

# ANCRAM OPERA HOUSE

Jeffrey Mousseau & Paul Ricciardi  
Directors

**PRESENTS**



## **SUNWATCHER**

**May 27, 28 and 29**

**Tidtaya Sinutoke**  
composer

**Isabella Dawis**  
book & lyrics

**Nana Dakin**  
director



**Council on  
the Arts**

Ancram Opera House 2022 season made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

# SUMMER PLAY LAB

Welcome to the 2022 Summer Play Lab!

In 2020, Ancram Opera House launched the Summer Play Lab residency as a way to support artists of all practices in the creation of new work in uncertain times. The residency program offered creators a space to make theater that felt rewarding and complete, in a time when live performance was not viable. Through open rehearsals, interactive workshops, and talkback events with the artists, the Summer Play Lab residency forged meaningful connections between resident artists and the community.

As we continue to transition back to live theater, the Summer Play Lab residency remains an integral part of AOH's seasonal programming.

We're trying something new this time! Last year the Summer Play Lab supported the creative team of *SUNWATCHER* (Nana Dakin, Isabella Dawis, and Tidtaya Sinutoke) in moving their beautiful new musical forward. Later last summer, we invited writer-performer Celeste Lecesne to initiate their new play, *POOF!*, as part of our acclaimed outdoor progressive performance, *PLEIN AIR PLAYS*. Recognizing that the creation of new work is often an iterative process, one that can extend over months and years before a piece is fully realized, AOH is thrilled to invite these artists back to Ancram as they continue to develop their extraordinary projects.

Central to AOH's mission is the act of telling stories—whether through spoken word, song or other means—as a way for our community to connect and learn. With the Summer Play Lab program—and this special ongoing relationship with these remarkable theater makers—AOH continues to support visionary artists in their creative journeys and invites the community to take part in the process.

Enjoy *SUNWATCHER* and *POOF!*

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Paul". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Jeff Mousseau & Paul Ricciardi  
Directors



## **SUNWATCHER**

**Tidtaya Sinutoke, Isabella Dawis, Nana Dakin,**

An experimental chamber musical inspired by classical Noh theatre, *SUNWATCHER* intertwines the story of two women -- the astronomer and “hidden figure” Hisako Koyama (1916-1997), and the Japanese sun goddess Amaterasu.

Hisako was a self-taught solar observer who drew the sun in painstaking detail every day for 40 years, a landmark achievement that ranks among the likes of Galileo. *SUNWATCHER* celebrates this underrecognized Asian woman in science and her extraordinary dedication to ordinary observation.

In World War II Tokyo, despite the threat of firebombing from the US, Hisako looks through her telescope every day and sketches the spots on the sun’s surface. Her observations lead her to the sun goddess Amaterasu, a powerful deity besieged by her violent brother. Hisako’s experience of war collides with creation mythology, as both goddess and mortal are tested by tragedy and despair.

**The Sunwatcher showing will last about 30 minutes  
followed by a short discussion**

### ***Special Thanks***

National Museum of Nature and Science (Tokyo, Japan), Nautilus Music-Theater (St. Paul, Minnesota, USA), Regional Observatory for the Public (Chachoengsao, Thailand), Prof. Deborah Brevoort, Prof. Richard Emmert, Prof. Thomas Hare, Dr. Hisashi Hayakawa, Dr. Toshihiro Horaguchi, Prof. Martha Johnson, Dr. Delores Knipp, Ben Krywosz, Prof. Huixin Liu, Mayo Miwa, Takashi Nakajima, Jennifer Weir.

