



american composers orchestra

news release

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David Hertzberg Wins \$15,000 Underwood Emerging Composer Commission from American Composers Orchestra

Carl Schimmel wins Annual Audience Choice Award

**Deadline for the 2016 Underwood
New Music Readings Posted by September 1, 2015 at
www.americancomposers.org/unmr2016**

David Hertzberg: www.davidhertzbergmusic.com | Carl Schimmel: www.carlschimmel.com

American Composers Orchestra: www.americancomposers.org

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

New York, NY – **American Composers Orchestra** (ACO) has awarded composer **David Hertzberg** its **2015 Underwood Commission**, bringing him a \$15,000 purse for a work to be premiered by ACO in the 2016-2017 season. Chosen from seven finalists during ACO's 23rd Underwood New Music Readings on May 6 and 7, 2015, in one of the most coveted opportunities for emerging composers in the United States, David won the top prize with his work *Spectre of the Spheres*.

In addition, for the sixth 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 **Carl Schimmel**, for his piece *Two Variations on Ascent into the Empyrean*. As the winner, Carl 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, "The musicians of the ACO were impressed with David's music. His control of orchestral colors and his talent were obvious to us all. We look forward to performing more of his works."

"Such a well-deserved award," adds Underwood New Music Readings mentor composer **Gabriela Lena Frank**. "David has an ear for color and pacing that's really outstanding, and I can't wait to hear the new work that he'll create for the ACO and future orchestras to perform!"

Upon winning the Underwood commission, David Hertzberg said, "I am thrilled to be writing for such a dynamic group of musicians. The commitment and artistry that Maestro Manahan and the ACO bring to all of the music that they perform is singular and truly inspiring. "

The music of **David Hertzberg** (b. 1990) has been performed recently at the Aspen, Tanglewood, and Santa Fe festivals, and on the stages of Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, and Carnegie Hall. Highlights of his 2014-2015 season included the premiere a new work for the PRISM Quartet and Young Concert Artists, where he served as the 2013-2015 Composer-in-Residence, as well as a feature on APM's *Performance Today*, a performance at Hong Kong's *The Intimacy of Creativity* festival, and a reading with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Upcoming projects include new works for pianist Steven Lin and violinist In Mo Yang, both of which will premiere on the 2015-16 Concert Artists Guild series at Carnegie Hall, and a large-scale concert work for Gotham Chamber Opera, to be premiered at (le) poisson rouge in the spring of 2016. The New England Philharmonic selected *Spectre of the Spheres* as the winner of the 30th annual Call for Scores; the piece will be performed by the orchestra in April 2016. Recent engagements include works for sopranos Julia Bullock and Jennifer Zetlan, pianists Ursula Oppens and Steven Lin, the Juilliard Orchestra, the Curtis Orchestra, the New Juilliard Ensemble, the Flux Quartet, the Dover Quartet, and the New Fromm Players. Recent distinctions include those from Gotham Chamber Opera, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the American Composers Forum, Copland House, Yaddo, Tanglewood, ASCAP, and BMI. David began his musical studies at the Colburn School in Los Angeles and received his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Juilliard School, where he studied with Samuel Adler. He holds an Artist Diploma from The Curtis Institute of Music. Of *Spectre of the Spheres* David says, "In the opening stanzas of *The Auroras of Autumn* (from which my work's title is drawn), Stevens uses the image of a serpent thrashing after having shed its skin, glimmering and flashing as if possessed, as a metaphor for the majestic beauty of the Northern Lights. I found this idea, of something primordial, that is at once terrifying and arrestingly beautiful, to be a very poignant one, and one ripe for musical expression. With *Spectre of the Spheres* I sought to create something that moves and breathes like the unfettered Aurora, with a reckless vitality, inexorably, and of its own mystical accord."

About the Underwood New Music Readings

The 24th 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 **Gabriela Lena Frank** and Pulitzer Prize-winner **Kevin Puts** as mentor composers. 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 200 submissions from emerging composers around the country.

