

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ALAN GILBERT AND THE NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

MAKOTO OZONE To Perform GERSHWIN'S *RHAPSODY IN BLUE* in One-Night-Only Concert

**All-American Program Also To Include
BERNSTEIN's *Candide* Overture and Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*
GERSHWIN's *An American in Paris***

April 22, 2014

Following his acclaimed New York Philharmonic debut on the ASIA / WINTER 2014 tour, jazz pianist Makoto Ozone will join Music Director Alan Gilbert and the New York Philharmonic in a newly added concert Tuesday, April 22, 2014, at 7:30 p.m. The all-American program will include Bernstein's *Candide* Overture; Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, featuring Mr. Ozone as soloist; Bernstein's Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*; and Gershwin's *An American in Paris*. The concert will mark Mr. Ozone's U.S. orchestral debut; his appearances with the Philharmonic on the ASIA / WINTER 2014 tour marked his first performances with an American orchestra.

"Before working with him I'd known that Makoto Ozone is a very talented pianist and one of the great living jazz musicians," said Music Director Alan Gilbert, "but I was still astounded by the results of his joining the New York Philharmonic in our performances of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* on our ASIA / WINTER 2014 tour. His expertise in both the fluidity of jazz and pianistic technique is just what the piece requires, and it inspired our musicians for a really rhapsodic interpretation. I knew we had to bring this to our home audience as soon as possible. Combined with the other Gershwin and Bernstein pieces on this program, which the Orchestra plays as nobody else can, this is sure to be a high-powered, uplifting performance of some of the best American music."

Praising Mr. Ozone's performance of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in Osaka, Japan, during the Philharmonic's ASIA / WINTER 2014 tour, *Nikkei* wrote: "The evening's highlight was Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with Makoto Ozone... Ozone's crystal sound was perfect for the *Rhapsody in Blue*, evoking New York City skyscrapers at night... The Philharmonic deeply
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understands the hybrid charms Gershwin's music has: the impressive jazz part for trumpet, musical comedy-style dance, and the gorgeous, Rachmaninoff-like intertwining of orchestra and pianist.... The concert reflected New York, that beloved cosmopolitan city.”

Straddling both classical and jazz, Makoto Ozone has performed with jazz greats such as Gary Burton, Chick Corea, and Branford Marsalis as well as works by Gershwin, Bernstein, Mozart, Beethoven, Rachmaninoff, and Shostakovich with the NDR Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de chambre de Paris, and NHK Symphony Orchestra, among others. In February 2014 he performed in *Music for Tomorrow: A Benefit for Japan* at the Blue Note Jazz Club, and he returns there in April 2014 for performances with longtime collaborator Gary Burton.

Artists

Music Director **Alan Gilbert** began his New York Philharmonic tenure in September 2009, the first native New Yorker in the post. He and the Philharmonic have introduced the positions of The Marie-Josée Kravis Composer-in-Residence and The Mary and James G. Wallach Artist-in-Residence; *CONTACT!*, the new-music series; and, beginning in the spring of 2014, the NY PHIL BIENNIAL. “He is building a legacy that matters and is helping to change the template for what an American orchestra can be,” *The New York Times* praised.

In addition to inaugurating the NY PHIL BIENNIAL, in the 2013–14 season Alan Gilbert conducts Mozart's three final symphonies; the U.S. Premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Frieze* coupled with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony; four world premieres; an all-Britten program celebrating the composer's centennial; the score from *2001: A Space Odyssey* as the film was screened; and a staged production of Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* starring Bryn Terfel and Emma Thompson. He continues The Nielsen Project — the multi-year initiative to perform and record the Danish composer's symphonies and concertos, the first release of which was named by *The New York Times* as among the Best Classical Music Recordings of 2012 — and presides over the ASIA / WINTER 2014 tour. Last season's highlights included Bach's B-minor Mass; Ives's Fourth Symphony; the EUROPE / SPRING 2013 tour; and the season-concluding *A Dancer's Dream*, a multidisciplinary reimagining of Stravinsky's *The Fairy's Kiss* and *Petrushka*, created by Giants Are Small and starring New York City Ballet principal dancer Sara Mearns.

Mr. Gilbert is Director of Conducting and Orchestral Studies and holds the William Schuman Chair in Musical Studies at The Juilliard School. Conductor laureate of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra and principal guest conductor of Hamburg's NDR Symphony Orchestra, he regularly conducts leading orchestras around the world. He made his acclaimed Metropolitan Opera debut conducting John Adams's *Doctor Atomic* in 2008, the DVD of which received a Grammy Award. Renée Fleming's recent Decca recording *Poèmes*, on which he conducted, received a 2013 Grammy Award. His recordings have received top honors from the *Chicago Tribune* and *Gramophone* magazine. In May 2010 Mr. Gilbert received an Honorary Doctor of Music degree from The Curtis Institute of Music and in December 2011, Columbia University's Ditson Conductor's Award for his “exceptional commitment to the performance of works by American composers and to contemporary music.”

