



W E L C O M E T O

YASUKE

The Black Samurai

I N C O N C E R T

THE MUSIC BEHIND YASUKE



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# Y A S U K E

IN CONCERT

Music by  
BÁLINT VARGA

Japanese Lyrics by  
AZUSA FUJIKURA

English Lyrics by  
JOËL RENÉ SCOVILLE & JOE BARROS

Book by  
BÁLINT VARGA

Starring

ALAN H. GREEN

TOMO WATANABE      HELEN MARLA WHITE

GEN PARTON-SHIN      LILITH MA      RYOKO SETA

Special thanks to

**KAREN DE CHABERT**

**GREG KANYICSKA**

for their incredibly generous contribution

For more information: [balint.varga.bsmg@gmail.com](mailto:balint.varga.bsmg@gmail.com)

[balintvarga.com/yasuke](http://balintvarga.com/yasuke)

The concert is held on October 15, 2023 at Smash Studios, New York City



# YASUKE

IN CONCERT

## ABOUT THE SHOW

Yasuke, The Black Samurai is a theater experience incorporating Japanese folk theater, dance, songs, fight-choreography, taiko drumming, and film score music; all together in a dramatic story setting.

## THE STORY

Yasuke - The Black Samurai is an awe-inspiring tale of true events that unfolds in the 16th Century of Feudal Japan. It recounts the journey of Yasuke, an African man uprooted from his native land of Mozambique, only to be brought to Japan, where he is bestowed with respect in a society known for its discipline and moral codes.

In Japan, he discovers the Samurai culture where the way of living life carries the utmost significance. Although cultural differences create myriad conflicts for Yasuke at first, the chasm starts slowly fading away as he recognizes his true potential in a world where men treat each other with honor.

Music and Book by BÁLINT VARGA

Japanese Lyrics by AZUSA FUJIKURA

English Lyrics by JOËL RENÉ SCOVILLE & JOE BARROS

Additional Poems by PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

(public domain poems)

ORCHESTRATED AND CONDUCTED BY BÁLINT VARGA

For more information: [balintvarga.com/yasuke](http://balintvarga.com/yasuke)

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Joe Barros / Joël René Scoville*

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# MUSICAL NUMBERS

- **A Vision** (*Orchestra*)
- **Shokunin** (*Company*) - English lyrics by Joe Barros / Japanese lyrics by Azusa Fujikura
- **The Riot** (*Orchestra*)
- **Tell Me Why** (*Yasuke*) - Lyrics by Joël René Scovilee
- **Hogi-Uta** (*Company*) - Lyrics by Azusa Fujikura
- **Welcome to Kyoto** (*Orchestra*)
- **Bessekai / A Different World** (*Company*) - Lyrics by Azusa Fujikura
- **Jō Dance** (*Orchestra*)
- **Mitsuhide's Past** (*Orchestra*)
- **The Art of Sweeping** (*Orchestra*)
- **The Joy Of Life** (*Yasuke / Company*) - Lyrics by Azusa Fujikura / Poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar
- **Let The Rumble Begin** (*Orchestra*)
- **Bushidō** (*Yasuke*) - Original Lyrics by Azusa Fujikura (English translation by Claire Kazami Marshall )
- **Sword Dance** (*Orchestra*)
- **Being A Samurai** (*Amaterasu, Orchestra*)
- **Yasuke's Visit** (*Orchestra*)
- **Have Faith** (*Amaterasu*) - Lyrics by Joe Barros
- **Where The Ocean Meets The Sky** (*Yasuke / Kuendelea*) - Lyrics by Joe Barros
- **The Assassin** (*Orchestra*)
- **A Different World reprise** (*Uzume / Company*) - Lyrics by Azusa Fujikura
- **Retribution** (*Orchestra*)
- **Finale** (*Orchestra*)

