

## The New York Times

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# Music in Review

By THE NEW YORK TIMES

## AMERICAN COMPOSERS ORCHESTRA

Zankel Hall

“Conversations,” the American Composers Orchestra called its concert on Friday night. You could argue that nearly all its collaborations with performing composers and interactions with disparate musical styles during recent seasons also amounted to dialogues. But each of the three works offered here was defined by at least one central duality.

Roger Zare’s “Time Lapse” alluded to two techniques from photography: time-lapse and high-speed. You could sense the concept at work as elongated, low-pitched glowers and rumbles jostled with bright, shimmering sounds and sinuous string figures. But your strongest impression was of a young composer with an enviable grasp of orchestration. In one of Mr. Zare’s most memorable effects, the pianist Peter Basquin pulled a strand of magnetic tape across the piano strings, creating an eerie whine over whispering strings and purring cymbal rolls.

In “Next Atlantis,” the composer Sebastian Currier fused a string orchestra with recorded washes of synthetically altered water sounds, sonorous boat horns and ghostly melodies, while the video artist Pawel Wojtasik’s striking images of New Orleans in the wake of [Hurricane Katrina](#) stretched and spun on an overhead screen. According to Mr. Currier’s program notes the work was not specifically meant as a response to Katrina. Still, it was impossible not to be moved when images of pain-racked survivors appeared over strains that wavered between eloquent meditation and anguished threnody.

“Conversations With Cachao,” by the jazz clarinetist and saxophonist Paquito D’Rivera, closed the concert on a gleeful note. In paying homage to the great Cuban bassist, composer and bandleader Israel López, a k a Cachao, Mr. D’Rivera used a four-note motif to bind a giddy barrage of eager melodies and lively rhythms.

Mr. D’Rivera and the bassist Robert Black improvised flamboyant cadenzas throughout. Recalled for an ovation, they charmed the audience with perky duet renditions of two Cuban standards: “Los Tres Golpes” by Ignacio Cervantes and “Al Fin Te Vi” by Ernesto Lecuona.

The conductor Anne Manson, in her American Composers Orchestra debut, did outstanding work in managing the program’s disparate elements, and the orchestra responded with estimable style and confidence. STEVE SMITH