

Akiko Nakajima - soprano

www.akikonakajima.org

Winning first prize in the Australian Singing Competition of 1990 marked the beginning of an international career for the Japanese soprano Akiko Nakajima. There followed in quick succession her debut for Opera Australia and her European debut at the Teatro di San Carlo di Napoli as Musetta, *La Bohème*.

Following on from this, her international career as both opera and concert singer flourished. She made her Austrian debut in the title role of Händel's *Alcina* for Innsbruck's Festwochen der Alten Musik – a production that received the European Broadcasting Union Award. Her sensational triumph as *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the Staatstheater Darmstadt led her to be nominated as the best new generation singer of the year by the Opernwelt magazine in 1999.

Her stunning debut as Sonja in *Der Zarewitsch* at the Vienna Volksoper in 1999 was followed by other successes: Violetta in *La Traviata*, Anne in *The Rake's Progress* and Annina in *Eine Nacht in Venedig*. In 2007 she made her debut at the Hamburg State Opera as Donna Fiorilla in *Il Turco in Italia*. At the same time, her career has continued to develop in her native country, Japan, where she frequently performs with various symphonic orchestras as well as opera institutions.

The celebrated conductors with whom she has appeared include Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, Seiji Ozawa, André Previn, Herbert Blomstedt, Charles Dutoit, Kazushi Ono, Myung-Whun Chung and Thomas Hengelbrock.

Akiko Nakajima's first solo CD *La Pastorella* (PR90647) was nominated for the Deutschen Schallplattenkritik list. *Female Portraits* (PR90691) was followed by another recording, *Plaisir d'amour* (CDS556) for the Italian label Dynamic in 2008. A DVD recording of a live concert of Britten's *Midsummer Night's Dream* with Seiji Ozawa was documented by NHK Enterprise in 2009. In early 2011, she recorded her much awaited operetta CD, *Wien, Stadt meiner Träume* (Gramola 98908) at the famous Musikverein for the Viennese label, Gramola.

Highlights from her recent engagements include a newly commissioned opera written for her voice, *Taki no Shiraito*, by the Ishikawa Music Foundation, her appointment as the artistic leader for a new festival, "Mozarthaus in Japan 2014" at Otemachi Hall in Tokyo, as well as the first overseas performance of her stage production, *Mugen Noh - Pierrot Lunaire*, at Sion Festival in Switzerland in 2016, in which she directed and performed the principal role. Forthcoming appearances include the NHK live broadcast performance, the 60th NHK New Year Concert, as well as Cio-cio san in *Madama Butterfly* in Kanazawa, Osaka, Takasaki and Tokyo under the direction of the legendary director Yoshi Oida in 2017.

Akiko Nakajima is the general director of the Gunma Opera Academy "Noura-Juku", and artistic adviser for the Mozarthaus Vienna. From 2016 she lectures in the faculty of Performing Arts – "Voice and Opera" at the Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna (MUK).