*Running time is 65 min with no intermission*



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## Cast & Creatives



**ALAN H. GREEN** (Yasuke) Broadway: *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory*, *School Of Rock*, *Sister Act*, *Plan On!*. Original Cast Albums include his Broadway shows as well as: *Broadway Bounty Hunter*, *Freaky Friday*, and *Carols For A Cure*. First National Tours: *25th Annual...Spelling Bee*, *Swing!*, *Smokey Joe's Cafe*. International: *Miss Saigon* (sung in German). Recent Regional: *Griswold's Broadway Vacation-5th Ave Seattle*, *The Karate Kid-Stages St Louis*, *A.D.16-Olney Theater*. TV: *Almost Family*, *Unforgettable*, *Murphy Brown*, *30 Rock*, *Peter Pan Live!*, *Law And Order SVU*, *Guiding Light*, and lots of National Commercials. Awards: Outstanding Lead Actor in a Musical (Berkie), Best Performer in a Streamed Musical (BroadwayWorld). BA in Vocal Performance - Rice University. Board Member and Associate Artist - Barrington Stage Company. Deacon -Metro Baptist Church in Hells Kitchen, NYC. But of all his roles his favorite is definitely that of Uncle to his twin nephews Aaron and Alan. IG: @alanhgreen



**TOMO WATANABE** (Amaterasu) is originally from Japan and is a 2014 graduate of AMDA. Her previous credits include Regional: *Into the Woods* (Little Red Ridinghood), *Miss Saigon* (Gigi); Off-Broadway: *The Little Mermaid* (Ensemble), *A Christmas Carol* (Peter), and *Alice in Wonderland* (Dodo Bird). When she is not on stage she is most likely teaching musical theatre to American and international students!  
IG: tomowatanabe.



**HELEN MARLA WHITE** (Kuendelea) Excited to join the cast of *The Black Samurai*. She was recently in *Bayard Rustin Inside Ashland* at Peoples Light Theatre, *Dreaming Zenzile* at Emerson Paramount Center, Appeared at Minton's Playhouse with a Solo Show, *Take Me to the World* Concert with Tituss Burgess at Carnegie Hall, and *Christmas Tour with Idina Menzel*. Other New York Credits include Off-Broadway *Sistas the Musical* at St. Lukes's theatre and *The First Noel* at the Apollo Theatre. She has worked regionally at Theatre by the Sea and SurfFlight Theatre in *Ain't Misbehavin*. *Light it Up* Musical at Cleveland Playhouse, and *Spiritual Uprising* at People's Light Theatre. She traveled all across the world performing with several artists as well on Royal Caribbean as the Main Female Vocalist. She continues to pursue her career as an actor/performer. Prv 3:5-6, Matt 6:33--34 Gal 5:22-25



**RYOKO SETA** (Uzume) is a native of Yokohama, Japan. She is an accomplished singer, actor, and dancer. Ryoko received a scholarship award from the London Royal Ballet School when she was 13 years old and still stands as the award's youngest recipient. She also has a master's license for Japanese Traditional Dance (Natori). Her first professional role in a U.S. production was as an airport desk agent in Gus Van Sant's film *Sea of Trees*. (Released on April 29th, 2016 in Japan and August 26th, 2016 in The U.S.) She is a graduate of the Berklee College of Music with a Bachelor's degree in Music Business and Management. She has been a proud member of SAG-AFTRA since 2014. Ryoko truly appreciates the love and support of her family and friends. ryokoseta.com





