

CV - Foad Arbabi

Composer, sound designer, music producer
Sometimes I build software

//
// +46 (0)708-755242
// foad.arbabi@gmail.com
//

2026

Good Theatre moment:teater

With: Daniel Andersson, Ludvig Hagberg, Tilman O'Donnell, Anna Vnuk, Thomas Zamolo, Karin Robérts, Heta Asikainen

I spent a week sorting out the llm-based software used to orchestrate the performance, filling in for Daniel who is the main creator. My main tasks consisted of finding and fixing bugs, streamlining the STT / TTS pipeline including trying out different models, and tuning and testing the AI system.

Project Paradox Snappy Joints Studio

An indie game studio run by Ivan Sazonov and Gabriele Stasi.

During my time on Gotland I met up with Gabriele and Ivan to talk about scoring their game 'Project Paradox', a third person sneak-n-sword game with neon visuals and fast movement. Based on their references, we quickly settled on a synthwave-ish soundtrack with orchestral elements. This was a genuinely fresh experience and something I had wanted to do for a long time: soundtracking games. Using a mixture of hardware, software, sample libraries, and a software drum synth I designed myself, I made many sketches until we landed on a coherent sonic language. I also did some light SFX work, and recorded voice lines for the different enemy states. The work is currently ongoing with a demo planned by the end of 2026.

Man kan ju inte leva på luftbubblor och drömmar liksom Inkonst, Malmö Sommarscen

By: Lisen Rosell & Foad Arbabi

Musicians: Filip Runesson - violin // Caroline Karpinska - violin // Elina Nygren - viola // Johanna Hydén Lander - cello // Ronald Heu - guitar

A sort of companion piece to "Blomsterkiosken" (2022), rearranged into a site specific audio work. The piece opened in June at an outdoors venue at Östra Kyrkogården in Malmö, where an ensemble consisting of a string quartet and guitar played reworked versions of the music. I put into practice what I learned at my two years at Tonsättarskolan, and adapted the music for the ensemble. There was also an artist talk with Lisen Rosell, Petra Gipp and myself. This was the first time I heard music I previously recorded myself being played by a live ensemble of classically trained musicians.

2024 09 - 2026 05

Composition studies

Gotlands Tonsättarskola

Studied a 2 year composition programme learning notation, orchestration, harmony, counterpoint, and lots of other skills for writing music for live musicians in an orchestral setting. Our Head of Education was Mattias Svensson Sandell who also had many courses with us. My first year I had Joseph Lake as individual mentor, who gave me very clear artistic and technical advice, as I was mainly struggling with learning notation. In my second year I had Per Mårtensson. He helped me develop my artistic abilities as well as my technical, with honest and direct feedback, and a clear understanding of my vision. Other teachers have been Ida Lundén, Mattias Petersson, Marcus Wrangö, and of course a variety of guest composers from around the world. During these two years the following pieces were created and performed:

Ladder of the Gods - orchestra

performed by Gotlandsmusiken

Fold - vibraphone, piano, two sopranos

performed by students at Falun Musikkonservatorium

BIL.MP3 - trombone, saxophone

performed by Ivo Nilsson & Jörgen Pettersson

Emergence - string quartet

performed by Zilliacus quartet

2025

Våld är min syster

Västmanlands teater

Writer: Athena Farrokhzad

Director: Carl Olof Berg

Scenography, costume, makeup: Linda Gonçalves

Music: Foad Arbabi

Technician: Sofia Linde

For my second collaboration with Berg the theme was violence. Violence as resistance, as play, as authority, as choreography. I chose to work exclusively with woodwinds as to contrast the theme, creating a stressful yet soft vibe for much of the play.

2024

My SomeAir

art film

Director: Nikos Arapi

Photographer: Paul Edwards

Music: Foad Arbabi

Talent: Ida Inxi Holmlund

Styling: Paul Edwards

DOP & Edit: Adam Hermansson

MUA & Hair: Patryk Konopacki

Assistant: Johan Forsberg

Nikos approached me regarding his short, a very personal depiction of what could be called "mellanförskapet" in Swedish, being "in between" cultures, specifically about migration and the experience as the child of a migrant, at home in the new country yet not quite accepted by dominant white population. Nikos created together with dancer Ida Inxi Holmlund a choreography about a specific beach in Greece, the sound of waves and the deep blue of the ocean. Initially I wanted to make a layered composition but when

Nikos heard my initial piano sketch he loved it, and so we went ahead and did a minimal piano composition with some sound design elements.

