



american composers orchestra

news release

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**American Composers Orchestra  
Orchestra Underground: *Sins & Songs***

**George Manahan, Music Director**



Shara Worden. Photo by Julien Bourgeois available upon request.

**Friday, February 27, 2015 at 7:30pm**

**Performances by Shara Worden,  
Hudson Shad & Khari Joyner**

**Featuring Kurt Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins***

**Selections from  
Sarah Kirkland Snider's *Unremembered***

**Songs by My Brightest Diamond**

**World premiere of Carman Moore's *MADIBA***

**US premiere of Daniel Schnyder's *DraKOOL***

**Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall | 57<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. | NYC  
Tickets: \$43 & 50 at [www.carnegiehall.org](http://www.carnegiehall.org), 212-247-7800,  
or the Carnegie Hall Box Office (154 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street, NYC)**

**For more information: [www.americancomposers.org](http://www.americancomposers.org)**

New York, NY – **American Composers Orchestra (ACO)** continues its 38th season with **Orchestra Underground: *Sins & Songs*** led by ACO Music Director **George Manahan** on Friday, February 27, 2015 at 7:30pm at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall. **Shara Worden** and her pop "alter-ego" **My Brightest Diamond** headline this program bringing the worlds of cabaret, pop, and jazz traditions into the orchestra concert hall. **Kurt Weill's** cult classic *The Seven Deadly Sins* anchors the evening with Worden taking the lead and six-man piano and vocal ensemble **Hudson Shad** as "The Family." As My Brightest Diamond, Worden performs her own evocative genre-bending songs, and then selections from **Sarah Kirkland Snider's *Unremembered***, songs that are about memory, innocence, and the ways we cope with an unpredictable world, recalling the composer's childhood in rural Massachusetts. Composer and saxophonist **Daniel Schnyder** shakes up the gothic horror of Dracula with his own roots in jazz in the American premiere of *DraKOOL*. **Carman Moore**, a composer who not only defies categories, but "treats them with disdain" (*New York Times*) offers *MADIBA* (world premiere), commissioned by ACO and inspired by the life of Nelson Mandela, featuring cello soloist **Khari Joyner**.

In addition to the works performed on *Sins & Songs*, ACO's 2014-2015 season includes premieres by a diverse group of composers including **Wynton Marsalis, Ian Williams, Theo Bleckmann, Courtney Bryan, Uri Caine, A.J. McCaffrey**, and **Loren Loaicano**. In April, ACO gives the New York premiere of Wynton Marsalis' *Blues Symphony* at **Jazz at Lincoln Center**; the concert will also feature a world premiere commissioned by ACO from **Courtney Bryan**, a past participant in ACO's **Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute**, plus a revised and expanded version of **Uri Caine's** *Double Trouble* commissioned by ACO.

Founded in 1977, American Composers Orchestra remains the only orchestra in the world dedicated exclusively to the creation, performance, preservation, and promulgation of music by American composers. To date, ACO has performed music by more than 700 American composers, including more than 300 world premieres and newly commissioned works. ACO's Orchestra Underground, named for Zankel Hall (its subterranean state-of-the-art home) as well as the series' subversive nature, seeks to reinvent the orchestra with new works that challenge convention, with diverse influences, unusual instruments and influences, multimedia and multi-disciplinary collaborations.

### **Kurt Weill: *The Seven Deadly Sins***

**Kurt Weill** (1900-1950) began his career in the early 1920's, after a musical childhood and several years of study in Berlin. His works with Bertolt Brecht made him famous all over Europe. He fled the Nazis in 1933 and continued his indefatigable efforts in Paris and in the U.S. until his death. Certain threads tie together his career: a concern for social justice, an aggressive pursuit of highly-regarded playwrights and lyricists as collaborators, and the ability to adapt to audience tastes no matter where he found himself. His most important works include *The Violin Concerto*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, *The Pledge*, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, *Lady in the Dark*, *Street Scene*, and *Lost in the Stars*.

Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins* explores sloth, pride, wrath, gluttony, lust, covetousness, and envy through two characters who are facets of one personality – Anna I (who sings) and Anna II (who dances) – as they travel to seven cities in America and encounter a different sin in each. In each city, she/they encounter a different deadly sin, and Anna I (the practical side) rebukes Anna II (the artistic side) for engaging in sinful behavior – that is, behavior that hinders the accumulation of wealth.

### **Shara Worden / *My Brightest Diamond: Whoever You Are, We Added It Up; Looking at the Sun***

**For more information:** [www.mybrightestdiamond.com](http://www.mybrightestdiamond.com)

**Shara Worden** received a BA in Opera from the University of North Texas. After moving to New York, she began studying composition with composer/performer Padma Newsome from Clogs and The National. During this time she composed music for several off-Broadway theater productions. Her band, My Brightest Diamond, has released *Bring Me The Workhorse*, *A Thousand Shark's Teeth* and *All Things Will Unwind* and she will soon release *This Is My Hand*. Recent years have found Worden in the role of composer as much as songwriter. She recently composed a baroque opera, *You Us We All*, which was co-produced by Hamburg International Summer Festival and deSingel International Arts Campus and was performed again at the Holland Festival in 2014. She has also received commissions from yMusic, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Young New Yorkers' Chorus, Brooklyn Rider, and Nadia Sirota. Additionally, many composers, songwriters and filmmakers have sought out Worden's distinctive voice, including David Lang, Sarah Kirkland Snider,

Sufjan Stevens, The Decemberists, David Byrne and Fatboy Slim, as well as Matthew Barney and Jonathan Bepler. Worden received the 2012 Kresge Artist Fellowship in the performing arts.

Worden's "Whoever You Are" was originally composed for the Brooklyn Youth Chorus and was released on My Brightest Diamond's 2014 EP *None More Than You*. The song began as a study of dance music, particularly the music of Skrillex, but Worden accidentally veered the tune toward art song by setting the poetry of Walt Whitman at 140 beats per minute. Composed for the American Songbook Series in 2011, Worden's arrangement for "We Added It Up," originally scored for the sextet yMusic, was released on the third My Brightest Diamond album, *All Things Will Unwind*. The text was inspired by President Obama's Congressional midterm election press conference in 2010 in which he said "we're going to need to ... disagree without being disagreeable." Recently obsessed with the American marching band as a symbol of collective music making and folk, Worden placed the snare drum-driven "Looking at the Sun" as the centerfold statement of the most recent My Brightest Diamond album, *This Is My Hand*, released in September 2014 on Asthmatic Kitty Records.

### **Sarah Kirkland Snider: *Unremembered (Prelude, The Witch, The Swan)***

**For more information: [www.sarahkirklandsnider.com](http://www.sarahkirklandsnider.com)**

Composer **Sarah Kirkland Snider** writes music of direct expression and vivid narrative that has been hailed as "rapturous" (*The New York Times*), "haunting" (*The Los Angeles Times*) and "strikingly beautiful" (*Time Out New York*). Her works have been commissioned and performed internationally by ACME, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, the Brooklyn Youth Chorus, the Hague Philharmonic/Residentie Orkest, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, the Knights, Psappha, Roomful of Teeth, Utah Philharmonia, Signal, Shara Worden and many others. Upcoming projects include commissions for the North Carolina Symphony Orchestra and the Princeton Symphony Orchestra, a work for Pierrot ensemble, and a work for the Young People's Chorus of New York. Her debut album, *Penelope*, featuring Shara Worden and Signal, was named to dozens of top 10 lists internationally. Her music also appears on the Grammy Award-winning eponymous debut album by Roomful of Teeth. Snider has an MM from the Yale School of Music.

Shara Worden and ACO will perform three songs excerpted from Snider's 13-song cycle *Unremembered*, featuring poetry by New York-based poet Nathaniel Bellows. Snider describes the work as, "A meditation on memory, landscape, innocence, and upheaval." *Unremembered* recalls strange and beautiful happenings experienced during a childhood in rural New England — a boy makes a shocking discovery on a riverbank, a girl disappears in the woods behind a ranging farm, ghosts appear with messages for the living. Imbued with wonder, pathos, fear, and revelation, *Unremembered* explores the line between the living and the dead, narrative and silence, and the haunting grandeur of the natural world. *Unremembered* has been recorded by vocalists Padma Newsome, D.M. Stith, and Shara Worden for release on New Amsterdam Records in July 2015.

