

E-CONCERT PROGRAMME

Malaysian
Philharmonic
Orchestra



METROPOLITAN RHYTHMS:
*The Emigré and
the American*

2026 SEASON

PERFORMANCES AT
DEWAN FILHARMONIK PETRONAS



MALAYSIAN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) gave its inaugural performance at Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS (DFP) on 17 August 1998 and has since provided the ultimate concert experience through music that entertains, educates and inspires.

Today, the MPO is made up of talented musicians from Malaysia and other nations, a beautiful example of harmony among different cultures and nationalities.

With immaculate versatility that transcends genres, the MPO continues to present classical masterpieces, film music, pop, jazz, traditional and contemporary works including anime music.

The MPO's artistry and vitality have been lauded by acclaimed international luminaries such as Lorin Maazel, Sir Neville Marriner, Joshua Bell, Harry Connick Jr., José Carreras, Andrea Bocelli, Kiri Te Kanawa, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Chris Botti and Branford Marsalis. Renowned local artists who

have performed with the MPO include S.M. Salim, Sheila Majid, M Nasir, Siti Nurhaliza, Jamal Abdillah, Ella, Dayang Nurfaizah and Aishah.

Affirming its stature in the Asian region, the MPO has performed in Singapore, Japan, Korea, Australia, China, Taiwan and Vietnam besides national tours around Malaysia. The MPO has also released 21 CDs.

Through its talent development programme, the MPO is dedicated in nurturing an appreciation among the young generation through its knowledge and skills transfer to the Malaysian Philharmonic Youth Orchestra. This initiative is supported by contributions from the public.

Beyond its concert schedule, the MPO expands its services to commercial purposes such as musician hire, tours, education and outreach programme and beneficial partnerships.

The MPO remains steadfast in its mission to share the depth and power of great music for all walks of life. Its main benefactor is PETRONAS and its patron is YABhg. Tun Dr. Siti Hasmah Haji Mohd Ali.

Metropolitan Rhythms: The Emigré and the American

Sat 18 Jul 2026, 8:00PM

02 Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
04 Aziz Shokhakov, conductor
05 Makoto Ozone, piano

PROGRAMME

WEILL

Symphonic Nocturne from *Lady
in the Dark* 17 mins

GERSHWIN

Piano Concerto in F 30 mins

20-mins intermission

STRAVINSKY

Petrushka (1911/1947) 34 mins

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***"It takes a vision to conduct
such a masterpiece [...]
Aziz Shokhakimov has it all."***

ResMusica, 2022

conductor

Aziz Shokhakimov

Aziz Shokhakimov is Music Director of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg and Artistic Director of the Tekfen Philharmonic Orchestra. Orchestras he has conducted include the Bergen and Seoul Philharmonics, Orchestre de Paris, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, NDR Elbphilharmonie and Tokyo Symphony. In North America, he has conducted the Dallas, Atlanta, Seattle, Toronto, Houston and Utah Symphony Orchestras.

He is equally prolific in the operatic repertory, having conducted Tchaikovsky's *Pique Dame* at the Bayerischer Staatsoper, Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* at both the Bayerischer Staatsoper and Opera National de Paris, Wagner's *Lohengrin* at the Opera National du Rhin and productions such as *The Queen of Spades*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Salome* and *Tosca* at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein.

He has released three recordings with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg under Warner Classics; Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe* (2025), Prokofiev's Symphony No.1 and Suites Nos.1 and 2 from *Romeo and Juliet* (2024) and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No.5 and *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture* (2023). Their concerts were frequently broadcast on Medici.TV including Brahms' *A German Requiem* and Verdi's *Requiem*.

In 2016, he won the prestigious Salzburg Festival Young Conductors Award. He returned to the Salzburg Festival in 2017 for the prize winner's concert with the RSO Wien and conducted the opening ceremony of the festival with Patricia Kopatchinskaja in 2019.

Born in 1988 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Shokhakimov entered the Uspensky Music School for Gifted Children at six, studying violin, viola and orchestral conducting under Vladimir Neymer. At 13, he made his conducting debut with National Symphony Orchestra of Uzbekistan; in 2001, he was appointed as its Assistant Conductor and in 2006, became its Principal Conductor.

He conducted his first opera, *Carmen*, at 14 at the National Opera of Uzbekistan and at just 21, won second place at the Gustav Mahler International Conducting Competition in 2010 under the auspices of the Bamberger Symphoniker. In 2023, he received the French critics' prize 'La personnalité musicale of the year'.

