



WARGO'S & WALTON'S  
A VISIT TO THE COUNTRY THE BEAR

FRI. NOV. 12 7:30 PM

SUN. NOV. 14 3:00 PM

# »»» A SPECIAL THANK YOU

To the Franklin School of Art and Sciences, The Hugh Hodgson School of Music, The Wyatt and Margaret Anderson Professorship in the Arts, and The Patricia and Carl S. Hoveland Fellowship in Opera for making this production possible.

A very special thanks to our “Friends of the Opera” Donors and Supporters who have contributed generously to the Opera Theatre Program and our opera students.

In addition, we wish to thank the Atlanta Opera, Wanda Creech, Joshua Jansen, the UGA Department of Theatre and Film Studies, Ivan Ingermann, Julie Ray, WUGA FM and Pamela Bowers. And thank you to Katie Preissner, Opera Colorado, and Opera Idaho for their help in getting Richard Wargo’s opera, A Visit to the Country, to our stage.



**Eleftherios Chasanidis**



**Xiaohan Chen**



**John Drake**



**Kandrya Edwards**



**Andrew Ellis**



**Samantha Mishima Friedman**



**Abigail Head**



**Rayvon Love**



**Sara Lynn Storm**

# UGA OPERA THEATRE

presents

Richard Wargo's  
A VISIT TO THE COUNTRY  
&  
William Walton's  
THE BEAR

*Sung in English*

**with the UGA Symphony Orchestra**

Friday, November 12, 2021 | 7:30 pm  
Sunday, November 14, 2021 | 3:00 pm

*Hodgson Concert Hall  
Performing Arts Center  
Athens, GA*

**A VISIT TO THE COUNTRY**  
**Part Two of A CHEKHOV TRILOGY**

**Music and Libretto by Richard Wargo**

*Suggested by “A Visit to Friends”, “Verochka”, “Other People’s Misfortune”, “The House with the Mezzanine” and other writings of Anton Chekhov*

*A Visit to the Country was commissioned by the Greater Miami Opera, with special thanks to the National Institute of Music Theatre for their support. The piece premiered with the Chautauqua Opera in 1993 as part two of A Chekhov Trilogy.*

**CAST**

**Tania**, a landowner –  
Xiaohan Chen (Mezzo-soprano),  
Samantha Mishima Friedman (cover)

**Nadia**, her younger sister –  
Sara Hargrave (Soprano),  
Abigail Head (cover)

**Wife** – Abigail Head (Soprano),  
Xandrya Edwards (cover)

**Husband** – Rayvon Love (Tenor)

**Sergei**, Tania’s husband –  
Eleftherios Chasanidis (Baritone)

**Mischa**, A lawyer from Moscow –  
Andrew Ellis (Tenor)

**Time:** *A late summer evening - 1888*

**Place:** *The porch of a country estate and the surrounding garden – 70 miles north of Moscow.*

*By arrangement with G. Schirmer, INC. publisher and copyright owner.*

**SYNOPSIS – A VISIT TO THE COUNTRY:**

Tania, an aristocratic landowner, in an effort to prevent her crumbling estate from being put up for auction, enlists the aid of Misha, a young Moscow lawyer. Tania’s true scheme, however, is to kindle a romance between Misha and her younger sister, Nadia, to preserve the estate by placing the mortgaged property in Misha’s name. At first, Tania’s plan appears to be working, with Misha falling helplessly under the spell of the country and hopelessly in love with Nadia. But could the success of this ‘visit to the country’ be short-lived if Misha learns the truth?

