



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 14, 2010

**ALAN GILBERT, MUSIC DIRECTOR OF THE NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC,  
TO SPEAK AT CURTIS COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES**

**Honorary Degrees Awarded to Alan Gilbert and H.F. “Gerry” and Marguerite Lenfest**

The Curtis Institute of Music says farewell to the seventy-seventh graduating class on Saturday, May 15 in the school’s Field Concert Hall. The commencement speaker will be Alan Gilbert, a Curtis graduate who is currently in his inaugural season as music director of the New York Philharmonic.

Thirty-six students are expected to graduate. Twenty-seven students will receive a Bachelor of Music degree, five students will receive a Diploma, and four students will receive a Master of Music degree.

Honorary Doctor of Music degrees will be presented to Mr. Gilbert, as well as to H.F. “Gerry” and Marguerite Lenfest. Mr. Lenfest is chairman of the board of trustees, and Mrs. Lenfest is a member of the board of overseers. Lenfest Hall, currently under construction on the 1600 block of Locust Street, is named in their honor.

“We feel privileged to bestow these honors on the Lenfests and on Alan Gilbert,” said Curtis President Roberto Díaz. “Gerry and Marguerite Lenfest have been wonderfully generous supporters of Curtis. They are deeply involved with the school and have inspired so many others to follow their example. And Alan Gilbert is a superlative artist who has shared his talents and wisdom generously with our students as a visiting conductor.”

**Alan Gilbert** began his tenure as music director of the New York Philharmonic in September 2009, becoming the first native New Yorker to hold the post. For his first season he has introduced a number of new initiatives: the positions of the Marie-Josée Kravis Composer-in-Residence, held by Magnus Lindberg, and Artist-in-Residence, held by Thomas Hampson; an annual three-week festival; and *CONTACT!*, the New York Philharmonic’s new-music series. This month he conducts staged performances of Ligeti’s only opera, *Le Grand Macabre*, the first time this seminal opera has been performed in New York.

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This season he also returns to Europe to continue his relationship with Hamburg's NDR Symphony Orchestra, where he has been principal guest conductor since 2004. On a new recording from the BIS label, released in 2009, Mr. Gilbert conducts the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra in Mahler's Ninth Symphony. The recording—representing one of his final performances as the orchestra's chief conductor and artistic advisor—was made shortly before he was named its conductor laureate in 2008. The disc was named a *Gramophone* "Editor's Choice" recording and the *Chicago Tribune's* Classical CD of the Year.

Mr. Gilbert regularly conducts other leading orchestras in the United States and abroad, including the Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco symphony orchestras; the Cleveland and Philadelphia orchestras; Munich's Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra; Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw; the Berlin Philharmonic; and Orchestre National de Lyon. In 2003 he was named the first music director of Santa Fe Opera, a position he held for three seasons. Last season he conducted the Metropolitan Opera premiere of John Adams's *Doctor Atomic*.

Curtis Board Chairman **H.F. "Gerry" Lenfest** graduated from Mercersburg Academy, Washington and Lee University, and Columbia Law School, going on to practice law with the New York firm of Davis Polk & Wardwell. He joined Walter Annenberg's Triangle Publications, Inc. in Philadelphia as associate counsel in 1965 and later became editorial director and publisher of Triangle's *Seventeen* magazine and president of its cable television operations. In 1974 Mr. Lenfest formed Lenfest Communications, Inc., which grew to become one of the top twelve cable television companies in the United States. In 2000 Mr. Lenfest and his children transferred their ownership in the cable television operations of Lenfest Communications to Comcast Corporation.

In addition to heading the Curtis Board of Trustees, Mr. Lenfest is chairman of the James Madison Council of the Library of Congress and the American Revolution Center and is former chairman of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. He serves on the Board of Trustees of Columbia University and is a former trustee of Washington & Lee University and a past president of the Board of Mercersburg Academy.

**Marguerite Lenfest** has been a member of the Curtis Board of Overseers since 2002. She is an active member of several nonprofit institutions, including the Lenfest Foundation, and is a trustee of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and Woodmere Art Museum. She is a former trustee of her alma mater, Wilson College, and has served on the board of the Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art at Ursinus College.

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The **Curtis Institute of Music** educates and trains exceptionally gifted young musicians for careers as performing artists on the highest professional level. One of the world's leading conservatories, Curtis is highly selective and provides full-tuition scholarships to all of its 160 students. In this intimate environment, students receive personalized attention from a celebrated faculty. A busy schedule of performances is at the heart of Curtis's distinctive "learn by doing" approach. This philosophy has produced an impressive number of notable artists since the school's founding in 1924, from such legends as Leonard Bernstein and Samuel Barber to current stars Juan Diego Flórez, Alan Gilbert, Hilary Hahn, Jennifer Higdon, Leila Josefowicz, Lang Lang, and Time for Three.

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