



Scottish
Opera

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Dai Fujikura & Harry Ross

The Great Wave

Support: Japan Creator Support Fund

Supported by Supported by The Alexander Gibson Circle,

Scottish Opera's New Commissions Circle, and Bernard & Jane Nelson



Welcome to tonight's performance of *The Great Wave*. Composer Dai Fujikura and Librettist Harry Ross have turned towards biographical fiction for the first time with their third operatic collaboration, and it is hugely exciting to present this world premiere in the middle of Scottish Opera's 2025/26 Season. The artist known as Hokusai is best remembered for his iconic views of Mount Fuji, the most famous of these portraying a massive wave looking to topple a fishing boat in the bay. *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* is displayed in museums, printed on t-shirts and posters, and lovingly parodied in cross-media homages. Dai and Harry capture the man behind the ubiquitous image, and in his many masterpieces, they find a testament to continual artistic invention and reinvention, searching always for perfection.

We hope you are surprised and delighted by the world evoked by Director Satoshi Miyagi, Scenographer Junpei Kiz, Costume Designer Kayo Takahashi Deschene, Lighting Designer Yuka Hisamatsu, Video Designer Sho Yamaguchi, Props Designer Eri Fukasawa, and Choreographer Akiko Kitamura. Scottish Opera's Music Director Stuart Stratford leads The Orchestra of Scottish Opera through a score that dramatises the opera's dynamic acts of creation. The cast is led by acclaimed Japanese baritone Daisuke Ohyama making his Company debut as Katsushika Hokusai and Julieth Lozano Rolong (*Ainadamar* 2022) as his dedicated daughter Ōi. The large Chorus of *The Great Wave* bring to life the bustling world inspiring art and commerce.

A co-production of this scale and complexity would not be possible without the incredibly generous support, notably from the Japan Creator Support Fund. Their funding has allowed us not only to unite our forces but also to facilitate the participation of several young Japanese professionals - singers, dancers, composers, conductors, designers, documentary photographers and videographers, and music advisors - on the stage and behind the scenes of *The Great Wave*.

Scottish Opera and KAJIMOTO also wish to thank The Alexander Gibson Circle, Bernard & Jane Nelson, The Great Wave Syndicate, The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, The Japan Society of Scotland, Japan Creator Support Fund, and Scottish Opera's New Commissions Circle. Scottish Opera remains grateful to the Scottish Government for core funding.

We hope you enjoy tonight's spellbinding world premiere.

Alex Reedijk OBE FRC
General Director,
Scottish Opera

Masa Kajimoto
President of KAJIMOTO



Dai Fujikura & Harry Ross

The Great Wave

Based on the life of the artist
formerly known as Hokusai

World premiere

New co-production with KAJIMOTO

Opera in five acts by Dai Fujikura

Libretto by Harry Ross

Sung in English with English supertitles

Ricordi Berlin (Universal Music Publishing Group · Classics & Screen)

Performances

Theatre Royal Glasgow

12 & 14 February 2026

Festival Theatre Edinburgh

19 & 21 February

All performances at 7.15pm

This performance lasts approximately 2 hours and 20 minutes

There will be an interval of 20 minutes between Acts III and IV

Support: **Japan Creator Support Fund**

Supported by **The Alexander Gibson Circle, Bernard & Jane Nelson, The Great Wave Syndicate, The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, The Japan Society of Scotland, and Scottish Opera's New Commissions Circle**

The opening performance on 12 February is dedicated to the memory of **Sir Alexander Gibson**, Scottish Opera's founder

cover
Cover of a Hokusai manga.

opposite
Sketches for the scenic
design of *The Great Wave*
by Junpei Kiz.

Core funded by



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The Great Wave Cast

Katsushika Hokusai
Daisuke Ohyama

Katsushika Ōi, Hokusai's daughter
Julieth Lozano Rolong

Mr Tozaki, a sweetshop owner
Shengzhi Ren

**Eirakuya Tōshirō,
Hokusai's publisher**
Edward Hawkins

**Nishimuraya Yohachi,
Hokusai's publisher**
Shengzhi Ren

Koto, Hokusai's second wife
Chloe Harris **

Hokusai's Grandson
Luvo Maranti *

Dr Philipp Franz von Siebold
Collin Shay

Takai Kōzan, a merchant patron
Edward Hawkins

Child
Audrey Tsang

The Spirit of Hokusai
Dan Armstrong

Actor / Dancers
Ching Chen
Kim Francey
Alex Henderson
Amy Hollinshead
Grace O'Brien
Ken Sugiyama
Malcolm Sutherland

Children
Daisy Holden
Cooper Laird-Jones
Eleanor Paterson
Sava Tripkovic

The Great Wave Creative Team

Conductor
Stuart Stratford

Director
Satoshi Miyagi

Scenographer
Junpei Kiz

Costume Designer
Kayo Takahashi Deschene

Lighting Designer
Yuka Hisamatsu

Video Designer
Sho Yamaguchi

Props Designer
Eri Fukasawa

Choreographer
Akiko Kitamura

**The Orchestra of Scottish Opera
The Chorus of The Great Wave**

* Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2025/26

** Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2024–26

The Orchestra of Scottish Opera

Leader **Anthony Moffat**

First Violins

Anthony Moffat
Frances Pryce †
Stewart Webster §
Terez Korondi
Tim Ewart
Sian Holding
Maria Oguren
Sharon Haslam †
Stephanie Brough
Elspeth Luke

Second Violins

Sarah White **
Giulia Bizzi
Liz Reeves
John Robinson
Malcolm Ross
Helena Zambrano Quispe
Elana Eisen
Danny Miller

Violas

Lev Atlas * †
Rachel Davis
Mary Ward
Shelagh McKail
Ian Swift
Maggie Miller

Cellos

Alicja Kozak / Aristide Du Plessis **
Marie Connell
Sarah Harrington
Aline Gow
Sonia Cromarty

Double Basses

Peter Fry *
Daniel Griffin / Nicholas Watt
May Halyburton

Flutes / Piccolos

Eilidh Gillespie *
Carolina Patricio

Oboes

Amy Turner * †
Kirstie Logan

Clarinets

Kate McDermott *
Lesley Bell

Bassoons

Jamie Louise White **
Heather Brown

Contrabassoon

Heather Brown

Horns

Sue Baxendale * †
Anna Drysdale

Trumpets / Cornets

Simon Bird * †
Andrew Connell-Smith †

Trombones

Alan Pash
Huw Evans

Percussion

Joanne McDowell **

Timpani

Kate Openshaw **

Celeste

José Javier Ucendo

Shakuhachi

Shozan Hasegawa

§ Guest Assistant Leader

* Section Principal

** Guest Section Principal

† Visiting Tutor to the Royal
Conservatoire of Scotland

Production

KAJIMOTO Producer

Akiko Sugiyama

Associate Producer

Lottie Gulliver

Assistant Conductor

Yukari Saito

Assistant Director

Keiko Sumida

Repetiteurs

Fiona MacSherry
Meghan Rhoades **

Interpreter & Assistant to Scenographer

Nozomi Abe

Interpreter & Assistant to Choreographer

Aya Kobayashi

KAJIMOTO Japanese Translations

Kumiko Nishi

KAJIMOTO Music Advisor

Yoichi Sugiyama

Head of Production

Niall Black

Production Manager

Elle Taylor

Stage Supervisor

David Hill

Stage Manager

Donald Ross

Deputy Stage Manager

April Lindsay

Assistant Stage Managers

Kieron Johnson
Alexandra McKenna
George Whitley

Electrics Supervisor

Barry McDonald

Costume Supervisor

Lorna Price

Assistant Costume Supervisor

Ruth McLean

Props Supervisor

Emma Robinson

Supertitles Operators

Gordon Grant
Holly Jarvis

Lead Chaperone

Gary Sloan

Chaperones

Audrey Blake
Alison Marshall
Lynne Mckechnie

** Scottish Opera Emerging Artist
2024–26

The Chorus of The Great Wave

Chorus Director **Susannah Wapshott**

Sopranos

Kanon Adachi
Naho Koizumi
Frances Morrison-Allen
Audrey Tsang
Stephanie Wong

Mezzo-sopranos

Josephine Amankwah
Heather Ireson
Jane Monari
Bernadine Pritchett
Sarah Shorter

Tenors

Matthew Kimble
Monwabisi Lindi
James McIntyre
Christian Schneeberger
Fraser Simpson

Basses

Timothy Edmundson
Francis Church
Phil Gault
Jonathan Forbes Kennedy
Jacob Ng

Synopsis

Act I – The Funeral and the Storm

Scene i: a small, rented house in Asakusa, second year of the Kaei era (1849)

Dawn: Katsushika Hokusai has departed after attaining Enlightenment through creating all the art he was destined to, and he is liberated from earthly desires. The Spirit of Hokusai escapes from the body placed in the *hayaoke* coffin and watches over his daughter Ōi. As she carefully washes and arranges him, we learn of their intertwined lives: she is a divorced woman who has returned to live and work with her father. Smoking as she works, she remembers how he placed a brush in her hand and treated her as his 'special student'. She recalls his oft-repeated wish for 'ten more years' to become a true artist and lets that wish travel out into the morning light.

Scene ii: a rice paddy in Sumida during a thunderstorm, sometime in the seventh year of the Bunka era (1810)

Hokusai is walking home following 21 days of devout prayer at the sacred temple of *Yanagishima no Myouken-sama*. Transformed by this period of intense spiritual reflection, he believes himself ready to transcend into a new, mature chapter of his artistic journey, having mastered his craft as an independent artist of the *Rinpa* school. He is caught in a violent storm, struck by lightning, and hurled into a flooded rice field. Alive but unconscious, he lies poised between worlds: his body in the mud, his mind on the threshold.

Scene iii: inside Hokusai's head while in a coma, having been struck by lightning

Hokusai finds himself on an *oshiokuri-bune*, a fast fishing barge, with 28 oarsmen battling a sudden, towering wave off Kanagawa. Mount Fuji hovers in the distance. As the rowers panic, Hokusai is gripped by the form and force of the sea; he wants to become the wave, understanding its geometry, movement, and power.

Scene iv: the house in Asakusa, preparing to make the funeral procession

Back in the Kaei era, Ōi readies the house for the mourners and the journey to *Seikyōji* Temple. Mr Tozaki, a local sweetshop owner and old friend of Hokusai, arrives with sweets and quiet memories. Groups of mourners gather from across Edo, trading anecdotes and showing off how well they 'knew' Hokusai through meetings, books, or gossip, until the space is filled with a rough, affectionate, almost



above
Edward Hawkins, Daisuke
Ohyama, and Satoshi Miyagi in
rehearsals for *The Great Wave*.

comic love rather than solemn grief. Samurai join the procession, singing a chant based on Hokusai's names (he was known by at least thirty names during his life; the use of multiple names was a common practice of Japanese artists of the time). The procession leaves for the Temple with Ōi at its head.

Scene v: the steps of *Seikyōji* Temple, Asakusa

On the Temple steps, following the internment, Ōi addresses the crowd. She speaks frankly of her father's messiness, his poverty, and his endless brush in hand, and also of the generosity of those who have paid for his burial. As thunder and lightning break over the temple, she names him 'My North Star' – the guiding light of her life and art.

Act II – The Hustle

The market outside the Nagoya branch of Hongan-ji Temple, twentieth year of Bunka era (1817), fifth day of the tenth month, eighth hour

In the bustling market, Hokusai prepares an enormous performance painting of Bodhidharma on a 200-square-metre sheet of paper framed in bamboo. His apprentices drum up curiosity while traders hawk food and goods. Once enough onlookers have gathered, Hokusai suddenly begins, working at speed with huge brushes and buckets of ink. The crowd falls silent, then erupts as the image is hoisted up: spectacle, devotion, and commerce all entangled.

Among the crowd is Nagoya publisher Eirakuya Tōshirō, who has financed some of Hokusai's work. When Hokusai presses him for more money, even joking about calling himself '*Hekusai*' (a pun meaning 'smelly fart'), Tōshirō remains unmoved. However dazzling the performance, he complains, Hokusai is too inconsistent – forever changing name, method and style, making him a risky partner. Their collaboration breaks down.

Another publisher, Nishimuraya Yohachi, overhears. He proposes that Hokusai supply work for the Dutch in Nagasaki through a 'cultural exchange' that will never appear on any official ledger. Hokusai is wary of the ethics and the law, but the promise of new pigments, views, and income exerts its pull. Tōshirō, listening from the sidelines, resolves that one day he will buy Hokusai's printing blocks himself to 'protect' the work from the volatility of the man who made it.

Act III – Debtors, Dutch Deceit, and Dedication

Scene i: Hokusai's studio, an afternoon in the Bunsei era (April 1818 to December 1830)

In a cramped, chaotic studio, Ōi teaches students, correcting their work while Koto, Hokusai's wife and Ōi's mother, keeps everyone fed. Work has slowed; debts are mounting. Hokusai is absorbed in painting, seemingly oblivious to the financial strain.

Hokusai's grandson (Koto's step-grandson) bursts in, panicked. He has run up gambling debts, and dangerous creditors are coming. As Koto frets and scolds, a menacing mob floods into the studio, demanding payment and hinting at violence. An apprentice is threatened with a knife. Ōi, thinking quickly, stalls them: Yohachi is on his way, she insists, and will arrive with money. Time stretches as the tension mounts and Yohachi fails to appear.

At last, Yohachi arrives – not with cash, but...

Scene ii: the Dutch trade mission to Edo, an evening earlier in the Bunsei era

In a quiet room at a Dutch trade mission, Yohachi meets Dr Philipp Franz von Siebold to collect payment for Hokusai's landscape commissions. Yohachi, acutely aware that such dealings with foreigners are illegal, wants to be in and out quickly. Siebold delays, talking about his travels, Hokusai's lines, and the problem of vivid pigments. When Yohachi finally insists on full payment, Siebold produces not money but a large quantity of Prussian Blue, 'more valuable than gold'. Yohachi, entranced by its depth and possibilities, convinces himself that bringing this pigment to Hokusai will secure both art and future income. He accepts.

