



PERFORMER CORNER

Sachiya Isomura

by Mary Sorlie

Cellist Sachiya Isomura has been a member of the Minnesota Orchestra for the past 25 years. Sachiya was born in Toyohashi, Japan. His family moved to Tokyo when he was seven. He began violin and piano studies at the age of three, but at the age of 9, switched to the cello. He studied at the Toho School of Music in Tokyo. He had one principal teacher, Hideo Saito, who was very influential in his life. He recalls that his teacher was quite strict and the training was hard, including many scales as well as etudes by Dotzauer, Duport, Popper and Gruetzmacher. His teacher taught mainly conducting and cello, but taught other areas as well. Sachiya studied with him from the ages of 9–23.

Upon completion of his studies in Tokyo, Sachiya headed to Juilliard. It was his hope to study and perform chamber music. At the time, he had one brother already living in New York. This brother, Kazuhide, is one of the founding members of the Tokyo String Quartet, and performs viola with them to this day. (He also has another brother, Toshihiko, who plays viola in the opera orchestra in Ulm, Germany.) While he was at Juilliard, he studied cello with Harvey Shapiro and chamber music with Felix Galimir. At Juilliard, Sachiya won the concerto competition and played the Schumann concerto with John Nelson conducting. He fondly recalls that he played in the same orchestra as Yo-Yo Ma at Juilliard.

After finishing his musical diploma, he played in a string quartet and taught at Bowling Green University in Ohio. He accepted the position that Peter Howard (current principal in the SPCO) had held. Other members of the quartet were Paul Makara and Young-Nam Kim on violin, and Bernard Linden on viola. Sachiya remained at Bowling Green for two years and then played in the Baltimore Symphony for one year. It was in January of 1979 that he joined the Minnesota Orchestra. One of his highlights during his tenure with

the Minnesota Orchestra was performing the Vivaldi *Concerto for Two Cellos* with Mina Fisher.

An active soloist and chamber musician in the Twin Cities, Sachiya has performed with the Bloomington Symphony, the Northwestern College Chamber Orchestra, and with the Musical Offering. He has most recently recorded a CD titled *Christmas Blessings*, along with Catherine Victorsen on harp and Barbara Leibundguth on flute. He is also on the faculty of Northwestern College.

In addition to performing in the orchestra, Sachiya teaches 10 students, both school age and adult. One of the points that he stresses in his teaching is that a teacher must be able to demonstrate technique and musical ideas to their students, not just tell them about it. That was one of the points that his teacher at Juilliard, Harvey Shapiro, stressed to him. He finds that many students are not ready to play some of the bigger concertos. He would like to find the student concertos that would prepare students technically for the bigger works, while holding their interest. These include works by Klengel, Romberg and Goltermann. Sachiya finds that some of the student concertos are not as much fun to play as the Dvorak Concerto and that students get bored easily on these lesser known works. Students need to play the pieces with less technical difficulties, pieces that will pre-

pare them musically and technically for the bigger works. He would also love to find the balance between a strict basic training and the enjoyment of music. "Encourage the student, but be realistic." Basic technique, such as intonation, cannot be ignored. As for his students performing, he loves the joint cello ensemble recitals he does with fellow cellist, Sarah West. He describes that sound of twenty-five cellos as simply amazing!

Sachiya and his wife are active in the Japanese Ministry at Alliance Church in Roseville. Their three children play musical instruments.



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Mary Sorlie is an active as a free-lance violinist in the Twin Cities. She has played with the Lexington Symphony, Minnesota Opera, Minneapolis Chamber Symphony, Lyra Concert, Bach Society and Minnesota Sinfonia. She has played for the San Francisco and Joffrey Ballet Companies as well as in concert with Harry Connick, Jr., Luciano Pavarotti, and Vince Gill.

Mary is a frequent guest conductor and string clinician in the Midwest. She has been on the conducting staff of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies and is currently the conductor for the MacPhail Suzuki Chamber Orchestra. Mary was on the faculty of Northwestern College for 18 years where she taught violin, string methods and founded and directed the Northwestern College Orchestra. She currently serves on the MNSOTA board as secretary. ♪