

TARA FAIRCLOTH
DIRECTOR



Stage director Tara Faircloth’s work has been seen in opera houses around the nation. Critics hailed her *Le nozze di Figaro*, claiming, “Faircloth made her Atlanta Opera debut this night with distinction, creating an unstoppable momentum of manipulation and misunderstandings. This production was so fresh that it had the ability to bridge yet another gap, entertaining the amateur and the opera aficionado alike” (Opera News). She has directed two world-premieres with the Houston Grand Opera’s East+West series (*Your Name Means the Sea* and *The Bricklayer*) and has a thriving career in regional houses such as Wolf Trap Opera, Utah Opera, Tulsa Opera, Atlanta Opera and Opera Colorado (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Rigoletto*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Hänsel & Gretel*, etc.). The baroque repertoire is of special interest to Ms. Faircloth, who made her directorial debut with Ars Lyrica Houston’s production of *Cain: Il primo omicidio* in 2003 and has since designed and directed a number of shows for the company, including Charpentier’s *Actéon* and *La descente d’Orphée aux enfers*. She created productions of *Dido & Aeneas* for Ars Lyrica at the Festival di Musica Barroca in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, and for Mercury Baroque in collaboration with the Dominic Walsh Dance Theater.

The 2018-19 season found Ms. Faircloth working on several new productions: *Il re pastore* with Merola Opera, *Agrippina* with Ars Lyrica Houston, *The Little Prince* with Utah Opera, *The Coronation of Poppea* with Boston Baroque, and returning to some familiar favorites: *Le nozze di Figaro* for Arizona Opera and *Rigoletto* for Austin Opera. Following the previous season, which included new productions of *Gianni Schicchi*, *Pagliacci*, and *Loving Clara*, a mixed media collaboration exploring the life and loves of Clara Schumann with Mercury Orchestra, Ms. Faircloth is clearly in demand as an interpreter for familiar works and those that are more obscure. Engagements for the 2019-2020 season include *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Wolf Trap Opera, *Rigoletto* at Austin Opera, *Le nozze di Figaro* at Hawaii Opera Theatre, and *Emmeline* at Tulsa Opera.

Recent seasons for Ms. Faircloth have included new productions of *Il Ritorno d’Ulisse*, *Eugene Onegin* and Britten’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Additionally, Ms. Faircloth has directed several new productions: *Madama Butterfly* with Wolf Trap Opera, *L’enfant et les sortilèges* with Utah Symphony & Opera, *Don Giovanni* with Arizona Opera, and a reconfiguration of her 2014 Wolf Trap *Carmen* for Arizona Opera.

Ms. Faircloth was formerly a staff director at Lyric Opera of Chicago. She has worked extensively on directing staff with such companies as Houston Grand Opera, Central City Opera, Dallas Opera, Utah Opera, Atlanta Opera and Opera Colorado, and as such, has worked on some of the most complicated operas in the repertoire, assisting international directors and preparing secondary casts comprised of some of the most accomplished performers in our industry. She is increasingly sought out for her skills as an adapter and has created such pieces as the “Mini” *Grapes of Wrath*, *One Enchanted Evening* (an operetta pastiche), and the “Mini” *Magic Flute*; commissions of Opera in the Ozarks and Utah Symphony & Opera. She has a private coaching studio in Houston, Texas, and regularly works with the talented singers in the Houston Grand Opera Studio and Rice University.