Scene iii: Hokusai's studio, the same late afternoon as Scene i

Back in the studio, the creditors are on edge, ready to collect in flesh if not coin. Hokusai finally notices the jar of pigment. Recognising Prussian Blue, he demands that everyone sit in silence so he can work.

As apprentices prepare a large sheet, he sketches out a new vision of Mount Fuji. He speaks of a series of 36 views; of eight years of labour; and of clouds, rain, snow, and mist. He tells those gathered that true wealth lies in practice, refining each dot and line over a lifetime. The immediate debts are not magically solved, but a new commitment is made: to work, to time, to Fuji, and to the wave that will one day be carved and printed.

Act IV – Old Age, Old Friend

Hokusai's studio in Kamezawa, first month, fourteenth year of the Tenpō era (1843), early morning

Years later, in other modest lodgings, Ōi rises early to make yuzu tea and a homemade elixir for her ageing father. Hokusai appears, delighted by the familiar scent and by their daily ritual. They recall past illness and recovery and fall into a rhythm of shared work: he draws lions from memory; she paints camellias from life.

Takai Kōzan, an old friend and wealthy merchant from Obuse, arrives. He has heard that a recent city fire has destroyed much of Hokusai and Ōi's work and possessions. He offers Hokusai and Ōi a studio and shelter in Obuse, away from Edo's fires and reforms. Hokusai jokes about starting again; Ōi measures the cost but knows she will go where her father's brushes go.

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Act V – Obuse

Scene i: arrival at Obuse

In a lively village square, children and townspeople rush to greet Hokusai and Ōi. The children clamour for drawings of animals, small creatures, and imaginary beasts. Ōi tries to impose order; Hokusai responds with speed and humour, sketching cats, dragons, sparrows, dogs, and more. When a child asks for a simple bird, he shows how something small can still be 'simple, but noble'.

Scene ii: Kōzan's salon

In Kōzan's studio, Hokusai, Ōi, and their host sit with friends amid laughter, roasted chestnuts, tea, and sake. They talk about the works being made for Obuse, festival carts, phoenixes, lions, and the strange freedom of working far from official scrutiny. Hokusai jokes that his lion drawings have repaid debts and might even protect the town. Monsters, he suggests, can frighten rulers and delight children.

As the evening deepens, Hokusai speaks of age and practice, repeating his famous line: 'If heaven gives me ten more years...' The room laughs with him, but the wish hangs in the air. Old and tired, he retires to sleep.

Scene iii: the dream of the Tiger and the Dragon

In a dream-landscape of snow and mountain, Hokusai encounters a Tiger and a Dragon, beings that seem to rise from his own ink and imagination. They encircle him without menace, asking what he has made of his life's work and how he intends to continue.

Ōi appears in the dream, and father and daughter speak together about time, legacy, and the work that still lies ahead. The question shifts: not just what Hokusai will yet draw but whether Ōi is ready to carry the practice onward in her own hand.

Years are granted and let go. Father and daughter accept what must fade, what endures in lines and memory, and what will be created anew. The opera ends not with a single 'masterpiece' achieved, but with the ongoing journey of art passing through Ōi: brush in hand, held under the same guiding North Star that has lit their lives.

opposite
A scenic sketch for
The Great Wave by Junpei Kiz.

Production note

The Great Wave began almost by chance, when Dai Fujikura visited the British Museum's 2017 exhibition on Katsushika Hokusai and then followed his wife's suggestion that this extraordinary artist might make an extraordinary opera.

Today, Hokusai is nearly synonymous with Japan – his *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji* are printed on the pages of our passports. But he only reached this level of fame in the last few decades, in no small part due to the fantastic exhibitions taking place at the British Museum and other institutions around the world.

Perhaps for European or American audiences, Hokusai seems very Japanese. But Hokusai's works are very open across cultures and experiences. Hokusai's conception of culture was much more fluid and open – he did not think of himself as a Japanese artist in the same way many modern artists would consider themselves and their work. He was someone who created a universe within himself as an individual. I hope that the international audience sitting in the theatre and the international cast on stage get to know Hokusai not as a person living in Edo Japan but see him as someone who could be from any time or any place.

When I approach any work as a director – be it a classic play or a new opera – I imagine that the original writer, or librettist in this case, is sitting in the audience. Instead of focusing on internal or psychological aspects of the characters, I focus on interpreting the author's intentions, examining why the artist made this work. With *The Great Wave*, I am not only working from Dai's music and Harry's words but also from Hokusai's artistic drive.

When studying Hokusai, I was surprised that over his long life and career he never seemed to encounter moments of depression, despair, or comparing himself to other artists. I had thought that every artist sometimes becomes lost or does not know how to proceed. Wondering why Hokusai did not encounter these problems shaped not only who Hokusai became on stage but the entire production concept.

For me, there is no differentiation between Hokusai's time and place in Edo Japan and ours in 21st-century Scotland. By getting to know his life through the opera, I hope we all discover how to



opposite
'Picture of Land Surveyors
(Chiho Sokuryo No Zu) in
the Edo Period', *ukiyo-e*
colour woodblock print by
Katsushika Hokusai.

push ourselves further and continue our journeys, whatever comes our way. I hope this opera encourages us. I hope this capacity for creation without limits leads to our own exploration.

But while time and place blur, there are powerful parallels between Edo Japan and the world we find ourselves in now. The Edo period was, in many ways, not the most ideal setting for artistic expression, creativity, or livelihoods. There were many political and material restrictions. Despite these realities, Hokusai managed to find a degree of liberty that allowed him to create what he wanted. And today, around the world, people are living in environments that restrict their opportunities; they similarly find outlets for expression despite the odds.

Perhaps more importantly, many people – especially those living in so-called developed countries – worry that they are living in a bad time. They worry about what is to come – if AI or immigration puts them out of a job, or if they cannot keep living as comfortably as they are now. Because of this fear, we see political conflicts – in Japan, the UK, and many other countries. In societies where people are constantly worried about the future and destruction, we instead think about hope and creation. Maybe we see this in Hokusai's life, because it appears Hokusai never felt that what was truly important could be taken away from him.

What is happiness, in a materialistic society? We identify our happiness with what we own. What if, like Hokusai, we imagined happiness through discovery, through our work and ourselves, which no changes in circumstances can take away? He never felt he had to attain more to be happier or more successful. Perhaps, especially when we live in these fortunate environments, we should not be so attached to the here and now.

Satoshi Miyagi

Director

己六才より物の形状を写の癖ありて
半百の此より数々画図を顕すといへども
七十年前描く所は実に取るに足ものなし
七十三才にして稍禽獣虫魚の骨格草木の出生を悟し得たり
故に八十歳にしてハ益、進み九十歳にて猶其奥意を極め
一百歳にして正に神妙ならん歟
百有十歳にしてハ一点一格にして生るがごとくならん
願くハ長寿の君子予が言の妄ならざるを見たまふべし
画狂老人 卍

『富獄百景初編』 跋文より



Dai Fujikura

Dai Fujikura is a London-based composer born in Osaka, Japan, in 1977. After moving to the UK aged fifteen, he later studied with Sir George Benjamin.

In 2020, Dai's Fourth Piano Concerto, 'Akiko's Piano', commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing and was released by Sony Music. His work 'Entwine' has been performed by orchestras including the WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln and the New York Philharmonic. His orchestral work 'Wavering World' was commissioned and performed by the Seattle Symphony, Pacific Philharmonia Tokyo, Musikalische Akademie des Nationaltheater-Orchesters Mannheim, and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. His music theatre piece *Metamorphosis of a Living Room*, in collaboration with theatre director Toshiki Okada, was commissioned and staged by Wiener Festwochen and has been staged in Austria, Germany, The Netherlands, Japan, and Korea.

Dai has presented three operas: *Solaris* (2015) co-commissioned by the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Opéra de Lausanne, and Opéra de Lille; *The Gold-Bug* (2018), commissioned by Theatre Basel; and *A Dream of Armageddon* (2020) commissioned by New National Theatre Tokyo. *A Dream of Armageddon* was selected as Best of the Year by numerous music magazines. His collaborations span various genres, working with artists like Ryuichi Sakamoto and David Sylvian. For the film *Mitsubachi to Enrai* (*Listen to the Universe*), he composed 'Spring and Asura'. Dai has composed for traditional Japanese instruments as well as European period instruments. Since 2017 he has been the Artistic Director of the Born Creative Festival at Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre. He was appointed the Music Director of the Izumi Sinfonietta Osaka. He has received numerous prestigious awards, including the Ivor Novello Award and the Silver Lion from the Venice Biennale.



Harry Ross

Harry Ross is a multidisciplinary artist, writer, and producer working across opera, public realm projects, and socially engaged performance. He collaborates with Dai Fujikura as librettist and lyricist (*A Dream of Armageddon*, *The Great Wave*) and has directed or produced work for ROH2, Spoleto Festival (Italy), Shakespeare's Globe, The British Council, The National Archives, and National Trust. He was the founding producer of Secret Cinema's immersive theatrical experiences and produced RPS award-winning London Contemporary Orchestra's site-responsive concerts.

From 2021–24 he led the British Army's Art and Engagement programme in Scotland, earning a Fringe First and the Scottish Arts Club Award for best Scottish production. He currently serves in the British Army Reserve as a Specialist Advisor in creative production. He is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Veterans and Families Institute at Anglia Ruskin University, Visiting Lecturer at Moray School of Art, University of the Highlands and Islands and Expert in Residence at the Practitioners Hub of The Alan Turing Institute, the UK's national institute for data science and artificial intelligence.

Harry is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Society of Scottish Antiquaries, and Royal Society for Public Health and a Member of the British Computer Society. He volunteers as a member of the City of Edinburgh's Slavery and Colonialism Legacy Review Implementation Group and sings in his local parish church choir. He runs the creative studio O'NeillRoss & Associates from Glasgow with his wife Helen and has three grown-up children: Charlie who is an artist, Eugenia who is studying environmental geoscience, and Theo who is studying music and filmmaking. He is proud to have followed in the footsteps of his parents Rowan, a retired headteacher, and Ian, a retired Army officer, by contributing to both education and defence while maintaining his career as a creative artist.

Composer's note

Dai Fujikura guides the world premiere audience through four key moments to listen for in *The Great Wave*

The shakuhachi

The shakuhachi (a traditional Japanese longitudinal flute) is heard in the Act I opening and again in Act V. This instrument, whose musical tradition is very different from those of the instruments found in a traditional opera orchestra, adds a new ethereal sound world and transports listeners into a different realm.

The force of nature

The Orchestra of Scottish Opera summon powerful natural events throughout *The Great Wave*—in Act I alone, these include the ferocity of a thunderstorm and the awe-inspiring might of water. Hokusai was struck by lightning twice—a historical fact!—and we dramatise one of these occurrences in *The Great Wave* to symbolically and spiritually explore his seemingly boundless creative drive. In this opera, when he is in a coma following the lightning strike, the idea for *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* originates in a dream sequence where Hokusai imagines himself to be one of the rowers in the boat dwarfed by the wave. The grandeur of the force of nature is on full display through the brass, strings, and woodwinds, and echoes of this music reappear as the famous work of art is created.

The scent of citrus

In a stage drama, I try to create the full world encompassing all senses through the music. In Act IV, there is a tender scene of Ōi looking after her father Hokusai with a special healing yuzu tea. The harmonics in the strings evoke the concentrated citrus scent, while the woodwinds conjure the warm sun pouring into the room.

The dragon's scales

In the opera's very last scene, a dream sequence shows the tiger and dragon that feature in one of Hokusai's last paintings. Listen closely, and you might hear the dragon's scales move in the opera's score as he grants Hokusai's wish to live and create to the age of 110.



above
The Great Wave in rehearsals;
Dragon puppet designed
by Eri Fukasawa.



opposite
Harry Ross and Dai Fujikura
on the set of *The Great Wave*
in rehearsals.

A shared making

In the last opera I wrote with Dai, *A Dream of Armageddon*, I tried to describe how societies tilt toward catastrophe: how complacency, drift and self-justification can harden into something violent and irreversible. I wrote that piece in anger and grief, surrounded by evidence of failure, convinced that a warning might still be a form of care. The work was produced by the New National Theatre in Tokyo at the height of the Covid lockdown. It seemed like a 'bad time for poetry', as Brecht said. Five years later, it seems not much has changed. The world slouches on, lessons unlearned.

So maybe now is the time to hear the 'voice of the happy man'. Maybe we should try the articulation of nurture, of knowledge transmitted not through manifestos but through shared practice? Maybe we can find what binds effort across generations – what survives through diligence rather than dominance and re-learn what is learned through close, quiet, and generous interaction? The teacher putting the brush in the child's hand, steadying the moment without claiming the mark, is a generous, collaborative interaction. Shared marks make a new meaning on the page.

My collaboration with Dai reminds me of this. We do not divide meaning neatly between text and sound. Instead, we test it. Hopefully something truer emerges – something neither of us could have produced alone. It feels, increasingly, like a model of how to remain responsive rather than declarative. I have come to recognise this way of working not as something specific to the lyric theatre, but as a pattern that reappears wherever making is shared, carried across time, and renewed through different materials and forms.

I have not stopped worrying about where we are headed. Perhaps that unease is shared. But I have come to understand that warning, when separated from care, risks becoming noise. This opera is an attempt to remain with that unease without surrendering to it: to think about how joy, fascination, and attention to the world and its spirit might still be held even as circumstances change. Like Hokusai, it asks whether what truly matters can be found not in what we preserve or defend, but in what we continue to make.