### **Daniel Schnyder: *DraKOOL***

**(US Premiere) For more information: [www.danielschnyder.com](http://www.danielschnyder.com)**

**Daniel Schnyder** is known as a composer/performer with a dynamic reputation in both jazz and classical fields. He has recorded more than ten CDs of his own music and has toured and recorded with many

classical musicians, world music artists and jazz players. Schnyder's orchestral works and his chamber music compositions have been performed and recorded all over the world. He has received commissions from Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Tonkuenstler Orchestra in Vienna, the Radio Symphony Orchestra in Berlin, The Norrlands Operan in Sweden, the Chicago Sinfonietta, the Vienna Art Orchestra the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, the Opera of Bern, the NDR Orchestra in Hannover, the NDR Big Band in Germany, the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, the New York-based Absolute Ensemble under the direction of Kristjan Järvi, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, among others.

Schnyder wrote *DraKOOL* after seeing a cartoon movie with his children about a monster party at Count Dracula's Castle in Transylvania. It was premiered in Sigisoara in Romania, the birth place of Dracula. According to the composer, the work begins at a Monster party, and includes fun dance music "with some monster flavors." The next movement is Dracul's lament. With his soul trapped, earthbound and unable to ascend to the heavens, he sings the Transylvanian blues. The piece ends with a "wild and fast" movement representing Dracul's battles with Mehmet, his long-time enemy and leader of the Ottoman empire.

## **Carman Moore: *MADIBA***

**(World Premiere, ACO Commission) For more information: [www.carmanmoore.com](http://www.carmanmoore.com)**

*The New York Times* described **Carman Moore** as a composer who not only defies categories, but "treats them with disdain." Moore earned his BM at Ohio State University and studied composition privately with Hall Overton and at The Juilliard School with Luciano Berio and Vincent Persichetti where he earned his MM. Moore began composing for symphony and chamber ensembles while writing lyrics for pop songs, gradually adding opera, theatre, dance, and film scores to his body of work. He has received commissions from New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, the Costa Rican Ministry of Culture, the Lincoln Center Institute, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He was recently awarded the MacDowell and Guggenheim Fellowships. Moore has taught at Yale University, Queens and Brooklyn Colleges, Carnegie-Mellon University, Manhattanville College, and The New School for Social Research. He has taught children with the Lincoln Center Institute and Jazzmobile. Moore has served as board member and/or adjudicator for several major organizations, including Composers Forum, the Society of Black Composers (of which he was a Founder), The MacDowell Colony, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Moore's work for ACO, *MADIBA*, honors the great statesman Nelson Mandela. The piece is a narrative, guided by the story of Mandela's life. The solo cello acts as Mandela. A brass choir acts as the strident voice of apartheid, shutting them down at every turn and calling up fortissimo drums as their artillery. A key moment in the score occurs as a duet between solo cello and solo tuba, the result of which leads to freedom for Mandela and the People. Moore says, "I found that that life actually reads like a piece of music. This is simply my take on *MADIBA*'s story and personality and allows me to bow musically before this amazing figure."

## About the Featured Performers

### About Hudson Shad

Though the six-man ensemble **Hudson Shad** (five singers and a pianist) debuted officially in 1992 in a concert featuring the music of the legendary German group The Comedian Harmonists, their nucleus formed in 1977 when three of them made their Carnegie Hall debuts as soloists in Penderecki's *Magnificat*. In 1989, the Arts at St. Ann's in Brooklyn asked bass Wilbur Pauley to contract a quartet to perform as The Family in Kurt Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins* with Marianne Faithfull. The response was favorable. Over the last quarter century, Hudson Shad has most likely racked up more performances as The Family in the *Seven Deadly Sins* than any other group in history. Recent performances in 2014 included five performances with Storm Large of the *Seven Deadly Sins* at the Ojai Festival, the Britt Festival, and with the Louisville Orchestra; two tours of the Midwest under the auspices of Allied Concert Services; and their debut at Joe's Pub last October. Other orchestra appearances by Hudson Shad have featured more Weill: *Kleine Mahagonny* with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* at the Salzburg Festival. The Schubert bicentennial found Hudson Shad returning to the New York Philharmonic for orchestral works with men's voices, and they performed Schubert songs using the Reger orchestrations with the Bruckner Orchester in Linz. Hudson Shad debuted with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra as "Wild Things" in Oliver Knussen's *Where the Wild Things Are*, conducted by the composer.

