

For immediate release

Alan Gilbert launches first NY PHIL BIENNIAL (May 28–June 7) and much more this spring

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Alan Gilbert's Full Spring Features Inaugural NY PHIL BIENNIAL: Wide-Ranging Exploration of Music of Today, Bringing Together More Than 50 Composers, Hundreds of Musicians and Ten of New York City's Cultural Institutions for Performances of New Works (May 28–June 7)

Fresh from their *Sweeney Todd* success, **Alan Gilbert** looks forward to an action-packed spring at the **New York Philharmonic**, where, in his fifth season as **Music Director**, he continues to be “**a galvanizing force**” (*New York Times*). In one of the most anticipated events of the season, he and the orchestra launch their inaugural **NY PHIL BIENNIAL**, a kaleidoscopic exploration of today's music by a wide range of composers through concerts presented with cultural partners in venues across New York City, crowned by Gilbert's leadership of the **world premiere** of Philharmonic Composer-in-Residence **Christopher Rouse's Symphony No. 4** (June 5 & 7) and of staged performances of **HK Gruber's Gloria – A Pig Tale** at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (May 29–June 1). In other upcoming highlights with the Philharmonic, Gilbert is joined by powerhouse pianist **Yefim (“Fima”) Bronfman**, the Philharmonic's Artist-in-Residence, for **The Beethoven Piano Concertos**, a three-week festival featuring a complete Beethoven concerto cycle punctuated by the **world premieres** of two new Philharmonic commissions (June 11–28); directs a surprise Gershwin collaboration with Japanese jazz virtuoso **Makoto Ozone** (April 22); and takes the orchestra out around town, first to **Carnegie Hall**, where they kick off the “**Spring for Music**” festival with the **New York premiere** of Rouse's Requiem (May 5), and then to the **Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine**, for the Philharmonic's **Free Annual Memorial Day Concert** (May 26). Rounding out his full spring schedule, Gilbert makes guest appearances with two eminent European orchestras, leading the **NDR Hamburg Symphony** (May 10 & 11) and **Orchestre National de Lyon** (May 15, 16 & 18).

Collaborating with living composers and local cultural partners in first NY PHIL BIENNIAL

“**Gilbert has infused the Philharmonic with his passion for contemporary music,**” reports the *New York Times*; *Gramophone* magazine finds him “**a magnificent choice, ... energizing, contemporary, [and] inclusive,**” while the *New Yorker* hails him as “**the musical leader the city needs.**” Reflecting his dedication to new composition and his flair for reaching out to his fellow New Yorkers, late spring sees the fruition of one of the Music

Director's most ambitious projects to date. As envisioned and curated by Alan Gilbert, the **NY PHIL BIENNIAL** (May 28–June 7) will immerse the city in contemporary and modern music for 11 days, and will feature a range of concerts and events representing an international roster of more than 50 composers. Partners include 92nd Street Y, MOMA, Orchestra of St. Luke's, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Juilliard School, Gotham City Opera, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Bang on a Can, American Composers Orchestra, and Kaufman Music Center's Special Music School High School. Featured composers range from students to luminaries, who include Christopher Rouse, Peter Eötvös, Steven Mackey, Julia Wolfe, Matthias Pintscher, Marc-André Dalbavie, Elliott Carter, Pierre Boulez, and George Benjamin. As the *New York Times* recognizes, the NY PHIL BIENNIAL "**positions the orchestra at the heart of an evolving cultural sector concerned with new sounds and fresh ideas.**" Calling it "**the music world's answer to the Whitney's regular roundups of recent art,**" *New York* magazine marvels: "**The festival promises to focus scattered glints of new music into a bright beam.**"

"We want the NY PHIL BIENNIAL to galvanize the whole city around an immersive contemporary music experience – to take a **snapshot of where music is today,**" Gilbert explains. "We have followed the lead of the great visual art biennial events in making this project extremely collaborative, and have reached out to a variety of curatorial voices, as well as the many other imaginative and forward-looking New York cultural organizations who have accepted our invitation to 'come play with us' as partners."

As one of the inaugural biennial's many highlights, on June 5 and 7 the conductor directs the **world premiere** of a major **Philharmonic commission: Symphony No. 4** by Pulitzer Prize-winning American composer **Christopher Rouse**, who continues his three-year tenure as the orchestra's Marie-Josée Kravis Composer-in-Residence. Gilbert has long championed Rouse's oeuvre; no other conductor has led Rouse's complete symphonic cycle, and when Gilbert directed the New York premiere of his Oboe Concerto last fall, the *New York Times* noted: "**Mr. Rouse's concerto showed how deep the Philharmonic's connection to his music has become.**" The symphony's premiere is bookended by a **new work**, still to be selected through the New York Philharmonic EarShot New Music Readings, and the **New York premiere** of *DoReMi*, a violin concerto by Hungarian composer **Peter Eötvös**, with **Midori** – on whose name its title plays – as soloist. It was the Japanese-American violinist who gave the concerto's world and UK premieres, prompting the *Independent* to comment: "Eötvös's rapid shifts in mood and color, combined with his fugitive tonality, generated suspense – what would he do next? – but Midori negotiated every twist in the journey with ice-cold brilliance."