Harry Ross

Dornoch, Sutherland, Scotland
December 2025

Hokusai's dramatic imagination

Timothy T Clark explores Hokusai's creativity through key images in his oeuvre



opposite
Figure 08
Hokusai, *Ducks in Flowing Water*, 1847 (detail).
Hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk. British Museum 1913,0501,0.320, given by Sir W Gwynne-Evans, Bt

One of the last recorded outings of Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) seems to have been a trip to enjoy kabuki at the Kawarazaki Theatre in Edo (modern Tokyo), in the eleventh month of 1848, towards the end of his 89th year. He would die just a few months later, in the middle of the fourth month of 1849, aged 90. With its interludes of dance, instrumental music, and song, kabuki was opera for Hokusai. Hokusai was arguably the most famous artist in Japan at the time – a household celebrity in Edo, for sure – and a few already knew his name even in distant Europe. Yet although a crucially important chronicler in prints, illustrated books, and paintings of the life of his nation, Hokusai largely left pictures of kabuki stage scenes to others. Dozens of artists of the contemporary Utagawa school produced hundreds of prints each year featuring kabuki superstars in stage roles. These were drawn according to the ever-evolving conventions of 'pictures of the floating world' (*ukiyo-e*), the vast school of art that held popular sway in the city of more than a million.

Hokusai had far greater ambitions. Already by his thirties, in the 1790s, he had expanded his artistic repertoire way beyond the conventional floating world subjects of beautiful people and actors. His goal, ultimately, was to live as long as he could and to draw as much as possible:

'...Thus when I reach eighty years, I hope to have made increasing progress, and at ninety to see further into the underlying principles of things, so that at one hundred I will have achieved a divine state in my art, and at one hundred and ten, every dot and every stroke will be as if alive.' (Hokusai's postscript to *One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji*, volume 1, 1834, aged 75; translated by Henry D Smith II)

In his eighties, Hokusai was still working on a wide-ranging picture encyclopaedia that had the grandiose title *The Great Picture Book of Everything*.

The crucial collaboration in the process of developing Hokusai's startlingly dramatic drawing style was with the popular writer Takizawa Bakin (1767–1848). Their partnership blossomed around 1805–1810, when Hokusai was in his late forties. Bakin wrote picaresque texts and Hokusai drew action-packed illustrations for printed serial adventure stories (*yomihon*) that proved wildly popular with the public. *Strange Tales of the Bow Moon* (5 parts, 29 volumes, 1807–1811), for example, featured the heroic exploits of Tametomo, champion samurai archer. The (literally) explosive drawing style of Hokusai's illustrations (Figure 01) was revolutionary and would go on strongly to influence both the warrior prints of Utagawa Kuniyoshi in the next generation and, much



above
Figure 02
Hokusai (image) and Bakin
(inscription), *Tametomo and
the Inhabitants of Onoshima
Island*, 1811. Hanging scroll,
ink, colour, gold and gold-leaf
on silk. British Museum
1881.1210.0.1747.

later, late 20th century manga in the so-called 'dramatic drawing' (*gekiga*) genre. The book sold thousands of copies. Hokusai earned enough in drawing fees to be able to buy, rarely for him, a house of his own. When Hokusai and Bakin fell out the publishers kept on Hokusai and hired a substitute writer. (Hokusai scholar Jack Hillier once observed that this was equivalent to retaining Cruickshank and sacking Dickens.)

A great treasure in the British Museum's large Japanese painting collections is *Tametomo and the Inhabitants of Onoshima Island* (1811, Figure 02). This lavish hanging scroll painting on silk was a special commission from the publisher Hirabayashi Shōgorō who had made such large profits with *Strange Tales of the Bow Moon*. The painting is directly inscribed with a celebratory text by Bakin, and by commissioning the scroll the publisher was able to further reward his star artist and writer.

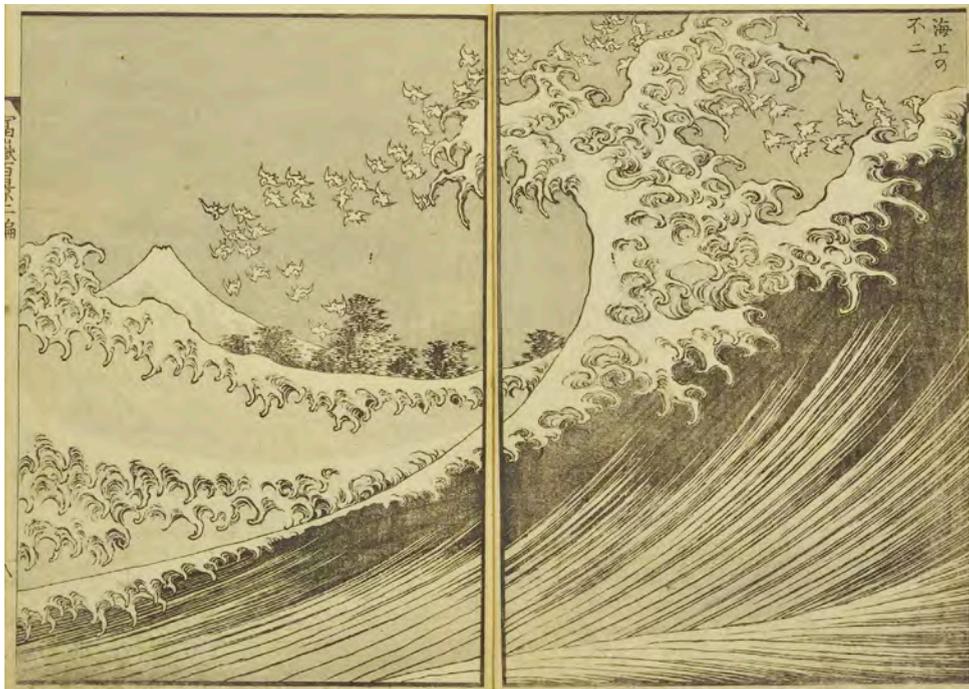
We refer to him by convention as 'Hokusai from Katsushika', but the artist used many different names – and combinations of names – chosen to reflect deepening spiritual beliefs and mark important life events. On the *Tametomo* painting, Hokusai impressed a square red painting seal that reads Raishin ('thunder tremor'). Some scholars think that this relates to the episode recounted in the key early biography,



above
Figure 01
Hokusai (image) and Bakin
(text), 'Tametomo shoots the
Thunder Monster that has
killed his companion Shigesue
at Mt Yūyama', from *Strange
Tales of the Bow Moon*, vol. 1,
1807. Woodblock illustrated
book. British Museum
1979.0305.0.488.1

right
Figure 03
Hokusai (image and poem)
and Ōi (poem), *Fisherman
seated on a rock*, about
1820s. Colour woodblock,
surimono. British Museum
1906.1220.0.479.





opposite (top)
Figure 04
Hokusai, 'Under the Wave
off Kanagawa ('The Great
Wave') from *Thirty-Six Views
of Mt Fuji*, about 1831. Colour
woodblock. British Museum
2008.3008.1, acquired with
contributions from the Brooke
Sewell Bequest and the Art
Fund

opposite (bottom)
Figure 05
Hokusai, 'Fuji from the sea'
from *One Hundred Views
of Mount Fuji* vol. 2, 1835.
Woodblock. British Museum
1979.0305.0.454.2

written by Iijima Kyoshin in 1893, in which Hokusai was struck by lightning and fell into a rice field.

If we accept *Fisherman seated on a rock* (Figure 03) as a kind of self-portrait, then Hokusai, likely now in his sixties, seems to be relishing the imagined freedom of a life communing with nature. Alongside his own comic poem, cryptic in meaning, is one by 'Ei' (written with the character 'tipsy'), likely his daughter Ei-jo, who would come to be the live-in support of his life and work after Hokusai's second wife Koto died in 1828. Ei was an accomplished artist in her own right, using the art-name Ōi, and surely assisted the late, great projects of Hokusai's final two decades.

Many of Hokusai's greatest colour print series, first and foremost *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji* (1831–1833) that includes *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* (fig. 04), date from the early 1830s, the artist's early seventies. Most of these were commissioned and issued by the publishing firm of Nishimuraya Yohachi (Eijudō), until they went bust following the economic dislocations that accompanied wide-spread famines in the mid-1830s. Nishimuraya was also the guiding force behind *One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji*, a three-volume (1834, 1835, c1849, Figure 05) superbly cut and printed illustrated book, filled with dramatic compositions that further developed the sophisticated visual games of the *Thirty-Six Views*. Sacred Mount Fuji calmly presides over the aging artist's conceptual gymnastics.

As with the composition of *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, there is a sense that Hokusai is anticipating the dramatic freeze-frame technique of modern animation in arrestingly shocking graphic images such as *Ghost of Kohada Koheiji* (Figure 06). The ghost of a jobbing kabuki actor Koheiji, murdered by his wife and her lover, menacingly pulls down the edge of the mosquito net under which the criminal lovers are sleeping. Although Koheiji had been featured as a character first in a popular novel and then in a kabuki play, Hokusai is here relying directly on his study of anatomy undertaken with a famous chiropractor, Nagura Yajibei.

A major recent rediscovery has been a group of more than 100 so-called 'block ready' drawings (*hanshita-e*) which Hokusai worked on later in life for a projected picture encyclopaedia, *The Great Picture Book of Everything* (1820s–1840s). The wide-ranging subject matter for the picture encyclopaedia drew extensively on earlier such publications. However, Hokusai and his publisher(s) now seem to have added new sections about ancient India and China, particularly relating to the Buddhist faith and to the development of human



opposite
Figure 06
Hokusai, 'Kohada Koheiji', from the series *One Hundred Ghost Tales*, about 1833. Colour woodblock. British Museum 2016.3015.2, purchase funded by the Teresia Gerda Buch bequest in memory of her parents Rudolph and Julie Buch

above
Figure 07
Hokusai, 'King Virudhaka killed by a lightning strike', 1820s-1840s. Ink on paper, block-ready drawing for *The Great Picture Book of Everything*. British Museum 2020.3015.81, purchase funded by the Teresia Gerda Buch bequest in memory of her parents Rudolph and Julie Buch, with support from Art Fund (with a contribution from the Wolfson Foundation)

civilisation. There appears to be no pictorial model for a scene such as *King Virudhaka killed by a lightning strike* (Figure 07): Hokusai has conjured it out of his ever-fertile imagination, bringing ancient history vividly to life. Incredible discipline was required to organise the brush lines of the drawing so that flashes of the explosion accurately cross Virudhaka's billowing robes – while maintaining the graphic energy that the block-cutter will presently have faithfully to reproduce using knives and chisels on a printing block of hard mountain cherry wood.

At first glance, the hanging scroll painting *Ducks in Flowing Water* (1847, Figure 08) might seem the antithesis of drama. Two mallards are bobbing and diving for pond weed, as fallen scarlet maple leaves sink progressively into the depths of the water. We are invited to savour a calm moment of meditation on a small fragment of the natural world, in company with the 88-year-old artist. And yet, once we notice the bands of ripples flowing across the painting surface, turning it into the water surface that complexly reflects the sunshine, then a quiet drama of time and movement unfolds. This quality of ecstatic intensity is found in many of Hokusai's late, great paintings.

'...Every dot and every stroke will be as if alive.'

Timothy T Clark FBA is an Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of Asia, British Museum.

Never Spirited Away



In this global age of Pokémon and matcha cafes, the influence of Japanese culture is taken for granted, but it is less than two hundred years since Scotland found its kindred spirit in tradition, craft and an appreciation of nature, writes **Fi Leith**

HOKUSAI AND THE BUTTERFLY NOV

Lavery

In a small, musky side room off a grand Glasgow ballroom whirling to the skirts of a Highland Schottische in the final decades of the 19th century, the last person one might have expected to bump into would be Katsushika Hokusai. Not least because of the near 6000-mile distance between Glasgow and Japan, but the fact that the renowned artist had already been dead for 40 years. The figure wrapped in a Prussian blue kimono, nonchalantly wafting a decorative fan, with his hair oiled back into a man bun known in Japan as the *chonmage*, is in fact a 28-years-young lad from Renfrew, Edward Arthur Walton.

This unmissable figure is not alone in his extravagant costume choice and assuredness on that 1889 evening, for he is surrounded by friends on the precipice of becoming the toast of the European art world at the time: The Glasgow Boys. His fellow artist, John Lavery (dressed as Rembrandt, no less) is making quick oil sketches of the invited guests, and Walton's fiancée boasts the butterfly monogram of artist James McNeill Whistler on her dress, who along with Katsushika Hokusai is a hero for the Boys.

Whistler had never visited Japan but had discovered woodblock prints in Paris and integrated them into his own artwork. Glasgow art dealer Alexander Reid had seen these in the French capital and promoted them on his return to Scotland. The irresistible love affair between Scottish and Japanese art is not just in the air that evening: it is already written into the history books.

Centuries before Pokémon, Marie Kondo, manga, and matcha diffused with our tastes, the first great wave of *Japonisme* – the influence of Japanese art and culture on Western lives – was charming its way into the homes and imaginations of Scots in the 1850s through trade, foreign travel, and military campaigns. The 1862 International Exhibition in London was the first major UK event in which Japan had an independent display space, and it is believed that woodblock prints by Hokusai were included.

The first Japanese visitors to Scotland arrived in 1863, as the Choshu Five students (of the Choshu clan) were smuggled out of a closed samurai state by Fraserburgh merchant, Thomas Blake Glover. This was just five years before the last Shogun leadership would eventually crumble to internal and external political pressures, and Japan began its evolution into a modern democracy under a 16-year-old Emperor Meiji. The seismic global shift for Japan was not solely political, setting in motion a thrilling period of commercial, industrial, and cultural exchange between the two island nations, and indeed the rest of the Western world.

opposite
Hokusai and the Butterfly by
Sir John Lavery, a painting
showing Scottish artist
E A Walton and his fiancée
Helen Law dressed for the
Glasgow Art Club's 1889
Grand Costume Ball.

Glasgow's story is at the heart of this unique dalliance between an isolated society in the Pacific Ocean and an industrially advanced one with an insatiable appetite for growth and change. The city's trading port and booming economy meant that it was held up as an exemplar of British ambition and achievement, and its talent was in high demand. Scotland at this point in history was heading out into the world, by travel made more accessible by the steamships built on the Clyde, and as diplomatic missions from Japan began to visit the shipyards, mills, and railways. By the turn of the century Scottish designers, engineers, entrepreneurs, and inevitably artists would have become not just smitten but transformed by Japanese aesthetics.

