



american composers orchestra

**news release**

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**American Composers Orchestra Announces  
2017-2018 Season: Dreamscapes  
Derek Bermel, Artistic Director & George Manahan, Music Director**

**40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Concert & Gala**

November 7, 2017 at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall  
Music by ACO Co-Founder Francis Thorne Leonard Bernstein, Duke Ellington,  
George Gershwin, Paola Prestini, and Elizabeth Ogonek

**Two Performances at Carnegie Hall**

December 8, 2017 and April 6, 2018 at Zankel Hall  
Music by Philip Glass, Pauchi Sasaki, Bryce Dessner, Ethan Iverson, Clarice Assad,  
Steve Lehman, TJ Anderson, and Hitomi Oba

**Fellow Travelers by Gregory Spears at the PROTOTYPE Festival**

January 12-14, 2018 at Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College of Criminal Justice  
co-presented with PROTOTYPE Festival and John Jay College of Criminal Justice

**The 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Underwood New Music Readings on June 21 & 22, 2018**

ACO's annual roundup of the country's brightest young and emerging composers at the  
DiMenna Center for Classical Music

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

New York, NY – American Composers Orchestra (ACO) announces its complete 2017-2018 season, *Dreamscapes*, under the leadership of Artistic Director **Derek Bermel**, Music Director **George Manahan**, and President **Edward Yim**, featuring ten world, U.S., and New York premieres by a diverse set of composers. ACO continues its concerts at **Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall** (December 8, 2017 and April 6, 2018) while expanding its presence in New York to include performances at **Jazz at Lincoln Center** (November 7, 2017) and as part of the **2018 PROTOTYPE Festival** (January 12-14, 2018). ACO continues to take its commitment to fostering new work beyond the stage in its annual **Underwood New Music Readings** (June 21 and 22, 2018) for emerging composers, now in its 27<sup>th</sup> year, and through **EarShot**, the National Orchestra Composition Discovery Network, which brings the Readings experience to orchestras across the country.

In 2017-2018, ACO celebrates 40 years as the only orchestra in the world wholly dedicated to the creation, performance, preservation, and promotion of music by American composers. To date, ACO has performed music by 800 American composers, including 350 world premieres and newly commissioned works. This season explores the overarching theme of dreams as an inspiration for both music itself and community created through music – celebrating ACO co-founder Francis Thorne's dream of an orchestra to champion the American composer; iconic composer Philip Glass' dream for the next generation; and the American dream of inclusiveness reflected in the infinite ways American orchestral music illustrates geographic, stylistic, gender, and racial diversity.

“I am particularly excited by the breadth and depth of American music that ACO will explore – classic American works by Gershwin, Ellington, and Bernstein, music by modern masters like Philip Glass and T.J. Anderson, and compositions by a wide range of young composers fluent in styles ranging from contemporary jazz to indie rock to samba to performance art and opera,” said ACO Artistic Director **Derek Bermel**. “Featuring four world and U.S. premieres and six New York premieres, as well as our annual readings of emerging compositional voices, ACO’s season offers a vital and eclectic mix that is quintessentially American.”

“In my first full season with ACO, the upcoming year fills me with excitement and hope for what this organization can contribute to the musical landscape,” said ACO President **Edward Yim**. “In addition to concerts with our wonderful and long-time collaborators at Carnegie Hall, we are particularly happy to work for the first time with the visionary team at the PROTOTYPE Festival and to celebrate our 40th anniversary with a tribute to American composers and those who support them at our fall gala.”

In addition to performances by the orchestra in New York, throughout the 2017-2018 season, ACO will partner with other orchestras in **EarShot**, a nationwide network that takes the ACO New Music Readings experience across the country, designed as an opportunity for emerging composers to develop their works with a professional orchestra. To date, over fifty composers have been selected for New Music Readings with orchestras. EarShot partnerships have included the New York Philharmonic, Detroit Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Berkeley Symphony, Colorado Symphony Orchestra, Memphis Symphony Orchestra, Naples Philharmonic, Nashville Symphony Orchestra, Pioneer Valley Symphony (MA), New York Youth Symphony, and the San Diego Symphony. EarShot is a partnership among American Composers Orchestra, League of American Orchestras, American Composers Forum, and New Music USA.

The deadline for composers interested in applying to both the Underwood New Music Readings and the EarShot Readings is **October 16, 2017**. Application guidelines and information are available at [www.americancomposers.org/composers/calls-for-submissions](http://www.americancomposers.org/composers/calls-for-submissions).

ACO also continues its thriving education program, **Music Factory**, which since 1999 has brought composers into New York City’s public schools, reaching over 3,000 students every year. Music Factory is a hands-on and minds-on creativity-based initiative, designed to maximize learning and develop a diversity of transferable skills among children from fourth grade through high school through in-school and after-school programs with partner schools and community organizations. During the 2017-2018 school year, Music Factory will partner with a dozen schools and community organizations throughout Harlem, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens. ACO’s **Compose Yourself** program provides in-depth study, including group lessons and readings, for promising high school composers. Compose Yourself students compiled an impressive list of honors in national young composers’ competitions in 2017, and all the program’s graduates have gained seats in conservatory composition departments.

