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Gilbert leads BSO & New York Philharmonic, makes Leipzig Gewandhaus debut

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Alan Gilbert Launches 2013 with Return to Boston Symphony, Gewandhaus Orchestra Debut, and Multiple Programs with New York Philharmonic

“Wherever Gilbert goes, he’s got his sound. And it’s stirring.” – Los Angeles Times

Alan Gilbert launches 2013 with a return to the **Boston Symphony** (Jan 10–15), followed by his debut with Leipzig’s legendary **Gewandhaus Orchestra** (Feb 7–8) and a smorgasbord of winter programs with the **New York Philharmonic**, where his contract as music director was recently extended through the 2016–17 season. This auspicious start follows another banner year for the conductor, whose extraordinary achievements recently graced two *New York Times* **“Best of 2012”** lists.

After Gilbert’s last appearance with the **Boston Symphony**, the *Boston Globe* expressed admiration for his “flair for programming with rich contrasts” and his rapport with the orchestra. In Charles Ives’s visionary Fourth Symphony, “Gilbert chose a spacious pacing and found clarity and structure within the chaos. He drew a beautifully rich tone from the strings in the third movement fugue, and traced the broadest of arcs in the spiritually searching finale. At the very end, the music created just the desired effect: it seemed to evaporate into a clear night sky.”

For his four upcoming performances with the great New England ensemble, the conductor mixes a blend of vibrant 20th-century orchestral works – Dutilleux’s *Métaboles*, Stravinsky’s Symphony in Three Movements, and Ravel’s *La valse* – with Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto, performed by soloist Julian Rachlin in his BSO debut (Rachlin is substituting in these performances for Lisa Batiashvili, who withdrew because of a back injury).

In early February, Gilbert will make his eagerly awaited first appearances with one of the world’s oldest symphony orchestras, Leipzig’s historic **Gewandhaus Orchestra**. “Performing with the Leipzig Gewandhaus has been a dream of mine for a very long time,” the conductor confesses. “The history of the city and the intensely musical culture there is something I have long admired.” Gilbert will lead an all-Russian program that includes Prokofiev’s First (“Classical”) Symphony and Tchaikovsky’s epic Fourth Symphony.

Back at the helm of the **New York Philharmonic**, Gilbert embarks on a series of programs that showcases “the Philharmonic that Mr. Gilbert has worked toward since his start: a brilliant organization in which individual virtuosity and ensemble unanimity are a given, resulting in music enlivened without need for excess or distortion” (*New York Times*). For performances at Lincoln Center (Feb 14–16), Tchaikovsky’s Sixth (“Pathétique”) Symphony is coupled with Brahms’s Second Piano Concerto featuring venerable Austrian pianist **Rudolf Buchbinder** – whose benchmark recording of the complete Brahms concertos “remain[s] a modern-day point

of reference” (*Classics Today*) – as soloist.

The appointment of **Christopher Rouse** as the Philharmonic’s second **Marie-Josée Kravis Composer-in-Residence** attests to Gilbert’s commitment to new music, and homegrown new music at that. Before leading April’s world premiere of the American composer’s *Prospero’s Rooms* – a New York Philharmonic commission (April 17-20) – Gilbert directs the orchestra in performances of Rouse’s *Phantasmata* (Feb 21–22). This hallucinatory work shares the program with Brahms’s potent First Symphony and Ernest Bloch’s *Schelomo*, featuring the “rapturously heartfelt” (*Washington Post*) playing of young German cellist **Jan Vogler**. Tchaikovsky’s “Pathétique” Symphony, Brahms’s First Symphony, and *Schelomo* are all also on the agenda when Gilbert takes the Philharmonic on tour to **Ann Arbor, MI** (Feb 23–24).

Then, as winter gives way to spring, he and the orchestra return to Lincoln Center to launch their latest enterprise: **The Bach Variations: A Philharmonic Festival**. In the first installment of this new initiative, Gilbert puts his own stamp on the Baroque master’s monumental Mass in B minor, in which they will be joined by a starry quartet of vocal soloists – soprano **Dorothea Röschmann**, mezzo **Anne Sofie von Otter**, tenor **Steve Davislim**, and bass-baritone **Eric Owens** – supported by the **New York Choral Artists** under the direction of **Joseph Flummerfelt** (March 13–16). Describing the Mass as “a consummate masterpiece,” the conductor explains: “This is the kind of piece that I think orchestras should be playing and I feel very privileged to be able to touch this music.”

Two of Gilbert’s latest ventures recently won kudos in the **New York Times**. The newspaper named the first installment of the Philharmonic’s “**Nielsen Project**” – which features the work of Danish master Carl Nielsen – one of the “**Best Classical Albums of 2012**,” praising Gilbert’s “pulsing and insightful accounts of the Second Symphony (‘The Four Temperaments’) and the Third (‘Sinfonia espansiva’).” The disc, released last September on Dacapo, is the first in a series that will offer the Danish composer’s six symphonies and three concertos on four CDs, to be released as a complete set on the 150th anniversary of Nielsen’s birth in 2015.

Similarly, in a slideshow entitled “**2012: The Year in Culture**,” the *Times* observed: “One of the most adventurous concerts of 2012 was the ‘**Philharmonic 360**’ program, conducted by Alan Gilbert, at the Park Avenue Armory.” This landmark event showcased a spectacular program of spatial music – by composers ranging from Gabrieli and Mozart to Ives, Boulez, and Stockhausen – at the venue described as a “playground for artists with outsized imaginations” (*Financial Times*). A resounding success, the concert inspired a wealth of rave reviews. The *New Yorker* called it perhaps Gilbert’s “boldest venture to date,” while the *Wall Street Journal* judged it “the musical equivalent of team skydiving,” and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* recognized its “true event status in a city where even everyday life can be an event.” As Anthony Tommasini pointed out in 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.”

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

Alan Gilbert: engagements, winter 2013

Jan 10, 11, 12 & 15, 2013

Boston, MA (Symphony Hall)

Boston Symphony Orchestra

Dutilleux: *Métaboles* for Orchestra

Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto in D, Op. 35 (with Julian Rachlin)

Stravinsky: Symphony in Three Movements

Ravel: *La valse*

Jan 31 & Feb 1

Hamburg, Germany (Laeiszhalle Musikhalle)

NDR Hamburg Sinfonieorchester

Program TBD

Feb 7 & 8

Leipzig, Germany (Grosser Saal, Gewandhaus)

Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra

Prokofiev: Symphony No. 1 in D, Op. 25

Prokofiev: Violin Concerto No. 1 in D, Op. 19 (with Lisa Batiashvili)

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

Feb 14, 15 & 16

New York, NY

New York Philharmonic

Brahms: Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Rudolf Buchbinder)

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6

Feb 21 & 22

New York, NY

New York Philharmonic

Rouse: *Phantasmata*

Bloch: *Schelomo* (with Jan Vogler, cello)

Brahms: Symphony No. 1

Feb 23

Ann Arbor, MI (Hill Auditorium)

New York Philharmonic

Mozart: Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*

Mozart: Symphony No. 36

Brahms: Symphony No. 1

Feb 24

Ann Arbor, MI (Hill Auditorium)

New York Philharmonic

Mussorgsky: *Night on Bald Mountain*

Bloch: *Schelomo* (with Jan Vogler, cello)

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6

March 13, 14, 15 & 16

New York, NY

New York Philharmonic

The Bach Variations: A Philharmonic Festival

J.S. Bach: Mass in B minor

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