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Media Contact: Aliana de la Guardia, co-artistic director  
[alidelaguardia@guerillaopera.org](mailto:alidelaguardia@guerillaopera.org), (866) 615-2723 Ext. 3  
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**THE WOMEN OF GUERRILLA OPERA ARE WINNING!**

BOSTON, MA (September 4, 2020)—The Coronavirus emergency left the landscape for the arts gloomy, but Guerilla Opera’s thirteenth season has successes which propel the company into a new era of female leadership and artistry. Guerilla Opera’s composers are equally winning, and with seven operas in development, new small-scale projects and digital programming, the company’s fans and supporters something to look forward to in future seasons.

**COMPOSER AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS**



On June 16, 2020 OPERA America announced that composer Emily Koh and Guerilla Opera r, received an award from OPERA America’s Opera Grants for Female Composers: Commissioning Grants program, supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation. This award is to directly commission the creation and support the premiere of Koh’s first evening length opera, *HER:alive|un|dead: a media opera*.

The OPERA America adjudication panel, which included composers Andrea Clearfield and Osvaldo Golijov; playwright, theater director and actress Lillian Groag; pianist and conductor Timothy Long; president and producing director of FringeArts Nick Stuccio; and baritone Jorell Williams, reviewed 24 applications submitted during the COVID-19 quarantine period in April. Koh was one of nine recipients to receive a grant award and joins composers Du Yun (Beth Morrison Projects), Ellen Reid (Boston Lyric Opera), Heather Christian (HERE), Nell Shaw Cohen (Houston Grand Opera), Kamala Sankaram (Opera on Tap), Stella C. Y. Sung (Opera Orlando), Missy Mazzoli (Opera Philadelphia ), and Rima Fand (American Opera Project).

OPERA America’s Opera Grants for Female Composers program provides financial assistance to identify, support, and help develop the work of female composers writing for the operatic medium, raising their visibility and promoting awareness of their compositions to the field. Funding for this program is provided by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Program for Commissioning Women in the Performing Arts.

*HER:alive|un|dead* is a concert-length media opera about three generations of Asian women in a single family. Through birth and death cycles in the family and encounters in a space called the in-between, these women expound on gender biases against women, and discriminatory practices upon people of Asian descent. The opera is slated to fully premiere in Guerilla’s 2023-2024 season.

[Emily Koh is a Singaporean composer](#) based in Atlanta, whose music is characterized by inventive explorations of the smallest details of sound. In addition to writing acoustic and electronic concert music, she enjoys collaborating with other creatives in projects where sound plays an important role in the creative process. Emily is currently Assistant Professor of Composition at the University of Georgia’s Hugh Hodgson School of Music and received a Ph.D. in Music Composition and Theory from Brandeis University.



Hear her music featured at the [Guerilla Backyard Bash](#) on Friday, August 21, 2020 at 7pm EST and Saturday, August 22, 2020 at 3pm EST. The Guerillas will also premiere their latest “experiment, *Papillon* with design and direction by Deniz Khateri and featuring the music of Kaija Saariaho as well as from *A Dead Body* by Mischa Salkind-Pearl and Franny Zhang.



Composer, computer musician, improviser, and arts documentarian Tina Tallon was awarded a 2020–2021 fellowship at the prestigious Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University. This fellowship supports her first opera, *Shrill*, commissioned by Guerilla Opera, as well as to support the writing of her first book on the technocultural history of voice technology.

The [Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study](#) offers one-year fellowships and creates an interdisciplinary, international community of 50 fellows across the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences. Each year, the Institute hosts leading scholars, scientists, artists, and practitioners from around the world in its renowned fellowship program.

*Shrill* is an electroacoustic chamber opera that will examine the ways that gender bias in the development and regulation of voice technology has shaped history. Told from the perspective of four female-identified vocal laborers (a switchboard operator, a radio announcer, a modern presidential candidate, and a virtual digital assistant), it will grapple with questions of embodiment, virtuality, agency, and identity construction. The set includes sculptural electronic instruments and interactive elements that engage performers and audience alike. *Shrill* is slated to premiere in Guerilla’s 2022-2023 season.

