



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Guerillas to Receive \$10,000 Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts**

BOSTON, MA (February 4, 2021) — Guerilla Opera has been approved for a \$10,000 [Grants for Arts Projects award](#) to support the world premiere of *Island of Hope, Island of Tears* with music by Boston-based composer Gabriele Vanoni, libretto by Eva Chrusciel and in collaboration with stage director and video artist Laine Rettmer.

Guerilla Opera's project is among 1,073 projects across America totaling nearly \$25 million that were selected during this first round of fiscal year 2021 funding in the Grants for Arts Projects funding category. "The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to support this project from Guerilla Opera," said Arts Endowment Acting Chairman Ann Eilers. "Guerilla Opera is among the arts organizations across the country that have demonstrated creativity, excellence, and resilience during this very challenging year."

*Island of Hope, Island of Tears* is a multimedia, immersive opera based on true stories of immigrants to the US as documented in the Ellis Island Oral Histories. It explores stories of cultural identity and that shed light on the acceptance, or intolerance, of different immigrant cultures through time. This project is expected to be 60-75 minutes in duration.

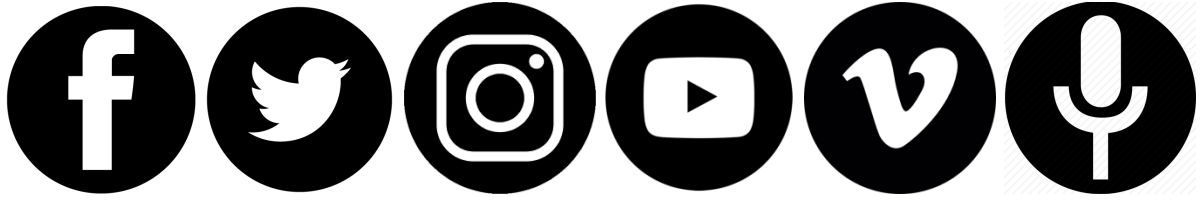
Composer, Gabriele Vanoni comments: *"I am really thankful for receiving this grant from NEA. As a grandson of an immigrant, and an immigrant myself, I am really attached to these stories of people who gave up everything to begin a new life across the ocean. As the NEA website states, the Arts "belong to all the people of the United States", and I am happy to see that these stories, at the heart of the American people itself, will receive such an important recognition."*

Artistic Director, Aliana de la Guardia comments: *"My parents are immigrants to this country from Cuba and I'm the first generation to be born in the States. The experiences and backgrounds of the immigrants in these stories are different from mine and my family's, yet I see our same cultural and familial values reflected in each protagonist. I feel connected to them in this way and I know others will too."*

For more information on projects included in the Arts Endowment grant announcement, visit [arts.gov/news](https://arts.gov/news). For more information on *Island of Hope, Island of Tears* please visit [guerillaopera.org/island-of-hope-island-of-tears](https://guerillaopera.org/island-of-hope-island-of-tears).

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## WHO WE ARE

In daring performances Guerilla Opera has garnered a national reputation for “deliciously inventive” (WBUR) contemporary opera with The Boston Globe raving that “radical exploration remains the cornerstone of everything it does.” This Boston-based, artist-led ensemble’s **mission** is to commission and reenvision new and experimental works custom-tailored to our unique ensemble of artists. We champion cutting-edge music and immerse audiences in profound experiences. We provide a vehicle for creative authenticity, diversity, equity, and inclusion. We inspire, influence and amplify emerging generations of artists and arts-lovers. Their **vision** is to generate a unique body of work that ferociously confronts the status quo, eschew antiquated and stereotypical traditions of the art form, examine stories through culturally focused and contemporary lenses, and bring new music to new audiences. ([guerillaopera.org](http://guerillaopera.org))

