Makoto Ozone

Pianist and composer

“thrilling, virtuosic and unabashedly personal”
The New York Times

Makoto Ozone is a unique force in both jazz and classical music, blending sound worlds and a host of influences into his performances. Born in Kobe, Japan, he was self-taught in jazz, under his father’s guidance, first on the organ, then piano. He first came to public attention when he gave his solo recital at the Carnegie Hall in 1983, following his graduation from Berklee College of Music. Makoto then became the first Japanese artist to sign an exclusive contract with CBS and released his first album, *Ozone*, a year after his Carnegie debut.

His stellar career in jazz, which earned him a Grammy nomination in 2003, has brought him regularly to the forefront of the international jazz scene, recording and touring with musicians such as Gary Burton, Chick Corea, Paquito D'Rivera, Anna Maria Jopek, Branford Marsalis, and others. In 2004, he formed his own big band in Japan, "No Name Horses" which has regularly toured to Europe, North America and Asia since its creation.

In more recent years, Makoto has expanded into classical repertoire, alongside his jazz engagements. Having first performed Gershwin *Rhapsody in Blue* in 1996, he now performs concertos by Mozart, Bernstein, Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Rachmaninov with major orchestras. Alongside his performing schedule, Makoto composes music, with over 300 pieces to his name, many for ‘No Name Horses’, as well as a symphony and piano concerto. His own concerto MOGAMI received its European premiere in autumn 2024 with the RSB Berlin and Duncan Ward.

Ozone has collaborated with a prestigious list of conductors including Marin Alsop, Bertie Baigent, Jader Bignamini, Kevin John Edusei, Alan Gilbert, Jun Maerkl, Lahav Shani, Kahchun Wong and Kazuki Yamada. He has performed with orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, RSB Berlin and Rotterdam Philharmonic, as well as many orchestras in Japan such as the NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra and Sapporo Symphony.

In the 2025/26 season, Ozone will tour Europe and Japan with the Tokyo Philharmonic and Myung-whun Chung and make his debut with Colorado Symphony and Indianapolis Symphony, both under the baton of Jun Maerkl, He has also been invited to perform with other guest artists at Toronto's Koerner Hall as part of a concert to celebrate 100 years since Oscar Peterson's birth. Ozone will give his London concerto debut with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in spring 2026, as well as make his much anticipated return to the Royal Scottish National Orchestra with Kevin John Edusei. His trio TRiNFiNiTY will tour to Australia after their hugely successful UK and Europe tour in the 24/25 season.

Makoto Ozone has an extensive discography, releasing over 30 albums under his name and as a composer in solo, duo and trio settings, as well as performing as a collaborator on many others. January 2024 saw the hugely successful release of Makoto's latest album TRiNFiNiTY (Universal Music), featuring Shimpei Ogawa on bass and Kunito Kitai on drums.

Makoto's many awards include the Kinokuniya Theatre Award (2000), Kobe City Culture Award (2005), Fumio Nanri Prize (2007), Hyogo Prefecture Culture Award (2009), Art Encouragement of Education, Culture, Sports, Science Minister's Prize (2014). In 2018, Makoto received the Medal of Honour with Purple Ribbon by the Government of Japan. This is Japan's highest award to individuals who have made significant contributions to the nation's academic or cultural life.

2025-26 season / 559 words. Not to be altered without permission.

Intermusica represents Makoto Ozone worldwide excluding Japan.

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