ACO launches its **Commissioning Club** with the 2017-2018 season, through which members invest in the lifespan of a commission: from the composer’s first kernel of artistic inspiration to the realization of the music as a printed score, the early rehearsals and through the premiere performance. Members of the Commissioning Club support all expenses in the commission process including fees paid to the composer, printing and engraving costs, as well as rehearsal and production costs related to the concert premiere. Throughout the season, members are invited to exclusive preview events with the composer to learn about the composer’s vision, hear excerpts of the work in-progress, and experience a full orchestral rehearsal of the piece before its premiere. In its inaugural season, ACO’s Commission Club will support **Ethan Iverson** as he creates a new piano concerto, which he will perform with ACO on **April 6, 2018** at Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall. For more information about ACO’s Commissioning Club, contact Lyndsay Werking at [Lyndsay@americancomposers.org](mailto:Lyndsay@americancomposers.org), or 212.977.8495 x204.

## **ACO’s 2017-2018 Season**

**American Composers Orchestra’s 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Concert & Gala**  
**Tuesday, November 7, 2017 at 7:30pm**  
**Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Frederick P. Rose Hall | Broadway at 60<sup>th</sup> St., NYC**

**Tickets & Information: [www.americancomposers.org](http://www.americancomposers.org) (<http://bit.ly/ACO40thGalaConcert>)**

**Tickets available August 15, 2017.**

George Manahan, music director & conductor  
Dennis Russell Davies, conductor  
Derek Bermel, clarinet  
Mikaela Bennett, soprano

ELIZABETH OGONEK: *Sleep and Unremembrance* (2015, U.S. Premiere)  
LEONARD BERNSTEIN: Clarinet Sonata (1941-42, orchestrated by Sid Ramin 1994)  
PAOLA PRESTINI: Prelude and Aria from *Gilgamesh* (2016, New York Premiere)  
DUKE ELLINGTON: *Black, Brown & Beige* (1943)  
FRANCIS THORNE: *Fanfare, Fugue and Funk* (1972)  
Selections by GEORGE GERSHWIN and JEROME KERN for voice and orchestra

ACO opens its season with a 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Concert celebrating the orchestra's legacy and future, featuring the U.S. premiere of **Elizabeth Ogonek's** *Sleep and Unremembrance*; **Leonard Bernstein's** Clarinet Sonata with ACO Artistic Director **Derek Bermel** as soloist; **Paola Prestini's** Prelude and Aria from *Gilgamesh*; **Duke Ellington's** *Black, Brown & Beige*; selections from the American songbook including works by **George Gershwin** and **Jerome Kern** sung by soprano and recent Juilliard graduate **Mikaela Bennett**; and ACO co-founder **Francis Thorne's** *Fanfare, Fugue and Funk*. ACO co-founder and Conductor Laureate **Dennis Russell Davies** leads the works by Thorne and Ellington; ACO Music Director **George Manahan** conducts the Ogonek, Prestini, Bernstein, and Gershwin.

**ACO's 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Gala** coincides with the performance, and honors benefactors Ellen and James S. Marcus, ACO founder Francis Thorne (in memoriam), Paul Lustig Dunkel, the Leonard Bernstein family (Jamie, Nina and Alexander), and composer and visionary founder of National Sawdust, Paola Prestini. Gala dinner and drinks follow directly after the performance at 9pm in the Ascent Lounge. For more information or to purchase tickets, contact Lyndsay Werking at [Lyndsay@americancomposers.org](mailto:Lyndsay@americancomposers.org), or 212.977.8495 x204. Limited tickets available.

**Leonard Bernstein** was a towering figure of 20<sup>th</sup> century music, known for *West Side Story*, *Candide*, and *On the Town* and as the celebrated conductor of the New York Philharmonic. His **Clarinet Sonata** was his first published composition, in 1943, when he was 25 years old. That same year, he stepped in and led the New York Philharmonic when Bruno Walter fell ill – the concert was broadcast live and made the young conductor an overnight sensation. Bernstein's longtime orchestrator Sid Ramin created this version of the Clarinet Sonata for orchestra in 1994, at the urging of clarinetist Richard Stoltzman.

***Black, Brown & Beige*** by **Duke Ellington** is a jazz work written for the composer's first concert at Carnegie Hall, on January 23, 1943. He described it as, "a parallel to the history of the Negro in America." It is his longest and most ambitious composition. Duke Ellington is recognized as one of the greatest jazz composers, known for being among the first to focus on musical form and composition in jazz and to use classic symphonic devices in his orchestral pieces such as *Black, Brown & Beige*, *Harlem*, and *Concerto for Cootie*. Beginning keyboard studies at the age of seven, Ellington's earliest influences were ragtime pianists. He taught himself harmony at the piano and at 17, made his professional debut. Encouraged by Fats Waller, he moved to New York in 1923 and, during the formative Cotton Club years, experimented with and developed the style that would quickly bring him worldwide success and recognition.

