

## Kings Place Local

# Akiko Yanagisawa

Akiko Yanagisawa is a producer with a special interest in Japanese arts and has curated the Noh Reimagined festival which comes to Kings Place in May



Akiko Yagisama at Wazen Restaurant

## WHERE'S HOME FOR YOU?

Tokyo, where I was born and raised, and London where I have been living for over 14 years. I feel home is where important people like my family and partner are.

## HOW HAS LONDON CHANGED IN THE TIME YOU'VE LIVED HERE: ANY MEMORIES FROM WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVED?

In 1997, I came to London to study Arts Management at City University. I commuted from my studio apartment in Notting Hill to the

Barbican. At the time, the rent was £110 a week and the tube stopped for signal failures every other day. I did not find many stylish cafés and restaurants with good service, which was a shock coming from Tokyo. But things have changed a lot since as we see today. Also the arts in London have become much more exciting and vibrant – obviously Kings Place is one important venue that has opened in the time I have been here.

## HOW DOES IT COMPARE TO YOUR HOME CITY? WHAT DO YOU MISS MOST ABOUT JAPAN?

Japanese-style bathtubs you can soak in to your chin, and crispy winter days with blue sky in Tokyo.

## WHAT WOULD AN AKIKO YANAGISAWA MAP OF LONDON LOOK LIKE – IN TERMS OF THE SIGNIFICANT PLACES IN YOUR LIFE?

I love living near the park and water. When I lived in West London, I enjoyed walking in Kensington Gardens and visiting the



Akiko Yanagisawa at King's Cross station

'I think Kings Cross is the most interesting area in London now as I tell my friends in Japan'

Serpentine Gallery, and Proms at the Royal Albert Hall. The long path on the south side of the Thames upstream of Putney Bridge, where you see rowing clubs practising, is still one of my favourite locations. But I think King's Cross is the most interesting area in London now, as I tell my friends in Japan. I love the Regent's Canal walk or biking to see the upcoming, wacky East London culture, and beautiful Regent's Park and Little Venice to the west.

#### FAVOURITE PLACES IN THE KING'S CROSS AREA?

From the Regent's Canal side of King's Cross Station, walking up the Kings Boulevard looking at the progress of new buildings and feeling the buzz of new wine bars and cafés, eventually arriving at Granary Square, overlooking the

canal towpath and narrowboats; it is a picturesque urban scene full of life.

#### WHERE'S YOUR FAVOURITE EATERY AROUND HERE?

I love cooking, especially Italian and Japanese. But I also like the contemporary Indian Dishoom restaurant on Stable Street, cappuccino at Notes Coffee on One Pancras Square, and a new Japanese restaurant Wazen on Acton Street.

#### WHERE IN LONDON IS STILL A MYSTERY TO YOU?

It used to be the women's pond on Hampstead Heath, but London Zoo is still a mystery.

#### WHAT ONE THING WOULD YOU CHANGE ABOUT THIS AREA?

It would be nice to have more trees, and cheaper rents.

#### ANY PARTICULARLY GOOD MEMORIES OF EVENTS AT KP?

Kings Place offers the best of music of all genres and I enjoy attending concerts there. The concert of Sho (a bamboo mouth organ) by Mayumi Miyata with members of London Sinfonietta was especially memorable. It was part of the *Hibiki: Resonances from Japan* festival I curated here in 2011.

#### TELL US ABOUT YOUR FORTHCOMING FESTIVAL - NOH REIMAGINED?

The festival's aim is to rediscover the value and inspiration of Noh for contemporary arts and culture. Noh is a total art form comprising drama, music and dance which originated in the 15th century – one of the oldest unbroken performance traditions in the world. As the title indicates, I curated the programme not only to introduce the Noh as a traditional art form but to explore its potential to inspire contemporary artists and audiences.

There will be performances of classical Noh by the best expert performers from Japan, premieres of new pieces by two British composers, intercultural performance with saxophonist Evan Parker and Remix artists, and performances and discussions by visual and performing artists inspired by Noh. You can also see Noh Dance and drop into a Noh music workshop.

Join us to discover the unlimited inspiration of Noh!

**FRI 13 & SAT 14 MAY**

Noh Reimagined  
See Listings  
pp45–47 for details