**INTERMISSION** (Approx. 20 minutes)

## THE BEAR

Music by William Walton  
Libretto by Paul Dehn and William Walton

*Based on the short story by Anton Chekhov*

*The first performance of The Bear was given by the English Opera Group on June 3, 1967 at the Aldeburgh Festival.*

## CAST

**Mdm. Yeliena Ivanovna Popova**, *the young widow of a landowner* –  
Samantha Mishima Friedman (Mezzo-soprano)

**Grigory Stepanovich Smirnov**, *a middle-aged landowner* –  
Eleftherios Chasanidis (Baritone)

**Luka**, *Madam Popova's Manservant* – John Drake (Baritone)

*Time: 1888*

*Place: The Drawing Room of Madam Popova's house in the country.*

*By arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., o/b/o Oxford University Press*

## SYNOPSIS – THE BEAR:

Madame Popova continues to mourn her late husband, in spite of the views of her manservant, Luka, that it is time for her to move on with her life. She may have been a faithful wife, but her husband was far from being a model husband. Suddenly, an unexpected visitor arrives. Smirnov is a great bear of a man, whom Madame Popova dislikes instantly. He has come to demand a settlement of an outstanding debt incurred by her late husband. An argument develops between the two and Popova orders Luka to throw the intruder out. Words are exchanged; a duel is threatened and considered, even though the lady would need to be shown how to use a pistol. Have they both finally found the thing that they have both been looking for standing before them or will their contempt for one another get the best of them?

# THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Mark Cedel, conductor

Pyeongkang Park, assistant conductor

## **VIOLIN I**

Thiago Formiga,  
concertmaster  
Paulo Batschauer  
Lyu Lian  
Yeasol Kang

## **VIOLIN II**

Cristobal Provoste, principal  
Molly Schneider, assistant  
principal  
Sean Smith

## **VIOLA**

Claudia Malchow, principal  
Ava Cosman, associate  
principal  
Bryan Johnson, assistant  
principal

## **CELLO**

Leah Dutton, co-principal  
Ayako Pederson-Takeda,  
co-principal  
Jack Rose, assistant

## **BASS**

Leonardo Lourenco Lopes,  
principal  
Ricardo Karelisky Deho

## **FLUTE**

Jovana Damnjanovic

## **OBOE**

Eleanor Rasmussen  
Emma Gordon

## **CLARINET**

Alex Carrillo  
Alex Gehring  
Jaden Skelton

## **BASSOON**

Cassandra Roache  
Sydney Worsham

## **HORN**

Erika Arango  
Jordan Chase  
Jake Wadsworth

## **TRUMPET**

Ting-Rui (Ray) Lian  
Matthew Burn

## **TROMBONE**

Dalton Hooper  
David Cain

## **PERCUSSION**

Kylan Bigby  
Michelle Jiang  
Jacob Pilz  
Patrick Sorah

## **HARP**

Julia Gu

## **PIANO**

Saeram Jang

## **LIBRARIAN**

Nathan Groot

## **PERSONNEL**

Molly Schneider

## **PRODUCTION**

Rogelio Bonilla-Piedra

## **PRODUCTION STAFF**

Mark Cedel – Conductor

Daniel Ellis – Stage Director/Producer

Frederick Burchnial – Director of Opera

Kathryn Wright – Principal Opera Coach and Musical Preparation

Saeram Jang – Assistant Opera Coach/Rehearsal Pianist

Donna Crawford – Costume/Makeup Coordinator

Graf von Imhoff – Lighting Designer

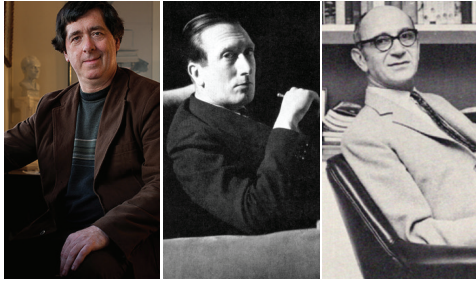
Carina McGeehin – Stage Manager

Samantha Eubanks – Properties and Furniture Manager

Alex Bond – Set Construction

Camille Hayes – HHSOM Publicity

# >>> ABOUT THE COMPOSERS/LIBRETTISTS



**Richard Wargo**, heralded by *The Philadelphia Enquirer* as "A fresh new voice in American opera" and by *Opera News* as "a born opera composer," is a native of Scranton, PA and a graduate of the Eastman School of Music. He has received grants from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the National Endowment for the Arts and the PA Council on the Arts, as well as a fellowship from the Theatre Communications Groups to serve as composer-in-residence at the Skylight Opera Theatre in Milwaukee, where his opera *Ballymore*, based on Brian Friel's play, *Lovers*, was premiered in 1999 and recorded for PBS. Mr. Wargo's, *A Chekhov Trilogy*, was premiered by Chautauqua Opera in 1993 and since then has received numerous performances, including a recent production of the Trilogy's third segment, *The Music Shop*, at Juilliard and Vancouver Opera. During the summer months, Mr. Wargo serves as curator of the Sembrich Opera Museum in Bolton Landing on Lake George, NY.

