, as well substantial extra-musical references to a broad range of philosophical topics and late 19th century literature. She has studied with composers including Gerardo Dirié, Simon Bainbridge, Claude Baker, Jeffrey Hass, John Gibson, and Alicyn Warren. Eötvös has been the recipient of various awards including the 3MBS National Composers Award (Australia 2009), an APRA PDA (Australia 2009), and the Soundstream National Composer Award (2012). She has had her music performed by ensembles and orchestras including the London Sinfonietta, BBC Singers, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra,

and the Australian String Quartet. She holds a DM (2014) from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music and a MM (2008) from the Royal Academy of Music, London.

Robert Honstein was born in 1980 in Syracuse, and now lives in Brooklyn, NY. His works have been performed throughout North America by ensembles such as the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, the New York Youth Symphony, the Albany Symphony Orchestra, the Woodstock Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble ACJW, Ensemble Dal Niente, the Mivos quartet, the Del Sol Quartet, Concert Black, TIGUE, and the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble. He has received an Aaron Copland Award, multiple ASCAP awards and other honors from SCI, Carnegie Hall, and New Music USA. He has also received residencies at Copland House, the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center, I-Park, the Bang on a Can Summer Institute, and the Tanglewood Music Center. Honstein studied composition at the Yale School of Music with Martin Bresnick, Christopher Theofanidis, and David Lang.

Jared Miller, born in 1988 in Los Angeles and raised in Vancouver, Canada, now lives in New York. He has worked in collaboration with many ensembles including the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, the Juilliard Orchestra, the Contemporary Youth Orchestra, the Sneak Peek Orchestra, Latitude 49 Ensemble and with soloists including pianists Sara Davis Buechner, Ang Li and Imri Talgam and violinist Francisco Fullana. Miller has won numerous awards for composition including a 2012 ASCAP Morton Gould Award, the 2011/12 Juilliard Orchestra Competition and the 2011 SOCAN Competition for Young Composers. He is currently a C.V. Starr Doctoral Fellow at The Juilliard School where he studies with John Corigliano and Samuel Adler.

Kyle Rotolo was born in 1986 in River Vale, New Jersey where he still resides. He has been awarded the Ada Arens Morawetz Memorial Award in Composition, third prize in the Prix d'Ete chamber music composition competition (both from the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University), and was a finalist in both the BMI Student Composer Awards and the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards. Rotolo is an alumnus of the Peabody Institute (MM, 2013), the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau, the Brevard Music Center, and a member of Pi Kappa Lambda National Music Honor Society. In 2012, Rotolo's mini-opera *Marilyn's Room* was premiered by the Peabody Opera Company, and his work for solo guitar *Le crâne a la cigarette qui fume* was released on the album *Epitaphios* by the lauded guitarist Anastasios Comanescu. In 2013, his *String Quartet No. 1: Macchiato* was recorded by the New England String Quartet and released on the album *Perceptions: Points of View for Small Ensemble* (Navona). Rotolo's mentors have been Kevin Puts, Liviu Marinescu, and N. Lincoln Hanks. He has also studied privately with Samuel Adler, Francois Paris, and David Dzubay.

Harry Stafylakis was born in 1982 in Montreal, Canada and now lives in New York. With a background in progressive metal and traditional Greek music, Stafylakis has developed a unique conception of musical temporality and rhythm, infusing his compositions with a characteristic vitality and drive. Stafylakis' works have been performed internationally by the Israel Chamber Orchestra, McGill Symphony Orchestra, International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), Mivos Quartet, Cadillac Moon Ensemble, Cygnus Ensemble, Alea III, Lorelei Ensemble, Architek Percussion, and American Modern Ensemble. His awards include the Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and four SOCAN Foundation Awards for Young Composers. Stafylakis holds a BM from McGill University, where he studied with Chris Paul Harman, Jean Lesage, and John Rea. He is a doctoral candidate and Graduate Teaching Fellow at the City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate Center, studying with Jason Eckardt and David Del Tredici.

Wang A-Mao was born in 1986 into a musical family in Beijing, China and is currently based in Kansas City, Missouri. Wang's awards include second prize in the Palatino Composition Competition (2007) for her piano solo work *Sheng Dan Jing Mo Chou*, the 2014 Missouri Music

Teachers Association Composition Commission, and the Young Composer Project winner of the Beijing Modern Music Festival for her chamber music work *The Vox of Swallow and Nightingale*. Her East-West instrumentation chamber work *The Feeble Breeze, The Sullen Spring* was premiered by Music From China at Symphony Space in New York in 2013 and her Chinese chamber music work, *The Battle Between Zhong Kui and Ghosts*, was performed at the Music Festival of the Central Conservatory of Music in 2008. Her orchestral work *Plantains in the Rain* was read by the Kansas City Symphony in 2012. From 2004-2009, Wang studied composition under Professor Tang Jianping at the Central Conservatory of Music, where she received her BA in music composition. She is now a second-year DMA composition student at the UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance, studying composition with Professors Chen Yi, Zhou Long, James Mobberley, and Paul Rudy.

Writing for the symphony orchestra remains one of the supreme challenges for the aspiring composer. The subtleties of instrumental balance, timbre, and communication with the conductor and musicians are critical skills. Opportunities for composers to gain hands-on experience working with a professional orchestra are few. Since 1991 ACO's Underwood New Music Readings have provided invaluable experience for emerging composers while serving as a vital resource to the music field by identifying a new generation of American composers. To date, more than 130 composers have participated in the Readings, including such award-winning composers as Melinda Wagner, Pierre Jalbert, Augusta Read Thomas, Randall Woolf, Jennifer Higdon, Daniel Bernard Roumain, Sebastian Currier, Kate Soper, and ACO's own Artistic Director, Derek Bermel. Readings alumni have gone on to win every major composition award, including the Pulitzer, Grammy, Grawemeyer, American Academy of Arts & Letters, and Rome Prizes, and orchestras around the globe have commissioned ACO Readings alumni.

The New Music Readings continue ACO's emphasis on launching 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 Robert Beaser, Ingram Marshall, Joan Tower, Aaron Jay Kernis, Christopher Rouse, Sebastian Currier, and Tobias Picker, whom the orchestra championed when they were beginning their careers.

ACO's 2013 winner, **A. J. McCaffrey**, received the top prize for his work *Thank You for Waiting*. His newly commissioned work, *Motormouth*, will be premiered by ACO at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall on **November 21, 2014**. The 24th Annual New Music Readings are scheduled for **May 7 and 8, 2015** at The DiMenna Center for Classical Music in New York City. The submission deadline for composers interested in applying is **December 19, 2014** at 5pm Eastern. Complete submission guidelines and application are available at www.americancomposers.org/unmr2015.

About ACO

Now in its 38th 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 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.

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 37 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* (2011); *Emerging Composers Series: Vol. 1* (2012); and *Orchestra Underground: X10D* (2012), an album featuring unusual and extended solo instruments with the orchestra. In 2014, ACO released *Orchestra Underground: Tech & Techno* and *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.

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

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