



SOUTH AFRICA-JAPAN CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS



MESSAGE FROM MR. TOSHIRO OZAWA, AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN



The collaborative concert with Japanese conductor, Mr. Yasuo Shinozaki, and Japanese pianist, Ms. Noriko Ogawa, together with the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra, is one of the highlights of the Japan-South Africa Centennial Celebrations.

In April 1910, Japan established consular relations with South Africa by appointing an Honorary Consul in Cape Town, Mr. Julius Otto Jeppe. Trade was beginning to grow even then. The year 2010 marks the centenary of the establishment of official relations between Japan and South Africa.

During the last 100 years there have been times of difficulty. Japan voiced its anti-apartheid policy views and kept its bilateral relations at the consular level until 1992, when full diplomatic relations were resumed.

Today, our two countries enjoy very cordial political relations and strong economic ties. In three of the last five years, Japan was the largest export market for South Africa.

Japan regards South Africa as an important partner in helping Africa become a truly 'vibrant Africa'. Japan also regards South

Africa as an important global player on many global issues, including global governance, and wishes to further strengthen its cooperation with South Africa.

The Centennial Celebration events are designed to promote and deepen mutual understanding of our cultures and history.

Cultural events planned for this year include the 16th Annual Japan Film Festival in Pretoria (Feb-Mar), Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, a Kabuki DVD Lecture in Pretoria, Grahamstown, Stellenbosch and Durban (Feb-Mar), a Japanese Martial Arts Day in Pretoria (Apr) and many other events.

We are also working to establish a Centre for Japanese Studies in Johannesburg and to plant 100 Japanese cherry blossom tree saplings across several sites in South Africa.

I sincerely hope that you are able to find time to attend some of these events.



For more information concerning the upcoming cultural events, please contact the Embassy of Japan.

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Conductor

Yasuo Shinozaki

In a remarkably short time, Yasuo Shinozaki has acquired a truly international reputation for his emotionally direct style of music making. Born in Japan, he studied in Vienna, Sienna and the United States, came to prominence in Finland, and spent three successful years as Assistant Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic before making his home in London. He has also scored notable success in his homeland.



Yasuo Shinozaki studied conducting with Leopold Hager at the Vienna Musikhochschule, with Myung-Whun Chung at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Sienna, and with Seiji Ozawa and Bernard Haitink at Tanglewood. In 2000 he took second prize at the Second International Sibelius Conducting Competition, directing the Helsinki Philharmonic in a memorably emotional performance of Sibelius' Second Symphony. He was immediately invited to conduct the same orchestra in a performance of Dvořák's New World Symphony, and given engagements with the Turku Philharmonic. Also in Finland he has worked with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Tampere Philharmonic and Tapiola Sinfonietta. In January 2007, Yasuo Shinozaki was appointed Chief Conductor / Artistic Director of the Kymi Sinfonietta based in Kotka and Kouvola in Finland, and continues his position with them throughout this season.

As Assistant Conductor to Esa-Pekka Salonen at the Los Angeles Philharmonic between August 2001 and September 2004 Yasuo Shinozaki conducted more than 40 concerts. In addition to subscription concerts in the Walt Disney Concert Hall, he conducted the orchestra on regional tours, at the Hollywood Bowl and in education and community events. Yasuo Shinozaki also performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group.

Yasuo Shinozaki's extensive work in Japan includes engagements with the Tokyo Philharmonic, Nagoya Philharmonic, Osaka Philharmoniker and the New Japan Philharmonic and he has conducted at Japanese opera houses including the Tokyo Nikikai Opera and Japan National Opera, where he made his opera debut with Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. In the UK Yasuo Shinozaki has worked with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Southbank Sinfonia, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and BBC Philharmonic. Other orchestras which have engaged him in recent years include the Hong Kong Philharmonic, Frankfurt Radio, Wuerttembergischer Philharmonic, Swedish Radio, Vasteras Sinfonietta, Norrlands Symphony, Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra and BIT20 Ensemble (for the Ultima Festival). Yasuo Shinozaki has established a great reputation in South Africa, conducting both the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra and the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra. In the 2009-10 season, Yasuo Shinozaki appears with orchestras including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Turku Philharmonic and the George Enescu Philharmonic.

Soloist

Noriko Ogawa

Noriko Ogawa appears with all the major UK, European, Japanese and US orchestras. With her wonderful dynamic range and colour palate, her particular affinities range from the works of Takemitsu, through the larger Romantic composers such as Prokofiev and Rachmaninov, to contemporary concerti commissioned from Graham Fitkin and Dai Fujikura. Amongst the leading conductors she has worked with are Dutoit, Vanska, Vonk, Lazarev, de Roo, Brabbins, Pesek, Slatkin, Fischer, Herbig, Otaka, Rozhdestvensky and Tortelier.