**GEN PARTON-SHIN** (Mitsuhide) Gen (pronounced with a hard “g”) was born in London, raised in England, Japan, and Korea. Gen made his debut in the Japanese musical theatre scene before coming to the US, starring in the Official Japanese cast of *RENT* (Angel), *Next to Normal* (Gabe), *Rocky Horror Show* (Rocky), *Dracula* (Jonathan), *Bare* (Jason), *The Last Five Years* (in concert) and *Mitsuko* etc. US credits include *Miss Saigon* (Thuy), *Monte Cristo* (Benedetto), *167 Tongues* (NYIT nomination) and *The History Boys* (Akthar), as well as numerous readings and workshops including *Other World*, *Poupelle of Chimney Town*, *Tiananmen* and *Kpop*. Gen has also been seen performing as a singer at venues such as *54 Below* (Hold On, the musical), *Joe’s Pub* (Seoul of Bway), *Sony Hall* (8-Bit Big Band). Gen can be seen as a series regular in the critically acclaimed Japanese indie drama “*Hodo Buzz*” and as a guest star in *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*. Aside from acting, Gen is passionate about his work as a lyrical translator, and has created the official Japanese translations for “35MM:A Musical Exhibition”, and subtitles for the filmed version of *Allegiance* the musical." @genpartonshin"



**LILITH MA** (Narration) (they/them) is a New York-based actor and singer. Credits include *I Migration* (Falconworks Theater Company), *Hypatia and the Heathens: A Musical Bacchanalia* (Caveat), *Dark Down Deep* (The Dare Tactic), *Medea* (Columbia Lenfest Center for the Arts), *Avenue Q* (Muhlenberg Summer Music Theatre), and *Hair* (Centenary Stage Company). Muhlenberg College graduate: Theatre, Music, and Asian Studies. Lily is also an organizer in the movement against displacement in Chinatown and is fighting to abolish the 24-hour workday. #boycottmoca #nomore24



**AZUSA FUJIKURA** (Japanese Lyrics) is a writer, and director. After studying Japanese Literature at Keio University, she went to Toho Musical Academy to study acting, singing, and dancing. She has created original musicals including *Kamuy-Rera* (The Winds of God in Ainu), *Sign*, *Propaganda cockpit*, *The Legend of Hitoka*, *Ranger*, *Le Soleil*, *Is Everything Alright?* and *The Glowing Kites* in Japan.

Other credits include *Ordinary Days*, *Little Women*, *The Wedding Singer*, *I Love You You're Perfect Now You Change*, *Memphis*, *Godspell*, *The 25th...SPelling Bee*, *A Night With Janis Joplin* (Director).



**JOËL RENÉ SCOVILLE** (English Lyrics) Joël is a Black Mormon (yes, really), actress, writer, librettist and lyricist. Her musical *2&1: A Harlem Musical with Loose Morals* with Loose Morals with composer Jenna Byrd, centering queer Black women during the Harlem Renaissance, is a 2023 Eugene O’Neill Finalist and a 2022 Relentless Musical Award Honorable Mention. Her musical *Flophouse* with co-writer Justin Anthony Long and composer Joanna Burns is a 2023 Rhinebeck Finalist. She wrote and starred in the web series, *Crazy with a K!* and is a co-writer on an upcoming series for *AfterShock Comics*. She is a member of the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop, The Dramatists Guild of America, Actors’ Equity Association and a founding member of the *UNTITLED Musical Writers Group*. She loves *Agatha Christie*, *Batman* and *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*; much to the chagrin of her three sons and her husband...who she remarried...for the third time. (Yes, really.)





**JOE BARROS** (English Lyrics) (he/him) is an award-winning queer director, choreographer and writer working on Broadway, Off-Broadway, regionally, internationally, and in film. Artistic Director: New York Theatre Barn, an inclusive home for original culture-shifting musicals during incubation. New York: the *Broadway revival of Gigi* with Vanessa Hudgens and Victoria Clark (associate director), Ry Armstrong's *Neglect*, *The Evolution of Mann*, *Bastard Jones*, *Cagney* (associate dir.). Nat'l Tours/Regional/Int'l: *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, *Beaches* with Shoshana Bean (Chicago's Drury Lane, associate dir.), *Aida* (Singapore), *Breathe* (with Matt Doyle and Max Clayton), plus *Goodspeed*, DC's Signature Theatre, Broadway in Chicago, The Phoenix Theatre Company (Keynote Speaker, 2022 Festival of New American Theatre), Bucks County Playhouse, Kaixinmahua (Shanghai). Recent Film: *The Girl Who Left Home* with Paolo Montalban. Barros is co-writing *Buried with Michael Ferrara* - a musical about Ruth Coker Burks that excavates an untold chapter of the AIDS crisis and a muted time in queer history (Barn on Fire Residency on Fire Island, Jerry Mitchell mentor), and the musical *Winner* with Nico Juber. [www.joebarrros.com](http://www.joebarrros.com)