**Sir William Walton** (1902 – 1983) was born in Oldham, Lancashire in 1902. He had little formal compositional tuition at university and is considered essentially self-taught. His first noted composition was a piano quartet written at the age of sixteen. In 1922 he collaborated with Edith Sitwell in devising the entertainment *Façade*. In 1938 Jascha Heifetz asked him for a violin concerto and this was first performed by Heifetz in December 1939. In 1941 he wrote the overture *Scapino* for the 50th anniversary of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Also known for his extensive film and ballet scores, in 1944 came the music for the first of Laurence Olivier's major Shakespearean films, *Henry V*. *Hamlet* followed in 1948 and *Richard III* in 1955. These established Walton among the greatest composers for the screen. 1969 saw *The Bear*, a one-act 'extravaganza' to a Chekhov-based libretto by Paul Dehn, both of which continue to be performed throughout Europe. In 1978 he was elected an honorary member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. He was knighted in 1951 and in 1968 received the Order of Merit. He died in Ischia in 1983 at the age of 80.

**Paul Edward Dehn** (1912 – 1976) was born in Manchester, England and began his career in 1936 as a film reviewer for several London newspapers. He was film critic for the *News Chronicle* until its closure in 1960 and then for the *Daily Herald* until 1963. During WWII he was stationed at Camp X in Ontario, Canada. This was one of several training facilities operated by the British Special Operations Executive to train spies and special forces teams. He was the Political Warfare officer from 1942 to 1944 and held the rank of Major. Dehn took part in missions in France and Norway.

Through the 1960s, Dehn concentrated on screenwriting for espionage films, notably *Goldfinger*, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, and *The Deadly Affair*. He later wrote the screenplays for the second, third, and fourth original *Planet of the Apes* sequels. Dehn and his business partner, James Bernard, won the Academy Award for Best Story for *Seven Days to Noon*. His last screenplay was for Sidney Lumet's all-star *Murder on the Orient Express* (1974), based on the Agatha Christie whodunit, for which he was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay.

# »»» ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Eleftherios Chasanidis** (SERGEI/SMIRNOV – Opera Graduate Assistant and Hoveland Fellowship Award Recipient) is a baritone from Thessaloniki, Greece. He holds degrees in Violin Performance, Voice Performance, Advanced Tonal Harmony, Modal Counterpoint, Fugue, and Byzantine Music. He has performed roles in his career including Figaro, Gianni Schicchi, Raimondo, Olin Blitch, The Prophet/King (EU Premiere of Dark Sisters by Nico Muhly), Il Commendatore, Don Basilio, and others. He has performed in venues in the US, Italy, Greece, Germany, and Austria. He is currently studying in the studio of Frederick Burchinal.

**Xiaohan Chen** (TANIA - Opera Graduate Assistant and Hoveland Fellowship Award Recipient), Chinese Mezzo-soprano, now resident in the United States. She is currently a DMA student at the University of Georgia with a Master degree from the Manhattan School of Music. Ms. Chen is an emerging artist in operatic and concert works that has performed throughout the United States, Canada, and China.

**John Drake** (LUKA, John R. Curtis Scholarship in Opera) is a third-year undergraduate pursuing a degree in music performance. He is originally from Gainesville, Ga and started his musical experience performing in musicals, and singing in numerous choirs in the community. His love for Opera began with his studies at the University of Georgia performing in the opera scenes programs put on by the opera theater. He is incredibly excited for this opportunity, and would like to thank his voice teacher Dr. Knight for her guidance, the entire directorial team, his cast mates, and his parents for their never-ending support.

