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**45<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL AMERICAN MUSIC CENTER AWARDS  
TO HONOR FOUR OUTSTANDING LEADERS IN  
CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN MUSIC**

On Monday, May 4, 2009, the American Music Center (AMC) will pay tribute to individuals and institutions of exceptional importance in contemporary American music. The ceremony will be held at the Chelsea Art Museum in New York City from 5-7pm, and will take place as part of the American Music Center's Annual Meeting, open to AMC members, the press, and invited guests.

***AMC's Founders Award will be presented to:***

**Gunther Schuller**

***AMC's Letter of Distinction will be presented to:***

**Albany Records  
La Monte Young**

***AMC's New Music Educator Award will be presented to:***

**New World Symphony**

(Biographies of the 2009 honorees follow.)

"Without the creativity, advocacy and good musical citizenship of these honorees, our artistic community would be far less rich," notes AMC's Chief Executive Officer, Joanne Hubbard Cossa. "As we honor them, they honor us all."

"Gunther Schuller, our 2009 recipient of the *Founders Award*, is a distinguished renaissance man of both jazz and concert music, with an all-encompassing career as an orchestral musician, composer, conductor, educator, administrator, author, theorist, publisher, and record producer."

She continues, "Each awardee has added something unique to our musical landscape. With its commitment to the recording of American composers (often performed by American artists), Albany Records preserves contemporary sounds through its imaginative programming and historic world premiere releases. Spanning a 50-year career, La Monte Young has created an influential body of work which gave rise to Minimalism, one of the most singularly distinctive movements in late 20th-century American music. His work remains a touchstone that other musicians, in all genres, continue to follow.

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“Finally,” she concludes, “as a laboratory of musical education and expression, we honor the New World Symphony with the 2009 *New Music Educator Award*. The New World Symphony is dedicated to enhancing the artistic, personal and professional development of instrumentalists and it does so while offering in-depth exposure to contemporary as well as traditional repertoire.”

### **AMC Awards: History and Descriptions**

The American Music Center has awarded the **Letter of Distinction** annually since 1964 to recognize those who have made a significant contribution to the field of contemporary American music. This year’s Letter of Distinction recipients join a celebrated group of individuals and organizations who have received this honor, including George Balanchine, Leonard Bernstein, John Cage, Joan Tower, Merce Cunningham, Morton Feldman, Laurie Anderson, Dizzy Gillespie, Steve Reich, Michael Tilson Thomas, Virgil Thomson, Joan La Barbara, Randy Weston, the Kronos Quartet, Bang on a Can, Dawn Upshaw, and the American Composers Orchestra.

The **Founders Award**, established in 1999, is named in honor of the six founders of the American Music Center: Aaron Copland, Howard Hansen, Marion Bauer, Otto Luening, Quincy Porter and Harrison Kerr. It celebrates lifetime achievement in the field of new American music. Previous winners have included Elliott Carter, Lou Harrison, Milton Babbitt, and Steve Reich.

The **New Music Educator Award** was established in 2006 and honors significant contributions to education in American music. The first recipient was Charles Hamm.

The **American Music Center** is dedicated to building a national community of artists, organizations, and audiences, creating, performing, and enjoying new American music. Since its founding in 1939, AMC has been a leader in providing field-wide advocacy, support, and connection. AMC **advocates** for the community through its media programming, **supports** the community by making grants to composers and ensembles each year, and by offering professional development services to artists; and AMC **connects** the community with an array of information services designed to facilitate performances, including a vast, searchable database of 45,000 works by American composers; publications compiling opportunities in new music and other information useful to industry professionals; and benefits and services for nearly 2,500 members in all 50 states and around the world.

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## **BIOGRAPHIES OF AMERICAN MUSIC CENTER HONOREES – 2009**

**Gunther Schuller** is, famously, a man of many musical pursuits. He began his professional life as a horn player in both the jazz and classical worlds, working as readily with Miles Davis and Gil Evans as with Toscanini; he was principal horn of the Cincinnati Symphony from age sixteen and later of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra until 1959. In the 1950s he began a conducting career focusing largely on contemporary music, and thereafter conducted most of the major orchestras of the world in a wide range of works, including his own. He was central in precipitating a new stylistic marriage between progressive factions of jazz and classical, coining the term "Third Stream" and collaborating in the development of the style with John Lewis, the Modern Jazz Quartet, and others. He has been on the faculties of the Manhattan School of Music and Yale University; he was, for many years, head of contemporary music activities (succeeding Aaron Copland) as well as a director of the Tanglewood Music Center, and served as President of the New England Conservatory. In the late 1970s he started the GunMar and Margun music publishing companies and later the GM Recordings label and has written more than 180 works over his career. On top of it all, Schuller's advocacy of other composers through performance, publishing, recording, teaching and administration has been as unflagging in its energy and scope as his pursuit of his own musical expression as performer, conductor, and composer.

