
For immediate release
Alan Gilbert conducts Mahler's Sixth Symphony

Contact Glenn Petry (212) 625-2038
gpetry@21cmediagroup.com

Alan Gilbert Conducts Mahler's Sixth – This Week with New York Philharmonic and in December with NDR Symphony

Alan Gilbert returns to the symphonies of Gustav Mahler this week when he conducts the New York Philharmonic in three concerts at Avery Fisher Hall, from September 29 to October 1. On the program will be a single, powerful work: Mahler's Sixth Symphony, often referred to as the composer's "Tragic" Symphony. Later this fall, Gilbert will conduct the same work in Germany with Hamburg's NDR Symphony Orchestra (Dec 9 - 12). Other Mahler performances are on the books for Gilbert later this season: he will lead the New York Philharmonic in the *Kindertotenlieder* with baritone Thomas Hampson (Jan 6 – 8) and the Fifth Symphony No. 5 (April 27 – 30). Gilbert also leads the Juilliard Orchestra in a single performance of Mahler's Ninth Symphony on April 15.

Mahler's music has long been a central component of the New York Philharmonic's repertoire. The composer himself led the orchestra in the early days of the 20th century (1909-1911), and some of the orchestra's subsequent music directors – most famously Leonard Bernstein – were staunch advocates of his music. Over the coming year, Mahler's music has a special place in orchestral programming around the world, as the 2010-11 season marks the 150th anniversary of Mahler's birth and the 100th anniversary of his death. The New York Philharmonic's own such concerts this season continue its long Mahler tradition, while furthering Alan Gilbert's own passionate and long-term relationship with the composer's music. He began his first season as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic last fall with Mahler's Third Symphony, having led it in the First Symphony during the prior season. This summer, he conducted *Das Lied von Der Erde* with the NDR Symphony Orchestra, Hamburg, in its home city (Gilbert has been the orchestra's principal guest conductor since 2004), as well as in Lübeck, Kiel and Copenhagen.

In June 2008, Gilbert ended his eight-year tenure as chief conductor and artistic advisor of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra with Mahler's valedictory Symphony No. 9. That performance was recorded by BIS and its release was greeted enthusiastically. *Gramophone* named it an "Editor's Choice," noting in its review, "It is as exhausting and purifying an experience as any 80 minutes spent in your listening room has the right to be." The *Chicago Tribune* named it the top classical recording of the year, with critic John von Rhein calling it "a studio recording of Mahler's sublime valedictory that strikes a wonderful balance between desolation and acceptance, with luminous sonics to match."

A brief Q & A with Alan Gilbert on the subject of Mahler follows below.

Q: You've described the Sixth as possibly your favorite of Mahler's symphonies. Why?

AG: It's a very, very pessimistic work that paints a very realistic picture of life's ups and downs and the search for happiness and meaning. For the particular protagonist in the Sixth Symphony it ends in utter despair, and without hope, which is quite rare in music and art. Usually there is some shred of optimism left! But this piece ends in utter devastation. That's not what I like about the piece, of course! But the work is such a statement, and is such a powerful expression of life's experiences; it is an important and indisputably great work.

Q: You've already performed the First and Third Symphonies with the New York Philharmonic, and will play the Sixth this week. Later in the season you'll also do the Fifth. Are you hoping to do all of the Mahler symphonies at some point with the orchestra?

Not necessarily. I don't feel a burning need to do all of them, but I adore the music and it might make sense to do all of them eventually.

Q: Mahler himself led the New York Philharmonic, and the orchestra has long had a reputation for being a great Mahler orchestra. What are the special qualities that the New York Philharmonic brings to a Mahler performance?

The orchestra really understands the feeling of this music; the general pathos and depth of "Mahler character" is something that they feel intuitively. Growing up, I heard some great performances by this orchestra led by Leonard Bernstein and Zubin Mehta. The orchestra really has this music in its blood.

You're doing Mahler's Kindertotenlieder with the orchestra in January with soloist Thomas Hampson. You've worked with Hampson a lot, and this summer you performed Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde with him and the NDR Symphony. Hampson is widely regarded as one of the greatest interpreters of Mahler songs. What qualities does he bring to the music?

