
For immediate release
Alan Gilbert and NY Phil: EUROPE/WINTER 2010

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Alan Gilbert Departs for First European Tour with New York Philharmonic: 13 Performances in Nine Cities (Jan 21 – Feb 4)

EUROPE/WINTER 2010 Features Guest Soloists Yefim Bronfman and Thomas Hampson

After a string of highly-acclaimed performances in their home hall, the New York Philharmonic and its Music Director, Alan Gilbert, head out this week for their first European tour. EUROPE/WINTER 2010 comprises 13 performances in nine European cities: Barcelona, Zaragoza, and Madrid, all in Spain; Zurich, Switzerland; Frankfurt, Cologne, and Dortmund (the Orchestra's debut there) in Germany; Paris, France; and London, England. Joining Gilbert and the orchestra on tour are soloists whose recent performances with them in New York were lavishly praised: pianist Yefim Bronfman, who will reprise Prokofiev's devilishly difficult Piano Concerto No. 2, and baritone Thomas Hampson, the Philharmonic's Mary and James G. Wallach Artist-in-Residence, who will once again sing John Adams's heart-wrenching Whitman setting, *The Wound-Dresser*.

Also on the tour programs are the European premieres of Magnus Lindberg's *EXPO*, commissioned by the New York Philharmonic for the opening this season of Gilbert's tenure as Music Director, and Sibelius's sweeping Symphony No. 2, a work Gilbert and the Philharmonic have never yet performed together. This tour marks the Philharmonic's first return to Spain since 2001. The Orchestra last performed in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1985, in Cologne in 2007, and in Frankfurt, Paris, and London in 2008. This will be the Philharmonic's debut in Dortmund.

Soon after, they return to New York where they will perform the world premiere of Christopher Rouse's *Odna Zhizn*, a New York Philharmonic commission, on a program at Avery Fisher Hall also featuring two works by Mozart: his Sinfonia Concertante for Winds (with four soloists from the Orchestra: Liang Wang, Principal Oboe; Mark Nuccio, Acting Principal Clarinet; Judith LeClair, Principal Bassoon; and Philip Myers, Principal Horn) and "Jupiter" Symphony (Feb 10-12 & 16).

On Saturday, February 13, Gilbert and the orchestra return to New York's Carnegie Hall for a single concert showcasing the U.S. premiere of Magnus Lindberg's landmark Clarinet Concerto with soloist Kari Kriikku, for whom the work was written, alongside Wagner's *Rienzi* Overture and Sibelius's Symphony No. 2. Lindberg is the Philharmonic's Marie-Josée Kravis Composer-in-Residence.

A conversation with Alan Gilbert follows, with a complete list of cities and detailed programs for EUROPE/WINTER 2010.

A quick chat with Alan Gilbert

Q: *What were some of the ideas behind the various programs you'll be performing in Europe and was it hard coming up with repertoire choices?*

AG: There are certain pieces that seem to appear again and again on orchestral tours, but some of the pieces we're playing are fresh. The Berg Three [Orchestral] Pieces, for example, aren't [usually] done on tour, especially in this context: as a completion of the Schubert "Unfinished" Symphony, which highlights a line that existed between Schubert and Berg. I think it's very exciting.

Q: *And was it absolutely essential to include a major work by an American composer?*

AG: I don't think about programming that way, but the fact that this extraordinary John Adams work fits into this program that starts with Haydn's Symphony 49 and progresses to the devastation of the Berg was fortuitous and gratifying.

Q: *You just performed Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 2 and Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2 together on a program in New York and one critic wondered whether this made sense as a tour program. What do you respond to that?*

AG: I always thought that these pieces worked well for a tour. We knew we'd have [Yefim] "Fima" Bronfman, the greatest exponent of this piece alive today, and the Philharmonic can make a sound for these pieces that is utterly idiomatic, and profoundly expressive. What better way to show what we are doing together than with this music?

Q: *Have you performed in all of these tour cities before?*

AG: No. I've never been to Barcelona, which I'm particularly excited about, having heard about its being such a great city.