**Xandrya Edwards** (Cover: WIFE – Graduate Assistant) is a soprano who is currently studying under Dr. Gregory Broughton in the Hugh Hodgson School of Music. Xandrya is pursuing her Master's degree here at the University of Georgia in Vocal Performance. Xandrya received her Undergraduate degree in Vocal performance from Kennesaw State University in 2020.

**Andrew Ellis** (MISHA - Opera Graduate Assistant and Hoveland Fellowship Award Recipient) is the resident tenor at the University of Georgia. He completed his M.M. at UGA performing such roles as Edgardo in Lucia di Lammermoor and Almaviva in Il Barbiere di Siviglia. Andrew continues his residence at UGA, now as a D.M.A. candidate in Vocal Performance in Prof. Frederick Burchinal's studio.

**Samantha Mishima Friedman** (MDM. POPOVA – Opera Graduate Assistant and Hoveland Fellowship Award Recipient) is a first-year DMA student at the University of Georgia. Roles include: The Trial of Susan B. Anthony by Steven Mark Kohn, Hansel und Gretel (Witch/Mother), Elektra (Erste Magd), Amahl and the Night Visitors (Mother). Samantha holds an MM in Vocal Performance from Mercer University and a BA from Sarah Lawrence College.

**Abigail Head** (WIFE - Opera Graduate Assistant and Hoveland Fellowship Award Recipient) soprano, has performed in Amahl and the Night Visitors (Amahl), The Importance of Being Earnest (Cecily), and Suor Angelica (Suor Osmina). Abigail is excited to continue her education as she pursues a DMA at the University of Georgia. Whenever performing, Abigail thinks of Bach's signature: Soli Deo Gloria.

**Rayvon Love** (HUSBAND - John R. Curtis Scholarship in Opera Recipient) is an undergraduate tenor at the University of Georgia. Love has been involved with UGA Opera Theatre in scenes programs as Tamino (Die Zauberflöte), Fenton (Falstaff), Belmonte (Die Entführung aus dem Serail), and Brighella (Ariadne auf Naxos). He is excited for his main stage role debut as Husband.

**Sara Lynn Storm** (NADIA, Opera Graduate Assistant and Hoveland Fellowship Award Recipient) of Stratford, CT has been singing since age 8. In the beginning of 2021 Storm performed in CCM's production of Die Zauberflöte, where she played Queen of the Night. In 2020, she appeared as La Messagiera in Monteverdi's L'Orfeo. Currently Storm is enrolled at the University of Georgia under the instruction of Frederick P. Burchinal and Kathryn T. Wright.



# »»» ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Mark Cedel** (Conductor) brings a wealth of professional experience to his position as Director of Orchestral Activities. The 2021-2022 academic year marks his 258th year at UGA. Prior to his appointment at UGA, he was Associate Conductor of the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra. In his four seasons with that orchestra, he conducted over 200 performances; appearing on every series offered by the orchestra. Before joining the Charlotte Symphony, Cedel was Principal Viola and Assistant Conductor of the Charleston (SC) Symphony Orchestra for nine years. While in Charleston, he served for two seasons as that orchestra's Acting Music Director. From 1986-1990, he was a member of the artist faculty at the Brevard Music Center and was principal conductor of the Brevard Repertory Training Program.

In addition to directing orchestral activities at UGA, Cedel served as professor of viola from 1994-2002. During that period, he performed, toured, and recorded regularly as extra/substitute viola with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, including its northeast tour with concerts in Carnegie Hall. He returned to teaching viola for the 2009-2010 academic year, while a search was conducted to fill the position.

Cedel earned a bachelor of music degree in viola performance from the Curtis Institute of Music where he was a student of Joseph dePasquale, and studied chamber music with members of the Guarneri Quartet, Budapest Quartet and Beaux Arts Trio. He holds a master of music degree in conducting from the North Carolina School of the Arts.



