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Alan Gilbert in 2016-17: farewell season at NY Phil; returns to top European orchestras

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## Alan Gilbert in 2016-17: Farewell Season Consolidates His Legacy at New York Philharmonic; Plus Returns to Berlin Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus, and Other Top European Orchestras



*Alan Gilbert (photo: Chris Lee)*

**“The Gilbert era...has been the most intellectually lively in the recent history of the orchestra.” – *New Yorker***

In seven years as **Music Director** of the **New York Philharmonic**, [Alan Gilbert](#) has continued to evolve the role of the modern orchestra; as the *New York Times* put it, **“helping to change the template for what an American orchestra can be.”** The eighth and final season of Gilbert’s

tenure, which also marks the Philharmonic's 175th anniversary season, not only honors their shared hometown, but also celebrates this **extraordinary legacy**. Thus world premieres of new Philharmonic commissions rub shoulders with iconic masterworks and an adventurous opera performance; artistic residencies continue to forge and nurture meaningful musical partnerships; innovative programming explores the ways music can foster global community and positive change; and the conductor and orchestra once again take their vision overseas on their seventh and final European tour together. Meanwhile, as a perennially popular guest of the world's foremost ensembles, Gilbert returns to the podiums of the **Berlin Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Orchestra of the Lucerne Festival Academy,** and Rome's **Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia**, besides making his staged operatic debut at **La Scala**. Once again, the season looks to showcase the "**unflashy radicalism**" with which the conductor has consistently shown himself to be "**a force of permanent revolution**" (*New York* magazine).

As Gilbert explains:

"The New York Philharmonic has always been and will always be my musical home. My final season as Music Director – and the Philharmonic's 175th anniversary season – will present music that the orchestra and I love, and will celebrate New York City, our shared hometown. Looking back on my tenure, I am particularly proud that the projects and collaborative approach I introduced in my first season are now woven into the fabric of the Philharmonic. I will always treasure the sense of warmth and family with the musicians of the orchestra: there's nothing better than to share the stage with friends. My final weeks encapsulate some of my musical aspirations, with the final subscription program examining a question I see as crucial to the future: how music can be a positive force in a world faced with crises. It speaks in part to what I hope I have accomplished at this great orchestra – to make music an essential part of this city, our world, and people's lives."

## Farewell season at the New York Philharmonic

To launch his farewell season at the Philharmonic, Gilbert leads the **Opening Gala Concert** (Sep 21) that pays tribute to their native city. The **New York premiere** of John Corigliano's *Stomp*, for Orchestra shares the program with two key New York works of the past: Gershwin's Concerto in F, which the Philharmonic commissioned and premiered, with American jazz virtuoso **Aaron Diehl**, and 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, for the fourth edition of **THE ART OF THE SCORE: Film Week at the Philharmonic**, Gilbert and the Philharmonic – the orchestra that anchored the film's original soundtrack recording – accompany a screening of **Woody Allen's Manhattan** (Sep 16 & 17) with the first live-to-film performance of its classic Gershwin score.

The Music Director's commitment to contemporary composition is one of the defining hallmarks of his tenure. Marking the first in **The New York Commissions** – a trio of works commissioned from composers based in the city, writing on New York themes, to be premiered over three seasons – he conducts the **world premiere** of a new work by Pulitzer Prize-winner **Wynton**

**Marsalis**, the Managing & Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, which joins the Philharmonic in the performances (Dec 28, 29, 30; Jan 3). Gilbert also leads **world premiere** performances of a Philharmonic-commissioned violin concerto by award-winning Soviet-Russian-born composer **Lera Auerbach** (March 1–3) and a Philharmonic co-commissioned piano concerto by **HK Gruber** (Jan 5–7), the Austrian composer whose comic opera *Gloria – A Pig Tale* was, as staged under Gilbert’s leadership by *Giants Are Small*, a highlight of the inaugural NY PHIL BIENNIAL. The two concerto soloists are violinist **Leonidas Kavakos** and pianist **Emanuel Ax**, the present and 2012-13 incumbents of the Philharmonic’s **Mary and James G. Wallach Artist-in-Residence** position.

