



Vanja Hamidi Isacson

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ABOUT MYSELF

Vanja Hamidi Isacson is a Swedish-Finnish playwright and artistic researcher based in Malmö, Sweden. She is an affiliated guest researcher at Malmö Theatre Academy. In 2022, she completed her doctorate at Stockholm University of the Arts with a thesis titled The Potential of Multilingualism in Dramatic Works. Her research explores the relationship between multilingualism and its communicative, dramaturgical, political, and emotional dimensions, drawing from her extensive experience as a playwright.

As part of her PhD project, she developed two multilingual dramatic works: ASIA/ÄRENDE and UniZona & PolyZona, in close collaboration with theaters, actors, and directors in Finland and Sweden.

Hamidi Isacson co-founded and served as dramaturg for Teater JaLaDa, a multilingual theater company in Malmö, from 2013 to 2015. Her multilingual plays for children have been performed on numerous occasions. Besides this, she also writes operatic librettos and regularly teaches, supervises, and leads workshops and lectures on performing arts, dramatic writing, and multilingualism at universities, theatre institutions and independent theatre groups.

Her current research project, To Compose with Multiple Languages and Found Material, is a collaboration with composer Daniel Fjellström. Together, they are developing a multilingual performance at Inter Arts Center, Malmö.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

01/02/2017 – 09/12/2022 Stockholm, Sweden

DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN FINE ARTS (240 CREDITS) IN PERFORMATIVE AND MEDIA BASED PRACTICES WITH SPECIALIZATION IN PERFORMING ARTS. STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS. DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS. Stockholm University of the Arts

Website <https://www.uniarts.se/english/>

09/2011 – 06/2012 Malmö, Sweden

MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN THEATRE (60 CREDITS) MALMÖ THEATRE ACADEMY, LUND UNIVERSITY. MASTER THESIS ON MULTILINGUAL DRAMATIC WRITING "ATT MIXA OCH VÄXLA SPRÅK. KODVÄXLING SOM METOD FÖR FLERSPRÅKIGHET". Malmö Theatre Academy

Website <https://www.thm.lu.se/>

09/2004 – 06/2007 Malmö, Sweden

BACHELOR IN DRAMATIC WRITING" TO WRITE FOR ACTORS" (120 CREDITS) Malmö Theatre Academy, Lund university.

Website <https://www.thm.lu.se/>

09/1997 – 06/2000 Stockholm, Sweden

BACHELOR OF ARTS WITH A MAJOR IN THEATRE HISTORY AND THEORY (120 CREDITS) Stockholm University.

● WORK EXPERIENCE

📖 STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS – STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

DOCTORAL CANDIDATE – 01/02/2017 – 30/09/2022

● CREATIVE WORKS

09/2023 – 04/2025

"Karelian Ghosts" - a multilingual stage text

Collaborative writing of a multilingual stage text together with actor Anitta Suikkari.

Languages: Swedish, Finnish, North Sami, English

Presented as a staged reading at Scenetekstivalen Tromsø, Norway 30 of April 2025.

Link <https://www.scenetekstivalen.no/2025>

2023 – CURRENT

"Det finns inga ord" ("There are no words")

The development of a live composed hybrid work

Composer Daniel Fjellström and playwright Vanja Hamidi Isacson

The purpose of the project is to develop a multilingual hybrid work in close collaboration as a composer and playwright/librettist.

We began in September 2023 with three residency periods at IAC and continues in 2025 with a series of workshops with singers and musicians. The project ends with a public sing-through and presentation of the work in the fall of -25. Our questions are: How can we, as composer and playwright, work more integrated from the start than in a traditional collaboration where the libretto/script is written first and the composing is done afterwards? What can a more integrated work process generate in terms of artistic expression and format?

The form of a live-composed hybrid work means that we combine pre-recorded musical material and voices which are then composed through sampling. This pre-recorded sampled material will be combined with live performances by singers and musicians. The form moves in the borderland between vocal work, opera and radio play. The piece will also be multilingual. How different languages sound in relation to each other constitutes a central musical dimension. Melodies, rhythms and stress patterns are important parameters in both language and music - something which we will investigate in this work.

The theme is young people's experiences of shootings in public spaces. In Malmö, where we both work, a number of shootings in public places with fatal outcomes have taken place in recent years. The theme is treated based on young people's subjective experiences in the form of sensory impressions, feelings and reactions. The aim is to give the audience the opportunity to process their own feelings and thoughts about similar events.

In December, we hold a first workshop with singers and musicians. It is done in collaboration with Operaverkstan, Malmö Opera.