It is a strange quirk of history that within months of Japan's 1868 Meiji Restoration shift to outward-looking cultural exchange, a young boy was born in Townhead, Glasgow who would go on to epitomise more than any Scot the influence of Japan on Scottish design despite never physically travelling there. Before we get to Charles Rennie Mackintosh, though, in 1876 Glasgow-born Christopher Dresser had been the first European designer to visit Japan by invitation of its new government. This is how Dresser describes his experience of first seeing Mount Fuji, in his book *Japan: Its Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures*:

I look above these clouds, and there, at a vast height, shines the immaculate summit of Japan's peerless cone. I have seen almost every alpine peak in the land of Tell; I have viewed Monte Rosa from Zermat, Acosta, and Como; I have gloried in the wild beauty of the Jungfrau and the precipitous heights of the Matterhorn; but never before did I see a mountain so pure in its form, so imposing in its grandeur, so impressive in its beauty, as that at which we now gaze. I do not wonder at the Japanese endowing it with marvellous powers; I do not wonder at this vast cone around which clouds love to sleep being regarded as the home of the dragon – the demon of the storm – for surely this mountain is one of nature's grandest works!

Dresser's passion for Japanese craft and creative philosophy combined with his knowledge of botany and expertise from his schooling in the British industrial revolution made for a revelatory new approach to the design and manufacture of homeware items in the UK when he returned. It is a style that remains refreshing to this day, so much so that the iconic Italian design house Alessi has gone as far as to editionise some of his most striking creations, and there is still an annual *DresserFest* held to celebrate his life and work.



opposite
The Chosyu Five, photographed
in 1863.



Mackintosh's attendance at Glasgow School of Art evening classes in 1883 would have exposed him to the 1882 lectures and (above) book written by Dresser, as well as so much of the art loans and exhibitions which had flooded into the city from Japan. Soaking it all up like a sponge around Sauchiehall Street, Mackintosh would have been able to see the Japanese Government gift of 1878 (items from which are on display in Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum to this day), the Oriental Art Loan exhibition at McLellan Galleries in 1881, and its accompanying GSA study programmes.

He would also have been aware of the two Glasgow Boys – Edward Atkinson Hornel and George Henry, who in the final decade of the 19th century were funded in their travels to Japan in 1893 by Reid and ship owner William Burrell. Burrell, as we know, would in 1944 donate the majority of his 6000-item art collection to the city of Glasgow. Hornel and Henry's visits to Japan brought back a vivid colour palette and flat composition style to their work, based on hundreds of souvenir photographs for foreign tourists that they acquired during their trip – a type now called *Yokohama Shashin*.

above
Charles Rennie Mackintosh,
design for a Dining Room,
House for an Art Lover,
Glasgow, 1901.

Mackintosh would inarguably emerge as Scotland's most influential designer within a matter of years. He may have admired the decorative aesthetic of Japan's motifs as represented in the work of his contemporaries, but it is the cultural philosophies of calm, space, and symmetry which can be traced so clearly through his furniture and architecture, showcased in the building of Glasgow School of Art itself. As the GSA's archives tell us:

Mackintosh was aged 29 and working as a junior draughtsman at the practice of Honeyman and Keppie when it was awarded the project to design a new building for the rapidly expanding art school in 1897...

Recognised as one of Europe's leading art academies, The Glasgow School of Art was central to Glasgow's emergence as a centre for the creative arts. The first phase of construction between 1897 and 1899 saw the completion of the central and east wing, including the Mackintosh Museum and Boardroom. By the time of the second phase of construction for the west wing of the Building between 1907 and 1909, Mackintosh was a partner in the firm. The delay enabled him to amend the design to include new second-floor studios, and workshops in the sub-basement, as well as introducing a more 20th-century look and feel influenced by the emergence of Modernism.

Thus, the circle of this 19th-century blossoming of Glasgow and Japan's love affair was squared, all the way back to the very walls of the city's flagship buildings. Yet so much of the story was still to be told in the century that followed and the women who would occupy the space – from the paintbrushes of Glasgow Girls Bessie MacNicol and Katherine Cameron through to the watercolours of Elizabeth Keith and Dame Elizabeth Blackadder.

Where might Scotland's 21st-century art and design bonds show themselves? I leave you to mull that over the next time you're sweeping north over the Tay Bridge, and your eye is drawn to Scotland's national design museum, the V&A Dundee, by the award-winning Japanese architect Kengo Kuma. Look closely, and you will notice a deliberate void in its building centre – an idea found in Shinto shrines, using *torii*, the gateway to the shrine, to strengthen the connection between nature and people.

Fi Leith has been a journalist in Scotland for 30 years. She is currently researching her debut novel about the blossoming of Glasgow and Japan's love affair in the 19th century.



Hokusai and the tide of influence

Monika Hinkel contextualises Hokusai's work in the modern international art world



When Dai Fujikura's opera *The Great Wave* unfolds on stage, it does more than narrate a story; it conjures the globally recognised image of Hokusai's *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*. This iconic print, with its curling crest and fragile boats, is both a symbol of Japan and a metaphor for human resilience against nature's power. Though universally familiar, beneath this image lies a deeper narrative: the legacy of Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints, and their wide-reaching influence on art, music, and popular culture. Entering this tradition, Fujikura transforms the wave's visual rhythm into sound, refreshing its energy for contemporary audiences.

The Floating World

Ukiyo-e, literally meaning 'pictures of the floating world,' emerged in Japan during the Edo period (1603–1868). These prints captured the vibrancy and fleeting pleasures of urban life, depicting kabuki theatre actors, courtesans and geisha, landscapes, famous places, travel routes, mythological and historical scenes, daily activities, festivals, and the changing seasons. The term 'floating world' referred both to the entertainment districts and to a Buddhist concept of transience, emphasising the impermanence of beauty and joy.

Ukiyo-e prints were created through a collaborative process, involving an artist, a carver, a printer, and a publisher. The artist first designed the image, which was then transferred onto cherry wood blocks by a highly skilled block carver. The key block captured the linework, while additional blocks were made for each colour. The printer applied ink and pigments to the blocks and placed handmade mulberry paper on top. Using a handheld pad called *baren*, the printer pressed the dyes into the paper, ensuring precise colour registration and creating tonal effects and delicate gradations. The publisher financed, organised, marketed and sold the finished prints. These prints were produced in large quantities, sometimes hundreds or thousands of copies, and sold at affordable prices. This collective approach enabled both mass production and consistent quality, exemplifying the synergy of design, craftsmanship, and innovation at the heart of *ukiyo-e*.

While today *ukiyo-e* are appreciated as art, they were originally produced as commercial products. These prints were mass-produced, affordable, and intended for popular entertainment. Although they had aesthetic value, they mostly functioned as souvenirs and visual merchandise. Unlike artworks created for the elite, *ukiyo-e* were aimed at urban consumers and were understood much like today's posters, magazine illustrations, or postcards.

previous spread, left
Masculine Waves (Kanmachi Festival Cart ceiling panel), Obuse Town Kanmachi Community Association Collection, on deposit at The Hokusai-kan Museum.

previous spread, right
Feminine Waves (Kanmachi Festival Cart ceiling panel), Obuse Town Kanmachi Community Association Collection, on deposit at The Hokusai-kan Museum.

opposite
Hokusai, *Boddhidharma figure*, Nagoya City Museum.

Hokusai's Wave

Printed around 1831, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* is part of the series *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji* (1830–1832), published by Nishimuraya Yohachi. In the image, three small boats battle a towering wave, while the serene Mount Fuji rises in the background. This iconic scene combines intimidation and peace, reflecting both nature's power and human resilience. The composition balances stillness and motion: the wave's curve echoes Mount Fuji's silhouette, and the foam forms dynamic claw-like shapes, enhancing the interplay of movement. The wave dominates yet also frames the distant mountain. Hokusai masterfully integrates Eastern and Western techniques, employing Western linear perspective and Prussian blue pigment, recently introduced from Europe. Prussian blue, more vivid and durable than traditional indigo, enables stronger tonal contrasts. Gradual blue tones through the print add depth and tension.

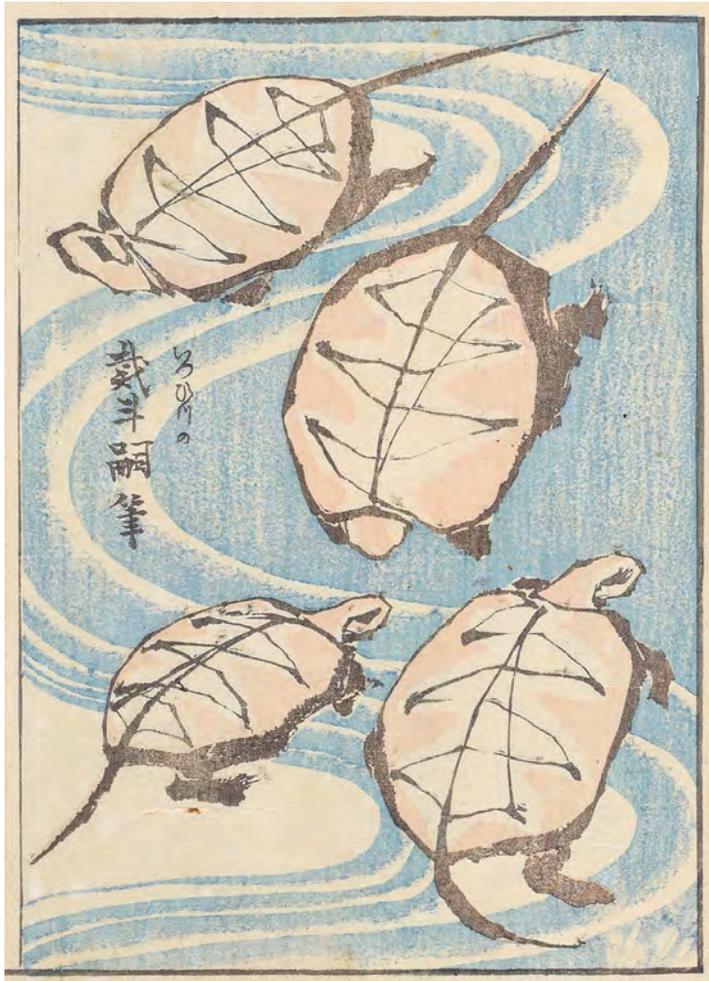
Born in Edo (now Tokyo), Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) lived through the vibrant Edo period, a time marked by urban growth and artistic innovation. His life was characterised by constant reinvention, prolific output, and an unceasing pursuit of artistic mastery. Although his oeuvre is extensive, no work represents his genius more than *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*. Hokusai was in his seventies when he created this iconic print. Later in life, he wrote, 'If heaven will grant me ten more years... I shall become a true artist.' This humility underscores a central element of his work: the belief that art, like life, is never complete and is always evolving. Hokusai's quest for perfection and his balance between nature and imagination infuse his art with vitality.

The Wave Travels West

When Japan reopened to the world in the 1850s after two centuries of isolation, its art swept across Europe like a revelation. At the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris, Japanese prints and crafts were exhibited to wide acclaim, sparking a phenomenon the French critic Philippe Burty (1830–90) called *Japonisme*.

Western artists such as Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, James McNeill Whistler, and Vincent van Gogh became avid collectors of Japanese prints, which they viewed as introducing a new visual language. They were captivated by the prints' flat planes, bold outlines, decorative patterns, and striking compositions, especially their use of asymmetry and cropped perspectives. At a time when academic realism dominated European art, Japanese prints offered a refreshing alternative to linear perspective and illusionistic depth. Monet filled his Giverny home with Japanese prints and screens, while Van Gogh meticulously copied works by Utagawa Hiroshige, telling his brother

Hokusai's quest for perfection and his balance between nature and imagination infuse his art with vitality.



left
Hokusai, from *Album of One-stroke Drawings*, Shimane Art Museum

Theo, 'All my work is founded on Japanese art,' and describing it as 'a religion.' Degas' cropped figures and Whistler's tonal harmonies also clearly show the influence of *ukiyo-e*. Composer Claude Debussy, who was inspired by Japanese prints, drew on Hokusai's *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* for his orchestral piece *La Mer*; this image appeared on the work's first edition cover in 1905, and Debussy kept a framed print of it in his Paris studio.

Japanese art, particularly *ukiyo-e*, profoundly influenced Western art. Artists adopted new perspectives, viewing composition as rhythmic space. The flowing lines characteristic of Art Nouveau drew inspiration from *ukiyo-e*'s stylised beauty. Driven by *Japonisme*, *ukiyo-e* became a cultural force, reshaping painting, and graphic design and fuelling modernism. Its elements are evident in Pop Art, with Roy Lichtenstein's

woodblock-like outlines and flat colours transforming comic strips into a modern form of *ukiyo-e*. Like Hokusai, Lichtenstein blurred boundaries between reproduction and originality, as well as high art and mass culture. Contemporary artists, including David Hockney, Takashi Murakami, Yayoi Kusama, and Nana Shiomi, continue to incorporate aspects of *ukiyo-e* and *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* into their visual language and compositions.