This position, together with **The Marie-Josée Kravis Composer-in-Residence**, was one of the initiatives launched by Gilbert in his inaugural season as Music Director. It was also he who subsequently introduced the **Kravis Emerging Composer** and **Artist-in-Association** positions, and all four partnerships continue to flourish. In the coming season, the second of **Esa-Pekka Salonen’s** term as Composer-in-Residence, Gilbert conducts the **New York premiere** of the great Finn’s Cello Concerto, a Philharmonic co-commission, with **Yo-Yo Ma** (March 15–18), who rejoins Gilbert and the orchestra to reprise the concerto on their EUROPE / SPRING 2017 tour (March 23–April 7). To celebrate these partnerships, the Music Director also leads the **New York premieres** of Salonen’s *Wing on Wing* and *Aeriality* by Kravis Emerging Composer **Anna Thorvaldsdottir** alongside Kavakos’s account of the Brahms Violin Concerto (May 19, 20 & 23). Other artists of note who will appear with the orchestra under his direction this season include violinist **Lisa Batiashvili**, Philharmonic Principal Clarinet **Anthony McGill**, pianists **Stephen Hough** and **Lang Lang**, mezzo-soprano **Joyce DiDonato**, and 2015-16 Artist-in-Residence bass-baritone **Eric Owens**. Together with soprano **Renée Fleming**, pianist **Yefim Bronfman**, and violinists **Joshua Bell**, **Pamela Frank** and Philharmonic Concertmaster **Frank Huang**, Ax and Batiashvili are among the artistic luminaries who come together for a festive program to celebrate Gilbert’s **50th birthday**, under his own leadership (Feb 23).

Other highlights of the conductor’s Philharmonic season further illustrate the breadth of programming that has consistently characterized his directorship. Key concerts include complete performances of Wagner’s *Das Rheingold*, with Eric Owens and Jamie Barton heading a star-studded cast (June 1, 3 & 6); a **tribute to new septuagenarian John Adams**, with whose *Doctor Atomic* the Music Director scored his first Grammy Award (March 9–11); a creative pairing of **Beethoven’s Ninth with Schoenberg’s A Survivor from Warsaw** (May 3–6 & 9); seasonal performances of Handel’s *Messiah*, in which Gilbert’s “decisive phrasing, generally brisk pacing and insistence on crystalline textures” previously impressed the *New York Times* as “magical” (Dec 13–17); and accounts of **Mahler’s Fourth Symphony** on both sides of the Atlantic, to complete his full Philharmonic cycle of the composer’s symphonies (March 1–4; March 23–April 7). The upcoming “**EUROPE / SPRING 2017**” tour takes Gilbert and the orchestra back to Luxembourg, Antwerp, Düsseldorf, Essen, Budapest, Vienna, Hamburg, and Copenhagen, crowned by their third residency at London’s Barbican, in repertoire showcasing such season highlights as Salonen’s Cello Concerto, Mahler’s Fourth, and the music of John Adams (March 23–April 7). Making a fitting end to the 2016-17 season and indeed to the Music Director’s eight-year tenure, their **Season Finale** program features “guest artists from around the world in

performances that highlight important international issues and foster the idea of a global community **that shares a common humanity.**" (June 8–10).

## Guest conducting Europe's top orchestras

Gilbert remains in high demand with the world's foremost orchestras. At Milan's **La Scala**, he helps premiere a new production of ***Porgy and Bess*** by stage director Philipp Harnoncourt, starring Morris Robinson and Kristin Lewis, which marks the conductor's **first staged opera with the company** and the first time that the original version of Gershwin's score will be heard there in its entirety (Nov 13–23). As a regular guest of the **Berlin Philharmonic**, Gilbert leads a program of Tchaikovsky, Bartók, and John Adams, the orchestra's current composer-in-residence (Dec 2–4). After joining violinist **Anne-Sophie Mutter** for a program exploring the roots of Modernism at the **Lucerne Festival** (Sep 4), Gilbert returns to the **Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra** with a pairing of Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* and Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto, followed by a special "talk and performance" event for which he and soloist **Inon Barnatan** – the Israeli pianist now launching his third and final season as the New York Philharmonic's inaugural **Artist-in-Association** – join German TV personality Malte Arkona (Oct 20–22). In the New Year, the conductor resumes the podiums of the **Munich Philharmonic** (Feb 2–5), **Royal Concertgebouw** (Feb 8–11), and **Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia** (Feb 16–18) orchestras, where highlights include the world premiere of a new Concertgebouw commission by Joey Roukens, and a Rome rendition of *The Ring Synthesis*, Gilbert's own arrangement of selections from Wagner's Ring Cycle.

