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Alan Gilbert leads NYPO in Eötvös U.S. premiere this week, “Joan of Arc at the Stake,” and more gpetry@21cmediagroup.com

After EUROPE / SPRING 2015 Tour, Alan Gilbert Leads New York Philharmonic in Peter Eötvös U.S. Premiere This Week, Free Memorial Day Concert, and *Joan of Arc at the Stake* Starring Marion Cotillard

On returning from EUROPE / SPRING 2015, his eighth international tour with the **New York Philharmonic**, **Alan Gilbert** will draw his sixth season as Music Director of the orchestra to a close with a number of intriguing programs back at home. He leads the **U.S. premieres** of Peter Eötvös’s one-act opera, ***Senza sangue*** (May 8 & 9) and of Côme de Bellescize’s staging of Honegger’s ***Joan of Arc at the Stake***, starring Academy Award-winner **Marion Cotillard** (June 10–13); joins Philharmonic musicians as violist in **Dvorák’s String Quintet in E-flat** (May 23); and revisits both his tour program of **Ravel, Strauss and Stravinsky** (May 6) and – for the orchestra’s **Annual Free Memorial Day Concert** at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine – his “**wrenching, blazing and vehement**” (*New York Times*) account of Shostakovich’s searing Tenth Symphony (May 26).

U.S. premiere of Peter Eötvös’s one-act opera, *Senza sangue*

The **first American performances** of Peter Eötvös’s *Senza sangue* follow on the heels of its world premiere, with which Gilbert and the orchestra concluded their European tour in Cologne last week. Both premieres feature Grammy Award-winning mezzo **Anne Sofie von Otter** and baritone **Russell Braun**, who previously collaborated with Gilbert on the Philharmonic’s world premiere of Peter Lieberon’s *The World in Flower*. Juxtaposed with Schubert’s “Unfinished” Symphony in the upcoming concerts, the Hungarian composer’s new opera is the latest in a string of important new works that Gilbert and the Philharmonic have commissioned, premiered, and championed. After the orchestra’s recent residency at London’s Barbican Centre under the auspices of its International Associates initiative, the *Guardian* admired “**the vigour and clarity Gilbert brings to contemporary repertoire**”; as the *New Yorker* notes, his “**keen interest in contemporary sounds has been a historic aspect of his term as music director.**”

Ravel, Strauss & Stravinsky

The music director also reprises another program from the European tour when he leads the Philharmonic in a trio of masterworks, all of which date from 1911: **Ravel’s *Valses nobles et sentimentales***, **Richard Strauss’s *Der Rosenkavalier Suite***, and the original version of **Stravinsky’s *Petrushka***. Dubbing their Barbican residency “**an adrenaline boost for musical life in London,**” the UK’s *Arts Desk* observed:

"The orchestral playing here was excellent, Ravel's full spectrum of tone colours projected in dazzling clarity. ... Given the sheer *joie de vivre* of each ensuing waltz [in the *Rosenkavalier* Suite], it was hard not to feel that Gilbert and his New York players had fully captured the spirit of the opera."

Shostakovich's Tenth at Annual Free Memorial Day Concert

As he has done each year since taking up his directorship in the 2009-10 season, Gilbert will lead the Philharmonic's **Annual Free Memorial Day Concert**. Held at the **Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine**, this year's program pairs Beethoven's *Egmont* Overture with Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony. After a recent rendition of the Shostakovich, the *New York Times*'s Anthony Tommasini wrote:

"I could devote a whole report to the wrenching, blazing and vehement account of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 10 in E minor that Mr. Gilbert conducted. ... Mr. Gilbert led a commanding performance, especially the spacious gravity he summoned during the expansive opening movement and the intensity bordering on sheer terror of the short Allegro."

On viola in Dvorák String Quintet

For a change of pace, the Music Director exchanges his baton for a bow to partner with Philharmonic principal musicians as violist in **Dvorák's String Quintet in E-flat**. Also featuring Philharmonic Acting Concertmaster **Sheryl Staples**, Acting Principal Associate Concertmaster **Michelle Kim**, Principal Viola **Cynthia Phelps**, and Principal Cello **Carter Brey**, their performance opens a Saturday matinee concert conducted by Susanna Mälkki. Gilbert explains:

"All music is chamber music: everybody should be an equal participant. Playing chamber music with Philharmonic musicians is exciting and inspiring for me, and it's a way for me to make a different kind of connection with them. Also, I simply enjoy it."

Joan of Arc at the Stake, starring Marion Cotillard

To close out the Philharmonic season, Gilbert takes the podium for the **U.S. premiere** of **Côme de Bellescize's** staged treatment of ***Joan of Arc at the Stake***. A depiction of the French martyr's final moments, the dramatic oratorio is, Gilbert believes, **"probably Honegger's greatest work."** In the hands of award-winning French director de Bellescize, it places Joan on a platform at the heart of the orchestra, where she recalls her life through a series of flashbacks. French movie icon **Marion Cotillard**, who considers the role **"one of my greatest experiences as an actress,"** was pronounced **"captivating"** (*Public* magazine, France) as Joan when she toured France with the production, following its debut at Seiji Ozawa's Saito Kinen festival in 2012. At Lincoln Center, Cotillard heads a strong cast that also features members of the **Comédie-Francaise**. Similarly innovative dramatic realizations are among the most successful initiatives of Gilbert's Philharmonic tenure; previous examples include collaborations with *Giants Are Small* on such projects as Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre* (2010) and *A Dancer's Dream: Two Works by Stravinsky* (2013), which was hailed as **"the future of the American orchestra"** (*New York Times*).

Royal Philharmonic Society Lecture

While in Europe, Gilbert presented the annual **Royal Philharmonic Society Lecture**, speaking on "**Orchestras in the 21st Century; a new paradigm**" at London's Guildhall School of Music & Drama. An edited version of his talk appeared in the [Guardian](#), and the full text may be downloaded [here](#).

A list of Alan Gilbert's upcoming engagements follows, and additional information may be found at his website: www.alangilbert.com. For high-resolution photos, click [here](#).

Alan Gilbert: upcoming engagements

May 6

New York Philharmonic
Avery Fisher Hall
Stravinsky: *Petrushka* (1911, original version)
Ravel: *Valses nobles et sentimentales*
R. Strauss: *Der Rosenkavalier* Suite

May 8, 9

New York Philharmonic
Avery Fisher Hall
Schubert: Symphony in B minor, "Unfinished"
Peter Eötvös: *Senza sangue* (U.S. premiere–New York Philharmonic co-commission, with the support of the Kravis Prize for New Music, with the Kölner Philharmonie)
Anne Sofie von Otter, mezzo-soprano; Russell Braun, baritone)

May 23 (matinee)

New York Philharmonic
Avery Fisher Hall
Dvorák: String Quintet in E-flat (viola; with Sheryl Staples, violin; Michelle Kim, violin; Cynthia Phelps, viola; Carter Brey, cello)

May 25

New York Philharmonic
The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine
Annual Free Memorial Day Concert
Beethoven: *Egmont* Overture
Shostakovich: Symphony No. 10

June 10, 11, 12, 13

New York Philharmonic
Avery Fisher Hall
Honegger: *Joan of Arc at the Stake* (staged)

Côme de Bellescize, director
Marion Cotillard, actress (Joan)
Éric Génovèse, actor (Brother Dominique)
Christian Gonon, actor (Narrator)
Erin Morley, Soprano (Virgin)
Simone Osborne, soprano (Marguerite)
Faith Sherman, mezzo-soprano (Catherine)
Thomas Blondelle, tenor
Steven Humes, bass
New York Choral Artists
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