

## American Composers Orchestra Presents Next Composer to Composer Talk

**Joan Tower and Conor Brown**

**Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 5pm ET – Online**

**Registration & Information: <http://bit.ly/ComposerToComposerTower>**

**Free, registration recommended.**



*Photo of Joan Tower by Bernie Mindich  
Photo of Conor Brown by Michelle Christiance*

## ACO Continues its Online Professional Development Panels

**Orchestra 101 – Wednesday, February 17, 2021 at 3pm ET**

**Project Production & Recording for Composers – Wednesday, March 3, 2021 3pm ET**

**Entrepreneurship & Ensembles for Composers – Wednesday, March 10, 2021 at 3pm ET**

**Registration & Information: <http://bit.ly/ACOProfessionalDevelopment>**

**Free, registration required.**

New York, NY – American Composers Orchestra (ACO) presents its next **Composer to Composer Talk** online with **Joan Tower and Conor Brown** on **Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 5pm ET**. The talk, which will be hosted by ACO **Artistic Director Derek Bermel**, 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 join the event, as well as to recordings of featured works in advance.

ACO's **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 February 24, Conor Brown talks with Joan Tower about her work ***Sequoia***, **commissioned and premiered by ACO in 1981**. Tower writes of the piece, "I think most composers would have to admit that they live, to various degrees, in the sound-worlds of other composers both old and new, and that what they consciously or unconsciously take from them enables them to discover what they themselves are interested in. Long ago, I recognized Beethoven as someone bound to

enter my work at some point, because for many years I had been intimately involved in both his piano music and chamber music as a pianist. Even though my own music does not sound like Beethoven's in any obvious way, in it there is a basic idea at work which came from him. This is something I call the "balancing" of musical energies. In *Sequoia*, that concept is not only very much present in the score but it actually led to the title (which is meant in an abstract rather than a pictorial sense). What fascinated me about sequoias, those giant California redwood trees, was the balancing act nature had achieved in giving them such great height."

ACO's Composer to Composer Talks will be archived by Oral History of American Music (OHAM) within Yale University's Irving S. Gilmore Music Library.

### **Upcoming Professional Development Panels:**

ACO also continues its series of free **Professional Development Panels** co-presented with the **American Composers Forum**, featuring panel discussions by esteemed professionals in the industry about topics including Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Entrepreneurship and Creating an Ensemble; Film Composition; Fundraising via Supportive Individuals; Programming and Digital Curation; Publishing, Self-Publishing, and Management; Recording Law and Practice; Project Production and Recording; and more. All panels are free and open to the public; registration is required.

#### **Orchestra 101 – Wednesday, February 17, 2021 at 3pm ET**

This panel peers into the innerworkings of the orchestra, illuminating the structure and best practices for composers. New York Philharmonic Librarian **Sara Griffin** moderates a panel of experienced orchestra administrators. A Q&A with the audience will follow the panel discussion. Panelists are **Nicole Jordan**, Philadelphia Orchestra Librarian; **Anna Kuwabara**, Albany Symphony Orchestra Executive Director; and **Meghan Martineau**, Los Angeles Philharmonic Vice President of Artistic Planning.

#### **Project Production & Recording for Composers – Wednesday, March 3, 2021 3pm ET**

What skills should a composer have in order to produce their own work? Topics include audio and video recording, project management, and producing recordings. **John Glover** moderates a panel of creators and producers. A Q&A with the audience will follow the panel discussion. Panelists are **Habib Azar**, Film and Stage Director; **Judith Sherman**, Producer and Audio Engineer; and **Du Yun**, Composer, Performer, and Advocate.

#### **Entrepreneurship & Ensembles for Composers – Wednesday, March 10, 2021 at 3pm ET**

How can composers help guide their own careers? What part does creating an ensemble play in that? **Frank J. Oteri** moderates a panel of innovative ensemble creators to explore topics of entrepreneurship and career advancement as a composer. A Q&A with the audience will follow the panel discussion. Panelists are **Afa Dworkin**, Sphinx Organization; **Nadia Sirota**, yMusic; and **Sugar Vendil**, The Nouveau Classical Project.

### **About the February 24 Composers – Joan Tower & Conor Brown**

**Joan Tower** is widely regarded as one of the most important American composers living today. During a career spanning more than 50 years, she has made lasting contributions to musical life in the United States as composer, performer, conductor, and educator. Her works have been commissioned by major ensembles, soloists, and orchestras, including the Emerson, Tokyo, and Muir quartets; soloists Evelyn Glennie, Carol Wincenc, David Shifrin, Paul Neubauer, and John Browning; and the orchestras of Chicago, New York, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Nashville, Albany NY, and Washington DC, among others.

Recent awards: in 2020 Chamber Music American honored her with its Richard J. Bogomolny National Service Award; *Musical America* chose her to be its 2020 Composer of the Year; in 2019 the League of American Orchestras awarded her its highest honor, the Gold Baton. In 1990, Tower became the first woman to win the prestigious Grawemeyer Award for *Silver Ladders*. She is the first composer chosen for a Ford Made in America consortium commission of sixty-five orchestras. The Nashville Symphony and conductor Leonard Slatkin recorded that work, *Made in America*, with *Tambor* and *Concerto for Orchestra* for the Naxos label. The top-selling recording won three 2008 Grammy awards: Best Contemporary Classical Composition, Best Classical Album, and Best Orchestral Performance. Nashville's latest all-Tower recording includes *Stroke*, which received a 2016 Grammy nomination for Best Contemporary Classical Composition.

