



american composers orchestra

news release

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**American Composers Orchestra Gives New York Premiere of  
*Where We Lost Our Shadows* at Carnegie Hall  
Thursday, April 11, 2019 at 7:30pm at Zankel Hall**

***Where We Lost Our Shadows*  
Music: Du Yun | Film: Khaled Jarrar**



**With soloists Pakistani Qawwali singer Ali Sethi; singer and performance artist Helga Davis; percussionist Shayna Dunkelman**

**Derek Bermel, Artistic Director & George Manahan, Music Director**

**Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall | 57<sup>th</sup> St. and 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. | NYC  
Tickets: \$43 to \$51 at [www.carnegiehall.org](http://www.carnegiehall.org), CarnegieCharge 212.247.7800,  
or the Carnegie Hall Box Office**

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

New York, NY – American Composers Orchestra (ACO) continues its 2018-2019 season with a concert on **Thursday, April 11, 2019 at 7:30pm** at Carnegie Hall’s Zankel Hall, featuring the New York premiere of *Where We Lost Our Shadows* with music by 2017 Pulitzer Prize-winning composer **Du Yun** and film by Palestinian artist **Khaled Jarrar**. The performance, led by ACO Music Director **George Manahan**, also includes **Gloria Coates’** ethereal soundscape **Symphony No. 1, “Music on Open Strings,”** from 1973, and **Morton Feldman’s** 1980 work *Turfan Fragments*, inspired by a series of fragments of knotted carpets from the third and sixth centuries which were discovered in the Silk Road region.

*Where We Lost Our Shadows* is a new work for orchestra, video, and soloists, co-commissioned by ACO, Carnegie Hall, The Kennedy Center, Southbank Centre, and Cal Performances. This is ACO's second commission from Du Yun, who created her piece *Slow Portraits* during ACO's coLABoratory research and development program in 2013. The new work includes film captured by Ramallah-based artist Khaled Jarrar, which documents the refugee crisis in Europe. The piece will be performed by ACO with celebrated performance artist and singer **Helga Davis**, renowned Pakistani Qawwali singer **Ali Sethi**, and versatile Brooklyn-based percussionist **Shayna Dunkelman**.

*Where We Lost Our Shadows* recognizes and depicts the timeless struggle of human migration and its many effects while celebrating the resilient human spirit that instigates and survives it. Du Yun's musical language takes the Qawwali of Raga Aiman Kalyan (a type of devotional music) and explores its provenance (13th century Muslim India, according to legend); its subsequent journey through space and time (Central Asia, Bengal, the global South Asian diaspora); and its migration through genres, forms, techniques. The piece also sets the poem "Pillow" by Palestinian poet Ghassan Zaqtan, who has lived in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Tunisia. Khaled Jarrar's video explores the meaning of home, belonging, and identity, inspired by his journey with a group of refugees, which was driven by his love of his late grandmother, who left him the trauma of displacement. It portrays human reactions to these concepts in abstract and specific ways.

Of the world premiere of *Where We Lost Our Shadows* at Southbank Center in London, *The Guardian* reported, "Thunderous, virtuosic gusts of percussion, played by the Japanese-born Shayna Dunkelman, heralded this composition, in which the Pakistani singer Ali Sethi embroidered exquisite raga material around the colours of western orchestral sounds... The experience was... unifying and powerfully resonant."

Du Yun writes, "At the heart of this project lies the footage that Khaled documented following a Syrian family migrating across the Aegean Sea (the mother of the family was a Palestinian refugee, who first sought refuge in Syria when she was an eight-year-old girl herself). The work, while showing only some of the footage, focuses on the perpetual movement of human procession and migration, and the question of *Exodus*."

*Where We Lost Our Shadows* will be paired on ACO's April concert with **Morton Feldman's *Turfan Fragments*** and **Gloria Coates' *Symphony No. 1, "Music on Open Strings"***. Feldman's *Turfan Fragments* is inspired by the knotting of oriental rugs. A series of archaeological expeditions to East Turkestan, conducted by Sir Aurel Stein in the early part of the 20th century, unearthed several fragments of knotted carpets dating from the third and sixth centuries. Feldman writes, "Though these fragments were too small to indicate either its design or provenance, they did convey a long tradition of carpet weaving. This is to a large degree the extended metaphor of my composition: not the suggestion of an actual completed work of 'art,' but the history in Western music of putting sounds and instruments together."