En God En Ond En Kul

Kulturhuset Stadsteatern Skärholmen

Writers: Lisen Rosell, Yankho Kamwendo, Nils Närman Svensson, Per Öhagen

Idea, concept, direction: Lisen Rosell

Scenography & Costume & Make-up: Amanda Hedman Hägerström

Light: Josefin Hinders

Music: Foad Arbabi

Lisen asked if I wanted to do something for our younger audience with a live band on stage. With my background both playing in and producing bands I jumped on the opportunity. The play was about three fairies in a sort of collage of different fairy tales. The fairies started out as the Bad, the Good, and the Fun, but as the story unfolds things are shown not be that simple. A very fun and cute project, and somehow we made the keytar look really cool on stage.

De Utvalda

Regionteater Väst

Writer: Dimen Abdulla

Director: Nadja Hjorton

Music: Foad Arbabi

Scenography & costume design: Lisa Berkert Wallard

Make-up: Maja Asp

Lighting: Michael Forsberg

This project revealed a shift in me, moving away from sound design and textural work and focusing more on the naked piano, composition, harmony and, to some extent, music theory. The story was about Hilma af Klint, a legendary Swedish artist who only got recognition after her death. We focused on her time at art school and her relationship with her friend, a sort of sibling rivalry. The play became quite psychedelic, with a few dream sequences. My main inspiration was in trying to create a doorway to a different dimension using music, by triggering specific frequencies that soften the fabric of reality. Of course this is all fiction, but it was a very inspiring mindset to have. I used the piano a lot, with some strings and electronics.

2023

Debut

Teater Halland

Writer: Theo Boguslaw

Director, scenography, choreography, lighting: Carl Olof Berg

Music: Foad Arbabi

Costume design: Mary-Anne Buyondo

Make-up: Tove Eneroth

A story about three teenage boys meeting a porn star, idolising him, and later realising it's not as much fun in reality as it is in fantasy. We dealt with violence and masculinity, the fragility of being a young boy forced to act like a man, and the vulnerability of performance. For the soundtrack I used lots of heavy beats and distorted synths, I sampled the lighting rig as it moved around and used that to create percussions. There was also electric guitar and, of course, some strings.

Billy DOCH

By: Ofelia Jarl Ortega

Music: Los Barbara Blade

Music adaptation: Foad Arbabi

Lighting: Ronald Salas

Graduation concert with the graduating students from DOCH Bachelor's Programme in Dance Performance

Ofelia had a very clear idea for the music, and I mainly did remixes of music made by the Chilean band Los Barbara Blade, adapting it to her choreography. My first time working with so many dancers, and my first time doing a larger dance piece.

You want it darker MDT

By: Lisen Rosell, Anna Vnuk, Sandra Medina

Music: Foad Arbabi

Scenography, lighting, costume: Josefin Hinders

A sort of spiritual successor to "the Dark Heart and the Sweet Part" (2020), starting as a boring lecture about medieval monks and the humorous and sometimes dirty scribbles they did on books, but quickly devolving into a cacophony of dissonant blasting brass, while the three performers get naked on stage, crawl on all four, and start blowing horns into each others asses. It just got better from there. One of the scenes was inspired by Michael Jackson's Thriller video, another scene had them picking silicone dicks from the ground and the trees, as if they were grown. A hilarious and moving project where I got to get really creative musically.

Hussein Månteatern

Writer: Kristian Hallberg

Director: Elin Skärstrand

Scenography, costume: Jasminda Blanco Asplund

Music and lyrics: Foad Arbabi

Lighting: Ida Eklund

A moving piece about immigration, young love, and finding inner strength. Hussein moves in with a Swedish family and him and the daughter fall in love. But of course, complications arise and things are never as easy as they seem. Lots of strings, some marimba, and some electronics. One scene in particular was like a time lapse where six months passed, and I wrote a heartbreak song where the lyrics describe the events from the daughters perspective, while the other actors played out short scenes.

2022

(Macbeth) Dramaten

Writer: Hannes Meidal, Jens Ohlin

Director: Jens Ohlin

Scenography, lighting: Susanna Hedin

Music: Foad Arbabi

Costume: Matilda Hyttsten

Hair, make-up: Anne-Charlotte Reinhold, Mimmi Lindell

Dramaturge: Irena Kraus

A sort of follow up to "Hamlet" (2017) and a rewriting of the classic Macbeth, this time on the main stage at Dramaten. I used the sound system to the maximum, having dozens of speakers at my disposal. The soundtrack consisted mainly of strings and synthesizer, with another David Bowie song as a central theme. One of my proudest moments as a composer was when the prompter complained about the bass, since it caused her manuscript to vibrate so much that it made reading impossible.