**BÁLINT VARGA** (Music & Book) Originally from Budapest, Hungary, Balint is a NY-based writer, composer, and immigration advocate. He started playing piano at age 4. At 17, he moved to Paris where he started his first professional work at the Bastille Opera House. First, he graduated from Béla Bartók Conservatory, later he moved to America and studied composition and conducting at Berklee College of Music. His work has been performed at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Birdland, Symphony Hall, 54 Below. He received his US Green Card for extraordinary abilities based on his achievements in his field. Notable writing credits: *d'ILLUSION*, *Hypatia and the Heathens*, *Reflections*, *Gailley and the Tale of the Fate Keeper*, *Where We Rush To Disappear*, *Why Don't I Have A Girlfriend?* He's the recipient of the Charles Mayer Grant, a Jonathan Larson Award finalist, and a proud member of the Dramatists Guild and the Lehman Engel BMI Advanced Musical Theatre Workshop. Balint also collaborated on Broadway workshops such as *Elton John's Tammy Faye*, *Jim Steinman's Bat Out Of Hell*, *Mariah Carey's Christmas Show*, and *Forest Whitaker's Benefit Concert*. He wrote special choral arrangements for Josh Groban. [BALINTVARGA.COM](http://BALINTVARGA.COM)



**PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR** (Poems) (1872-1906) was a groundbreaking African-American poet, novelist, and playwright whose work left an indelible mark on American literature. Born in Dayton, Ohio, he was the son of formerly enslaved parents. Dunbar's poetry, characterized by its poignant themes and mastery of dialect, offered a unique glimpse into the African-American experience during the late 19th century. His notable works include "Lyrics of a Lowly Life" (1896) and "Oak and Ivy" (1893), which showcased his lyrical talents and social commentary. Dunbar's writing skillfully navigated both standard English and African-American Vernacular English, earning him recognition as one of the first African-American poets to reach a broad, racially diverse audience. Despite a tragically short life, Paul Laurence Dunbar's literary contributions continue to inspire readers and scholars, highlighting the enduring power of his words in addressing issues of race, identity, and human dignity.



# THE ORCHESTRA

Violin **KIHO YUTAKA**

Violoncello **ZACHARY BROWN**

Shamisen **SUMIE KANEKO**

Reed **JOSH PLOTNER**

French Horn **ALINA ECKERSLEY**

Keyboard 1 **SHAWN GOUGH**

Keyboard 2 **ASHER DENBURG**

Bass **DAVE D'ARANJO**

Guitars **MARC MALSEGNA**

Taiko / Nohkan **FUMI TANAKADATE**

Drums / Percussion **ANTHONY DI BARTOLO**



**KIHO YUTAKA** (VIOLIN) is a New York based Violinist/Composer originally from Yokohama, Japan. Kiho's violinist debut in NY was at the off-Broadway theater, The Gallery Players, in October of 2012. Since then, she has performed at notable venues such as PlayStation Theater, Beacon Theater, John F. Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, among other venues in the tri-state area with various artists. She also worked as a copyist under Bill Elliott, 24 Hour Musical, and on the upcoming production of CATS (PAC). Kiho was also the contractor/violinist at Fukushima Night in NY, held at One World Observatory on May 30, 2018. The Governor of Fukushima Prefecture, to dispel the bad reputation of Fukushima products since the devastation of 2011 Tōhoku Earthquake and Nuclear Power Plant disaster, hosted this event and invited local Fukushima industries to promote their safe and high quality products. Kiho strives to bring people and culture together for the music industry and beyond.



