

Media Kit



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Longest Running Show in Vancouver History Set to Close

After fourteen years, Tony and Tina finally get a honeymoon

VANCOUVER, BC: After fourteen years of getting married week after week, Tony and Tina are counting down the days to their honeymoon. *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding*, Hoarse Raven Theatre's interactive comedy that takes the format of a mock Italian Wedding, is set to close at the end of May, 2009, after a fourteen year run—the longest theatre run in Western Canadian history.

“Closing the show was an extremely difficult decision to make,” says Tanja Dixon-Warren, co-director of the show. “It has been my work for 15 years and has helped launch a theatre career for both Michael and I. It has been a family affair--our kids were raised in and around the show, and the show was also our baby. But we will go out with a bang. The last few months of *Tony n' Tina's* will be full of the same enormous celebration and excitement that has been so vital to its longevity...and of which I am so proud.”

Tony n' Tina's Wedding starts at St. Andrew's Wesley United Church. It's there that the audience, who are treated as wedding guests, witness a traditional, but uproarious ceremony, and meet the show's colourful characters: the fighting Nunzio and Vitale families, as well as the best friends of the bride and groom, the minister, and Tina's ex-boyfriend. After the ceremony, a reception is held above the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, and includes a sumptuous Italian buffet, performances, dancing, and a Vegas-style lounge act. But you never know what outrageous event is going to happen next... which is all part of the fun!

“The success of *TnT* can be attributed to a number of things,” says Michael Fera, Tanja's husband, and co-director. “Things like luck, timing, and the right script at the right time. Most of all, I think we would not have run for 14 years if it had not been for the commitment, support, and goodwill of the many talented artists and crew we have had the pleasure of working with. They have been the core of the show without a doubt.”

Tony n' Tina's Wedding runs Thursday through Saturday nights. The doors to the Church (1012 Nelson Street at Burrard) open at 6:30, the ceremony begins at 7. The reception is held at The Other Space (Queen Elizabeth Theatre Restaurant, Hamilton and Georgia Streets). Tickets are \$70-85, and are available through www.ticketmaster.ca (604.280.4444) or the Hoarse Raven Box office (604.258-4079).

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About *Tony n' Tina's Wedding*

Hoarse Raven Theatre's smash hit comedy *Tony n' Tina's Wedding*, now in its fourteenth year, continues to thrill and delight audiences. The Wedding begins with a traditional, but hilarious wedding ceremony at St. Andrew's Wesley Church at 7:00pm. At the church, audience members, who are greeted as wedding guests, will meet all the show's colorful characters, including the feuding Nunzio and Vitale families, the best friends of the bride and groom, the charismatic Minister and the brooding ex-boyfriend. After the ceremony, the wedding guests and wedding party move to the Queen Elizabeth Restaurant (600 Hamilton Street) for the Wedding Reception. This evening of celebration includes dancing, singing, a Vegas-style lounge act and of course, a sumptuous Italian buffet. At the reception, wedding guests get a chance to mingle with cast members. Some wedding guests get drawn into lovers' quarrels, family disagreements and the odd arranged marriage. Indeed, anything can happen—and that's the fun of it all!

Tony n' Tina—The First Date

"We thought it would be fun," is how Tanja Dixon-Warren describes her and her Michael Fera's decision to mount a production of *Tony n' Tina's Wedding* in Vancouver. The unusual and hilarious interactive comedy had already achieved critical success in New York, and the crazy Italian wedding seemed the perfect vehicle for Michael to direct. The couple cleaned out their savings to purchase the rights to produce the show, then began the task of mounting the sizable production.

Tanja and Michael organized a production co-operative, with everyone involved in the show holding an equal share in the profits. They raised three hundred dollars from a garage sale and negotiated a deal with *St Andrews Wesley Church* and *Chardonays*, a downtown Italian restaurant. When *Tony n' Tina's Wedding* opened in July 1995, the co-operative consisted of cast, crew, Michael (who made all of the artistic choices in the show) and Tanja (who acted in the show, oversaw sales, marketing, box office, accounting and any trouble shooting).

Over the last fourteen years, Hoarse Raven Theatre has employed more than 1000 actors and technicians. They have moved reception venues three times: from *Chardonays'* to the *Century Plaza Hotel and Spa* and finally to their most recent home at *THE OTHER SPACE* (formerly the Queen Elizabeth Theatre Restaurant). The production staff works in a house a few blocks away from Tanja and Michael's home in Vancouver. *Tony n' Tina's Wedding* plays regularly in Vancouver while a second cast is often performing for corporations, fundraisers and communities throughout the province.

