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Contact Glenn Petry (212) 625-2038

Alan Gilbert leads NY Philharmonic in NY and Asia; guest conducts Berlin Philharmonic gpetry@21cmediagroup.com

New Year Sees Alan Gilbert Showcase Rouse and Lindberg with NY Philharmonic in New York and Asia, and Return to Berlin Philharmonic

It was **Alan Gilbert**, now in his fifth season as Music Director of the **New York Philharmonic**, who introduced the posts of Artist-in-Residence and Composer-in-Residence at the start of his tenure with the orchestra. Now the conductor – “**a galvanizing force at the Philharmonic**” (*New York Times*) – leads a program that for the first time unites Artist-in-Residence **Yefim “Fima” Bronfman** with former and current Composers-in-Residence, **Magnus Lindberg** and **Christopher Rouse**, for dates in New York (Jan 2–7) and during the orchestra’s intensive, ten-concert **ASIA / WINTER 2014** tour (Feb 6–19). Gilbert’s other winter highlights with the Philharmonic include a festive New Year’s Eve celebration with musical humorists **Igudesman & Joo** and special guest **Joshua Bell** (Dec 31); collaborations with **Lisa Batiashvili** in New York (Jan 9–14) and on tour in Asia (Feb 13); and a staged production of Sondheim’s *Sweeney Todd*, starring **Bryn Terfel** and **Emma Thompson** (March 5–8). Following the success of his recent guest appearances with the **Berlin Philharmonic**, Gilbert also returns to lead the storied orchestra in a program showcasing Lindberg’s *Kraft*, with the composer himself as soloist (Jan 30–Feb 1).

Lindberg, Rouse, and Bronfman

For performances with the Philharmonic at Lincoln Center (Jan 2, 3, & 7) and Long Island’s Tilles Center for the Performing Arts (Jan 4), Gilbert draws together the talents of Mary and James G. Wallach Artist-in-Residence **Yefim Bronfman** with former and current Marie-Josée Kravis Composers-in-Residence, **Magnus Lindberg** and **Christopher Rouse**. As the *New York Times* observes, “**Mr. Gilbert has infused the Philharmonic with his passion for contemporary music,**” and it was he who directed Bronfman and the orchestra in the world premiere of Lindberg’s **Second Piano Concerto** (2012), when they wowed the *New York Times* with their “**brilliant and triumphant performance.**” Their subsequent live recording of the concerto for Dacapo Records has just been nominated for two **2014 Grammy Awards**, in the Best Classical Instrumental Solo and Best Contemporary Classical Composition categories. Selecting the disc as Q2’s **Album of the Week**, WQXR observed: “The real treat here is Lindberg’s Piano Concerto No. 2, thanks to yet another brilliant creative partner: Yefim Bronfman wrestles a sensationally virtuosic solo part into submission with playing as musically acute and expressive as it is athletic.”

Gilbert and the orchestra complement the concerto with **Rapture** (2000) by Pulitzer Prize and Grammy Award-winning American composer Christopher Rouse, who describes it as “a joyous, very life-affirming work” that ranks among “the most unabashedly tonal music” of his distinguished career; after its Pittsburgh premiere, the *Post-Gazette* praised its “powerful tonal underpinnings and swirling dynamic shifts, ... well-paced structure, vibrant solos, and lush string writing.” Tchaikovsky’s seminal **Fifth Symphony** rounds out the program; the *New York Times* finds Gilbert’s leadership of Tchaikovsky’s symphonies “**consistently involving and insightful**,” prompting critic Anthony Tommasini to reflect: “**I learn something when he conducts this repertory.**”

Bronfman rejoins Gilbert and the orchestra to reprise Lindberg’s Second Piano Concerto on their upcoming **ASIA / WINTER 2014 tour**, in Tokyo (Feb 12) and Taipei (Feb 19).

New Year’s Eve holiday concert

On December 31, Gilbert leads the New York Philharmonic’s annual **New Year’s Eve** celebration, which this year features musical humorists and viral YouTube sensations **Igudesman & Joo** in their Philharmonic debut, with a special guest appearance from violin superstar **Joshua Bell**. Highlights of their playful program, which recalls earlier Philharmonic collaborations with Victor Borge and Danny Kaye, include such tongue-in-cheek numbers as *Rachmaninoff by Himself*, a humorous nod to the origins of Eric Carmen’s power ballad “All by Myself” in Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto No. 2; *A Very Blue Danube*, which takes Johann Strauss II’s famed waltz to virtuosic extremes and pokes fun at the waltz-filled Viennese New Year; and *From Mozart with Love*, a memorable mash-up of Mozart’s Symphony No. 40 with the James Bond theme. The evening will also present the **world premiere** performance of *Ring in the Classics*, created by Igudesman & Joo expressly for Gilbert.

