

For immediate release
Alan Gilbert and NY Phil: May/June 2012 highlights

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Alan Gilbert's Upcoming Performances with NY Philharmonic Include Lindberg World Premiere, Six-City California Tour, Mozart's Great Mass in C Minor, and Concerts at Park Avenue Armory

As spring comes into full bloom, **Alan Gilbert** and the **New York Philharmonic** gear up for some colorfully-programmed concerts at home and on tour, showcasing a range of repertoire and some important guest artists. Among the many highlights of the remaining two months in Gilbert's third season as the orchestra's Music Director will be the **world premiere** of Composer-in-Residence **Magnus Lindberg's Piano Concerto No. 2**, a New York Philharmonic co-commission with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, with soloist **Yefim Bronfman** (May 3 – 5); **CALIFORNIA 2012**, a **six-city, seven-concert tour** (May 8 -15) that includes the orchestra's debut at Walt Disney Concert Hall in LA (May 9); a continuation of "**The Nielsen Project**," the orchestra's ongoing survey of the six symphonies and three concertos of Carl Nielsen, with a performance of the Danish composer's Third Symphony, "Sinfonia Espansiva" (June 14 – 16); and an all-Mozart season finale at Avery Fisher Hall, including one of the composer's most sublimely beautiful works: the **Great Mass in C minor** (June 20 – 23). Two special concerts (June 29 and 30) co-presented by Park Avenue Armory form **Philharmonic 360 – Spatial Music from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* to Stockhausen's *Gruppen***. Exploring the spatial qualities of the Armory's soaring, 55,000-square foot Wade Thompson Drill Hall, the program presents four iconic works in an unusual and illuminating setting in which the orchestra members surround the audience.

Gilbert calls **Lindberg's Piano Concerto No. 2** "an important premiere," describing it as the culmination of Lindberg's relationship with the orchestra in his capacity as Composer-in-Residence. Gilbert explains:

"We've done a lot of music by Magnus Lindberg, and he has said himself that he has changed and grown as a composer during his work with us. Writing for an orchestra he knows so well, it's already clear from the first rehearsal that this piece is really suited to the New York Philharmonic. Of course it's also a showpiece for the piano. Yefim Bronfman is one of the only pianists alive who could conceivably even attempt this heroically difficult work. Listening to Fima in rehearsal, you can tell how he already owns the piece and I think it's one of the best things I've heard by Magnus. He's spent more than a year writing this piece full time, and you can really tell that he's put his heart and soul and intellect into it."

Lindberg's new piano concerto will be one of the featured works – appearing on programs in San Francisco and Los Angeles – in Gilbert's first US tour with the New York Philharmonic. **CALIFORNIA 2012** offers seven concerts in six cities and marks the orchestra's first extensive visit to California since 1999. On May 13 and 14, the Philharmonic will perform in Louise M.

Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco as part of the 2011–12 centennial celebrations of the San Francisco Symphony, in conjunction with the appearances of five other major American orchestras. On Sunday, May 13 from 1:30 to 4:30 pm, Alan Gilbert will be the keynote speaker in “Talking About Audiences,” a free public event to be held in Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall; in this conversation with University of Michigan musicologist Mark Clague, he will discuss the role of live music in a world of changing audience habits.

Alan Gilbert has performed extensively as a guest conductor in California, leading both the San Francisco Symphony and Los Angeles Philharmonic, as well as a production at the Los Angeles Opera. However, his performances there in May bring special excitement, since he’ll be playing with his own orchestra. As Gilbert observes:

“We like to think of ourselves as not just a New York orchestra, but as an American orchestra and an international orchestra. This is my first US tour, and while we’ll be performing exclusively in California, we’ll be playing for audiences in important cities where music is really alive and well. This is an exciting opportunity for us. Performing in San Francisco has special significance as the orchestra there is celebrating its 100th anniversary. We are happy to be bringing our new Lindberg commission there, and I’ll be taking part in a symposium that is part of a series celebrating this milestone in their history.”

Additional May highlights for Gilbert and the New York Philharmonic include a one-night-only performance with pianist **Evgeny Kissin** (May 23), and the **Free Annual Memorial Day Concert** at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, where this year the orchestra performs Mahler’s valedictory Symphony No. 9 (May 28).

“**The Nielsen Project**” returns in mid June with a program that features Nielsen’s Third Symphony, “Sinfonia Espansiva.” Gilbert considers the work, which he has performed with other orchestras including the Chicago Symphony, among Nielsen’s best. “Out of a body of work that I like in general,” Gilbert notes, “this is one of my favorites – perhaps, for me, the most compelling of his symphonies. There’s something so powerfully direct about this work. I don’t think it’s a coincidence that with the number three he looked back to the ‘Eroica’ Symphony of Beethoven, and you hear some echoes of that work in Nielsen’s Third. It’s work that really goes into the deepest and most wrenching aspects of humanity.” The New York Philharmonic has a long history with the music of Carl Nielsen (1865 – 1931), but the current project represents the first time the complete symphonies and concertos of Denmark’s national composer will be recorded by the New York Philharmonic. Each of the four discs, recorded for Denmark’s Dacapo label, will be released separately — the first in the fall of 2012 — with all being integrated into a set in fall 2015 to coincide with the 150th anniversary of Nielsen’s birth.