Michael and Tanja have also enjoyed a successful run as co-directors for the Seattle, Edmonton and Winnipeg productions of *Tony n' Tina's Wedding*.



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The Family and Friends



Tony - Truly a nice guy. He's at UBC to study Law. He deeply loves Tina and really wishes he convinced Tina to elope. This wedding thing has really gotten out of control!

Tina - Has always been a princess and Tony is definitely her prince. She loves Madonna, who will have to move over to share her spotlight tonight. Because tonight is Tina's night.

Connie - the consummate party girl, Connie is not going to let a pregnancy get in her way of whooping it up as Tina's Maid of Honour.

Donna - She loves to sing. Almost as much as she loves her boyfriend and her hair!

Marina - She's a good girl. She'll make a great teacher and a good wife. If only she could find a guy.

Dominic - The consummate Italian Stallion. If I were you, I wouldn't touch his girlfriend or his car.

Barry - The boy next door who makes the perfect best man. He'll make a great father.

Johnny - The poor guy has always lived under the shadow of his older brother. But his spirit can not be crushed. Not with Grandma Nunzio rooting for him. He's got plans of his own.

Mr. Nunzio - A pillar of the community and the business world. He owns the Animal Kingdom, a local strip joint. He is proud of his son but wishes he wasn't marrying a Vitale. There's some history between these two families!



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Mrs. Vitale - If Tina is a princess then this lady is a queen. Always there to milk a spotlight, when not mourning her dead husband. Mrs. Vitale has a soft spot for Mr. Nunzio, an old boyfriend, but she would never admit it.

Nona - Matriarch of the Nunzio family, she looks after her own. Especially her little Johnny. Perhaps you know a nice girl for him?

Joey - As Tina's big brother, he is determined to make this her day. He won't let a certain secret get in the way. It's hard to be an Italian!

Aunt Rose - A sympathetic ear and a kind heart Aunt Rose is privy to things that no-one would dare tell another.

Uncle Lui - Patriarch of the Family since Vito Vitale died at the deli. Uncle Lui is the strong shoulder that Mrs. Vitale has been leaning on. He has come all the way from Italy especially for the wedding.

Maddy - Thrilled to attend a family function, Maddy loves big Tony's sons as if they were her own. With any luck she could be going down the aisle soon herself!

Father Mark - Although this is first wedding, it is also a very special one for him. He is trying hard not to be nervous. Perhaps he should have a glass of wine to settle his nerves.

Sister Terry - Exuberant and musical, she is determined to make her own contribution to make this wedding a night to remember. Besides, some members of the bridal party are old friends of hers.

Timmy - Although he's strictly here to video tape the wedding. If Joey doesn't talk to him soon he's just going to go home.

Sal - If you can do it, Sal can shoot it! Although nudes are his favorite photo gigs, weddings and bar mitzvahs are fine too.

Vinnie - Being a restaurant owner is a heck of a way to make a living. He'll always be stand up comedian at heart.

Nicki - Would rather be anywhere else but here!!! Her Uncle Vinnie can make her work but she doesn't have to like it.

Donny - Five-time nominee for the Las Vegas Entertainer of the Year Award, Donny is a wonderful performer. It's not his fault if his career is spinning its wheels right now. But any work is good work.

Celeste - Marriage has its good points and its bad points. The good point is singing the bad point is Donny. Oh well a gig is a gig.

Michael Just - Tina's ex-boyfriend. He's managed to get out of rehab just in time to see Tony steal her for good. He knows he screwed up. If only he could make it better. Tina will always own his heart.



About the Producers

Michael Fera

Artistic Director (Hoarse Raven Theatre) / **Co-Director** (*Tony n' Tina's Wedding*)

Michael is a self-employed director who has been working in Vancouver for over 20 years. In 1992, he and his wife, Tanja Dixon-Warren, co-founded Hoarse Raven Theatre as a means to create work for themselves and fellow artists.