ACO co-founder **Francis Thorne** was born in 1922 into a musical family in New York; his formal musical training took place at Yale under Paul Hindemith. After graduating, he spent three years in the Navy during World War II followed by nine years working on Wall Street. During this time, he kept playing jazz piano. Duke Ellington heard him perform, and it was Ellington's personal recommendation that led Thorne to a two-year stint as a jazz pianist at Manhattan's Hickory House. Thorne's piece ***Fanfare, Fugue and Funk*** was premiered by the Springfield (Mass.) Symphony Orchestra in 1973. In the score, he wrote that "an attempt to emulate the Duke Ellington brass section," was desirable. Francis Thorne was a principal founder of ACO, serving as President and CEO since its founding into the 2000s. He was also President/Treasurer of the Thorne Music Fund and Executive Director of Music

Theatre Group, the Naumburg Foundation, and American Composers Alliance. Francis Thorne died on March 7, 2017 at the age of 94. ACO celebrates and honors his life with this performance.

**Paola Prestini** is “the enterprising composer and impresario” (*New York Times*) whose interdisciplinary vision is helping to shape the future of new music. Named one of *Musical America*’s “Top 30 Musical Innovators 2016” and one of the “Top 100 Composers in the World under 40” (*NPR*), her music has been commissioned by and performed at Carnegie Hall, the Chicago Symphony (Music Now), the New York Philharmonic (Biennial), the Los Angeles Philharmonic (Green Umbrella Series) New York City Opera (VOX), the Morgan Library, The Juilliard School, American Composers Orchestra, and the Kronos Quartet. Her compositions have been performed and heard worldwide, from the Kennedy Center and the Park Avenue Armory, to Cannes Film Festival and Mozart in the Jungle, to London’s Barbican Centre. This coming year her works travel to the Ford Theater and Los Angeles Opera, and the Kennedy Center. She is the founding CEO and founding Artistic Director of National Sawdust (NS), a nonprofit Brooklyn-based space for arts incubation and performance, and the “visionary-in-chief” (*Time Out New York*) of VisionIntoArt, the multimedia production company she co-founded in 1999 which has now merged with NS. ACO will perform her *Prelude* and the first Greensnake Aria from *Gilgamesh*, which draw from Prestini’s 2016 opera production. Originally produced by Beth Morrison Projects and Commissioned by Friends of Madame White Snake for the Boston Celebrity Series, the opera explores the legend of Madame White Snake which inspired a trio of operas known as the *Ouroboros Trilogy*.

**Elizabeth Ogonek’s *Sleep and Unremembrance*** is inspired by Polish poet Wisława Szymborska’s *While Sleeping*, one of his last works, which reflects on the brevity of life. Often inspired by text, Ogonek’s compositions explore the transference of words and poetic imagery to music. The nature of her interests has led to several collaborations with emerging writers including Sophia Veltfort, Ghazal Mosadeq, and Jonathan Dubow. She has also worked extensively with Indian poet Ralph Nazareth to set both his work and the work of his poetry students at Green Haven Correctional Facility. Recent and upcoming commissions include works for the London Symphony Orchestra and François-Xavier Roth, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Riccardo Muti, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and Fulcrum Point New Music Project for the Ear Taxi Festival in Chicago. Born in 1989 in Anoka, Minnesota, and raised in New York City, Ogonek holds degrees from Indiana University, Jacobs School of Music, and the University of Southern California, Thornton School of Music. In 2015, she completed doctoral studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She is currently Mead Composer in Residence at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Assistant Professor of Composition at Oberlin College and Conservatory.

The evening also includes selections from the American songbook, including works by **George Gershwin** and **Jerome Kern**, sung by recent Juilliard graduate **Mikaela Bennett**. Bennett made her professional stage debut starring as Penelope in John Latouche and Jerome Moross’s *The Golden Apple* with City Center Encores!, and has appeared with the San Francisco Symphony and the New World Symphony conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, in the world premiere of his new work *Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind*. She has appeared in New York City’s prestigious cabaret venues including solo concerts at Feinstein’s 54 Below and Joe’s Pub working with Emmy Award-winning composer Lance Horne on his new works concert. Bennett joined New York Festival of Song for its *Harry, Hoagy, and Harold* program, which was curated and accompanied by Steven Blier, and has worked closely with composer William Bolcom for Opera America’s *Composers in Concert* series.

