

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2025 | 7:30 PM
NEIDORFF-KARPATI HALL

MSM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

George Manahan (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor

Seiran Tozlian, piano

Winner of the 2024–2025 Dora Zaslavsky Koch Competition

JT Kane, Dean of Instrumental Studies and Orchestral Performance

PROGRAM

SUSAN BOTTI (MM '90)
(b. 1962)

Impetuosity

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
(1770–1827)

Piano Concerto No.2 in B-flat Major, Op.19

Allegro con brio

Adagio

Rondo. Allegro molto

Intermission

IGOR STRAVINSKY
(1882–1971)

Petrushka (1947)

MSM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

George Manahan (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor
Seiran Tozlian, piano

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concertmaster
Nanjing, China

Risa Hokamura
Tokyo, Japan

Mina Kim
New York, New York

Samuel Marquis
Cocoa Beach, Florida

Subin Valerie Choi
Vaughan, Canada

Liang-liang Chen
New Haven, Connecticut

Cecilia Martin
Columbus, Ohio

Eunhye Chun
Cheonan, South Korea

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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Tokyo, Japan

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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Beijing, China

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Taipei City, Taiwan

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VIOLIN II

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principal
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Melis Turker
Istanbul, Turkey

Hyewon Nam
Seoul, South Korea

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San Juan, Texas

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Winona, Minnesota

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Bethesda, Maryland

Hannah Thill
Geneva, Illinois

Phoebe Ro
Old Tappan, New Jersey

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Oak Park, Illinois

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Ridgefield, Connecticut

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Andrea Lopez
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Amaree Sanchez
Higbland, California

Kwasi Micah
New York, New York

Peter Wiseman
Austin, Texas

Binxuan Yu
Changsha, China

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Fate, Texas

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BRASS AND WIND PRINCIPALS

1 BOTTI – *IMPETUOSITY*

2 BEETHOVEN – *PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2, OP. 19*

3 STRAVINSKY – *PETRUSHKA*

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

George Manahan (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor

George Manahan is in his 14th season as Director of Orchestral Activities at Manhattan School of Music, as well as Music Director Emeritus of the American Composers Orchestra. He served as Music Director of the New York City Opera for 14 seasons and was hailed for his leadership of the orchestra. He was also Music Director of the Richmond Symphony (VA) for 12 seasons. Recipient of Columbia University's Ditson Conductor's Award, Mr. Manahan was also honored by the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) for his "career-long advocacy for American composers and the music of our time." His Carnegie Hall performance of Samuel Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* was hailed by audiences and critics alike. "The fervent and sensitive performance that Mr. Manahan presided over made the best case for this opera that I have ever encountered," said the *New York Times*.

Mr. Manahan's guest appearances include the Orchestra of St. Luke's as well as the symphonies of Atlanta, San Francisco, Hollywood Bowl, and New Jersey, where he served as acting Music Director for four seasons. He has been a regular guest with the Curtis Institute and the Aspen Music Festival and has appeared with the opera companies of Seattle, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Chicago, Santa Fe, Paris, Sydney, Bologna, St. Louis, the Bergen Festival (Norway), and the Casals Festival (Puerto Rico). His many appearances on television include productions of *La bohème*, *Lizzie Borden*, and *Tosca* on PBS. The *Live from Lincoln Center* telecast of New York City Opera's production of *Madama Butterfly*, under his direction, won a 2007 Emmy Award.

George Manahan's wide-ranging recording activities include the premiere recording of Steve Reich's *Tebillim* for ECM; recordings of Edward Thomas's *Desire Under the Elms*, which was nominated for a Grammy; Joe Jackson's *Will Power*; and Tobias Picker's *Emmeline*. He has conducted numerous world premieres, including Charles Wuorinen's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, David Lang's *Modern Painters*, Hans Werner Henze's *The English Cat*, Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne*, and Terence Blanchard's *Champion*.

