



american composers orchestra

# news release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 2, 2016

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**Carlos Simon Wins  
\$15,000 Underwood Emerging  
Composer Commission from  
American Composers Orchestra**

**Paul Frucht wins  
Annual Audience Choice Award**

**Deadline for the 2017 Underwood  
New Music Readings: December 12, 2016  
More information:  
[www.americancomposers.org/unmr2017](http://www.americancomposers.org/unmr2017)**

**Carlos Simon: [www.coliversimon.com](http://www.coliversimon.com) | Paul Frucht: [www.paulfrucht.com](http://www.paulfrucht.com)  
American Composers Orchestra: [www.americancomposers.org](http://www.americancomposers.org)**

New York, NY – **American Composers Orchestra (ACO)** has awarded composer **Carlos Simon** its **2016 Underwood Commission**, bringing him a \$15,000 purse for a work to be premiered by ACO on May 23, 2017 at Symphony Space in New York City. Chosen from seven finalists during ACO's 25th Underwood New Music Readings on June 13 and 14, 2016, in one of the most coveted opportunities for emerging composers in the United States, Carlos won the top prize with his work *Plagues of Egypt*.

In addition, for the seventh 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 **Paul Frucht**, for his piece *Dawn*, written for his middle school assistant principal Dawn Hochsprung, who was killed in 2012's shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT. As the winner, Paul will compose an original mobile phone an original mobile phone ringtone which will be available to everyone who voted, free of charge.

Upon winning the Underwood commission, Carlos Simon said, "I am extremely grateful to be chosen for this prestigious opportunity. As a composer, there is no greater honor than to express my gifts through such amazingly talented musicians. I can not wait to work with Maestro Manahan and ACO."

ACO Artistic Director **Derek Bermel** said, "Carlos Simon's score was rich, colorful, and bold, brimming with dramatic urgency."

**Carlos Simon**, a versatile composer, arranger and performer, combines the influences of jazz, gospel, and neo-romanticism in his music. Simon was named the winner of the 2015 Marvin Hamlisch Film Scoring Contest. Serving as music director and keyboardist for GRAMMY Award winner Jennifer Holliday, he has performed with the Boston Pops Symphony, Jackson Symphony, and the St. Louis Symphony. Simon is currently earning his Doctorate Degree at the University of Michigan, where he has studied with Michael Daugherty and Evan Chambers. He received his Master's Degree at Georgia State University studying with Nickitas Demos and earned his Bachelor's Degree at Morehouse College studying with Robert Tanner. In 2011, he was on faculty at Morehouse college, teaching music theory. For the 2015-2016 season, Carlos Simon served as the young composer-in-residence for the Detroit Chamber Strings and Winds.

## About the Underwood New Music Readings

The 25th 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**, **Sarah Kirkland Snider** and **Stephen Hartke** 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.

For over a generation, ACO's **Underwood New Music Readings** have been providing all-important career development and public exposure to the country's most promising emerging composers, with over 150 composers participating. Readings composers have gone on to win every major composition award, including the Pulitzer, Grammy, Grawemeyer, American Academy of Arts & Letters, and Rome Prizes. Orchestras around the globe have commissioned and performed hundreds of works by ACO Readings alumni.

The New Music Readings have, for 25 years, served as a launch pad for 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 ACO's own Artistic Director **Derek Bermel**, as well as composers **Lisa Bielawa**, **Anthony Cheung**, **Anna Clyne**, **Cindy Cox**, **Sebastian Currier**, **Jennifer Higdon**, **Pierre Jalbert**, **Aaron Jay Kernis**, **Hannah Lash**, **Ingram Marshall**, **Carter Pann**, **P.Q. Phan**, **Tobias Picker**, **Narong Prangcharoen**, **Paola Prestini**, **David Rakowski**, **Daniel Bernard Roumain**, **Christopher Rouse**, **Huang Ruo**, **Eric Samuelson**, **Carlos Sanchez-Guiterrez**, **Kate Soper**, **Gregory Spears**, **Joan Tower**, **Ken Ueno**, **Dan Visconti**, **Melinda Wagner**, **Wang Jie**, **Dalit Warshaw**, **Randall Woolf**, **Nina Young**, and **Roger Zare**.

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.

ACO's 2015 winner, **David Hertzberg**, received the top prize for his work *Spectre of the Spheres*. David is composing a new symphony that will be premiered on March 24, 2017 at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall. The 26th Annual New Music Readings are scheduled for June 21-23, 2017 at The DiMenna Center for Classical Music in New York City. The submission deadline for the 2017 Underwood New Music Readings is December 12, 2016. Complete guidelines and application are available at [www.americancomposers.org/unmr2017](http://www.americancomposers.org/unmr2017).