## **Reflected in Glass: Philip Glass and the Next Generation**

**Friday, December 8, 2017 at 7:30pm**

**Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall | 57<sup>th</sup> St. and 7<sup>th</sup> Ave., NYC**

**Tickets & Information: [www.carnegiehall.org](http://www.carnegiehall.org) (<http://bit.ly/ACOCarnegieGlass>)**

**Subscriptions now available; single tickets available August 28, 2017.**

George Manahan, music director & conductor

Pauchi Sasaki, electronics and speaker dress

Tim Fain, violin

PAUCHI SASAKI: *GAMA XVI* for Orchestra and Speaker Dress with composer as electronics soloist (2017, World Premiere, ACO/Carnegie Hall Commission)

BRYCE DESSNER: *Response Lutoslawski* (2014, New York Premiere)  
PHILIP GLASS: Violin Concerto No. 2, “American Four Seasons” (2009)

*Reflected in Glass* is **Philip Glass**’ first concert as Carnegie Hall’s Richard and Barbara Debs Composer’s Chair, which he holds for the 2017-2018 season. It features Glass’ Violin Concerto No. 2, “The American Four Seasons,” with **Tim Fain** as soloist. Glass’ work is paired with two composers he has mentored and inspired – **Pauchi Sasaki** and **Bryce Dessner**. Dessner’s *Réponse Lutoslawski* is the creative fruit of his study of Lutoslawski’s string orchestra piece *Musique funèbre*. Pauchi Sasaki’s *GAMA XVI* features the composer as electronics soloist, wearing and performing an original Speaker Dress made from 100 speakers.

**Philip Glass** is widely regarded as one of the most influential musicians of our time. In the early 1960s, following studies at the University of Chicago and the Juilliard School, Glass spent two years of intensive study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger and while there, earned money by transcribing Ravi Shankar’s Indian music into Western notation. By 1974, Glass had a number of innovative projects, creating a large collection of new music for The Philip Glass Ensemble and for the Mabou Mines Theater Company. This period culminated in *Music in Twelve Parts*, and *Einstein on the Beach* on which he collaborated with Robert Wilson. Since *Einstein*, Glass has expanded his repertoire to include music for opera, dance, theater, chamber ensemble, orchestra, and film. ACO has a long history of performing Glass’ work frequently, going back to the world premiere of his first violin concerto written for the late Paul Zukofsky in 1987. ACO recorded Glass’ *Heroes* symphony in 1997 and most recently gave the U.S. premiere of his Symphony No. 9 at Carnegie Hall on Glass’ 75<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2012. Glass’ **Violin Concerto No. 2** was written for violinist Robert McDuffie in 2009. The work is a companion piece to Vivaldi’s *The Four Seasons*, but Glass states in the note for the piece that he and McDuffie did not agree on which movement corresponded to which season. He writes, “This struck me as an opportunity, then, for the listener to make his/her own interpretation. Therefore, there will be no instructions for the audience, no clues as to where Spring, Summer, Winter, and Fall might appear in the new concerto – an interesting, though not worrisome, problem for the listener.”

**Pauchi Sasaki**’s interdisciplinary approach integrates musical composition with the design of multimedia performances and the application of new technologies. A composer, performer, and improviser, she collaborates actively on projects linked to film, dance, theater, installation, site specific, and interdisciplinary performances; Sasaki has performed internationally in Peru, the U.S., Japan, Spain, Chile, Colombia, and Switzerland. This year she was selected by Philip Glass to become his protégé as part of the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Initiative for a one-year mentorship. Sasaki’s classical violin studies began at age five; she studied Andean music at CEMDUC; classical music of North India with maestro Ali Akbar Khan in San Rafael, California; and Klezmer music with Alicia Svigals in New York. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Journalism from PUCP in Lima and a master’s degree in Recording Media and Experimental Music from Mills College in Oakland, California. Her compositions involve acoustic, amplified, and electronic instrumentation influenced by improvisational aesthetics and ethnic musical traditions. Her work also focuses on the development of real time interactive music and self-designed instruments using Max Msp and circuit bending. This branch of her work seeks the embodiment of electronic music performance integrating the emission of electronic sounds with corporal expressivity. Her piece for ACO, **GAMA XVI**, is a performative electroacoustic composition for orchestra and speaker dress – a wearable sound sculpture created with 100 speakers.

**Bryce Dessner** is one of the most sought-after composers of his generation, with a rapidly expanding catalog of works commissioned by leading ensembles. Known to many as a guitarist with The National, he is also active as a curator – a vital force in the flourishing realm of new creative music. His orchestral, chamber, and vocal compositions have been commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Ensemble Intercontemporain, Metropolitan Museum of Art (for the New York Philharmonic), Kronos Quartet, BAM Next Wave Festival, Barbican Centre, Edinburgh International Festival, Sydney Festival, eighth blackbird, So Percussion, New York City Ballet, and many others. He has curated Mountains and Waves at the Barbican, and founded MusicNOW in Cincinnati. Dessner now resides in Paris and has been increasingly active composing for major European ensembles and soloists. Last fall he premiered a new piece entitled *Wires* commissioned for Ensemble Intercontemporain and Matthias Pintscher, as well as recent solo works for violinists Pekka Kuusisto and Jennifer Koh, and a concerto for renowned pianists Katia and Marielle Labèque. Dessner’s *Réponse Lutoslawski* was written as an homage to Witold Lutoslawski’s composition for string orchestra, *Musique funèbre*. “This was an

amazing process of discovering one of the 20th century's great musical minds and allowing his adventurous spirit to influence my own musical decisions," Dessner says. "I like to think that his music opened a window in a certain direction for me, or pushed open a door, through which I could then pass and take my journey with the music."

