

Guerilla Opera presents
Giver of Light
Watch Party and On Demand Encore presentation
Open Description Document

This document is intended to work with screen readers in order to describe the encore presentation of Guerilla Opera's 2013 production of *Giver of Light* for audiences with visual impairment or who are non-sighted.

For a large print program booklet outlining cast and production credits and personnel click through or copy and paste this link:

https://guerillaopera.org/s/2021-GuerillaOpera_GiverofLight_ProgramBooklet-LargePrint.pdf

For more information on this production and accessible documents visit:

<https://guerillaopera.org/events-1/2021/2/18-watch-party-giver-of-light-x2cc5>

If you have any questions regarding this document or accessibility, please contact Aliana de la Guardia at artistic@guerillaopera.org or call/text at 617-286-6723.

[Introduction and Titles]

Before the program begins, the Guerilla Opera logo appears on screen. The logo is stylized as a red and black spray-painted tag that reads: Guerilla Opera, with the word "Opera" turned upside down, as if turning opera "on its head." As a voice-over begins, the word "presents" appears at the bottom of the screen and fades out.

The screen quickly goes to black and the text "A Guerilla Opera Production" rolls across the black screen in white text from left to right and fades out. Then the title "Giver of Light" flashes onto the screen in large white text, followed by "A World Premiere Chamber Opera" which appears below the title, both fade to black.

The preshow screen is a shot of the stage from the back of the audience in the intimate theatre. The stage area is dimly lit. There are two white walls bordering on stage left and right. The back wall of the stage is black, and the floor of the stage is white. The visible audience is eagerly awaiting the start of the opera, when the voiceover begins.

Titles appear in various orientations on the screen, each fading in and out:

"Music by Adam Roberts,"

"Electronic score by Anil Çamcı,"

"Written by Adam Roberts"

"Filmed from a live performance at Boston Conservatory at Berklee,"

"Filmed and edited by Boston Conservatory at Berklee,"

“Sound by Silken Audio,”
“Stage direction by Andrew Eggert,”

At the bottom of the screen a message reads “Text 44-321 with the code GOWATCHPARTY to donate!”

This message is replaced by a QR code that links to <http://www.pateron.com/guerillaopera> With a message that reads “Join our Agents Provocateurs Patreon Members.”

As the voiceover ends, the camera zooms in on the stage as the house lights dim and slowly fade to black.

[Act 1, Prelude: The Opening]

A curtain to the back of the stage opens to a band of four instrumentalists, cello, clarinets, saxophone and percussion, silhouetted in darkness. Behind them there is a rectangular screen, like a window or painting. On the screen is the Rumi poem, which will be sung as the text to the prelude.

The four main characters enter from two doors on each white wall to the left and right of the stage and stagger their positions across the length of the stage with two in front and two in back facing the audience. They are wearing semi-translucent masks with stereotypical features painted on them such as exaggerated makeup for Elena and exaggerated facial hair for the male characters. When they wear these masks in the show, they are meant to represent a Greek Chorus.

When the vibraphone rings, the lights slowly fade in and they sing the poem that is in the window to the back of the stage.

*If we could taste
one sip of an answer
we could break out
of this prison for drunks.*

The light fades to leave only blue light gentle highlighting the band.

[Act 1, Interlude 1]

During the energetic instrumental interlude, we see dark shadows of the cast members bringing set pieces on to the stage for the next scene in the blue light.

[Act1, Scene 1: The Conversation]

After the long held notes of the interlude the energetic music indicates the new scene. During this opening musical section, the text behind the band is slid out of view to reveal an image of various cooking utensils in a yellow brown color, neatly lined up next to each other.

As the lights come up the chairs are revealed to be bright red, the table bright blue, with a cooking pan and ladle both bright green. On the table is a place setting of a white plate, a napkin with a fork and knife, placed at the center.

The characters Elena and John are on stage when the lights come up. Elena, played by Aliana de la Guardia, is setting the table for dinner. She is a young Latin woman in her early 30's with long brown hair pulled back into a bun and with brown eyes. She is in an orange knee-length dress with a blue cardigan and a wedged heel.

On the other side of the table is John, played by Jonas Budris. John is a young white man in his early 30's with short light brown hair parted to the side and with blue eyes. He wears a white dress shirt, blue slacks, and black dress shoes. He hangs his grey suit jacket over one of the chairs and sets down a bright red suitcase,

Elena serves John dinner as John sits in the center chair with the place setting and Elena sits in the leftmost chair. Elena enthusiastically recounts her day, until she mentions the "strange" and "weird" thing: "The new guy driving the bus" who has "mysterious eyes." The mood shifts to a concerned and mysterious state when they discuss this new busdriver.

