

# British Theatre Guide

News, reviews, features and podcast on theatre across the UK

## Aladdin

David Bintley

National Ballet of Japan

New National Theatre Tokyo

20 September 2024–20 March 2025

*Aladdin* has been rubbing his lamp on the stage since 1788 and is the most popular of all the British pantomimes. Sir David Bintley's ballet, which premièred in Tokyo in 2008, has nothing whatsoever to do with either pantomime slapstick or Walt Disney schmaltz.

His breezy romantic ballet, to melodious music by Carl Davis, conducted by Paul Murphy, gives the Arabian Nights a distinctive Chinese flavour by introducing a Chinese carnival lion and a Chinese dragon. The ballet is extremely popular in Japan, and this is its third revival there.

Aladdin (Yudai Fukuoka) is an agile, mischievous street boy who falls in love with a princess (Ayako Ono). They have some nice duets and lifts, and she regularly leaps into his arms.

Takafumi Watanabe, his face and body coated in blue, has a spectacular rocket-like launch for his entrance as The Djinn of the Lamp. He and his entourage have bags of energy.

The treasure cave of dancing jewels—onyx and pearls, gold and silver, sapphire, emeralds, rubies and diamonds—is a series of classical divertissements and one of the production's high spots. Yuri Kimura and Shun Izawa as the rubies and Kasumi Okuda as the solo diamond stand out.

The harem bathhouse scene, with the girls in towels and Aladdin, a peeping tom, liable to have his head chopped off if he is caught, has no eroticism.

Bintley has said his *Aladdin* is the least deep ballet he has ever made. The lavish, pretty, colourful spectacle, designed by David Bird with costumes by Sue Blane, is ideal for family audiences.

David Bintley's *Aladdin* can be viewed free on the OperaVision channel.

**Reviewer:** [Robert Tanitch](#)