

SHUNSKE SATO

violinist • conductor • teacher

For versions in other languages (German, Dutch, French) or abridged versions of this biography, please contact Marloes Biermans (mbiermans@icloud.com)

Shunske Sato is a violinist, a conductor, chamber musician, soloist and teacher – the diversity of his activities reflect his versatile and resourceful nature. Historically informed performance practice is central to his identity and allows him to inhabit the music and communicate with audiences in dramatic, revelatory ways. He directs and appears as soloist with period ensembles as well as symphonic orchestras around the world, and has led several staged productions as well.

Resident in The Netherlands, Shunske has been a faculty member of the Amsterdam Conservatory since 2013, where he teaches historical violin. He also gives masterclasses and workshops with regularity. Sharing his knowledge with young musicians is very important to him, which is why he enjoyed the guest projects he did with, among others, the European Union Baroque Orchestra, Juilliard415 (New York) and the New World Symphony (Miami).

In 2013 Shunske became concertmaster of the Netherlands Bach Society, and was appointed its artistic leader from 2018 to 2023, during which time he directed numerous works by J.S. Bach and contemporaries. His many recordings of Bach's cantatas and instrumental works can be seen on www.youtube.com/bach. Shunske has also worked closely with Concerto Köln since 2011 as soloist, conductor and concertmaster.

With his own PastForward Ensemble Shunske devotes himself to the realm of 19th century performance practice. The ensemble, formed by experienced European-based musicians, seeks to revisit the music of the 19th century and to bring it back to its emotion-driven roots.

Shunske is regularly invited as guest director by ensembles such as the Dutch Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, the Residentie Orkest (The Hague), the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra (Norway), Orfeo Orchestra (Hungary), Philharmonia Baroque (USA), Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, and Orquestra Barocca de Sevilla. Upcoming highlights include his debut with Tafelmusik and the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra.

Shunske forms a duo with pianist Shuann Chai – the two have given acclaimed concerts in Japan, Canada, and Europe. Their recording “BEE1HOVEN – The Complete Violin Sonatas” (2024) won the prestigious New Record Academy Award in Japan.

Before historically informed practice became a part of Shunske's activities, he performed extensively as soloist with renowned symphonic orchestras such as the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bavarian Radio Philharmonic, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, and the NHK Symphony Orchestra.

Born in Tokyo, Shunske immigrated to the US at the age of four. He studied at the Juilliard School in New York, Conservatoire National de Région in Paris and Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Munich. His teachers include Chin Kim, Dorothy DeLay, Masao Kawasaki, Gérard Poulet, Eiichi Chijiwa and Mary Utiger.