The Endless Wave, A Universal Tide

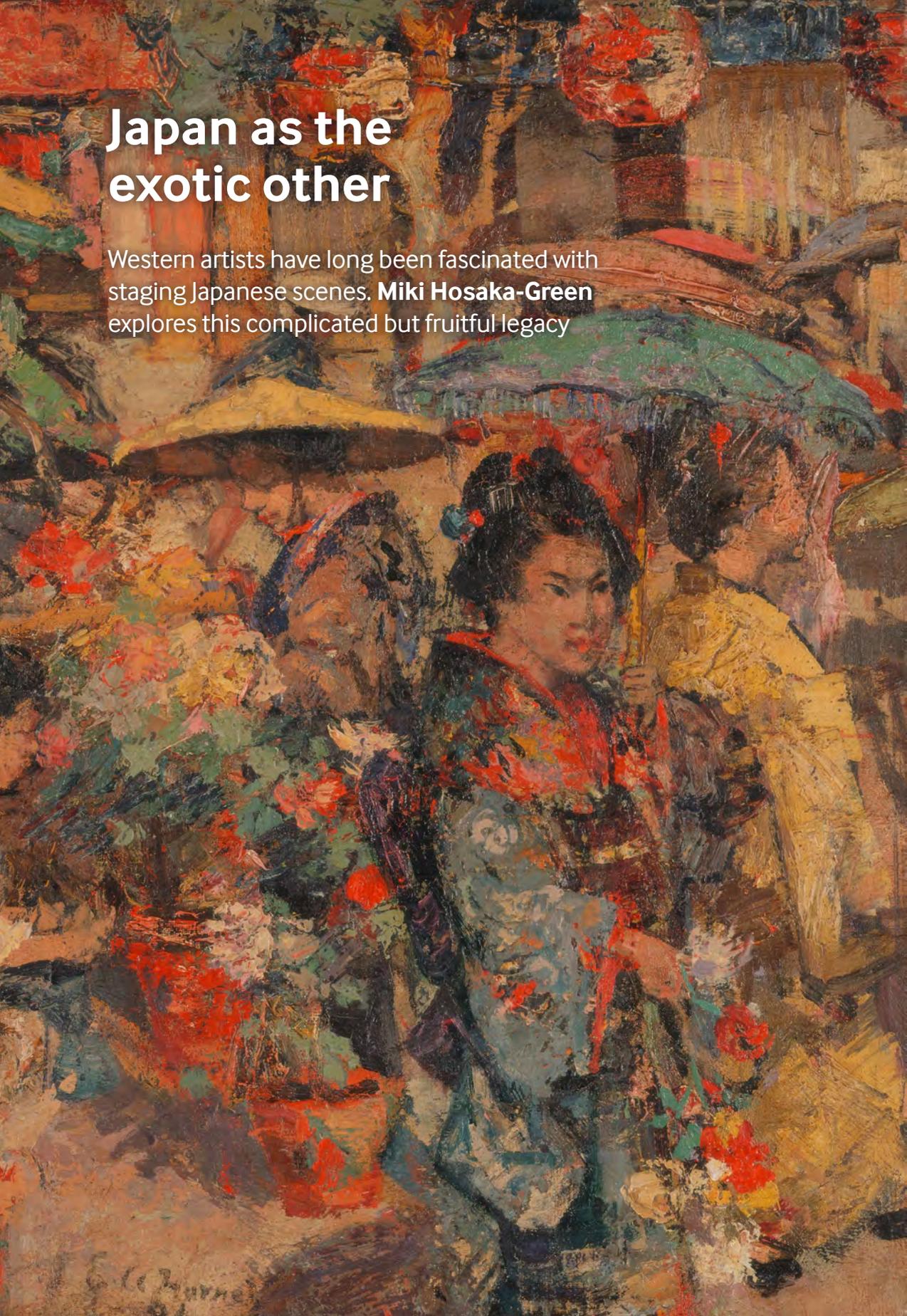
The Great Wave off Kanagawa, even two centuries after its creation, is among the most reproduced images in history. Today, it stands as a global cultural icon, seen on posters and album covers, fashion prints, emojis, and tattoos. Originally made as a woodblock print for Edo townspeople, it has become a worldwide symbol. This widespread popularity is fitting since *ukiyo-e* prints were always designed as a popular, commercial, mass-produced form of illustration. Each t-shirt or digital reinterpretation extends this tradition. *The Wave*'s striking composition and emotional resonance give it a timeless adaptability: it can represent Japan, the environment, the idea of the sublime, or humanity's resilience through adversity. Its lasting impact comes from its portrayal of movement and the harmony between people and nature. Hokusai once wrote, 'At one hundred, I shall surely have reached the divine. At one hundred and ten, every dot and line shall be alive'. In taking inspiration from this print, Fujikura's opera carries this life and vitality forward, transforming the wave from image into dynamic musical movement.

The Great Wave, whether as artwork, opera, or symbol, expresses the continual exchange between cultures, ideas, and generations. What began as ink on paper has evolved into orchestral sound; what was once a view of Mount Fuji now encompasses the entire world. Like water, art transcends boundaries, shaping, eroding, and renewing. It carries us, sometimes helplessly, sometimes joyfully, toward discovery. In Hokusai's wave, we sense the same surge: the very pulse of creation.

Monika Hinkel is a lecturer and curator of Japanese art based at SOAS, University of London. Her research focuses on the history of Japanese woodblock prints and the influence of *ukiyo-e* on modern and contemporary art.

Japan as the exotic other

Western artists have long been fascinated with staging Japanese scenes. **Miki Hosaka-Green** explores this complicated but fruitful legacy



opposite
Edward Atkinson Hornel,
Flower Market, Nagasaki,
oil on linen, 1894.

Kimono, Geisha, Cherry blossoms... People have long been fascinated by these key motifs seen as representative of Japan; these 'cultural images' have a history of being both appreciated and appropriated throughout history. The discussion surrounding Japanese culture, especially its 'authentic' portrayal from the standpoint of the West, is still an ongoing debate, and opera is no exception.

In recent years, London's Royal Ballet and Opera began a process of overhauling their iconic production of *Madama Butterfly*, directed by Moshe Leiser and Patrice Caurier, which had faced criticism over its depiction of Japanese culture since it first debuted in 2003. In the 2022 revival, although the costumes and general staging were broadly maintained, the entire production was updated significantly through the input of invited academics and specialists to better portray the story with both respect to its original spirit and a renewed sense of authenticity toward Japanese culture.

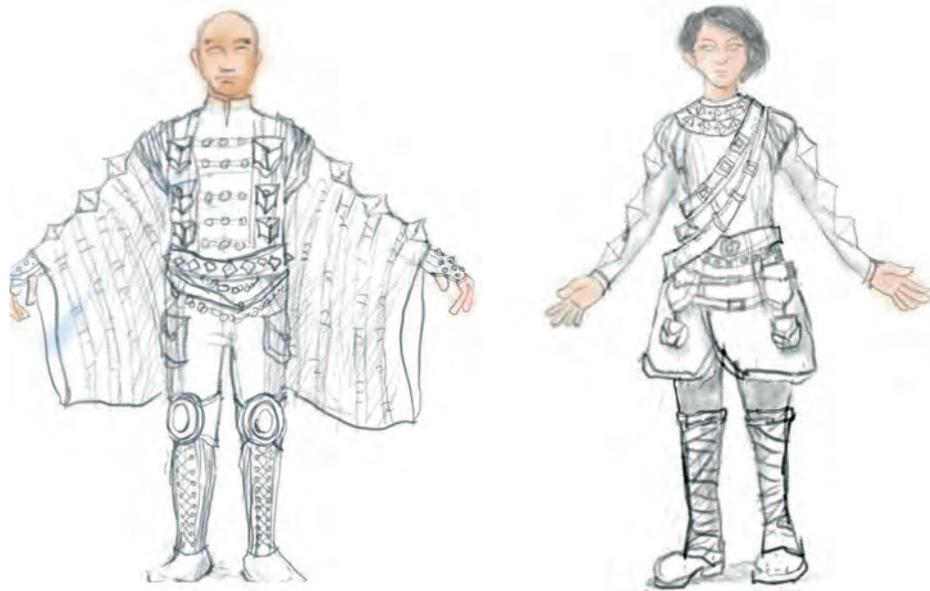
The historic fascination towards Japan in the West first truly blossomed in the 19th century – following Japan's emergence from the long *Sakoku* (Closed Country Policy) period which lasted from 1639 to 1853. With Impressionist painters such as Vincent Van Gogh and Paul Cézanne incorporating stylistic inspiration from striking *ukiyo-e* artworks by the now-famous Hokusai, Western creators would continually identify the unique styles and motifs of Japan and attempt to incorporate them into their own work. These disparate artforms would come to take on a collective name: *Japonisme*.

One of the most representative examples within performance history is the 1885 comic opera *The Mikado* by Gilbert and Sullivan. Set in a fantastical exotic land, the story cleverly parodied British society through the lens of a Japanese satire. *The Mikado* was well received by audiences in the West End, kick-starting a boom in purchasing kimono and other Japanese items, and becoming a cornerstone of the *Japonisme* trend within Victorian Britain.

Another iconic example was driven by encounters with the beautiful imagery of a 'Japanese lady', most famously characterised by the protagonist Cio-Cio San in the opera *Madama Butterfly*. Cio-Cio San appeared as the 'temporary wife' of the American naval officer Pinkerton. Eventually Pinkerton returns to his home country, the 'temporary marriage' proving to be exactly that for him, while she poignantly remains hopeful that he will come back to her one day. The iconic aria sung by Cio-Cio San – 'Un bel dí vedremo' – captures her emotion and passion for life and love, contrasting starkly with what will happen to her next.

Seen through the more globalised and intercultural eyes of today's audiences, there are two key aspects that can stand as controversial in terms of the depiction of Japan in theatrical works. Firstly, there is the stereotypical storyline and its creation as an inherently Orientalist narrative that looks down on Japan with a derogatory attitude. In the example of *Madama Butterfly*, the Japanese heroine Cio-Cio San is seen as an 'exotic' creature, glorified as part of an unbalanced relationship inherent to her status as a 15-year-old geisha; a plot that outlines Asia as the fragile, inferior and irrational 'Other' in opposition to the West as a powerful, rational entity. Likewise, in *The Mikado*, Japan appears only as an exotic setting, a satirical backdrop that exists as something to laugh at. Both narratives ultimately served to strengthen the unequal power dynamics between the West and Asia.

The second issue has more to do with the historic interpretation and visual portrayal of Japanese people and culture, and Asians more widely, with performances of these works serving as a historical accumulation of discriminatory expressions and misrepresented motifs that have subconsciously proliferated across stages worldwide. Examples include misusage of cultural items such as kimono, inauthentic hairstyles, fans, and chopsticks. This misrepresentation could also include expressions of the 'Asian' body, including yellowface make up, slanted eye makeup, bowing motions, and other seemingly 'cultural' gestures.



Otherness continues to open the door to new worlds, inspiring audiences with an essence of something they have never seen in their day-to-day lives

Although it cannot be denied that it is the nature of classic historical works to contain some problematic issues reflecting the viewpoints of the time in which they were created, the works in question here have remained as some of the most popular pieces in the opera repertoire, with companies throughout the world continuing to play them, further influencing the views of current audiences. Against this backdrop, the difference between the imagined vision of Japan and the true state of Japan can be a critical issue for a global, intercultural audience nowadays, especially when the 'idealised' Japan portrayed in these works is rooted in an Orientalist viewpoint which functions as a system to justify Western dominance, stereotyping other cultures rather than letting them truly speak for themselves.

While the opera world is undergoing relatively slow change in response to these challenges, some creators have already re-imagined these historic productions with powerful, inspiring ideas. One of the most celebrated productions of *Madama Butterfly* was created by Robert Wilson in 1993 with the Opéra national de Paris, collaborating with Japanese choreographer Suzushi Hanayagi, who has worked in a variety of styles from traditional to contemporary. They aimed to remove clichés of Japanese culture by featuring the essence of the Japanese slow dance movement *Butoh* and striking minimalist aesthetics. *The Mikado* has also undergone successful reinterpretation. Jonathan Miller's 1986 production at the English National Opera altered its narrative by setting it at an English seaside hotel in the 1930s, playing up the British self-referential wit, rather than relying on Japanese and Asian features to enhance the humorous satire. Many recent productions have started to take authenticity and representation into consideration, just like the changes initiated by the Royal Ballet and Opera; these creative teams acknowledge this need for change by appointing specialists to modify and update their productions or encouraging collaboration with Asian artists.

Trends in the wider performance space have begun to move more rapidly, with the last five years in particular marking a significant transition towards the representation of Japan in the UK theatre

opposite
Kayo Takahashi Deschene's
costume designs for
The Great Wave.

industry. London's West End has seen the phenomenal success of the theatrical adaptation of Studio Ghibli's classic 1988 animation *My Neighbour Totoro* by the Royal Shakespeare Company, becoming the fastest selling show in the history of the Barbican Centre before transferring to the Gillian Lynne Theatre for a run lasting over a year. With all-Asian casting and beautifully crafted Japanese scenery, the production won six Olivier Awards and was especially recognised for its stagecraft. While *Totoro* championed the beauty of the traditional Japanese countryside with its beautiful stage sets and Japanese language mixed seamlessly into its storytelling, exoticness is undoubtedly still to be found in contemporary theatre works as seen in *Kyoto* (Royal Shakespeare Company, 2024) which explicitly focused on national stereotypes seen through the lens of climate politics, playing up these caricatures as an effective satire to make the global setting more humorous.

While artistic decisions related to the body, hairstyle, and race are often politicised in the UK, Japan has arguably developed their own view in terms of how to incorporate 'foreign' culture into their stage craft. In the current Japanese stage industry, it is hard to overlook the outstanding popularity of Western mega hit productions such as *Les Misérables*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, and *Wicked*, which are usually acted by local Japanese casts wearing costumes and wigs identical to the original Western productions, acting in the Japanese language but as if they were Westerners, with very minimal localisation.

Looking to an example in Japan's traditional arts, chiefly kabuki, director Satoshi Miyagi and the costume designer Kayo Takahashi Deschene (both also collaborating on *The Great Wave*) created the Indian-styled kabuki performance *Kiwametsuke Indo-den Mahabharata Senki*. Premiering in 2017 and revived again in 2023, it beautifully blended the exoticness of India with traditional kabuki aesthetics.

Otherness continues to open the door to new worlds, inspiring audiences with an essence of something they have never seen in their day-to-day lives. The discussion becomes controversial when the 'Others' consumed in art are not simply 'Others' but are also taken advantage of within the framework of global inequalities, and when they and their culture are consumed by envisioning them as vulnerable, fetishised, primitive and idealised in a way that no longer accurately represents the real state of where these cultures originated. Seen alongside the well-documented discourse around *Japonisme* and Orientalism in the West, the popularity of 'otherness' in the theatre industry in Japan requires further investigation, in particular regarding where it originated from, but in the context of contemporary Japan,



above
Director Satoshi Miyagi in
rehearsals for *The Great Wave*.

this historical trajectory goes a long way to explaining why people might react and respond differently to the 'culture debate' compared to those in the West.