Q: *Does one get a special feeling performing in a city like London, which has long been home to so many legendary orchestras?*

AG: I've always loved playing in London. They have an incredibly active and vibrant music scene there, and the opportunity to present my new partnership with this orchestra is a thrilling one. We're looking forward to building a relationship with the London music-loving public over the years.

Q: *Sibelius's Symphony No. 2, which you'll play with the orchestra at Carnegie Hall in February, is on the program for Europe, but you've not done that piece before in New York. What was the thinking there?*

AG: I've done this symphony a lot in Scandinavia and I've always enjoyed hearing the New York Philharmonic play this very popular piece. We've already started rehearsing it for tour and I feel that there's a special chemistry that comes from the Philharmonic's unique understanding of the work and my Northern experience with it.

Q: Having lived in Stockholm for nine years, does going to Europe feel like going home in some way?

AG: Absolutely. For a significant portion of my life I spent well over half my time in Europe and there's a comfort and a sense of familiarity that kicks in already as soon as I arrive at the various airports. I'm very excited about this tour.

Critical acclaim for recent Gilbert/NY Phil performances at Avery Fisher Hall

"The orchestra played with such shining textures [in Berg's Three Orchestral Pieces, Op. 6] – from the misty percussion at the opening to the tremendous climax in the third section – that one didn't need to be aware of the technical complexity behind it. Mr. Gilbert conducted *in extremis*. The cataclysmic syncopated timpani strokes – labelled "fff, played with both hands" in my score – were louder than the same notes in Berg's later *Lulu*. The waltz in the second movement was like the eerie waltz in *Wozzeck*. And **the entire work simply exploded throughout Avery Fisher Hall**, with an emotional impact I had not suspected this season."

– Harry Rolnick for *Concertonet.com* (January 15, 2010)

"Though [Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2 is] full of lush orchestral writing and alluring, long-spun melodies, this score of nearly an hour can come across as padded and aimless. Not this time, however. **Mr. Gilbert drew a revelatory performance from the Philharmonic.** It had the requisite Russian Romantic soulful yearning, surging intensity, and sumptuous sound. The astute musician in Mr. Gilbert was particularly on display here. He was determined, it seemed, to prove that this work made structural sense and had musical integrity...in a performance that presented the music's expansiveness as a characteristic, not a flaw. In the slow introduction to the first movement, somber themes and motifs emerged haltingly, as if trying to coalesce into something solid. Yet Mr. Gilbert maintained such quiet tension that the quizzical music ensnared you. Almost without notice, the introduction evolved into the urgent episode that begins the teeming main Allegro section. Throughout the vibrant Scherzo, the plaintive Adagio and the episodic and ultimately exuberant finale, Mr. Gilbert brought out musical resonances that linked Rachmaninoff as a harmonist to Debussy, Mahler, and even early Schoenberg. The elegiac theme of the slow movement, which can sometimes seem endless, was lyrically compelling and deftly shaped, without ever sounding manipulated."

– Anthony Tommasini in *New York Times* (January 9, 2010)

Alan Gilbert – upcoming engagements

January 21 – February 4 EUROPE / WINTER 2010

January 21: Palau de la Música (Barcelona, Spain)

Haydn: Symphony No. 49 ("La passione"); John Adams: *The Wound-Dresser* (Thomas Hampson, baritone); Schubert: Symphony in B minor ("Unfinished"); Berg: Three Orchestral Pieces

January 22: Auditorio y Palacio de Congresos (Zaragoza, Spain)

Prokofiev: Piano Concerto No. 2 (Yefim Bronfman, piano); Rachmaninoff: Symphony No. 2

January 23: Auditorio Nacional de Música (Madrid, Spain)
Magnus Lindberg: *EXPO* (New York Philharmonic commission; Spanish premiere); Prokofiev:
Piano Concerto No. 2 (Yefim Bronfman, piano); Sibelius: Symphony No. 2

January 24: Auditorio Nacional de Música (Madrid, Spain)
Haydn: Symphony No. 49 ("La passione"); John Adams: *The Wound-Dresser* (Thomas Hampson,
baritone); Schubert: Symphony in B minor ("Unfinished"); Berg: Three Orchestral Pieces