[Act 1, Interlude 2]

When the musical interlude begins the lights dim to blue and gently highlight the band. Then some red light slowly rises at the back of the stage to mix with the blue. The "Greek Chorus" in their clear masks mechanically walk into the red light and line up standing still and side by side facing the audience.

[Act 1, Scene 2: The Encounter]

The scene begins when the cast exclaims "to the bus stop." The cast rigidly strikes an everyday pose such as driving or waving, and marches around the stage as if on a grid while repeating "to the bus stop." They abstractly go about their daily routines of taking their children to the bus stop.

After the final "to the bus stop" they exit the stage. In the window at the back of the stage the image of cooking utensils slides away to reveal an image of bus-stop road signs.

The stage goes dark, the set is cleared and a single chair is placed on the right side of the stage, facing toward the left side. The characters take their places onstage in the dark.

With the chime of a bell white lights come up. John, now wearing his grey suit jacket, and his son, Brian are waiting for the bus. Brian, played by Jennifer Ashe, is a small child dressed in a colorful outfit of a bright red cap, a color-blocked long-sleeve sweatshirt with yellow, blue, green, red, and black trim around the cuffs and bottom of the sweatshirt. His pants are bright red and with a pair of red converse sneakers.

The busdriver is now sitting in the lone chair. He pantomimes opening the imaginary bus door. After Brian boards the imaginary bus, John begins interrogating the bus driver, who reveals his name to be Darren.

The busdriver, Darren, played by Brian Church, wears a bus driving cap on his head, a white button-down shirt with a bright red tie, grey slacks, and black shoes.

During the bizarre short conversation, John pulls out a notepad to take Darren's phone number. The encounter is tense, though Darren is relaxed, unbothered.

Daren pantomimes closing the bus door and engaging the clutch as the stage lights transition to dark blue.

During the second musical interlude, which is entirely electronic sound, the stage is cleared and the blue table is set in the center of the stage with a desk lamp.

[Act1, Scene 3: John's Aria and Elena Questions John]

In the window behind the band the image of the bus signs slides away to reveal an zoomed image of black computer keyboard keys on a white background glowing.

When the music grows louder John, sitting at the desk, turns on the lamp. At the desk, his suitcase is open on the table with pen and paper sprawled out. He is dimly lit only by the desk lamp, and appears stressed, tired and bewildered. His aria begins with "Why am I, so sad?"

After he sings "All I feel is aging," he rips up the paper on his desk in anger, stands up and walks to the front of the desk, then collapses on the floor dropping the ripped up paper.

As he resumes his self questioning the camera zooms out to reveal Darren and Brian in their translucent masks, standing near to and facing the audience on opposite ends of the stage as silent figures. They are lit ominous from below and are on the outside of the side-walls that border the stage to the left and right.

Elena enters quietly from the door on the right wall, lit from behind, and watches, unsure of what to do as John begins to cry, sitting on the floor.

Elena breaks the silence by stepping into the scene inquiring "John? Why are you crying?" with concern.

Throughout John and Elena's exchange the masked Darren and Brian remain at their posts to then sing along: "He's just feeling a little under the weather." After which, they walk out of the light and out of the scene, while Elena continues her questioning to John. As John answers he packs up his suitcase, and leaves it on the table.

When Elena expresses her concerns about Darren being "creepy" she seems frantic, uncomfortable. John cups her hands in his to comfort her. "Don't worry."

The scene ends when the light dims to black with only the light from the window behind the band.

[Act 1, Interlude 3]

During the musical interlude the table is moved to the left of the stage. The image in the window behind the band of the computer keyboard keys slides away to reveal a colorful abstract image of many circular shapes in various shades of orange.

[Act1, Scene 4: Darren's Aria and The Interrogation]

As the music calms it goes from acoustic instruments to electronic droning sound textures. A dim orange light illuminates the right side of the stage. Darren enters and neatly places three pillows on the floor next to each other from left to right. He also brings a low-to-the-ground table, which has an incense holder and a cup on it. Darren sits on the center pillow and vocalizes meditatively. With his face in shadow, he meditates with sometimes quick sighing gestures.