Participants:

Artistic dialogue partner: Maria Sundqvist

Director: Linda Mallik,

Singers: Negar Zarassi, Tor Lind, Elisabet Einarsdottir

Musicians: Annika Bjelk, Lovisa Kowalczyk

The project also has support from: The Royal Academy of Music (within the Bernadotte programme, Sten K Johnson's foundation and Helge Ax:son Johnson's foundation.

Link <https://www.iac.lu.se/development-live-composed-hybrid-work>

2023 – CURRENT

"Breaking Multilingual Silence in the Nordic performing arts"

Concept, script and artistic research: Vanja Hamidi Isacson (SWE)

Concept, script and direction: David Kozma (FI), Post Theatre Collective

"Breaking Multilingual Silence in the Nordic performing arts" is a collaborative artistic research project that explores the concept of silence through multilingualism. The project aims to empower multilingualism in both the performing arts field and society at large.

The overall objective is to create artistic outcomes reflecting Nordic linguistic diversity including: the multilingual performance: "SILENCE", a seminar, a workshop, a podcast and an article.

The project explores silence as both a tool of oppression and resistance, examining its imposed, voluntary, individual, and systemic aspects. "Multilingual silence" refers to the suppression of linguistic diversity, particularly in Nordic performing arts.

By breaking the "multilingual silence," the project empower multilingual speakers, both professionals and audience, and contribute to a more inclusive and diverse performing arts landscape in the Nordic region.

2020 – 2021

"UniZona & PolyZona" - a multilingual stage text for children (part of thesis)

Hamidi Isacson, V. UniZona & PolyZona (script)

Created in collaboration with Unga Klara, National Theatre for children and youth, Sweden this multilingual play for youth is part of my PhD-project. It shows the great musical potential that multilingualism has in a dramatic piece. The play has been presented through a reading at Uniarts Stockholm 2020.

Link <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/539081/1753465>

2019 – 2022

"ASIA/ÄRENDE: Kaarle Vihtori Turunen" - a multilingual play (part of thesis)

Hamidi Isacson, V. ASIA/ÄRENDE: Kaarle Vihtori Turunen (script).

Presented as Staged reading, Uniarts Helsinki, 2020 and Uniarts Stockholm, 2019.

The multilingual play was part of my PhD-project at Uniarts Stockholm. Includes Finnish, Swedish and Russian. It is my first full length multilingual play for adults where I investigate the political, communicative, emotional, and dramaturgical & musical potential of multilingualism.

Link <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/539081/1753464>

2017 – 10/2018

"Kom inte hit" ("Don't come here") (libretto)

Hamidi Isacson, V. Kom inte hit (libretto)

Premiered at Atalante Göteborg. Man Must Sing.

Composer: Daniel Fjellström.

This multilingual chamber opera is an example, of my close collaboration with composer Daniel Fjellström, with whom I developed the piece from idea to the final stage.

Languages: Swedish and Russian.

2014 – 09/2015

"Drömmarnas väg" ("The path of the Dreams") (script and songs)

Hamidi Isacson, V. Drömmarnas väg (script and songs)

Premiered at Teater JaLaDa. Operaverkstan, Malmö.

Composer: Daniel Fjellström.

A multilingual musical theatre performance is an example for youth. Languages: Dari, Somali, English, Swedish, Arabic.

2012 – 2016

"Tusen och en natt" "One thousand and one night") (libretto)

Hamidi Isacson, V. Tusen och en natt (libretto)

Premiered at Malmö Opera, 2012. Performed 2012/2013 and 2015/2016.

Composer: Daniel Fjellström.

My first opera libretto commissioned by Malmö Opera and performed at the main stage as a performance for families.

Link <https://www.malmoopera.se/forestallningar/tusen-och-en-natt>

2012 – 2016

Multilingual plays premiered in Malmö

During 2012-2016 I have written and premiered around five multilingual plays for children and adults in Malmö, Sweden.

Malmö Opera, Teater Foratt, Teater JaLaDa.

Link https://vanjahamidiisacson.se/?page_id=1193

2007 – 2011

Premiered plays

After my BA degree in dramatic writing I wrote several plays for theatres in Sweden, both for children and adults.

PUBLICATIONS

2025

["Composing Polyvocal Stage Text: An Introduction"](#)

Playwright Vanja Hamidi Isacson presents her research on composing stage texts with several languages and found material. Central to her work is polyvocality, in which different languages, dialects and social voices can coexist in a single piece. She also uses found material, such as pre-existing texts, documents and sounds, which are reused and placed in new artistic contexts. Hamidi Isacson emphasises the importance of allowing linguistic diversity to shape the performing arts as a living, dynamic entity.

