

For immediate release
Alan Gilbert's 2009-10 season

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Alan Gilbert Begins Tenure as Music Director of New York Philharmonic With Televised Gala Concert on Wednesday, September 16

Alan Gilbert begins his tenure as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic in the 2009–10 season, which launches on Wednesday, September 16 with a concert from Avery Fisher Hall that will be televised on PBS's *Live From Lincoln Center*. The program features a new work, *EXPO*, by the Philharmonic's new Composer-in-Residence Magnus Lindberg, commissioned by the Philharmonic for the occasion; superstar soprano Renée Fleming singing Messiaen's *Poèmes pour Mi*; and Gilbert conducting Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*. The opening-night concert will also be projected live onto Lincoln Center's Josie Robertson Plaza, and the public is invited to a free open rehearsal of the evening's program conducted by Alan Gilbert that morning. Most of Gilbert's concerts this season will be with the New York Philharmonic, but he will also return to Europe to continue his relationship with Hamburg's NDR Symphony Orchestra, where he has been principal guest conductor since 2004. He will also be heard this fall on a new recording from the BIS label conducting Mahler's Ninth Symphony with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra (available on line at Arkiv Music beginning September 1 and elsewhere later in the month). The recording was made in June 2008 and captures Gilbert's final performances as the orchestra's chief conductor and artistic advisor; at the time he was also named the orchestra's conductor laureate.

As well as being one of the New York Philharmonic's youngest music directors, the Manhattan-born Gilbert is the first native New Yorker to hold the post. For his inaugural season he has introduced a number of new initiatives, including creating a new position of Artist-in-Residence, to which Thomas Hampson has been appointed this year, as well as naming the new Composer-in-Residence, Magnus Lindberg. An annual three-week festival – this season focusing on the music of Stravinsky – has also been introduced, as well as CONTACT, the New York Philharmonic's new-music series. In other highlights of the 2009-10 season, Gilbert leads the orchestra on Asian Horizons, a major tour of Asia in October 2009, with debuts in Hanoi (Vietnam) and Abu Dhabi; on a European tour in January/February 2010; and in performances of world, U.S., and New York premieres – notably including a spring performance of Ligeti's seminal opera *Le Grand Macabre*, which has never been performed complete in New York. This season Gilbert also becomes the first person to hold the newly created William Schuman Chair in Musical Studies at the Juilliard School, a position that will include coaching, conducting, and performance master classes.

Highlights of Gilbert's 2008–09 season with the New York Philharmonic included the November 14 Bernstein anniversary concert at Carnegie Hall, and a performance with

the Juilliard Orchestra, presented by the Philharmonic, featuring Bernstein's Symphony No. 3, *Kaddish*. In spring 2009 Gilbert conducted the world premiere of Peter Lieberson's *The World in Flower*, a New York Philharmonic commission, and Mahler's First Symphony. Writing about the latter for the *New York Times*, critic Anthony Tommasini observed, "it was a thrill to hear the work performed with such precision and daring by the Philharmonic under Mr. Gilbert, conducting from memory. During the blazing episodes in the finale, he drove the orchestra to frenzied outbursts, all the more terrifying for being executed with such cool command. The tremendous ovation bodes well for his coming tenure as the orchestra's music director." In July 2009 Gilbert led the New York Philharmonic Concerts in the Parks and Free Indoor Concerts and four concerts at the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival in Colorado. He also discussed his upcoming season with the orchestra in a July cover story for *Gramophone* magazine that ran with the headline, "Alan Gilbert Takes New York".

Also last season, Gilbert made his Metropolitan Opera debut, conducting John Adams's *Doctor Atomic* – the first time the company had presented an opera by the great American composer. *New York* magazine named the production the top classical music event of 2008, with critic Justin Davidson observing, "the real star was the Met orchestra, which under Alan Gilbert sounded like one great inhaling—the upbeat to the nuclear age." In February, Gilbert led the Boston Symphony Orchestra in an acclaimed performance of Ives's visionary Fourth Symphony. Jeremy Eichler reported on the occasion for the *Boston Globe*, noting, "Gilbert chose a spacious pacing and found clarity and structure within the chaos. He drew a beautifully rich tone from the strings in the third movement fugue, and traced the broadest of arcs in the spiritually searching finale. At the very end, the music created just the desired effect: it seemed to evaporate into a clear night sky."

In April, Gilbert returned to the podium of Berlin's famed Philharmonie, where he led the Berlin Philharmonic in a program of Dvorak and Martinu. Berlin's *Morgenpost* called Gilbert's return "a triumph," with Klaus Geitel, the dean of Germany's music critics, giving special praise to Gilbert for his revelatory performance of Martinu's Fourth Symphony: "[Gilbert] ripped Bohuslav Martinu from the perpetual twilight that has been so negligently inflicted upon him, and with an enlightened performance of the Fourth Symphony demonstrated the gravitas, greatness and originality of this master."

Alan Gilbert discusses his first two programs of the 2009-2010 season in a Q & A posted at his web site: www.alangilbert.com

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