## CREATIVE TEAM



**Tidtaya Sinutoke**



**Isabella Dawis**



**Nana Dakin**

## BIOS

**TIDTAYA SINUTOKE** (Composer) Tidtaya Sinutoke (ทิดตยา สินธก) is a Thailand born, NYC-based composer. Composition credits include *HALF THE SKY* (The 5th Avenue Theatre's First Draft Commission & 20/21 Digital Season, Weston-Ghostlight New Musical Award, Rhinebeck Writers Retreat, Richard Rodgers Award finalist); *SUNWATCHER* (The Civilians R&D Group, Weston Playhouse's Songs for Today, Ancram Opera House Play Lab, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater Global Forms Festival); and *DEAR MR. C* (NYFA's City Artist Corps Grants, Polyphone Festival). She was awarded the 2017 Jonathan Larson Grant, the 2020 Billie Burke Ziegfeld Award, the 2021 International Theatremaker Award and the 2021 Fred Ebb Award. Her works have been supported by the American Opera Project, Composer-Librettist Studio at New Dramatists, Yale Institute for Music Theatre, Johnny Mercer Songwriters Project, Johnny Mercer Writers Grove at Goodspeed Musicals, Robert Rauschenberg Residency, EtM Con Edison Composer-in-Residence, MTF's Makers Cohort, and the Kurt Weill Foundation. A proud member of ASCAP, the Dramatists Guild, Maestra, MUSE, and Thai Theatre Foundation. MFA: NYU. [tidtayasinutoke.com](http://tidtayasinutoke.com)

**ISABELLA DAWIS** (Bookwriter/Lyricist) is a Filipina-American playwright and performer. As a librettist and lyricist, she is the recipient of the 2022 Kleban Prize, the 2021 Fred Ebb Award, and the 2020 Weston-Ghostlight New Musical Award. Isabella currently holds a 2021-23 Composers and the Voice Fellowship with the American Opera Project. Her musicals written with composer Tidtaya Sinutoke include *HALF THE SKY* (5th Avenue Theatre Digital Radio Play/First Draft Commission, Rhinebeck Writers Retreat, Theater Mu's New Eyes Festival, Theater Latté Da's NEXT Festival) and *SUNWATCHER* (Civilians' R&D Group, Goodspeed's

Writers Grove, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, Ancram Opera House Play Lab, Tofte Lake Center). Isabella's writing has been supported by the Primary Stages Rockwell Scholarship, the Kurt Weill Foundation's Lotte Lenya Songbook, Musical Theatre Factory, Coalition of Asian American Leaders, and more. B.M. summa cum laude, piano performance, University of Minnesota, with vocal study at New England Conservatory. [isabelladawis.com](http://isabelladawis.com)

**NANA DAKIN** (Director) is a queer Thai-American director of new work, classics and devised performance based in NYC. Her work pursues social equity by examining the way culture is constructed and unsettling dormant biases. Upcoming: *LOST COAST* (The Playwrights Realm INK'D Festival) and *MAMMELEPHANT* (Superhero Clubhouse/122CC). Recent: *PASSAGE* (University of North Carolina School of the Arts), *SORRY/NOT SORRY* (Ars Nova ANT Fest), *SUNWATCHER* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater Global Forms Festival, Ancram Opera House Play Lab, Civilians *FINDINGS* Series), *LOVE LETTER TO A SEED* (Clubbed Thumb Winterworks), *WHITE PEARL* (Royal Court Theatre), an all-women and non-binary production of Shakespeare's *RICHARD III* (Lenfest Center for the Arts). She has developed new work at Ensemble Studio Theatre, NYTW, The Song Collective, The Tank and Columbia University's International Play Reading Festival. MFA Theatre Directing: Columbia University. [www.nanadakin.com](http://www.nanadakin.com)

**Creative Producer/Cultural Consultant**

Ikumi Kuronaga

**Video & Production Designer**

Suzu Sakai

**Audio Mixer**

Megumi Katayama

**Singers**

Gemma Nha (Hisako)

Isabella Dawis (Sun/Chorus)

Francesca Dawis (Sunspot/Chorus)

**Dancers**

Natsuko Hirano (Hisako)

Akiko Aizawa (Sun/Amaterasu)



# Coming up next at AOH!

## REAL PEOPLE REAL STORIES

At Hilltop Barn Roe-Jan Park  
9140 NY State Route 22, Hillsdale

**June 25 - 8pm**

An evening of authentic personal narratives as told by local residents.

Hierba Buena  
Mexican  
Food Truck!

## SUMMER PLAY LAB

At Ancram Opera House 1330 County Route 7

**July 8, 9, 10**

Fri/Sat at 8pm, Sun at 3pm

**POOF!**



At Hilltop Barn Roe-Jan Park  
9140 NY State Route 22, Hillsdale

**July 23 - 8pm**

Featuring Hugh Sheehy's soon-to-be published *Amontillado: There is no purer feeling than a wish for revenge.*

The Bengsons



At The Circa 1799 Barn  
105 Simons Road, Ancramdale

**July 30 - 8pm**

Indie-Folk-Rock sensations, The Bengsons, take to the fields of Ancram. ASL-interpreted.