Tom has an intuitive understanding of the style. His way with the text is really profound. I had never done *Das Lied* with a baritone before, but after hearing him do it, that's how I would like to hear this piece!

Alan Gilbert: fall 2010 engagements

Sep 29 – Oct 1

Mahler: Symphony No. 6

Oct 6

Debussy: *Prelude to "The Afternoon of a Faun"*

Sibelius: Violin Concerto (with Joshua Bell, violin)

R. Strauss: *Don Juan*

Hindemith: *Symphonic Metamorphoses on Themes by Carl Maria von Weber*

Oct 7, 8, 12

Debussy: *Prelude to "The Afternoon of a Faun"*
Sibelius: Violin Concerto (with Joshua Bell, violin)
Magnus Lindberg: *Kraft* (New York premiere)

Oct 9

Tilles Center for the Performing Arts, Long Island University, Brookville, NY
Sibelius: Violin Concerto (with Joshua Bell, violin)
R. Strauss: *Don Juan*
Hindemith: *Symphonic Metamorphoses on Themes by Carl Maria von Weber*

Oct 14-16

Webern: *Passacaglia*, Op. 1
Brahms: Violin Concerto (with Pinchas Zukerman, violin)
Brahms: Symphony No. 4

Oct 24 – Nov 4

"Europe / Autumn 2010": European tour with the New York Philharmonic

Nov 10, 11, 13

Mendelssohn: *Elijah*
With Carolyn Sampson, soprano; Alice Coote, mezzo-soprano; Allan Clayton, tenor; Gerald Finley, bass-baritone; New York Choral Artists / Joseph Flummerfelt, director

Nov 12

New York Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall
Beethoven: Violin Concerto (with Midori, violin)
John Adams: *Harmonielehre*

Nov 19

CONTACT! (the New York Philharmonic's new-music series at Symphony Space, NYC)
Magnus Lindberg: new work (world premiere)
G rard Grisey: *Quatre chants pour franchir le seuil* (with Barbara Hannigan, soprano)

Nov 20

CONTACT! (the New York Philharmonic's new-music series at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC)
Magnus Lindberg: new work
G rard Grisey: *Quatre chants pour franchir le seuil* (with Barbara Hannigan, soprano)

Nov 26-27

Paris, France; Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France
School concert, Nov 26
Schoenberg: *Pelleas und Melisande*
Family Concert, Nov 27, matinee
Schoenberg: *Pelleas und Melisande*
Concert, Nov 27, evening
Zemlinsky: *Sechs Ges nge After Poems by Maurice Maeterlinck*, Op. 13
(with Yvonne Naef, contralto)
Schoenberg: *Pelleas und Melisande*

Dec 9-10, 12

NDR Symphony Orchestra, Hamburg
Hamburg, Germany (Dec 9)
Lübeck, Germany (Dec 10)
Hamburg, Germany (Dec 12)
Mahler: Symphony No. 6

Dec 17

CONTACT!, the New York Philharmonic's new-music series at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (NYC)
Julian Anderson: *The Comedy of Change* (U.S. premiere)
James Matheson: New work (world premiere)
Jay Alan Yim: New work (world premiere)

Dec 18

CONTACT!, the New York Philharmonic's new-music series at Symphony Space (NYC)
Julian Anderson: *The Comedy of Change* (U.S. premiere)
James Matheson: New work (world premiere)
Jay Alan Yim: new work (world premiere)

Dec 28-30

Vivaldi: Concerto for Four Violins, Op. 3, No. 10
Aaron Jay Kernis: *a Voice, a Messenger* (world premiere, New York Philharmonic commission)
Hindemith: Horn Concerto
Christopher Rouse: Oboe Concerto (New York premiere)
Ravel: *Boléro*

Dec 31

Tchaikovsky: "Polonaise" from *Eugene Onegin*
Tchaikovsky: Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Lang Lang, piano)
Tchaikovsky: *The Nutcracker*, Act II
(Broadcast on *Live From Lincoln Center* on PBS stations)

www.alangilbert.com

#

© 21C Media Group, September 2010