He received his formal musical training at Manhattan School of Music, studying conducting with Anton Coppola and George Schick, and was appointed to the faculty of the school upon his graduation, at which time the Juilliard School awarded him a fellowship as Assistant Conductor with the American Opera Center. Mr. Manahan was chosen as the Exxon Arts Endowment Conductor of the New

Jersey Symphony the same year he made his opera debut with the Santa Fe Opera, conducting the American premiere of Arnold Schoenberg's *Von Heute auf Morgen*.

Seiran Tozlian, piano

Seiran Tozlian is a 22-year-old Armenian pianist and composer. He has participated in numerous international festivals and is a prizewinner of many competitions, including “Grand Piano in Palace” (St. Petersburg), “Young Talents of Russia” (Moscow), “Firework of Talents” (St. Petersburg), the 18th International Competition “Valesia Music Junior” (Varallo, Italy), and the XIV Chopin International Piano Competition (Hartford, USA). Seiran graduated from the High School of Music of the Rostov State Conservatory named after S.V. Rachmaninov in Rostov-on-Don, where he studied with renowned professor Sergei Osipenko. During his studies, he appeared on many of Rostov’s most prestigious stages, including the Rostov Philharmonic, the Great Hall of the Rostov Conservatory, and the Rostov Drama Theater. Since September 2022, Seiran has been pursuing his studies at Manhattan School of Music under acclaimed pianist Alexandre Moutouzkine. He is a recipient of both the Armenian General Benevolent Union Scholarship and the Dora Zaslavsky Endowed Piano Scholarship, awarded to students of exceptional artistry and promise. In 2024, Seiran won the Koch Piano Concerto Competition and will perform Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 2 with orchestra at Manhattan School of Music during the 2025–2026 season. In May 2024, he made his New York debut with the NY Session Orchestra, performing Mendelssohn’s Piano Concerto No. 1. He continues to maintain an active solo career, appearing regularly at Manhattan School of Music, The Juilliard School, and other prestigious venues in New York, including Merkin Hall. In 2025, he also served as a jury member of the Anselmo International Competition.

PROGRAM NOTES

Impetuosity

Susan Botti (MM '90)

Impetuosity is an exploration of momentum. The piece begins with a build-up of energy from a static state gradually increasing in tension until it is unleashed. The orchestra is the energy force careening in many directions, focusing strongly as a rhythmic unit, finding precarious balances, held at a stillpoint momentarily by the concertmaster until the free-flying pendulum again starts to swing.

“Impetus: the force or energy associated with a moving body” (Webster’s).

Inspired by the freedom of great Jazz artists I admire such as Thelonius Monk, John Coltrane, and Gonzalo Rubalcaba... and dedicated to the musicians of the Cleveland Orchestra.

–*Susan Botti*

Susan Botti is an alumnus and member of the Composition faculty of Manhattan School of Music.

Piano Concerto No.2 in B-flat Major, Op.19

Ludwig van Beethoven

Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto went through years of formulation and shelf-sitting before he apologetically offered it for "half price" to the publisher Hoffmeister in 1801. (The Septet, First Symphony, and B-flat major Piano Sonata, op. 22, went for twenty ducats each and the B-flat Concerto for only ten.) Though written first, it became his "Second" because the C major Concerto, written several years after the B-flat major, appeared in print several months before as Opus 15. (Actually, another work, the youthful E-flat Concerto, predates those numbered 1 to 5.) Beethoven scholars Geoffrey Block, Douglas Johnson, and Hans-Werner K uthen have gleaned the compositional history of the B-flat major Concerto from sketches, which show five main stages: 1790, 1793, 1794–95, 1798, and 1801.

It seems that much of the B-flat Concerto as we know it stems from a version performed in Vienna in 1798, though the *Adagio* remained basically unchanged after 1795. Beethoven's work after 1798 shows one of his essential compositional traits: the reluctance to discard early ideas despite persistent attempts at new ones. It is clear from his correspondence that Beethoven considered the years from 1798 to 1801 a time of great compositional growth; perhaps he worried in 1801 that his latest revisions strayed too far from the original conception and character of the work. Thus the published form of the Concerto returns substantially to what Vienna heard in 1798.