**PROTOTYPE Festival: *Fellow Travelers* by Gregory Spears (New York Premiere)**

**Friday, January 12, 2018 at 8pm**

**Saturday, January 13 at 2pm and 8pm**

**Sunday, January 14 at 2pm**

**Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College of Criminal Justice | 524 W. 59th St., NYC**

**Tickets & Information: [www.prototypefestival.org](http://www.prototypefestival.org)**

**VIP Memberships now available. Single tickets are available for VIP Members after Labor Day and for the general public after September 18, 2017.**

Gregory Spears, composer

Greg Pierce, librettist

Kevin Newbury, director

George Manahan, conductor

G. Sterling Zinsmeyer, executive producer

with American Composers Orchestra

**Cast:**

Timothy Laughlin: Aaron Blake

Hawkins Fuller: Joseph Lattanzi

Mary Johnson: Devon Guthrie

Senator Potter & Bartender: Vernon Hartman

Estonian Frank, Interrogator, & Sen. McCarthy: Marcus DeLoach

Potter's Assistant, Bookseller, & Priest: Christian Pursell

Tommy McIntyre: Paul Scholten

Miss Lightfoot: Alexandra Schoeny

Lucy: Cecilia Violetta Lopez

At the height of the McCarthy era in 1950s Washington, D.C., recent college grad Timothy Laughlin is eager to join the crusade against Communism. A chance encounter with handsome State Department official Hawkins Fuller leads to Tim's first job, an illicit love affair with a man, and an entanglement that will end in a stunning act of betrayal. Based on Thomas Mallon's 2007 novel, Gregory Spears and Greg Pierce's *Fellow Travelers* is an extraordinary personal journey through the intriguing, gut-wrenching world of the 1950s American witch-hunts, and the often overlooked "Lavender Scare." Directed by Kevin Newbury and featuring American Composers Orchestra in the opera's New York debut, this acclaimed Cincinnati Opera production pairs American Minimalism with Medieval troubadour melodies, reflecting the tension between two men's professional, public lives and their private, forbidden longings.

"Opera thrives on stories with rich subtext, where characters cannot fully express themselves in words," states Spears. "Both politicians and gay men and women in Washington, D.C. in the 1950s lived in a world full of coded sensibility – a culture operating under the surface and in counterpoint with the rigid formality of 1950s mores. In both the fraught political world of the McCarthy Era and the private world of Hawk and Tim, dialogue could only tell part of the story. My goal was to craft a musical language for *Fellow Travelers* that would foreground the undercurrent of clandestine machinations and forbidden longing churning under the surface of Greg Pierce's elegant adaptation. My hope is that the nuanced machinery of opera might play some small part reminding us of this history, while also preserving in music the sensibility of doubleness that so often defined gay experience in this era."

**Gregory Spears** writes music that blends aspects of romanticism, minimalism, and early music. His work has been called "astonishingly beautiful" (*The New York Times*), "coolly entrancing" (*The New Yorker*), and "some of the most beautifully unsettling music to appear in recent memory" (*The Boston Globe*). In recent seasons, he has been

commissioned by The Lyric Opera of Chicago, The Cincinnati Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Seraphic Fire, and the JACK Quartet, among others. Spears' children's opera *Jason and the Argonauts* premiered in summer 2016 at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and was performed on tour that fall. His opera about space exploration, *O Columbia*, premiered in 2015 at Houston Grand Opera. Spears' first opera, *Paul's Case*, described as a "masterpiece" (*New York Observer*) was developed by American Opera Projects and premiered by Urban Arias in 2013. It was restaged at the PROTOTYPE Festival in New York, and presented in a new production by Pittsburgh Opera in 2014. He has won prizes from BMI and ASCAP as well as awards and fellowships from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the Vagn Holmboe Competition. He holds degrees in composition from the Eastman School of Music (BM), Yale School of Music (MM), and Princeton University (PhD). His music is published by Schott Music and Schott PSNY.

*Fellow Travelers* is a Cincinnati Opera Production, developed and co-commissioned by G. Sterling Zinsmeyer and Cincinnati Opera, and co-presented by PROTOTYPE Festival with John Jay College of Criminal Justice and American Composers Orchestra.