As Darren meditates, a white light comes up on the desk revealing John contemplatively standing in front of the desk holding the notepad in which he wrote Darren's phone number. He picks up a red-corded phone, which is connected to the wall on the left and slowly dials the phone.

At the sound of the phone ringing the orange light turns to white and Darren is startled out of his meditative state. Darren answers a black corded phone connected to the right wall. They have their conversation.

Well. Did you have something to say to me?

Well, to be honest, I felt like I had something to say, but I have no idea what it was. This might sound weird, but when you looked at me the other day, I went home and cried, like I haven't cried in ten years. I cried, and then I felt like talking to you for some reason. So that's what I have to say. Do you think I'm crazy?

That doesn't sound crazy.

During the conversation the camera pans slightly to the left to reveal Elena behind the left wall holding a feather duster and lit ominously from below. She is listening in on the conversation and bursts out with an interjection. John asks Elena to get a Fresca from the fridge to send her away to ask his final question. He is nervous. Darren is engaged, has a look of intrigue.

John ends the phone conversation with excitement. When they both hang up, the lights on the left side of the stage go black as John runs off. The camera zooms into Darren as he begins singing "could it be." When he sings "a giver of light" the camera zooms out to reveal that in the window behind the band an image of sun rays among clouds has replaced the abstract image of spirals.

[Act 1, Interlude 4]

Darren sits back down on the middle pillow and resumes his meditative overtone singing. The lights fade, leaving only a dim orange light on Darren. Slowly the lights change to reveal glowing blue characters of poetry written in Farsi, Rumi's original language, on the floor and walls of the stage. Darren's shirt is also illuminated

[Act1, Scene 5: Darren and John Meditate]

John enters from the right as he calls out, "Darren? Darren? Is everything alright?" We hear the audience laugh, as the meditative vocalizing is somewhat absurd and suggestive of sexual sounds.

Into the glowing room, John walks in front of Darren crossing to the left to grab three pillows for himself. He lays them down in a similar formation to Darren and sits. They both meditate, sitting cross-legged with their hands and arms up and outstretched in an open position.

When the vibraphone rises out of the musical texture, the two men stand up and walk to the back of the stage, and begin to run their hands along the side walls with the sanskrit text, in an energized fashion. John on the left and Darren on the right. They do flowing movements, similar to thai chi, around the space. The goal of meditation is to achieve catharsis. The movements are somewhat orgasmic and frantic, an energized ritual.

When the bell rings and the music crescendos they both stand at the front of the stage and stand side by side with their arms up and out. The palms of their hands are glowing like the writing on the walls. Their heads covered in shadow.

As the vocalizing becomes lower in pitch the two men sit on their pillows with their hands still raised.

When their singing stops the image of the sun rays in the window behind the band slides away revealing the two sopranos, Aliana de la Guardia and Jennifer Ashe, from the waist up wearing the translucent masks as members of the "Greek Chorus."

When the band comes in, the men gather their pillows and exit opposite of each other. The camera zooms in on the two figures in the window soon after John and Darren enter as members of the “Greek Chorus” with their clear masks behind Elena and Susan in the window behind the band.

[Act II, Prelude: They Cry]

Act One immediately segues into Act Two with a choral interlude. The four sing overlapping and dissonant cries. The music abruptly stops and Elena and Susan leave the frame.

[Act II, Scene 1: The Suggestion]

The scene begins with pulsing and forward moving music. Susan and Elena enter the stage in the dark, the Farsi text still visible. Bright white light slowly comes up, making the Farsi disappear. In the window behind the band an image of a night sky with a crescent moon slides into frame.

Susan, Elena’s gossiping friend, played by Jennifer Ashe, wears a bright red dress, similar to Elena’s, with a red wedged heel and dark blue cardigan. Elena’s cardigan is a more vibrant blue color. Susan is a young white woman with brown hair, pulled back in a bun.

Susan stands on the right of the stage talking on the black corded phone to Elena, who stands on the left of the stage talking into the red corded phone. There is a red bucket with a blue feather duster and various cleaning supplies within it, on the floor beneath the phone by Elena.

Elena is visibly concerned about John. Susan asks Elena if she “ever considered that John might be gay.” Elena is appalled and responds “why would you ask me that?”

The stage goes dark revealing the sanskrit text again as we hear John and Darren vocalize offstage. When Susan continues her speculation the white lights return and we’re back with Susan and Elena, this lighting scheme continues as John and Darren meditate with greater intensity, which causes the audience to laugh.

