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**Alan Gilbert leads NY Phil at Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival this week** [gpetry@21cmediagroup.com](mailto:gpetry@21cmediagroup.com)

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## Alan Gilbert Leads NY Philharmonic at Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival This Week, After “Philharmonic 360” Triumph

This week, **Alan Gilbert** joins the **New York Philharmonic** at the orchestra’s summer home, the **Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival**, for programs that include Brahms’s Second Piano Concerto with powerhouse pianist **Yefim Bronfman**; Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony; and **festival premieres** of Mozart’s Great Mass in C minor and Nielsen’s Third Symphony. The Colorado residency follows the conductor’s phenomenal success with “**Philharmonic 360**,” pronounced the “**boldest venture to date**” (*New Yorker*) in Gilbert’s tenure as Music Director of the storied orchestra (he begins his fourth season in the position on September 19, 2012 with a program that includes Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*). On a more intimate scale, in August, Gilbert heads to the **Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival** where, as the **2012 Artist-in-Residence**, he leads three works for chamber ensemble, and plays violin and viola in collaboration with some of today’s preeminent chamber musicians.

### At the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival

Now celebrating its silver anniversary, the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival runs for seven weeks in the heart of the Colorado Rocky Mountains. This Wednesday, July 25, Gilbert leads the New York Philharmonic in the first of their three appearances there together, with Principal Associate Concertmaster **Sheryl Staples** as violin soloist in renditions of “Winter” and “Spring” from **Vivaldi’s Four Seasons**, alongside **Tchaikovsky’s** powerful **Fourth Symphony**.

Next day, on Thursday, July 26, Gilbert directs two of the festival’s most important premieres: **Nielsen’s Third Symphony**, “*Sinfonia Espansiva*,” which the conductor describes as exploring “the deepest and most wrenching aspects of humanity,” with soloists soprano Jennifer Zetland and baritone Joshua Hopkins, and **Brahms’s Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat**, featuring Grammy Award-winning pianist **Yefim Bronfman**, whose collaboration with the conductor and orchestra this past May proved a “**brilliant and triumphant performance**” (*New York Times*).

Finally, on Friday, July 27, Gilbert and the New York Philharmonic conclude their festival season with **Stravinsky’s Symphony in Three Movements** coupled with the Vail premiere of **Mozart’s** monumental **Great Mass in C minor**. Jennifer Zetlan, Jennifer Johnson Cano, Paul Appleby and Joshua Hopkins are the soloists, with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra Chorus. Gilbert has called the work “one of those iconic masterpieces that really makes you happy to be a musician,” and after he directed the Philharmonic’s performance of the work with the same quartet of soloists at New York’s Lincoln Center this June, the *New York Times* observed: “**Alan**

**Gilbert led as majestic a Mozart performance as anyone might want, with the kind of guests that would make cognoscenti sit up and take notice.”**

### **“Philharmonic 360” triumph**

Just days after their all-Mozart program, Gilbert and the New York Philharmonic pulled off what many consider their **“most daring project yet”** (*Philadelphia Inquirer*): “Philharmonic 360.” Presented in two concerts at New York’s Park Avenue Armory, this was a program of spatial music from Gabrieli and Mozart to Ives, Boulez, and Stockhausen, designed to exploit the cathedral-like sonic qualities of the Armory’s cavernous 55,000-square-foot Wade Thompson Drill Hall.

With Stockhausen’s *Gruppen* as its centerpiece, the program’s impact was profound, marking another milestone moment in Gilbert’s tenure as music director of the orchestra. According to the *New York Times*: **“Those who think classical music needs some shaking up routinely challenge music directors at major orchestras to think outside the box. That is precisely what Alan Gilbert did** on Friday night for an exhilarating concert with the New York Philharmonic in the Drill Hall of the Park Avenue Armory. His program, ‘Philharmonic 360,’ took the orchestra outside the box of Avery Fisher Hall and into the armory’s cavernous hall, a space the size of a football field with a vaulted 80-foot ceiling. ...The Drill Hall was perfect for *Gruppen*. ...The audience broke into prolonged applause and cheers.”