The biennial also sees Gilbert reunite with **Doug Fitch**, **Edouard Getaz**, and **Giants Are Small** – the dream team behind the Philharmonic's hit productions of *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *Le Grand Macabre*, and *A Dancer's Dream* – for staged performances of *Gloria – A Pig Tale* by **HK Gruber** (May 29–June 1) at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Of their previous collaborations, the *New York Times* wrote:

“These programs were not just high points in Mr. Gilbert’s tenure as music director of the Philharmonic, but inspiring examples of how an American orchestra can take a creative leap and reinvent itself. ... Is this the future of the American orchestra? Let’s hope so.”

Bearing a variety of influences, from new music to jazz, cabaret, and pop, Gruber’s work is marked by fast-paced action, syncopated rhythms, challenging vocals, and his characteristic irony and dark humor. When Gilbert led the Philharmonic in performances of the Austrian composer’s “pan-demonium” *Frankenstein!!!*, *Musical America* described the audience’s delight at the conductor’s getting “in on the act, singing in an ad hoc chorus and playing the kazoo”; after the show, **“Gruber, Gilbert and the musicians received a standing ovation.”** To perform *Gloria*, the story of a beautiful and unconventional pig who craves love and acceptance, the conductor will be joined by Juilliard’s **AXIOM Ensemble** and singers affiliated with the school.

On June 2, Gilbert joins curators from the Whitney Biennial and the Venice Biennale and other cultural leaders from the visual and performing arts to explore the nature, essence, and impact of biennials, in **“What Is a Biennial?”** Under his curatorship, other festival highlights include **Gotham Chamber Opera’s U.S. premiere of *The Raven* by Toshio Hosokawa** at John Jay College; **Matthias Pintscher** conducting cellist and MacArthur Fellow **Alisa Weilerstein** in the **New York premiere** of his own ***Reflections on Narcissus***; the Philharmonic’s **New York premieres** of new works by **Julia Wolfe** and **Steven Mackey**; **Pablo Heras-Casado** leading the **Orchestra of St. Luke’s** in programs of new works inspired by Boulez and George Benjamin; and two new installments of **CONTACT!**, the Philharmonic’s new-music series, which extends its reach with more concerts in new venues across the city: **Pintscher** conducts the **U.S. premieres** of nine new works at **MOMA**, and downtown hotspot **SubCulture** hosts the **world premieres** of new Philharmonic commissions from composers including **Michael Hersch**.

Upcoming Philharmonic highlights at Lincoln Center and beyond

It was Gilbert, in his inaugural season as Music Director, who launched the Philharmonic’s Mary and James G. Wallach Artist-in-Residence initiative. When the present incumbent, **Yefim (“Fima”) Bronfman**, joined them for Tchaikovsky’s First Piano Concerto last year, the *New York Times* observed:

“His musical maturity showed through in his sensitivity to the work’s quiet passages and the piano’s interaction with the orchestra. ... He brought a sunny sweetness to a melody in the high register of his piano that was reflected in the big, smiling tutti Mr. Gilbert drew from the orchestra.”

In their upcoming festival together, ***The Beethoven Piano Concertos***, the conductor – recognized by the *New York Times* as **“insightful and strong”** in Beethoven – directs the world premiere of *Lyra*, a new Philharmonic commission from Kravis Prize beneficiary and 2012-13 Rome Prize-winner **Anthony Cheung** (b.1982), together with Bronfman’s

accounts of Beethoven's First and Fourth Piano Concertos (June 11–14); the world premiere of *Songs*, a new Philharmonic commission from Kravis Emerging Composer **Sean Shepherd** (b.1979), "a composer worth keeping an ear on" (*Chicago Tribune*), between Beethoven's Second and Third concertos (June 18–21); and, coupled with the pianist's rendition of the "Emperor," Beethoven's Triple Concerto, for which Bronfman joins the Philharmonic's departing concertmaster **Glenn Dicterow** and principal cello **Carter Brey** (June 24–28). Both new works were commissioned as part of the Philharmonic's Marie-Josée Kravis Prize for New Music.

On April 22, in an already sold-out new addition to the orchestra's spring line-up, Gilbert leads a salute to two great New Yorkers, **Gershwin and Bernstein**, with jazz pianist **Makoto Ozone** making his U.S. orchestral debut in *Rhapsody in Blue*. When the Japanese pianist appeared with Gilbert and the Philharmonic in Osaka this winter, on the orchestra's ASIA / WINTER 2014 tour, the *Nikkei Asian Review* found that "**Ozone's crystal sound was perfect for the *Rhapsody in Blue*, evoking New York City skyscrapers at night.**"

Beyond Avery Fisher Hall, Gilbert takes the Philharmonic across town to **Carnegie Hall**, where, with baritone Jacques Imbrailo, the Westminster Symphonic Choir, and Brooklyn Youth Chorus, they launch the "**Spring For Music**" festival with the **New York premiere of Christopher Rouse's Requiem**. Inspired by Berlioz and composed in the wake of 9/11, Rouse's mass was welcomed by the *Los Angeles Times* as "the first great traditional American Requiem" (May 5).

