



american composers orchestra

news release

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American Composers Orchestra & Beijing Modern Music Festival

announce the

China-U.S. Composers Project An Historic International Collaboration

American Composers Orchestra: www.americancomposers.org
Beijing Modern Music Festival: <http://bmmf.ccom.edu.cn/EN/index.aspx>

New York, NY – American Composers Orchestra (ACO) and the Beijing Modern Music Festival announced the launch of a new, international collaboration, the **China-U.S. Composers Project**, on Monday, June 22, 2015 at a VIP event hosted by the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the United States at the Mayflower Renaissance Hotel in Washington, DC, with honored guest H.E. Liu Yandong, Vice Premier of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China. Taking place over three seasons or more, with multiple performances and exchange activities in both Beijing and New York City, the China-U.S. Composers Project will be one of the most significant cultural exchange projects ever undertaken between China and the U.S., and the most important international exploration of the work of contemporary composers to date.

The collaboration has three components, each will develop mutual understanding and international friendships:

A major **FESTIVAL** in New York City that brings together delegations of Chinese and American composers for performances and professional exchange will focus attention on these composers and their music. The festival will feature a delegation of 12-15 Chinese composers and 12-15 American composers in attendance; two concerts by ACO, featuring music by Chinese and Chinese-American composers and led by ACO Music Director George Manahan; chamber music and traditional music performances by guest ensembles from both China and the U.S. in collaboration with major cultural venues in New York; and educational partnerships with the area’s top institutions.

CONCERTS by American Composers Orchestra at the Beijing Modern Music Festival introducing an array of innovative American composers to Chinese audiences, and introducing these composers to their counterparts in China. These concerts will feature premieres by 10-12 American composers, led by ACO’s Music Director George Manahan.

NEW MUSIC READINGS of music by young and emerging composers from China and the U.S. will be produced in China and the U.S. and introduce talented young composers from both countries, promote

their work and careers. Readings will take place on an ongoing basis over the next several seasons. A unique facet of the project, with the potential for deep connections between the young people of the U.S. and China, these Readings will give young composers the chance to have their music workshopped, rehearsed and performed, and to gain the very rare opportunity to work with a professional orchestra. Readings provide important career-building exposure and experience. Composers also learn from each other and from more established mentor-composers. The Readings will keep dialogue and exchange going between the two countries over an extended period, providing a long-term connection between their musical worlds.

ACO will engage composer **Chen Yi** as artistic advisor for the project to help conceive programs and select participating composers. Yi is in a unique position to provide artistic insights for the project: she is a well-respected composer, a Chinese-American, who is familiar and well liked by composers in both China and the U.S. Within ACO, Yi will collaborate with ACO's senior artistic staff: composer/Artistic Director **Derek Bermel**, and the award-winning composer and ACO Artistic Director Laureate, **Robert Beaser**, who also serves as chairman of the composition department at the Juilliard School. Renowned composer **Xiaogang Ye**, artistic director, assisted by **Shaosheng Li**, project director for the Beijing Modern Music Festival, will co-curate on behalf of the Beijing Modern Music Festival. The senior artistic leaders of both organizations have already developed strong bonds on which to build their relationship. Both Beaser and Bermel have been guests at the Beijing Modern Music Festival, and Beaser and Ye have a close working relationship over many years.

ACO has a rich history of facilitating international cultural exchange, particularly by producing *Sonidos de las Américas*, six annual festivals devoted to the music of different Latin American countries, and *Coming to America: Immigrant Sounds/Immigrant Voices*, an exploration of the ongoing evolution of American music through the work of immigrant composers.

The orchestra has commissioned and performed works by many of today's Chinese-American composers, including Tan Dun, Ge Gan-ru, Fred Ho, Wang Jie, Bun-ching Lam, Zhou Long, Wang Lu, Fang Man, Huang Ruo, Hsueh-Yung Shen, Chen Yi and others. ACO's collaboration with the Beijing Modern Music Festival will continue this work to enrich the orchestral landscape by exploring works by American and Chinese composers.

Unlike most other musical exchange programs developed between China and the U.S., this project focuses on music created (rather than just performed) by Chinese and American artists. By focusing on living composers, the project makes much deeper connections between the people of our two countries. Contemporary composers capture the culture, concerns, histories, and aspirations of their people, their countries, and their time. When artists and audiences are drawn together because of a common love of music, and the music they perform and hear is created by contemporary composers, the level of exchange and understanding is much deeper.

Despite the incredible power and talent represented in Chinese and American composers, it is a fact that composers from our two countries are not widely known beyond our borders. The China-America Composers Project will bring the best and brightest composers greater recognition not only in China and the U.S. but around the world.

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.

About the Beijing Modern Music Festival

The Beijing Modern Music Festival (BMMF) is sponsored by the Central Conservatory of Music (CCOM) and supported by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China. Since its founding in 2002, BMMF has grown into the largest and the most influential modern music event in China, as well as one of the largest new music festivals in the world. Under the leadership of artistic director Xiaogang Ye and music director Yongyan Hu, BMMF engages with society by disseminating modern music in ways that make it approachable to ordinary people while retaining the festival's academic value and forward-looking nature. In addition to providing a plethora of concerts featuring new music in various styles and genres, BMMF has launched a series of special projects extending throughout the year, including performances and exchange activities for the purpose of disseminating domestic and international modern music.

The Chinese/International Forum on Culture and the Humanities has been held since 2010, and is an important part of BMMF's educational and exchange activities. Each year, leaders from state ministries related to education and culture are invited to attend the forum to discuss the development of China's arts education together with domestic and international experts, and scholars from the fields of culture, arts, education, and economics, as well as with business leaders, representatives of the media, leaders in charge of education in China's eastern and western regions, and representatives of arts educators working at the grass-roots level.

The "School Song Project" was initiated by BMMF to bring public attention to the importance of arts education in impoverished regions of China. It is also a follow-up project to the Chinese International Forum on Culture and the Humanities. The project relies on the prestige of BMMF together with the educational resources of the Central Conservatory of Music. It calls on musicians throughout the country to volunteer to compose school songs for each school in these impoverished regions and, in the form of "sending school songs," to foster the development of arts education and address the imbalanced development of music education between eastern and western China.

The Young Composers Project (YCP) was established to help young composers. It is aimed at providing development opportunities for talented young composers and providing a platform for the development of all young musicians. In line with the principles of fairness and impartiality, each year YCP invites internationally renowned composers to serve as judges.

A series of musical works with minority culture as their theme have been part of BMMF since 2010, when the Minority Music Culture and Development Project was established. These concerts present the colorful musical culture of all of China's ethnic minorities to audiences from all over the world.

To help foster the development of new music, BMMF organizes master classes, seminars, and dialogues with renowned composers. Through these activities, young students are exposed to the opinions of some of the most important figures in contemporary music. In addition, these guest artists also have the opportunity to hear the creative and vibrant pieces of music being written by young composers so that

they can foster and guide the development of new music.

"The essence of modern arts lies in transcending the art of the past, using new techniques and ways of thinking to create the art of today, and in providing the imaginative power that will make room for the development of the art of the future." Twelve years into its development, BMMF has been working hard to realize the commitments it made when it was founded. Through constant exploration and development, BMMF has been enriched and improved, extending its influences into the social, cultural, and educational arenas. It has also demonstrated its unique value in promoting the development of modern music, imbuing it with social significance, and developing its educational value. BMMF has received considerable recognition from domestic and international music circles for its contributions to modern musical culture.

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

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