**Daniel Ellis** (Director) is the Academic Professional of Opera/Musical Theatre and a new addition to the UGA HHSOM faculty. He is a recipient of 2021 OPERA America's Robert L. B. Tobin Director-Designer Prize. Ellis made his European debut directing the third revival of Barrie Kosky and Suzanne Andrade's production of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* at the Komische Oper in Berlin (2016). Ellis also directed the European debut of Sir David McVicar's production of *Wozzeck* at the Grand Théâtre de Genève in Geneva, Switzerland (2017) and the Finnish National Opera (2019). Ellis has directed over 10 world premieres including the Off-Broadway production of Frank Gagliano's comedy, *Dancing with Joy*. Daniel directed and conceived the premiere of *Stay Tuned*, featuring vocal ensemble Five By Design, which performed with over 40 symphony orchestras and performing arts centers throughout the United States and Canada for its five-year tour. Daniel was selected for Minnesota Opera's Resident Artist Program for their 50th and 51st seasons. Ellis has worked for Lyric Opera of Chicago, Dallas Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Portland Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Mill City Opera, San Diego Opera, and Minnesota Opera alongside world-renowned directors including: Sir David McVicar, Graham Vick, Michael Cavanaugh, Fenlon Lamb, Thaddeus Strassberger, Kevin Newbury, Renaud Doucet, Joel Ivany, Sam Helfrich and David Lefkovich. He is an associate member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, and a member of AGMA. <http://www.danielbellis.com>



# »»» ABOUT THE ARTISTS



**Kathryn Wright** (Principal Opera Coach) is an American coach/prompter. For the past 20 years she lived and worked primarily in Germany until joining the faculty of the Hugh Hodgson School of Music's Opera Program in 2011. After training at McGill University in Montreal and finishing her studies at Columbia University in New York she became apprentice and assistant to Ms. Joan Dornemann, who taught her many of the subtleties of working with singers and a great deal about the operatic repertoire. Ms. Wright freelanced extensively in New York and worked with various regional theaters in the US until she moved to Germany in 1987. Her credentials include four years at the Oper der Stadt Köln under James Conlon, two years at the Semper Oper in Dresden under Giuseppe Sinopoli, and four years as a guest artist at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, working with conductors such as Peter Schneider, Adam Fisher, Carlo Rizzi, Placido Domingo and James Levine, as well as artists such as Deborah Voigt, Jennifer Larmore, Roberto Alagna, Bryn Terfel, and Ben Heppner among many others. From 1996 to 2003 she was also a guest in Sydney for the Winter Season of the Australian Opera, where she prepared, assisted and prompted for many individual productions as well as coaching for their Young Artists Program. She was on the musical staff of the Deutsche Oper Berlin from 2001 to 2011, where again she was privileged to collaborate with many of the well-known singers and conductors of our time, including Christian Thielemann and, most recently, Donald Runnicles.

**Saeram Jang** (Assistant Opera Coach/Rehearsal Pianist) is currently pursuing a DMA in piano performance at UGA, and is currently the official accompanist for the school's opera department. Originally from South Korea, she graduated from Kyungsung University with a B.A and an M.A in piano performance studying with Jung Mi Hwang. She also graduated from SUNY Purchase with another Master's degree studying piano with Paul Ostrovsky. Since 2010, she has been working as an accompanist in different school choruses, as well as collaborating with different opera departments when she is not giving solo concerts. Prior she was an official accompanist in Busan's Jung Gu District Office with their chorus. She has performed with In Hong Cha who is violinist and conductor, and Professor of Music at Wright State University's School of Music in Dayton, Ohio. In New York, she performed Stravinsky's "Les Noces" with SUNY Purchase's chorus.



# UGA OPERA THEATRE

# Hugh Hodgson School of Music Fall Season

**November 18, 7:30, Hodgson Hall**

**Thursday Scholarship Series**

**GLEE CLUBS & JAZZ ENSEMBLE**

**Friday, November 19, 7:30, Hodgson Hall**

**Ensemble Series**

**UGA WIND ENSEMBLE**

**+ AFRICAN AMERICAN CHORAL ENSEMBLE**

**Thursday, December 2 & Friday, December 3**

**7:30, Hodgson Hall**

**Thursday Scholarship Series**

**ANNUAL HOLIDAY CONCERTS**

**SCAN FOR  
TICKETS FROM  
THE PERFORMING  
ARTS CENTER  
BOX OFFICE!**



