

TEIYA KASAHARA 笠原 貞野

Heralded as “an artist with extraordinary things to say” (The Globe and Mail) and “a force of nature” (Toronto Star), Nikkei Canadian settler **Teiya Kasahara 笠原貞野 (they/he)** is a transgender opera singer and interdisciplinary theater creator based in Tkarón:to (colonially known as Toronto, Canada), and the creator-performer of the critically acclaimed operatic play *The Queen In Me*.

Teiya comes from a background of nearly 20 years of singing both traditional and contemporary music across Turtle Island and Europe including the Queen of the Night *Die Zauberflöte*, Cio-Cio San *Madama Butterfly*, and the soprano solos in Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony* and Verdi’s *Requiem*.

Recently featured in the CBC short-doc [OPERA TRANS*FORMED](#), they are a graduate of the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble Studio and the University of British Columbia (B.Mus '07), and is the 2022 recipient of the Joseph S. Stauffer Prize in Music (Canada Council for the Arts). They have performed with companies such as the Canadian Opera Company, Edmonton Opera, Vancouver Opera, Vancouver Symphony, Toronto Symphony, Windsor Symphony, Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, Against the Grain Theatre, Aalto-Essen Musiktheater (Germany), Opéra Toulon, Tapestry Opera, the Luminato Festival, and Theatre Gargantua, among others.

Other vocal highlights in Teiya’s career include performing alongside Polaris Prize and Juno award winner Jeremy Dutcher, performing to a sold out audience the soprano solo Verdi’s *Requiem* with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir at Koerner Hall (2024), and premiering two roles by composer Leslie Uyeda, Solana from *When the Sun Comes Out* (Queer Arts Festival 2013) and the title role of *Silence* (Nuova Vocal Arts 2025).

During the COVID-19 global pandemic (2020-2021), Teiya created their first video series 19 VIDEOS FOR COVID-19 which garnered them the nickname, “the balcony soprano” (Toronto Star), video debuted the iterative *Butterfly Project* (Confluence Concerts, Amplified Opera 2022; Toronto Summer Music 2023), and performed in various digital offerings including: S.O.S. *Sketch Opera Singers* (Tapestry Opera), *Electric Messiah* (Soundstreams), and *Symphonic Pride* (Vancouver Symphony Orchestra).

Within their own artistic practice, Teiya explores the intersections of gender, sexuality, and race using elements of opera, theater, and electronics, as both creator and performer, noted in their first original work *The Queen In Me* which had its world premiere in June 2022 at the Canadian Opera Company (co-produced by the COC, Amplified Opera, Nightwood Theatre, Theatre Gargantua). *The Queen In*

Me was a sold-out success and was nominated for five Dora Mavor Moore awards, and has since toured to the Belfast International Arts Festival where it was praised as “a radical, innovative piece of operatic art” and “a clever, caustically funny, pointed and pertinent solo show.” Teiya’s “robust and undeniably stunning vocals” was especially noted for helping audience members bear witness to “the transcendent potential of the art form” (Intermission Magazine, British Theatre Guide). The show also experienced a nearly sold-out run to critical acclaim at the National Arts Centre in 2023, and will continue to tour in BC in 2025.

Since 2020, Teiya has been collaborator with re:Naissance Opera developing new works including *Imaginarium*, *Inferno* a new hip hop opera by Omari Newton and Amy Lee Lavoie, performed with a live computer animation and dancers in *Eurydice: Into the Underworld*, and has a new work in development called *River Island*, inspired by the life of Yoshiko Kawashima. His latest contribution is co-creator and star of the upcoming neo-classical trans-punk electronic opera, *Eurydice Fragments*, that will premiere in Vancouver in the fall of 2024.

Other projects at various phases of development include [夜が一つの音になる \(yoru ga hitotsu no oto ni naru\), or When the Night Becomes One Sound](#) (Nightwood Theatre’s Write From The Hip Program 20/21), interdisciplinary work called *Little Mis(s)gender* that was first conceived and then workshopped publicly when Teiya was the Artist-in-Residence for the Queer and Trans Research Lab at the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies at the University of Toronto (2021-2022), and exploring opera and kabuki art-forms with Noriko Kim Kobayashi called *Kabuki Get!*

His most recent endeavour, [Project T](#), is a 5-year autobiographical account of Teiya’s professional career and personal life as he documents his transition in real time. The first public performance launched at ChamberQueer’s festival in New York this past June. To follow this journey more, [sign-up here](#) or follow on various social media platforms with the handle @projecttdoc.

Teiya is co-founder (alongside Aria Umezawa, Marion Newman, and Asitha Tennekoon) of [Amplified Opera](#) (AO), an arts collective which seeks to bring Turtle Island/Canada an “injection of [...] creativity & politics of inclusivity” (barczablog) within the opera sector. Currently, AO has produced two sold-out concert series (AMPLIFY Beta in 2019 and AMPLIFY 1.0 in 2022) and was the company in residence at the COC from 2021-2022.

He is also an artistic associate with [Confluence Concerts](#), alongside Suba Sankaran, Patricia O’Callaghan, Andrew Downing and led by artistic director Larry Beckwith, a founding member of Queer AF Collective with Bilal Baig and Sofía Rodríguez, and

most recently the [Kyōdai Arts Collective](#) which was birthed out of the first ever Japanese Canadian Artists Symposium “GEI” held in Victoria, BC in 2022.

They have experience as a consultant, facilitator, and educator in both group and individual vocal and music coaching, and have been on various podcasts, panels, delivered numerous speeches and workshops at organizations including [Beyond Travesti](#), [Classical Queer](#), Association for Opera in Canada National Summit (2019, 2022), the University of Toronto Faculty of Music, (2021-2022), and as the keynote address for Queer History Month at McGill University (2022).

Above all, Teiya loves to sing, loves to share music-making with others, and values tremendously uplifting and working with artists to decolonize the industry and art-form from within.

In his spare time, Teiya enjoys cycling, competitive soccer and weightlifting, and shares a home with their wife Mel and two cats, Moira Rose and Stevie Budd.

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