## 2015-16 highlights at the Philharmonic and beyond

These engagements follow a string of fresh triumphs for the conductor. At the New York Philharmonic, he launched 2015-16 with season-opening events at Lincoln Center's newly renamed David Geffen Hall, where his leadership of Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* drew "**pyrotechnic pleasures and swashbuckling sounds**" (*New York* magazine) from the orchestra, and Carnegie Hall, where their program – featuring an "**incandescent performance**" (*New York Times*) of Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*, Suite No. 2 – was selected as one of the "**Top Ten of 2015**" (*New York Classical Review*). Philharmonic highlights went on to include a "**white-hot**" (*New York Times*) account of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*; widely celebrated commemorations of the **Sibelius sesquicentennial**; and the second **NY PHIL BIENNIAL**, the kaleidoscopic, citywide new-music immersion at which he led premieres by William Bolcom, John Corigliano, Per Nørgård, and the late Steven Stucky, as well as a three-part Ligeti series at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. As the *New York Times* wrote:

"Few of Alan Gilbert's initiatives as the New York Philharmonic's music director have been as ambitious, and as successful, as the NY Phil Biennial. It's not just an extended immersion in contemporary music – that would be admirable enough – but also an endeavor that connects the orchestra with a range of spaces and cooperating organizations."

Under his curation, the festival featured Gerald Barry's operatic adaptation of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, prompting the *Wall Street Journal* to observe: "**We can thank the New York**

**Philharmonic and its soon-to-depart music director, Alan Gilbert, for bringing some of the most imaginative opera events of recent years to New York.**” Gilbert also led members of the Philharmonic’s brass section at the University of Michigan’s homecoming football game, named one of the **best five halftime shows of 2015** (NCAA), and directed the orchestra’s 100th-birthday gala tribute to Frank Sinatra, with such household names as Christina Aguilera, Bernadette Peters, Sting, and Seth MacFarlane. This was subsequently broadcast nationwide on PBS’s *Live From Lincoln Center*, scoring the conductor his **second Emmy Award nomination for Best Musical Direction**.

In light of his impending departure from the orchestra, accolades are continuing to pour in. In the *New Yorker*, Alex Ross declared:

“Gilbert’s record with new music is unambiguously formidable, rivaling that of Leonard Bernstein and Pierre Boulez, the two great visionaries in Philharmonic history. Indeed, Gilbert may have been a more persuasive advocate than either of them, since, not being a composer himself, he could not be accused of serving his own agenda.”

**“I already know that I’ll greatly miss the specific spirit of innovation that he has brought to my hometown orchestra,”** wrote Seth Colter Walls in the *Guardian*. **“The seemingly selfless, profoundly gifted maestro...will be missed,”** agreed Martin Bernheimer in the *Financial Times*. As Alex Ross put it, **“The Gilbert era...has been the most intellectually lively in the recent history of the orchestra.”**

Beyond the Philharmonic, last season saw Gilbert make guest conducting debuts with four eminent European ensembles: Milan’s La Scala Orchestra, the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, and the London Symphony Orchestra, after which the *Guardian* ran its review under the headline: **“New York maestro hands audience an adrenaline rush.”** He returned to Leipzig’s Gewandhaus Orchestra, Paris’s Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Tokyo’s Metropolitan Symphony, Hamburg’s NDR Symphony, and the Cleveland Orchestra, where he gave **“the kind of searing, well-paced, and deeply organic performance”** that **“demands a cultivated relationship”** (*Plain-Dealer*). Likewise, his leadership of George Benjamin’s opera *Written on Skin* at the Mostly Mozart Festival was named one of the **“Best Classical Performances of 2015”** by both *New York* magazine and the *New York Times*, which praised the **“surging and nuanced performance”** he drew from the Mahler Chamber Orchestra.

In addition to his Emmy nomination, Gilbert’s achievements were recognized with two new awards. He received an **honorary doctorate** from **Westminster Choir College**, where he served as the 2016 commencement speaker, and was named an **Officier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres** by the French government. As the subject of an episode of PBS TV’s celebrated *Charlie Rose* show, he eloquently described his vision for the evolution of the orchestra in contemporary society and his own plans for the future. Click [here](#) to see Gilbert’s appearance on *Charlie Rose*.

