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 internationally and engaging at the highest-level with orchestras and conductors.

Suwanai begins the 2024/25 season with a return to National Symphony Orchestra Taiwan/Jun Märkl for Bruch’s Violin Concerto No.1, a concerto she will reprise further ahead in the season with Gürzenich-Orchester Köln/Sakari Oramo on tour in Japan. In other highlights, she joins NHK Symphony Orchestra Tokyo/Fabio Luisi on tour both in Asia and Europe with performances of Berg’s Violin Concerto and will visit the Swedish Chamber Orchestra/Downey-Dear and Sydney Symphony Orchestra/Dmitry Matvienko to perform Mozart’s Violin Concerto No.5. Known for her breadth of repertoire, Suwanai will premier Dai Fujikura’s Double Concerto for Flute and Violin with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic/Karina Canellakis, perform Hosokawa’s *Genesis* with Gürzenich-Orchester Köln and visit the St Louis Symphony for Connesson’s *Lost Horizons* conducted by Stephane Deneve. Another prominent work of the season is Dvořák’s Violin Concerto*,* which she will perform with both the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen/Paavo Järvi and Singapore Symphony Orchestra/Kahchun Wong.

Universally acclaimed for her performances of the core violin repertoire, Suwanai released *Brahms: The Sonatas for Violin and Piano* and Bach's *Complete Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin* with Universal Music in 2024 and 2022, respectively. She is also recognised for her master interpretations of lesser performed works and passion for new music: she has recorded works by Takemitsu with NHK Symphony Orchestra Tokyo/​Järvi 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. Suwanai has also given Asian premieres of important new works including violin concertos by James MacMillan, Esa-Pekka Salonen and Krzysztof Penderecki.

In 2012, Akiko launched the Tokyo-based International Music Festival NIPPON as Artistic Director. This bi-annual 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 Gesu violin, generously loaned to her by the Japanese-American collector and philanthropist, Dr. Ryuji Ueno.