American Composers Orchestra Presents Inaugural Composer to Composer Talk
George Lewis with Courtney Bryan and Damon Holzborn

Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 3pm – Online

Information & Registration: http://bit.ly/ComposerToComposerLewis
Free, registration recommended.

New York, NY – American Composers Orchestra (ACO) presents its inaugural Composer to Composer Talk online on Thursday, November 18 at 3pm, with composers George Lewis, Courtney Bryan, and Damon Holzborn. The talk will be live-streamed and available for on-demand viewing for seven days. Tickets are free; registration is highly encouraged. Registrants will receive links to recordings of featured works in advance of the event.

The Composer to Composer series features major American composers in conversation with each other about their work and leading a creative life. The intergenerational discussions begin by exploring a single orchestral piece, with one composer interviewing the other. Attendees will gain insight into the work’s genesis, sound, influence on the American orchestral canon, and will be invited to ask questions of the artists.

On November 18, Courtney Bryan and Damon Holzborn will talk with George Lewis about his Virtual Concerto from 2004, a piece for improvising computer piano soloist and orchestra, written for ACO. The New York Times described the premiere, writing, “the soloist was a computer-driven piano, its software programmed to ‘react’ to aspects of the orchestra's performance.”

Volume One of ACO’s Composer to Composer Talks runs through January 27, 2021. Future talks include Chen Yi, Zhou Long, and Kerwin Young (December 2); William Bolcom and Gabriela Lena Frank (January 13); and John Corigliano and Mason Bates (January 27). Volume Two, to be announced in January 2021, will include composers Missy Mazzoli and Meredith Monk, among others.

These conversations will be archived by Oral History of American Music (OHAM) within Yale University’s Irving S. Gilmore Music Library.

Upcoming Composer to Composer Talks:

December 2, 2020 at 5pm ET: Chen Yi and Zhou Long’s Symphony “Humen 1839”
with Chen Yi, Zhou Long, Kerwin Young


Kerwin Young talks with Chen Yi and Zhou Long about their co-composed work, Symphony “Humen 1839,” from 2009. The work commemorates the public burning of over 1000 tons of opium, an event which led to the First Opium War between Great Britain and China.

**January 13, 2021 at 5pm ET: William Bolcom’s Symphony No. 9**

with William Bolcom and Gabriela Lena Frank


Gabriela Lena Frank talks with William Bolcom about his Symphony No. 9, from 2012, of which Bolcom writes, “Today our greatest enemy is our inability to listen to each other, which seems to worsen with time. All we hear now is shouting, and nobody is listening because the din is so great. Yet there is a ‘still, small voice’ that refuses to disappear…I pin my hope on that voice. I search for it daily in life and in music – and possibly the ‘Ninth Symphony’ is a search for that soft sound.”

**January 27, 2021 at 5pm ET: John Corigliano’s *Circus Maximus* (Symphony No. 3 for Large Wind Ensemble)**

With John Corigliano and Mason Bates


Mason Bates talks with John Corigliano about Corigliano’s work *Circus Maximus* (Symphony No. 3 for Large Wind Ensemble) from 2004. Corigliano writes of the piece, “The Circus Maximus of ancient Rome was the largest arena in the world. 300,000 spectators were entertained by chariot races, hunts, and battles. The Roman need for grander and wilder amusement grew as its empire declined. The parallels between the high decadence of Rome and our present time are obvious. Entertainment dominates our reality, and ever-more-extreme ‘reality’ shows dominate our entertainment.”

**About George Lewis:** George Lewis, Professor of American Music at Columbia University, Area Chair in Composition, and member of the faculty in Historical Musicology, is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy, and an Honorary Member of the American Musicological Society. Lewis’s other honors include a MacArthur “genius” Fellowship (2002), a Guggenheim Fellowship (2015), and the Doris Duke Artist Award (2019). A member of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) since 1971, Lewis's work in electronic and computer music, computer-based multimedia installations, and notated and improvisative forms is documented on more than 150 recordings. His work has been presented by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Dal Niente, Ensemble Intercontemporain, London Philharmonia Orchestra, Talea Ensemble, International Contemporary Ensemble, Musikfabrik, Mivos Quartet, London Sinfonietta, Spektral Quartet, and others; his opera *Afterword* (2015) has been performed in the United States, United Kingdom, and the Czech Republic. He is the author of the award-winning book, *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music* (University of Chicago Press 2008), and co-editor of the two-volume *Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies* (2016). An Honorary Member of the American Musicological Society, Lewis holds honorary doctorates from the University of Edinburgh, New College of Florida, and Harvard University. Lewis’s music is published by Edition Peters. See [https://music.columbia.edu/bios/george-e-lewis](https://music.columbia.edu/bios/george-e-lewis)