The past few years Tina has been researching the topic of technology bias extensively, and received notable attention after [her first published article in the New Yorker](#). Also listen to [NPR’s On The Media interview](#) between Brooke Gladstone and Tina Tallon about her research on bias in voice technology.



[Composer Elena Ruehr](#) received a grant award from [The Center for Art, Science & Technology \(CAST\)](#) to support the premiere of *The Thrilling Adventures of Lovelace and Babbage*, a chamber opera based on the steampunk graphic novel written and drawn by Sydney Padua, which will premiere in Guerilla’s 2021-2022 season.

CAST was established to create new opportunities for art, science and technology to thrive as interrelated, mutually informing modes of exploration, knowledge, and discovery at MIT. The Center also supports projects that may be difficult to fund through traditional sources or are exploratory in nature but may lead to creative works, significant research or interesting collaborations in the future.

In *The Thrilling Adventures of Lovelace and Babbage* Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage are two great minds in mathematics and engineering. They work together for years on the first design for a computer and create the Analytical Engine, an engine that can analyze any subject in the universe. In a twist of plot, the Multiverse is created and Ada and Charles appear in new forms, as crime fighters, although it is music that Charles wants to battle, and poetry that Ada hopes to destroy.



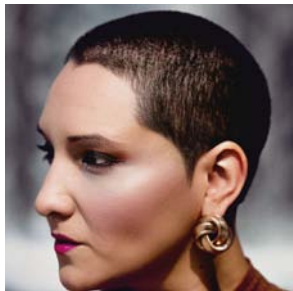
Over the course of last and this coming year composer Beth Wiemann was awarded various fellowships and residencies to complete the score and libretto for *Rose Standish Nichols: Design for a Life* for Guerilla Opera including: the Hambidge Center in Rabun Gap, GA, Willapa Bay Artists in Residence at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts in Amherst, VA, and the Visby International Center for Composers in Götland, Sweden. This opera is slated to premiere in Guerilla’s 2021-2022 season.

This monodrama for soprano, saxophone, percussion and electronics has a libretto fashioned from published sources courtesy of the Nichols House Museum in Boston,

MA. It paints the portrait this true-life striving woman who had success as a landscape architect, and a suffragette who was sometimes seen as a political radical. The opera explores the ways in which her position on Beacon Hill both helped and hurt her, given her intense commitment to art and politics. She had both radical and conservative sides to her. This opera will be performed in her historical home, The Nichols House Museum, which she willed to become a museum.

## GUERRILLA LEADERSHIP AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS

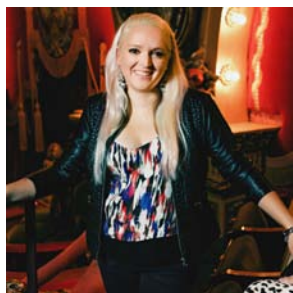
The Guerilla women running the show are also all in the spotlight with industry acknowledgements and opportunities to learn and expand their contributions to the field. In this artist-led ensemble, the creators and performers wear multiple hats at all times, and these women continue to prove their ability to excel in many areas. Recent awards will enable them to expend their skills in creation, community, and administration both in Boston and nationwide.



**Aliana de la Guardia** was recently selected as a [protégée for OPERA America’s Women’s Opera Network Mentorship Program for Women in Opera](#). She has been paired with Lee Anne Myslewski, Vice President of Opera and Classical Programming, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts in Vienna, VA. The Mentorship Program was created in 2018 to help advance the goals of the OPERA America Women’s Opera Network, an action-oriented affinity group dedicated to addressing and advancing gender parity in the opera field.

De la Guardia is also the recipient of a [Public Art Learning Fund grant from the New England Foundation for the Arts](#). She is pursuing a custom-tailored mentorship program with Double Edge Theatre shadowing producing director Adam Bright and co-artistic director Carlos Uriona focused on the development and production of public art, events and community engagement. The Public Art Learning Fund provides grants to support professional development opportunities for New England artists to strengthen their public art practices.