A portrait of Makoto Ozone, a middle-aged man with dark, wavy hair, smiling. He is wearing a dark blue button-down shirt. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green foliage and a dark structure, possibly a piano, on the right.

piano

Makoto Ozone

“...thrilling, virtuosic and unabashedly personal.”

The New York Times

Makoto Ozone is a unique force in jazz and classical music. Born in Kobe, Japan, he was self-taught in jazz, under his father's guidance, on the organ and piano. He came to public attention at a Carnegie Hall recital in 1983 after graduating from Berklee College of Music in Boston. He became the first Japanese artist to sign an exclusive contract with CBS and released a debut album, *Ozone*, a year later.

He earned a Grammy nomination in 2003 which brought him to the forefront of the international jazz scene, recording and touring with musicians including Gary Burton, Chick Corea, Paquito D'Rivera, Anna Maria Jopek and Branford Marsalis. In 2004, he formed his own Big Band in Japan called No Name Horses.

He has also expanded into the classical repertory. After performing Gershwin's *Rhapsody In Blue* in 1996, he now performs classical concertos with major orchestras. He has over 300 compositions to his name. His concerto *MOGAMI* received its European premiere in 2024 with the RSB Berlin and Duncan Ward.

Ozone has released over 30 albums under his name and as a composer in solo, duo and trio settings, and also as a collaborator. 2024 saw the successful release of his album *TRiNFiNiTY*.

Ozone has collaborated with prominent conductors including Marin Alsop, Bertie Baigent, Jader Bignamini, Alan Gilbert, Lahav Shani, Kahchun Wong and Kazuki Yamada. He has performed with orchestras including the New York, Los Angeles and Rotterdam Philharmonics, San Francisco Symphony, and Japan's NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra and Sapporo Symphony.

In 2025/26 season, he will tour Europe and Japan with the Tokyo Philharmonic and Myung-whun Chung, and make a debut with the Colorado and Indianapolis Symphonies under the baton of Jun Märkl. He was invited to perform at Toronto's Koerner Hall to celebrate Oscar Peterson's 100th birthday. He will make his London concerto debut with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and return to the Royal Scottish National Orchestra with Kevin John Edusei. His trio *TRiNFiNiTY* will tour Australia.

His accolades include the Kinokuniya Theatre Award, Kobe City Culture Award, Fumio Nanri Prize, Hyogo Prefecture Culture Award, and Art Encouragement of Education, Culture, Sports, Science Minister's Prize. In 2018, he received the Medal of Honour with Purple Ribbon by the Government of Japan, the highest award bestowed to individuals who made significant contributions to the nation's academic or cultural life.

PROGRAMME NOTES

In one way or another, all three composers on tonight's programme are renowned for their theatre music, and all three were either born in the USA or immigrated there. German-born Kurt Weill had seven shows on Broadway including the hugely popular *Three-Penny Opera*, which ran for 2,600-plus performances (*Lady in the Dark*, whose music is represented on this programme, ran for "only" 467 performances – still a respectable run). George Gershwin's Piano Concerto in F is pure concert music, but this composer also enjoyed fame on the Broadway stage, with no fewer than eleven shows. Igor Stravinsky never made it to Broadway but his three Russian-inspired ballet scores for *The Firebird*, *The Rite of Spring* and *Petrushka* (which we hear tonight) rank among the most popular concert music of the entire 20th century.

KURT WEILL (1900-1950)

Symphonic Nocturne from *Lady in the Dark* (1941/1949)

THE BACKGROUND



Kurt Weill left his native Germany in 1933 in the face of the Nazi onslaught, eventually settling in New York City in 1935 where he remained for the rest of his brief life. Weill knew from the age of 19 that his destiny lay in the theatre. His most famous works, set to texts by Berthold Brecht, were *Mahagonny* (1927; later to become the full-length *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*) and *Die Dreigroschenoper* (*Three-Penny Opera*, 1928) which saw over 10,000 performances in eighteen languages in

its first five years alone. The Broadway musical *Lady in the Dark* opened at the Alvin Theatre (today the Neil Simon) on 23 January 1941 and closed more than a year later after 467 performances. The music was by Weill, the lyrics by Ira Gershwin (brother of George). A 17-minute concert suite was arranged by Robert Russell Bennett and premiered by the New York Philharmonic under Maurice Abravanel on 30 July 1949 at Lewisohn Stadium.