## **Dreamscapes**

**Friday, April 6, 2018 at 7:30pm**

**Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall | 57<sup>th</sup> St. and 7<sup>th</sup> Ave., NYC**

**Tickets & Information: [www.carnegiehall.org](http://www.carnegiehall.org) (<http://bit.ly/ACOCarnegieDreamscapes>)**

**Subscriptions now available; single tickets available August 28, 2017.**

George Manahan, music director & conductor

Elena Urioste, violin

Ethan Iverson, piano

CLARICE ASSAD: *Dreamscapes* for violin and chamber orchestra (New York Premiere)

STEVE LEHMAN: *Ten Threshold Studies* (2018, World Premiere, ACO Commission)

ETHAN IVERSON: *Concerto to Scale* for piano and orchestra (2018, World Premiere, ACO Commission)

TJ ANDERSON: *Bahia Bahia* (1991, New York Premiere)

HITOMI OBA: *September Coming* (2016, New York Premiere)

ACO's April concert at Carnegie Hall, *Dreamscapes*, is a global celebration of musical dreams, fusing jazz, world, and classical music. It features the world premieres of The Bad Plus founding member **Ethan Iverson's** first orchestral work, *Concerto to Scale* with the composer as the piano soloist, and **Steve Lehman's** *Ten Threshold Studies*, both commissioned by ACO; and the New York premieres of **Clarice Assad's** *Dreamscapes* featuring violinist **Elena Urioste**, **TJ Anderson's** *Bahia Bahia*, and **Hitomi Oba's** *September Coming*, which was first read at the Buffalo Philharmonic EarShot Readings led by ACO after Oba's participation in ACO's 2015 Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute.

**Ethan Iverson** is best known as a founding member and pianist of The Bad Plus, a game-changing collective with bassist Reid Anderson and drummer David King. *The New York Times* describes the group as, "better than anyone at melding the sensibilities of post-60's jazz and indie rock." With The Bad Plus, Iverson has collaborated with Joshua Redman, Bill Frisell, and the Mark Morris Dance Group and created a faithful arrangement of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* and a radical reinvention of Ornette Coleman's *Science Fiction*. In 2017, Iverson composed and arranged *Pepperland* for the Mark Morris Dance Group and curated a major centennial celebration of Thelonious Monk at Duke University. With Mark Morris Dance Group he played Robert Schumann's chamber music with Yo-Yo Ma; for the release of *The Rest is Noise* he toured with Alex Ross and performed examples of 20th-century repertoire. Iverson describes his piano concerto for ACO, *Concerto to Scale*, as being of, "modest dimensions but of sincere intent."

**Clarice Assad** is a Brazilian-American Grammy-nominated composer, pianist, vocalist, bandleader and educator. A versatile musician of depth and imagination, she has been commissioned by Carnegie Hall, Orquestra Sinfônica de São Paulo, the Albany Symphony, the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, the New Century Chamber Orchestra, the BRAVO! Vail Music Festival and the La Jolla Music Festival, among others. Her works have been

recorded by some of the most prominent names and groups in classical music today, including Yo-Yo Ma, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, Eugenia Zuckerman, Chanticleer and Liang Wang. Assad is a founding member of the Chicago-based music and poetry publishing company Virtual Artists Collective and VOXPloration, an award-winning research based outreach program and workshop for children and adolescents on spontaneous music creation, composition, and improvisation. Her piece *Dreamscapes* for violin and chamber orchestra is based loosely on Assad's research on the subject of rapid eye movement (REM) and lucid dreaming. The piece follows a storyline based on notes Assad made about her own dreams, and depicts her struggle to have a pleasant dreaming experience against the strong subconscious draw of negativity.

**TJ Anderson** was born in 1928 in Coatesville, Pennsylvania and received degrees from West Virginia State College, Penn State University, and a Ph.D. in Composition from the University of Iowa. He also holds several honorary degrees. He now lives in Atlanta, Georgia where he is devoted full time to writing music. He studied composition with George Ceiga, Philip Bezanson, Richard Hervig, and Darius Milhaud. Anderson is well known for his orchestration of Scott Joplin's opera *Treemonisha*, which premiered in Atlanta in 1972. His first opera, *Soldier Boy, Soldier*, is based on a libretto by Leon Forrest, and was commissioned by Indiana University. His opera *Walker* was commissioned by the Boston Athenaeum with a libretto by Derek Walcott and his opera *Slip Knot* is based on a historical paper by T.H. Breen with libretto by Yusef Komunyakaa. Anderson has been a fellow at the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, Virginia Center for the Arts, the Djerassi Foundation, the National Humanities Center (their first composer), and a scholar-in-residence at the Rockefeller Center for the Creative Arts, Bellagio, Italy. Other honors include an honorary membership in Phi Beta Kappa, a fellowship from the Guggenheim Foundation, and a Rockefeller Center Foundation grant. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2005. His piece *Bahia Bahia* was written in 1990 as part of his Guggenheim Foundation fellowship and is dedicated to the Brazilian composers Alda and Jamary Oliveira. It represents impressions of popular music Anderson heard on two visits to Brazil in 1976 and 1988, and was premiered in 1998 by the North Carolina Symphony. ACO presents its New York premiere.