Pianist **Makoto Ozone** taught himself to play the organ while very young, made his first television appearance at six, began performing regularly on Osaka Mainichi Broadcasting, and,
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after attending an Oscar Peterson concert at 12, turned his attention toward jazz piano. He moved to the United States in 1980 to study at Boston's Berklee College of Music, and graduated at the top of his class in 1983 — the same year he gave a solo recital at Carnegie Hall, became the first Japanese musician to sign an exclusive contract with CBS, and joined vibraphonist Gary Burton's quartet. He has worked with numerous other jazz artists including Chick Corea and Branford Marsalis, and in 2004, formed the No Name Horses big band and regularly performs in France, Austria, the U.S., United Kingdom, Singapore, and Japan. He has recently explored classical repertoire with conductors including Charles Dutoit, Thomas Zehetmair, Joseph Swensen, Alexandre Rabinovitch, Arie van Beek, Francois-Xavier Roth, Tadaaki Otaka, Eiji Oue, and Michiyoshi Inoue. He has played Gershwin, Bernstein, Mozart, Beethoven, Rachmaninoff, and Shostakovich with the NDR Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de chambre de Paris, Orchestre d'Auvergne, Sinfonia Varsovia, NHK Symphony Orchestra, and New Japan Philharmonic. He performed and conducted his own piano concerto, *Mogami*, commissioned by playwright Hisashi Inoue (2003); appeared at the Chopin and His Europe International Festival in Warsaw (2006); and performed with the NDR Symphony Orchestra at the Schleswig-Holstein Festival (2008). His trio toured Japan with Christian McBride and Jeff "Tain" Watts in 2012, and he toured with Gary Burton to commemorate the 30th anniversary of his world debut in 2013. Albums on Universal include the Grammy-nominated *Virtuosi* (2002); a charity project for victims of Japan's 2011 earthquake and tsunami, *Live & Let Live — Love for Japan* (2010); *Road to Chopin* (2010); and a duo album with Mr. Burton, *Time Thread* (2013). He hosts a popular jazz music radio program, writes music for theater and television, and is a professor at the Kunitachi College of Music. Makoto Ozone made his New York Philharmonic debut on the ASIA / WINTER 2014 tour in February 2014 performing Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, led by Music Director Alan Gilbert.

Repertoire

In 1953 Lillian Hellman told **Leonard Bernstein** (1918–90) that she thought they should set Voltaire's *Candide* as a musical — Hellman saw parallels between the 1758 satirical novella and the witch hunt being waged at the time by the House Un-American Activities Committee. She adapted the text (working first with lyricist John LaTouche and then Richard Wilbur), Bernstein wrote the music, and the work opened on Broadway to mixed reviews in December 1956. It closed in February, but was revised and revived several times over the next few decades. In spite of its rough start, the music ultimately achieved cult status, and the ***Candide Overture*** is a popular staple in the New York Philharmonic's repertoire: Bernstein himself conducted the Orchestra's first performance of the Overture in 1957 at Carnegie Hall; Philharmonic Assistant Conductor Case Scaglione led the most recent presentation during a May 2013 Young People's Concert.

George Gershwin (1898–1937) was the soloist in the 1924 premiere of ***Rhapsody in Blue***, his iconic work combining the jazz and classical genres that established his reputation as a serious composer. Now one of American music's most popular piano concertos, the piece was composed at the request of bandleader Paul Whiteman, who wanted something in the style of a concerto for his upcoming all-jazz concert with his Palais Royal Orchestra, the now-historic program called *An Experiment in Modern Music*. Orchestrated by Whiteman's arranger Ferde Grofé, the work quickly found popular success (with Whiteman's band performing it 84 times by the end of 1927 and the recording going platinum), so two years later, Grofé created an arrangement for solo

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piano and full symphony orchestra, which remains today's more regularly performed version. George Gershwin appeared as soloist in four New York Philharmonic performances of *Rhapsody in Blue*: one in 1929 led by Ernest Schelling, one in 1932 with William Daly, and two in 1936 with Alexander Smallens. Makoto Ozone is the Orchestra's most recent soloist, performing the work in Japan and South Korea during the ASIA / WINTER 2014 tour, led by Music Director Alan Gilbert.

Discussions about the creation of *West Side Story* began in early 1949, but the show itself — with music by **Leonard Bernstein**, a book by Arthur Laurents, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, and choreography by Jerome Robbins — was put aside in favor of other projects, notably Bernstein's *Candide*. *West Side Story* finally came to life in August 1957 as an update on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, set among teenage gang members in the Manhattan neighborhood that would be razed a few years later to make way for Lincoln Center. The show became an Oscar-winning movie, and Bernstein selected scenes to form the **Symphonic Dances**, which was premiered by the Philharmonic in February 1961, conducted by Lukas Foss; the most recent performances were in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan during the ASIA / WINTER 2014 tour, led by Alan Gilbert.

Commissioned by the New York Philharmonic in 1928, *An American in Paris* started life while **George Gershwin** was enjoying the heady atmosphere of the title city in the 1920s (although he completed the piece in New York). Gershwin wrote at length about his delightful "rhapsodic ballet," which was choreographed and danced memorably by Gene Kelly in the 1951 movie of the same name. He said, "My purpose here is to portray the impression of an American visitor in Paris as he strolls about the city and listens to various street noises and absorbs the French atmosphere." When the piece kicks into a bluesy style, the composer continues, "Our American friend ... has succumbed to a spasm of homesickness." But, ultimately, the American visitor "once again is an alert spectator of Parisian life." Listen for the characteristic French car horns. Walter Damrosch led the Philharmonic in the work's World Premiere at Carnegie Hall in December 1928. The most recent performances were in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan during the ASIA / WINTER 2014 tour, led by Alan Gilbert.

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Tickets

Tickets for the concerts start at \$34. All tickets may be purchased online at nyphil.org or by calling **(212) 875-5656**, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saturday; and noon to 5:00 p.m. Sunday. Tickets may also be purchased at the **Avery Fisher**
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Hall Box Office. 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. 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 Marketing and Communications Department at (212) 875-5714, or e-mail her at carrl@nyphil.org.

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New York Philharmonic

Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center

Tuesday, April 22, 2014, 7:30 p.m.

Alan Gilbert, conductor

Makoto Ozone, piano

BERNSTEIN	<i>Candide Overture</i>
GERSHWIN	<i>Rhapsody in Blue</i>
BERNSTEIN	<i>Symphonic Dances from West Side Story</i>
GERSHWIN	<i>An American in Paris</i>

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