



# SUMI JO

## Soprano



Sumi Jo has established herself as one of her generation's most sought-after sopranos, praised for her outstanding musicianship and the remarkable agility, precision and warmth of her voice. She is the highest selling Classical singer in the world, with over 50 recordings to her credit, including a Grammy-winning *Die Frau ohne Schatten* with Sir Georg Solti for Decca London and *Un Ballo in Maschera* for Deutsche Grammophon under Herbert von Karajan. One of her most recent discs, *Mother* (Universal Records), a collection of classical, crossover and folksongs dedicated to her mother, received Platinum Award certification in November 2019.

Now best known for her Grammy award-winning interpretations of the bel canto repertoire, Sumi made her European operatic debut as Gilda *Rigoletto* at the Teatro Comunale Giuseppe Verdi in Trieste in 1986. There followed a series of impressive house and role debuts, including Oscar *Un ballo in maschera* opposite Placido Domingo at the Salzburg Festival in 1987; Thetis in Jommelli's *Fetonte* at Teatro alla Scala, Barbarina *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Bayerische Staatsoper in 1988; debuts at the Wiener Staatsoper and the Metropolitan Opera as Gilda in 1989 and the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Queen of the Night and Olympia *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the

Royal Opera House in 1990. Sumi has since been greeted consistently with exceptional accolades, by public and press alike, for performances in opera houses and concert halls throughout the world.

This season, Sumi Jo launches the inaugural Sumi Jo International Singing Competition, which will take place in July 2024, and will be situated in the beautiful surroundings of the Chateau de La Ferte-Imbault, a medieval Castle just outside of Paris. Over recent years Sumi Jo has been invited to join the distinguished juries of the world's most renowned vocal competitions, including the Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition in Brussels, Glyndebourne Opera Cup 2020, Cardiff Singer of the World in 2017, the Hong Kong International Operatic Singing Competition, the Queen Sonja International Music Competition 2019 and the 2020 Glyndebourne Cup.

Sumi Jo is in constant demand as a performer and as a special guest artist at gala concerts and events internationally, with recent appearances including the World Cup, the 2011 Asian Winter Olympics Opening Ceremony in Sochi, the International Olympic Games in Beijing and at the PyeongChang Paralympics Winter Games, where as an Honorary Ambassador she performed their official song "Here as One". Sumi was also invited to sing for Pope Francis's papal visit to South Korea in 2014.

Sumi celebrated the 30th anniversary of her international opera debut in the 2016-17 season, with performances across Australia (Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne), Manila, at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center Athens, Toulouse, Taipei and Pingtung with the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, a series of Maria Callas Tribute concerts with the Hong Kong Philharmonic and recitals in Clermont-Ferrand and Montreal. That season she also made



guest appearances with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra conducted by Kent Nagano and with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Long Yu for their Lunar New Year Concert at David Geffen Hall.

Recent engagements have also included a Lunar New Year celebration concert with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, an exclusive recital at the Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay in Singapore, the opening gala concert for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Mozart Festival in Warsaw, a special winner’s concert for the Hong Kong International Operatic Singing Competition alongside Hong Kong Philharmonic and Musiva Viva, gala concerts at the Colosseum, Rome; to open the new Guangzhou Opera House; the inaugural performance of Hanoi’s first professional orchestra (the Sun Symphony Orchestra); as part of the Shanghai Concert Hall’s 30th anniversary celebrations; with the Budapest Film Orchestra; at the Theatre des Champs-Élysées in Paris; Teatro Colón in Bogota; the Kremlin Palace and the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow (where she received an award for Best Female Artist from Asia at the 2018 BraVo International Music Awards); in St Petersburg, London, Krasnoyarsk, Latvia and Almaty, Kazakhstan; as well as further touring projects, concerts and masterclasses across Korea, China and Europe, and recitals at the Sala Sao Paolo, Opéra National du Rhin Strasbourg, Roy Thomson Hall Toronto, Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, Smetanova Litomysl Festival, Opéra-Théâtre de Clermont-Ferrand and London’s Wigmore Hall. At the Metropolitan Opera House New York, Sumi Jo has been heard in the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Olympia in *Les Contes d’Hoffmann*, Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Oscar in *Un Ballo in maschera*. Audiences at Teatro alla Scala have heard her in bel canto specialties such as *Le Comte Ory* and *Fra Diavolo*. At the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, she has appeared as Gilda, Zerbinetta and Queen of the Night; with the latter role Sumi also made her Wiener Staatsoper debut. Sumi’s recent opera engagements include Fiakermilli *Arabella* and Fiorilla in *Il turco in Italia* at Hamburg State Opera, Madame Mao in *Nixon in China* at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette* at Teatro Municipal de Rio de Janeiro, title role *Lucia di Lammermoor* for Opera di Firenze and the title role of Auber’s *Manon Lescaut* at Opéra Royal de Wallonie in Liège. In March 2018 Sumi appeared on stage at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden in a memorial concert to honour her dear colleague and friend, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, alongside artists such as Anna Netrebko, Elīna Garanča and Angela Gheorghiu.

Sumi has also appeared in a number of motion pictures, notably performing as herself in Paolo Sorrentino’s *Youth* starring Michael Caine. Sumi’s performance of the film’s signature song, “Simple Song #3” won her nominations for the 2016 Golden Globe awards, Academy Awards and for an Oscar in the “Music – Original Song” category.

Born in South Korea, Sumi Jo studied in her native country before enrolling in the Conservatory of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, where she graduated with honours in October 1986. Her many prestigious awards include the International Puccini Award and First Prize at international competitions in Seoul, Naples, Enna, Barcelona, Pretoria and the Carlo Alberto Cappelli International Competition in Verona. She was elected UNESCO ‘Artist for Peace’ in 2003 and in 2019 was granted the Decoration of “Cavaliere dell’Ordine della Stella d’Italia” (Order of the Star of Italy – Knight) from the Italian Government.

This biography is valid for use until March 2024. For updated versions, please contact [evangeline@wehmermanagement.com](mailto:evangeline@wehmermanagement.com). This biography should not be edited without permission from Camilla Wehmer Management.