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Alan Gilbert launches New Year with NY Phil, Silk Road Ensemble, & Metropolitan Opera

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Alan Gilbert Launches New Year with New York Phil, Concluding “Nielsen Project,” Leading Verdi Requiem, & Celebrating Silk Road Ensemble at 15; Plus *Don Giovanni* at Met

Alan Gilbert launches the New Year at the **New York Philharmonic**, where, in his sixth season as Music Director, he continues to prove himself a “**force for permanent revolution**” (*New York*). In their first concerts together of 2015 – the 150th anniversary of Carl Nielsen’s birth – Gilbert and the orchestra conclude “**The Nielsen Project**,” their multi-season survey of the Danish composer’s symphonies and concertos, with performances of his Clarinet Concerto (Jan 8–13) that will be recorded for release along with his Violin and Flute Concertos and for inclusion in the complete commemorative boxed set. Next the conductor joins a dream team of vocal soloists for his first Philharmonic accounts of **Verdi’s Requiem** (Jan 15–17), before taking the podium for the orchestra’s collaboration with **Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble**, to celebrate the trailblazing collective’s 15th anniversary (Feb 19–21). Winter also takes Gilbert back to the **Metropolitan Opera**, where he leads a ten-performance run of Mozart’s ***Don Giovanni*** with Peter Mattei in the title role (Feb 4–March 6). These engagements follow a momentous fall for the conductor, who – on the heels of his triumphant leadership of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra’s season-opening tour – scored glowing reviews on his return to Germany in guest appearances with the Berlin Philharmonic, NDR Symphony Hamburg, and Munich Philharmonic. Fall highlights also included concerts with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and back in New York Gilbert conducted the world and U.S. premieres of works by Christopher Rouse and Unsuk Chin, demonstrating a commitment to expanding the orchestral repertory that was recently recognized by the *New York Times*: Anthony Tommasini named the inaugural NY Phil Biennial one of the “**Ten Best Classical Music Events of 2014**,” pronouncing it – “**thanks to Alan Gilbert’s vision**” – “**a tremendous accomplishment**.”

Conclusion of The Nielsen Project at the New York Philharmonic

The Nielsen Project – Gilbert’s complete cycle of the Danish composer’s symphonies and concertos with the New York Philharmonic, in live performance and on disc – has been recognized as “**one of the great successes of Alan Gilbert’s tenure thus far**” (*New York Times*). Marking the 150th anniversary of Nielsen’s birth, the New Year sees this ambitious multi-season initiative draw to a timely close, with performances of the Clarinet Concerto showcasing new Philharmonic principal clarinetist **Anthony McGill** in his solo debut with the orchestra (Jan 8, 9, 10 & 13).

It is Gilbert’s impassioned advocacy of Carl Nielsen (1865-1931) that has engendered and driven

the long-term project. Previously the only Philharmonic conductor to record Nielsen's music with the orchestra was Leonard Bernstein; indeed, as the *New York Times* observed this fall, "**Before Alan Gilbert began championing the Danish composer ... his 150th birthday next year would have probably passed unnoticed.**" Instead, thanks to Gilbert's dedication to the project, the composer's sesquicentennial will be honored with the Philharmonic's first complete recordings of his symphonies and concertos, to be released as a **four-CD boxed set on June 9, 2015**, the 150th anniversary of the day he was born, issued on Denmark's **Dacapo** label for distribution by **Naxos**. The four discs will also be available singly.

Two of these have already been issued. The first coupled Symphony No. 2, "The Four Temperaments," and No. 3, "Sinfonia Espansiva," with soprano Erin Morley and baritone Joshua Hopkins; released in 2012, the album was named one of the "**Best Classical Music Recordings of 2012**" (*New York Times*), and hailed in a **five-star review** as "**an immensely promising start to what could well prove a landmark cycle**" (*BBC Music* magazine).

Next up were Symphonies Nos. 1 & 4, "The Inextinguishable," in a performance that the *New York Times* pronounced "**exhilarating, even breathtaking**"; released in September 2014, the recording prompted Germany's *WiMP* magazine to conclude: "**Nowhere are the works of Nielsen better off than in the hands of the gifted New York Philharmonic Orchestra.**"

January brings the release of a third disc, comprising Nielsen's Fifth Symphony together with the Philharmonic's premiere performance of his Sixth, "Sinfonia semplice" – welcomed as "**an occasion to celebrate for Nielsen lovers everywhere**" (*New York Times*) – in a concert that found "**Gilbert [and the] Philharmonic at their finest**" (*New York Classical Review*).

