



**Alan Gilbert**  
Music Director  
The Yoko Nagae Ceschina Chair

**2011/12 Season News**

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**Eric Latzky**  
Vice President, Communications  
212 875 5700  
212 875 5717 Fax

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Contact: Katherine E. Johnson  
(212) 875-5718; [johnsonk@nyphil.org](mailto:johnsonk@nyphil.org)

## **ALAN GILBERT AND THE NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC**

### **MUSIC DIRECTOR TO CONDUCT STEVEN STUCKY'S *SON ET LUMIÈRE*, BERLIOZ'S *LES NUITS D'ÉTÉ* WITH MEZZO-SOPRANO JOYCE DiDONATO AND MUSORGSKY/RAVEL'S *PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION* FEBRUARY 23, 25, AND 28, 2012**

Music Director Alan Gilbert, The Yoko Nagae Ceschina Chair, will conduct the New York Philharmonic in Steven Stucky's *Son et lumière*, a nine-minute work from 1988; Berlioz's song cycle, *Les Nuits d'été*, with mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato as soloist; and Ravel's orchestration of Musorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Thursday, February 23, 2012, at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, February 25, at 8:00 p.m., and Tuesday, February 28, at 7:30 p.m.

The concert will also be performed at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia, on Friday, February 24, 2012, at 8:00 p.m.

This program will be released May 15, 2012, as part of *Alan Gilbert and the New York Philharmonic 2011–12 Season* recording series.

In discussing the program, Mr. Gilbert noted that "Steven Stucky is a very important American composer. *Son et lumière* is one of his early works that I particularly love," he said. "As the title would indicate, it's about contrasts — sound and color. And there is a definite connection between this work and the kind of French impressionistic color of Berlioz's *Les Nuits d'été*." He also noted that "It's easy to forget that Musorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* was originally written for piano because the Ravel version we know is so iconic and compelling. Ravel extracted the essence of the piece and turned it into a kaleidoscopic, wonderful, absolutely convincing orchestral work." Mr. Gilbert described mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato as an "ebullient, effervescent stage personality" who has "natural charisma as well as a gorgeous voice."

#### **Related Events**

- **Pre-Concert Talk**

Arbie Orenstein, author and professor of music at the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College, will introduce the program one hour before each

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performance in the Helen Hull Room, unless otherwise noted. Pre-Concert Talks are \$7; discounts available for multiple concerts, students, and groups. Attendance is limited to 90 people. Information: [nyphil.org](http://nyphil.org) or (212) 875-5656

- ***On the Music: The New York Philharmonic Podcast***

New York Philharmonic Audio Producer Mark Travis is the producer and host of this program. Formerly with the WFMT Radio Network, he is the producer of the 52-week-per-year nationally and internationally syndicated radio series, *The New York Philharmonic This Week*. These award-winning previews of upcoming programs — through musical selections as well as interviews with guest artists, conductors, and Orchestra musicians — are available at [nyphil.org/podcast](http://nyphil.org/podcast) and from iTunes.

- **National and International Radio Broadcast**

This concert will be broadcast the week of March 12, 2012,\* on *The New York Philharmonic This Week*, a radio concert series syndicated weekly to more than 300 stations nationally, and to 122 outlets internationally, by the WFMT Radio Network. The 52-week series, hosted by actor Alec Baldwin, is generously underwritten by The Kaplen Foundation, the Audrey Love Charitable Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Philharmonic's corporate partner, MetLife Foundation. The broadcast will be available on the Philharmonic's Website, [nyphil.org](http://nyphil.org). The program is broadcast locally in the New York metropolitan area on 105.9 FM WQXR on Thursdays at 9:00 p.m.

\*Check local listings for broadcast and program information.

### Artists

New York Philharmonic Music Director **Alan Gilbert**, The Yoko Nagae Ceschina Chair, began his tenure in September 2009, creating what *New York* magazine called “a fresh future for the Philharmonic.” The first native New Yorker to hold the post, he has sought to make the Orchestra a point of civic pride for both the city and the country.