The conductor and orchestra also head uptown for their **Free Annual Memorial Day Concert** at the **Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine**, with a program pairing Nielsen's *Helios* Overture with Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, in which repertoire the *New York Times* considers Gilbert's leadership "**consistently involving and insightful**" (May 26).

Recent *Sweeney Todd* success at New York Philharmonic

Gilbert's spring engagements at the Philharmonic follow last month's resounding success of their staged production of Stephen Sondheim's macabre musical thriller, ***Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street***, which starred Grammy Award winner Bryn Terfel and two-time Academy Award-winner Emma Thompson. According to the *New York Times*, "**Under Mr. Gilbert's direction, the performance was remarkable for the clarity it brought to Jonathan Tunick's sumptuous but delicately textured orchestrations. ... Such details can easily be blurred, but came through incisively here.**" As *New York* magazine pointed out, "**Alan Gilbert has already shown that the Philharmonic can be the best opera company in town; now he's put Broadway on notice, too.**"

Guest conducting in France and Germany

Dubbed “**the embodiment of a conducting ‘event’**” by the *Berliner Morgenpost*, Gilbert is highly sought after as a guest conductor, and returns to Europe for spring engagements with two leading European orchestras. He directs the **Orchestre National de Lyon** in Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony, alongside Beethoven’s Violin Concerto with Queen Elisabeth Competition-winner **Nicolaj Znaider** (May 10 & 11), and returns to the **NDR Hamburg Sinfonieorchester** for Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony and Bartók’s *Bluebeard’s Castle* (May 15, 16 & 18). Marking his third collaboration with the German orchestra this season, this engagement follows Gilbert’s recent account of Mahler’s Seventh Symphony there last month, when he stepped in to replace Michael Geilen, and his triumphant fall presentation of *The Ring Journey*, his own orchestral arrangement (after Erich Leinsdorf) of music from Wagner’s epic “Ring” cycle; as *Die Welt* reported:

“Each breakneck run in the violin parts and each delicate woodwind comment was audible, and even the collective brass that usually dominates the Wagnerian sound was well-balanced and articulated. Gilbert obviously knew what he wanted. ... In the introductory ‘Ride of the Valkyries,’ he chiseled the inner structures instead of unleashing an overwhelming barrage of sound. This made it so much more effective when Gilbert gave the musicians free rein. ... The tonal and technical mastery was deeply impressive.”

A list of the conductor’s upcoming engagements follows, and more information may be found at his website: www.alangilbert.com.

Alan Gilbert: spring engagements

April 22

New York Philharmonic

Bernstein: *Candide* Overture

Gershwin: *Rhapsody in Blue* (with Makoto Ozone, piano)

Bernstein: Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*

Gershwin: *An American in Paris*

May 5

New York Philharmonic

Spring For Music Festival

Carnegie Hall

Christopher Rouse: Requiem (NY premiere; with Jacques Imbrailo, baritone; Westminster Symphonic Choir / Joe Miller; Brooklyn Youth Chorus / Dianne Berkun)

May 10 & 11

Orchestre National de Lyon

Beethoven: Violin Concerto in D, Op. 61 (with Nicolaj Znaider, violin)

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36

May 15, 16, 18

NDR Hamburg Sinfonieorchester

Beethoven: Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67

Bartók: *Bluebeard's Castle* (with Michelle DeYoung, mezzo-soprano; John Relyea, bass-baritone)

May 26

New York Philharmonic

Free Annual Memorial Day Concert

Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine

Nielsen: *Helios* Overture

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5

May 29, 30; June 1

Metropolitan Museum of Art

NY PHIL BIENNIAL

Gruber: *Gloria – A Pig Tale*

Juilliard School's AXIOM Ensemble

Lauren Snouffer, soprano

Brenda Patterson, mezzo-soprano

Alexander Lewis, tenor

Carlton Ford, baritone

Kevin Burdette, bass

Director: Doug Fitch

Producers: Giants Are Small, Edouard Getaz

June 5 & 7

New York Philharmonic

NY PHIL BIENNIAL

Christopher Rouse: Symphony No. 4 (world premiere of NY Philharmonic commission)

Peter Eötvös: *DoReMi* (NY premiere; with Midori, violin)

TBD: Work to be selected through New York Philharmonic EarShot New Music Readings

June 11–14

New York Philharmonic

The Beethoven Piano Concertos: A Philharmonic Festival

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Yefim Bronfman)

Anthony Cheung: *Lyra* (world premiere of NY Philharmonic commission)

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 4 (with Yefim Bronfman)

June 18–21

New York Philharmonic

The Beethoven Piano Concertos: A Philharmonic Festival

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Yefim Bronfman)

Sean Shepherd: *Songs* (world premiere of NY Philharmonic commission)

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 3 (with Yefim Bronfman)

June 24–28

New York Philharmonic

The Beethoven Piano Concertos: A Philharmonic Festival

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 5, “Emperor” (with Yefim Bronfman)

Beethoven: Triple Concerto for piano, violin, and cello (with Glenn Dicterow, violin; Carter Brey, cello; Yefim Bronfman, piano)

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