Beethoven and Batiashvili

The *New York Times* characterizes Gilbert’s Beethoven as “**insightful and strong**,” and for his second Philharmonic program of 2014, the conductor will lead performances of Beethoven’s First Symphony and the Overture to *Fidelio*. These share the program with Gershwin’s *An American in Paris* – originally a Philharmonic commission and a Gilbert favorite – and Shostakovich’s First Violin Concerto with soloist **Lisa Batiashvili**, whose recording of the work won an ECHO Klassik award in 2011 (Jan 9, 10, 11 & 14). Batiashvili has appeared annually with the orchestra since Gilbert’s appointment as Music Director; when they played Prokofiev’s First Violin Concerto together in June, the *New York Times* declared: “Mr. Gilbert...had an ideal soloist in the brilliant violinist Lisa Batiashvili. Together they brought out the work’s intricate complexities and surprising intensity.”

The violinist will reunite with Gilbert and the Philharmonic to reprise the concerto in Tokyo (Feb 13) during the **ASIA / WINTER 2014** tour.

ASIA / WINTER 2014

February sees Gilbert and the Philharmonic embark on **ASIA / WINTER 2014**, an intensive two-week tour that marks the orchestra's seventh international concert tour under his leadership, and comprises ten concerts in three countries, with performances in **Seoul**, South Korea; **Tokyo, Osaka, Yokohama**, and **Nagoya**, Japan; and **Taipei**, Taiwan (Feb 6–19). The tour has special significance for the conductor, who explains: "Part of my family comes from Japan, and I'll never forget my first tour with the orchestra, which started out there."

Guest soloists **Bronfman** and **Batiashvili** will join the conductor and orchestra in Tokyo and Taipei, as will the pianists **Da Sol** in Seoul and **Makoto Ozone** in Seoul, Osaka, Tokyo, and Yokohama. Gilbert will conduct five performances of Rouse's *Rapture* and two of Lindberg's Second Piano Concerto, besides a variety of American and canonical classics. The tour will also showcase the music of Benjamin Britten, now celebrating his centennial; an especial highlight is a Young People's Concert in Tokyo, at which Gilbert will narrate **Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra in Japanese***. He confesses: "This is definitely the scariest thing I've ever agreed to do – I'm going to start practicing right now – but I'm glad I'm doing it because Japan is a country where music is really important for kids."

***Sweeney Todd*, starring Bryn Terfel and Emma Thompson**

Back in New York, Gilbert takes the Philharmonic on an excursion into the world of Broadway with a staged production of Stephen Sondheim's macabre musical thriller, ***Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*** (March 5–8). Grammy Award winning bass-baritone **Bryn Terfel** undertakes the title role, in which, at Chicago's Lyric Opera, he inspired the *New York Times* to marvel: "It would be difficult to imagine a more perfect marriage of role, voice, and stage personality than [Terfel's] performance of the Demon Barber of Fleet Street." Playing Todd's partner in crime, Mrs. Lovett, is two-time Academy Award-winner **Emma Thompson**, whose new movie, *Saving Mr. Banks*, is now in cinemas worldwide; the upcoming performances mark her New York Philharmonic, New York stage, and role debuts. *Sweeney Todd* is directed by Emmy Award-winner **Lonny Price**, who helmed the Philharmonic's all-star 2011 production of *Company* as well as its 2010 Sondheim birthday concert, when the *New York Times* commented: "Monday's concert demonstrated that there is still no substitute for a force as mighty as the New York Philharmonic...playing songs conceived and orchestrated...for a symphonic palette."