The first performance, which predates both the 1798 and 1801 stages, took place on March 29, 1795, with Beethoven at the piano. The *Wiener Zeitung* reported on April 1 that "the celebrated Herr Ludwig van Beethoven reaped the unanimous applause of the audience for his performance on the pianoforte of a completely new concerto composed by him." The occasion was a concert organized by Antonio Salieri featuring compositions by two of his students: Antonio Cartellieri, long since forgotten, and Beethoven, whose Concerto was presented between the two parts of Cartellieri's oratorio *Gioas, re di Giuda* (Joas, King of Judah).

It would be enlightening to know how that version of the Concerto sounded. The 1795 sketches are somewhat fragmentary and it is possible that Beethoven hadn't even written out the entire piano part. He apparently wrote the final *Rondo* only two days before the performance, while suffering from a severe colic, and while four copyists in the next room copied sheet after sheet as it was handed to them. He eventually wrote down a cadenza for this Concerto in 1809, providing a great opportunity to compare the early-period Concerto with its middle-period cadenza. Though Beethoven was studying with Salieri and Albrechtsberger, and had

studied a year earlier with Haydn, the B-flat Concerto seems most indebted to Mozart. Employing the traditional three-movement structure, Beethoven applied Mozartian formal designs to the outer movements. In the first movement the piano enters with a new musical idea—a Mozartian device, as is the piano’s introduction of the second theme, which hadn’t been heard in the exposition. Whereas Beethoven was to employ a fuller orchestra with clarinets, trumpets, and timpani in his C major Concerto, the present work parallels the lighter instrumentation of many Mozart piano concertos. Furthermore, the general concept of the concerto as a symphonic work in which the piano is prominent but not ruling is one that Beethoven adopted from Mozart.

Naturally Beethovenian traits abound, such as unusual harmonic juxtapositions—the move to D-flat in the opening statement—and the fortissimo entry of the recapitulation. Other significant features are the dramatic accents before the quiet ending of the slow movement and the conspicuous stress on the weak beats in the main theme of the delightful *Rondo* finale.

—©Jane Vial Jaffe

Petrushka

Igor Stravinsky

After the brilliant success of Stravinsky's ballet *Firebird* in 1910, dance impresario Sergei Diaghilev and the composer made plans for what was to be their next collaboration: *The Rite of Spring*, a spectacle of Russia in pagan times. Before tackling this new ballet, however, Stravinsky wanted to refresh himself by composing:

an orchestral piece in which the piano would play the most important part—a sort of *Konzertstück*. . . . In composing the music I had in mind a distinct picture of a puppet, suddenly endowed with life, exasperating the patience of the orchestra with diabolical cascades of *arpeggi*. The orchestra in turn retaliates with menacing trumpet blasts. The outcome is a terrific noise which reaches its climax and ends in the sorrowful and querulous collapse of the poor puppet. This bizarre piece having been completed, I sought for hours, while walking beside Lake Geneva, to find a title that would express in a single word the character of my music and consequently the personality of this creature.

One day I jumped for joy—*Petrushka!*¹ The immortal and unhappy hero of all the fairs in all countries: I had found my title!

Imagine Diaghilev's astonishment when he visited Stravinsky in Lausanne expecting sketches for *The Rite of Spring* and instead being confronted with a substantial installment of a completely different work, and one intended for concert rather than stage performance! He immediately saw the dramatic possibilities of *Petrushka* and persuaded Stravinsky to expand it into a ballet by developing the theme of the puppet's sufferings. They agreed on the scene of action: the annual Shrove-tide Fair in Admiralty Square, St. Petersburg. Thus Stravinsky's "diversion" became another substantial stage work, exactly the sort of piece from which he was trying to take a vacation.

Petrushka took shape as four scenes or tableaux. The personalities of the three puppets—Petrushka, the Ballerina, and the Moor—are developed most in the middle two tableaux, framed by the outer scenes of the Shrove-tide Fair. Events or scenes are bridged by drum rolls, during which the sets are changed in staged productions. The opening scene depicts crowds and merrymaking at the fair, replete with an ingenious orchestration of an organ grinder with one broken key. Drums announce the arrival of the Charlatan with his miniature theater. He brings the three puppets to life with his flute, and they perform the *Danse russe*.