**ZACHARY BROWN** (CELLO) is a contemporary cellist based out of New York City, and born in Far Rockaway, Queens. With degrees in Cello Performance and a Concentration in Jazz studies from Ithaca College and Purchase Conservatory, Zach is a cellist that studies and performs both classical repertoire, as well as Jazz and contemporary art forms. Bridging the gap in musical genres, he focuses on his main project Westbound Situation, a string quartet that performs a fusion of Jazz, classical, and bluegrass into one, all original material. He has been cello and chamber music faculty at the Usdan Performing Arts Camp, The Larchmont Music Academy, and Riverfolk Music and Arts. He has performed as a guest soloist for both the Mansfield and Marquette symphony orchestras, as well as guest artist at The New Directions Cello Festival.





**SUMIE KANEKO (SHAMISEN)** is a Japanese koto and shamisen player and vocal artist. In 2002 after studying Japanese traditional music at Tokyo National University of the Arts, Sumie moved to Boston and studied Jazz vocal at Berklee College of Music. She has performed at such prestigious venues as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Blue Note NY, TED Talk, Google, Getty Center, Boston Ballet, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She is renowned for her ability to collaborate with a diverse array of visionary international artists and writers: Pulitzer Winner Paula Vogel, composer Evan Ziporyn, taiko artist Kenny Endo and Kaoru Watanabe, and American Ballet Theater principal dancers Isabella Boylston and James Whiteside. Sumie tours overseas as a cultural exchange artist. She has performed in over 20 countries. Also as an educator, she has lectured at large academic scenes including Harvard University, Princeton University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Texas A&M University, and Aoyama Gakuin University as a renowned international artist.



**JOSH PLOTNER (REED)** is a producer, recording artist, composer, arranger, and saxophonist/woodwind multi-instrumentalist with a collection of over 150 instruments. He has a diverse musical background touching almost every single genre, including many genres of non-western music. Josh has played on multiple Grammy, Tony, and Oscar-nominated projects, done orchestration for Heineken and Louis Vuitton commercials, orchestration for pop trio AJR, is a recurring guest lecturer at NYU, and has a platinum record as a hip-hop producer.

He has worked on everything from cabarets to Carnegie Hall, and Broadway, has been featured on dozens of film, television, video games and commercial scores, and much more. Josh currently lives in New York and performs on Broadway, in the GRAMMY award-winning 8-Bit Big Band, and for many solo artists. He graduated from Berklee College of Music Magna Cum Laude with a double major Performance and Jazz Composition. <https://joshplotnermusic.com> | @joshplotner



**ALINA ECKERSLEY (FRENCH HORN)** is a freelance musician in New York City who has experience in a variety of musical styles and experience. Eckersley has played in various ensembles in the city with The Chelsea Symphony, The Broadway Sinfonietta, the Washington Square Music Festival, and more. A recent highlight in her career was subbing for Spider-Man: Into the Spider-verse national tour. She is a member of the Ad Sonus Quintet, a woodwind quintet based out of Inwood. Being a native of Las Vegas, she has played with the Las Vegas Philharmonic, The Nevada Ballet Theatre, and The Las Vegas Opera Company. Eckersley holds degrees from the University of Nevada Las Vegas, and Brigham Young University, and has recently graduated with her DMA from the Manhattan School of Music where she studied with David Jolley.



**MARC MALSEGNA (GUITARS)** is a professional guitarist and music director based in NYC. He has worked with artists such as K-pop sensation Aespa, Mimi Webb, Sofia Carson, Loren Gray, Rayvon Owen, Derek Hough, and many others. Including performances at Gov Ball, MTV, iheart Radio, Late-night/morning shows, etc.. He also plays guitar on Broadway shows such as the Michael Jackson Musical, & Juliet to name a few. Locally you can find him playing gigs all around the city at various clubs with artists.