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DIRECTING EXPERIENCE

Emmeline	Picker	Tulsa Opera	2020
Le nozze di Figaro	Mozart	Hawaii Opera Theatre	2020
Rigoletto	Verdi	Austin Opera	2019
Ariadne auf Naxos	R. Strauss	Wolf Trap Opera	2019
L'incoronazione di Poppea	Handel	Boston Baroque	2019
Le nozze di Figaro	Mozart	Arizona Opera	2019
The Little Prince	Portman	Utah Opera	2019
Agrippina	Handel	Ars Lyrica Houston	2018
Il re pastore	Mozart	Merola	2018
Pagliacci/Gianni Schicchi	Leoncavallo/Puccini	Utah Opera	2018
Tosca	Puccini	Arizona Opera	2017
Carmen	Bizet	Hawaii Opera Theatre	2017
La rondine	Puccini	Opera Santa Barbara	2017
Hänsel und Gretel	Humperdinck	Peabody Conservatory	2016
Carmen	Bizet	Utah Opera	2016
Le nozze di Figaro	Mozart	Utah Opera	2016
Carmen	Bizet	Arizona Opera	2016
L'enfant et les sortilèges	Ravel	Utah Symphony	2015
La bohème	Puccini	Tulsa Opera	2015
Madama Butterfly	Puccini	Wolf Trap Opera	2015
Le nozze di Figaro	Mozart	Atlanta Opera	2015
Eugene Onegin	Tchaikovsky	Arizona Opera	2015
Fidelio	Beethoven	Madison Opera	2014
Opera Scenes	Various	Rice University	2014
H.M.S. Pinafore	Sullivan	Arizona Opera	2013
Il barbiere di Siviglia	Rossini	Utah Opera	2013
L'elisir d'amore	Donizetti	Martina Arroyo's Prelude to Performance, NYC	2013
La fille du régiment	Donizetti	Tulsa Opera	2012
Acis and Galatea	Handel	Ars Lyrica Houston	2012
Gala Anniversary Performance	Various	Houston Grand Opera	2012
The Rake's Progress	Stravinsky	Wolf Trap Opera	2012
The Bricklayer	Gregory Spears (world premiere)	Houston Grand Opera	2012
Il trovatore	Verdi	Opera Colorado	2012
Mass	Bernstein	St. Cecilia Society, Houston	2012
Rigoletto	Verdi	Utah Opera	2012
Sweeney Todd	Sondheim	Wolf Trap Opera	2011
Il barbiere di Siviglia	Rossini	Tulsa Opera	2011
Your Name Means the Sea	Franghiz Ali-Zadeh (world premiere)	Houston Grand Opera	2011
La Dirindina	Scarlatti	Ars Lyrica Houston	2010
Les plaisirs de Versailles	Charpentier	Ars Lyrica Houston	2010
Mini Magic Flute	Mozart	Utah Opera	2010
Rigoletto	Verdi	Houston Grand Opera (Miller Theater prod)	2009
The Face on the Barroom Floor	Henry Mollicone	Central City Opera	2010, 2009
Hansel & Gretel	Humperdinck	Tulsa Opera	2009
Sāvītri	Holst	Grace Note Series	2009
Noye's Fludde	Britten	Tulsa Opera; Grace Note Series	2009, 2006
Dido & Aeneas	Purcell	Mercury Baroque	2008
Die Zauberflöte	Mozart	Tulsa Opera	2008
Carmen	Bizet	Amarillo Opera	2007
Don Pasquale	Donizetti	Amarillo Opera	2007
La traviata	Verdi	Amarillo Opera	2006

DIRECTING EXPERIENCE cont. . .

Die Fledermaus	J. Strauss	Opera in the Heights	2006
La descente d'Orphée aux enfers	Charpentier	Ars Lyrica Houston	2005
The Little Flute (adaptation)	Mozart	Opera in the Ozarks	2005
Actéon	Charpentier	Ars Lyrica Houston	2005
Cain, overo Il primo omicidio	Scarlatti	Ars Lyrica Houston	2004

EDUCATIONAL TOURS & SECENES PROGRAMS

The Velveteen Rabbit	Mary Carol Warwick	Houston Grand Opera	2011
Romeo & Juliet	Gounod	Houston Grand Opera	2011
A Way Home	Ethan Frederick Greene	Houston Grand Opera	2010
How Nanita Learned to Make Flan	Enrique Gonzalez-Medina	Houston Grand Opera	2009
Sugar and Spice	Various	Utah Opera	2010
Hansel & Gretel	Humperdinck	Tulsa Opera	2009
Opera a la Carte	Various	Central City Opera	2008, 2007
Grand Finale	Various	Merola Opera Program	2006
"Mini" Grapes of Wrath	Ricky Ian Gordon	Utah Opera	2006
One Enchanted Evening	Various	Utah Opera	2006