From 1969 to 1984, she was pianist and founding member of the Naumburg Award-winning Da Capo Chamber Players, which commissioned and premiered many of her most popular works. Her first orchestral work, *Sequoia*, quickly entered the repertory. Tower's tremendously popular six *Fanfares for the Uncommon Woman* have been played by over 600 different ensembles. She is currently Asher Edelman Professor of Music at Bard College, where she has taught since 1972. Her composer-residencies with orchestras and festivals include a decade with the Orchestra of St. Luke's, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's Composer of the Year for their 2010-11 season, as well as the St. Louis Symphony, the Deer Valley Music Festival, and the Yale/Norfolk Chamber Music Festival. She was in residence as the Albany Symphony's Mentor Composer partner in the 2013-14 season. She has received honorary doctorates from Smith College, the New England Conservatory, and Illinois State University. Joan Tower's music is published by Associated Music Publishers.

**Conor Abbott Brown** is a composer and clarinetist from Altona, Colorado. His music is informed by the sweeping prairies, big sky, and jagged peaks of the American West. His compositions often feature complex, driving rhythms, sustained tension, and ornamentation inspired by folk music from around the world. Brown has had works commissioned by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Albany Symphony Orchestra, groundbreaking amplified chamber orchestra Dogs of Desire, clarinet virtuoso David Krakauer, the American Symphony Orchestra, Contemporaneous, Ars Nova Singers, the Colorado Children's Chorale, and many others. His work *Early Winter Spires* was recently released on the record *Scenes From Home* by clarinetist Kellan Toohey. Brown's composition *Ladun hiihan laulajille* was presented at the Embassy of Finland in Washington D.C. in 2017 in commemoration of the centenary of Finnish independence and received repeat performances in Helsinki, Finland, and in New York City at Carnegie Hall in the Fall of 2018. Brown is a member of the Code Switch Composers Collective. As a performer, Brown has appeared as the guest principal clarinetist of the American Symphony Orchestra, and is the clarinetist of the Boulder Altitude Directive, a chamber ensemble dedicated to performing the works of living composers. Brown holds an MM in music composition from the University of Colorado at Boulder as well as a BA in dance and a BM in music composition from Bard College and the Bard College Conservatory of Music.

## About American Composers Orchestra

Founded in 1977, 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, racial, 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, Amazon, Spotify, and Apple Music.

ACO offers an array of programs for emerging composers including its own annual New Music Readings in New York City, which has served over 150 composers since its inception in 1991, and EarShot Readings, which since 2008 have been offered in partnership with orchestras across the country in collaboration with the League of American Orchestras, New Music USA and American Composers Forum. These Readings provide the rare opportunity for emerging composers to hear their original works played by a professional orchestra; the residencies, performances and composer-development programs speak directly to the orchestras' communities and leverage local resources. Annually, ACO-produced Readings support 15-20 emerging composers, who receive mentorship and a professional orchestra reading and recording of their work. ACO's New Music Readings in New York include a multi-performance commission awarded to the most promising participant through the Composing a New Orchestra Audience platform. Readings composers have gone on to win every major composition award, including the Pulitzer, Grammy, Grawemeyer, American Academy of Arts and Letters, and Rome Prizes.

Since 1999, 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.

ACO has received numerous awards for its work, including those from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and from BMI recognizing the orchestra's outstanding contribution to American music. ASCAP has awarded ACO its annual prize for adventurous programming 35 times, singling out ACO as "the orchestra that has done the most for new American music in the United States." ACO received the inaugural MetLife Award for Excellence in Audience Engagement, and a proclamation from the New York City Council.

More information about American Composers Orchestra and resources about American orchestral composers is available online at [www.americancomposers.org](http://www.americancomposers.org).

###

*Institutional Support for American Composers Orchestra is provided by Herb Alpert Foundation, American Orchestras' Futures Fund, Amphion Foundation, Inc., ASCAP, ASCAP Foundation, BMI Foundation, BMI, Inc., Cheswaty Foundation, Edward T. Cone Foundation, Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation, Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, Jean and Louis Dreyfus Foundation, Baisley Powell Elebash Fund, Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Ford Foundation's Good Neighbor Committee, Fromm Music Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts, G. Schirmer, Hearst Foundations, Richard R. Howe Foundation, Jephson Educational Trusts, Edward and In-Aie Kang Foundation, The J. M. Kaplan Fund, Kettles and Company, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Mitsubishi Corporation (Americas), Morgan Stanley, Neiman Marcus Group Associates Giving Program, Network for Good, NYC COVID-19 Response and Impact Fund in The New York Community Trust, Pacific Harmony Foundation, Paypal, Rexford Fund, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Rolex Institute, Schlam Stone & Dolan LLP, Sphinx Organization, and Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation.*

*ACO programs are made possible with public funds provided by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.*

### **American Composers Orchestra**

Derek Bermel, Artistic Director | George Manahan, Music Director  
Melissa Ngan, Incoming President | Lyndsay Werking, Acting President | Jesse Rosen, Interim 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](http://www.americancomposers.org)