



TOKYO - MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD?

If you're a music lover, then Tokyo is the right place to be! There are ardent music fans throughout the greater Tokyo area and an amazing number of concert halls and auditoriums (approximately 150!), with countless performances per year. If you but have the time, you can experience virtually everything the world has to offer in the way of live music, as nearly all musicians - both domestic and from overseas - find themselves in Tokyo sooner or later for a live performance. While competition for tickets to the most famous performances can be fierce, there are many excellent performances of not so well known musicians where tickets can be bought even a mere hour before the last cough and shuffling of feet. Limited space only allows me to explore the tip of the musical iceberg, so if you're a music fan, by all means, after reading this article, start exploring the music world in Tokyo - you won't be disappointed!

Major concert halls in Tokyo & Yokohama



quite cosmopolitan. The hall focuses specifically on classical music and has a concert there virtually every

Suntory Hall - with excellent acoustics, rooftop gardens and surrounded by restaurants, shops, office towers and landscaped gardens - is

evening. Among the many concert halls in Tokyo, few have quite the volume of performances as Suntory Hall.

03-3584-9999 www.suntory.co.jp/suntoryhall (E&J)

Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall - most easily accessed via Hatsudai Station on the Keio Shin-sen (New Line), but within walking distance of Shinjuku as well.

Opera City has one of the better English language websites, with access information, instructions on how to order tickets by phone, calendars for upcoming concerts, and detailed information about individual concerts.

Nearby Shinjuku is famous for many things - the Tokyo Metropolitan Government towers, nightlife, cameras, shopping in general, movie theaters, and the busiest train station in the entire country. Or... just take an elevator up to either the 53rd or 54th floor for dinner with a view....

03-5353-9999 www.operacity.jp/en/index2.html (E&J)



New National Theater Tokyo - situated right next to Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall, and the reason for the "opera" in the name of the concert hall (see above).

03-5351-3011 www.nntt.jac.go.jp/ (E&J)



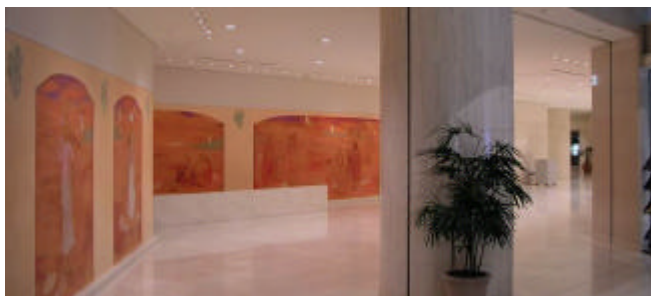
Bunkamura Orchard Hall - located in Shibuya just up the road from the 109 Building - is in a complex that includes movie theaters, shops and restaurants. Shibuya is generally considered to be the center of the current youth movement in Japan. A slight detour on your way back to the

station will take you through ground zero.

03-3477-9999

www.bunkamura.co.jp/english/index.html (E&J)

Yokohama Minato Mirai Hall – part of Minato Mirai (a short walk from Sakuragicho Station), consisting of Landmark Tower, classy hotels, the Pacifico Yokohama convention center, the Nippon Maru four-mast sailing ship and a very large Ferris wheel at Yokohama Cosmo World amusement park - is a busy hall with a steady stream of nearly daily concerts.



045-682-2000

www.city.yokohama.jp/me/mmhall/index-e.html

Tokyo Bunka Kaikan - in Ueno between Ueno Station and Ueno Park - formerly the premiere venue for classical music, opera and ballet, but recently eclipsed by several new concert halls of superb design and acoustics. 03-5815-5452 www.t-bunka.jp (J)



