MASAAKI SUZUKI

Conductor

Since founding Bach Collegium Japan in 1990, Masaaki Suzuki has established himself as a leading authority on the works of Bach. He has remained their Music Director ever since, taking them regularly to major venues and festivals in Europe and the USA and building up an outstanding reputation for the expressive refinement and truth of his performances.

In addition to working with renowned period ensembles, such as the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Philharmonia Baroque, Suzuki is invited to conduct repertoire as diverse as Brahms, Britten, Fauré, Mahler, Mendelssohn and Stravinsky, with orchestras such as the Bavarian Radio, Danish National Radio, Gothenburg Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, San Francisco Symphony, Sydney Symphony and Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestras. This season he visits the NDR Elbphilharmonie, NHK Symphony, Seattle Symphony and St. Louis Symphony Orchestras, amongst others.

Suzuki’s impressive discography on the BIS label, featuring all Bach’s major choral works as well as complete works for harpsichord, has brought him many critical plaudits - the Times has written: *“it would take an iron bar not to be moved by his crispness, sobriety and spiritual vigour”*. 2018 marked the triumphant conclusion of Bach Collegium Japan's epic recording of the complete sacred and secular cantatas initiated in 1995 and comprising sixty-five volumes. The ensemble has now embarked upon extending their repertoire with recent recordings of works by Mozart (*Requiem* and *Mass in C minor*) and Beethoven (*Missa Solemnis* and *Symphony No. 9*).

Last season Bach Collegium Japan were invited to participate, as one of three ensembles, in the cantata cycle at Bachfest Leipzig, where they also gave a critically acclaimed performance of Mendelssohn’s *Elias*; their busy touring schedule also took them to the USA performing at venues including the Alice Tully Hall, New York and San Francisco’s Davies Symphony Hall. This season in Europe they embark upon their 30th anniversary tour including concerts in Brussels, Dublin, Hamburg, Köln, London, Madrid and Paris, amongst others.

Suzuki combines his conducting career with his work as an organist and harpsichordist; he is currently in the process of recording Bach’s solo works for these instruments. Born in Kobe, he graduated from the Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music with a degree in composition and organ performance and went on to study at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam under Ton Koopman and Piet Kee. Founder and Professor Emeritus of the early music department at the Tokyo University of the Arts, he was on the choral conducting faculty at the Yale School of Music and Yale Institute of Sacred Music from 2009 until 2013, where he remains affiliated as the principal guest conductor of Yale Schola Cantorum.

In 2012 Suzuki was awarded with the Leipzig Bach Medal and in 2013 the Royal Academy of Music Bach Prize. In April 2001, he was decorated with ‘Das Verdienstkreuz am Bande des Verdienstordens der Bundesrepublik’ from Germany.