To complete the collection, the final album will pair January's Clarinet Concerto performance by Anthony McGill with Nielsen's Flute and Violin Concertos, recorded with New York Philharmonic Principal Flute Robert Langevin and violinist Nikolaj Znaider in what the *New York Times* proclaimed as being "**among the best concerts of Mr. Gilbert's tenure, a thrilling demonstration of a sensibility balanced between Romantic and Modernist.**"

First Verdi Requiem with the New York Philharmonic, featuring dream team of soloists

Programs focusing on the great choral literature from the Baroque to the modern era have become a staple of Gilbert's tenure with the New York Philharmonic. Following previous, highly successful collaborations on such masterworks as Bach's *Mass in B minor*, Mozart's *Great Mass in C Minor*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Mahler's "Resurrection" Symphony, Gilbert and the Philharmonic now turn to another cornerstone of the choral repertory, tackling **Verdi's Requiem** together for the first time. The *New York Times* has stated that "**when performed with passion by first-rung artists ..., [it] can stir the blood and grip the imagination like no other work in the concert repertory,**" and Gilbert has assembled a quartet of soloists that he describes as "**absolutely spectacular.**" As he recalls, "When we started talking about doing Verdi's Requiem we didn't think about when we were going to do it, we

thought about who would sing it, and then found a period that worked in the schedules of these specific singers.”

The conductor’s faith in his four vocalists is amply justified. When **Angela Meade** – “easily the most talked-about soprano of her generation” (*Opera News*) – sang the Requiem with the Philadelphia Orchestra last season, the *American Record Guide* found her “flawless and electrifying.” She returns to Verdi in March, starring opposite Plácido Domingo in *Ernani* at the Metropolitan Opera. Similarly, mezzo-soprano **Lilli Paasikivi**, principal soloist of the Finnish National Opera, impressed the *New York Sun* as “well-nigh perfect.” She has previously sung Verdi’s Requiem with both the Orchestre National de Lille and Finnish National Opera Orchestra, and collaborated with Gilbert and the Philharmonic on Mahler’s “Resurrection” Symphony. She and Meade will be joined by Tucker Award-winning tenor **Brandon Jovanovich**, whose “winning combination of lyricism and dramatic intensity” convinced *Opera News* of his “true star potential,” and by **Eric Owens**, the “towering bass-baritone” (*New York Times*) who previously appeared under Gilbert’s direction in Bach’s B-minor mass, as well as in two of the greatest productions of the conductor’s Philharmonic legacy: Ligeti’s *Le Grand Macabre* and *A Dancer’s Dream: Two Works by Stravinsky*. In the upcoming performances of Verdi’s Requiem, Gilbert, the orchestra, and the four soloists will enjoy the support of the **New York Choral Artists** under the direction of **Joseph Flummerfelt** (Jan 15–17).

Following last season’s offering of Bach’s towering *Mass in B minor*, Anthony Tommasini reported in the *New York Times* that “[Gilbert] conveyed his reverence for the piece by trusting that Bach’s music would do its job if he and the Philharmonic players did theirs,” resulting in “an intelligent, exciting and affecting performance.”

Silk Road Ensemble and Yo-Yo Ma celebrate 15th anniversary with NY Philharmonic

In honor of the cross-cultural collective’s 15th anniversary celebrations, the **Silk Road Ensemble** makes its Philharmonic debut under Gilbert’s direction this winter, with a program featuring its founder and artistic director, cellist and bona fide classical superstar **Yo-Yo Ma** (Feb 19–21). Founded by Ma in 2000, the Silk Road Ensemble is the performing arm of the nonprofit organization **Silkroad**, established two years earlier, and offers a cross-cultural exploration of musical experiences found on the trade route by that name that once spanned Europe and Asia.

As Gilbert explains:

“This kind of collaboration with Yo-Yo and the Silk Road Ensemble – bringing instruments rarely seen onstage at the New York Philharmonic and with musicians who bring a completely different skill-set – is extremely powerful and is totally in line with what we’ve been trying to do.”

The program opens with the Silk Road Ensemble performing two examples of its signature East-meets-West repertory: the custom-composed ***Silk Road Suite***, and ***Sacred Signs Suite*** by Uzbekistan’s **Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky**, which was inspired by elements of Stravinsky’s *Rite of*

Spring. Both works offer Philharmonic audiences the opportunity to hear such instruments as the shakuhachi (Japanese flute), pipa (Chinese lute), and tabla (Indian drums).