When Elena continues saying “A week ago,” the lights come back and the text disappears once more. Despite what Susan says, she was most definitely “stirring the pot.”

Elena ends the phone call saying “Listen, I’ll call you sometime next week.” The two hang up, and Susan exits offstage to the right.

Elena’s Aria begins with the image of night sky sliding away to reveal a bright image of a box “Brillo Pads” in its distinct orange and yellow packaging with red and blue text in the window behind the band. This also causes the audience to laugh.

Elena is stressed, concerned, overwhelmed from that conversation. She grabs the cleaning bucket, crosses to the front of the stage and gets down on her knees to scrub the floor as she begins singing her aria. She stands, angered by her husband's distancing, and by the potential danger she perceives in Darren's presence:

*For all I know he could be a thief
A rapist
A murderer!*

She ends the aria by proclaiming tensely and under her breath: "I want my husband back!". She angrily grabs the bucket and cleaning supplies and storms off to the left.

[Act 2, Interlude 5]

As the interlude begins, the lights slowly fade so that the band is silhouetted in blue light. In the dark the cast sets the kitchen scene from the first act: a blue table center stage with three red chairs surrounding, a green pan and ladle, and a place setting in front of the center chair.

The image on the back wall of the box of "brillo pads" slides away to reveal the image of neatly aligned cooking utensils in the window behind the band, also seen in Act one.

[Act II, Scene 2: The Seduction]

The lights come up during a rhythmic unison triple gesture between the winds, a musical highpoint at the end of the interlude.

Elena is in the kitchen waiting to serve John. John rushes in and Elena sings: "John I can't help but notice you've been spending a lot of time with Darren."

John hangs his coat on the rightmost chair and sits down in the center chair. Elena paces for a moment and sits in the leftmost chair.

John is initially taken aback by Elena's anger. He stands as he attempts to explain, but it is hard for them to understand and communicate to each other:

*This all sounds a bit weird, John
quite a bit weird. John.*

Elena, in an effort to prove that John is not gay, she quickly shifts modes and becomes flirty. She stands and walks to him. As they kiss she unbuttons his shirt. They move to the front of the table. John sits on the edge of the table as Elena makes her way down his body to his pants zipper. She attempts to give him a blowjob, but he doesn't give consent.

It has nothing to do with you. I'm in a very internal place right now

Elena is bewildered and upset. She stands up and begins walking offstage before she's stopped by John: "Elena, wait, I didn't mean to hurt you..." John attempts to comfort her by touching her shoulder. She recoils, saying: "Don't touch me!." The lights slowly fade out.

[Act II, Scene 3: The Harassment]

The stage is cleared, and this time the light on the band is green. The busdriver scene is set up with a chair on the right facing the left. A giant red stop sign sits on the left side of the stage. The image in the window behind the band slides to the bus stop road sign.

As the lights come up, Darren is sitting in the chair pantomiming driving the bus. John's son, Brian is wearing his colorblock -sweatshirt and orange backpack. Behind him is Mean Kid, played by Aliana de la Guardia, who also plays Elena. Mean kid is heavy set, with a bright green and oversized baseball cap, a large green sweatshirt, Red knee length athletic shorts and grey sneakers. Brian and the Mean Kid don't sing. They only speak in rhythm with the music.

Mean Kid sits behind Brian and insults him with homophobic insults, slapping his head and shoving him.

Brian and Mean Kid stand off as if they are about to fight, but Mean Kid is bigger. Brian tried to run away, but Mean Kid grabs him by the backpack and throws him to the floor. Mean Kid gets on top of him, winds up for a big punch on Brian when Darren stops them yelling, "Get out! Get out! Get out of the bus!"

He grabs Mean Kid's backpack and throws it to him, then grabs Mean Kid and drags him off yelling "*Get out*" into Mean Kid's face. Mean Kid exit stage crying, holding his backpack.

Dareen sees that Brian is bleeding, brings him over to the chair and places him on his lap. Brian is sniffing. He gets a first aid kit, opens a band aid and covers a cut near his left eye.

Elena walks in, in her orange dress without her blue cardigan, and sees the two together. "*Oh, my God! What's going on here? Did you touch him?*" She storms on to the imaginary bus and grabs Brian while frantically chastising Darren.

Brian is confused and concerned as he is dragged off stage right by a fuming Elena. Darren, exhausted, sits back in the chair on the imaginary bus.

During the music with upward flourishes in saxophone and clarinet parts, the lights dim to again silhouette the band, this time in a light purple. Darren clears the stage.