Gloria Coates has written sixteen full-scale symphonies, eleven string quartets, several orchestral works, and a number of song cycles. The 1978 premiere in Warsaw of her *Symphony No. 1, "Music for Open Strings"* brought her acclaim; the work was among the finalists for the 1986 International Koussevitsky Award. It was also the first piece by a woman composer to be performed at Munich's *Musica Viva*, in 1980. *Symphony No. 1 "Music for Open Strings,"* was written in 1973 and is scored for a string orchestra playing entirely on retuned open strings. The work opens with the strings tuned to a minor pentatonic scale (B flat, C, D flat, F, G flat), which are returned to their normal tuning movement by movement.

Under the leadership of Artistic Director **Derek Bermel**, Music Director **George Manahan**, and President **Edward Yim**, ACO continues its commitment to the creation, performance, preservation, and promotion of music by American composers, with programming that reflects the infinite ways American orchestral music illustrates geographic, stylistic, gender, and racial diversity.

"ACO is honored and excited to continue giving voice to American composers, both emerging and established," said ACO President Edward Yim. "In particular, that our premieres during the 2018-2019 season shine a light on issues of empowerment of women, the global refugee crisis, and powerful musical storytelling is at the heart of our mission to embrace the relevance of today's creative artists to contemporary issues."

**Where We Lost Our Shadows Concert Program:**

**George Manahan, music director and conductor**

**Helga Davis, vocalist**

**Ali Sethi, vocalist**

**Shayna Dunkelman, percussion**

**MORTON FELDMAN: *Turfan Fragments* (1980)**

**GLORIA COATES: *Symphony No. 1, “Music on Open Strings”* (1973)**

**DU YUN, Music & KHALED JARRAR, Film: *Where We Lost Our Shadows* (New York Premiere, co-commissioned by ACO, Carnegie Hall, The Kennedy Center, Southbank Centre, and Cal Performances)**

**Listen to music by Feldman, Coates, and Du Yun:**

**Morton Feldman:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e49qbrz1sZU>

**Gloria Coates:** <https://open.spotify.com/album/7z2ReIPPi3SxAXPTBVz7Zw?si=HFoUARjXTBCFrbJ3T3A4kQ>

**Du Yun:** <https://open.spotify.com/album/1K98GrnOhdIP1NDJuU5aPs?si=BqeM5rCLREiZOY3le3cn7g>

**About the Artists (alphabetical order)**

**Gloria Coates** was born in Wausau, Wisconsin, and began composing and experimenting with overtones and clusters in early youth. Both Alexander Tcherepnin (1899-1977) and Otto Luening (1900-1996) were important mentors. Her studies took her from Chicago, Cooper Union Art School, NYC, and Louisiana (with a Master’s in Composition), and post graduate studies in composition at Columbia University. Since 1969, Coates has lived primarily in Europe where, as well as composing, she has promoted American music: a German-American Music Series (1971-1984), writing musicological articles, and making broadcasts for the WDR Radio Cologne, and Radio Bremen. From 1975 to 1983 she taught for the University of Wisconsin’s International Programs, initiating the first music programs in London and Munich. She has been invited to lecture on her music for faculty and composition students about her concepts and techniques of composing at Harvard, Princeton, Brown, Boston, and Wisconsin-Madison as well as in India, Poland, Germany, Ireland, and England. Some festivals at which her compositions have been performed include March Music (Berlin), New Music America (New York), Crash (Dublin), Other Minds (San Francisco), the Dresden Festival, Warsaw Autumn, Avanti (Finland), the Hans Werner Henze Festival in Montepulciano, Aspekte Salzburg, St.Johns/Smith Square London, Gardner Museum, Boston. Among the artists who have performed her work include the Kronos, Kreutzer, Spektral, and JACK string quartets; orchestras including the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Brooklyn Philharmonic, Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony, Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