Described as “one of the transforming figures of early 21st century jazz,” by *The Guardian* and as a “creator of intricately detailed contemporary classical works,” by *The New York Times*, **Steve Lehman** is a composer, performer, educator, and scholar who works across a broad spectrum of experimental musical idioms. Lehman's music has been performed by the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), So Percussion, Kammerensemble Neue Musik Berlin, the JACK Quartet, the PRISM Saxophone Quartet, Talea Ensemble, and by the pianist Marilyn Nonken. His recording *Mise en Abîme* was chosen as the No. 1 Jazz Album of 2014 by *NPR Music* and *The Los Angeles Times*. The recipient of a 2015 Guggenheim Fellowship and a 2014 Doris Duke Artist Award, Lehman is an alto saxophonist who has performed and recorded nationally and internationally with his own ensembles and with those led by Anthony Braxton, Vijay Iyer, George Lewis, Jason Moran, Georgia-Anne Muldrow, Meshell Ndegeocello, and High Priest of Anti-Pop Consortium, among many others. He describes his new piece for ACO, *Ten Threshold Studies*, as, “making use of elastic rhythms and shadowy spectral harmonies to explore the nature of hearing and perception in modern day music.”

Saxophonist and composer **Hitomi Oba** completed her master's degree at the University of California, Los Angeles in Music Composition after receiving her bachelor's degree in Ethnomusicology/Jazz Studies. Her projects include a sixteen-piece jazz orchestra called Jazz Nexus and an electro-acoustic pop duo, Nova. Her second jazz album, *Negai*, received a prestigious *Swing Journal* 42nd Annual Jazz Disc Award. Her commissions include works for the Los Angeles Asian American Jazz Festival, Kenny Burrell's Los Angeles Jazz Orchestra Unlimited, the Jon Jangtet, and the Indian classical/jazz collaborative Aditya Prakash Ensemble. Oba is one of the co-founders of the new music collective LA Signal Lab, premiering and recording stylistically diverse new music with a focus on integrating improvised and pre-composed music. She teaches jazz saxophone and music theory at UCLA. Her piece, *September Coming*, explores ways to express the momentum and gestures of improvisational language through the orchestra, using orchestration to further enhance the spirit of improvised material. The concepts explored in the piece were inspired by the workshops, discussions, and music from the 2015 ACO Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute Intensive. The first version of *September Coming* was read at the 2016 Buffalo Philharmonic EarShot Readings, conducted by Stefan Sanders, made possible by ACO and Earshot.



## **Underwood New Music Readings**

**Thursday, June 21 at 10am and Friday, June 22, 2018 at 7:30pm**

**DiMenna Center for Classical Music | 450 W 37<sup>th</sup> St., NYC**

ACO will hold its **27th Annual Underwood New Music Readings** for emerging composers on Thursday and Friday, June 21 and 22, 2018 at the **DiMenna Center for Classical Music**. In what has become a rite of passage for aspiring orchestral composers, several composers from throughout the United States will be selected to receive a reading of a new work, and one composer will be selected to receive a \$15,000 commission for a work to be performed by ACO during an upcoming season. Each participating composer receives rehearsal, reading, and a digital recording of his or her work. Review and feedback sessions with ACO principal players, mentor composers, guest conductors, and industry representatives provide crucial artistic, technical, and conceptual assistance.

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 more 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**.

The Readings are open to the public for a nominal admission price. The first day of Readings, a working rehearsal, will be presented on **Thursday, June 21 at 10am**; the second day of Readings will take place on **Friday, June 22 at 7:30pm**, during which all selected pieces will be polished and performed in their entirety, led by ACO's Music Director George Manahan. ACO's Artistic Director Derek Bermel directs the readings.

The deadline for composers interested in applying to both the Underwood New Music Readings and the EarShot Readings is **October 16, 2017**. Application guidelines and information are available at [www.americancomposers.org/composers/calls-for-submissions](http://www.americancomposers.org/composers/calls-for-submissions).

## **About Derek Bermel, ACO Artistic Director**

Grammy-nominated composer-clarinetist **Derek Bermel** has been hailed for his creativity, theatricality, and virtuosity. An "eclectic with wide open ears" (*Toronto Star*), Bermel is acclaimed for music that is "intricate, witty, clear-spoken, tender, and extraordinarily beautiful [and] covers an amazing amount of ground, from the West African rhythms of *Dust Dances* to the Bulgarian folk strains of *Thracian Echoes*, to the shimmering harmonic splendor of *Elixir*. In the hands of a composer less assured, all that globe-trotting would seem like an affectation; Bermel makes it an artistic imperative." (*San Francisco Chronicle*).

His engagement with myriad musical cultures has become part of the fabric and force of his compositional language. In addition to his role as Artistic Director of American Composers Orchestra, he is also Director of Copland House's CULTIVATE emerging composers' institute, served for four-years as Artist-in-Residence at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study and is Curator of the Gamper Festival of Contemporary Music (Bowdoin International Music Festival). Recognized as a dynamic and unconventional curator and creator, his work has been performed by renowned artists worldwide. His commissioners have included the Pittsburgh, National, Saint Louis, New Jersey, Boston, and Pacific Symphonies, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles, New Century, and St. Paul Chamber Orchestras, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, WNYC Radio, eighth blackbird, the Guarneri and JACK Quartets, Seattle and La Jolla Chamber Music Society, Music from Copland House and Music from China, FIGURA (Denmark) Ensembles, Midori, ASKO/Schoenberg Ensemble and Veenfabriek (Netherlands).