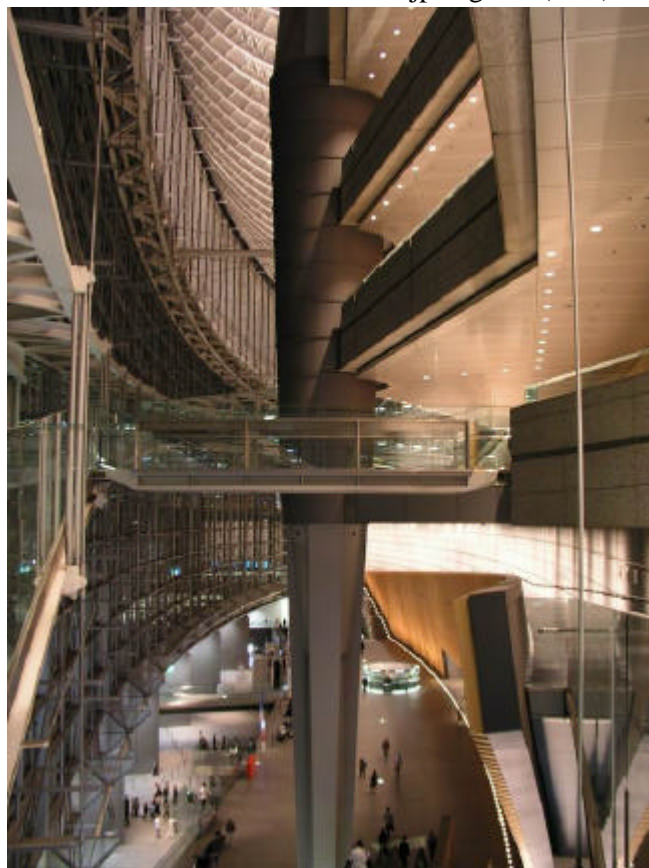
Kioi Hall - situated next to the New Otani Hotel - is a pleasant three-minute walk from Yotsuya Station between the rampart of an old moat with cherry blossom trees on top, and Sophia University. Their website includes a map (in Japanese), as well as information (with photos) about upcoming events, all in the Japanese

language, but if you don't read Japanese, you can still get a general idea of upcoming events if you dive far enough into the site via links to where they have

photos of upcoming musicians and performers. 03-3237-0061 www.kioi-hall.or.jp/ (J)

Tokyo International Forum - just a one-minute walk from Yurakucho Station - is an ultra-modern facility (designed by Rafael Vinoly) which opened in 1997. The design is fascinating, impressive, and complex. Seen from the air, it consists of an eye-shaped building with a huge glass atrium on the side towards the Yamanote Line tracks, which is connected via walkways to four buildings housing several concert halls and exhibition spaces on the other side. Between the glass atrium and the group of four buildings is a ground level area that is somewhat like a park - with trees, and open to pedestrians on both ends. Historically fashionable Ginza is only a ten-minute walk away.

03-5221-9000 www.t-i-forum.co.jp/english/ (E&J)



Hamarikyu Asahi Concert Hall Located between the new Shiodome high-rises (formerly a freight rail yard), and Tsukiji - the largest fish market in the world. Their website has a map (in Japanese), seating charts, and instruction on how to get there both in English and Japanese. The nearest station is Tsukiji-shijo on the Oedo Line (Exit A2). 03-3267-9990 www.asahi.com/asahihall/hamarikyu/ (J)

Sumida Triphony Hall Located near Kinshicho Station on the (JR) Sobu and Yokosuka lines, as well as the Hanzomon subway line.
03-5608-1212 <http://www.triphony.com/> (J)

Obtaining Tickets

In addition to directly contacting the concert halls, there are also ticket service companies, the most well known being Ticket PIA. Some of the people you will contact will speak better English than others – just remember to speak slowly, clearly, and compose your sentences to have the maximum meaning with the fewest number and least complexity of words.

0570-02-9999 <http://t.pia.co.jp/> (J)

And... there is so much more! The Internet is one source for additional information, but (strangely) there are not many sites that give a comprehensive listing of what's out there, and some halls don't maintain a website at all. Asking around may well be the best way to fill in the gaps. Enjoy listening!