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SAPPORO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES BENEFIT CONCERT FOR JAPAN EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS



**SOUTHBANK CENTRE'S ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL
LONDON 23 MAY 2011 7.30pm**

21 March 2011: The Sapporo Symphony Orchestra, supported by Askonas Holt Ltd and Southbank Centre, announced today that its London concert is to be a benefit event for the victims of the devastating earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan on 11 March. The entire proceeds from ticket sales will go directly to the Japanese Red Cross Society and the Japan Society Tohoku Earthquake Relief Fund, both of which are distributing aid to help people in the affected areas.

The London concert is part of the Sapporo Symphony Orchestra's 50th anniversary tour this May under the baton of its longtime Principal Conductor **Tadaaki Otaka** with a programme of **Takemitsu's How Slow the Wind, Bruch's Violin Concerto No 1 in G minor** – with celebrated Japanese violinist **Akiko Suwanai** – and **Shostakovich's Symphony No 5 in D minor**.

Tadaaki Otaka commented: *"It was an unforeseen and terrible disaster, from which all Japanese people are working extremely hard to recover. We, the musicians, wish to turn our London appearance into a charity concert in aid of the vital relief efforts in our country. Please join us and help Japan."*

Toshio Miyazawa, General Manager of the Orchestra added: *"Japan has faced the most disastrous earthquake ever experienced, and we would like to express our sincere appreciation to people in the UK and all over the world for their encouragement and sympathy. With the goodwill of all people concerned, our London concert is now a benefit event for the victims. We appeal to music lovers to support us in this; with deepest gratitude for their generosity, we will perform our very best."*



Tadaaki Otaka

Not only is this a rare opportunity for London audiences to hear one of Japan's leading orchestras, they can now show their support for the people of Japan tragically affected by this huge natural disaster.

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

Tickets £10-£35 Box Office T.0844 875 0073 www.southbankcentre.co.uk

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The Japanese Red Cross Society www.jrc.or.jp/english/index.html
The Japan Society Tohoku Earthquake Relief Fund www.japansociety.org.uk/earthquake

Notes to editors

SAPPORO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Originally founded on 1st July 1961 as the Sapporo Citizen Symphony, Hokkaido's only professional orchestra was renamed the Sapporo Symphony Orchestra the following year. Since then more than 5.6 million Hokkaido residents have known it affectionately as "Sakkyo". Currently the orchestra comprises 76 musicians and performs over 120 concerts every year. www.sso.or.jp/sso_e/

TADAAKI OTAKA, CBE

Tadaaki Otaka's association with the Sapporo Symphony Orchestra is a long one: he has held the current position of Principal Conductor since 1998 and was previously Resident Conductor 1981-86. He has been associated with practically all the major Japanese orchestras, as well with many international ones and is well known in the UK for his dedication to performing the works of British composers and also his tenure with BBC National Orchestra of Wales - to which he was first appointed in 1996 and where he is now Conductor Laureate.

<http://www.askonasholt.co.uk/artists/conductors/tadaaki-otaka>

AKIKO SUWANAI

Guest soloist **Akiko Suwanai**, the youngest ever winner of the International Tchaikovsky Competition, enjoys superstar status in her homeland. Praised for the poise, power and clarity of her playing, she is in demand with the world's most highly regarded orchestras and conductors (her relationship with conductor Tadaaki Otaka goes back 20 years). She plays one of the most famous known violins in existence today, the 1714 Stradivarius 'Dolphin' that previously belonged to Jascha Heifetz.

www.akikosuwanai.com

ASKONAS HOLT is one of the world's leading arts management agencies. It represents some of the finest vocal, instrumental and conducting talent, as well as managing tours for a large number of outstanding orchestras and chamber ensembles and has also built strong reputations in the fields of dance and ballet, special projects and festival management. Askonas Holt is managing the Sapporo Symphony Orchestra 50th anniversary tour in Germany, Italy and the UK.

www.askonasholt.co.uk

SOUTHBANK CENTRE is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying a 21-acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 *Festival of Britain*. Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and The Hayward as well as The Saison Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. The Royal Festival Hall reopened in June 2007 following the major refurbishment of the Hall and redevelopment of the surrounding area and facilities. Southbank Centre is home to Resident Orchestras, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra, London Sinfonietta and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.