**SHAWN GOUGH** (KEYBOARD 1) is thrilled to join these amazing artists of YASUKE! Broadway: Billy Elliot, Violet, The Light In The Piazza, Nice Work If You Can Get It, Sunday In The Park With George, Into The Woods, The Frogs, Kiss Me Kate, The Music Man, Aladdin, Les Miserables, Dames At Sea, Chicago, Big Fish, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, Annie Get Your Gun, The Lion King, Mary Poppins, The Drowsy Chaperone. Off-Broadway: Carmen Jones, Cagney, Shockheaded Peter, A Man of No Importance, tick...tick...BOOM! TV: NBC's The Sound Of Music Live, The Kennedy Center Honors, 54th Presidential Inauguration. Regional: New York Pops at Carnegie Hall, Radio City Christmas Spectacular starring the Rockettes. Artists include Maya Angelou, Carol Channing, Marvin Hamlisch, Jerry Herman, Whitney Houston, Susan Lucci, Liza Minnelli, Barbra Streisand, Stephen Sondheim and Stevie Wonder. Upcoming includes Music Director/Conductor of Little Dancer by Aherns & Flaherty, and direction by Susan Stroman.



**FUMI TANAKADATE** (TAIKO DRUMS) is a versatile music artist, specializing in piano, Japanese percussion, and bamboo flute, who has a unique combination of expertise in European Classical music and a background in traditional folk dance and music from Japan. Fumi studied and worked extensively with Kaoru Watanabe, performing at such venues as Joe's Pub, National Sawdust, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, BAM, Pioneer Works, the Metropolitan Museum of Arts, the Rubin Museum of Art, Super Deluxe in Tokyo, National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts in Taiwan and at PASIC, Percussive Arts Society International Convention. She has also collaborated and worked with Shane Shanahan of the Silkroad Ensemble, Brooklyn Raga Massive, Chieko Kojima and Yuta Sumiyoshi of KODO, Alicia Hall Moran, Sonoko Kawahara (theatre director), Parijat Desai (dancer), Garrett Fisher (composer), Satoshi Takeishi, Kiyohiko Semba, Ying-Chieh Wang, and Woonjung Sim. Fumi currently teaches at Wesleyan University and serves as the primary instructor at Kaoru Watanabe Taiko Center, giving classes and educational workshops at local schools and colleges. She has also taught at the North American Taiko Conference, the East Coast Taiko Conference, and the European Taiko Conference. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Earth and Environmental Sciences from Wesleyan University and a Master of Music degree in piano performance from Manhattan School of Music.



**DAVE D'ARANJO** (BASS), a bassist and producer from Singapore, holds three degrees from Berklee College of Music and is an alumnus of The Bass Collective in NYC. He's a versatile musician who has traveled the world exploring various musical styles. In 2008, he was featured in an instructional DVD by five-time Grammy Award-winning bassist Victor Wooten. As the founder of Interrobang Records, he championed jazz and world music from recent Berklee graduates. Dave is also an ASCAP member and a voting Recording Academy member, with attendance at Grammy Awards in 2014, 2017, and 2018. Dave made his Broadway debut in "Hamilton" in 2022 and continues to sub on electric, upright, and synth bass at the Richard Rodgers Theatre. His Off-Broadway debut was in 2020, contributing to the original musical "The Perfect Fit." In 2017, he played bass in the 50th-anniversary celebration of "Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical." Dave also has an extensive background playing bass in various cabarets, performances, recordings, and regional theater productions.





**ANTHONY DI BARTOLO** (DRUMS / PERCUSSION) is a New Jersey-based percussionist, composer, and sound artist. Fusing his experiences playing classical, metal, free jazz, and electronic music he has created a unique musical vocabulary that has made him an in-demand musician around the world. Anthony has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician at acclaimed venues such as Symphony Space, Lincoln Center, Madrid's Reina Sofia, and Basel's Gare du Nord, as well as at the Zeltsman International Marimba Festival and Philadelphia Fringe Festival. He is featured on recordings for the Innova and Mulatta labels as well as several independent artists and ensemble recordings. Anthony is also the Principal Percussionist with the Allentown Symphony Orchestra, a position he won in 2022, and performs regularly with a variety of other classical music groups such as Orchestra 2001, Bay Atlantic Symphony, Princeton Pro Musica, Garden State Philharmonic, and more.