In the *New Yorker*, Alex Ross was equally impressed, describing the event as **“Gilbert’s boldest venture to date, harking back to the most experimental period in the orchestra’s history, the years of Bernstein and Boulez.”** Ross continued: “What I liked most about the scheme was that it reversed the usual tactic of squirreling a contemporary piece amid familiar fare; here, Mozart was the odd man out, the awkward interloper,” and went on to single out the performance of Ives’s *Unanswered Question* as “the most enchanting rendition of this 20<sup>th</sup>-century classic I have ever heard – an uncanny approximation of the natural sublime.”

The *Financial Times* admired the way “the project offered fascinating explorations of unorthodox spatial, acoustical, and social relations,” and found the results “bold and bracing,” while the *Los Angeles Times* reported that “the orchestra played...with a restrained, expressive brilliance that made it seem for once proud of its Boulezian heritage. For his part, Gilbert found the Armory’s acoustic sweet spot. ...The vibrations here were of such a magically high quality that they were worth experiencing directly through every body part.” In short, as the *Philadelphia Inquirer* concluded, **“the project had true event status in a city where even everyday life can be an event.”**

For those unable to share the experience firsthand, a film of “Philharmonic 360” is through September 2012 for streaming, free of charge, at [medici.tv](http://medici.tv).

### **Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival and Salt Bay Chamberfest**

On a more intimate scale, Gilbert begins August at New Mexico’s Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, now celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary season. As the festival’s **2012 Artist-in-Residence**, he leads three tight-knit works for small, virtuoso, ensemble: Schoenberg’s First and Second Chamber Symphonies and Richard Strauss’s First Sonatina for winds. Also an active instrumentalist himself, Gilbert packs both viola and violin alongside his baton, joining

superlative musicians who include the members of the former Guarneri Quartet (John Dalley, Arnold Steinhardt, Michael Tree and Peter Wiley) – “among the most revered and enduring ensembles of its kind in the world” (*NPR*) – for renditions of Brahms’s Second String Sextet and the Mendelssohn Octet (Aug 1–12).

Likewise, at the **Salt Bay Chamberfest**, Gilbert joins a stellar lineup of chamber musicians to play Richard Strauss’s *Metamorphosen* in an arrangement for string septet based on the composer’s own short score, as came to light in 1990 (Aug 19).

A list of Alan Gilbert’s upcoming engagements follows, and additional information may be found at his website: [www.alangilbert.com](http://www.alangilbert.com).

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## **Alan Gilbert: engagements, summer 2012**

### **July 25; Vail, CO**

#### **Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival**

Respighi: *The Fountains of Rome*

Vivaldi: Concerto No. 1 in E, Op. 8, RV 269, *La primavera* (with Sheryl Staples, violin)

Vivaldi: Concerto No. 4 in F minor, Op. 8, RV 297, *L'inverno* (with Sheryl Staples, violin)

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

### **July 26; Vail, CO**

#### **Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival**

Nielsen: Symphony No. 3, Op. 27 (with Jennifer Zetlan, soprano & Joshua Hopkins, baritone)

Brahms: Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat, Op. 83 (with Yefim Bronfman, piano)

### **July 27; Vail, CO**

#### **Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival**

Stravinsky: Symphony in Three Movements

Mozart: Mass in C minor, K. 427 (with Colorado Symphony Orchestra Chorus / Duain Wolfe; Jennifer Zetlan, soprano; Jennifer Johnson Cano, mezzo-soprano; Paul Appleby, tenor; Joshua Hopkins, baritone)

### **August 1 & 2; Santa Fe, NM**

#### **Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival**

Brahms: String Sextet No. 2 in G, Op. 36 (viola)

### **August 5 & 6; Santa Fe, NM**

#### **Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival**

Schoenberg: Chamber Symphony No. 1 in E

Mendelssohn: Octet in E-flat, Op. 20 (violin)

### **August 8 & 9; Santa Fe, NM**

#### **Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival**

Schoenberg: Chamber Symphony No. 2, Op. 38

### **August 12; Santa Fe, NM**

#### **Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival**

R. Strauss: Sonatina No. 1 for 16 wind instruments in F, Op. 135

### **August 19; Damariscotta, ME**

#### **Salt Bay Chamberfest**

R. Strauss: *Metamorphosen* for septet (violin)

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