As *The Boston Globe* wrote, “There doesn't seem to be anything that Bermel can't do with the clarinet.” As a performer he has worked with a dizzyingly eclectic array of artists, including as soloist alongside Wynton Marsalis in his own *Migration Series*, commissioned by the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and American Composers Orchestra. Bermel's clarinet concerto *Voices* premiered at Carnegie Hall, with the composer as soloist, and he has performed the critically acclaimed work with more than a dozen orchestras, including the BBC Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and at the Beijing Modern Music Festival. His performance of *Voices* with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project led to a Grammy-nominated recording for Best Soloist with Orchestra. Founding clarinetist of the acclaimed Music from Copland House ensemble, Bermel's chamber music appearances also include performances with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center; Borromeo, Pacifica, and JACK quartets; festivals including Moab, Fontana, Cape Cod, and Salt Bay; the Cliburn Series at the Modern, Carmel and Albuquerque Chamber Music Series, Garth Newel Center, Seattle Town Hall, and Louisville Chamber Music Society. He has collaborated on several film scores, and with artists such as playwright Will Eno, installation artist Shimon Attie, choreographer Sheron Wray, poet Wendy S. Walters, and hip hop legend Yasiin Bey (Mos Def).

Bermel's many honors include the Alpert Award in the Arts, Rome Prize, Guggenheim and Fulbright Fellowships, New Music USA's Trailblazer Award, and Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, commissions from the Koussevitzky and Fromm Foundations, and residencies at Yaddo, Tanglewood, Aspen, Banff, Bellagio, Copland House, Sacatar, and Civitella Ranieri.

## About George Manahan, ACO Music Director

ACO's Music Director, 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. He is also the Music Director of Portland Opera (OR), previously served as Music Director of New York City Opera for fourteen seasons, and has appeared as guest conductor with the Opera Companies of Seattle, Santa Fe, San Francisco, Chicago, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Opera National du Paris and Teatro de Comunale de Bologna and the National, New Jersey, Atlanta, San Francisco, Milwaukee, and Indianapolis Symphonies, and the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. In 2013, Manahan was awarded the Alice M. Ditson Award for his outstanding commitment to the work of emerging composers, and was honored four times by the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) for his commitment to 20th-century music during his tenure as Music Director of the Richmond Symphony (VA).

Dedicated to the music of our time, he has led premieres of Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne*, Charles Wuorinen's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, David Lang's *Modern Painters*, Hans Werner Henze's *The English Cat*, Terence Blanchard's *Champion*, the New York premiere of Richard Danielpour's *Margaret Garner*, and Emmy Award-winning composer Laura Karpman's Grammy Award winning *Ask Your Mama*, a collaboration with soprano Jessye Norman, The Roots, and Orchestra of St. Luke's. Recent seasons have included appearances at Santa Fe Opera, Rose Theater at Lincoln Center in a concert performance of Gluck's *Alceste* featuring Deborah Voigt, Music Academy of the West, and the Aspen Music Festival. The Live from Lincoln Center broadcast of his New York City Opera production of *Madame Butterfly* won an Emmy Award.

Manahan's discography includes the Grammy-nominated recording of Edward Thomas' *Desire Under the Elms* with the London Symphony, and Steve Reich's *Tehillim* on the EMI-Warner Brothers label. He is Director of Orchestral Activities at the Manhattan School of Music as well as a frequent guest conductor at the Curtis Institute of Music.

## About ACO

Founded in 1977, American Composers Orchestra is the only orchestra in the world dedicated to the creation, performance, preservation, and promotion 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. ACO programs seek to innovate and experiment, educate students and the public, and open the orchestra to diverse new influences and audiences.

To date, ACO has performed music by 800 American composers, including 350 world premieres and newly commissioned works. Among the orchestra's innovative programs have been SONiC, 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 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. 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. Recently, EarShot introduced an initiative to provide career development and commissions for emerging female composers, and launched an online archive featuring audio excerpts, program notes, and score samples by more than 140 composers whose works have been performed through the EarShot Network. The Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute, launched in 2010, supports jazz artists who desire to write for symphony orchestra. For more information visit [www.EarShotnetwork.org](http://www.EarShotnetwork.org).

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. ACO was the 2015 recipient of the Champion of New Music Award given by American Composers Forum. ASCAP has awarded its annual prize for adventurous programming to ACO over 35 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: XI0D* (June 2012), *Orchestra Underground: Tech & Techno* (July 2014), and *SONiC Double Live* (July 2016), a collection of premiere performances from its groundbreaking SONiC 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-media](http://www.americancomposers.org/press-media)*

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**american composers orchestra**

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