Akiko Suwanai
Violin

Capturing audiences with her “staggering sonority” (The Straits Times, April 2025), Japanese violinist Akiko Suwanai is a musician of considerable versatility and breadth of repertoire. Since winning the International Tchaikovsky Competition in 1990 she has enjoyed a flourishing career, performing internationally in chamber music and recital and engaging at the highest level with orchestras and conductors.

Suwanai begins the 2025/26 season with returns to the Luzerner Sinfonieorchester/Duncan Ward and the Budapest Festival Orchestra / Jaime Martín, and will debut with the Mozarteumorchester Salzburg / Andrey Boreyko. Later in the autumn she will join the Hallé Orchestra and Principal Conductor Kahchun Wong on tour in China and in Manchester and Sheffield, as well as the BBC National Orchestra of Wales with Jaime Martín on tour in Spain and in Cardiff. Other highlights include the Orchestre Philharmonique de Nice / Lionel Bringuier, the Lahti Symphony / Christian Schumann and returns to the Belgian National Orchestra / Antony Hermus and the Macao Orchestra / Lio Kuokman. Suwanai’s 2024/25 season was marked by an Asian and European tour with the NHK Symphony Orchestra / Fabio Luisi performing Berg’s Violin Concerto, returns to Die Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen/Paavo Järvi and the Gürzenich-Orchester / Sakari Oramo, and a debut with Sydney Symphony Orchestra/Dmitry Matvienko.

Known for her breadth of repertoire and passion for new music, Suwanai will give the world premiere of a new violin concerto by Misato Mochizuki with Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra / Mario Venzago in February 2026. The work will also be premiered in North America with Espirit Orchestra. In previous seasons she has premiered Dai Fujikura’s Double Concerto for Flute and Violin with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic / Karina Canellakis and Peter Eötvös’ *Seven* at the Lucerne Festival under Pierre Boulez and at the BBC Proms under Susanna Mälkki. Suwanai has also given Asian premieres of important new violin concertos by James MacMillan, Esa-Pekka Salonen and Krzysztof Penderecki. Other notable performances of new works include Toshio Hosokawa’s *Genesis* with Gürzenich-Orchester / Osmo Vänskä, Guillaume Connesson’s *Lost Horizons* with St Louis Symphony Orchestra / Stephane Denève and recordings of works by Tōru Takemitsu with NHK Symphony Orchestra /​ Paavo Järvi.

Signed to Decca Classics, Suwanai is also universally acclaimed for her performances of the core violin repertoire and has released *Brahms: The Sonatas for Violin and Piano* (2024) and Bach's *Complete Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin* (2022).

In 2012, Akiko launched the Nagoya- and Tokyo-based International Music Festival NIPPON as Artistic Director. This biennial festival presents a variety of guest orchestras and chamber concerts and commissions new works and world premieres by Japanese and international composers. At the festival Akiko has premiered new works including Karol Beffa’s Violin Concerto alongside Die Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen and Dai Fujikura’s *Pitter-Patter* with Boris Berezovsky.

Suwanai performs on the​ “Charles Reade” Guarneri del Gesù violin (1732), generously loaned to her by Dr. Ryuji Ueno, a Japanese-American collector and philanthropist.