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Guerillas Awarded \$3,000 Grant from the Haverhill Cultural Council

BOSTON, MA (March 7, 2021) — Guerilla Opera has been awarded a \$3,000 grant to support the world premiere of *Island of Hope, Island of Tears* (working title) with music by Massachusetts-based composer Gabriele Vanoni, libretto by Ewa Chrusciel and in collaboration with stage director and video artist Laine Rettmer.

The Haverhill Cultural Council recognizes and helps fund local groups that contribute rich and inclusive cultural experiences to Haverhill citizens. The HCC is supported by the City of Haverhill along with The Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) Local Cultural Council Program.

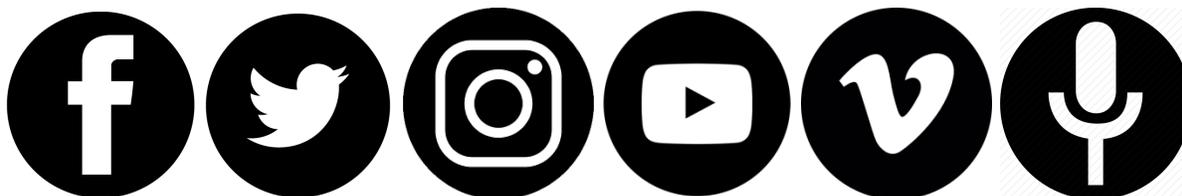
Island of Hope, Island of Tears (working title) is a multimedia, immersive opera that breathes life into forgotten voices of our past through true stories and the actual voices of immigrants to the US as documented in the *Ellis Island Oral Histories*. This beautiful new opera presents themes of the clash of cultural identities, the artifacts immigrants bring to this country, and the acceptance or intolerance of different immigrant cultures through time, and highlights stories that are human and touching eliciting emotions we can all relate to. This project is expected to be 60-75 minutes in duration and sung in English.

Artistic Director, Aliana de la Guardia comments: *“My parents are immigrants to this country, and although the experiences and backgrounds of the immigrants in these stories are different from mine and my family’s, I see our same cultural and familial values reflected in each protagonist. I am excited and grateful that this project has been recognized by Haverhill Cultural Council.”*

For more information on the Haverhill Cultural Council, visit [the City of Haverhill's website](#). For more information on *Island of Hope, Island of Tears* please visit 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 innovative 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 envision new and experimental works custom-tailored to our unique ensemble of artists; to champion cutting-edge music and immerse audiences in profound experiences; to be a model for creative authenticity and IDEA (inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility); to inspire, influence and amplify emerging generations of artists. 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)



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 the 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)



Ewa Chrusciel, librettist, is a poet, teacher and translator. She has published eight books: three books 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: *Tobolek*, *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)