On the same program Gilbert and the Philharmonic undertake the tone poem ***Death and Transfiguration*** by **Richard Strauss**, in whose music the conductor succeeds in making “**old rhetoric sound fresh**” (*Financial Times*), and **Mozart’s Masonic Funeral Music**, in which he has shown himself “**a galvanizing and sensitive guide**” (*Cleveland Plain-Dealer*). The conductor’s astute and thoughtful programming is once again in evidence; while famed for their secrecy, the Freemasons nonetheless embody the Enlightenment principles of education and knowledge, reflecting something of the open-mindedness so central to Silkroad’s vision.

Finally, the two ensembles come together under Gilbert’s direction for an account of ***Rose of the Winds*** by **Oswaldo Golijov**. The Music Director and Philharmonic previously collaborated with Yo-Yo Ma on a “**committed performance**” (*New York Times*) of the Argentinean composer’s *Azul*, a work written for the cellist and performed as the centerpiece of the orchestra’s 2013-14 season-opening gala. And it was the Silk Road Ensemble that premiered *Rose of the Winds*, which the *Chicago Tribune* called “**a bold yet seamless melding of musical resonances from Christian, Arabic and Jewish traditions**” that “**sums up what ... Ma’s globally connected group stands for.**”

***Don Giovanni* at the Met**

To round out his winter season, Gilbert crosses the plaza at Lincoln Center to take the podium at the **Metropolitan Opera**, where he leads all ten upcoming performances of Mozart’s ***Don Giovanni*** (Feb 4–March 6). This marks a very welcome return, for it is already six years since the conductor scored a decisive victory in his Met debut, for which he conducted John Adams’s *Doctor Atomic*. The *New York Times* declared: “**The performance he draws from the Met orchestra and chorus is a revelation**”; *New York* magazine selected the production as one of the “**Top Ten Classical Events of 2008**”; and its subsequent DVD/Blu-ray release received the **2012 Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording**.

Now, having since succeeded in injecting “**new vitality**” (*New York Times*) into *Così fan tutte* at the Juilliard Opera, Gilbert returns to the Met for **Michael Grandage**’s classic take on Mozart’s retelling of the Don Juan tale. Grammy Award-winning baritone **Peter Mattei** stars in a reprise of his “superb” account of the title role (*New York Times*), with sopranos **Elza van den Heever** and **Emma Bell** as Donna Anna and Donna Elvira; mezzo **Kate Lindsey** as Zerlina; veteran bass-baritone **James Morris** as the Commendatore; and bass-baritone **Luca Pisaroni**, always “a dynamic Leporello” (*New York Times*), in his signature role as Don Giovanni’s beleaguered servant.

Successes in Berlin, Hamburg, and Munich

Gilbert recently returned to Germany to conduct three more of the great orchestras with which he has developed especially close ties. Reaffirming his membership in an elite class of international maestros, all three collaborations proved resoundingly successful. The *Berliner*

Zeitung described his leadership of the Berlin Philharmonic as possessing “**a natural force that has become rare in our times of overbred musical culture.**” In performances crowned by the world premiere of Thierry Escaich’s Concerto for Violin, Oboe and Orchestra, the NDR Symphony Orchestra Hamburg “**rewarded his inspiring presence with enormous vitality in sound**” (*Hamburger Abendblatt*) and “**everything was just right**” (*Lübecker Nachrichten*). Likewise, with the Munich Philharmonic, Gilbert showed himself to be “**a revolutionary of concert halls ... a shooting star who tears down walls**” (ARD).

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

Alan Gilbert: upcoming engagements

Jan 8, 9, 10, 13

New York Philharmonic

Avery Fisher Hall

(conclusion of the Nielsen Project)

Ravel: *Valses nobles et sentimentales*

Nielsen: Clarinet Concerto (with Anthony McGill, clarinet)

Tchaikovsky: Selections from *Swan Lake*

Jan 15–17

New York Philharmonic

Avery Fisher Hall

Verdi: Requiem

With Angela Meade, soprano; Lilli Paasikivi, mezzo-soprano; Brandon Jovanovich, tenor; Eric Owens, bass-baritone; New York Choral Artists / Joseph Flummerfelt

