

# TANIA ARAZI COAMBS

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## SELECTED DIRECTING: OPERA, MUSICAL THEATRE, & PLAYS

*Arsenic and Old Lace*

*Banned Stories* (film documentary)

*Stoplight* (by Tania Arazi Coambs)

*Farinelli and the King*

*The Tender Land*

*Happy Hour!* (world premiere of opera by Roger Zahab)

*Trouble in Tahiti*

*Catatumbo*

*Stop Kiss*

*Roméo et Juliette*

*Brundibár*

*The Informer*

*Feeding the Moon Fish*

*Don Giovanni*

FORTHCOMING, March 2023: CU Theatre Co.

FORTHCOMING: (*Co-Director*) online

The Station Theatre

Celebration Company at the Station Theatre

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Co-Director) Opera Theatre of Pittsburgh

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

University of Illinois Opera Studio

Armory Free Theatre

Southern Illinois Music Festival

Central Illinois Children's Choir

Moe Laboratory Theater

Moe Laboratory Theater

(Co-Director) Southern Illinois Music Festival

## ASSISTANT DIRECTING

*The Merry Widow* (Director: Mo Zhou)

*Blithe Spirit* (Director: Peter Davis)

*I Pagliacci* (Director: James Marvel)

*Lily* (Director: James Marvel)

*The Piano Lesson* (Director: Robert Homer-Drummond)

Opera Theater of Pittsburgh

Krannert Center for the Performing Arts

New Opera St. Louis

DiCapo Opera

Harold and Jean Miner Theater

## DIRECTING & PRODUCTION AWARDS

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner of The American Prize *Opera Production* Competition for Aaron Copland's *The Tender Land* at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2015**  
“... a terrific production with an effective set, attractive period costumes, and strong staging. The story-telling aspect of the production was well conceived with committed performances from this young cast ... It was always refreshing to see ‘natural’ and ‘unforced’ acting. This production is thoroughly entertaining!”
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Place Winner of The American Prize *Stage Director* Competition for Aaron Copland's *The Tender Land* at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2015**  
“... mounted by a director of heart, skill and imagination. Ms. Coambs succeeds very well here, the production supported by an attractive set, lovingly lit, but especially by a strong cast that is able to realistically and naturally present the situations of the story. The tension between Laurie, who wants to leave to see the wider world, and the drifter Martin, who desires to settle down, is made real and believable—with not the hint of melodrama or overacting ... making a solid case for this truly ‘American’ opera ... especially when Copland's gentle message is handled with as much evident devotion as it is here.”

## SELECT MUSICAL THEATRE, OPERA, AND THEATRE

Mrs. Lovett	<i>Sweeney Todd</i>	FORTHCOMING, April 2023: Parkland Theatre
Aldonza	<i>Man of La Mancha</i>	Illinois Opera Theater
Aline	<i>The Sorcerer</i>	Pittsburgh Savoyards
Annie	<i>The Game of Love</i>	Station Theatre
Arsena	<i>Der Zigeunerbaron</i>	Amadeus Opern Ensemble
Ben's Mom	<i>The Goblins and the Gravedigger</i>	Prairie Theatrical Ensemble (World Premiere)
Cookie	<i>Talk Opera</i>	Marjorie Lawrence Opera Theatre
Dr. Vivian Watson	<i>Preemptive</i>	African Lives Tour, World Premiere (Barbados, London, Nigeria)
Elizabeth	<i>The Christians</i>	Station Theater
Edith	<i>The Pirates of Penzance</i>	Allerton Barn Festival
Francesca	<i>The Bridges of Madison County</i>	Danville Light Opera
Gretel	<i>Hänsel und Gretel</i>	Marjorie Lawrence Opera Theatre
Kate	<i>Human Terrain</i>	Heartland Theatre
Lauretta	<i>Gianni Schicchi</i>	Opera Venezuela
Linfea	<i>La Calisto</i>	Illinois Opera Theater
Mother	<i>Scarlett Lines</i>	Penny Dreadful Players, World Premiere
Mrs. Webb	<i>Our Town</i>	McLeod Theatre
Ruth Kelley, R.N.	<i>Harvey</i>	Harold and Jean Miner Theater
Sacajawea	<i>The Prairie Dog That Met the President</i>	Marjorie Lawrence Opera Theatre
Susanna	<i>Le Nozze di Figaro</i>	Amadeus Opern Ensemble
Woman	<i>Homo Homarus</i>	University of Illinois
Wren	<i>A Body of Water</i>	Station Theater