ASSISTANT DIRECTING EXPERIENCE

Lyric Opera of Chicago	The Sound of Music	Marc Bruni	2014	
	La Clemenza di Tito	Marie Lambert (Sir David McVicar)	2014	
	La traviata	Arin Arbus	2013	
	Hansel & Gretel	Eric Einhorn (Richard Jones)	2012	
	Houston Grand Opera	Ariadne auf Naxos	John Cox	2011
		Lucia di Lammermoor	John Doyle	2011
		Peter Grimes	Neil Armfield	2010
Turn of the Screw		Neil Armfield	2010	
Opera Colorado	Lohengrin	Daniel Slater	2009	
	Rigoletto	Lindy Hume	2009	
	Tosca	Ron Daniels	2010	
Atlanta Opera	Madama Butterfly	Bernard Uzan	2008	
Central City Opera	Orpheus in the Underworld	Marc Astafan	2010	
	Rinaldo	Marc Astafan	2009	
	Susannah	Michael Ehrman	2008	
	La traviata	Justin Way	2007	
Dallas Opera	Tosca	Guilio Chazalettes	2008	
	Macbeth	Bernard Uzan	2007	
	La Rondine	Michael Scarola	2007	
	Il barbiere di Siviglia	Helena Binder	2006	
	Carmen	Marcus Richter	2004	
Utah Opera	Tosca	Stephanie Sundine	2008	
	La traviata	Pam Berlin	2006	
	La Rondine	Michael Scarola	2006	
Merola Opera Program	Il matrimonio segreto	Nicola Bowie	2006	
Mercury Baroque	Acis & Galatea	Dominic Walsh	2006	
	Don Quichotte	Kate Pogue	2005	
	Le Devin du Village	Kate Pogue/Catherine Turocy	2004	

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CRITICAL ACCLAIM

Ariadne auf Naxos – Wolf Trap Opera

"Director Tara Faircloth used the supporting cast to advantage in a production that was at once fairly conventional — set around the time the opera was written, in the early 20th century — and quietly inventive, particularly in its use of the backstage area in Act II, so you could see what was happening on the fictive stage and what was going on behind the scenes."
-Washington Post

"The production directed by Tara Faircloth made clever use of the proscenium area, separated from the orchestra in both acts by a diagonal wall. . . Faircloth's direction, especially the use of small "offstage" areas in the wings in the second act, brilliantly walked the line required by the opera, with slapstick parody that did not get in the way of the exalted moments in the score."
-Washington Classical Review

"Director Tara Faircloth did an excellent job in presenting the story, especially in choreographing the moves of a large number of players on a small stage and bringing each character to life."
-Opera Gene

Le nozze di Figaro – Arizona Opera

"Stage Director Tara Faircloth chose to expand upon the amusing situations in Lorenzo da Ponte's libretto, so that cast members were often running around the stage and pushing each other to the floor while singing the score's florid music. They never missed a beat or a grace note, either. In fact, they occasionally decorated their arias. Faircloth drove playwright Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais's sharpest point home because the servants were always smarter and had higher morals than their noble masters."
-Opera Wire

The Little Prince – Utah Opera

"This is one of the most enjoyable productions I have seen at Utah Opera. Directed by Tara Faircloth, her work with the singers is inspired and her direction is engaging."
-Utah Theatre Bloggers Association

"...Their pure, harmonious, bell-like voices along with how Director Tara Faircloth blocks them throughout the show creates a movement that crescendoed in all the right places for me...Not only are the music, costumes, set, and performances incredible, but the story itself transcends all ages and is most memorable. Come ready for a visual and auditory adventure that explores the soul and opens the heart to understanding what's important."
-Front Row Reviewers Utah

Agrippina – Ars Lyrica Houston

"Stage director Tara Faircloth emphasized comedy, as in Claudio's preening demeanor on his first entrance; Pallante and Narciso's fawning over Agrippina; and the fluttering of the servant Lesbo, played by Eduardo Tercero. But for Handel's serious moments—as in Ottone's big aria,—Faircloth quieted everything down, and the poignant results helped Handel's extraordinary music tell its story."
-Texas Classical Review

"Directed by Tara Faircloth, ably abetted by costumer Macy Lyne and lighting designer Frank Vela (there's no set designer listed in the program), the show is chic and full of pop and awe. Everything glistens: the gowns, the men's spats, the cushions, Nero's tie, the henchmen's vests, the multiple chandeliers. Like one of those big white sets out of a Fred and Ginger RKO fantasy, Agrippina is sleek and clean, an Art Deco dream of silver lamé and sequins. It's lovely to look at."
-Houston Press

