

For immediate release
Alan Gilbert returns to Berlin Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus, & La Scala

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Alan Gilbert with the New York Philharmonic (photo: Chris Lee)

Following successful concerts launching his farewell season with the New York Philharmonic, [Alan Gilbert](#) heads across the Atlantic for guest conducting engagements with three of Europe's most iconic musical institutions, including two of the German orchestras with which he has established the most meaningful ties. As a regular guest of the **Berlin Philharmonic**, he returns

to lead a program of Tchaikovsky, Bartók, and John Adams, who is the orchestra's current Composer-in-Residence (Dec 2–4). He rejoins the **Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra**, where his sensational season-opening concerts wowed the British and German press two years ago, for a coupling of Bartók and Beethoven followed by a special “talk and performance” event, at which he and piano soloist **Inon Barnatan** join German TV personality Malte Arkona (Oct 20–22). With the same orchestra he conducts a program pairing Mahler with the **German premiere** of Anders Hillborg's Second Violin Concerto (Oct 27 & 28). Finally, at **La Scala** he leads a new production of **Porgy and Bess** that marks the first time that the original version of Gershwin's score will have been heard complete at the Milan house (Nov 13–23).

Tchaikovsky's Fourth and more at the Berlin Philharmonic

Gilbert enjoys close relationships with all Germany's leading orchestras, including the Munich Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio Symphony, Dresden Staatskapelle, and NDR Elbphilharmonie (formerly known as NDR Symphony Hamburg), where he served as Principal Guest Conductor for more than a decade. His 2006 debut at the **Berlin Philharmonic** impressed the *Berlin Morgenpost* as “**the embodiment of a conducting ‘event,’**” and since then his collaborations with the orchestra have consistently drawn glowing praise. Of his singular rapport with the ensemble the *Morgenpost* noted: “**The musicians have faith in him, letting him unleash his creativity to the fullest.**” Similarly, of his leadership style, the *Berliner Zeitung* observed:

“Gilbert's conducting is of great physical presence, ... very direct, muscular and dynamically forward. One can hear a distinctive musical instinct, ... a natural force at work, that has become rare in our times of overdone musical culture.”

For his return to the orchestra, Gilbert conducts **Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony**, of which his “**hypercharged**” account was a highlight of the New York Philharmonic's “**blistering Disney Hall debut**” (*Los Angeles Times*). Juxtaposed with the feverish despair of that Russian masterwork are **Short Ride in a Fast Machine** and **Lollapalooza** by **John Adams** – the Berlin Philharmonic's current Composer-in-Residence – and **Bartók's Second Violin Concerto** with **Frank Peter Zimmermann** as soloist. Gilbert's association with the German violinist is of long standing. It was he who appointed Zimmermann as the New York Philharmonic's 2011-12 Artist-in-Residence, when their concerto collaborations included a performance of the Bach “Double” with the Music Director himself on violin; as the *New York Times* wrote, “**the interplay between them was graceful ... and took on an appealing visceral quality.**” After their Berlin engagement, the two look forward to reuniting once again on the New York Philharmonic's upcoming European tour.

Beethoven, Mahler, Bartók and a Hillborg premiere with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra

Gilbert's relationship with the **Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra** reached new heights in 2014-15, when he conducted the season-launching performances in the Saxon city and on tour at Musikfest Berlin, the Lucerne Festival and London's BBC Proms. Their account of Mahler's Third Symphony was named one of the highlights of the Proms season by the UK's *Independent*, which declared: “**Gilbert blew not just our socks but everything else off.**” Likewise, their rendition of

Beethoven's Ninth on the penultimate night of the festival impressed *The Telegraph* as "**urgent and often thrilling**," while *The Guardian* took special notice of the "**tremendous**" finale:

"There were fine insights from Gilbert here, too, from the almost imperceptible first emergence of the *Freude* theme out of the silence that preceded it, to the thrillingly precise, yet almost frenzied elation of the closing bars."

The centerpiece of their first program this season is **Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto** with Israeli pianist **Inon Barnatan**. One of the conductor's frequent collaborators, Barnatan is currently concluding a three-year residency as the New York Philharmonic's inaugural Artist-in-Association, and recently took part in Gilbert's live recording of Messiaen's epic *Des canyons aux étoiles...* at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. Last winter, he and Gilbert performed Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, when the "**close artistic rapport between conductor and soloist was particularly evident**" (*Seen and Heard International*).