Noriko is also renowned as a recitalist and chamber musician. In February 2008, she made her recital debut at Suntory Hall, Japan for her 20th anniversary concert. Notable chamber projects include a tour of Japan with the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Ensemble and the leader of the Vienna Philharmonic, Rainer Honeck. In 2001 Noriko and Kathryn Stott launched their piano duo and have since toured in Japan and given premieres of Graham Fitkin's double piano concerto *Circuit*, including the world premiere at Bridgewater Hall. She has also collaborated with Steven Isserlis, Isabelle van Keulen, Martin Roscoe, Michael Collins and Peter Donohoe.

An advocate of commissioning, Noriko has been involved in numerous premierés. She has toured in Japan with Evelyn Glennie, premiering an exciting new commission for two pianos and percussion by Yoshihiro Kanno. In February 2009, she performed the premieré of Dai Fujikura's *Ampere* for piano and toy piano, with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Martyn Brabbins. Noriko's current ongoing commission is a ground-breaking series of four recital pieces from Kanno which feature the piano alongside various traditional Japanese instruments or sounds; the first for Nambu bell and piano *Hikari no Ryushi* (A Particle of Light) will be followed by *Mizu no Ryushi* (A Particle of Water) for metal chopsticks and piano.

Since 1997, Noriko Ogawa has been an exclusive recording artist for BIS Records. In addition to her Gramophone Editor's Choice award winning complete Debussy series (shortly to be completed with the *Fantasia* for piano and orchestra), her recordings for the label include Toru Takemitsu *Riverrun* (also Gramophone Magazine Editor's Choice) and *Mussorgsky Pictures at an Exhibition* (BBC Music Magazine Critics' Choice). Noriko's discography also includes Rachmaninov, Tchernin, Saint-Saens, Grieg, Delius and Graham Fitkin's double concerto *Circuit* with duo partner Kathryn Stott.

Alongside performing and recording, she is sought after for presenting both on the radio and on television, recently appearing on BBC Worldwide in 'Visionaries' as an advocate for Takemitsu and in programmes for NHK and Nippon Television. As an adjudicator, she regularly judges the BBC Young Musician of the Year Competition, Honens International Piano Competition and the Scottish International Piano Competition. In Japan, Noriko acts as artistic advisor to the MUZA Kawasaki Symphony Hall (www.kawasaki-sym-hall.jp) in her hometown. In 1999, the Japanese Ministry of Education awarded her their Art Prize in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the cultural profile of Japan throughout the world and she has also been awarded the Okura Prize for her outstanding contribution to music in Japan. As a writer, she has completed her first book (published in Japan) and is a regular columnist for the music press both in the UK and in Japan.

ALLAN STEPHENSON (1949–)
A JOHANNESBURG OVERTURE (1992)

This was written as a tribute to the National Symphony Orchestra with whom I'd made a number of recordings of South African works in the 1980's (Klatzow's *States of Light* and *A Chrysalis in Flames*, Rajna's 2nd Piano and Harp Concerti, Simon's Requiem and *Antipodian Overture* and Zaidel-Rudolph's *At the End of the Rainbow*). The work takes as its main theme the rhythm of the word Jo-han-nes-burg and was inspired by the view of the Joburg skyline from what is today Midrand. At the time I wrote the piece there were only green sprawling fields all the way and I imagined an aerial photographic shot travelling towards the city. The form is my version of sonata form with intersecting episodes and a false recapitulation....just like Papa Haydn.

Programme note supplied by the composer



TORU TAKEMITSU (1930–1996)
*RIVERRUN, CONCERTO FOR PIANO
 AND ORCHESTRA* (1984)

"I would like to achieve a sound as intense as silence," is one of many credos in which Takemitsu gave expression to what he aimed for in his music. He was also impressed by the following poem, written by a child: 'Hours are leaves of life, / and I am their gardener... / Each hour falls down slow.' This epigram, perfectly fitting the Japanese *haiku* style, was found by Takemitsu in the collection "Miracles: Poems by Children of the English-Speaking World," edited by Richard Lewis and published in 1966 by Simon and Schuster, New York. The composer's music itself is poetic, slowly revolving in broad sound currents, languidly sensual, rarely rushed, with the kind of imaginative character which seems ideal for

film. At the end of the day there's hardly any difference between his "real" music, or the kind which might have utilitarian value, like his soundtracks.

Takemitsu was born in Tokyo on 8 October 1930 and died in the same city on 20 February 1996. He came to music rather late, as a 16-year old high school student shortly after World War II. With hardly any formal training apart from one extended lesson from French composer Olivier Messiaen, he remained essentially self-taught. The first music he was exposed to was popular French chansons during the war, but also French art music – especially through the works of Debussy, Ravel and Messiaen. Apart from developing a thorough knowledge of the European classical tradition, the influences from Japanese culture were evenly strong. From the early 1960's he became increasingly well-known on the strength of his *Requiem for Strings* (1957), *Dorian Horizon* (1966) and *November Steps* (1967) for two traditional Japanese instruments, the *schakuhachi* and *biwa*, and Western symphony orchestra. He also composed music for almost a hundred Japanese films.