[Act 2, Scene 4: The Confrontation]

With a breath the band cues themselves playing active, drumming music. The stage is set with the blue table at the center and one red chair behind it. The lights come up to reveal Elena now sitting in the chair, waiting for John and fuming. John enters from the right.

"Where were you? Where were you?"

"I went to go see Darren."

John sits at the table as Elena angrily circles back and forth behind him. She tells him everything she thinks saw on the bus and that Darren is a child molester.

Upset, John crosses to the right side of the stage. Elena follows and puts her hand on his cheeks. *"John, sweetie, let him go. He's not good for you anyway... They already came for him."*

"No! Elena, How could you!"

Elena calmly exits through a door to the right of the stage.

John, incredibly upset, throws the chair to the left and overturns the table toward the band. He picks up the red-corded phone on the left side of the stage to call Darren, to confirm if it's true that he was arrested and taken away. *"It's true. It's really true."*

John falls to his knees and folds over in sorrow at center stage, when the lights begin to dim. As they dim it reveals a faint white circle of light around John. When the instruments begin to drone, attempts to find peace and catharsis through meditation. He vocalizes and sets three pillows center stage, as Darren taught him. Sits down cross-legged on the center pillow and stretches out his hands as he begins his overtone singing.

When the percussive knocking begins a light appears on the right side of the stage of the outside of the wall to reveal Elena lit ominously with a light shining up from the floor. She pantomimes knocking on the door towards the audience.

"John, open the door!" She enters the room with Brian in tow. Brian ends up on the right of John and Elena on the left, so that they are surrounding him.

Elena is fuming and circling John as she questions him, *"Who are you? I told you, John, that your son was molested! And you ran into your room John! And you're angry at me for protecting our son! John, get your priorities straight! Get your shit together!"*

Elena tries to get a reaction out of John, as he is still in a meditative trance. She pushes his head and then grabs a pillow from the floor and hits him several times. This scares Brian who runs to hide behind the table near the band.

Elena collapses from exhaust and sorrow, which begins a trio:

“Don’t leave, dad, please don’t leave, dad. I need you dad, I need you.”

“I can’t believe this John, how did we get here?”

“Elena, it doesn’t have to come to this. I know how it looks, but not everything is what it seems! “

John gets upset and asks Elena to explain what happened to Darren. Brian, still scared and confused, sneaks to hide behind the chair that was thrown to the left of the stage. Elena crosses to exit through the right side door, when John stops her. She faces away from him as he explains, *“I was feeling empty, so empty... then it happened”*

She turns to face him and her fears, but when John sings *“remember”* both Elena and Brian exit opposite sides of the stage to become the “Greek Chorus.” Both are outside of the walls, Elena on the right and Brian on the left and lit from the floor lights. They chant *“remember”* with John. As they chant the stage begins to gently glow again illuminating the Farsi poetry on the floor and the walls.

They quickly remove their masks and return into character to confront John, but he can’t go back to who he was before. He has been changed and he won’t go back.

Elena crosses to the left in sorrow. Brian runs over to John and defends Darren in hopes that it will keep them together, but it’s too late. John is changed. John and Elena resolve to take some time apart.

In the stillness of the music John crosses to Elena and they embrace with love and sorrow, heads together. Then John crosses to a teary-eyed Brian and hugs him. Elena moves toward Brian and he runs to his mother’s embrace.

With the resonant sound of the cymbal and electronic score, Darren, with his translucent mask on, enters from the right holding the bus driver’s cap ceremoniously in both his hands. He places it on John’s head, indicating that John is now the “bus driver,” a metaphor for the Mystic, and places it on John's head.

As John and Darren exit, one behind the other, the lights dim with Elena and Brian still embracing each other on stage. The black light reveals only the glowing poetry of Rumi written all over the stage floor and the walls, glowing in black light.

The lights cut to black. The end.

[Closing Titles]

The lights come up to reveal the set. The singers bow, the instrumentalists bow, and then they come together and take a company bow. Director Andrew Eggert and composer Adam Roberts come up to the stage and take a bow.

The closing titles play over this in the the same order as the beginning in various orientations on the screen, each fading in and out:

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The credits crawl list the cast and crew from the 2013 production as well as special thanks and sponsor from 2013 and the present season. For a full list of this season’s sponsors please visit www.guerillaopera.org.support.

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You can also visit <http://www.guerillaopera.org.support>.

Thank you for watching!