THE MUSIC

In the storyline, the lead character, a successful fashion magazine editor named Liza Elliott, undergoes psychotherapy in three "dream sequences" (Glamour, Wedding and Circus) into which all the show's musical numbers are incorporated except for "My Ship." Bits of "My Ship" are heard throughout the show but only at the end is it heard complete, thus signifying the success of Liza's therapy. In the Symphonic Nocturne (misnamed as much of the music is lively, at times even raucous), "My Ship" serves as the opening, followed by half a dozen other tunes including "The Saga of Jenny" (the Suite's concluding music) which became a blues standard recorded by the likes of Julie Andrews and Benny Goodman.

GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898-1937) Piano Concerto in F (1928)

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio - Andante con moto
- III. Allegro agitato

THE BACKGROUND



It is surely symbolic that George Gershwin was born on one shore of America (Brooklyn, New York) and died on the other (Hollywood, California) for his music has been played, embraced, loved and cherished as has that of virtually no other classical composer this country has produced. His first major orchestral work was *Rhapsody in Blue*, premiered at a historic concert in New York's Aeolian Hall in 1924. At that concert was Walter Damrosch, conductor of the New York Symphony (which merged with the Philharmonic in 1928). He was impressed enough to ask the Symphony Society of New York to commission Gershwin to write a full-length concerto for piano and orchestra. The premiere took place 3 December 1925 with the composer as soloist.

THE MUSIC

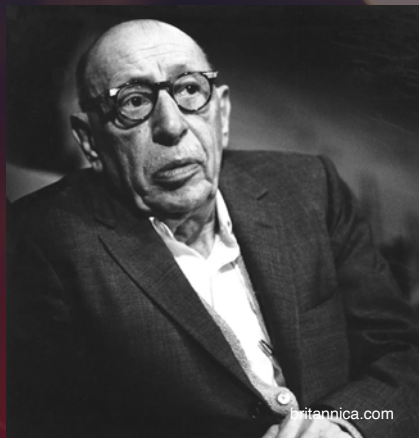
The first movement is in freely modified classical sonata form, with a restless and energetic first theme announced first in the bassoon (immediately following the percussion introduction), then in turn by bass clarinet, trumpet and strings. A second theme – poignant and lyrical – is introduced by the piano in a long solo passage. The lively Charleston dance rhythm pervades the movement, which is infused with “the young enthusiastic spirit of American life,” in Gershwin’s words. The slow movement has a “poetic, nocturnal atmosphere which has come to be referred to as the American blues but in a purer form than that in which they are usually treated” (Gershwin). The brilliant, vigorous finale employs the rondo form. Themes from the earlier movements are recalled.

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)

Petrushka (1911/1947)

- I. The Shrovetide Fair
- II. Petrushka's Room
- III. The Moor's Room
- IV. The Shrovetide Fair (towards evening)

THE BACKGROUND



In his memoirs, Stravinsky relates how he “had in mind a distinct picture of a puppet, suddenly endowed with life, exasperating the patience of the orchestra with diabolical cascades of *arpeggi*.” He called it *Petrushka* – “the immortal and unhappy hero of every fair in all countries”. The 34-minute score was first performed in Paris’ Théâtre du Châtelet on 13 June 1911. The scenario, scenery and costumes were by Alexandre Benois (to whom the score is dedicated) and the choreography by Michel Fokine. The principal roles were danced by Vaslav Nijinsky (*Petrushka*), Tamara Karsavina (the Ballerina), Alexander Orlov (the Moor) and Enrico Cecchetti (the Magician). Pierre Monteux conducted. Years later, mostly for copyright reasons, Stravinsky slightly revised the score and had it published in

1947; this is the version usually heard today. The neatly symmetrical, four-part scenario calls for two outer scenes set in Admiralty Square, St. Petersburg at Shrovetide (a Christian liturgical event) and two inner scenes, each in a different private room.

THE MUSIC

SCENE I: THE SHROVETIDE FAIR – We are immediately plunged into the hustle and bustle of a carnival scene, with all its attendant noise, confusion, high spirits, dances, magicians, vendors, side shows, and attractions of all sorts - a veritable riot of sound and colour. The opening melody for the flute, played against a background of horns and clarinets simulating the sounds of an accordion, is the first of numerous authentic folk melodies Stravinsky incorporated into *Petrushka*, this one an Easter song from the province of Smolensk.