January 26: Tonhalle (Zurich, Switzerland)
Prokofiev: Piano Concerto No. 2 (Yefim Bronfman, piano); Rachmaninoff: Symphony No. 2

January 27: Alte Oper (Frankfurt, Germany)
Magnus Lindberg: *EXPO* (New York Philharmonic commission; German premiere); Prokofiev:
Piano Concerto No. 2 (Yefim Bronfman, piano); Sibelius: Symphony No. 2

January 28: Philharmonie (Cologne, Germany)
Haydn: Symphony No. 49 ("La passione"); John Adams: *The Wound-Dresser* (Thomas Hampson,
baritone); Schubert: Symphony in B minor ("Unfinished"); Berg: Three Orchestral Pieces

January 29: Philharmonie (Cologne, Germany)
Magnus Lindberg: *EXPO* (New York Philharmonic commission); Prokofiev: Piano Concerto No. 2
(Yefim Bronfman, piano); Sibelius: Symphony No. 2

January 30: Konzerthaus (Dortmund, Germany)
John Adams: *The Wound-Dresser* (Thomas Hampson, baritone); Rachmaninoff: Symphony No. 2

February 1: Salle Pleyel (Paris, France)
Magnus Lindberg: *EXPO* (New York Philharmonic commission; French premiere); Prokofiev:
Piano Concerto No. 2 (Yefim Bronfman, piano); Sibelius: Symphony No. 2

February 2: Salle Pleyel (Paris, France)
Haydn: Symphony No. 49 ("La passione"); John Adams: *The Wound-Dresser* (Thomas Hampson,
baritone); Schubert: Symphony in B minor ("Unfinished"); Berg: Three Orchestral Pieces

February 3: Barbican (London, England)
Magnus Lindberg: *EXPO* (New York Philharmonic commission; U.K. premiere); Prokofiev: Piano
Concerto No. 2 (Yefim Bronfman, piano); Sibelius: Symphony No. 2

February 4: Barbican (London, England)
Haydn: Symphony No. 49 ("La passione"); John Adams: *The Wound-Dresser* (Thomas Hampson,
baritone); Schubert: Symphony in B minor ("Unfinished"); Berg: Three Orchestral Pieces

February 10-12 and 16

New York, NY (Avery Fisher Hall)

New York Philharmonic

Mozart: Sinfonia Concertante for Winds (Liang Wang, oboe; Mark Nuccio, clarinet; Judith
LeClair, bassoon; Philip Myers, horn)

Rouse: *Odná Zhizn* (world premiere; New York Philharmonic commission)

Mozart: Symphony No. 41 ("Jupiter")

February 13

New York, NY (Carnegie Hall)

New York Philharmonic
Wagner: Overture to *Rienzi*
Lindberg: Clarinet Concerto (U.S. premiere)
Sibelius: Symphony No. 2

March 3

New York, NY (Avery Fisher Hall)
New York Philharmonic
Mozart: Sinfonia Concertante for Winds (Liang Wang, oboe; Mark Nuccio, clarinet; Judith LeClair, bassoon; Philip Myers, horn)
Mozart: Symphony No. 41 ("Jupiter")

March 18 and 19

Hamburg, Germany
Sinfonieorchester des Norddeutschen Rundfunk (NDR)
Webern: *Im Sommerwind*
Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto (Joshua Bell, violin)
Schoenberg: *Pelléas et Mélisande*

March 20

Lübeck, Germany
Sinfonieorchester des Norddeutschen Rundfunk (NDR)
Webern: *Im Sommerwind*
Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto (Joshua Bell, violin)
Schoenberg: *Pelléas et Mélisande*

March 28 and 29

Hamburg, Germany
Sinfonieorchester des Norddeutschen Rundfunk (NDR)
Beethoven: *Die Weihe des Hauses*, Overture for Orchestra, Op. 124
Beethoven: Triple Concerto (Lars Vogt, piano; Veronika Eberle, violin; Gustav Rivinius, cello)
Nielsen: Symphony No. 2 ("The Four Temperaments")

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