Mr. Gilbert's creative approach to programming combines works in fresh and innovative ways. He has forged artistic partnerships, introducing the positions of The Marie-Josée Kravis Composer-in-Residence and The Mary and James G. Wallach Artist-in-Residence, an annual three-week festival, and *CONTACT!*, the new-music series. In 2011–12 he conducts world premieres, Mahler symphonies, a residency at London's Barbican Centre, tours to Europe and California, and a season-concluding musical exploration of space at the Park Avenue Armory featuring Stockhausen's theatrical immersion, *Gruppen*. He also made his Philharmonic soloist debut performing J.S. Bach's Concerto for Two Violins alongside Frank Peter Zimmermann in October 2011. Last season's highlights included two tours of European music capitals, Carnegie Hall's 120th Anniversary Concert, and Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, hailed by *The Washington Post* as “another victory,” building on 2010's wildly successful staging of

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Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre*, which *The New York Times* called "an instant Philharmonic milestone."

In September 2011 Alan Gilbert became Director of Conducting and Orchestral Studies at The Juilliard School, where he is the first to hold the William Schuman Chair in Musical Studies. Conductor Laureate of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of Hamburg's NDR Symphony Orchestra, he regularly conducts the world's leading orchestras, such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, and the Berlin Philharmonic.

Alan Gilbert made his acclaimed Metropolitan Opera debut in 2008 leading John Adams's *Doctor Atomic*, the DVD of which was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording in 2011. Other recordings have garnered Grammy Award nominations and top honors from the *Chicago Tribune* and *Gramophone* magazine. Mr. Gilbert studied at Harvard University, The Curtis Institute of Music, and Juilliard, and was assistant conductor of The Cleveland Orchestra (1995–97). In May 2010 he received an Honorary Doctor of Music degree from Curtis, and in December 2011 he received Columbia University's Ditson Conductor's Award for his "exceptional commitment to the performance of works by American composers and to contemporary music."

Mezzo-soprano **Joyce DiDonato** has gained renown in operas by Rossini, Handel, and Mozart, as well as in high-profile world premieres. Born in Kansas and a graduate of Wichita State University, she trained with the young artist programs of the San Francisco, Houston, and Santa Fe opera companies. Her signature parts include Rossini's *La cenerentola* and *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Last season Ms. DiDonato made her debut at the Deutsche Oper, and performed at the Madrid's Teatro Real, Houston Grand Opera, Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and on a European tour. In addition to appearances with the New York Philharmonic in New York and London, highlights of her current season include the title roles in R. Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier* and Rossini's *La donna del lago* at Milan's Teatro alla Scala; the world premiere of the Baroque pastiche *The Enchanted Island* at The Metropolitan Opera; and the title role in Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* at Houston Grand Opera.

An exclusive recording artist with EMI/Virgin Classics, Ms. DiDonato's third solo CD is titled *Diva Divo*. Her many honors include The Metropolitan Opera's Beverly Sills Award and the Royal Philharmonic Society's Singer of the Year Award; in 2010 she was named Artist of the Year by *Gramophone*. She performed most recently with the New York Philharmonic in May 2009, when she sang in the world premiere of Peter Lieberson's *The World in Flower*, conducted by Music Director Alan Gilbert.

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### **Repertoire**

**Steven Stucky** took the title of *Son et Lumière* from the sound and light shows often staged at tourist venues, historic sites, and buildings. The composer wanted to evoke the play of color and light over surfaces and textures. In his own program notes, Stucky writes: “I tried in this music to recapture the élan and immediacy that regular meters and repetitive rhythms make possible — the sort of thing forbidden during the modernist regime but later restored in the ‘minimalist’ work of composers like John Adams, Steve Reich, and many others. Throughout its brief nine minutes, therefore, the piece is built almost exclusively of short, busy ostinato figures — my attempt, I suppose, to achieve the rhythmic vitality of minimalism, but without giving in to the over-simple harmonic language that sometimes comes with it.” *Son et Lumière* was commissioned by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and premiered on May 18, 1989, with David Zinman conducting. This is its first performance by the New York Philharmonic.