## SELECT CONCERT WORK

- Soloist with the Danville Symphony Orchestra on "A Night in Paris" concert, singing "Youkali," "La vie en rose," as well as a 45-minute pre-concert soiree with my jazz trio featuring jazz and cabaret music of France — (Historic Fischer Theatre)
- Soloist with the Danville Symphony Orchestra on 'Stars of the Silver Screen' concert, singing "When You Believe" from *Prince of Egypt* — (Historic Fischer Theatre)
- Soloist for The Auschwitz Experience in the Art of Prisoners, Hillel (April 2022)
- Soprano Soloist for Monteverdi's *1640/1641 Gloria*, with chamber orchestra (December 2021)
- Soloist on "The Silk Road & World Music" concert at Spurlock Museum—singing traditional Sephardic music of Spain (April 2021)
- Soprano Soloist for Handel's *Messiah*, Opera Quad Cities (December 2018)
- Winner of the 2015 American Prize Friedrich and Virginia Schorr Memorial Award for Art Song/Oratorio
- "Something Wonderful": Concert Featuring Winners of the 2015 American Prize Chicago Music Theater Award (Chicago Symphony Orchestra Hall & Elgin Community College)
- Soloist with the Danville Symphony Orchestra on 'Carmen to Camelot' concert, singing scenes from: *Carmen* (Frasquita), *My Fair Lady* (Eliza), and *Brigadoon* (Fiona) — (Dick Van Dyke Auditorium)

## SPECIAL SKILLS

- Dialects: Cockney, Standard British, Irish, Italian, French, Russian
- Dance: Salsa, Tango, Swing, Ballet, Jazz, Modern
- Instruments: Violin

## DRAMATURGY / NEW PLAY DEVELOPMENT

- *Stoplight*, by Tania Arazi Coombs (Play Reading: Station Theatre, May 13, 2022; World Premiere Performance: Station Theatre, Aug. 11-14)
- *The Kingdom of Dreams, A Tale of Oz* by Kenny Chumbley (Parkland Theatre, 2021)
- *Lily; her life, his music* by Audrey Babcock with music of Kurt Weill (DiCapo Opera, 2009)
- *Theology* (Lincoln Center, 2009)
  - *The Marriage* (M. Mussorgsky)
  - *Rothschild's Violin* (B. Fleischmann)
  - *Heavyweight, or The Pride of the Nation* (E. Krenek)
- *The Deal* by Michael A. Rose (a new play development, Southern Illinois University, 2007)

## PLAYWRIGHT & LIBRETTIST

*Stoplight*, a three-act play in development

*Catatumbo*, an opera with music by Griffin Candey

*Almost Sorry*, a song with music by YoungWoo Yoo

## PRODUCING

- *Stoplight*, a play by Tania Arazi Coombs (Play Reading & Talk-Back, Station Theatre, May 13, 2022)
- *Scenes from Our Past*, a devised theatre piece arranged by Tania Arazi Coombs (Performance Studio, 2019)
- *Into the Woods* by Stephen Sondheim & James Lapine (Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2015)
- *The Tender Land* by Aaron Copland & Horace Everett (Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2014)
- *The Pajama Game* by George Abbott, Richard Adler, & Jerry Ross (Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2014)
- *Trouble in Tahiti* by Leonard Bernstein (Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2013)
- *Signor Deluso* by Thomas Pasatieri (Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2013)
- *Gianni Schicchi* by Giacomo Puccini & Giovacchino Forzano (Opera Venezuela, 2012)
- *Nuit d'Amour: A Recital of Love Arias and Duets* (Opera Venezuela, 2012)
- *Mozart & Friends* (Pasha Mediterranean Cuisine, 2008)
- An Evening of Rarely Performed Opera & Operetta Scenes (Marjorie Lawrence Opera Theater, 2006)
- *Musicale: An Evening of Musical Theater Scenes* (Marjorie Lawrence Opera Theatre, 2004)

## STAGE MANAGEMENT

*Seven* (African Intersections Tour—Barbados, London, Nigeria, 2010)

*Don Pasquale* (New Opera St. Louis, 2009)

*I Pagliacci* (New Opera St. Louis, 2009)

*Lily; her life, his music* (DiCapo Opera, 2009)

*The Elixir of Love* (Southern Illinois Music Festival, 2007)

*Don Pasquale* (Marjorie Lawrence Opera Theatre, 2004)

*The Piano Lesson* (Parkland College Theater, 2002)

*Gypsy* (Cavatina Productions, 1998)