A procession of drunken revelers approaches; an organ grinder plays a popular Russian folksong; a man with a music box arrives with another tune (flutes and clarinet), all of them competing for the crowd’s attention. Suddenly, the Magician steps out from behind the curtains of a little theatre to present three puppets – *Petrushka*, the Ballerina, and the Moor. After charming the audience with his flute playing, he does some hocus-pocus and abacadabra (mysterious mutterings in the orchestra) and breathes life into his three puppets, who execute the brilliant Russian Dance.



SCENE II: PETRUSHKA'S ROOM – The printed score describes the following scenario: “While the Magician’s magic has imbued all three puppets with human feelings and emotions, it is Petrushka who feels and suffers most. Bitterly conscious of his ugliness and grotesque appearance, he feels himself to be an outsider, and he resents the way he is completely dependent on his cruel master. He tries to console himself by falling in love with the Ballerina.” The music follows Petrushka’s every shift of emotional response to his surroundings: his terrified shriek as he is thrust through the door, his tearful sobs and whimpers (clarinets, bassoon), his frantic racing about the room (piano) and screams of rage at his cruel master (full orchestra, with piercing “screams” from the trumpets).

SCENE III: THE MOOR'S ROOM – The scene is rife with menace and danger. The Moor is, as the score tells us, “clad in a magnificent costume, lying on a divan, playing with a coconut.” The Ballerina enters, and is romantically attracted to this brutish, stupid, but handsome and obviously prosperous Moor. She tries to impress him with a dance, which gives the orchestra’s solo trumpet player as many *pirouettes* and *jetés* to perform as she has. She next dances a waltz, both of whose genial tunes Stravinsky borrowed from Joseph Lanner (1801-43), one of the founders of the Viennese dance music craze. Petrushka creeps in, furiously jealous (soft trumpet fanfares), hoping to “rescue” the Ballerina from the Moor, but he is unceremoniously tossed out.

SCENE IV: THE SHROVETIDE FAIR – We are back where we started, amidst the noisy, swirling crowds at the carnival. It is now evening. Everyone is singing, dancing, drinking, making merry. Stravinsky takes us from one group of revelers and entertainers to another, nearly all of whom are portrayed in Russian folksongs and dances. Petrushka suddenly rushes out from the little theatre, pursued by the Moor, who eventually catches up to him and destroys him with one sweep of his scimitar. The Magician demonstrates to the astonished crowd that it is nothing more than straw and sawdust. But as the Magician begins to drag off his lifeless doll, he glances up at the roof of the theatre to see Petrushka’s immortal spirit mocking him.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Formerly a horn player in the Montreal Symphony, Robert Markow has been writing programme notes for more than forty years for musical organizations in Canada, the USA, Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore. He taught at Montreal's McGill University for many years, and as a Wagner specialist, has lectured at the Bayreuth Festival and the Wagner Society of New York. He writes regularly for the journals *Fanfare*, *Der neue Merker* (Vienna), *The Strad*, *Strings*, *Opera* (UK), and the website *classicalvoiceamerica*. org. Extra-musical interests include travel, film, literature and decadent desserts.

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PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Junichi Hirokami, conductor
Elias David Moncado, violin

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AUG
2026
SAT 8:00PM**

PERFORMANCE AT
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Tribute to Alfonso Soliano

**2
SEP
2026
WED 8:00PM**

PERFORMANCE AT
DEWAN FILHARMONIK PETRONAS
PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Ahmad Muriz Che Rose, conductor
The Solianos

Experience a meaningful celebration of Malaysia's musical heritage as the MPO pays tribute to one of the country's greatest cultural icons, Alfonso Soliano. A visionary pianist, arranger and conductor, Soliano is widely known as a pioneer who laid the foundation for the country's music scene especially jazz. Led by Ahmad Muriz Che Rose and with The Solianos as vocalists and instrumentalists, this special performance brings his timeless works back on stage in a heartfelt homage.

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MAURICE STEGER'S

Nature Concerti

**12
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2026
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PERFORMANCE AT
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PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Maurice Steger, conductor & recorder

Programme to include:

TELEMANN Sinfonia TWV 50:1 in G major "Cricket
Symphony"
TELEMANN Violin Concerto, TWV 51:A4 "The Frogs"
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and above

Vivaldi's Ring of Mystery

**19
SEP
2026
SAT 2:30PM**

PERFORMANCE AT
DEWAN FILHARMONIK PETRONAS
PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Gerard Salonga, conductor
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Lea Salonga, vocals

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