**Hector Berlioz**’s intimate song cycle *Les Nuits d’été* is a setting of six poems from an 1838 collection by the composer’s close friend, the French Romantic writer Théophile Gautier. Originally composed for voice and piano in 1840–41, the orchestral version came later, in 1856, at the request of Swiss publisher Rieter-Biedermann, who had attended a concert performance of one of the songs. The poems Berlioz selected are linked by the theme of sentiments aroused by love and parting, and the texts are resplendent with the characteristic imagery of the Romantic style: young lovers in spring (*Villanelle*), the haunting aroma of a faded rose blossom (*The Spectre of the Rose*), a grey tomb in the shadow of a yew tree (*In the Cemetery*), the plaintive lament of a lover for her lost love (*On the Lagoons*), distance from a rose-colored smile (*Absence*), and the imaginings of distant and exotic lands (*The Unknown Isle*). The song cycle was first performed by the New York Philharmonic in April 1953, with Dimtri Mitropoulos conducting and soprano Eleanor Steber as soloist. The complete cycle was performed most recently in April 2006 with Sir Colin Davis on the podium and tenor Ian Bostridge as soloist.

**Modest Mussorgsky** composed *Pictures at an Exhibition* as a set of piano pieces in June 1874. The work was inspired by drawings, paintings, and architectural sketches by Victor Hartmann, a close friend of Mussorgsky’s, whose death in the summer of 1873 brought great grief to the composer. Mussorgsky imagined himself “roving through the exhibition, now leisurely, now briskly in order to come close to a picture that had attracted his attention, and at times sadly, thinking of his departed friend.” Many musicians have arranged Mussorgsky’s *Pictures*, most notably **Maurice Ravel**, whose orchestral version has become a classic in its own right. The first New York Philharmonic performance of Ravel’s orchestration took place in March 1930, under Arturo Toscanini. It was most recently performed in July 2011 at the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival, led by Ludovic Morlot.

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Single tickets for these performances start at \$33. Tickets for Open Rehearsals are \$18. Pre-Concert Talks are \$7; discounts are available for multiple concerts, students, and groups (visit [nyphil.org/preconcert](http://nyphil.org/preconcert) for more information). All other tickets may be purchased online at [nyphil.org](http://nyphil.org) or by calling **(212) 875-5656**, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets may also be purchased at the **Avery Fisher Hall Box Office** or the **Alice Tully Hall Box Office** at Lincoln Center, Broadway at 65th Street. The Box Office opens at 10:00 a.m. Monday through Saturday, and at noon on Sunday. On performance evenings, the Box Office closes one-half hour after performance time; other evenings it closes at 6:00 p.m. A limited number of \$12.50 tickets for select concerts may be available through the Internet for students within 10 days of the performance, or in person the day of. Valid identification is required. To determine ticket availability, call the Philharmonic's Customer Relations Department at **(212) 875-5656**. [Ticket prices subject to change.]

For press tickets, call Lanore Carr in the New York Philharmonic Communications Department at (212) 875-5714, or e-mail her at [carrl@nyphil.org](mailto:carrl@nyphil.org).

For tickets to the concert at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts on February 24, please call the box office at (215) 893-1999 or go to [www.kimmelcenter.org](http://www.kimmelcenter.org). For press tickets, contact Dafni Comerota at (215) 790-5847 or at [ddcomerota@kimmelcenter.org](mailto:ddcomerota@kimmelcenter.org).

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**New York Philharmonic**

Avery Fisher Hall

Thursday, February 23, 2012, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 25, 2012, 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 28, 2012, 7:30 p.m.

Pre-Concert Talk (one hour before each concert) with Arbie Orenstein, author and professor of music at the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College

Alan Gilbert, conductor

Joyce DiDonato, mezzo-soprano

Steven STUCKY

*Son et lumière*

BERLIOZ

*Les Nuits d'été*

MUSORGSKY/Ravel

*Pictures at an Exhibition*

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**New York Philharmonic**

Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts

Friday, February 24, 2012, 8:00 p.m.

Same program

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