Brinn

Unga Klara / Teaterhögskolan Malmö

Writer: Elmira Arian, Farnaz Arbabi

Director: Farnaz Arbabi

Scenography: Jenny Kronberg

Costume: Matilda Hyttsten

Lighting: Johan Sundén

Music: Foad Arbabi

Make-up: Alexander Wernersson, Klara Jorméus

A big project in two acts with graduates from Malmö Theatre Academy on stage. It was a deep project with generous rehearsal time, which gave me an uncommon opportunity: To write choir music for the graduates. Probably the first time in my career I wished I knew notation, a skill I later learned at Gotland School of Composition. The soundtrack consists of heavily modified versions of existing songs with a fire theme. I used a lot of thick synthetic sounds with slow arpeggios, layered with the big choir on stage. Together with the psychedelic dance moments it became quite a hypnotic and deeply emotional project.

Blomsterkiosken

Inkonst

By: Lisen Rosell, Foad Arbabi, Petra Gipp

Producer: Sara Bergsmark

Merkurius

Norrlandsoperan / MDT

Text & choreography: Gunilla Heilborn & Kristiina Viiala

Director: Gunilla Heilborn

Performer: Kristiina Viiala

Room & costume: Katarina Wiklund

Lighting: Minna Tiikkainen

Music & Sound: Foad Arbabi

Producer: Johnson & Bergsmark

CASH MONEY FLOW

Regionteater Väst

Director: Nadja Hjorton
Text: Manda Stenström, Nadja Hjorton, Ellen Lion Siöö, Nawar Hermez, Rebecca Hayman
Scenography & costume: Chrisander Brun
Music: Foad Arbabi
Lighting: Chrisander Brun

Mellan Rum
Bananteatern

Director: Björn Dahlman

2021

Där en samling av förnimmelser landar
Höjden studios

By: Oda Brekke, Alexander Talts

2020

The dark heart and the sweet part
Ö2

Director: Sandra Medina & Lisen Rosell, Bastard produktion

2019

My Wild Flag 2019

Sound technician at dance and arts festival

Ziggy och isprinsessan
Profilteatern

Director: Elin Skärstrand
Writer: Linda Wincent

För att jag säger det Unga Klara

Director: Farnaz Arbabi

30 minutes of theatre for the smallest of us, ages 3 and below. A psychedelic and colourful wordless choreography about the power dynamics between child and adult. The tempo of a child's resting heartbeat informed my decisions regarding musical tempo, and the unexperienced ears of children made sine waves the obvious choice for basing the music. My main instrument became the Elektron Machinedrum, a digital drum machine from the early 2000s. For the main theme I programmed it to play notes that formed rough chords. As the main patterns were set I did a few live recordings and saved one of them. The rest of the music was a mixture of the Machinedrum, recorded sounds, and an iPhone app.

2018

Pjäsen K! Dramaten

Director: Åsa Emilia Lindholm

Writer: Dimen Abdulla

This play was inspired by the life of Leila K, one of Swedens biggest and most mythic pop-stars. Musically it consisted of covers and newly written material inspired by the music of Leila K.

Faust Dramaten

Director: Jens Ohlin

Writer: Hannes Meidal & Jens Ohlin

The myth of Faust stretches far back and with varying authors. In this iteration, Meidal/Ohlin created a sequel of sorts where the shadow of Faust is ever present in a creative house. Musically it was a follow up of sorts to the previous collaboration I did with Ohlin, the version of Hamlet. Lots of subtly out of tune synthesisers, but with more harmonic freedom and distortion. The sound of something buried deep in a damp hidden space beneath this house.

PersonaPersonaPersona Dramaten

Director: Bahar Pars

Writer: Dimen Abdulla

Inspired by the film Persona by Ingmar Bergman, Abdulla rewrote it into a mind bending thriller for the stage. The sounds and music and lighting was tightly interwoven to create layers representing the different mental stages of the protagonist. Musically I went for a mostly atonal soundtrack, using rhythmic pulses, percussion, and recording samples from an old broken violin.

Angels In America

Dramaten

Director: Farnaz Arbabi

Writer: Tony Kushner

An absolutely epic project, 7 hours of theatre divided into two separate parts. Lots of late nights and learning how to handle more organic, acoustic sounds. Here I began experimenting with orchestral sounds, mainly strings, choirs, and percussion. Creating a soundtrack to match the scope of the story was challenging but incredibly rewarding, breaking out of my habits and set patterns to create with new tools and new expressions. Having themes for characters, instruments for places. Incorporating sound effects with lighting design. One of the greatest experiences of my career.

2017

The Sexual Contract

Unga Klara

Director: Shari Sabel Strandmark

Based on the book by Carole Pateman, under Strandmarks direction it became a playful exploration of social norms and sexual boundaries. Musically I went a bit crazy, creating a punkrock track, a childishly naive rave track, ambient soundscapes, all using different techniques and instruments. One track was entirely made on a synth app on my iPhone, while another track had live instruments and was recorded in my studio.