The magic of performance art lies in the power of actors and the productions they act in to transport the audience to a world they have never been to, yet how can we discuss the gaps between intention and perception when other cultures are framed in a specifically 'other' context? How can we examine the unique positionality of Japan in the wider context of the 'cultural appropriation' debate? It is in this light that the global collaboration of leading creators and artists in productions like *The Great Wave* can be seen as a vital step forward for both further discussion of this topic and for the future of opera and performing arts as a whole – how can we continue to inspire each other to create something exciting?

Miki Hosaka-Green is a PhD researcher at SOAS, University of London. Her research focuses on Japan-themed performing arts in the West. Alongside her research, she currently works as a localisation project manager for a major Japanese gaming company.

Biographies



Dan Armstrong – The Spirit of Hokusai

Scottish Opera debut

Dan trained as an actor in Contemporary Theatre at East 15 Acting School. He also studied at The Curious School of Puppetry.

Theatre work includes: *Room on The Broom* (Tall Stories / West End); *Dragons & Mythical Beasts* (International Tour); *Pinocchio* (Gloucester Guildhall); *Journey to the Impossible* (UK Tour); *The Hatchling* (Platinum Jubilee Pageant); *Peter Pan* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre); *Flew the Coop* (New Diorama Theatre); *Snow Mouse* (The Egg / Travelling Light).

Television work includes: *The Third Day* (Punchdrunk International / Sky); *Don't Hug Me I'm Scared* (Channel 4 / Blink Industries).



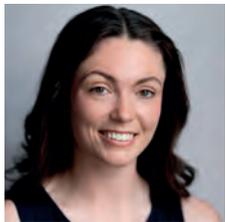
Ching Chen – Actor / Dancer

Scottish Opera debut

Ching Chen (Jin) is a Taiwanese actor, martial artist, and movement director based in London. She completed her MFA at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. With a background in acting and over 15 years of professional movement training – including Chinese martial arts, contemporary dance, and Chinese dance – she works across theatre and film. Her interdisciplinary practice draws on Chinese martial arts and Western techniques to create dynamic, embodied performance. As a movement practitioner, she has also led courses at RCSSD, East 15 Acting School, and UAL.

Recent film credits include: *The Fishbowl Girl* (Golden Horse-nominated, Clermont-Ferrand 2025) and *The Trio Hall* (Berlinale Forum 2025).

Theatre credits include: *Cardstock*, a 5-star-reviewed production at the 2025 Edinburgh Festival Fringe.



Kim Francey – Actor / Dancer

Scottish Opera debut

Born in Aberdeen, Kim began dancing at a young age and trained in a variety of styles. After graduating from the Institute of the Arts Barcelona, she went on to join Motionhouse as an apprentice dancer. Upon completing her apprenticeship, she has performed in various professional productions with the company. Kim freelances throughout the UK and internationally across dance, circus, and theatre with extensive experience in bespoke, large-scale aerial-dance performances alongside several touring productions.

Credits include: Glastonbury Opening Ceremony (2025), ITV New Years Eve (2023), Eurovision (2023), Motionhouse, Off the Wall Aerial, Justice in Motion, No Sleep Dance Theatre, Mercurial Dance, Marc Brew Company, Off the Rails Dance, and Cagoule Dance.



Eri Fukasawa – Props Designer

Scottish Opera debut

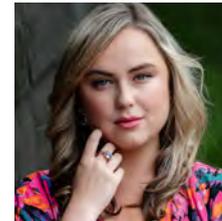
Eri Fukasawa graduated from Musashino Art University, where she studied under stage designers Ichiro Takada and Nobusetsu Kotake. In 2000, she joined Satoshi Miyagi's theatre company Ku Na'uka. Since 2006 she has been collaborated with Shizuoka Performing Arts Centre (SPAC) on various projects. She is known for stage art and works that not only reflect the imagery of plays and direction but create spaces extending from everyday life. In April 2024, Eri opened her own studio, *Kūsō to Kioku*.

Past collaboration on works directed by Satoshi Miyagi: *Mahabharata* (Tokyo National Museum), *Peer Gynt* (SPAC), mural design for *Mitridate, re di Ponto* (Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Berlin); *The War Chronicles of the Mahabharata* (Kabuki-za Theatre, starring kabuki actor Kikunosuke Onoe).

Works directed by Shintaro Mori: *The Secret of the Bouquet of Roses* (SPAC).

Works directed by Shuji Onodera: *Game* (Kanagawa Arts Theatre); *NORA* (OWLSPOT Theatre); *Metamorphosis* (SPAC).

Works directed by Seiji Nozoe: *The Imaginary Invalid* (SPAC); *Considerate Lucy* (Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre); *Life for Sale* (Ikebukuro Sunshine Theatre); *Tom and Jerry: Dream Again* (Misonoza Theatre, Bunkamura Orchard Hall, and others).



Chloe Harris – Koto

Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2024–26

Chloe is a graduate of the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and the RAM Opera School. Roles include Nancy *Albert Herring*, Baba the Turk *The Rake's Progress*, Marcellina *Le nozze di Figaro*, Clarina *Il cambiale di matrimonio*, Public Opinion *Orphée aux enfers*, and The Second Fairy *The Selfish Giant* (world premiere). In Australia, Chloe is an Associate Artist through Melbourne Opera's Richard Divall Emerging Artists Programme and was a Melba Opera Trust Artist. In 2023, she received the Opera Foundation for Young Australians Lady Galleghan London Award and Help Musicians Sybil Tutton Opera Award. Chloe was a 2024 Garsington Opera Alvarez Young Artist, performing in the chorus and covering Marcellina and covering Moon Queen *A Trip to the Moon*.

Scottish Opera appearances: Yelena Ivanovna Popova *The Bear*, *Opera Highlights* Autumn and Spring 2025, Counsel for the Plaintiff *Trial by Jury*, Cherry Penistone *A Matter of Misconduct!* (world premiere), Nancy.

Future engagements include: Cherubino *The Marriage of Figaro* (Scottish Opera).



Shozan Hasegawa – Shakuhachi

Scottish Opera debut

Shozan Hasegawa started playing the shakuhachi aged ten and studied under Dozan Fujiwara. Shozan passed both the *jun-shihan* (associate master instructor) and *shihan* (master instructor) licensing examinations of the Tozan School of Shakuhachi with top marks. He graduated from the Tokyo University of the Arts before completing his master's course there. He approaches shakuhachi music from multiple perspectives through his material collection regarding Japanese traditional pieces and his research on them. In recent years, performing activities have been further diversified by his participation in concerts of the *enka* (Japanese ballad) singer Keisuke Yamauchi as well as recordings and tours of singer / songwriter Kaze Fujii. In 2024, Shozan gave a recital as part of the popular series 'B to C: From Bach to Contemporary Music' organised by Tokyo Opera City. He held his first solo concert at the Hamarikyū Asahi Hall, Tokyo. Recipient of the 75th Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technologies' Art Encouragement Prize for New Artists in 2024, Shozan is currently a *shihan* of the Tozan School of Shakuhachi and the head of the Shozan Group within the School.



Edward Hawkins – Eirakuya Tōshirō / Takai Kōzan

Scottish Opera debut

Edward began his career in the Glyndebourne Chorus, working on many critically acclaimed productions before pursuing a busy solo career across the UK and abroad, including numerous performances broadcast on BBC Radio 3. During Covid theatre closures, Edward filmed two staged song cycles by Shostakovich for ETO: *Romances on Verses by English Poets* and *Suite on Verses of Michelangelo Buonarroti*.

edwardhawkinsbass.com

Operatic engagements include: David / Mr Tarpolski *The Railway Children*, cover Mayor / Quercus *Uprising* (Glyndebourne, both world premieres); Gregor *A Visit to Friends* (Aldeburgh Festival); Somnus / Cadmus *Semele* (Opera Collective Ireland); Sherlock Holmes *The Sign of Four* (Northern Opera Group, world premiere); Figaro *The Marriage of Figaro* (GAP Festival); Sarastro *The Magic Flute* (Wild Arts); Alidoro *La Cenerentola*, Geronte *Manon Lescaut*, cover Seneca *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, cover Trulove *The Rake's Progress*, Lord Sidney *Il viaggio a Reims*, Achilla *Giulio Cesare*, Claudio *Agrippina*, General Polkan *The Golden Cockerel*, Banquo *Macbeth* (ETO); cover *Godo / Miro La Sapienza* (La Monnaie); cover Rocco *Fidelio* (Garsington).

Future engagements include: Bartolo *The Marriage of Figaro* (Scottish Opera).



Alex Henderson – Actor / Dancer

Scottish Opera debut

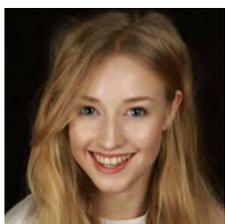
Alex is a dance artist based in Edinburgh, originally from Brighton. He trained at London Contemporary Dance School, graduating in 2020. He has since been working as a dancer with various companies including Requardt and Rosenberg, Curious Seed, and Bodies in Action. He has also worked as a dance artist for brands and artists including Maison Margiela, HARRI, Netflix, and Harry Styles. His performance career has led him to perform in dance theatre work, immersive work, film work, site-specific work, work for young autistic audiences, and work with intergenerational casts. Prior to training, he was part of the National Youth Dance Company where he performed in pieces choreographed by Michael Keegan-Dolan and Damien Jalet.



Yuka Hisamatsu – Lighting Designer

Scottish Opera debut

Yuka Hisamatsu began her career in Japan in 2005 and relocated to the Netherlands in 2021, where she is now based. She works internationally across contemporary dance, ballet, and opera. She is a former Lighting Technician at Nederlands Dans Theater (NDT). Her work composes space with light; these include *Once...Never...and Again...* (Jermaine Spivey, 2025) and *Fantaisie mineure* (Yoann Bourgeois). Her practice is driven by a close reading of each work's context. She shapes light in response to the production's inner logic – its dramaturgy, musical structure, pacing, and emotional temperature – so that she composes space with light, shifting with precision over time. Her work has been presented at theatres and festivals across Europe. Awards include the LIT Lighting Design Awards (2025) and honours from the Japan Association of Lighting Engineers and Designers (Rookie Designer Award, 2016; Encouragement Prize, 2022).



Amy Hollinshead – Actor / Dancer

Scottish Opera debut

Amy completed her professional training at Rambert School. She joined Scottish Dance Theatre in 2013, under the direction of Fleur Darkin. Whilst there, she worked with choreographers including Damien Jalet, Sharon Eyal, and Botis Seva and toured extensively both nationally and internationally. Now freelance, Amy works with an array of independent choreographers as a dancer, rehearsal director, and teacher. She is currently part of the team at Presence Projects, Barrowland Ballet, and James Cousins Company.



Akiko Kitamura – Choreographer

Scottish Opera debut

Akiko Kitamura is a choreographer, dancer, director, and professor at J F Oberlin University in Tokyo. Her background includes ballet, street dance, and Indonesian martial arts. She founded her dance company, Leni Basso, in 1994 while studying at Waseda University, from where she also received her MA. She stayed in Berlin as a trainee of the Agency for Cultural Affairs Overseas Training Program for Artists in 1995. Since returning to Japan, she has implemented her own theory of choreography, the Grid System, and directing style that mixes dancing, light, rhythm, and image. 'Enact Oneself', choreographed for the 2003 American Dance Festival, was selected as its Best Dance of the Year. 'Finks' (2001) has been performed in more than 60 cities and was awarded Best Dance Piece of the Year by Montreal Hour Magazine in 2005. In 2010, Kitamura started her solo career. 'Vox Soil' (2018) won the 13th Japan Dance Forum (JaDaFo) Awards Grand Prix. Both 'Soul Hunter' and 'Echoes of Calling – Rainbow After' won the 18th JaDaFo Grand Prix in 2023. Kitamura studies 'the use of the human body as a medium'; based on 'physical thinking', she looks for the appeal of bodies and good communication generated from creative activities and performance.



Junpei Kiz – Scenographer

Scottish Opera debut

Architect and Director of Landscape Theatre, Junpei Kiz began his collaboration with stage director Satoshi Miyagi in 1994. Not only does he design the stages in conventional theatres, but also utilises the space of architectural structures and the atmosphere of outdoor event spaces as integral performance areas for his designs. The theatrical perspective he creates maximises the hidden potentials of a location, founded on his knowledge in landscape design and architecture; one of his acclaimed works is his collaboration with Shizuoka Performing Art Centre on *Mahabharata* at the 2014 Festival d'Avignon, presented at the Boulbon Quarry. Kiz also designed *Antigone* in the open-air 'Honors Courtyard' in the 14th-century Palais des Papes for the opening of the 2017 Festival d'Avignon. Other works include *Idomeneo* (co-production by Aix-en-Provence and l'Opéra National du Capitole de Toulouse) and *Mitridate, re di Ponto* (Berlin Staatsoper). As a celebrated architect, he is the recipient of the English Architectural Review Award (2007). In 2023 Kiz established Landscape THEATRE (landscapetheatre.com) to integrate 'nature, history, and architecture' as an environmental asset of stage design. kiz-architect.com



Julieth Lozano Rolong – Katsushika Ōi

Colombian soprano Julieth Lozano Rolong is the winner of the Dame Kiri Te Kanawa Audience Prize at the 2023 Cardiff Singer of the World Competition and the 2018 recipient of the President's Award given by HM The King. She graduated with a Masters in Vocal Performance and an Artist Diploma in Opera from the RCM. Her roles include *Vixen The Cunning Little Vixen*, *Musetta La bohème*, *Gilda Rigoletto*, *Susanna Le nozze di Figaro*, *Norina Don Pasquale*, and *Despina Così fan tutte*. The 2025/26 season brings a mix of opera and concert work with song recitals, new album recordings, and exciting new operatic roles as well as Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and Strauss' *Four Last Songs* as highlights. Julieth has performed with Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera, English National Opera, Grand Theatre of Geneva, Estonian Opera, Cairo Opera, Teatro Mayor, and Teatro Colón in Bogotá among others.

Scottish Opera appearances: Nuria *Ainadamar*.



