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News

Kazuyoshi AKIYAMA; < Conductor >

Profile

In 2001, Kazuyoshi Akiyama, Music Director and Permanent Conductor of the Tokyo Symphony since 1964, and Principal Conductor and Music Advisor of the Hiroshima Symphony Orchestra since 1998, was awarded the Purple Ribbon Medal from the Japanese government for his outstanding contribution to the country's musical culture.

Kazuyoshi Akiyama began his musical life at the age of three studying the piano under his mother, a highly regarded instructor in Tokyo. He entered the piano department of Toho Gakuen School of Music but, strongly influenced by the conducting activities of another student, Seiji Ozawa, Mr. Akiyama quickly changed to the conducting department and was soon studying under Hideo Saito. In February 1964, a year after graduating, Mr. Akiyama made his debut with The Tokyo Symphony, the tremendous success of which led to the post of Music Director and Permanent Conductor that he maintains today.

Maestro Akiyama has led The Tokyo Symphony on successful world tours including performances at the United Nations in New York, London under the auspices of the UK Japan Festival, Italy and Turkey. He commemorated his 30th year as Music Director and Permanent Conductor of The Tokyo Symphony and also the orchestra's 400th subscription performance with the Japanese premiere of Schoenberg's Moses and Aaron (concert style). His programming has also included such works as Schonberg's Jacob Ladder (concert-style/1997), Janacek's The Adventures of the Vixen Bystrouska (semi-concert-style/1997), and Lachenmann's Das Madchen den Schwefelholzern (Japanese premiere/2000).

Overseas, this artist's conducting successes began with U.S. and Europe tours of the Toho Gakuen School of Music Orchestra and continued with guest conducting engagements with the Toronto Symphony, American Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic and Vancouver Symphony Orchestras. He further established himself through guest engagements with the San Francisco Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, The Cleveland Orchestra and Boston Symphony Orchestra. His reputation spread to Europe, where he was invited to conduct the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Cologne Broadcast Symphony Orchestra, and

Bayerisches Broadcast Orchestra. He has since become a regular guest conductor to numerous orchestras around the world, particularly to major orchestras in the United States.

Previous posts include Assistant Conductor of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (1968-1969), as well as Music Director of the American (1973-1978), Vancouver (1972-1985), and Syracuse (1985-1993) Symphony Orchestras. And following his positions in Vancouver and Syracuse, he was honored with the titles of Conductor Laureate and Conductor Emeritus, respectively. He is the recipient of numerous citations, including the Suntory Music Award of 1975, the Kyoto Music Award of 1993, the 1995 Mainichi Arts Award, and the 1995 Arts Encouragement Prize of the Minister of Education.