At Ancram Opera House 1330 County Route 7

**August 5 - 21st**

Thurs/Fri/Sat at 8pm, Sun at 3pm

By Jonas Hassen Khemiri/Translated by Rachel Willson-Broyles. This subversive satire confronts identity, race and language through a whirlwind of interconnected vignettes.



The Angram Opera House presents a mix of contemporary theatre, alternative cabaret, storytelling and community programs. Located in a former grange hall in rural Columbia County, AOH offers a unique opportunity to directly engage, up close with visionary theatre artists at the top of their field, yet rarely seen in our region.

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***Special Thank You to Cherie Schiffer***



## **ABOUT ANCRAM OPERA HOUSE**

AOH offers an annual season of theatre, cabaret, literary, storytelling and community programs.

AOH's theatre productions include *Homebody* (Berkshire Theatre Critics Award for Outstanding Solo Performance); *We're Gonna Die*; *The Brother's Size* (Berkshire Theatre Critics nominations for Outstanding Ensemble and Outstanding Play); the American premiere of *In Praise of Elephants*, *Performing Olana*, an original site-specific piece staged at Olana; *Aunt Leaf*, also presented in Aguascalientes, Mexico and, most recently, reprised as part of Festival Universitario de Teatro, Baja California, Mexico; and the premiere of a new musical adaptation of *The Snow Queen*.

As an incubator of new performance, AOH hosts *Summer Play Lab* which supports the creation of innovative productions by theatre-makers including Heather Christian and Frank Boyd and presents early editions of new, alternative cabaret performances with acclaimed artists such as Taylor Mac in *Holiday Sauce* which went on to NYC's Town Hall and San Francisco's Curran Theater, Diana Oh who was subsequently produced at The Bushwick Starr in Brooklyn, and Stew and longtime collaborator Heidi Rodewald in *Staged Dives* which was then performed at Joe's Pub in NYC.

*Crystal Radio Hour* features new short stories written by Hudson Valley and Tri-state regional writers, including Jo Ann Beard, Wesley Brown, David Rabe and Courtney Maum, that are read by professional actors.

Community engagement is very much at the heart of AOH's programming. *Real People Real Stories* (RPRS), presented twice a year, features local residents sharing personal, authentic narratives. *Local Characters* showcases community members in fun, free-wheeling short form conversations. AOH leads storytelling workshops for young people at the Northeast Community Center and 5th and 6th graders at the Taconic Hills School. For adult learners, AOH also offers free writing and theatre-making workshops each year.

### **AOH MISSION**

Ancram Opera House creates meaningful encounters through the performing arts that forge connection. Through its productions, AOH offers a unique opportunity to directly experience, up close, visionary theatre artists at the top of their field yet seldom seen in the region. AOH's community-based arts and storytelling programs with local residents encourage day-to-day participation in the performing arts. AOH seeks to foster a sense of place for a rural region and contribute to a healthier and happier community.



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List as of May 25, 2022. If we inadvertently omitted your name or there is a correction to it, let us know and please accept our apologies. We are grateful to all of our supporters.



To help bring performances and educational programs to the region, we invite you to become a Friend of the Ancram Opera House. We need the help of individuals like you who understand what it means to have an arts and culture space like this in Ancram.

Friends of Ancram Opera House will be thanked in printed programs, and also receive invitations to special Friends' events. Most importantly, by becoming a Friend of AOH, you join a very special group of individuals ensuring that our activities can benefit all in the area through a range of community arts programs.

Ancram Opera House is a 501c3 nonprofit organization; contributions are tax-deductible as allowed by law. All funds raised go directly to support annual programming costs. Thank you for whatever you can do!

**Yes, I'd like to become a friend of Ancram Opera House!**

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**Please mail to:**

Ancram Opera House 1330 County Route 7, Ancram, NY 12502

**Or, donate online: [www.ancramoperahouse.org](http://www.ancramoperahouse.org)**