**In addition to Carlos Simon, the 2016 Underwood New Music Readings participants were:**

**Katherine Balch: *Leaf Catalogue***

[www.americancomposers.org/2016/03/23/katherine-balch](http://www.americancomposers.org/2016/03/23/katherine-balch)

**Katherine Balch** writes music that explores lyricism through textural soundscapes. Her recognitions include several ASCAP Morton Gould Awards, New England Conservatory's Donald Martino Prize, and Fontainebleau's Prix du Composition. She is currently pursuing her Master's at Yale School of Music, studying with David Lang.

**Lembit Beecher: *Chopin's Ocean***

[www.americancomposers.org/2016/04/05/lembit-beecher](http://www.americancomposers.org/2016/04/05/lembit-beecher)

Born to Estonian and American parents, **Lembit Beecher** grew up under the redwoods in Santa Cruz, California. Since then he has lived in Boston, Houston, Ann Arbor, Berlin, New York and Philadelphia, earning degrees from Harvard, Rice, and the University of Michigan. Recent awards include a MacDowell Colony Fellowship, the S&R Foundation Washington Award Grand Prize, a residency at the Penn Museum sponsored by the American Composers Forum, and a grant from the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage.

**Paul Frucht: *Dawn***

[www.americancomposers.org/2016/04/05/paul-frucht](http://www.americancomposers.org/2016/04/05/paul-frucht)

A 2015 recipient of a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, **Paul Frucht** is currently a D.M.A candidate at Juilliard, where he also earned a Master of Music Degree in 2013, studying with Robert Beaser. Paul earned a Bachelor of Music Degree from NYU, where he studied with Justin Dello Joio. Paul is currently an adjunct faculty member at NYU and is artistic director of the Danbury Chamber Music Intensive.

**Sarah Gibson: *Talking To The Time***

[www.americancomposers.org/2016/03/23/sarah-gibson](http://www.americancomposers.org/2016/03/23/sarah-gibson)

**Sarah Gibson** is a Los Angeles-based composer whose works have received recognition including the Victor Herbert ASCAP award, NFMC Marion Richter American Music Composition Award, and first place in the 2010 Percussive Arts Society Composition Contest. Sarah received B.M. degrees in Composition and Piano from Indiana University and a M.M. and D.M.A. in Composition, both at USC.

**Joel Rust: *Beyond The Heart***

[www.americancomposers.org/2016/04/05/joel-rust](http://www.americancomposers.org/2016/04/05/joel-rust)

**Joel Rust** has received commissions from the Melos Sinfonia, the Park Lane Group, the Choir of Gonville & Caius College Cambridge, Filthy Lucre, and Discantus. He is currently studying for a Doctorate at New York University. In 2013 he gained a Master's at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he studied with Julian Anderson. He graduated from the Emmanuel College, Cambridge in 2011, before spending a year at Harvard on a Herchel Smith Scholarship.

**Michael Small: *Eastern Point***

[www.americancomposers.org/2016/03/23/michael-small](http://www.americancomposers.org/2016/03/23/michael-small)

**Michael Small's** works often draw on visual or literary sources and seek to place the listener's imaginative journey at the heart of the work's narrative. Michael received a BMus (Hons) from the Royal Northern College of Music and studied with David Horne, before moving the United States to study with Steven Stucky at Cornell University.

## About ACO

Founded in 1977, 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, Columbus, 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), *Orchestra Underground: Tech & Techno* (July 2014), and *SONiC Double Live* (July 2016), a collection of premiere performances from its groundbreaking SONiC: Sounds of a New Century festival. 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-archive](http://www.americancomposers.org/press-archive)

*Lead support for the Underwood New Music Readings comes from Mr. and Mrs. Paul Underwood.  
Support of Readings also comes from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Fromm Music Foundation.*

*The Underwood New Music Readings are part of EarShot, the National Orchestral Composition Discovery Network. EarShot is a program of American Composers Orchestra in partnership with American Composers Forum, the League of American Orchestras, and New Music USA. Made possible with the support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, and with public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional funding provided by the League of American Orchestras with support of the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation.*

*Support for American Composers Orchestra is provided by The Herb Alpert Foundation, The Amphion Foundation, Inc., ASCAP Foundation, The Sidley Austin Foundation, Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, BMI & the BMI Foundation, The Cheswaty Foundation, The Edward T. Cone Foundation, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, The Charles E. Culpeper Fund, The Joe and Hellen Darion Foundation, Deutsche Bank, Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Fromm Music Foundation, Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation, The Howard Gilman Foundation, Francis Goellet Charitable Lead Trusts, Guggenheim Partners, Jephson Educational Trust, Jerome Foundation, The J.M. Kaplan Fund, Ralph Lauren Foundation, League of American Orchestras, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Metropolitan Valuation Services, New Music USA, The Netherland-American Foundation, The New York Community Trust Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund, Seyfarth Shaw LLP, Emma A. Sheaffer Charitable Trust, Women's Philharmonic Advocacy, and World Wide Land Transfer, Inc.*

*ACO programs are made possible with public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council.*

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