### About Khari Joyner

Heralded by the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* as "one of the most promising cellists in the country, **Khari Joyner** has made numerous achievements nationally and abroad as a versatile soloist, chamber musician, and ambassador for the arts. He has collaborated with artists such as Magnus Lindberg and Hubert Laws, and has had numerous solo engagements with the Atlanta, Buffalo, New World, New Jersey, and Sphinx Symphonies. Other accomplishments include being awarded the William Schuman Prize for outstanding achievement and leadership in music at Juilliard's 109th Commencement ceremony, winning first prizes in the Juilliard Concerto Competition and Sphinx Competition, and giving a private performance in the Oval Office for President Obama. A recently named C.V. Starr Doctoral Fellow, Joyner was one of seven candidates accepted into Juilliard's prestigious Doctor of Musical Arts program, and is continuing his studies with teachers Timothy Eddy and Joel Krosnick, the latter for whom he serves as Teaching Assistant. In addition to concertizing, Joyner is passionate about community engagement and also pursued a concentration in mathematics during his undergraduate and graduate degrees, in an exchange program with Columbia University.

### About Derek Bermel, ACO Artistic Director

Described by the *Toronto Star* as an "eclectic with wide open ears," Grammy-nominated composer and clarinetist **Derek Bermel** has been widely acclaimed for his creativity, theatricality, and virtuosity. Bermel's works draw from a rich variety of musical genres, including classical, jazz, pop, rock, blues, folk, and gospel. Hands-on experience with music of cultures around the world has become part of the fabric and force of his compositional language. Bermel currently serves as the Artistic Director of the American Composers Orchestra and has been ACO's Artistic Adviser since 2009. Bermel is the senior composer in ACO's artistic administration, and is primarily responsible for ACO's concert programming.

In addition to his commissions from American Composers Orchestra, Bermel has received commissions from the Pittsburgh, National, Saint Louis, and Pacific Symphonies, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, WNYC, eighth blackbird, the Guarneri String Quartet, Music from Copland House and Music from China, De Ereprijs (Netherlands), Jazz Xchange (U.K.), violinist Midori, and electric guitarist Wiek Hijmans, among others. His many honors include the Alpert Award in the Arts, Rome Prize, Guggenheim and Fulbright Fellowships, American Music Center's Trailblazer Award, and Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; commissions from the Koussevitzky and Fromm Foundations, Meet the Composer, and Cary Trust; and residencies at the Institute for Advanced Study, Yaddo, Tanglewood, Aspen, Banff, Bellagio, Copland House, Sacatar, and Civitella Ranieri. His discography features three critically acclaimed discs: an all-Bermel orchestral recording that includes his clarinet concerto *Voices* (BMOP/sound); *Soul Garden* (New World/CRI); and his most recent disc, *Canzonas Americanas*, with Alarm Will Sound (Cantaloupe).

### **About George Manahan, ACO Music Director**

In his fifth season as Music Director of the American Composers Orchestra, the wide-ranging and versatile **George Manahan** has had an esteemed career embracing everything from opera to the concert stage, the traditional to the contemporary. In addition to his work with ACO, Manahan continues his commitment to working with young musicians as Director of Orchestral Studies at the Manhattan School of Music as well as guest conductor at the Curtis Institute of Music. He also serves as Music Director of the Portland Opera.