Riverrun, commissioned in 1984 by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association and premièred in January 1985 by its orchestra with soloist Peter Serkin and Simon Rattle conducting, is the last of Takemitsu's (James) Joycean compositions. He uses the river/sea motif of *Finnegan's Wake* to explore a musical hemisphere based on the three keys found in the word SEA (the German Es of E-flat, E, and A). As in his Violin Concerto, this symbolism is further advanced to broaden and transform a piece of atonal music into a wider expanse of tonalism. *Riverrun* also illustrates the composer's affinity for complex pitch and rhythmic structures, pitting a highly chromatic, pointillistic piano part against the background of fluctuating tempi in the orchestra.

Andrew Clements wrote: "...the absolute lack

of stylistic inhibition and absence of rhetoric in his music allow Takemitsu to juxtapose gestures which from any other composer would seem contradictory, or even bombastic: there is piano writing which would seem not out of place in a Liszt piece, or a Brahms concerto, set against – or more properly amongst – orchestral sonorities of Bergian chromaticism or Messiaen-like richness. Yet the mixture never seems anything but objective, and is light years away from the kind of self-willed thought processes that would have motivated such piano configuration in the nineteenth century.”

Takemitsu can be seen as a gentle giant amongst serious Oriental composers. Attention to musical detail is a salient feature in his scores. A vivid realisation of those details produces an astonishing sonic effect. Any comparison of Debussy with Takemitsu is useful, considering their shared attraction to the sensuous as well as their common interest in the fusion of Western and Eastern musical ideas. As the Dutch conductor Edo de Waart recently said in an interview: “One of my favourite composers is, no doubt, Toku Takemitsu. It’s as if his music is written with the lightest of feather pens – and he is predominantly following the line of Debussy.”



PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)

SYMPHONY NO 5 IN E MINOR, OP 64 (1888)

I Andante – Allegro con anima

*II Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza –
Moderato con anima*

III Valse: Allegro moderato

IV Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace

There is no doubt in anyone’s mind that the emotional context of Tchaikovsky’s Fifth

Symphony reflects the soul of a man in a time of deep crisis. Like the Fourth, the composer’s Fifth is again a fate symphony and the programme is fairly obvious, representing once more the struggle of man against unseen forces. A kind of “destiny motif”, which appears in all four movements, is first heard at the beginning of the Andante introduction, in the lowest register of the clarinets. It becomes a kind of leitmotif (Wagner) or an *idée fixe* (Berlioz) which recurs every time in a different musical guise. This motto theme is as such an extended melody in a minor key.

After this opening theme on the clarinets – it is repeated several times threateningly – the main theme of this movement, said to be based on a Polish folk-tune, is introduced pianissimo by clarinet and bassoon. It develops strongly, but quite soon a plaintive second theme is given to the strings. After considerable development, with the occasional introduction of new material and a developed reprise with strong climaxes featuring the brass, a lengthy coda is anticipated which eventually leads us back to a mood of extreme calm. The movement ends with a dying tremolo culminating in an uncanny silence.

The *Andante cantabile* is a constant stream of melodic inspiration. The wonderful solo horn melody, challenging to perform, is quite unforgettable even after a single hearing. It is followed by an emotion laden duet with the oboe. The second theme, played by the ‘cellos and extended by the violins, contains a distinct note of optimism. These two melodies supply most of the material of the movement, with a tentative reminder of the motto theme just before the coda, which ends in a drawn-out soft chord.

Valse is the heading Tchaikovsky chose for the third movement, unique in symphonic literature. Its delicate melody is passed around the various instrumental groups with several artful variations. The middle section brings

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anxious excitement into the amorous mood, perhaps a hint of jealousy too, which finds its way even into the reprise of the waltz theme. At the very end of this movement the foreboding tones of the motto are heard again sounding low in clarinets and bassoons, still in the minor key.

Like the first movement, the finale begins with an *Andante*, but then it presents the destiny motif *maestoso*, in the optimistic major key. It has a triumphant sound. The *Allegro vivace* which follows is a concluding movement of often barbaric wildness and Asiatic/Slavic temperament. Themes and motives are quoted from the preceding movements and even the fateful leading motif, drawn into the general expression of zest for life, is here transformed. Near the close a surprising reminder of the opening movement's first theme is trumpeted by the brass, also in major key, and with this final bond to emphasise the cyclic form, the symphony ends gloriously on E major chords.

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