**Helga Davis** is a vocalist and performance artist with feet planted on the most prestigious international stages and with firm roots in the realities and concerns of her local community whose work draws out insights that illuminate how artistic leaps for an individual can offer connection among audiences. Davis was principal actor in the 25th-anniversary international revival of Robert Wilson and Philip Glass's seminal opera *Einstein on the Beach*. Among the collaborative and works written for her are *Oceanic Verses* by Paola Prestini, *You Us We All* by Shara Nova and Andrew Ondrejcek and *Faust's Box*, by Italian contemporary music composer Andrea Liberovici. Robert Wilson describes her as “a united whole, with spellbinding inner power and strength.” She also starred in Wilson’s *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, with libretto and score by Bernice Johnson Reagon; and *The Blue Planet*, by Peter Greenaway. She is the recipient of the 2014 BRIC Media Arts Fireworks Grant and completed her first evening-length piece, *Cassandra*. Current projects include *Silent Voices* with the Brooklyn Youth Chorus with text by Hilton Als, Jomama Jones *Blacklight* by Daniel Alexander Jones, *Requiem for a Tuesday* with bass-baritone Davóne Tines and dancer/choreographer Reggie Gray, *Yet Unheard*, a tribute to Sandra Bland by Courtney Bryan, based on the poem by Sharan Strange. She has conceived and performed *First Responder* and *Wanna* as responses to *Until* and *The Let Go* by multidisciplinary artist Nick Cave. She is artist in residence at National Sawdust, host of the eponymous podcast *HELGA* on WQXR/New Sounds and is the 2018-19 visiting curator for the performing arts at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

**Shayna Dunkelman** is a musician, an improviser, and a percussionist based in Brooklyn, NY. She is known for her versatile and unique techniques, and her use of electronics to access a sonic pallet not found in acoustic percussion. Dunkelman is the founding member of the retro-future electronic band Peptalk with Michael Carter and Angelica Negron based in Brooklyn, NYC. She was also a member of the world touring band Xiu Xiu for six years. As part of Xiu Xiu, Dunkelman premiered a multi-media performance art piece at the International Summer Festival in Hamburg, Germany (2013) and Donaufestival in Krems, Austria (2014). Their latest collaboration saw them paired with conceptual artist Danh Vo on a month-long performative gallery exhibition at the Kitchen in New York City in October of 2014 with support from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and other generous contributions. One of Xiu Xiu's latest achievements include the release of the cover album *Xiu Xiu plays the music of Twin Peaks*, which was made possible by the cooperation of the Gallery of Modern Art in Brisbane Australia. Dunkelman has also performed classical and contemporary pieces with numerous contemporary music ensembles such as the William Winant Percussion Group and the Wordless Music Orchestra while recording and performing with pioneers of avant-garde experimental musicians such as John Zorn, Yoko Ono, Thurston Moore, and Zeena Parkins. Dunkelman graduated with honors in both music and mathematics from Mills College in Oakland, CA in 2007, where she studied percussion with William Winant. Born and raised in Tokyo, Japan to an Indonesian mother and an American father, Dunkelman learned to be a multi-instrumentalist, and performed alongside her mother, a musician and composer active in Asia and the Middle East.