**La Monte Young** has pioneered the concept of extended time durations in contemporary music for over 35 years. As well, his work has played a central role in the development of the use of Just Intonation in 20th-century music and the growth of the Minimalist style. During the 1950s La Monte Young was a jazz saxophone performer in Los Angeles, playing with Eric Dolphy, Ornette Coleman, Billy Higgins, and Don Cherry, among others. After graduate composition studies at the University of California at Berkeley, he moved to New York City, where he directed the first loft concert series in that city. With the founding in 1962 of The Theatre of Eternal Music, Mr. Young began work on his ongoing ensemble work *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys* (1964-present). His other major ongoing work has been his *The Well-Tuned Piano* (1964-73-81-present), for a special, justly-tuned Bösendorfer Imperial piano. By 1987, his performances of this work had expanded to a duration of almost six and a half hours. Since the early 1960s, La Monte Young has collaborated with visual artist Marian Zazeela. Together, they have designed numerous "sound and light" environments, utilizing electronically generated sustained tones in a specially lighted environment. In addition, Mr. Young's concert works are usually presented with lighting designs by Ms. Zazeela.

**Albany Records** was formed in 1987 by two people who wanted to show the world the magnificent value of America's musical legacy. Coming from a background of a life-time of listening and 25 years of involvement with orchestras, Peter Kermani brought his vast knowledge of music to the partnership, while Susan Bush, who was trained as a musician and worked in arts administration, brought these skills to the new company. The label has devoted itself to American composers and American performers,

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although it has released a wealth of non-American music as well. There are now

more than 1,000 titles available which celebrate America's musical heritage as well as the best of our current culture. Reflecting the eclectic musical interests of Peter Kermani and Susan Bush, the recordings range from the orchestral music of Robert Ward (the very first release) — to the music of the vastly underrated Don Gillis — to the wind ensemble music of John Barnes Chance — to the latest compositions by America's new and upcoming masters. Albany Records, in its releases, offers profound aural proof of the quality and breadth of America's music.

**The New World Symphony** was established in 1987 under the artistic direction of Michael Tilson Thomas, as a unique educational environment in which to prepare gifted graduates of distinguished music programs for leadership positions in orchestras and ensembles around the world. Through an intensive, three-year fellowship program, the New World Symphony (NWS) offers a wide range of performance and educational opportunities in both domestic and international venues. At its home base in Miami Beach, NWS presents a full season of concerts from October to May at the Lincoln Theatre, including full-orchestra concerts, a chamber music series, a new music series, small ensemble concerts, a family series, and special festivals, as well as recitals. The program offers in-depth exposure to traditional and modern repertoire, with the active involvement of leading guest conductors, soloists and coaches. The relationships with these artists are extended through NWS's pioneering experimentation with distance learning via Internet2. Additionally, the program offers opportunities for fellows to design and present their own concerts, often featuring seldom-heard works for unusual instrumentation, as well as opportunities to develop their entrepreneurial and community outreach skills. One outcome of this initiative was the creation of a "Music Mentor" program that pairs NWS fellows with high school music students for private music lessons, culminating in an annual "Side-by-Side" spring concert showcasing the combined talents of the young students and their NWS mentors.

## Historical List of American Music Center Award Recipients

### Founders Award

- 2009** Gunther Schuller
- 2008** Steve Reich
- 2007** Philip Glass
- 2006** Milton Babbitt
- 2005** William "Count" Basie (posthumous); Charles Ives (posthumous)
- 2004** Ornette Coleman
- 2003** Betty Freeman; Lou Harrison (in memoriam)
- 2001** John Duffy
- 1999** Elliott Carter

### Trailblazer Award

- 2008** Derek Bermel
- 2007** eighth blackbird
- 2005** The Minnesota Commissioning Club
- 2004** Matt Haimovitz
- 2003** George Steel/Miller Theatre

