



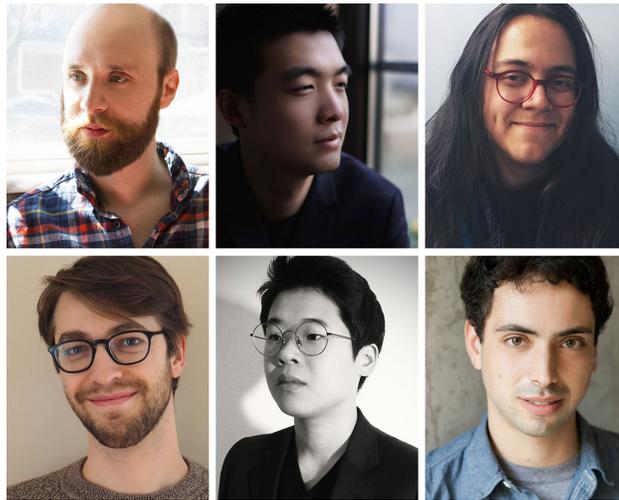
american composers orchestra

news release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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American Composers Orchestra Announces the 28th Annual Underwood New Music Readings With support from the Department of Music & Performing Arts Professions at NYU Steinhardt



**Featuring six composers selected from over 200 submissions:
Rodrigo Castro, Chen Yihan, inti figgis-vizueta, Jack Hughes, Jihyun Kim, Aaron Israel Levin
with Ludovic Morlot, guest conductor**

**Thursday, May 23, 2019 at 10:30am (Open Rehearsal; free with advance reservation)
Friday, May 24, 2019 from 10am – 3pm (Career Development Workshop; \$10 admission)
Friday, May 24, 2019 at 7:30pm (Run-Through Performance; \$10 admission)**

**Frederick Loewe Theater – New York University | 35 West 4th Street | NYC
Tickets and more information: <http://bit.ly/ACOUnderwood2019>**

New York, NY – American Composers Orchestra announces the 28th Annual Underwood New Music Readings on **May 23 and 24, 2019** at NYU’s Frederick Loewe Theater (35 West 4th Street). ACO continues its commitment to the creation and development of new orchestral music by identifying and celebrating emerging composers with the Underwood New Music Readings, giving audiences a chance to look behind the scenes of bringing new, diverse orchestral music to life. The first day of Readings, an open rehearsal, is **Thursday, May 23, 2019 at 10:30am**; the second day of Readings is **Friday, May 24, 2019 at 7:30pm** during which the new works will be polished and performed in their entirety. ACO Artistic Director **Derek Bermel** directs the Readings; **Ludovic Morlot**, Music Director of the Seattle Symphony, conducts.

This year, six of the nation’s most promising composers in the early stages of their professional careers were selected from over 200 submissions. **Rodrigo Castro, Chen Yihan, inti figgis-vizueta, Jack Hughes, Jihyun Kim, and Aaron Israel Levin** represent a broad spectrum of musical backgrounds and sound worlds. Three commission opportunities will be available to this year’s participants: the Underwood Commission and Audience Choice each award the chance to write

a new work for ACO while the Consortium for Emerging Composers winner will receive a commission to write a new work to be performed by ACO, the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, and American Youth Symphony (Los Angeles).

Each composer participating in the Underwood New Music Readings receives rehearsals, a reading, and a digital recording of his or her work. Feedback sessions with guest conductor Ludovic Morlot, ACO principal players, mentor composers, and ACO's directors provide crucial artistic, technical, and conceptual assistance. This year's mentor composers are **Tania León**, **Anthony Cheung**, and ACO Artistic Director, **Derek Bermel**.

In addition, the Readings offer a **Career Development Workshop** for composers, students, or anyone interested in exploring the business and realities of being a professional composer on **Friday, May 24, from 10am - 3pm**. These invaluable talks, led by leaders in the industry, present topics ranging from copyright and commission agreements to music preparation, from promotion to fundraising. This year's schedule, topics, and speakers include:

10:00am - 11:00am: Workshop 1: Beyond the Music – legal and technical issues in working with music

Topics to be included: What are any changing issues in the copyright area? When and where are grand rights applicable? How do composers work on rights issues if working with other artists such as writers or visual artists? What is most important for a composer to keep in mind in delivering manuscript to a publisher or copyist? What do professional orchestras look for in part production? How far in advance do they really need the parts for the musicians? What is the most common sticky situation that composers get themselves into with regard to copyright or parts production?

Moderator: Ed Yim

Sara Griffin, New York Philharmonic Library

Bill Holab, Bill Holab Music

James Kendrick, Attorney/Alter Kendrick Baron; Director of The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, The Amphion Foundation, the Virgil Thomson Foundation, The Serge Koussevitzky Music Foundation in the Library of Congress and The Charles Ives Society; Counsel to the Music Publishers Association of the United States and the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

11:00am - 12:30pm: Workshop 2: Publisher, publicist, and manager

What are the pros and cons of self-publishing? What services does a publisher actually provide, and what other kinds of support systems are there for those who need them?