Pulitzer Prize-winner **Du Yun**, born and raised in Shanghai and currently based in New York City, is a composer, multi-instrumentalist, performance artist, activist, and curator for new music, working at the intersection of orchestral, opera, chamber music, theatre, cabaret, musical, oral tradition, public performances, sound installation, electronics, visual arts, and noise. Hailed by *The New York Times* as a “leading figure in China’s new generation of composers” and often cited as a key activist in New York’s “new movement in new music,” Du Yun’s music is championed by some of today’s finest performing artists, ensembles, orchestras, and organizations around the world. Describing her as “protean” and “chameleonic,” *NPR* voted Du Yun one of 100 composers under 40 in 2011 and *The Washington Post* named her one of the top 35 female composers in classical music. She is known for her “relentless originality and unflinching social conscience (*The New Yorker*). In 2017, she won the Pulitzer Prize in Music for her opera, *Angel’s Bone*, with libretto by Royce Vavrek. She is a 2018 Guggenheim Fellow, and the same year was named one of the 38 Great Immigrants by the Carnegie Foundation. Her work *Air Glow* was a 2019 GRAMMY nomination in the category of Best Classical Contemporary Composition. Du Yun is currently on the composition faculty at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University and distinguished visiting professor at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. She was a founding member of the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), served as the Artistic Director of MATA from 2014-2018, conceived the Pan Asia Sounding Festival, and founder of the FutureTradition Initiative in China.

**Morton Feldman** was born in New York, NY in 1926 and died in Buffalo, NY in 1987. A major figure in 20th-century music, Feldman was a pioneer of indeterminate music, a development associated with the experimental New York School of composers also including John Cage, Christian Wolff, and Earle Brown. Feldman’s works are characterized by notational innovations that he developed to create his characteristic sound: rhythms that seem to be free and floating; pitch shadings that seem softly unfocused; a generally quiet and slowly evolving music; recurring asymmetric patterns. His later works, after 1977, also begin to explore extremes of duration. Feldman identified himself by differentiating his views on composition from those of his colleagues in Europe. He was proud to be an American because he was convinced that it enabled him the freedom, unparalleled in Europe, to work unfettered by tradition. Like any true artist, Feldman was endowed with a sensitivity for impressions of a wide variety of sources, literature and painting in particular. His affinity to Samuel Beckett has enriched music literature by a unique music theatre piece, *Neither*, and two ensemble works. His friendship with abstract impressionist painters gave birth to a range of masterpieces, *Rothko Chapel* in particular.

With photographs, videos, installations, films, and performances that are focused on his native Palestine, multidisciplinary artist **Khaled Jarrar** explores the impact of modern-day power struggles on ordinary citizens while seeking to maximise the social potential of artistic interventions. Jarrar’s bold, and sometimes controversial, projects often include various media and have earned him international recognition, most recently Jarrar has been nominated for the 2018 Film Prize of the Robert Bosch Stiftung for International Cooperation, and the recipient of the 2016 Anni and Heinrich Sussmann Award. In 2007, for example, he displayed photographs of the Howarra and Qalandiya checkpoint in plain sight of Israeli soldiers at the border. Other projects such as his *Live and Work in*

*Palestine* passport stamps and his award-winning documentary film *The Infiltrators* (2012), subvert the dominant narrative of an equally fought, two-sided conflict by highlighting the limited mobility of ordinary Palestinians who struggle to have access to basic things such as healthcare, education, or travel documents.

**Ali Sethi** (b. 1984) is a Pakistani author and musician. Having grown up in Lahore, Pakistan, Sethi graduated from Harvard College and authored the critically acclaimed novel *The Wish Maker*. He is also a trained vocalist in the Indo-Pakistani classical traditions of Khayal and Ghazal. A regular on the popular Coke Studio program, he is known for combining live music with historical narrative and critical analysis. He lives between Lahore and New York City.

## **Other Upcoming ACO Performances & Events**

### **2019 Gala: Forces of Nature**

**Wednesday, March 20, 2019 at 6:30PM**

**The Park, NYC | 118 10th Ave., NYC**

American Composers Orchestra celebrates the movers and shakers – true forces of nature – who have effected change in the American musical landscape. At an indoor garden near the High Line, we will toast our honorees with sparkling libations, scrumptious food and lively conversation at ACO's lounge-style Gala, with musical guests Jennifer Koh, violinist; Missy Mazzoli, composer; Tania León, composer and conductor; and student composers who have participated in ACO's Compose Yourself and the New York Philharmonic's Very Young Composers Program.