¹ *Petrushka* is the Russian equivalent of *Punch*.

In the second scene, Petrushka, in his quarters, enacts despair at the Ballerina's rejection of him for the flashily dressed Moor. The third scene opens with the Moor; the Ballerina enters and they dance together. Petrushka bursts in, only to be thrown out by the Moor. The final tableau returns to the fair, at evening, with more crowds, a Dance of Nursemaids, a Peasant with a Bear (unmistakable duet between clarinets and tuba), Gypsies and a Rake Vendor, Dance of the Coachmen, and Masqueraders. In the midst of the merrymaking and dancing, the Moor and Petrushka scuffle and the poor hero is killed. A juggler and policeman find the Charlatan, who returns to reassure the crowd that Petrushka was only a puppet. The crowd disperses, leaving the Charlatan alone. The ghost of Petrushka appears above the little theater and the Charlatan flees in terror.

The premiere of *Petrushka* took place on June 13, 1911, in Paris, with Nijinsky in the title role, one he subsequently made world-famous. The original score called for a very large orchestra, including woodwinds and trumpets grouped in fours (rather than pairs or triples), two harps, piano and a large percussion battery. Stravinsky reorchestrated the piece in 1947, reducing the forces somewhat, redistributing certain meters and melodic lines, and making certain other adjustments that seemed oriented more toward concert performance than ballet performance. By then Stravinsky had matured considerably as an orchestrator, and he modestly declared the new version to be "very much less amateur." It is this version that is performed today.

—©Jane Vial Jaffe

ABOUT THE ORCHESTRAL STUDIES PROGRAM

In the tradition of the classical music conservatory, the orchestral studies program at MSM forms the heart of the performing experience for classical instrumentalists. All students, placed by competitive audition, participate in a variety of orchestral projects under the guidance of George Manahan, Director of Orchestral Activities, and JT Kane, Dean of Instrumental Studies and Orchestral Performance.

Students play in a variety of orchestral formats, giving them ample opportunity to develop their audition and ensemble technique, broaden their knowledge of orchestral repertoire, and perform at New York City venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, St. Patrick's Cathedral, and Merkin Concert Hall. Winners of the School's annual Eisenberg–Fried Concerto Competition perform with the orchestras as soloists.

In addition to Maestro Manahan, the orchestras work regularly with Leonard Slatkin, Distinguished Visiting Artist in Conducting and Orchestral Studies, and guest conductors such as Joshua Gersen, Mei-Ann Chen, and JoAnn Falletta.

George Manahan, Director of Orchestral Activities

JT Kane, Dean of Instrumental Studies and Orchestral Performance

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ABOUT MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Founded as a community music school by Janet Daniels Schenck in 1918, today MSM is recognized for its more than 1,000 superbly talented undergraduate and graduate students who come from more than 50 countries and nearly all 50 states; its innovative curricula and world-renowned artist-teacher faculty that includes musicians from the New York Philharmonic, the Met Orchestra, and the top ranks of the jazz and Broadway communities; and a distinguished community of accomplished, award-winning alumni working at the highest levels of the musical, educational, cultural, and professional worlds.

The School is dedicated to the personal, artistic, and intellectual development of aspiring musicians, from its Precollege students through those pursuing doctoral studies. Offering classical, jazz, and musical theatre training, MSM grants a range of undergraduate and graduate degrees. True to MSM's origins as a music school for children, the Precollege Division is a professionally oriented Saturday music program dedicated to the musical and personal growth of talented young musicians ages 8 to 18. The School also serves some 2,000 New York City schoolchildren through its Arts-in-Education Program, and another 2,000 students through its critically acclaimed Distance Learning Program.

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We want to acknowledge that we gather as Manhattan School of Music on the traditional land of the Lenape and Wappinger past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we inhabit as well.



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