

Mihoko Ajima

Koto and Shamisen

Mihoko Ajima is a koto and shamisen performer of the Ikuta-ryū tradition, whose work bridges classical repertoire and contemporary expression. She began studying koto at the age of four and shamisen at twelve under Satomi Fukami. She graduated from the Tokyo University of the Arts and completed her postgraduate studies at the same institution. Through programs organized by the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan, she studied *koto kumi-uta* under Namino Torii, *jiuta shamisen* under Seikin Tomiyama (Living National Treasure), and contemporary koto music under Chieko Fukunaga, cultivating a broad artistic foundation across traditional and modern repertoire.

In 2009, she won her first major award, First Prize at the Michio Miyagi Memorial Competition. She also received the Kenjun Prize (the highest honor) at the Kenjun Memorial National Koto Competition in 2021, the Gold Prize in the contemporary category at the Hidenori Tone Memorial Aioi Competition in 2024, the Silver Prize in the classical category at the same competition in 2025, Second Prize in the world music division at the Ibra Grand Award Japan Competition in 2024, and Grand Prize at the Japanese HOUGAKU Music Contest in 2026.

In 2022, she held her first solo recital in Tokyo. She performs widely across Japan and internationally, appearing on NHK television and radio programs. She has participated in various recordings such as the music for the new Kabuki production “Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind.” In addition to performing, she composes and arranges music for stage and media, including the web commercial for “Suntory ROKU GIN,” exploring new possibilities for traditional Japanese instruments.

She was appointed as a Cultural Ambassador for Traditional Japanese Music (2024-2025) by the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan. As part of this role, she conducts educational outreach for university and high school students. She has been also involved in “Public Hall Japanese Music Promotion Project” as a registered artist for the Japan Foundation for Regional Art-Activities since 2024.

She is a member of the Miyagikai and the Japan Sankyoku Association, and also she performs with the traditional performing arts project “TRAD JAPAN.”

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