American Composers Orchestra Presents Next Composer to Composer Talk
Chen Yi and Zhou Long with Kerwin Young

Wednesday, December 2, 2020 at 5pm ET – Online

Free, registration recommended.

New York, NY – American Composers Orchestra (ACO) presents its next Composer to Composer Talk online on Wednesday, December 2 at 5pm ET, with composers Chen Yi, Zhou Long, and Kerwin Young. 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(s). 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.

ACO’s inaugural Composer to Composer Talk with George Lewis, Courtney Bryan and Damon Holzborn, which was live-streamed on November 18, is now available for on-demand viewing for one week. Tune in at: https://youtu.be/T_TJO-WeBH0

On December 2, Kerwin Young discusses Chen Yi and Zhou Long’s co-composed work Symphony Humen 1839 with them. Symphony Humen 1839 was commissioned and premiered by the Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra in 2009, conducted by Guangzhou Symphony’s Music Director Long Yu.

The Symphony is intended to commemorate the public burning of over 1000 tons of opium in June 1839 in Humen, Guangdong. The opium had been seized from British traders and was piled by the Pearl River and set alight, in an attempt to ban the formidable – and illegal – trading of opium by the British in Qing Dynasty China (1636-1912). The event was to prompt Britain to declare war on China – a conflict now known as the First Opium War (1839-42).

Symphony Humen 1839 won First Prize in the Sixteenth Chinese National Composition Competition for Symphonic Works, sponsored by the Chinese Ministry of Culture in 2012. The Naxos recording, performed by the New Zealand Symphony and conducted by Darrell Ang, was nominated for a 2016 Grammy.
Volume One of ACO’s Composer to Composer Talks runs through January 27, 2021. Future talks include 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:

January 13, 2021 at 5pm ET: William Bolcom’s Symphony No. 9 with William Bolcom and Gabriela Lena Frank

Tickets & Information: http://bit.ly/ComposerToComposerBolcom

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

Tickets & Information: http://bit.ly/ComposerToComposerCorigliano

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 Chen Yi: Born in Guangzhou in 1953, Dr. Chen Yi received her composition degrees from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and Columbia University in New York, studying with Profs. Wu Zuqiang, Chou Wen-chung, and Mario Davidovsky. She has been the Distinguished Endowed Professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory since 1998. Chen Yi blends Chinese and Western traditions, transcending cultural and musical boundaries. She has composed over 150 works ranging from solo instruments and chamber groups (over 60), to chorus (over 30), and large ensembles (over 50, including orchestra or wind band, concertos, or mixed vocal and instrumental works), recorded in over 120 commercially released albums on various labels, and received the prestigious Charles Ives Living Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2001. Published by Theodore Presser Company, her music has reached a wide range of audiences and inspired people around the world. As a strong advocate for new music with diversity and inclusion, particularly for women in music, Prof. Chen has been awarded five Honorary Doctorates in the States and Distinguished Visiting Professorship from many music institutes in China. She has been inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2005, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2019.

About Zhou Long: Zhou Long is internationally recognized for creating a unique body of music that brings together the aesthetic concepts and musical elements of East and West. Winner of the 2011 Pulitzer Prize for his first opera, Madame White Snake, Dr. Zhou also received the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award, the Elise Stoeger Prize from Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society in New York, and the Barlow Prize. He has received commissions from Koussevitzky and Fromm Music Foundation, Meet the Composer, Chamber Music America, and NYSCA, and fellowships from NEA, Guggenheim and Rockefeller Foundation, the AAAL, and New York Foundation for the Arts. Dr. Zhou’s music has been widely performed and recorded on major labels and published by the Oxford University Press and the Shanghai Music Publishing House. He studied composition at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and Columbia University in the City of New York. Major composition teachers were Profs. Su Xia, Chou Wen-chung, Mario Davidovsky, and George Edwards. He is currently Bonfils Distinguished Research Professor of Composition at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory.

About Kerwin Young: Kerwin Young is a prolific international concert and media composer, and recording producer, whose music has served as social commentary the world over since 1989. A member-producer of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inducted Public Enemy, Kerwin Young is a multi-platinum, Grammy-winning composer/producer of popular
music in multiple genres, including film, television, and video games. His works have been performed by Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, University City Symphony, Inscape Chamber Orchestra, Music From China, Del Sol String Quartet, Tesla Quartet, ROCO, and other well-known ensembles. Young studied music composition at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance with Chen Yi, Zhou Long, and Jazz Messenger legend, Bobby Watson. Since 2019, he serves as Performing Rights Associate with Next Level, an initiative of the U.S. Department of State, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Meridian International Center. Internationally, Kerwin Young is a traveling scholar, lecturing on music composition and production across multiple genres, and entrepreneurship. See: www.kerwinyoung.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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American Composers Orchestra
Derek Bermel, Artistic Director | George Manahan, Music Director | Lyndsay Werking, Acting President
Dennis Russell Davies, Conductor Laureate | Robert Beaser, Artistic Director Laureate
494 8th Avenue, Suite 503 | New York, NY 10001
Phone: 212.977.8495 | Web: www.americancomposers.org