Moderator: Anthony Cheung, composer

Sarah Baird Knight, Calliope PR

Emily Motherwell, OtherArts

Norman Ryan, European American Music

12:30pm - 1:30pm Lunch on your own

1:30pm – 3:00pm: Workshop 3: Perspectives on programming

How do presenting and performing organizations decide what to program? What's the best way to get noticed and programmed? How can my work at least be considered?

Moderator: Derek Bermel, mentor composer/ACO Artistic Director

Ludovic Morlot, conductor and Music Director/Seattle Symphony

Carlos Izacaray, conductor and Music Director/American Youth Symphony and Alabama Symphony Orchestra

Isaac Thompson, Vice President for Artistic Planning/New York Philharmonic

The cost for the Workshop is \$10; reservations can be made at <http://bit.ly/ACOUnderwood2019>

For over a generation, **ACO's Underwood New Music Readings** have provided all-important career development and public exposure to the country's most promising emerging composers, with over 150 composers participating. Readings

alumni have won every major composition award, including the Pulitzer, Grammy, Grawemeyer, American Academy of Arts & Letters, and Rome Prizes. Orchestras around the globe have commissioned ACO Readings alumni.

The New Music Readings have launched many of today's top composers, such as ACO's own Artistic Director **Derek Bermel**, **Lisa Bielawa**, **Anthony Cheung**, **Anna Clyne**, **Cindy Cox**, **Sebastian Currier**, **Jennifer Higdon**, **Pierre Jalbert**, **Aaron Jay Kernis**, **Hannah Lash**, **Carter Pann**, **P.Q. Phan**, **Tobias Picker**, **Narong Prangcharoen**, **Paola Prestini**, **Daniel Bernard Roumain**, **Huang Ruo**, **Eric Samuelson**, **Carlos Sanchez-Guiterrez**, **Kate Soper**, **Gregory Spears**, **Joan Tower**, **Ken Ueno**, **Dan Visconti**, **Wang Jie**, **Dalit Warshaw**, **Randall Woolf**, **Nina Young**, and **Roger Zare**.

About the Selected Composers and Their Music

Rodrigo A. Castro (b. 1985) (*La gaviota* - Essay No. 1 for Orchestra)

Rodrigo Castro's work is a counterpoint of ideas laid out in mosaic, fractal, and dendrite forms. Imbued with an esoteric spirit, the organic cell-driven structures that he creates in every piece project atmospheres where spectral and playful echoes are chanted in a shifting sense of time. As a troubadour of his own time, he uses the orchestra to redefine the vernacular melodies and rhythms of his Mexican and Cuban heritage.

Rodrigo's work is influenced by artists such as Silvio Rodríguez, Bob Dylan, Luis Eduardo Aute and Leonard Cohen. His craft has also been guided and informed by his mentors Leonardo Balada and Leo Brouwer and his most profound inspirations have come to him by way of Jean Sibelius, Alfred Schnittke, and Mikis Theodorakis. Rodrigo is always eager to bring the textures of his compositions to all who venture to hear the voice of his hands in a dialectal exchange that transforms musician and audience.

Of the piece, Castro explains, "The song 'La gaviota' (The Seagull), by Cuban songwriter Silvio Rodríguez, is used as a main theme for development in this orchestral essay. It is an homage to this poet and musician, as well as a personal statement about my Cuban heritage and the sense of exile as a Hispanic. This is the first movement for an orchestral suite that will serve as a testament to my search for truth through identity; it offers a message about struggle vis-à-vis peace and reconciliation. This piece is meant to convey an embodiment of the seagull by the orchestra. It grows from a thematic cell borrowed from Silvio and is then filtered through the prisms of personal experiences, which are conveyed through secondary musical quotations. The piece ends with an orchestration of the natural song of a seagull, giving proper form through a circular closing, as a journey that is distilled back to its purest essence.

Chen Yihan (b. 1994) (*Spiritus*)

Much of Chen Yihan's music seeks for a convergence of different points in time and space, connecting the past to the future and bringing different corners of the world together in an abstract, poetic, and emotional way that transcends culture and epoch. His music is often a play of lines, space, and intensity in a calligraphic way, reflecting his cultural roots in the Chinese arts.

