



american composers orchestra

**news release**

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**American Composers Orchestra  
*Blues Symphony & Beyond* at Jazz at Lincoln Center**

**George Manahan, Music Director  
Uri Caine, piano soloist**



Wynton Marsalis by Rob Waymen. Photos available in high resolution upon request.

**Thursday, April 9, 2015 at 8pm**

**Featuring the New York Premiere of  
Wynton Marsalis' *Blues Symphony***

**the World Premiere of  
a revised & expanded version  
of Uri Caine's *Double Trouble***

**the World Premiere of  
Courtney Bryan's *Sanctum***

**Watch Marsalis discuss *Blues Symphony*:  
<http://bit.ly/MarsalisInterview>**

**Rose Theater, Jazz at Lincoln Center | Broadway at 60th Street | NYC**

**Tickets: \$40-\$120 at [www.jazz.org](http://www.jazz.org) or 212.721.6500**

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

New York, NY – **American Composers Orchestra** (ACO) continues its 38th season with *Blues Symphony & Beyond* led by ACO Music Director **George Manahan** on Thursday, April 9, 2015 at 8pm at the Rose Theater at **Jazz at Lincoln Center**. The concert will feature the New York premiere of *Blues Symphony* by **Wynton Marsalis**, Managing and Artistic Director, Jazz at Lincoln Center (Marsalis does not perform in this work). The concert will also feature the world premiere of **Courtney Bryan's *Sanctum***, commissioned by ACO. Bryan is a past participant in ACO's groundbreaking **Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute** (JCOI), which gives jazz composers the opportunity for vital hands-on experience working with a symphony orchestra. A revised and expanded version of **Uri Caine's *Double Trouble***, featuring the composer at the piano, completes the program.

ACO has a deep and continuing interest in the intersection of jazz and symphonic music. A decade ago, ACO created IMPROVISE!, a festival devoted to exploring jazz and improvised musical idioms and the orchestra. In recent years, ACO has often commissioned notable jazz artists to write their first orchestral works, including Steve Coleman, George Lewis, Suzie Ibarra, Henry Threadgill, Donal Fox, Muhal Richard

Abrams, and Vijay Iyer. And ACO has previously collaborated with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and performed works by Duke Ellington, Anthony Davis, and Paquito D'Rivera, among many others.

ACO's **Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute** (JCOI), of which *Blues Symphony & Beyond* composer Courtney Bryan is an alumna, continues in 2015. JCOI extends the orchestra's exploration of the intersection of jazz and improvised music and the symphony orchestra. The next installment commences with an Intensive involving 35 jazz composers from August 8-13, 2015. Renowned flutist and composer **James Newton** directs the program, which is produced in collaboration with the Center for Jazz Studies at Columbia University and the Herb Alpert School of Music at UCLA. Participants in the Intensive will include some of the most forward-looking jazz composers working today, selected from submissions nationwide. The Intensive will feature seminars led by visiting composers and conductors working in both jazz and classical music, and will address various topics related to the 21st-century orchestra such as composition and notation techniques, electronics, improvisation, and a historical review of American orchestral music. 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. Applications are now being accepted. Details can be found at: <http://www.americancomposers.org/jcoi>.

This is the third installment of the JCOI program and it remains a unique development in the jazz field. While many jazz composers seek to write for the symphony orchestra, opportunities for hands-on experience are few. The first JCOI, which took place in New York 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](http://www.npr.org/2010/12/19/132146455/teaching-the-symphony-to-swing)

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.

## **Wynton Marsalis: *Blues Symphony***

**(New York Premiere) For more information: [www.wyntonmarsalis.org](http://www.wyntonmarsalis.org)**

**Wynton Marsalis** is the Managing and Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, and a world-renowned band leader and composer. Born in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1961, Marsalis began his classical training on trumpet at age 12 and soon began playing in local bands of diverse genres. He entered The Juilliard School at age 17 and later joined Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. Marsalis made his recording debut as a leader in 1982, and since then he has recorded more than 30 jazz and classical recordings, which have won him nine Grammy® Awards. In 1983, he became the first and only artist to win both classical and jazz Grammys® in the same year and repeated this feat in 1984.

