Akiko Suwanai  
Violin

“Her big, focused, almost piercing tone took over, carving sonic space, a race car driver weaving in and out of (and even cutting off) traffic” *The Washington Post*

Japanese violinist Akiko Suwanai has established herself as one of the most sought-after artists of her generation. Since winning the International Tchaikovsky Competition in 1990 she has enjoyed a flourishing career, performing chamber music worldwide and engaging at the highest-level with orchestras and conductors worldwide.

In the 2022/23 season, Akiko tours with the Rotterdam Philharmonic/Shani and performs with the BBC Symphony Orchestra/Bringuier, Sinfonieorchester Basel/Bolton, Duisberg Philharmoniker/Bellincampi, Hong Kong Symphony Orchestra/van Zweden and National Symphony Orchestra/Märkl, to name a few. Frequently invited to chamber music festivals internationally, Akiko has long standing relationships with Martha Argerich and took part in her birthday celebrations in summer 2021 and this season performs at the Stresa Festival and the new, Far East Classical Music Festival at the House of Hungarian Music with renowned cellist, Istvan Vardai. Also a regular recitalist, performances in the 2022/23 season include dates with Ilya Rashkovsky in Taiwan, Tomoki Sakata in Japan and Evgeny Bozhanov in Duisburg.

Universally acclaimed for her performances of the core violin repertoire, Akiko has recently released a new disc for Universal Japan of the Complete Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin by Bach. She is also recognised for her master interpretations of lesser performed works and passion for new music. In previous seasons she has recorded works by Takemitsu with the NHK Symphony Orchestra/Järvi for Sony and given premieres of Peter Eötvös’ Seven at the Lucerne Festival under Pierre Boulez, and in the following year at the BBC Proms conducted by Susanna Mälkki.She has also given Asian premiers of important new works including violin concertos by James MacMIllan, Esa-Pekka Salonen and Krzysztof Penderecki.

Highlights of her 2021/22 season included touring with the Budapest Festival Orchestra/Fischer, as well as weeks with Tonkünstler/Märkl and Valencia Orchestra/Sung. Akiko recently recorded the complete Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin by Bach for Universal, which was released in January 2022 and was followed by a six-date solo recital tour in Japan including concerts in Tokyo and Nagoya. Successes in previous seasons also include concerts with Orquesta Sinfonica del Principado de Asturias performing Ligeti’s Violin concerto, which she will revive in his anniversary year, and concerts with Hamburg Symphoniker for the reopening of the Laeiszhalle for Mozart Violin Concerto No.1 as well as performances of Beethoven’s Violin Concerto with NHK SO and Japan Philharmonic.

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

Akiko performs on the “Charles Reade” Guarneri del Gesu violin generously loaned to her by the Japanese-American collector and philanthropist, Dr. Ryuji Ueno.