### **The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Underwood New Music Readings**

**Thursday, May 23, 2019 and Friday, May 24, 2019**

**NYU's Loewe Theater | 35 West 4th St., NYC**

ACO will hold its 28th Annual Underwood New Music Readings for emerging composers on Thursday and Friday, May 23 and 24, 2019. Six composers will hear ACO perform their work live for the first time, receive personalized mentorship, and an archival recording. Two composers will receive a commission for a work to be performed by ACO in an upcoming season: one will be selected by the panel of mentor composers and one will be selected as the Audience Favorite through an audience survey.

### **New England Echoes**

**Wednesday, November 13, 2019 at 7:30 PM**

**Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall | 57th St. and 7th Ave., NYC**

American Composers Orchestra

George Manahan, music director and conductor

Jamie Barton, mezzo-soprano

JJJ, guitar

HILARY PURRINGTON: Guitar Concerto (World Premiere)

CHARLES IVES: Selected songs (World Premieres of orchestrations by Hilary Purrington and Hannah Lash)

MATTHEW AUCOIN: Evidence (2016, New York City Premiere)

### **The Natural Order**

**Thursday, April 2, 2020 at 7:30 PM**

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

American Composers Orchestra

George Manahan, music director and conductor

Jeffrey Zeigler, cello

David Tinervia, baritone

R. Luke DuBois, projection designer

JOHN LUTHER ADAMS: *Become River* (New York City Premiere)

MARK ADAMO: *Last Year*: Concerto for Cello and String Orchestra (World Premiere)

NINA C. YOUNG: *Out of whose womb came the ice* (World Premiere of expanded version)

## About Derek Bermel, ACO Artistic Director

Composer and clarinetist **Derek Bermel** has been widely hailed for his creativity, theatricality, and virtuosity. Artistic Director of the American Composers Orchestra, Bermel is also curator of the Gamper Festival at the Bowdoin International Music Festival, Director of Copland House's emerging composers institute Cultivate, and recently enjoyed a four-year tenure as artist-in-residence at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) in Princeton. Bermel has become recognized as a dynamic and unconventional curator of concert series that spotlight the composer as performer, including ACO's SONIC Festival. Alongside his international studies of ethnomusicology and orchestration, an ongoing engagement with other musical cultures has become part of the fabric and force of his compositional language, in which the human voice and its myriad inflections play a primary role.

He has received commissions from the Pittsburgh, National, Saint Louis, and Pacific Symphonies, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, WNYC Radio, La Jolla Music Society, Seattle Chamber Music Festival, eighth blackbird, Guarneri String Quartet, Music from Copland House and Music from China, De Erepijs (Netherlands), violinist Midori, and electric guitarist Wiek Hijmans among others. His many honors include the Alpert Award in the Arts, Rome Prize, Guggenheim and Fulbright Fellowships, American Music Center's Trailblazer Award, and an Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; commissions from the Koussevitzky and Fromm Foundations, Meet the Composer, and Cary Trust; and residencies at Yaddo, Tanglewood, Aspen, Banff, Bellagio, Copland House, Sacatar, and Civitella Ranieri.

His discography features three critically-acclaimed discs: an all-Bermel orchestral recording that includes the Grammy-nominated performance of his clarinet concerto *Voices*, (BMOP/sound); *Soul Garden*, his small ensemble/solo music (New World/CRI); and his most recent disc, *Canzonas Americanas*, with Alarm Will Sound (Cantaloupe). Recent appearances include the *Intimacy of Creativity* Festival in Hong-Kong; Seattle, La Jolla, and Lincoln Center Chamber Music Societies, *Migration Series* with the Seattle Symphony, *Elixir* with the Boston Symphony, *Hyllos*, his evening-length collaboration with The Veenfabriek and Asko | Schönberg Ensemble in Amsterdam, as well as composer-in-residence stints at Kempten Classix (Germany) and Nuova Consonanza (Rome). Two upcoming Bermel discs feature recordings with the JACK quartet and Albany Symphony Orchestra.

## 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 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.

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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Derek Bermel, *Artistic Director* | George Manahan, *Music Director* | Edward Yim, *President*

Dennis Russell Davies, *Conductor Laureate* | Robert Beaser, *Artistic Director Laureate*

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