Luvo Maranti – Hokusai’s Grandson

Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2025/26

Luvo Maranti is a South African tenor whose career highlights include appearances in Cape Town Opera productions, winning first prize in the Voices of South Africa International Competition, reaching the quarterfinals of the 2023 Operalia Competition, and performing leading roles in Europe and the USA. A 2024/25 National Opera Studio alumnus and founder of the Luvo Maranti Arts Scholarship in 2022, he holds a Diploma in Music Performance from the University of Cape Town and is a recipient of The Drake Calleja Scholarship.

Scottish Opera appearances: Gonzalve *L'heure espagnole*, Groom *The Bear*, *Opera Highlights* Autumn 2025.

Operatic engagements include: chorus *Macbeth* and *Don Pasquale* (West Green Opera); Hoffmann *Les contes d'Hoffmann* (Opera UCT, International Lyric Academy / Opera Carolina); Ildamaro *Dalinda* (world premiere); Hendrik Cesars *Sara Baartman* (UCT); Rinuccio *Gianni Schicchi* (International Lyric Academy); Gherardo *Gianni Schicchi* (Operatunity South Africa).

Future engagements include: Don Basilio / Don Curzio *The Marriage of Figaro* (Scottish Opera).



Satoshi Miyagi – Director

Scottish Opera debut

Satoshi Miyagi is acclaimed worldwide for his work combining contemporary textual interpretations with physical techniques and styles of Asian theatre. He founded Ku Na'uka Theatre Company in 1990 and was appointed Artistic Director of Shizuoka Performing Arts Center (SPAC) in 2007, where he invites a succession of theatrical works from around the world that cast a sharp eye on contemporary society with a focus on creating theatre as 'a window to view the world.' His *Antigone* was performed in the Cour d'honneur du palais des Papes as the 2017 Festival d'Avignon's opening work – the first time a work from Asia was selected for the festival's opening. He was awarded the Art Encouragement Prize for Drama in 2018 by The Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and received the honor of Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from the French Ministry of Culture in 2019. In 2023, he received the Japan Foundation Awards and La médaille d'or du Rayonnement Culturel de La Renaissance Française.

Theatre produced by Ku Na'uka: *Hamlet*, *Salome*, *Turandot*, *Phèdre*, *Elektra*, *Tenshu-Monogatari*, *Tropical Tree*, *Sakurahime-Azuma Bunsyo*, *Medea*, *Oedipus*, *Macbeth*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Mahabharata-Nalacharitam*, *Antigone*, *Othello*, *Oshu-Adachigahara*.

Theatre produced by SPAC: *Hamlet*, *Two Ladies*, *Damon Lake*, *Peer Gynt*, *Epître aux jeunes acteurs*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Grimm's Fairy Tale: The True Bride*, *Mahabharata*, *Le Carrosse d'or*, *Chushingura*, *The Life of Guskou Budori*, *Mefisto For Ever*, *Kurotokage*, *Le Lièvre blanc d'Inaba et des Navajos*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Antigone*, *Othello*, *Hogijuta*, *Révélation Red in Blue* trilogy, *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Mary Poppins with her Upside-down Umbrella*, *Dream and Derangement*, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The White Fox*, *Ramayana*.

Opera: *Le Malade imaginaire*, *L'Orfeo*, *The Fairy Queen*, *Rusalka*, *Idomeneo* (Festival d'Aix-en-Provence); *Mitridate*, *re di Ponto* (Staatsoper Unter den Linden).

Kabuki: *Mahabharata*.



Anthony Moffat – Leader, The Orchestra of Scottish Opera

Hailing from Northumberland, Anthony Moffat was trained at the Royal Academy of Music by Manoug Parikian. On graduating he gained the highest accolade for violin by winning the Marjorie Hayward Prize. His passion for chamber music was nurtured by the Amadeus Quartet, but he has devoted the majority of his time to piano trios, giving trio recitals in London's Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room. As founder member of the Da Vinci Piano Trio he has toured across Europe and been broadcast on BBC Radio 3. His career as Orchestra Leader began as Co-leader of the Hallé Orchestra before his appointment as Leader of The Orchestra of Scottish Opera in 2000. He has appeared as Guest Leader with the BBC Concert Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, and the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland.

He plays on a fine violin by Giovanni Grancino of Milan made in 1695, once owned by Vera Hockman, the lover of Edward Elgar.



Grace O'Brien – Actor / Dancer

Scottish Opera debut

Grace graduated from Rambert School as part of the 2025 cohort with a First Class Degree (BA Hons) in ballet and contemporary dance. Throughout her training she had the opportunity to work with choreographers and répétiteurs to both restage and make new work, such as with Mavin Khoo on a restaging of Akram Khan's *Mud of Sorrow* in her second year and on newly commissioned works by Miguel Altunaga and Jordan James Bridge in her third year.

Alongside her training, Grace has also been able to work both professionally and choreographically. Her work 'Set Fast' performed as part of the Ballet Nights 005 and 006 programmes at London's Cadogan Hall. She recently spent three months performing with Danish Dance Theatre in theatres across Denmark and Finland in Fernando Melo's *Leaning Tree* as part of the company's 2024/25 season, and she performed the duet 'Green Apples' with the Mark Bruce Company in September 2025.



Daisuke Ohyama – Katsushika Hokusai

Scottish Opera debut

Daisuke Ohyama graduated from Tokyo University of the Arts, winning first prize. After a sensational debut in 2008 as Danilo *The Merry Widow* (Hyogo PAC), he has been engaged in many opera productions. One of his most acclaimed performances was as Figaro *The Marriage of Figaro* by conductor Michiyoshi Inoue and director Hideki Noda. He made his mark on productions including *Black Jack*, composed by Akira Miyagawa based on Osamu Tezuka's best-selling manga, and as the Celebrant in Bernstein's *Mass*. He regularly performs as a soloist in Baroque music and religious works such as Mozart's Requiem and C minor Mass and Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*. He also performs in plays such as *Aoi no Ue* from *Five Modern Noh plays* by Yukio Mishima. He further appeared in the musical *The Phantom of the Opera* (Shiki Theater Company). He was librettist and director of the opera *Princess Anio* celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Vietnam, which premiered in Vietnam in September 2023.

Ohyama now teaches at Senzoku Gakuen College of Music as well as the theatre studio Kakushinhan.

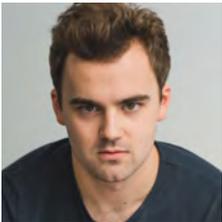


Shengzhi Ren – Mr Tozaki / Nishimuraya Yohachi

Shengzhi was a 2020/21 Scottish Opera Emerging Artist. He completed the 2019/20 NOS Young Artist Programme. From 2017 to 2019, he completed the RAM Advanced Diploma in Opera. Shengzhi trained at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, graduating with Bachelor's and Master's degrees with Honours. Competition awards include Third Prize at the 2019 Neapolitan Masters Competition; First Prize at the 2016 International Singing Contest for Young People in Macau; and First Prize at the 2015 Golden Bell Awards. In 2018 Shengzhi sang at the London Bel Canto Festival Concert and in the Academy Voices Concert at Istituto Italiano Di Cultura. In 2017, he performed as soloist at the Korea-China Cultural Exchange Night.

Scottish Opera appearances: title role *Oedipus Rex*, Leukippos *Daphne*, Armand de Clerval *Thérèse*, Don Ottavio *Don Giovanni*, *Opera Highlights* Spring 2022 and Online 2020, Nemorino *L'elisir d'amore*, Fenton *Falstaff*, Ferrando *Così fan tutte*.

Operatic engagements include: Song Seller *Il tabarro* (BBC Proms conducted by Sir Mark Elder); Vaudémont *Iolanta*, Don José *La tragédie de Carmen* (Royal Academy); Tamino *The Magic Flute*, Nemorino, Borsa *Rigoletto*, Prince *Cinderella* (Opera North); Rodolfo *La bohème* (WNO).



Collin Shay – Dr Philipp Franz von Siebold

Scottish Opera debut

Collin is a French-American countertenor. Their 2025/26 Season takes them to New York City for *The F*****s and Their Friends Between Revolutions* (Park Avenue Armory); London for the world premiere of Michael Betteridge's *bodies*, commissioned by Britten Sinfonia (Kings Place); Leeds to cover Joacim in Handel's *Susanna* (Opera North); and Martigues for *Ruination* (Théâtre des Salins). They will also perform at Bordeaux Festes Baroques, the Islington Proms, Hastings Festival, and the Royal Opera's Paul Hamlyn Hall. Prizes include Third Prize at the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, Western Region; Second Prize at the Concours International de Musique Ancienne; and the Brian Nisbet Prize for Early Music. Collin's main focuses are contemporary opera and baroque music. They studied at the Juilliard School, McGill University, and the Guildhall School of Music.

Operatic engagements include: cover Oberon *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, cover Tousel Blond *The Masque of Night* (Opera North); cover Serafino *The Intelligence Park* (Music Theatre Wales / RBO); Pete *The Lost Thing* (RBO Linbury Theatre); Yoel Mamzer / *Bastard* (RBO, world premiere).



Stuart Stratford – Conductor

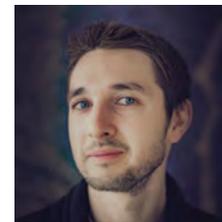
Stuart Stratford marked 10 years as Scottish Opera's Music Director in 2025. Recent Company highlights include *La bohème*, *The Merry Widow* (also at Opera Holland Park), *Don Pasquale*, *Oedipus Rex* (Edinburgh International Festival), *La traviata*, *Hansel & Gretel*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Daphne* (Scottish premiere), *Il tritico* (2023 Critics Circle Award winner and International Opera Awards nominee), *Ainadamar* (UK staged premiere), *Candide*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Miserly Knight*, *Mavra*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Falstaff*, *Anthropocene* (world premiere), and *Breaking the Waves* (European premiere at EIF). Stuart has conducted for ENO, Opera North, WNO, Holland Park, Birmingham Opera Company, and Buxton Festival. Outside the UK, he has worked at Royal Danish Opera, Opera Australia, Finnish National Opera, Theater St Gallen, Estonian National Opera, and in Hong Kong. Stratford has conducted ensembles including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, RPO, London Symphony Orchestra, Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, Manchester Camerata, Porto Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the Algarve, Perm Opera and Ballet Theater, Viva Sinfonia, Remix Ensemble, and Ural Symphony Orchestra where he gave the Russian premieres of *Momentum* (Turnage) and *Airport Scenes* (Dove).



Ken Sugiyama – Actor / Dancer

Scottish Opera debut

Ken Sugiyama was born in Tokyo, Japan. He graduated from the Department of Theatre, Nihon University College of Art and was granted the stage name Bando Kenshiro as a certified performer of Bando School of traditional Japanese Dance. Sugiyama is also certified in high-level stage combat by the Japan Actors Union. He joined Shizuoka Performing Arts Centre (SPAC) in 2019 and since then has performed in several productions presented by SPAC such as *The White Hare of Inaba-Navajo*, Jūrō Kara's *Mary Poppins with her Upside-down Umbrella*, *Two Ladies*, *Peerl Gynt*, and *Ramayana*. Sugiyama has performed in opera productions staged by Satoshi Miyagi overseas as a dancer in *Idomeneo* at Festival d'Aix-en-Provence (2022) and actor in *Mitridate, re di Ponto* at Berlin's Staatsoper Unter den Linden (2022).



Malcolm Sutherland – Actor / Dancer

Scottish Opera debut

Malcolm is a dance artist and performer trained at the Central School of Ballet. He began his professional career as an apprentice with Ballet Basel before joining Staatstheater Nürnberg Ballett, where he performed a wide repertoire by internationally renowned choreographers including Jiří Kylián, Nacho Duato, Ohad Naharin, Mats Ek, Johan Inger, and Crystal Pite. His time in these companies grounded him in classical and contemporary practices with a strong focus on theatricality, musicality, and embodied storytelling. As a freelance performer, Malcolm has worked across Europe and internationally with artists and companies such as Michael Clark, Oceanallover, Klever Dance Company, Dance Theatre Luxembourg, Elisabeth Schilling, Focus Dance, Company Shang-Chi Sun, Kollektiv 52°07, Shaper/Caper, and Snap-Elastic. His performance practice spans stage-based dance, interdisciplinary work, and experimental performance contexts.

Alongside performing, Malcolm has created numerous works for the stage and screen, presented nationally and internationally. He holds an MA in Choreography with distinction and teaches professional classes and workshops in a range of contemporary dance settings.



Kayo Takahashi Deschene – Costume Designer

Scottish Opera debut

Kayo Takahashi Deschene is a costume designer whose work spans theatre, opera, and large-scale performance projects. She began her collaboration with theatre director Satoshi Miyagi in 1994 and has since designed costumes for numerous productions in Japan and internationally. In parallel with theatrical work, she creates costumes for musicians' promotional videos, concerts, and major cultural events. Her designs are rooted in a strong conceptual approach, shaped by the narrative, the director's vision, and the energy of the performance space. Drawing on elements of traditional Japanese culture – such as origami, papercraft, and calligraphy – her work blends sculptural forms with contemporary aesthetics. She is also known for creating distinctive stage props and expressive masks. kayotakahashidesign.com

International credits include: *The White Hare of Inaba-Navajo* (Musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac, Paris); *Mahabharata* (presented in Tokyo, Shizuoka, Paris, and Avignon); *Mahabharata Senki* (Kabuki Theatre, Tokyo); *Antigone* (Festival d'Avignon, also Park Avenue Armory, New York); *Mugen Noh Othello* (Japan Society, New York).

Opera credits include: *Rusalka* (Nissay Theatre, Tokyo); *Idomeneo* (Festival d'Aix-en-Provence); *Mitridate, re di Ponto* (Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Berlin).



Audrey Tsang – Child

Audrey graduated from the RCS Alexander Gibson Opera Studio in 2024, having studied under Wilma McDougall. She received her Bachelor of Music (Honours) at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts in 2022. She was a 2024 Garsington Alvarez Young Artist. Audrey participated in the 2018 Emil Petrovics Vocal Competition in Hungary and won First Prize in Category I. She won the Special Prize (Best Interpretation of 1700s Neapolitan Arias) at the 2021 Domenico Cimarosa International Opera Singing Competition. She won First Prize at the 2024 Ye Cronies Opera Award.

