Akiko Suwanai
Violin

Japanese violinist Akiko Suwanai’s “noble playing, with its rhythmic life, taut and rigorous” (*The Times)*  makes her one of the most sought-after artists of her generation. She won the International Tchaikovsky Competition in 1990 and since then has enjoyed a flourishing international career, engaging at the highest level with renowned conductors and orchestras.

In 2020/21, Akiko will join the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen/Järvi and Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra/Shani on tours to Japan and make returns to Hong Kong Philharmonic/van Zweden, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo and Yomiuri Nippon Orchestra. Other highlights also include a three-part residency with the Hamburger Symphoniker where she will play the Lampson Violin Concerto at the Elbphilharmonie conducted by Cambreling as well as joining the, Solistes Européens Luxembourg and Real Orquesta Sinfónica de Sevilla for performances across Europe. Akiko will also perform Ligeti’s Violin Concerto with Asturias Symphony Orchestra.

Last season, Akiko returned to National Symphony Orchestra Washington for a series of concerts with its Music Director Gianandrea Noseda at the Kennedy Center, as well as giving performances with Camerata Salzburg at the Enescu Festival in Bucharest, Brussels Philharmonic and the Singapore Symphony Orchestra.

An extremely keen chamber musician, Akiko enjoys fruitful and longstanding collaborations with several artistic partners. In 2019/20 she toured an all-Beethoven programme with Nicholas Angelich to commemorate the composer’s 250th anniversary. For the Stresa Festival in Italy she has presented solo recitals juxtaposing music by J.S. Bach and 20th century composers, and most recently she has performed at Martha Argerich’s Festival in Hamburg and Leif Ove Andsnes’ Festival in Norway.

In recent years, significant highlights have included performances with Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin/Jurowski, Oslo Philharmonic/Petrenko, Staatskapelle Dresden/Eötvös, Detroit Symphony Orchestra/Slatkin, Orchestre de Paris/ Järvi, The Mariinsky Orchestra/Gergiev, Gürzenich-Orchester Köln/Xavier Roth, Helsinki Philharmonic/Mälkki and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra/Noseda.

Universally acclaimed for her performances of key violin repertoire, Akiko 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 the Lucerne Festival under Pierre Boulez, and in the following year performed the work at the BBC Proms conducted by Susanna Mälkki and the Philharmonia Orchestra. She has also given Asian premieres of important new works such as violin concertos by James MacMillan, Esa-Pekka Salonen and Krzysztof Penderecki.

In 2012, she launched and became Artistic Director of the Tokyo based ‘International Music Festival NIPPON’ which, as well as a presenting a variety of orchestral and chamber concerts, regularly commissions new works and organizes world premieres by Japanese and international composers. With the festival Akiko has premiered new works including Karol Beffa’s Violin Concerto with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen/Järvi and Dai Fujikura’s Pitter-Patter with Boris Berezovsky.

As a regular recording artist, Akiko’s extensive discography including several albums for Decca, has garnered much global critical acclaim. Recent releases have comprised Violin Sonatas by Beethoven for Universal Music, and a recording for Sony with the NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo/Järvi of Toru Takemitsu’s Music for Violin and Orchestra.

Akiko 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. She performs on the ‘Charles Reade’ Guarneri del Gesu violin c1732, which has been kindly loaned to her by Japanese-American scientist and philanthropist Dr. Ryuji Ueno.