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

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## Alan Gilbert: 2016-17 engagements

*Except where noted, the New York Philharmonic concerts listed below take place at David Geffen Hall in New York, NY.*

### Sep 4

#### Lucerne, Switzerland

#### Lucerne Festival Orchestra

Berg: Violin Concerto *To the memory of an angel* (with Anne-Sophie Mutter, violin)

Norbert Moret: *En rêve*, Concerto for Violin and Chamber Orchestra (with Anne-Sophie Mutter, violin)

Schoenberg: *Pelleas und Melisande*, Op. 5

### Sep 16 & 17

#### New York Philharmonic

#### THE ART OF THE SCORE

Gershwin: *Manhattan* (world premiere of complete film with live orchestral accompaniment)

### Sep 21

#### New York Philharmonic

#### Season Opening Gala Concert

John Corigliano: *Stomp*, for Orchestra (New York premiere)

Gershwin: Concerto in F (with Aaron Diehl, piano)

Dvořák: Symphony No. 9, "From the New World"

### Sep 22, 23 & 24

#### New York Philharmonic

Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto (with Lisa Batiashvili, violin)

Dvořák: Symphony No. 9, "From the New World"

### Sep 27

#### New York Philharmonic

John Corigliano: *Stomp*, for Orchestra

Mozart: Clarinet Concerto (with Anthony McGill, clarinet)

Dvořák: Symphony No. 9, "From the New World"

### Sep 29, 30 & Oct 1

#### New York Philharmonic

Berlioz: *Les nuits d'été* (with Magdalena Kožená, mezzo-soprano)

Rimsky-Korsakov: *Scheherazade*

**Oct 5**

**New York Philharmonic**

Bartók: Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta

Ligeti: *Mysteries of the Macabre* for Trumpet and Orchestra (with Christopher Martin, trumpet)

Beethoven: Symphony No. 5

**Oct 6, 7, & 8**

**New York Philharmonic**

Ligeti: *Mysteries of the Macabre* for Trumpet and Orchestra (with Christopher Martin, trumpet)

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 4 (with Lang Lang, piano)

Bartók: Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta

**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)

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

**Milan, Italy**

**La Scala**

Gershwin: *Porgy and Bess*

**Dec 2, 3 & 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

**Dec 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17**

**New York Philharmonic**

Handel: *Messiah* (with Christina Landshamer, soprano; Sasha Cooke, mezzo-soprano; Matthew Polenzani, tenor; John Relyea, bass-baritone; Concert Chorale of New York/James Bagwell, director)

**Dec 28, 29, 30 & Jan 3**

**New York Philharmonic**

Copland: *Quiet City* (Christopher Martin, trumpet)

William Bolcom: Trombone Concerto (New York Philharmonic co-commission with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra; with Joseph Alessi, trombone)

Wynton Marsalis: new work (world premiere of New York Philharmonic commission; with Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and Wynton Marsalis)

**Dec 31**

**New York Philharmonic**

**New Year's Eve Concert**

An evening of American classics, including works by Rodgers & Hammerstein and others (with Joyce DiDonato, mezzo-soprano)

**Jan 5, 6 & 7**

**New York Philharmonic**

Weill: *Little Threepenny Music* for Wind Orchestra

HK Gruber: Piano Concerto (world premiere of New York Philharmonic co-commission with the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw, and Royal Stockholm Philharmonic orchestras; with Emanuel Ax, piano)

Schubert: Symphony No. 2

**Jan 11, 12, 13 & 14**

**New York Philharmonic**

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 5, "Emperor" (with Stephen Hough, piano)

Brahms: Symphony No. 3

**Feb 2, 3, 4 & 5**

**Munich, Germany**

**Munich Philharmonic**

Mantovani: *Le Cycle des gris*

Lalo: Violin Concerto No. 2 in D minor, Op. 21, "Symphonie espagnole" (with Augustin Hadelich, violin)

Ravel: *Daphnis et Chloé Suites*, Nos. 1 & 2

**Feb 8, 9 & 11**

**Amsterdam, Netherlands**

**Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra**

Joey Roukens: commissioned work

Bernstein: *Serenade* (with Liviu Prunaru, violin)