As a composer, Chen Yihan's music has been performed by the Symphony Orchestra of the National Opera House (China), The Juilliard Orchestra, Longcheng Symphony Orchestra, The New York Virtuoso Singers, Cantoría Hong Kong, the Entre Madeiras Trio, among others. He has earned honors such as two ASCAP Foundation Morton Gould Young Composer Awards, the Jacobs School of Music Dean's Prize, a winner of the Juilliard orchestra competition, to name a few. As a pianist, Chen Yihan has received recognitions such as being the Grand Prize winner of the Cincinnati World Piano Competition, the winner of the New World Youth Symphony Orchestra Young Artist Competition, etc.

Chen Yihan is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in composition at Princeton University and holds a master's degree in composition from the Juilliard School and bachelor's degrees in composition and piano from the Jacobs School of Music, having studied with Samuel Adler, Claude Baker, Arnaldo Cohen, Don Freund, P.Q. Phan, Christopher Rouse, and Sven-David Sandström, Aaron Travers, among others.

Chen Yihan offers this brief description of the piece:

"Breathing the spirit of this world,
I'm grateful to Heaven above."

inti figgis-vizueta (b. 1993) (*Symphony of the Body*)

inti figgis-vizueta (they/them) is a queer Andinx experimental composer based in Brooklyn, NY. They write identity-focused musics, often channeling story-telling and the manifestation of non-hegemonic voices in concert spaces. inti works to create transparent, self-contained musical processes through which melodic and timbral interaction blooms and consumes itself. inti studied with Felipe Lara. inti has received numerous awards, most recently the 2019 Hildegard Competition from National Sawdust and the 2019 Mizzou International Composer's Festival featuring Alarm Will Sound. They've won calls for scores for organizations such as Verdant Vibes, N/A Ensemble, UnTwelve, Baltimore Choral Arts, and 113 Collective. Their music has also been played by ensembles such as loadbang, PUBLIQuartet, Hypercube, RTE Contempo String Quartet, and Balance Campaign as well as the Shenandoah Valley Youth Orchestra and SJSU Wind Ensemble. When not composing, inti works as the Director of Inclusion at the Boulanger Initiative and as a curator for Score Follower.

Of their piece, figgis-vizueta notes, “Dedicated to Pauline Oliveros, *Symphony for the Body* focuses on the player. The principles of individual choice and agency are core to compositional structure, while the natural rhythms of each performer are highlighted throughout the work. The graphic nature of the score encourages free interpretation of articulation, register, and timing. The piece works to deconstruct hierarchies within the orchestra, creating opportunities written in for each instrumental family to facilitate or lead a movement. Players are encouraged to individually choose key elements of music, such as register, duration, and pitch within comfortable parameters while utilizing the natural resonant qualities of the instruments themselves. Inspired from the work of Pauline Oliveros, *Symphony for the Body* is driven by the rise and fall of breath, communal listening, and a freedom to choose your own path through its seven movements.”

Jack Hughes (b. 1992) (*Needlepoint*)

Jack Hughes is a Chicago-based composer who is interested in exploring the ways in which the inner life of sound interacts with a listener's mind, body and soul. He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Chicago, where he studies with Augusta Read Thomas. He received his Bachelor of Music degree in composition and theory at the Cleveland Institute of Music, in the studio of Keith Fitch. Jack served as composer fellow of San Francisco's Volti choral ensemble in 2017 and of the Canton Symphony Orchestra in 2014. His music has also been performed by eighth blackbird, Quator Bozzini and members of Ensemble Dal Niente, among others. He began his musical studies on trumpet and piano in Reston Virginia and has also studied violin and viola with members of The Spektral Quartet in Chicago. While Jack avoids being prescriptive in the response his music elicits, one of his core values is for his music be meaningful on some level to all audience members, regardless of their musical knowledge. He seeks to foster musical experiences in which imagination, empathy, and trust flow in all directions among the composer, performers, and listeners.

Of *Needlepoint*, Hughes explains, “This piece was inspired by the craft of needlepoint, in which different-colored yarns are stitched onto a stiff canvas to produce a pattern or image. What inspires me about this art form are the contrasts it contains: between the flexible strands of yarn and the rigid canvas and between the small complex patterns that combine to form larger shapes and images. Throughout the work, small melodic threads are stitched onto a slowly-evolving harmonic grid. Dynamic swells produce rapid changes between the foreground and background, while stark tempo changes create a sense of ebb and flow as the music sometimes surges forward and sometimes seems to be held back against its will.”