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 140 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 2014 winner, **Andy Akiho**, received the top prize for his work *Tarnished Mirrors*. Andy is composing a new piece that will premiere in October 2015 as part of ACO's SONiC festival. The 25th Annual New Music Readings are scheduled for May 2016 at The DiMenna Center for Classical Music in New York City. Complete submission guidelines and application will be posted by September 1, 2015 at www.americancomposers.org/unmr2016.

In addition to David Hertzberg, the 2015 Underwood New Music Readings participants were:

Yuanyuan (Kay) He was born in 1985 and began learning piano at age 5. At age 15, she began studying composition at the affiliated middle school of Shenyang Conservatory of China. As a double major undergraduate, Kay studied composition with Tang Jianping at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, and with Zhang Xiaofu at the Conservatory's Center for Electroacoustic Music of China. The winner of the Snow Scholarship, Kay completed her Master's degree in composition at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. While at UMKC, she studied under Dr. Zhou Long, Dr. Chen Yi, Dr. Paul Rudy, and Dr. James Mobberley. Besides music, she also studied painting at the UMKC Department of Art and Fine Arts. She is currently pursuing her doctoral degree in composition at the University of Texas at Austin, studying under Dr. Dan Welcher, Dr. Russell Pinkston, Dr. Donald Grantham, and Dr. Yevgeniy Sharlat. As a young composer, Kay has won many composition awards in the U.S. and abroad. Her piece *On the Threshold of a Drizzly Reality* was selected for 2014 performances at the International Computer Music Conference (ICMC) in Athens, Greece; New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival; and the Root Signals music festival in Jacksonville, Florida; her piano trio *Shadow of Dewdrops* was selected for Gamma UT music festival in 2014; the orchestra piece *Legends of Old Peking* won the Seattle Symphony's Celebrate Asia Composition in 2012; *Dying Away* won the 2011 DuoSolo Emerging Composer Competition; and *Destiny of the Sputnik* was chosen in the 2011 Beijing Modern Music Festival Young Composers Project.

David "Clay" Mettens was born in 1990 and is currently a Master's composition student at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY. A native of Covington, KY, he completed his undergraduate studies at the University of South Carolina with a degree in music composition and a clarinet performance certificate. The USC School of Music selected him to be the winner of the 2012 John and Lucretia Herr Composition Award, the 2012 Cantey Award for Excellence, the 2013 Arthur M. Fraser Award, and the 2013 LeDare Robinson Undergraduate Award for Academic Excellence. His primary composition teachers at USC were John Fitz Rogers and Fang Man. At Eastman, he has studied composition with Ricardo

Zohn-Muldoon, David Liptak, Robert Morris, and Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, and computer music with Allan Schindler. His orchestra piece *Sleeping I am carried...* was the winner of Eastman's 2014 Wayne Brewster Barlow Composition Prize, and received a premiere with the Eastman School Symphony Orchestra in October 2014. He was a finalist for the 2011, 2013, and 2014 ASCAP Foundation Morton Gould Young Composer Awards and a regional finalist for the 2012 SCI/ASCAP Student Commission Competition. He studied composition at the Brevard Music Center with Robert Aldridge and David Dzubay, and attended the 2014 New Music on the Point Chamber Music Festival. Recently, his works have been performed by the Elon University Wind Ensemble; on the Café MoMus new music series at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music; OSSIA, Composers' Forum, Graduate Composers' Sinfonietta, and Computer Music Center concerts at Eastman; and in readings by the Eastman Philharmonia Chamber Orchestra, the Eastman Wind Orchestra, the Brevard Sinfonia, and the USC Wind Ensemble.

Polina Nazaykinskaya was born in 1987 in Togliatti, an industrial city on the Volga River in Russia. She studied piano, violin and flute as a child, and as a teenager at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory she concentrated on violin and composition. She came to the U.S. to attend the Yale School of Music, where she completed a Master's degree in composition and theory and artist diploma in composition, working with Christopher Theofanidis and Ezra Laderman. She is now pursuing her doctorate in composition at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, studying with Tania León. She has won numerous awards including the Charles Ives Scholarship at The American Academy of Arts and Letters and has garnered performances by ensembles including the Minnesota Orchestra, the Russian National Orchestra, the Hermitage Orchestra and Chorus, the Yale Philharmonia Orchestra, the Youth Symphony Orchestra of Russia, the Omsk Philharmonic Orchestra, the St. Olaf Philharmonia and the Juventas New Music Ensemble, where her chamber opera, *The Magic Mirror*, drew considerable attention for its elegance and rich, intricate score.