Hamlet

Teater Galeasen

Director: Jens Ohlin

Writer: Hannes Meidal & Jens Ohlin

The original text was deconstructed and rewritten from scratch, keeping the meter but changing the words, and ultimately creating a dark, almost fascist world which connects ancient kingdoms with contemporary imperialist regimes. Ohlins direction was very direct and as he had a clear vision of the play, my job became that much easier. Musically I kept it very simple, using only one hardware synth for the entire soundtrack, with some minimal sound design and effects. The sounds chosen were slightly unstable, out of tune like an old vinyl yet modern in being synthesised and composed on a contemporary instrument. The harmonies were all very coherent and almost strict, without deviation from the chosen chords, yet the subtle detuning added a haunting variation, a rebellion waiting to happen.

2016

Romeo & Julia

Stockholms Stadsteater

Director: Linus Tunström

This reimagining of the Shakespeare classic had an 80s synthwave vibe throughout, the main musical inspiration being John Carpenters Escape from New York. The soundtrack became a love letter to the 80s, with lush synths, muted guitars, glittering arpeggios, some modular madness, and electronic bass.

Allt Du Önskar

Unga Klara

Director: Anne Jonsson

This was an intense and very rewarding devising process, where the music was composed and produced as the rehearsals went on. The scenes were based on childrens wishes, which included everything from world peace to new clothes to wanting their parent back. It was both heartbreaking and cathartic. Musically I went back to the synthetic string feel of Vitsvit, and for the ever rising never concluding type of music. There was also a guitar based punk rock track.

Och Inte Någon Blev Knivhuggen

Uppsala Stadsteater

Director: Bahar Pars

Writer: Dimen Abdulla

The story about a group of friends where tensions rise and eventually bad things happen, but there is also an element of psychosis, as with many of Abdullas texts. The play had a violent undertone throughout, until the violence finally emerged on stage. I attempted to create this uncertainty and discomfort musically, as well as keep it a bit unbalanced as to underscore the unrealness of the stage. The music melded together with a lot of sound design and effects to create a soundtrack reminiscent of Wendy Carlos' soundtrack to Clockwork Orange. Lots of synthesis and phaser and other modulation effects.

2015

Vitsvit

Unga Klara

Director: Farnaz Arbabi
 Writer: Athena Farrokhzad

A movement-centric play based on the poetry by Farrokhzad. On stage we center on three women playing different roles. A very poetic and almost ethereal experience which is difficult to describe in words. Characters come and go, relationships fade in only to change before they solidify. Musically I was very inspired by the soundtrack to Girlhood, composed by Para One. My goal was to create something to enhance this world, the feeling of being in the now, something fleeting yet beautiful, a moment in time lost the second you step outside the theatre. Mostly synthetic strings and some other electronic sounds inspired by or resembling acoustic instruments.

X

Unga Klara

Director: Farnaz Arbabi

A coproduction with the Stockholm university of arts, X became more than just a theatre play. The research that went into this play, exploring the Swedish trade colony where slaves were traded and revealing the general whitewashing of Swedish history, reverberated throughout society. Most swedes (me included) were not aware of the extent to which Sweden was involved in the slave trade. X explored the history of racism and managed to paint a clear line into our present time, where racism is still a big problem in Swedish society. The two acts are built by a collage of scenes, mixing different time periods and characters throughout Swedish history. Musically I got a lot more space to explore, since many scenes were without any lines. I used the actors as a choir, mixed electronics, modular synths, and acoustic instruments, and attempted to create a coherent soundscape despite the eclectic scenery.

2014

På Alla Fyra

Kilen

Director: Bahar Pars
 Writer: Dimen Abdulla

This solo piece written by Abdulla and with only Pars on stage, was performed at Kilen which is basically a black box. Abdulla's text was about a single woman surviving the city life while having a breakdown. With the soundtrack I intended to create room and spaces, to imply sonically what was absent physically. The room became the club, a church, an empty park. One instance it was banging techno, the next sacred choirs. This soundtrack became quite varying, with some electronics, vocal samples, lots of beats, and some sound effects.

Jag Ringer Mina Bröder **Stockholms Stadsteater**

Director: Farnaz Arbabi
 Writer: Jonas Hassen Khemiri

Based on the book by Khemiri, "Bröder" was a process of finding my own voice as I was given space to create music for scenes without any spoken lines. I was present for a lot of the rehearsals and did most of the composing while watching the actors work on stage. The majority of the soundtrack was electronic, with some guitar and vocals. One of my first bigger productions.