## EDUCATION

- D.M.A. Vocal Performance and Literature, University of Illinois with concentration in Stage Direction
- M.M. Opera/Musical Theater, Southern Illinois University Carbondale with concentration in Stage Direction
- B.M. Vocal Performance, minor in Creative Writing, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

## LANGUAGE SKILLS

Con conversationally Proficient / Upper Intermediate in Spanish and French  
Lower Intermediate in Italian and German

## RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE ARTS

- **Producer/Director of Opera/Music Theater Program & Assistant Professor of Voice**, Department of Music, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA (2013 - 2015)
  - Taught classes in opera, musical theater production, musical theater workshop, and voice.
  - Served as producer for both main stage productions (the Fall opera and Spring musical), stage director of the opera, and music director of the musical.
- **Performance Studio: A Storytelling Playground**, Core Group Member, Urbana, IL (2018 – 2020)
  - Our company's mission was to create a space for the creation of new performance pieces, new and reimagined old works, as well as create a place to explore new theatrical forms and styles via workshops. Our ensemble was committed to stories about the marginalized and about the health of our planet.
- **Premiere Ambassador Acting Coach**, Premiere, Walt Disney World, Swan and Dolphin Resort, Orlando, FL (2015 – 2020)
  - Taught and prepped child actors from around the world for industry auditions (commercial, film, and theater).
- **Voice Instructor**
  - Faculty Instructor at The Conservatory of Central Illinois, Champaign, IL (2015 - Present)
  - Voice Instructor at Illinois Wesleyan University's Klepak Community Music Scholars Program (2021 – 2022)
    - Taught voice lessons to under-privileged youth who wouldn't be able to afford lessons otherwise.
  - Voice Instructor/ Assistant to the Voice Chair, School of Music, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL (2011 – 2013)
  - Voice Instructor, Department of Music, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL (2005 – 2006)
- **Vocal Competition Judging**
  - Adjudicator for Illinois High School Association Solo and Ensemble Competition (Broadlands, IL, 2017-2019)
  - Adjudicator for Illinois Association of Christian Schools Music Competition (Danville, IL, 2013)
- **Music Appreciation Teaching Assistant**, Department of Music, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL (2004 -2005)
  - Responsible for teaching discussion section.

## CONFERENCE AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PRESENTATIONS

### **“Ópera en Español: A Manifesto Towards the Creation of a New Spanish and American Operatic Tradition”**

- NOA (National Opera Association) Conference – “Strengthening the Foundation” Virtual Conference, January 2021

### **“Dissertation Competition: 2020 Winner Tania Arazi Coombs”** [Summary of research from award-winning dissertation]

- NOA (National Opera Association) Conference – “Strengthening the Foundation” Virtual Conference, January 2021

### **“Catán's *Florencia en el Amazonas*. Setting the Stage for Latina/o American Opera”**

[Invited presenter and award-winning paper on the ATHE Theatre History Focus Debut Panel]

- ATHE (Association for Theatre in Higher Education) Conference – “Scene Changes: Performing, Teaching, and Working Through the Transitions,” Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress, Orlando, FL, August 2019

### **“(Re)Defining the Norms: Two Case Studies in the Performance of Latinx Identity in Opera”** [Presenter on “Witnessing Revolutionary Musical Practices: The Ethics and Expectation of Audience at Musical Performance Events” Panel]

- ATHE (Association for Theatre in Higher Education) Conference – “Theatres of Revolution: Performance, Pedagogy, and Protest,” The Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel, Boston, MA, August 2018

### **“Ópera latina en los Estados Unidos” (Latino Opera in the United States)**

- Illini Grupo de Español de Champaign-Urbana, Urbana, IL, February 2018.

### **“Musical Theatre Scenes Featuring Women Composers and Librettists”** [Director]

- Tenth Festival of Women Composers & Librettists, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, February 2014.

### **“*Catatumbo*”** [Lecture-Recital on my opera libretto with composer Griffin Candey]

- Tenth Festival of Women Composers & Librettists, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, February 2014.

### **“*Dr. Zhivago* by Simon, Korie, Powers, & Weller”** [Lecture-Recital with Dr. Sarah Mantel]

- Tenth Festival of Women Composers & Librettists, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, February 2014.

## PUBLICATIONS

- [Forthcoming] “From You, My Song is Born: Towards a New Operatic Tradition,” *The Opera Journal*, 2023.
- [Forthcoming] Chapter contributor to the book anthology, *A World of Contradiction: Culture and Identity in the Roiling of Globalization*. Chapter tentatively entitled, “Gentrification and the Politics of Opera: When Site-Specific Performances Invade Urban Spaces”