**About Courtney Bryan:** Courtney Bryan is “a pianist and composer of panoramic interests” (*The New York Times*). Her music is in conversation with various musical genres, including jazz and other types of experimental music, as well as traditional gospel, spirituals, and hymns. Bryan has academic degrees from Oberlin Conservatory (BM), Rutgers University (MM), and Columbia University (DMA) with advisor George Lewis, and completed postdoctoral studies in the Department of African American Studies at Princeton University. Bryan is currently the Albert and Linda Mintz Professor of Music at Newcomb College in the School of Liberal Arts, Tulane University. She was the 2018 music recipient of the Herb Alpert Award in the Arts, a 2019 Bard College Freehand Fellow, a 2019-20 recipient of the Samuel Barber Rome Prize in Music Composition and is currently a recipient of a 2020-21 Civitella Ranieri Fellowship, and a 2020 United States Artists Fellow. See [www.courtneybryan.com](http://www.courtneybryan.com)

**About Damon Holzborn:** Damon Holzborn is a Brooklyn-based musician, new media artist, and software developer. As a musician, he is an improviser and composer who works primarily with electronics. In performance he uses custom software, traditional effects, and interactive processes. Holzborn has long relied on instruments that he develops for use in his own compositions and performances, creating software that produces dynamic instruments that are particularly effective for improvisational performance. Holzborn has presented his work in the U.S., Mexico, Canada, Europe and Japan, performing as a solo artist and with several ensembles, including Donkey – a decades-long
collaboration with musician/filmmaker Hans Fjellestad. He was a founding member of the Trummerflora Collective (1999-2009), a group whose aim was to create a fertile, varied, self-sustaining environment for experimental and improvised music. In addition to instruments he creates for his own work, he collaborates with other artists to produce custom technology for use in performances and installations. Previous work includes software or hardware for George Lewis, Eric Metcalf, Miya Masaoka, Hans Fjellestad, and Duane Pitre. See www.damonholzborn.com

About American Composers Orchestra

American Composers Orchestra (ACO) is dedicated to the creation, celebration, performance, and promotion of orchestral music by American composers. With commitment to diversity, disruption and discovery, ACO produces concerts, middle school through college composer education programs, and emerging composer development programs to foster a community of creators, audience, performers, collaborators, and funders.

ACO identifies and develops talent, performs established composers, champions those who are lesser-known, and increases regional, national, and international awareness of the infinite variety of American orchestral music, reflecting gender, ethnic, geographic, stylistic, and age diversity. To date, ACO has performed music by 800 American composers, including over 350 world premieres and newly commissioned works. ACO recordings are available on ARGO, CRI, ECM, Point, Phoenix USA, MusicMasters, Nonesuch, Tzadik, New World Records, InstantEncore.com, Amazon.com and iTunes.

EarShot – in collaboration with the League of American Orchestras, New Music USA and American Composers Forum – enables ACO and partner orchestras across the country to identify talented young composers. With guidance from ACO, partner orchestras – such as the Detroit Symphony, the Sarasota (FL) Orchestra, the Charlotte Symphony, and the Philadelphia Orchestra – undertake readings, residencies, performances and composer-development programs that speak directly to their communities and leverage local resources. ACO itself holds annual readings in New York with a multi-performance commission awarded to the most promising participant through the Composing a New Orchestra Audience platform.

For nearly two decades, ACO has brought composers and musical teaching artists into New York City public schools through Sonic Spark (formerly known as Music Factory). Sonic Spark aims to leverage composition as a platform for creativity, and creativity as a platform for achievement in all areas of student’s life. Students in Brooklyn, Bronx, Manhattan and Queens, work directly with professional composers to create and perform original music. ACO also offers the intensive Compose Yourself! seminars, during which high school and college composers participate in hands-on composition classes, culminating in a performance of student compositions played by ACO’s professional musicians.

More information about American Composers Orchestra and resources about American orchestral composers is available online at www.americancomposers.org.

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