Il re pastore – Merola Opera

"Tara Faircloth's staging of K. 208 dispensed with almost all of the "seria" elements (except for honoring the da capo structure of the arias), establishing the element of farce from the very opening gestures and maintaining the comic rhetoric with impeccable timing and prodigious diversity in every element of the plot structure. . . Faircloth's staging of this topsy-turvy unfolding of events was so convincing that it is hard to imagine this opera being given a more serious interpretation." -The Rehearsal Studio

Pagliacci/Gianni Schicchi – Utah Opera

"Under the sure hands of stage director Tara Faircloth and conductor Timothy Myers, these one-act operas spanned a broad emotional range with tight drama, good pacing and imaginative charm"
-Opera News

Tosca – Arizona Opera

"a dramatic production directed by Tara Faircloth. . . Director Faircloth made sure we understood the fine points of her story"
-Opera Today

Carmen – Utah Opera

"Georges Bizet's Carmen opened Utah Opera's new season on October 8, featuring a uniformly young and attractive cast under the direction of Tara Faircloth. Faircloth deftly fleshed out characters' motivation, driving momentum and credibility as the story careened to its fated conclusion. She also injected a modicum of humor that, despite one bit of slapstick in the first act that had soldiers swooning during the "Habanera," briefly relieved mounting tension. The opera, sung in French with English titles, incorporated original spoken dialogue, delivered beautifully by cast members. . ."
-Opera News

"Utah Opera opened its five-performance run of "Carmen" Saturday night with a stirring performance in a sold-out Capitol Theatre. . . As directed by Tara Faircloth, Tucker's portrayal refutes the old trope that "good" equals "boring"; her Micaëla won over Saturday's audience with her polite but firm assertion of her boundaries in the first act and her deft handling of Don José in the third."
-Salt Lake Tribune

Le nozze di Figaro – Utah Opera

"Stage director Tara Faircloth delivered just the right amount of physical comedy while making sure the characters' humanity always rang true. Under her direction, every movement and gesture, even in the choreographed moments, propelled the story naturally."
-Salt Lake Tribune

"With a compelling, organic blend of musical, dramatic and visual elements, Utah Opera's The Marriage of Figaro was an unqualified success. . . the updated concept allowed more accessible examination of Figaro's thematic ideas, including social class entitlement, fidelity and forgiveness, but with enough distance to avoid an air of contemporary preachiness. This balance was expertly achieved by set director Tara Faircloth, whose light touch, dedication to detail and motivation empowered each singer to fully realize their character. Taking a cue from Mozart's brilliant ability to seamlessly expand from duet to septet and beyond, Faircloth involved each cast member in a meaningful way and used this as a spring-board, validating greater ensemble awareness and contribution."
-Opera News

A Midsummer Night's Dream – Boston University

"It is impossible to consider details of production without discussing the ingenious overall design by Tara Faircloth. Her aesthetic featured an organized, and controlled chaos, with highly stylized movement from all characters. The lovers, caught in some time between 1920-1960, use a specified movement vocabulary to execute all actions from wandering through the woods to a four-person brawl, while the faeries engaged in court dance; the rustics' Bergamasque dance was anything but courtly. Though no single moment lost control of these stipulations, the show gave an impression of losing the reins at any moment—which was very exciting to watch."
-Boston Musical Intelligencer

Carmen – Arizona Opera

"Arizona Opera's production of Carmen last evening was a superb conglomeration of sexy, violence and art. . . This production of Carmen, directed by Tara Faircloth, featured a number of interesting staging elements. . . When you go to the opera you expect many things: the stage to feel far removed from reality, the production to be both fantastic and mystical, and to be treated to a spectacle. This was not the experience of going to Carmen, and that was the best part of this interpretation. The characters felt so real and relatable that the audience had no choice but to laugh, cry and empathize with them. The production elements were both modern and rustic, making it easy for the audience to connect on a visceral plane."
-The Daily Wildcat

La bohème – Tulsa Opera

"What invigorates this production is director Tara Faircloth's fine attention to dramatic and comic detail and a cast able to transform these characters into people. . . Faircloth's pacing of the action kept it as naturalistic as an opera can be and did much to play up the comedy in the piece — I have never heard an audience laugh so much at "La Boheme."
-Tulsa World