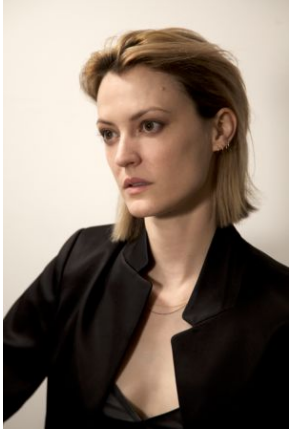


Gabriele Vanoni is an Italian composer, currently living in the Boston area. He completed a Ph.D. in Music Composition at Harvard University, under the guidance of Julian Anderson, Chaya Czernowin and Hans Tutschku. His music has been performed in several prestigious venues and festivals, such as Carnegie Hall (Weill Hall), Biennale di Venezia, ManiFeste, Moscow Conservatory, Royaumont Voix Nouvelles, June in Buffalo, IRCAM, Wellesley Composers Conference, NYU, BIT Teatergarasjen in Bergen and Accademia Chigiana di Siena, among many others. Likewise, various soloists and ensembles have now been involved in performing his music, including members of the Ensemble Intercontemporain, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Talea Ensemble, Moscow Studio for New Music Ensemble, Ensemble L’arsenale, Mario Caroli, Diotima Quartet, Les Cris de Paris, Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, and many more. Besides his activity as a composer, Gabriele Vanoni served as the artistic director and founder of Suggestioni, a festival of Italian Music in United

States, and holds a degree in Business for the Arts, Culture and Communication at Bocconi University. He is currently Assistant Professor in Composition at Berklee College of Music. Recent and upcoming commissions include a multimedia work with Ensemble Parallax for the New York Encounter, and a recording project with flutist Orlando Cela. He lives with his wife and children in Stoneham. ([gabrielevanoni.com](http://gabrielevanoni.com))



Eva Chrusciel, librettist, is a poet, teacher and translator. She has published eight books: three book of poems in English: Of Annunciations (Omnidawn 2017), Contraband of Hoopoe (Omnidawn 2014), Strata (Emergency Press 2009, reprinted by Omnidawn in April 2018); three books in Polish: Tobałek, Sopiłki, Furkot, as well as a book in Italian Contrabbando di Upupe (Contraband of Hoopoe translated into Italian by Anna Aresi) with Edizioni Ensemble. She also published a book of Selected Poems by Jorie Graham in co-translation with Milosz Biedrzycki. She also translated selected books by Jack London, Joseph Conrad, I.B. Singer and selected poems of Kazim Ali, Lyn Hejinian, Cole Swensen and other American poets into Polish. She is an Associate Prof. of Humanities at Colby-Sawyer College.



Laine Rettmer, director and video artist Laine Rettmer is a North American visual artist and opera director. Their work explores performance, gender, desire, and methods of social control. Rettmer's work has been presented nationally and internationally at the Vizcaya Museum; Manifesta; MoMA Public, curated by Mel Logan and Jakob Boeskov; the Museum of Fine Art, Boston; Massachusetts Institute of Technology Museum for the exhibition, Hot Steam; the Illuminus Festival; the Boston Independent Film Festival; the Yuan Art Museum; Yve Yang Gallery; Perkins and Ping; Present Company; NADA NY, NADA Presents; and AREA gallery, among others.

Rettmer's opera productions have been praised as "wickedly smart" and "devastatingly funny" by The New York Times, and "not only profound but also shattering" by the Observer. Their, Barber of Seville, was named one of the top 10 classical music productions of 2014 by the New York Times and La Bohème one of the best operas of the decade by the Observer. For four years Rettmer was the resident stage director for the New York based company LoftOpera, with whom their last production, Macbeth, received a Freddie Award for Best New Production and was nominated for Best Director. Rettmer has also worked extensively on new opera with such companies as New York City Opera, Ecce Ensemble, Guerrilla Opera, and Rhymes with Opera. They are currently on the Artistic Advisory Board of On-Site Opera. ([lainerettmer.com](http://lainerettmer.com))