In 1997, Marsalis became the first jazz artist to be awarded the prestigious Pulitzer Prize in music, for his oratorio *Blood on the Fields*, which was commissioned by Jazz at Lincoln Center. In addition to composer, musician, bandleader, Marsalis is an internationally recognized educator and spokesperson for music education and arts advocacy. He has received honorary doctorates from over 25 universities and

colleges throughout the U.S. and is the author of six books. In 2001, Marsalis was appointed Messenger of Peace by Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and he has also been designated cultural ambassador to the United States of America by the U.S. State Department through their CultureConnect program. He helped lead the effort to construct Jazz at Lincoln Center's home – Frederick P. Rose Hall – the first education, performance, and broadcast facility devoted to jazz, which opened in October 2004.

Marsalis' *Blues Symphony* (Symphony No. 2) celebrates the blues through the prism of different moments in American history. Each movement is designed to be in the form of 12-bar blues choruses with variations and specific sounds related to historical reference points. Marsalis says, "It incorporates the call and responses, train whistles, stomp-down grooves, big-city complexities and down-home idiosyncrasies of Afro-American and American music. Like most New Orleans musicians, I grew up surrounded by vernacular music and love the plain-spokenness of it all." Marsalis last collaborated with ACO in 2006 when the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra joined ACO in a program of Gershwin and the world premiere of *The Migration Series* by Derek Bermel.

**Uri Caine: *Double Trouble***  
**(World Premiere, Revised & Expanded Version, ACO Commission)**  
**For more information: [www.uricaine.com](http://www.uricaine.com)**

**Uri Caine** was born in Philadelphia and began studying piano with Bernard Peiffer. He played in bands led by Philly Joe Jones, Hank Mobley, Johnny Coles, Mickey Roker, Odean Pope, Jymmie Merritt, Bootsie Barnes and Grover Washington. He attended the University of Pennsylvania and studied music composition with George Rochberg and George Crumb. Caine has recorded 25 albums as a leader including recordings featuring his jazz trio, his Bedrock Trio, and his ensemble performing arrangements of Mahler, Wagner, Beethoven, Bach, and Schumann. In addition to ACO, he has received commissions from the Vienna Volksoper, The Seattle Chamber Players, Relache, The Beaux Arts Trio, the Basel Chamber Orchestra, and Concerto Koln. He has received grants from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Pew Foundation.

Caine's work *Double Trouble* For Piano and Orchestra was commissioned by American Composers Orchestra in 2008; this performance will be the premiere of a revised version for expanded forces. *Double Trouble* sets up a dialogue between composed music written mostly for the orchestra and improvisation, mostly by the piano soloist. Of the work, Caine says, "The piece is a mini piano concerto in the sense that there is a constant give-and-take between the piano and the orchestra. In five short but continuous sections, the piano comments on and seeks to transform musical material presented by the orchestra, especially in the solo cadenzas. Sometimes the piano is part of the ensemble, sometimes it moves in a parallel but distinct musical space, and sometimes it moves in direct opposition and in contrast to the orchestra. The orchestra functions as a rhythm section and set up textures that invite improvisation from the soloist."

## **Courtney Bryan: *Sanctum* (World Premiere, ACO/Jerome/Heller Commission)**

**Courtney Bryan**, a native of New Orleans, is a prolific and eclectic composer, pianist, and arranger. Her compositions range from solo works to large ensembles in the jazz and new music idioms, film scores, and collaborations of dancers, visual artists, writers, and actors. Bryan was a participant in ACO's Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute. She has academic degrees from Oberlin Conservatory '04 (BM), Rutgers University '07 (MM), and Columbia University '09 (MA). Recently, Bryan was a Visiting Instructor at Oberlin Conservatory. Currently, she is pursuing a DMA in music composition at Columbia University of New York.

Bryan's work for ACO, *Sanctum* for orchestra and recorded sound, explores the sound of improvisation in Holiness-preaching traditions, and draws inspiration from Pastor Shirley Caesar's 1973 recorded sermon, "The Praying Slave Lady," about an enslaved woman protected from the slave master's whips by her unrelenting faith in God and the intervention of a host of spirits. Bryan says, "By employing techniques of layered repetition, rhythmic intensity, and sounds of moaning and whooping, *Sanctum* invokes solace found in the midst of persecution and tribulation."

## **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 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](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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**american composers orchestra**

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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/Heller Commission)

URI CAINE: *Double Trouble* (World Premiere, Revised and Expanded Version, ACO commission)

WYNTON MARSALIS: *Blues Symphony* (NY Premiere)

**Wednesday & Thursday, May 6 & 7, 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 – UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, Los Angeles, CA**

Summer Intensive, August 8-13, 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.*