Jihyun Kim (b.1989) (*A Tramp in the Assembly Line*)

Jihyun Kim's music has been performed in the prestigious venues around the world, including Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, the Cloisters at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bruno Walter Auditorium at Lincoln Center, Seiji Ozawa Hall, Harris Hall in Aspen, DiMenna Center, Palazzo Medici Riccardi in Florence Italy, and Seoul Arts Center in Korea. His works have been performed by Tanglewood New Fromm Players, Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, JACK Quartet, PUBLIQuartet, Asciano Quartet, Karien Ensemble, Switch Ensemble, and were featured at Tanglewood Music Center, Aspen Music Festival, Mayfest, the University of South Florida New Music Festival, among others. Recent honors include the American Prize in Orchestral Music, Libby Larsen Prize, Otto R. Stahl Memorial Award, PUBLIQ Access, Florence String Quartet Call for Scores, Juventas Ensemble Call for Scores, RedNote New Music Composition Competition, among many others. Jihyun is currently pursuing DMA in Composition at Cornell University as a Sage

Fellowship recipient. Jihyun previously earned MM degree in Composition from the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University while serving as an Associate Instructor in Music Theory, and BM degree in Composition from Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea.

The movie, *Modern Times* (1936), is a comedy film written and directed by Charlie Chaplin. The “Tramp” character struggles to survive in the modern, industrialized world. My intention is not about conveying the message of *Modern Times*. Rather, I wanted to depict the scenes that were left with me with strong impressions: the rotating motion of the conveyor belt; the regular-pulsed machinery sound from the factory; the clown-like walking gesture of the character “Tramp”; and black-and-white scenes without sound. I wanted to create a musical panorama - enumerating it with equal importance and independence, instead of a single plot with a logical flow. As the musical ideas shift from one to another, a sense of discontinuity can be found between the sections.”

Aaron Israel Levin (b. 1995) (*In Between*)

Aaron Israel Levin writes music that is guided by the emotional dynamism of storytelling and drama. He draws from a variety of musical and non-musical influences – including film, theater, and performance art – to create compositions that are both personal and wide-ranging. Aaron’s music has been performed by the Bent Frequency Duo, Fifth House Ensemble, loadbang, Pavia Winds, the Yale Philharmonia, mezzo-sopranos Kayleigh Butcher and Lisa Neher, and percussionists Dmitrii Nilov and Sam Um. Passionate about collaboration, Aaron frequently works with artists from different mediums. He has collaborated with playwright Christopher Gabriel Nuñez; developed projects with projection designer Johnny Moreno; and choreographers Celeste Miller and Mary Gwin. Originally from St. Paul, Minnesota, Aaron earned his BA in music from Grinnell College in Iowa, where he studied composition with Eric McIntyre and John Rommereim. He will receive his MM in composition from the Yale School of Music in May 2019, where his teachers included Martin Bresnick, Aaron Jay Kernis, David Lang, Hannah Lash, and Christopher Theofanidis.

Of his piece, Levin says, “*In Between* takes its inspiration from movies about making movies, like David Lynch’s *Mulholland Drive*, or Federico Fellini’s *8 1/2*. In these films, the lives of fictitious filmmakers ‘off-set’ often become intermingled with the film they’re attempting to make. *In Between* takes this premise as a jumping-off point, and approaches the orchestra like a crew of filmmakers. Specifically, the whip – a percussion instrument that makes a distinctive *whack* – stands in for the director’s clapperboard. Every time the whip is sounded, it signifies an ‘action’ for the filming to begin, or a ‘cut’ for the filming to stop. The musical characters that take place during the ‘action’ and ‘cut’ sequences come into conflict with each other, evoking the tension and inner turmoil that frequently accompany the artistic process. The title refers to what happens in between ‘takes,’ and the inevitable merging of off- and on-set.”

About American Composers Orchestra

Founded in 1977, American Composers Orchestra is 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. For more information, visit www.americancomposers.org.

About NYU Steinhardt

The NYU Steinhardt *Department of Music and Performing Arts Professions*, established in 1925, serves as the university’s ‘School of Music.’ It has since developed into a major research and practice center in music technology, music composition, music business, film scoring, songwriting, music performance practices, performing arts therapies, and the performing arts-in-education (music, dance, and drama). 1,600 students major in renowned music and performing arts programs, guided by a faculty of over 450. The degree programs - baccalaureate through Ph.D. - share Steinhardt’s

entrepreneurial spirit that encourages innovation and the pursuit of high artistic and academic goals. The Department's expertise and diverse interests spark the collaborations that bring performers and composers together with technologists, business entrepreneurs, arts managers, filmmakers, choreographers, actors, librettists and educators – often reviewed by the New York and national media. Faculty sit on leading journal editorial boards and publish some of today's most significant performing arts and technology research.

Alumni have moved on to major performing and composing careers, and serve in coveted positions within the music and performing arts industry. They form the faculties and administrative positions in colleges, conservatories, and universities throughout the world. Celebrated graduates include jazz great Wayne Shorter, multiple Tony award winning music theatre composer Cy Coleman and lyricist Betty Comden, multiple Oscar winning film composer Elmer Bernstein, conductor/composer Tania León, music technologist Enoch Light, and Tony Award, Oscar and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and screenwriter John Patrick Shanley.

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

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