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Akiko Suwanai

Violin

Praised by T*he Times* for her “noble playing, with its rhythmic life, taut and rigorous,” Japanese violinist Akiko Suwanai was the youngest ever winner of the International Tchaikovsky Competition in 1990. Since then she has enjoyed a flourishing international career and appears regularly with celebrated maestros and foremost orchestras across the globe.

In 2019/20, Akiko Suwanai returns to Washington’s National Symphony Orchestra for a series of concerts with its music director Gianandrea Noseda at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. Other highlights of the season include debuts with Camerata Salzburg at the Enescu Festival in Bucharest, as well as with Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Brussels Philharmonic with Jun Märkl and New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and Andrey Boreyko.

An extremely keen chamber musician, Akiko Suwanai enjoys fruitful and longstanding collaborations with several artistic partners. In 2019/20 she tours Japan with Nicholas Angelich presenting a brand-new all-Beethoven programme commemorating composer’s 250th anniversary. At the prestigious Stresa Festival in Italy Akiko presents two solo recitals juxtaposing music by J.S. Bach and 20th century composers. Most recently, Akiko Suwanai has been invited to the Martha Argerich Festival in Hamburg and Leif Ove Andsnes’ Festival in Rosendal, Norway.

Universally acclaimed for her performances of key violin repertoire works, Akiko Suwanai is also widely recognised for her master interpretations of lesser-performed works and passion for new music. In 2007, she premiered Peter Eötvös' violin concerto *Seven* at Lucerne Festival under Pierre Boulez, and in the following year she took this work to the BBC Proms where she appeared alongside Susanna Mälkki and Philharmonia Orchestra. She also gave Japanese premieres to important new works such as violin concertos by James MacMillan and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

In recent years, Akiko Suwanai performed with Orchestre de Paris and Paavo Järvi, The Mariinsky Orchestra and Valery Gergiev, Staatskapelle Dresden and Peter Eötvös, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin and Vladimir Jurowski, Bamberger Symphoniker and Herbert Blomstedt, Gürzenich-Orchester Köln and François-Xavier Roth, Philadelphia Orchestra and Pablo Heras-Casado, Helsinki Philharmonic and Susanna Mälkki, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse and Klaus Mäkelä, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and Gianandrea Noseda, Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Leonard Slatkin, State Academic “E. Svetlanov” Orchestra and Vasily Petrenko and Hong Kong Philharmonic and Lawrence Foster. She also served as a jury member at the prestigious competitions including Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels, International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow as well as Concours international Long-Thibaud-Crespin in Paris.

Previously, she worked with Philharmonia Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Oslo and Czech Philharmonic orchestras, Danish National and Iceland Symphony orchestras as well as Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra. Conductor collaborations have included Vladimir Ashkenazy, Sir Andrew Davis, Cristian Măcelaru, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Gianandrea Noseda, Sakari Oramo, Andrés Orozco-Estrada, Seiji Ozawa, Antonio Pappano, David Robertson, Yuri Temirkanov and Mark Wigglesworth.

Akiko Suwanai is the Artistic Director of the International Music Festival NIPPON which she launched in 2012. Offering a variety of orchestral and chamber music concerts, master classes and charity events, the Festival regularly organizes Japanese premieres and commissions new works by Japanese and international composers. As part of the festival, Akiko Suwanai gave among others the Japanese premiere of Karol Beffa’s Violin Concerto with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen and Paavo Järvi, and premiered Eric Tanguy’s *In a Dream* with pianist Akira Eguchi as well as Dai Fujikura’s *Pitter-Patter* with Boris Berezovsky.

As well as winning the International Tchaikovsky Competition, Akiko Suwanai has won numerous awards. These include the International Paganini Competition and the Queen Elisabeth International Competition. She studied at the Toho Gakuen School of Music with Toshiya Eto, Columbia University, and the Juilliard School of Music with Dorothy DeLay and Cho-Liang Lin, and at the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin with Uwe-Martin Haiberg. Her extensive discography with Universal Music and Decca Classics has garnered much critical acclaim in Japan and worldwide. In 2019, Sony Music releases recording of music by Toru Takemitsu featuring his works for violin and orchestra performed by Akiko Suwanai and the NHK Symphony Orchestra under direction of Paavo Järvi.

Akiko Suwanai performs on the Stradivarius ‘Dolphin’ violin from 1714, one of the most famous violins known today and previously owned by Jascha Heifetz, which has been kindly loaned to her by the Nippon Music Foundation.