Sibelius: Symphony No. 4

**Feb 16, 17 & 18**

**Rome, Italy**

**Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia**

Adams/Liszt: *The Black Gondola*

Martinů: Cello Concerto No. 1 (with Sol Gabetta, cello)

Wagner (arr. Alan Gilbert): *A Ring Synthesis*

**Feb 23**

**New York Philharmonic**

**Alan's 50th Birthday Celebration**

Program: TBA (with Renée Fleming, soprano; Lisa Batiashvili, Joshua Bell, Pamela Frank, and Frank Huang, violins; Emanuel Ax and Yefim Bronfman, piano)



**March 1, 2 & 3**

**New York Philharmonic**

Lera Auerbach: Violin Concerto No. 4 (world premiere of New York Philharmonic commission; with Leonidas Kavakos, violin)

Mahler: Symphony No. 4 (with Christina Landshamer, soprano)

**March 4**

**New York Philharmonic**

Bartók: Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta

Mahler: Symphony No. 4 (with Christina Landshamer, soprano)

**March 9, 10 & 11**

**New York Philharmonic**

**“John Adams’ 70th Birthday Season”**

John Adams: *Absolute Jest* (with Frank Huang and Sheryl Staples, violin; Cynthia Phelps, viola; Carter Brey, cello)

John Adams: *Harmonielehre*

**March 15, 16, 17 & 18**

**New York Philharmonic**

John Adams: *The Chairman Dances* (Foxtrot for Orchestra)

Esa-Pekka Salonen: Cello Concerto (New York premiere of New York Philharmonic co-commission with Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Barbican Centre, and Elbphilharmonie Hamburg; with Yo-Yo Ma, cello)

Berlioz: *Symphonie fantastique*

**March 23–April 7**

**New York Philharmonic**

**EUROPE / SPRING 2017 TOUR**

**Antwerp, Luxembourg, Düsseldorf, Essen, Budapest, Vienna, London, Hamburg, Copenhagen**

Repertoire to include:

Esa-Pekka Salonen: Cello Concerto (with Yo-Yo Ma)

Mahler: Symphony No. 4

Bartók: Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta

John Adams: *Harmonielehre*, *Absolute Jest*, and *The Chairman Dances* (Foxtrot for Orchestra)

Prokofiev: Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Frank Peter Zimmermann, violin)

**May 3, 4, 5, 6 & 9**

**New York Philharmonic**

Schoenberg: *A Survivor from Warsaw*

Beethoven: Symphony No. 9 (with Camilla Tilling, soprano; Daniela Mack, mezzo-soprano; Joseph Kaiser, tenor; Eric Owens, bass-baritone; Westminster Symphonic Choir/Joe Miller, director)

**May 19, 20 & 23**

**New York Philharmonic**

Brahms: Violin Concerto (with Leonidas Kavakos, violin)

Anna Thorvaldsdottir: *Aeriality* (New York premiere)

Esa-Pekka Salonen: *Wing on Wing* (New York premiere; with Anu Komsa and Piia Komsa, sopranos)

**May 20**

**New York Philharmonic**

Hummel: Piano Quartet in D minor (with musicians from the New York Philharmonic)

Brahms: Violin Concerto (with Leonidas Kavakos, violin)

**May 29**

**New York Philharmonic**

**Annual Free Memorial Day Concert**

The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine

Mahler: Symphony No. 4

**June 1, 3 & 6**

**New York Philharmonic**

**Wagner: *Das Rheingold* (complete, in concert)**

Eric Owens, bass-baritone (Wotan)

Jamie Barton, mezzo-soprano (Fricka)

Christopher Purves, baritone (Alberich)

Russell Thomas, tenor (Loge)

Kelley O'Connor, mezzo-soprano (Erda)

Morris Robinson, bass (Fasolt)

Stephen Milling, bass (Fafner)

Rachel Willis-Sørensen, soprano (Freia)

Brian Jagd, tenor (Froh)

Christian Van Horn, bass-baritone (Donner)

Peter Bronder, tenor (Mime)

Jennifer Zetlan, soprano (Woglinde)

Jennifer Johnson Cano, mezzo-soprano (Wellgunde)

Tamara Mumford, mezzo-soprano (Flosshilde)

**June 8, 9 & 10**

**New York Philharmonic**

**Season Finale**

Program features “guest artists from around the world in performances that highlight important international issues and foster the idea of a global community **that shares a common humanity.**”

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