

Naoko Yoshino

Naoko Yoshino is one of the most outstanding harpists in the world today. Born in London, Ms. Yoshino began to study harp at the age of six with the eminent Susann McDonald, professor of music at Indiana University. Her tremendous talent was quickly recognized, and after returning to Tokyo, she began performing annual solo recitals. Her tenth such recital, in 1988, won her the prestigious Arts Festival Prize from Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs.

Now, in the 2001/2002 season, she appeared at the Vienna Musikvereinsaal with Maestro Harnoncourt/Concentus Musicus Wien, later traveling with them through Spain. Also this season are concerts with Fruhbeck de Burgos/National Orchestra of Spain in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the celebrated composer, Rodrigo, concerts with the North West German Philharmonic, and with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra/Blomstedt.

Highlights from 1998 to 2001, include tours with Seiji Ozawa on two separate occasions, the Mito Chamber Orchestra (Europe) and Saito Kinen Orchestra (US); trio concerts throughout Japan with Veronika Hagen and Wolfgang Schulz (later going with this same trio to the Schleswig-Holstein and Lucerne Festivals); a solo recital at the Lucerne Festival; an engagement at Salzburg's Mozart Week; duo concerts throughout Japan with Berlin Philharmonic solo-harpist Marie-Pierre Langlamet; and the world-premiere of Toshio Hosokawa's new Concerto for Harp.

Ms. Yoshino's engagements with the world's top symphonies and chamber orchestras have included dates with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Israel Philharmonic, Zurich's Tonhalle Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, NHK Symphony Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonische Virtuosen Berlin, Orchestre de Chambre Jean-Francois Paillard, Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra, and Vienna Chamber Orchestra among others. And conductors with whom she has shared the stage include Menuhin, Ozawa, Sawallisch, Mehta, Dutoit, Sinopoli, and Vonk.

A frequent guest at the Stresa, Davos, Saito Kinen, Marlboro, Neuberg, and Mostly Mozart Festivals, Naoko Yoshino is also known as a recitalist and chamber musician. In 1994 she earned the honor of performing at The Vatican to commemorate the restoration

of the Sistine Chapel. Through chamber music, she has come to work with such re-known musicians as violists Veronika Hagen and Nobuko Imai, oboist Hansjorg Schellenberger, flutists Aurele Nicolet, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Wolfgang Schulz, Shigenori Kudo and Yumiko Sakuma. One of her most well-known collaborations has been with violinist Gidon Kremer, with whom she performed a duo tour throughout Japan in 1996, and then according to Mr. Kremer's strong wish recorded harp and violin repertoire on the Philips label; this led to invitations from the Lockenhaus Festival, the Salzburger Festspiele and Gstaad Festival with Mr. Kremer in 1997.

In addition to Hosokawa's most recent Harp Concerto, as an advocate of new repertoire for harp, Ms. Yoshino has premiered many works including Ami Maayani's 2nd Sonata for Harp, Yuzo Toyama: Harp Concerto, Toru Takemitsu's And then I knew 'twas Wind, and also Yuji Takahashi's Insomnia.

Recordings to date include five releases on Sony Classical, a recording with SirYehudi Menuhin on Virgin Classics, and four releases on Philips Classics. Her most recent recording features her using a period harp for Mozart's Concerto for Flute and Harp, with Concentus Musicus Wien, conducted by Harnoncourt (Teldec). Prizes include second place - First International Harp Contest (Santa Cecilia Academy, Rome), at the age of 13; first place - Ninth International Harp Contest 1985 (Israel), where she was the youngest participant; 1988, Arts Festival Prize (Japan Agency for Cultural Affairs); 1989 Mobil Music Award for Brilliant Young Musicians.