***Kraft* with the Berlin Philharmonic**

One of the world's most highly sought-after guest conductors, Gilbert also looks forward to returning to Germany for three appearances at the helm of the **Berlin Philharmonic** (Jan 30–Feb 1). These follow his triumphant engagement with the eminent ensemble in September, when the *Berliner Morgenpost* admired the "**benevolent maturity**" of his Lutoslawski, and the *Berliner Zeitung* marveled at the way his "**precise interpretation**" of

the work “**drew impressive connections between individual moments and the work as a whole, creating a rendition that was both effective in the moment and lingered on.**” As a result, “**the audience, thrilled by the performance, continued to applaud the conductor even as the musicians had already begun to pack up their instruments backstage.**”

For his upcoming return to the orchestra, Gilbert pairs **Dvorák’s Cello Concerto**, featuring Grammy Award-winning Norwegian cellist **Truls Mork**, with **Kraft** (1983-85), a unique and trailblazing work by **Lindberg**, with the composer himself at the piano. As Lindberg recalls, *Kraft* was in part inspired by the new-music scene in Berlin, then “hopping with post-punk and non-tonal sound,” and it was Gilbert who gave the work its New York premiere in 2010, when the *New York Times* pronounced it “**a brilliant, serious-minded contemporary work.**” The conductor considers *Kraft* “one of Magnus Lindberg’s most important and influential works,” and his recent reprise of the piece at Volkswagen’s Transparent Factory in Dresden, which was webcast live and subsequently made available for streaming by medici.tv, prompted *New York* magazine to declare: “**Gilbert’s unflashy radicalism is re-creating the Philharmonic.**”

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

Alan Gilbert: upcoming engagements

Dec 31

New York Philharmonic

New Year’s Eve with Igudesman & Joo, musical humorists (plus special guest Joshua Bell, violin)

Jan 2, 3, 7

New York Philharmonic

Christopher Rouse: *Rapture*

Magnus Lindberg: Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Yefim Bronfman, piano)

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5

Jan 4

New York Philharmonic

Tilles Center for the Performing Arts

Christopher Rouse: *Rapture*

Magnus Lindberg: Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Yefim Bronfman, piano)

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5

Jan 9, 10, 11, 14

New York Philharmonic

Beethoven: *Fidelio* Overture

Shostakovich: Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Lisa Batiashvili, violin)
Beethoven: Symphony No. 1
Gershwin: *An American in Paris*

Jan 30, 31; Feb 1

Berlin Philharmonic

Berlin, Germany

Dvorák: Cello Concerto (with Truls Mork, cello)
Magnus Lindberg: *Kraft*

Feb 6–19

New York Philharmonic on tour: ASIA / WINTER 2014

Feb 6

Seoul, South Korea (Seoul Arts Center)

Beethoven: *Fidelio* Overture
Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 3 (with Da Sol, piano)
Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5

Feb 7

Seoul, South Korea (Seoul Arts Center)

Christopher Rouse: *Rapture*
Gershwin: *Rhapsody in Blue* for piano and orchestra (with Makoto Ozone, piano)
Bernstein: Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*
Gershwin: *An American in Paris*

Feb 9

Nagoya, Japan (Aichi Prefectural Art Theater)

Christopher Rouse: *Rapture*
Bernstein: Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*
Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5

Feb 10

Osaka, Japan (Symphony Hall)

Britten: Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Henry Purcell
Gershwin: *Rhapsody in Blue* for piano and orchestra (with Makoto Ozone, piano)
Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5

Feb 11

Tokyo, Japan (Suntory Hall)

Manabu Suzuki, host
Britten: *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*
(with Alan Gilbert, narrator; Joshua Weilerstein, conductor)
Works by very young composers
Bernstein: Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*
Gershwin: *Rhapsody in Blue* for piano and orchestra (with Makoto Ozone, piano)

Feb 12

Tokyo, Japan (Suntory Hall)

Christopher Rouse: *Rapture*
Magnus Lindberg: Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Yefim Bronfman, piano)

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5

Feb 13

Tokyo, Japan (Suntory Hall)

Beethoven: *Fidelio* Overture

Shostakovich: Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Lisa Batiashvili, violin)

Beethoven: Symphony No. 1

Gershwin: *An American in Paris*

Feb 15

Yokohama, Japan (Minato Mirai Hall)

Christopher Rouse: *Rapture*

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

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5

Feb 18

Taipei, Taiwan (National Chiang Kai-Shek Cultural Center)

Shostakovich: Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Lisa Batiashvili, violin)

Bernstein: Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*

Gershwin: *An American in Paris*

Feb 19

Taipei, Taiwan (National Chiang Kai-Shek Cultural Center)

Christopher Rouse: *Rapture*

Magnus Lindberg: Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Yefim Bronfman, piano)

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5

March 5, 6, 7, 8m, 8

New York Philharmonic

Stephen Sondheim: *Sweeney Todd* (with Emma Thompson, Bryn Terfel, and more)

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