Le nozze di Figaro – Atlanta Opera

"On April 4 the Atlanta Opera offered an exceedingly fast-paced rendition of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Le Nozze di Figaro at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre. Stage director Tara Faircloth made her AO debut this night with distinction, creating an unstoppable momentum of manipulation and misunderstandings. . . As Mozart and Beaumarchais intended to make a political statement about social class within Le Nozze di Figaro, likewise this production was so fresh that it had the ability to bridge yet another gap, entertaining the amateur and the opera aficionado alike."
-Opera News

Eugene Onegin – Arizona Opera

"Director Tara Faircloth's production spun the narrative extremely cogently, with keen eyes towards detailing the characters in terms of movement, props, and — an increasing rarity in the surtitle era — responsiveness to sung text. . . Zucker, with Spencer Smith, took on Act III's potentially dazzling Polonaise and Écossaise as a virtuoso duo team, whose interaction sometimes reflected the Tatiana/Onegin tensions: an interesting, professional solution to budget restraints, and thus representative of Faircloth's achievement overall. Her fine production merits attention from other regional companies."

- Opera News

Fidelio – Madison Opera

"Faircloth creates dynamic scenes throughout the opera, from Marzeline and Jaquino ducking behind laundry lines to the prisoners' thrill at their first glimpse of warm sunshine....Faircloth's staging matches the look of the production, too, with castle-and-gate sets from Michigan Opera and artful lighting design..."

-Madison.com

"The most important debut was that of director Tara Faircloth; once again Smith and DeMain consistently tap worthy directors who work through the heart of a work. With sets from Michigan Opera Theater (dominated by two receding stone arches on either side of the stage) and costumes from Utah Opera, Faircloth deftly manages to move the principals about effectively. The famous "Prisoners Chorus" at the end of Act I, in which the men see the light of day for the first time in what seems like an eternity, revealed Faircloth's willingness to let the music unfold the action."

-Madison Magazine

Carmen – Wolf Trap Opera

"Director Tara Faircloth kept things moving along briskly, adding bursts of physical activity, especially drinks tossed into faces, for punctuation."

- Opera News

HMS Pinafore – Arizona Opera

Arizona Opera hits funny bone with 'Pinafore'

"briskly staged and brightly sung . . . the entire second act zips along with a relentless comic brio"- AZ Central.com

Fun Loving H.M.S. Pinafore Opens Arizona Opera

"Arizona Opera gave its Phoenix audience a thoroughly joyous rendition of this lighthearted work . . . Director Tara Faircloth devised various types of comic antics for the cast but they never interfered with the singing." - Opera Today

L'elisir d'amore – Prelude to Performance, The Martina Arroyo Foundation

" . . . Tara Faircloth's buoyant direction allowed each performer to play to his or her strengths, and Faircloth drew comedy from characterization."

- Opera News

The Rake's Progress – Wolf Trap Opera

"Wolf Trap...hit one of its highest peaks of the last decade with its bracing production of The Rake's Progress...incisive, tightly meshed direction. With little details... and terrifically buoyant choreography, Tara Faircloth gave the production a kick at every turn."

- Opera News

"Tara Faircloth directed a simple and elegant production"

- The Washington Post

"Easily ranks among the most satisfying Wolf Trap Opera Company productions, musically and theatrically, of the past decade....imaginative and absorbing touches throughout."

- The Baltimore Sun

Barber of Seville – Tulsa Opera

"Lively, well-rehearsed production by Tara Faircloth."

- The New Yorker

"The show was a delight from start to finish."

- Tulsa World

Barber of Seville – Utah Opera

"The entire opera surged with...exciting drive, showcasing a cast with exceptional voices and spot-on comedic timing. Stage director Tara Faircloth contributed to the evening's momentum by leaving no detail unaddressed." - Opera News

"Tara Faircloth directs a masterful tapestry of storytelling, music and visual display, leaving the audience craning their necks for where to look next."

- Deseret News

"The staging was creative and clever, and my amazement at the musical quality of the performance was interrupted only by my joining in the roaring laughter of the audience."
- Reichel Recommends

Il Trovatore – Opera Colorado

"An imaginative, absorbing affair."

- Denver Post

Die Zauberflöte – Tulsa Opera

"The clarity of what goes on in this production -- the way Mozart's music is played and sung, the manner in which director Tara Faircloth has staged the action, how the unamplified dialogue is easily heard -- is such that you almost have to remind yourself to look up at the captions. ... Faircloth, in her company debut as director, has made sure to keep the simplicity of the story paramount, and not let it get lost amid the stagecraft and special effects."

- Tulsa World