Feb 4, 7, 11 14, 17, 21, 24, 27; March 2, 6

Metropolitan Opera

Mozart: *Don Giovanni*

Feb 19, 20, 21

Silk Road Ensemble / New York Philharmonic

Avery Fisher Hall

Yo-Yo Ma, cello

15th anniversary celebration of the Silk Road Ensemble

Various: *The Silk Road Suite*

Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky: *Sacred Signs Suite*

Mozart: *Masonic Funeral Music*

R. Strauss: *Death and Transfiguration*

Oswaldo Golijov: *Rose of the Winds*

March 7

Musicians from the New York Philharmonic

Metropolitan Museum of Art

CONTACT!: New Music from Nordic Countries

Per Norgard: *Momentum* (New York Premiere)

Kalevi Aho: Chamber Symphony No. 2

Djuro Zivkovic: *The White Angel* (New York Premiere) (Courtney Lewis, conductor)

Kaija Saariaho: *Terra Memoria* for string orchestra (U.S. Premiere of string orchestra version) (Courtney Lewis, conductor)

March 19, 20, 24

New York Philharmonic

Avery Fisher Hall

Esa-Pekka Salonen: *Nyx*

Ravel: Piano Concerto in G (with Inon Barnatan, piano)

Debussy: *Jeux*

R. Strauss: *Der Rosenkavalier* Suite

March 21

Brookville, New York

New York Philharmonic

Tilles Center for the Performing Arts, Long Island University

Esa-Pekka Salonen: *Nyx*

Ravel: Piano Concerto in G (with Inon Barnatan, piano)

Debussy: *Jeux*

R. Strauss: *Der Rosenkavalier* Suite

March 26, 27, 28

New York Philharmonic

Avery Fisher Hall

Lyadov: *The Enchanted Lake*

Stravinsky: *Petrushka* (1911, original version)

John Adams: *Scheherazade.2* – Dramatic symphony for violin and orchestra (with Leila Josefowicz, violin; world premiere of New York Philharmonic co-commission)

April 8, 9, 10, 11

New York Philharmonic

Avery Fisher Hall

J.S. Bach: Concerto for Violin and Oboe

Thierry Escaich: Concerto for Violin and Oboe (with Lisa Batiashvili, violin & Francois Leleux, oboe; U.S. premiere of New York Philharmonic co-commission)

Shostakovich: Symphony No. 10

Late April–early May (specific dates not yet announced)

New York Philharmonic

EUROPE / SPRING 2015 TOUR

Tour to include concerts in Dublin, London, Paris, and Cologne, among other cities. In London, the Philharmonic will present Giants Are Small's theatrical reimagining of Stravinsky's ballet Petrushka. The Philharmonic also returns to London for its second residency at the Barbican Centre under the auspices of its International Associates initiative. In Cologne the Philharmonic will present the World Premiere of Peter Eötvös's Senza sangue, a co-commission, with the support of The Marie-Josée Kravis Prize for New Music,

with the Kölner Philharmonie. Additional details to be announced.

April 15

London, UK

Barbican Centre

Royal Philharmonic Society Annual Lecture

(The New York Philharmonic will be doing a residency at the Barbican during their Europe/Spring 2015 tour.)

May 6

New York Philharmonic

Avery Fisher Hall

Ravel: *Valses nobles et sentimentales*

R. Strauss: *Der Rosenkavalier* Suite

Stravinsky: *Petrushka* (1911, original version)

May 8 & 9

New York Philharmonic

Avery Fisher Hall

Schubert: Symphony in B minor, "Unfinished"

Peter Eötvös: *Senza sangue* (with Anne Sofie von Otter, mezzo-soprano & Russell Braun, baritone; U.S. premiere of New York Philharmonic co-commission, with the support of the Kravis Prize for New Music, with the Kölner Philharmonie)

May 23 (matinee)

New York Philharmonic

Avery Fisher Hall

Dvorák: String Quintet in E-flat (with Sheryl Staples, violin; Michelle Kim, violin; **Alan Gilbert, viola**; Cynthia Phelps, viola; Carter Brey, cello)

Brahms: Piano Concerto No. 1 (Susanna Mälkki, conductor; Jonathan Biss, piano)

May 25

New York Philharmonic

The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine

Free Annual Memorial Day Concert: Program TBA

June 10-13

New York Philharmonic

Avery Fisher Hall

Honegger: *Joan of Arc at the Stake* (staged; U.S. Premiere of August 2012 Saito Kinen Festival Matsumoto production under the artistic direction of Seiji Ozawa)

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; Chorus TBA

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