Manahan was Music Director at New York City Opera for fourteen seasons. There he helped envision the organization's groundbreaking VOX program, a series of workshops and readings that have provided unique opportunities for numerous composers to hear their new concepts realized, and introduced audiences to exciting new compositional voices. In addition to established composers such as Mark Adamo, David Del Tredici, Lewis Spratlan, Robert X. Rodriguez, Lou Harrison, Bernard Rands, and Richard Danielpour, Manahan has introduced works by composers on the rise including Adam Silverman, Elodie Lauten, Mason Bates, and David T. Little. Among his many world premieres are Charles Wuorinen's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, David Lang's *Modern Painters*, and the New York premiere of Richard Danielpour's *Margaret Garner*.

In May 2011 Manahan was honored by the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) for his "career-long advocacy for American composers and the music of our time that has enriched and enabled Concert Music both at home and abroad." His recent Carnegie Hall performance of Samuel Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* was hailed by audiences and critics alike. *The New York Times* reported, "the fervent and sensitive performance that Mr. Manahan presided over made the best case for this opera that I have encountered." In 2013, Manahan was awarded the Alice M. Ditson Award for his outstanding commitment to the work of emerging composers.

George Manahan's recording activities include the premiere recording of Steve Reich's *Tehillim* for ECM; recordings of Edward Thomas's *Desire Under the Elms*, which was nominated for a Grammy; Joe Jackson's *Will Power*; and Tobias Picker's *Emmeline*. As music director of the Richmond Symphony (VA) for twelve years, he was honored four times by the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) for his commitment to 20th century music.

## **About ACO**

Now in its 38<sup>th</sup> 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 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](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), 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](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 [www.americancomposers.org/press](http://www.americancomposers.org/press)*

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Derek Bermel, Artistic Director | George Manahan, Music Director  
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## 2014-2015 Season Highlights

**Friday, November 21, 2014 at 7:30pm – Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall**

**Orchestra Underground: Monk's Sphere**

George Manahan, Music Director and Conductor

Theo Bleckmann, vocals

Ian Williams, electronics

Meredith Monk Vocal Ensemble

IAN WILLIAMS: *Clear Image* (World Premiere, ACO/Goelet Commission)

AJ McCaffrey: *Motormouth* (World Premiere, ACO/Underwood Commission)

LOREN LOIACANO: *Stalks, Hounds* (NY Premiere)

THEO BLECKMANN: *My Brightest Garment* (World Premiere, Carnegie Hall Commission)

MEREDITH MONK: *Night*

**Friday, February 27, 2015 at 7:30pm – Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall**

**Orchestra Underground: Sins & Songs**

George Manahan, Music Director and Conductor

Shara Worden / *My Brightest Diamond*, vocals

Hudson Shad, vocal ensemble

Khari Joyner, cello

KURT WEILL: *The Seven Deadly Sins*

MY BRIGHTEST DIAMOND: *Whoever You Are; We Added It Up; Looking at the Sun*

SARAH KIRKLAND SNIDER: Selections from *Unremembered*

DANIEL SCHNYDER: *DraKOOL* (US Premiere)

CARMAN MOORE: *MADIBA* (World Premiere, ACO Commission)

**Thursday, April 9, 2015 at 8pm – Rose Theater, Jazz at Lincoln Center**

**American Composers Orchestra: Blues Symphony & Beyond**

George Manahan, Music Director and Conductor

Uri Caine, piano

COURTNEY BRYAN: *Sanctum* for Orchestra & Recorded Sound (World Premiere, ACO/Jerome Commission)

URI CAINE: *Double Trouble* (revised and expanded, ACO commission)

WYNTON MARSALIS: *Blues Symphony* (NY Premiere)

**Thursday & Friday, May 7 & 8, 2015 – The DiMenna Center for Classical Music**

**Underwood New Music Readings**

George Manahan, Music Director and Conductor

Derek Bermel, Artistic Director

ACO's annual roundup of the country's brightest young and emerging composers.

**Plus:**

**Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute**

Summer Intensive 2015

**EarShot New Music Readings**

from ACO's National Orchestral Composition Discovery Network

**coLABoratory: Playing It UNSafe**

Laboratory for the research and development of cutting-edge new orchestra music

*Artists and repertoire subject to change.*