**ASHER DENBURG** (KEYBOARD 2) is a versatile and in-demand musician whose work has been heralded worldwide. A mainstay in New York's theatre scene, Asher leads residencies at both Green Room 42 (At This Performance; Pretty, Witty, & Gay Cabaret) and Chelsea Music Hall (Sweet! w/Seth Herzog). He is currently touring with comedian Jeff Ross, writing original songs for Ross' new one-man show, Take A Banana For The Ride. Selected credits as music director: National tours of Spamilton, Cirque Musica Holiday Spectacular; Never Sleep Alone (Virgin Voyages, inaugural company); Breath and Imagination (Lyric Stage Company of Boston/Front Porch Arts Collective, IRNE nomination for Best Music Director). Selected orchestrations & and arrangements: Bachelors of Broadway; Never Sleep Alone; Shanghai Sonatas in concert (Wallis Annenberg, world premiere); Fable (NYMF, world premiere); ghostwriter for the Boston Pops, Chicago Symphony. Concerts: Jackie Burns, Kennedy Caughell, Ali Ewoldt, Gavin Lee, Jelani Remy, Sis Thee Doll, and many more





## THE PLACE

FEUDAL JAPAN (CA. 1580)

五右衛門

## ABOUT THE CHARACTERS

**YASUKE** (a.k.a. The Black Samurai): originally named SIWAZURI (fictional name), a robust African man who arrived from Mozambique in Japan on a ship of an Italian Jesuit missionary after his wife was killed. Later, he is offered to join the Japanese daimyō Oda Nobunaga's samurai army. Having lost faith in humanity, Nobunaga gives him a new purpose in life.

**ODA NOBUNAGA:** “The Great Unifier,” a Japanese lord who launched a war against other daimyōs (lords) to unify Feudal Japan. Nobunaga's rule was noted for innovative military tactics, fostering free trade, and Japan's civil government reforms. He became Yasuke's mentor and friend.

**AMATERASU:** Japanese sun goddess, she is the Queen of Heaven, the kami, and creation itself. Amaterasu's primary role is that of the sun goddess. In this position, she not only serves as the literal rising sun that illuminates all things but also provides nourishment to all living creatures and marks the orderly movement of day into night.

**KUENDELEA:** (fictional character), Yasuke's wife from Mozambique, killed in a riot between two tribes before Yasuke left his home. Later, she materializes as a ghost and in the form of Yasuke's consciousness.

**ALESSANDRO VALIGNANO:** an Italian Jesuit missionary who spread the love of Jesus Christ and helped people seek God in all things. He brought Yasuke to Japan. Later, Valignano and Yasuke became close friends too.

**AKECHI MITSUhide:** a successful general under Nobunaga during his war of political unification in Japan. Later, Mitsuhide rebelled against Nobunaga in the Honnō-ji incident and forced the unprotected Nobunaga to commit seppuku (ritual suicide) in Kyoto.

**AME-NO-UZUME:** Japanese goddess of the dawn, known for her merriment and humor. Credited with inventing the performing arts, her spontaneous dancing once saved the world from eternal darkness. Traditional stories describe Ame-no-Uzume as wearing loose or revealing clothing, which other kami in these stories find comical, but Ame-no-Uzume is joyful and unconcerned. She's placed in the service of Amaterasu.

**SUSANOO-NO-MIKOTO:** Younger brother of Amaterasu. The Storm God who causes chaos and destruction. In this story, he materializes in the form of ray-of-light.

*Voice only!*

## ADDITIONAL CHARACTERS

People of the street in Japan, Yasuke's stunt man, puppeteers, dancers, samurais