Favorite directing credits include the Canadian premieres of *A Boston Marriage*, *Dancing in the Light*, *Corpus Christi*, *Molly Sweeney* and the Alistair Elliot translation of *Medea*. He also directed *Kindertransport*, *Angels in America 1 & 2*, *Alley Cats, the Musical*, the 2003/04 and 2004/05 *Jessie Richardson Theatre Awards*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *Balthazar and the Mojo Star*, *Tartuffe, three heads talking*, *The Herbal Bed*, *The Belle of Amherst*, *Tony n' Tina's Wedding* (Seattle, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver), *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Maids*, *Macbeth*, *Life After Hockey*, *Teechers* and a variety of original plays (co-written and conceived by Michael) for the Ailanthus Achievement Centre. A number of these shows have received Jessie nominations and have been mentioned in the lists of the top 10 shows of the year by both *The Vancouver Sun* and *The Vancouver Courier*.

He works closely with the Vancouver School Board and the Career Preparation Program, and is a recipient of the *40 Under 40 Business in Vancouver Award*. Hoarse Raven Theatre was the 1997 recipient of the *Vancouver Board of Trade "Joint Venture" Award*.

Tanja Dixon-Warren

Artistic Producer (Hoarse Raven Theatre) / **Co-Director** (*Tony n' Tina's Wedding*)

Since graduating in 1987 from UBC with a BFA in Acting, Tanja has been wearing many hats and working as a theatre artist in Vancouver. In 1992 she and her husband, Michael Fera, founded Hoarse Raven Theatre (HRT) as a means to create work for themselves and fellow artists.

Aside from managing HRT and overseeing the ongoing antics of *Tony n' Tina's Wedding*, Dixon-Warren acts as producer on all HRT shows: *Angels in America 1 & 2*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *Corpus Christi*, *Balthazaar and the Mojo star*, and *three heads talking*. She also accepts other freelance producing/directing positions, tries to reconcile 'business' with the 'arts', juggles two children and continues, whenever possible, to get on stage herself. She has produced the chaired and programmed the *Making A Scene* conference for the past six years, and produced and co-directed the *Jessie Richardson Theatre Awards* in 2003/04 and 2004/05. She acted as advisor and co-producer on the world premier of *Alley Cats – the Musical* and she also manages and programs HRT's present home THE OTHER SPACE at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre.

Favorite roles include Evelyn in *Kindertransport*, Hannah Pitt, The Rabbi and Ethel Rosenberg in *Angels in America 1&2*, Mary in *Broken*, Martha in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolfe*, Anna in *A Boston Marriage*, Dr. Livingstone in *Agnes of God*, Dad (et al) in the Fringe and touring hit *Motherload*, Emily Dickinson in *The Belle of Amherst*, Amanda in *Private Lives: Polonius* in the *Haunted House Hamlet*, Solange in *The Maids*, Hobby in *Teechers* and the title roles in both *Medea* and *Molly Sweeney*. Along with playing numerous character's in HRT's long running *Tony n' Tina's Wedding*, she originated the role of *Maddy* for the Vancouver production. She has worked in TV commercials and can be seen in the role of *Wheezie* in the upcoming season of the *L Word*.

Dixon-Warren is the recipient of the *40 Under 40 'Business in Vancouver' Award* and has been nominated for number of *Jessie Richardson Theatre Awards* She has been recognized twice with nominations for the YWCA's *Woman of Distinction Award*.



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Tony n' Tina's Wedding Statistics



Wedding's First Performance: July 8, 1995

Number of Marriage Certificates: 5,748

Number of White Shoes Heeled: 584

Number of Kisses by the Couple: 108682



Pasta Served: 781800 pounds
(enough to cover two football fields!)

Salad Served: 492,280 pounds

Number of Buns: 758,980 rolls

Number of Actors: More than 1,000 of
Vancouver's Best



Number of performances: over 2,500

Number of wedding guests: over 50,000



Critical Acclaim

“Flat-out fun”

Malcolm Parry – *The Vancouver Sun*

“How many opportunities do you get to really play, to pretend, to let loose and celebrate life in all its ridiculousness?”

Colin Thomas – *The Georgia Straight*

“Full of invention, enthusiasm, and high spirits”

Jo Ledingham - *The Vancouver Courier*

“You’ll love it”

Barbara Crook – *The Vancouver Sun*

“A hugely entertaining event”

Renne Doruyter – *The Vancouver Province*

“Absolute success”

Anna Fuschi Ciampolini – *L’eco Italia*

“the more you play, the more fun you’ll have”

Michael Groberman – *West End Times*

“...the evening is as fun and as tasty as a large sizzling pizza with the works”

Jo Ledingham – *The Vancouver Courier*

“I’ve been twice already and I’ll probably go once more”

Jurgen Gothe – *Cbc Radio 2*

“This production shines...well cast and very well performed.”

The Georgia Straight