[Aliana de la Guardia](#) has garnered acclaim for her “dazzling flights of virtuosity” (Gramophone) in “vocally fearless” performances that are “fizzing with theatrical commitment” (The Boston Globe). The Cuban-American artist is a co-founder of Guerilla Opera, with which she has produced many world premiere operas with roles tailor-made for her ferocious stage presence. As a soprano vocalist specializing in new music and garnering skills as a physical theater artist, she is especially fit for premiering experimental new operas as well as genre-bending performance art, devised works and intimate performances. She is also the owner and founder of Dirty Paloma Voice Studio, a private voice studio with over 30 students ranging from middle school to professional; the treasurer of Granite State National Association of Teachers of Singing; and on the Haverhill Multicultural Festival 2020 planning committee. De la Guardia has an BM in vocal performance, with an emphasis in opera as well as MM, vocal performance from the Boston Conservatory at Berklee.



This season **Julia Noulin-Mérat** is one of fifteen selected from the United States, Canada, Europe and Latin America to attend [Opera America’s Leadership Intensive](#), which identifies and offers intensive training to the most promising up and coming leaders in the field of opera. The 2020 Leadership Intensive participants selected by OPERA America include representatives from Long Beach Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, On Site Opera, San Diego Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Opera Birmingham, and Michigan Opera Theatre.

In addition to her work as Co-Artistic Director for Guerilla Opera, [Julia Noulin-Mérat](#) is Associate Producer for Boston Lyric Opera. She has designed over 400 opera, theater, television productions, as well as immersive and interactive shows world-wide and has produced 50 shows, including 20 new operas. Other projects include a TEDx talk on site-specific opera productions in the modern age, a critically acclaimed immersive Pagliacci experience on fairgrounds with a circus tent with Boston Lyric Opera and Playground (Opera

Omaha) a touring operatic sound sculpture in collaboration with Pulitzer composer Ellen Reid. She has served on the panel for Opera America adjudicating the Tobin Director-Designer showcase and has received OA's Women Opera Network mentorship distinction with an emphasis on being a general director. With over 18 years experience in the performing arts industry, she is an adjunct professor at Pace University and a graduate of Boston University with a MSc in Arts Administration, an MFA in Set Design, a Diversity Inclusion certificate from ESSEC Business School, a social media marketing specialization from Northwestern University, a Fundraising Development Specialization from UC Davis, a Finance certification from Harvard Business School.



The newest Guerilla, **Brenda Huggins**, now Guerilla Opera's Director of Engagement Programs, is a recipient of a \$2,000 Opportunity Fund artist grant from the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture and the City of Boston. In partnership with [Families Creating Together](#), a non-profit organization serving multi-generational and multi-lingual communities, Brenda will lead interactive shadow theater, drama, and storytelling workshops in Roxbury this Spring.

[Brenda Huggins](#) is a stage director, dramaturg and designer working in opera and puppetry. She made her NYC directing debut in 2019 at the Abrons Center for the Arts, and has created many intimate productions of classical and contemporary opera with Opera Del West in the Boston area for the last seven years. She is the Resident Dramaturg at Guerilla Opera for the 2020 Emergence Composer Fellowship and additional dramaturgy projects include productions with OperaRox at the National Opera Center in NYC, the New England Russian Theater Festival at the Boston Playwright's Theatre, Commonwealth Opera, and Boston Conservatory. She was commissioned in 2015 by Juventas New Music Ensemble to create a new puppetry work at the A.R.T.'s Club Oberon and produced a new original work in 2013 at the National Puppetry Festival: Fringe in Swarthmore, PA. Brenda is a passionate teaching artist with an M.A. in Theater Education from Emerson College, currently teaches at the Urban College of Boston, and served as the Learning and Leadership Manager at OPERA America from 2017-2019.

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### WHO WE ARE

Guerilla Opera is a Boston-based, artist-led ensemble whose mission is to expand the possibilities of opera by immersing audiences in innovative, experimental and thought-provoking new works from cutting-edge composers in productions that reenvision the audience's relationship to the new work for profound and lasting experiences. In daring performances that often do not use a conductor, 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." Visit [guerillaopera.org](http://guerillaopera.org) for more information.