As summer rolls in, an all-Mozart program closes out the New York Philharmonic’s regular season in Avery Fisher Hall. Pianist **Emanuel Ax** – who next season becomes the orchestra’s Artist-in-Residence – performs **Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 22**, and the New York Choral Artists and four exciting young soloists join Gilbert and the orchestra for **Mozart’s Great Mass in C minor**. Says Gilbert, “There’s no reason to compare the Great Mass to Mozart’s Requiem because they are both wonderful pieces, but perhaps because of the movie *Amadeus*, or perhaps just because it’s the last work that he wrote, the *Requiem* has a greater mystique and

notoriety. But the C Minor Mass might actually be the greater work. It's one of those iconic masterpieces that really makes you happy to be a musician."

Performances by Gilbert and the New York Philharmonic of staged operas at Avery Fisher Hall were late-season highlights in his first two seasons as Music Director of the orchestra. The *New York Times* called their sold-out performances of Ligeti's *Le Grande Macabre* an "instant Philharmonic milestone", and *New York* magazine named it the number one classical music event of 2010. Lightning struck again a year later, when Gilbert teamed up again with designer-director Doug Fitch for Janáček's fairy-tale opera *The Cunning Little Vixen*. That production made several best-of-the-year lists, including another number one slot in *New York* magazine's year-end round-up. Music from the opera makes a prominent appearance in two special June concerts at the Park Avenue Armory: **Philharmonic 360 – Spatial Music from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* to Stockhausen's *Gruppen*** is designed especially to engage and exploit the vast acoustical reaches of this remarkable venue. Alan Gilbert explains:

"The Armory concerts are different than what we've done with our staged opera performances at Avery Fisher Hall, but the idea is the same: to stretch the idea of what the orchestra does while hopefully stretching the boundary of how the audience perceives us. It's a program built around music that relies on space – that is to say physical space and spatial qualities. Boulez's *Rituel* is written for eight ensembles that are going to be placed all around the Armory. We've chosen this kind of *tabula rasa* – this huge open area – so that we can use this literally cavernous space in the most dramatic and theatrical way. The big piece on the program is Stockhausen's *Gruppen*, an epic, landmark work that is written for three orchestras led by three different conductors. A kind of quirky piece, but one that fits right in, is the finale of Act I of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. That famous party scene also relies on three orchestras playing at the same time – you can imagine different dance bands in rooms of a house where a party is going on and only Mozart could compose it so that they all fit together and it makes perfect sense. There's a thread that runs through this entire program, closing with Charles Ives's *Unanswered Question*, a philosophical and metaphysical work that will be an appropriate way to put people in the mood of trying to figure out what they've just experienced and what music is all about."

A list of Alan Gilbert's May and June concerts with the New York Philharmonic follows. Additional information can be found at his website: www.alangilbert.com.

Alan Gilbert and the New York Philharmonic: May and June 2012

(all concerts at Avery Fisher Hall, NYC, unless otherwise specified)

May 2

Carnegie Hall, New York, NY

Mahler: Symphony No. 6, "Tragic"

May 3, 4, 5

With Yefim Bronfman, piano

Dvorák: *Carnival Overture*

Magnus Lindberg: Piano Concerto No. 2 (world premiere, New York Philharmonic co-commission with Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra)

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4

May 8-15

CALIFORNIA 2012

Cities: Costa Mesa (May 8), Los Angeles – NY Philharmonic debut at Walt Disney Concert Hall (May 9), Santa Barbara (May 10), Davis (May 12), San Francisco (May 13, 14), San Diego (May 15)

Works include west coast premiere of Composer-in-Residence Magnus Lindberg's Piano Concerto No. 2, Berlioz's *Le Corsaire* Overture, Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 with Yefim Bronfman, Debussy's *La mer*, Ravel's *La valse*, Dvorák's *Carnival Overture* and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4

May 19 (Saturday matinee concert)

With Glenn Dicterow, violin

Schubert: Octet

Bartók: Violin Concerto No. 1

Dvorák: *Carnival Overture*

May 19, 22, 26

With Glenn Dicterow, violin

Dvorák: *Carnival Overture*

Bartók: Violin Concerto No. 1

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4

May 23

With Evgeny Kissin, piano

Tchaikovsky: Overture-Fantasy *Romeo and Juliet*

Scriabin: Piano Concerto

Grieg: Piano Concerto

May 28

The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, New York, NY

Free Annual Memorial Day Concert

Mahler: Symphony No. 9

June 14, 15, 16

With Leonidas Kavakos, violin; Joshua Hopkins, baritone; Erin Morley, soprano

Beethoven: *Coriolan* Overture

Korngold: Violin Concerto

Nielsen: Symphony No. 3, "Sinfonia espansiva"

June 16 (Saturday matinee concert)

With Alan Gilbert, conductor and violin; Leonidas Kavakos, violin; Cynthia Phelps, viola; Carter Brey, cello; Maria Kitsopoulos, cello; Joshua Hopkins, baritone

Schubert: String Quintet in C major

Nielsen: Symphony No. 3, "Sinfonia espansiva"

June 20, 21, 22, 23

With Emanuel Ax, piano; Jennifer Zetlan, soprano; Jennifer Johnson Cano, mezzo-soprano; Paul Appleby, tenor; Joshua Hopkins, baritone; New York Choral Artists, Joseph Flummerfelt, director

Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 22

Mozart: Mass in C minor, "Great"

June 29, 30

The Park Avenue Armory, New York, NY

Philharmonic 360 – Spatial Music from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* to Stockhausen's *Gruppen*

Pierre Boulez: *Rituel in memoriam Bruno Maderna*

Mozart: Act I finale from *Don Giovanni*

Stockhausen: *Gruppen* for three orchestras

Ives: *The Unanswered Question*

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