### New Music Educator Award

- 2009** New World Symphony
- 2007** Charles Hamm

### Letter of Distinction

- 2009** La Monte Young; Albany Records
- 2008** Robert Ashley; Joan La Barbara; Edgar Meyer; Ned Rorem; Joan Tower
- 2007** Marin Alsop; T.J. Anderson; John Corigliano; Ralph Jackson; Terry Riley
- 2006** Chanticleer; Bill Frisell; Alex Ross; Billy Taylor
- 2005** Laurie Anderson; Lukas Foss; Ahmad Jamal; Richard Kessler; Gian Carlo Menotti; The Other Minds Festival; Frances Richard
- 2004** John Adams; Art Ensemble of Chicago; Dave Brubeck; Ben Johnston; George Perle; Stephen Sondheim; Dawn Upshaw; Yale Oral History of American Music/Vivian Perlis
- 2003** George Crumb; Ronald Freed (in memoriam); Kyle Gann; Steve Reich; Wayne Shorter
- 2002** Henry Cowell (in memoriam); Phyllis Curtin; Sylvia Goldstein, Ursula Oppens, John Schaefer
- 2001** Donald Erb; Hale Smith; Mark Swed; Lyn Austin (in memoriam); Teresa Sterne (in memoriam)
- 2000** Composers Recordings, Inc.; John Harbison; Robert Hurwitz; K. Robert Schwarz (in memoriam); Michael Tilson Thomas
- 1999** Ellis Freedman; Philip Glass; California EAR Unit; Harvey Lichtenstein; Mel Powell (in memoriam)
- 1998** Arnold Broido; Yo-Yo Ma; George Walker; Bette Snapp (in memoriam)
- 1997** Merce Cunningham; Tania Leon; Paul Sperry; Jacob Druckman (in memoriam)
- 1996** Earle Brown; Thomas Buckner; Randy Weston; Ulysses Kay (in memoriam)
- 1995** Ed London and the Cleveland Chamber Symphony; Max Roach; Gregg Smith
- 1994** David Baker; Arthur Cohn; Francis Goelet
- 1993** Morton Gould; Modern Jazz Quartet; Dizzy Gillespie (in memoriam); Stephen Albert (in memoriam)
- 1992** (none awarded due to schedule change)
- 1991** Bang on a Can; New World Records; Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust
- 1990** Muhal Richard Abrams; Pauline Oliveros; Lawrence Leighton Smith and the Louisville Orchestra
- 1989** Leo Ornstein; Minna Lederman Daniels; and Jan DeGaetani (in memoriam)

- 1988** Cecil Taylor; Sylvia Smith and Smith Publications; Peter Garland and Soundings Press  
**1987** Ornette Coleman; Kronos Quartet; Morton Feldman (in memoriam); Vincent Persichetti (in memoriam)  
**1986** Lou Harrison; Betty Freeman  
**1985** Gunther Schuller; Margaret Jory (in memoriam); Leonard Fleischer of Exxon, Howard Klein of the Rockefeller Foundation, and Frank Hodsoll of the National Endowment for the Arts for the Meet the Composer Orchestra Residencies Program  
**1984** Milton Babbitt; KPFA/Charles Amirkhanian; St. Louis Symphony/Leonard Slatkin  
**1983** Robert Erickson; C.F. Peters Corporation/Evelyn Hinrichsen; Paul Jacobs (in memoriam)  
**1982** Henry Brant; Institute for Studies in American Music/H. Wiley Hitchcock, founding director; Robert Miller (in memoriam)  
**1981** Conlon Nancarrow; American Composers Orchestra/Francis Thorne, Dennis Russell Davies  
**1980** Meet the Composer/John Duffy; Samuel Barber  
**1979** John Cage; Lawrence Morton  
**1978** Leonard Bernstein; Nicolas Slonimsky  
**1977** Hugo Weisgall; Martin Bookspan  
**1976** Virgil Thomson; Paul Fromm  
**1975** Aaron Copland; Otto Luening  
**1974** Koussevitsky Foundation; Olga Koussevitsky  
**1973** Elliott Carter; Roy Harris  
**1972** Hugo Weisgall; Max Pollikoff  
**1971** Howard Hanson; Roger Sessions  
**1970** Aaron Copland; Leopold Stokowski; Benjamin Steinberg  
**1969** Stefan Wolpe; George Balanchine; Samuel Rosenbaum  
**1968** Roger Sessions; Alberto Ginestera  
**1967** William Schuman  
**1965** Adele Addison; Milton Feist; Henry Allen Moe; Thomas Scherman  
**1964** Claire Reis; Donald Engle; Richard Franko Goldman; Virgil Thomson

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