

## • Kazuyoshi Akiyama



Kazuyoshi Akiyama was recently named Conductor Laureate of the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra after serving as Music Director for nearly 40 years. He is also music Director of the Hiroshima Symphony Orchestra, and Principal Conductor and Music Advisor of the Kyushu Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. Akiyama began studying piano at age three under the tutelage of his mother, a highly regarded instructor in Tokyo. He entered the piano department of Toho Gakuen School of Music, and was so strongly influenced by the conducting activities of fellow student Seiji Ozawa that he transferred to the conducting department and studied with Hideo Saito. In 1974, a year after graduating, Mr. Akiyama made his debut with The Tokyo Symphony. He was named Music Director and Permanent Conductor of that orchestra two months later.

Outside of Japan, Mr. Akiyama's conducting successes began with U.S. and European tours of the Toho Gakuen School of Music Orchestra. He went on to guest conduct the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, American Symphony Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic and Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, and gained recognition in guest engagements with the San Francisco Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, The Cleveland Orchestra and Boston Symphony Orchestra. In Europe, he has conducted major orchestras including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Cologne Radio Orchestra, and Bayerischer Rundfunk Orchestra.

Mr. Akiyama has served as Assistant Conductor of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (1968-1969), Music Director of the American Symphony Orchestra, following Leopold Stokowski, in New York, (1973-1978), and Music Director of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (1972-1985). He was granted the title of Conductor Laureate of the Vancouver symphony upon leaving his post there in 1985. During 2004-2005 he served as Principal Guest Conductor of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. From 1985 to 1993, Mr. Akiyama served as Music Director of the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra.

In 1991, Kazuyoshi Akiyama led The Tokyo Symphony in a world tour to celebrate the orchestra's 45th anniversary, which included performances in New York at the United Nations, as well as in London under the auspices of the United Kingdom's Japan Festival. He commemorated the Tokyo Symphony's 400th subscription performance with the Japanese premiere of Schoenberg's *Moses und Aaron*.

Mr. Akiyama was awarded an honorary doctorate in Music from Colgate University in 1992. He is the recipient of numerous citations, including the Suntory Music Award, the Kyoto Music Award, the Mainichi Arts Award, and the Arts Encouragement Prize of the Minister of Education. In 2001, he was awarded the Emperor's Purple Ribbon Medal from the Japanese Government for his outstanding contribution to the country's musical culture.