Journal Name: MATTER | **Volume, Issue and Pages:** Issue 3 | **Publisher:** Malmö Theatre Academy

2025

"Listening as method in working with multilingual stage text"

Authors: Hamidi Isacson | **Journal Name:** MATTER | **Volume, Issue and Pages:** Issue 4 | **Publisher:** Malmö Theatre Academy

2024

"Reclaiming a lost language by writing drama"

Write here the description...

Ed. Hætta Björn, A.

Authors: Hamidi Isacson, V. | **Journal Name:** Gullahallat magazine - multilingual magazine | **Publisher:** Dawi center for scenekunst

2022

"Flerspråkighetens potential i dramatiska verk" Eng: The potential of multilingualism in dramatic works . Thesis.

"The potential of multilingualism in dramatic works" is an artistic research project that aims to investigate, develop, and deepen the practice of writing multilingual drama for an imagined audience in Sweden. Through placing significant focus on the playwright's practice, the goal is to contribute to the artistic development of dramatic writing in Sweden and in other Swedish-speaking contexts.

By using sociolinguistic theories and terms around multilingualism, both the artistic practice and the discourse surrounding it are developed and challenged. Through the application of an integrated ideology of multilingualism, language ideologies based on a monolingual norm are contradicted. In this way, the project makes room for silenced and marginalized voices and perspectives that rarely take or receive a place in Swedish performing arts contexts. Considering language, and thus multilingualism, as social practice and action is the starting point for the research. This post-structuralist approach is in line with the theories of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and language theorist Michael Bakhtin. In this research drama is considered as both practice and as action. Central concepts are linguistic repertoires, translanguaging and speech acts.

Within the project, two dramatic works have been created, ASIA/ÄRENDE and UniZona & PolyZona. These constitute the artistic result of the research and can both be described as dialogical polyvocal plays. Common and central to both works is that multilingualism permeates them and constitutes their formal core. The multilingualism has consequences that affect the dramaturgical and musical structures.

The creation of the works has taken place in dialogue and collaboration with multilingual actors, directors and translators in Sweden and Finland. The form of the artistic work has been conversations, workshops and periods of writing, translation, and design. Through these processes and works, the issues have been successively investigated. As tools for analysis, reflection and discussion, four categories have been created: dramaturgical, political, emotional and communicative potential. With the help of these, the concrete functions of multilingualism in both dramatic works are examined with the aim of making visible the potential of multilingualism in dramatic works.

The project demonstrates that multilingual dramatic writing requires different, less traditional approaches and in this way contributes to an expanded practice for the playwright. The methods used in the creation of the works have been collaborative, transcultural and dialogic, shifting between practices and acts of listening and composing.

"The potential of multilingualism in dramatic works" aims to show the enormous artistic, creative, political, emotional and communicative potential that multilingualism can bring to the dramatic work and, by extension, the performing arts.

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Authors: Hamidi Isacson, V. | **Volume, Issue and Pages:** X Position, ISSN 2002-603X ; 22 | **Publisher:** Stockholm University of the Arts

Link <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/877893/877894>

2020

Antologi för flerspråkig scenkonst Eng: "Anthology of multilingual performing arts"

Chapters:

Bushell-Mingo, J. Interview by Hamidi Isacson, V. "Multispråk gives you multi possibilities".

Hamidi Isacson, V. "Flerspråkighetens funktion i verket "ASIA/ÄRENDE".

Both chapters relates to the topic multilingual performing arts and its political potential. The anthology has been used in courses at Uniarts Stockholm.

Ed. Haglund, Styrke & Wiklund.

Authors: Hamidi Isacson, V. | **Publisher:** Johanssons Pelargoner

● HONOURS AND AWARDS

10/04/2024

The Bernadotte Scholarship – The Royal Swedish Academy of Music

The Royal Swedish Academy of Music awards two scholarships within the Bernadotte Programme 2024.

Daniel Fjellström, composer and Vanja Hamidi Isacson, playwright and librettist, for the project The Development of a Multilingual Hybrid Composition.

Link <https://www.musikaliskaakademien.se/stipendier/bernadotteprogrammet.1041.html>

06/2024

Sten K Johnssons Foundation – Sten K Johnssons Foundation

The development of a multilingual hybrid work.

Awarded together with composer Daniel Fjellström.

Link https://www.stenkjohnsonsstiftelse.se/tidigare-stipendier/?_stipendier=musik&_stipendier_year=2024-se

Scholarships – Swedish Authors' Fund

Swedish Authors' Fund (Sveriges författarfond) scholarships for playwrights:

2008, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2018

Sparbanksstiftelsen Skånes stipendium. 2012

Malmö Kulturstipendium. 2009

Fundings – Kulturfonden för Sverige och Finland, The Region of Skåne among others

Kulturfonden för Sverige och Finland

2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

2024

Residencies – Davvi centre for performing arts, Inter Arts Center (among others)

I have been selected for several Artistic Residencies, these are the last ones:

2024 Hammerfest, Norway

2023 Hamaroy, Norway

2023 Inter Arts Center, Malmö

Link <https://finno.no/en/articles/david-kozma-and-vanja-hamidi-isacson-selected-for-residency-at-davvi-centre-for-performing-arts/>

● PROJECTS

2012 – 2015

Teater JaLaDa

Hamidi Isacson was one of the founders, and the dramaturg, of the multilingual theatre Teater JaLaDa in Malmö, Sweden 2012-2015.