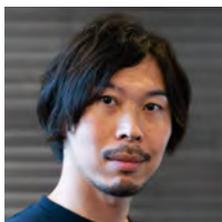
Scottish Opera appearances: chorus *La bohème*, Clo-Clo / chorus *The Merry Widow*, Cis Albert Herring.

Operatic engagements include: Chorus *Orpheus and Eurydice* (Opera Australia at EIF), First Ménade Platée (Garsington), Ilia *Idomeneo* (RCS), La Fée *Cendrillon* (RCS), Nedda *Pagliacci* (HKAPA); Papagena *Die Zauberflöte* (Musica Viva HK). Scene roles include: Adina *L'elisir d'amore*, Frasquita *Carmen*, Soeur Constance *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Lucia *The Rape of Lucretia*, Romilda *Serse* (RCS); title role *Rodelinda*, Donna Anna *Don Giovanni* (Hong Kong Academy).



Susannah Wapshott – Chorus Director

Susannah is Chorus Director at Scottish Opera and an accomplished conductor, répétiteur, and vocal coach. She began her musical career as a pianist, studying with scholarships at the RNCM and the RCS, and holds a music degree from The University of Manchester. In Season 2008/2009, she was the Musicians' Benevolent Fund Junior Fellow Répétiteur, the precursor to Scottish Opera's Emerging Artist programme. Since then, Susannah has been a senior member of Scottish Opera's music staff, working on over 60 productions and playing a key role in shaping the Company's musical and artistic standards. Conducting credits include mainstage performances of *Don Pasquale*, *The Barber of Seville*, and upcoming performances of *The Marriage of Figaro*, as well as productions of *Nixon in China* and *Orfeo ed Euridice*. She conducted the soundtrack for Scottish Opera's first animated opera, *Josefine*, and directed from the piano for touring productions of *Carmen*, *La traviata*, *Rodelinda*, and *Macbeth*. She is Music Director of Helensburgh Oratorio Choir, a regular conductor with the Glasgow Orchestral Society, a visiting Vocal Coach at the RCS and a former Conducting Fellow at The Dallas Opera.



Sho Yamaguchi – Video Designer

Scottish Opera debut

Specialising in spatial direction and moving image production, Sho Yamaguchi employs advanced digital expression across projection mapping, immersive environments, and live visual performances. Since producing *Hokusai: Water Reverie* at Nijo Castle in Kyoto in 2016 – an artistic video experience guiding viewers through Hokusai's *ukiyo-e* depictions of water – he has transformed numerous works by Katsushika Hokusai into digital art, establishing one of the most extensive bodies of work in this field. His activities have expanded internationally, including projection mapping for Amon Miyamoto's reading drama *FANATIC ARTIST HOKUSAI* at the British Museum in 2017 and *JAL Journey to the World of Hokusai* at New York's Grand Central Station. He has also pursued innovative approaches to immersive e-presentation, notably recreating the ceiling painting 'Phoenix Glaring in All Directions' from Gansho-in Temple in Obuse within a five-metre-square immersive installation for an exhibition at NTT Inter Communication Center (ICC). He has received consecutive awards at the Asia Digital Art Award and is recognised as a pioneering figure reinterpreting cultural heritage through contemporary digital art.

The Children of The Great Wave



Daisy Holden



Cooper Laird-Jones



Eleanor Paterson



Sava Tripkovic

The Children of *The Great Wave* are members of Scottish Opera's Children's Chorus. The Children's Chorus is led by Scottish Opera Chorus Director Susannah Wapshott, managed by Scottish Opera's Education & Outreach department, and supported by a highly experienced team of theatre professionals.

The singing element includes learning songs and excerpts from a wide range of musical genres, including children's choruses from opera, musicals, folk, traditional, and world music. Along with musicianship training, the children build skills relating to the world of opera, including acting and stage skills, language coaching, choreography, costumes, wigs, and makeup, all of which are designed to create a lifelong love of music and performance.

The chorus members experience a range of performance opportunities, from specially commissioned pieces of children's music theatre to opportunities to perform in Scottish Opera's productions alongside professional singers and The Orchestra of Scottish Opera.

Art by Katsushika Hokusai seen in *The Great Wave*

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Gathering Shellfish at Ebb Tide [Shiohigari zu], Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts
Carp and turtles [Koi kame zu], Saitama Prefectural Museum of History and Folklore
'Telescope,' from the series *Seven Foibles* [Furyū nakute nanakuse], Hagi Urugami Museum
'Under the Wave off Kanagawa,' from the series *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji* [Fugaku sanjūrokkei] (Reproduction), The Adachi Foundation for the Preservation of Woodcut Printing
Promotional Handbill for Hokusai's Performance Painting of a Huge Portrait of the Bodhidharma, Nagoya City Museum
Line Drawing for the Phoenix painting at Ganshōin temple, Mukai Daisuke
'*Kohada Koheiji*,' from the series *One Hundred Tales* [Hyaku monogatari], Shimane Art Museum
Peonies and butterfly [Botan ni chō], Shimane Art Museum
'*Spring View of Enoshima*,' from *Strands of the Willow* [Yanagi no ito], Shimane Art Museum
'Minamoto no Tametomo,' from *Strange Tales of the Crescent Moon: A Supplementary Biography of Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo* [Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo gaiden chinsetsu yumiharizuki], Part 1, Volume 1, Shimane Art Museum
Shōki, the demon queller [Shōki zu], Shimane Art Museum
Segawa Kikunojō III as Oren, the daughter of Masamune [Sandaime Segawa Kikunojō Masamune musume Oren], Shimane Art Museum
Three images from *Quick Lessons in Simplified Drawing* [Ryakuga hayaoshie], Volume 1, Shimane Art Museum
Four images from *Quick Lessons in Simplified Drawing* [Ryakuga hayaoshie], Volume 2, Shimane Art Museum
'Suppression of Demons Hall is Broken and the 108 Demons Released,' from *An Illustrated New Edition of the Water Margin* [Shinpen suiko gaden], Part 1, Volume 1, The Hokusai-kan Museum
Beauty with Umbrella beneath a Willow Tree [Ryūka kasamochi bijin], The Hokusai-kan Museum
'Falconer's Hawk,' from An Album of Paintings [Nikuhitsu gajō], The Hokusai-kan Museum
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'A Picture of Monsters,' from *Random Drawings by Hokusai* [Hokusai manga], Volume 12, Urugami Sōkyū-dō
'The Mountain Man Who Appeared Night after Night,' from *Strange Tales from the Hokuetsu Region* [Hokuetsu kidan], Volume 4, Urugami Sōkyū-dō

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Master Drawing for the Phoenix Painting at Ganshōin Temple, Ganshō-in Temple
Masculine Waves [Onami] Ceiling Panel for the Kanmachi Festival Cart, Obuse Town Kanmachi Community Association Collection, on deposit at The Hokusai-kan Museum
Feminine Waves [Menami] Ceiling Panel for the Kanmachi Festival Cart, Obuse Town Kanmachi Community Association Collection, on deposit at The Hokusai-kan Museum

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Our sincere thanks to those from whom we have received a gift in their Will and to those who have made a living legacy or a gift in memory to the **Scottish Opera Endowment Trust**.

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Scottish Opera

Scottish Opera is Scotland's national opera company and largest performing arts organisation. The Company was founded in 1962 by Sir Alexander Gibson 'to lay the treasures of opera at the feet of the people of Scotland'. Repertoire ranges across five centuries, from the earliest operas to newly commissioned world premieres. For mainstage and concert productions, the Company collaborates with the world's finest singers and creatives, The Orchestra of Scottish Opera, and choruses for each opera. It co-produces work with companies including The Metropolitan Opera (New York), Opéra-Comique (Paris), and Adelaide Festival (Australia). Recent accolades include a 2017 UK Theatre Award, 2020 RPS Award, 2023 International Opera Award nomination, and 2023 Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera.

Presenting world-class opera at every scale, Scottish Opera is a trailblazer in community arts including 'community opera' combining chorus members of all backgrounds with a professional chorus, soloists, and The Orchestra of Scottish Opera. Such productions include *Pagliacci* in Paisley (2018), *Candide* in Glasgow (2022), and *Oedipus Rex* at the Edinburgh International Festival (2024). The Company's extensive touring programme ensures performances of Pop-up Opera and *Opera Highlights* are within reach of as many of Scotland's dispersed population as possible.

Scottish Opera's Outreach & Education programme, the longest running in Europe, includes in-person and digital Primary Schools Tours. Around 100 schools and 10,000 pupils take part in the live tour each year. The Emerging Artists programme gives early-career professionals comprehensive training for today's opera industry. Breath Cycle, an initiative for those with lung conditions, won the 2025 Classical:NEXT Innovation Award. Scottish Opera aims to be inclusive through the availability of free and subsidised tickets, audio-described performances, and Access performances with Dementia Friendly values at their core.

Scottish Opera is committed to presenting opera at the highest possible standards across Scotland, and worldwide audiences can experience this work through recordings. Recent audio recordings featuring The Orchestra of Scottish Opera include *Utopia, Limited* (Opus Arte 2025), *The Seal Woman* (Retrospect Opera 2025), and *Shamus O'Brien* (Retrospect Opera 2024). The Company's 2021 production of *The Gondoliers* is available to watch on BBC iPlayer and purchase on DVD or Blu-ray. *Josefine*, by Samuel Bordoli and Antonia Bain, is the UK's first newly commissioned opera for animation; it has won numerous awards at international film festivals since its July 2024 world premiere.

Scottish Opera is core funded by The Scottish Government.

opposite
Alex Otterburn and Paula Sides
in *The Merry Widow*, 2025.



Celebrating 75 Years of Music Making

In 2009, I made the decision to rename our company from “Kajimoto Concert Management” to simply “KAJIMOTO.” The reasoning behind my decision was because “Concert Management” seemed somewhat rigid and restrictive. My goal is to cross genres and borders to cultivate “art of the future,” filled with surprises and discoveries. Nevertheless, it goes without saying that the core of our projects is still classical music as it had always been so.

Since its founding, KAJIMOTO has been guided by the encouragement of our former president, who always inspired the staff to pursue bold ideas with a free and creative spirit. This core value has been in place to the present day, like an invisible thread of DNA. Reflecting on the forces that have shaped KAJIMOTO’s journey, I recall the pivotal words shared with me by Mr. Boulez during the “Pierre Boulez Festival” held in Tokyo in 1995, which lit our current path.

“Masa, if we don’t take any action, classical music might go extinct. It has been too standardized and fixed without any innovation. Music must be presented in more diverse ways. Unless we open up its possibilities, classical music will become a relic of the past.” This remark went straight to my heart.

Driven by a desire for new ideas and innovative approaches, I established our Paris office in 2001. This decision enabled us to have different perspectives on the music, which brought to fruition operatic projects co-produced with the Théâtre du Châtelet such as “My Way of Life,” a spectacle based on Toru Takemitsu’s music. In 2005, KAJIMOTO introduced “La Folle Journée TOKYO” (LFJ) to Japan. This groundbreaking and daring festival challenged the conventional norms of the classical music community and has continued to thrive in Tokyo every year since.

We are delighted to present the world premiere of *The Great Wave* through this new partnership and friendship with the Scottish Opera on our anniversary year. Even in uncertain times, collaborations like this are vital for bringing people together and fostering understanding of our differences and similarities. While art may not be able to halt political turmoil and conflict, I believe it can inspire hope and mindfulness that guide us toward peace. This production stands as evidence that Hokusai’s work has united us all here today.

Masa Kajimoto
President of KAJIMOTO



TOKYO PARIS SHANGHAI BEIJING

KAJIMOTO

Established in 1951, KAJIMOTO has its headquarters in Tokyo with offices in Paris and Beijing. The company is involved in the management of domestic and international musicians, the invitation of overseas orchestras, the organization and the production of musical events, and the production of the music festival “La Folle Journée Tokyo.” It has also produced “Boulez Festival in Tokyo,” “Lucerne Festival in Tokyo,” “Paris Châtelet Project” (2004-06), and “Ark Nova,” a special concert venue designed by Arata Isozaki and Anish Kapoor and a project to support the regions affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake.

The Japan Creator Support Fund was established within the Japan Arts Council to support projects nurturing Japan’s diverse creators. Through these initiatives, the fund aims to foster creators who thrive internationally, invigorate arts and culture, and boost Japan’s global cultural presence. The fund supports promising young Japanese creators, artists, and curators poised for global impact. It aids international co-productions, overseas exhibitions, performances, and participation in arts festivals. By supporting projects from planning to presentation, it fosters creative challenges, valuable experience, and global networks.

The international co-production of *The Great Wave* presents an exceptional opportunity for emerging creators to observe and engage in the intricate development of a new opera. Young professionals from the opera have been involved in the creative process, while aspiring conductors and composers gained invaluable insights into the complex journey of bringing an operatic work to fruition. These activities are meticulously documented by the videography team, capturing the artists’ thought processes and collaborative efforts behind the scenes, culminating in the world premiere of the new work by Dai Fujikura and Harry Ross.

Opera: Kanon Adachi / Yuka Hisamatsu / Naho Koizumi / Ken Sugiyama / Keiko Sumida / Sho Yamaguchi
 Conducting & Composition: Yukari Saito / Kento Ishikawa / Ayane Nakase / Hiroki Tanaka / Yuki Urabe
 Videography: Ayami Sakamoto
 Advisors: Kayo Takahashi Deschene / Daisuke Fujii / Akiko Kitamura / Junpei Kiz / Takayuki Komuro / Yu Kuwabara / Satoshi Miyagi / Shoji Sato
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Acknowledgements

All performances of *The Great Wave* are presented by arrangement with G Ricordi & Co (London) Ltd

Additional traditional menswear by Pam McCabe and Suzanne Togneri

Additional costumes made by Jasmine Clark, Marie Hansen, and Martha Welland

Millinery by Sally-Ann Provan

Belts and leather work by David Young

Thanks to Derek Gibson for additional Electrics support on this production

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