Jules Pegram was born in 1991 and writes music modern in its sensibility and sophisticated in its craft, yet full of shimmering colors, boundless energy, and an unbridled lyricism. His kaleidoscopic sound-world is influenced by everything from contemporary concert music and the rigors of modernism to film and television scores, show tunes, urban environments, popular culture, and the natural world. In 2013, Jules' orchestral work *Neon Nights* was selected as the winning composition in both the Marilyn K. Glick and Symphony in C Young Composers Competitions, resulting in performances by the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra and New Jersey's Symphony in C, respectively. Other awards include recognition as a Finalist in the 2012 ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composers Competition as well as in the 3rd International Frank Ticheli Composition Contest, the Presser Foundation's Undergraduate Scholar Award, the Sadye J. Moss Endowed Music Composition Prize, selection in both the University of Southern California New Music for Orchestra and Indiana State University's "Music Now" competitions, and "Honorable Mention" in the Donald Sinta Quartet's National Composition Competition. He was also a recipient of the USC Discovery Scholars prize and was named an Outstanding Graduate of the USC Thornton School of Music's Department of Composition. Jules is pursuing the Master of Music in Composition at the University of Michigan, where he has studied with Michael Daugherty and Bright Sheng. Pegram received the Bachelor of Music in Composition (*summa cum laude*) from the University of Southern California, where he studied with Oscar nominee Bruce Broughton, Frank Ticheli, Morten Lauridsen, Stephen Hartke, Donald Crockett, Erica Muhl, and USC Trojan Marching Band arranger Tony

Fox. He studied classical piano with Alin Melik-Adamyman and jazz piano with Yellowjackets keyboardist Russell Ferrante.

Igor Santos was born in 1985 and is a Brazilian-American composer of acoustic and electro-acoustic concert music. His works have been performed by groups such as eighth blackbird, Ensemble Intercontemporain, Spektral Quartet and The Florida Orchestra. Igor is currently Ph.D. candidate in Music Composition at the University of Chicago. He received his Master's degree from the Eastman School of Music, where he studied under Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon and Carlos Sánchez-Gutiérrez. At Eastman he was an active member of the Ossia New Music group, assisting in organizing and promoting concerts of contemporary music. He received his B.M. in composition from the University of South Florida, where he was active as board member and pianist for the USF Composer's Consortium. Igor is currently studying under Shulamit Ran, Marta Ptaszynska, Augusta Read Thomas and Anthony Cheung. Additional studies include workshops and festivals such as ManiFeste, Synthetis, Fontainebleau, and Brevard Music Center.

Carl Schimmel was born in 1975 and is a composer based in Iowa and Illinois. In infusing his music with extra-musical influences such as poetry, art, and even unusual words, he strives to construct nexuses of experience that reflects both the inner life of emotions and the outer physical world which shapes us and is shaped by us. Winner of Columbia University's Joseph Bearns Prize and the Lee Ettelson Award, Carl has received honors and awards from many organizations, including the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, Copland House, New Music USA, and ASCAP. His works have been performed in Carnegie Hall's Weill Hall, Merkin Hall in New York, Severance Hall in Cleveland, the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London, Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis, and at other venues throughout North America, Europe, Australia, and Asia. He has received performances and commissions from the California EAR Unit, the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, the Minnesota Orchestra, North/South Consonance, saxophonist Taimur Sullivan, the Da Capo Chamber Players, Lucy Shelton, the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, and many others. A graduate of Duke University (Ph.D.), the Yale School of Music (M.M.), and Case Western Reserve University (B.A. Mathematics and Music), he is currently Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Composition at Illinois State University in Normal, IL.

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 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 it's 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 and continuing in 2015, 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.

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

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