Her multilingual plays for children have been performed numerous times.

Link <https://www.jalada.se/om-oss>

Part of the artistic board of the independent theatre group Teater Foratt Malmö.
Dramaturg and Playwright.

Link https://vanjahamidiisacson.se/?page_id=86

● CONFERENCES & SEMINARS

2019 – 2024 Sweden, Norway, Finland, Netherlands, Canada

"Multilingualism in the performing arts"

Workshops and lectures (selection)

Since 2021, I have regularly given workshops and presentations on multilingual performing arts at theatres, festivals and universities in Sweden, Finland and Norway. The workshop is aimed at anyone interested in exploring multilingualism as a resource, both as an individual and within a societal and performing arts context. It is suitable for both students and professionals in all areas of the performing arts: production, playwriting, acting, directing, set design, theory and criticism, etc.

These are all examples of workshops and lectures on the theme multilingualism and performing arts I have been holding for professionals and students within the field after my PhD-project.

2024, Nov Workshop "Silence", a one week workshop for actors. Västerbottensteatern, Skellefteå.

2024, Aug Workshop "The potential of multilingualism within the performing arts", Helsinki. A one-week workshop for multilingual actors. In collaboration with Post Theatre Collective.

2024, May Workshop "The potential of multilingualism within the performing arts", Uppsala. A one-week workshop for multilingual actors. In collaboration with Post Theatre Collective.

2024, Jan Lecture and Workshop "The potential of multilingualism within the performing arts", Västerbottenteatern, Skellefteå and Uleåborg City theatre, Finland.

2023, Oct Lecture (online) "The potential of multilingualism within the performing arts", for Research Master's Art and Performance Research Studies Programme, Amsterdam University.

2023, June Lecture and workshop "The potential of multilingualism within the performing arts", Swedish Biennale of Performing Arts Stockholm. In collaboration with Uniarts Stockholm.

2023, June Lecture "The potential of multilingualism within the performing arts", Uppsala Region.

2023, May Lecture and workshop "The potential of multilingualism within the performing arts", Bastionen, Malmö.

2023, Feb Workshop "The potential of multilingualism within the performing arts", Helsinki. A one-week workshop for multilingual actors. In collaboration with Post Theatre Collective.

Seminars, symposiums and courses

Since 2017 I have initiated, developed and been the project leader of several courses, seminars and symposiums relating to the theme multilingualism and performing arts, such as:

2021 Multilingualism within performing arts, 7.5 credits. Uniarts Stockholm.

2020 Multilingualism within performing arts, film and media, 7,5 credits.
Uniarts Stockholm.

2020 Seminar at the Theatre Academy at the University of the Arts Helsinki. Seminar on multilingualism and the play ASIA/ÄRENDE. Part of the panel discussion.

2020 Symposium March 2020 (organizer)

A two-day symposium on multilingual performing arts from various perspectives. Uniarts Stockholm (Department of Performing Arts) in collaboration with Unga Klara, Riksteatern Crea and SKH Department of Acting.

2019 Seminar at the Swedish Biennale of Performing Arts (Scenkonstbiennalen)

"Multilingualism: Artistic possibilities and challenges". Organized by the Department of Performing Arts at Uniarts Stockholm.

Public seminars as part of the PhD-project at Unniarts Stockholm.

The seminars included readings of dramatic works, presentation of my artistic research and discussion with opponent and audience.

2018 "Emotions and multilingualism"

2019 "The functions of multilingualism"

2021 "The dramaturgical & musical potential"

Link https://vanjahamidiisacson.se/?page_id=1632

● LANGUAGE SKILLS

Mother tongue(s): **SWEDISH**

Other language(s):

	UNDERSTANDING		SPEAKING		WRITING
	Listening	Reading	Spoken production	Spoken interaction	
FRENCH	C2	C1	C1	B2	B1
ENGLISH	C2	C1	C1	C1	B2
FINNISH	A2	A1	A1	A1	A1
ARABIC	A2	A1	A1	A1	
NORWEGIAN	C1	C1	A1	A1	
SPANISH	A2	A1	A1	A1	

Levels: A1 and A2: Basic user - B1 and B2: Independent user - C1 and C2: Proficient user