For their second program, Gilbert and the orchestra join Georgian violinist **Lisa Batiashvili** for the **German premiere of Anders Hillborg's Violin Concerto No. 2**. Batiashvili – a frequent collaborator of the conductor's, whom he appointed as the New York Philharmonic's 2014–15 Artist-in-Residence – gave the work's first performance this season at the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic. As Conductor Laureate of that orchestra, Gilbert has a special connection to the music of Sweden, and is the dedicatee of Hillborg's *Exquisite Corpse*, which he premiered and recorded for the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic's 75th anniversary. In Leipzig he pairs the new concerto with the **First Symphony of Mahler**, in whose music he has long excelled; it was with Mahler's Sixth that Gilbert first convinced "**all who heard it that New York City [had] set its own homegrown star on the musical firmament**" (*New York Classical Review*) and with the "Resurrection" Symphony that his "**inspired**" account drew an "**ovation [that] went on for ten minutes**" (*New York Times*). Indeed, when looking back over the Music Director's New York Philharmonic tenure, *The Guardian's* Seth Colter Walls observed:

"I'll greatly miss the specific spirit of innovation that he has brought to my hometown orchestra. ... A 2014 concert that paired Mahler's Symphony No 1 with a riotous new clarinet concerto by Unsuk Chin is just one of the great Gilbert-led concerts that didn't grab enough attention."

Gilbert also leads the Gewandhaus Orchestra in concert performances of ***Bluebeard's Castle***, featuring Grammy Award-winning mezzo **Michelle DeYoung** and baritone **Mikhail Petrenko**. Bartók's chilling one-act opera was the vehicle for the conductor's 2014 appearances with DeYoung at Hamburg's NDR Symphony (as it was still known), when *Der Neue Merker* reported:

"Thanks to the artistry of Gilbert's leadership, the orchestra rose to the challenges posed by Bartók's sonorous music. The Lübeck audience ... was profoundly impressed, and applauded long and persistently for all involved."

Operatic debut at La Scala with *Porgy and Bess*

It was also with *Bluebeard's Castle* that Gilbert made his debut with the La Scala Orchestra last fall. Although he has yet to conduct a staged production at the Milan house, he is already a major player on the opera scene. As the first appointed music director of Santa Fe Opera, he led productions ranging from repertory staples like *Don Giovanni* and *Carmen* to the North American premiere of Thomas Adès's *The Tempest*. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut with a production of John Adams's *Doctor Atomic* that was named one of the best of 2008 by *New York* magazine and which, when released on DVD, scored the conductor his first Grammy Award. At the New York Philharmonic, Gilbert's innovative collaborations with NYC-based production company Giants Are Small, on projects including Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre*, have been hailed as among the most successful initiatives of his tenure. Most recently, his leadership of George Benjamin's *Written on Skin* at the Mostly Mozart Festival was chosen as one of the best of 2015 by both *New York* and the *New York Times*, which praised the **"surging and nuanced performance"** he drew from the Mahler Chamber Orchestra.

For his first staged opera at La Scala, Gilbert helps premiere a new staging of *Porgy and Bess* by stage director **Philipp Harnoncourt**, who is best known for his work with Robert Wilson and the Vienna State Opera Ballet. Starring bass **Morris Robinson** and soprano **Kristin Lewis** in the title roles, with original video design by **Max Kaufmann** and **Eva Grün**, the semi-staged production marks the first time that the original version of Gershwin's score will be presented at the Milan house in its entirety.

Launch of farewell season at the New York Philharmonic

This trio of high-profile international engagements follows the launch of Gilbert's eighth and final season as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic, which celebrates the transformative legacy of his tenure. Paying tribute to the hometown he shares with the orchestra, their Opening Gala Concert paired the New York premiere of John Corigliano's *Stomp* with two key New York works of the past: Gershwin's Concerto in F, which the Philharmonic commissioned and premiered, and – in **"a majestic performance"** (*New York Times*) – Dvorák's Symphony No. 9, "From the New World," which the Philharmonic premiered in 1893. This work forms the centerpiece of the orchestra's season-long New World Initiative, which seeks to make the beloved symphony a cultural touchstone for as many New Yorkers as possible. By way of an upbeat to the new season, Gilbert and the Philharmonic – the orchestra that anchored the original soundtrack recording of Woody Allen's *Manhattan* – accompanied a screening of the film with the first live-to-film performance of its classic Gershwin score, in a sold-out "Art of the Score" event that the *New York Times* called **"magical."** And for their next program, Gilbert led the orchestra in a pairing of Berlioz and Rimsky-Korsakov that the *New York Classical Review* considered such **"exceptionally fine music making"** that the event was, all told, **"as impressive as any concert one is likely to hear this season."**

For high-resolution photos, click [here](#).

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Alan Gilbert: fall guest conducting engagements in Europe

Oct 20 & 21

Leipzig, Germany

Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Inon Barnatan, piano)

Bartók: *Bluebeard's Castle* (with Michelle DeYoung, mezzo-soprano; Mikhail Petrenko, baritone)

Oct 22

Leipzig, Germany

Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Inon Barnatan, piano)

Oct 27 & 28

Leipzig, Germany

Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra

Anders Hillborg: Violin Concerto No. 2 (with Lisa Batiashvili, violin)

Mahler: Symphony No. 1

Nov 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, & 23

Milan, Italy

Teatro alla Scala

Gershwin: *Porgy and Bess*

Dec 2-4

Berlin, Germany

Berlin Philharmonic

John Adams: *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*

Bartók: Violin Concerto No. 2 (with Frank Peter Zimmermann, violin)

John Adams: *Lollapalooza* for orchestra

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4

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