Chincha-Chancha Coñoco or the Weaver’s Wedding

directed by David Bass and Kathryn Lindsay
choreography by Rachel Zimmerman

The Peabody School, Cambridge, MA
March 12, 13, 19, and 20, 2016
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Weaver’s Wedding

music by Bernard Hughes
libretto by William Radice

based on “The Foolish Weaver and the Jackal” by Upendrakishore Raychaudhuri

Directed by David Bass and Kathryn Lindsay
Choreography by Rachel Zimmerman
Produced by Carla Procaskey

March 12, 13, 19, and 20, 2016
The Peabody School, Cambridge, MA

Special thanks to Beanfields Bean and Rice Chips for their sponsorship of this production.
Act 1

The Story Teller spins a tale to interest five children, and so we meet Rajah the Weaver. Rajah is no use at multi-tasking. He knows he should weave his cloth, cut his crops and milk his cow, but he gets confused. When his scythe gets hot, the clever Jackal advises him: “Dip your scythe in the water - That will make it cooler”.

This advice works well, until Rajah plunges his cow into the pond to cool her down and drowns her, to the mortification of his neighbors in the village. To make amends, the Jackal promises to help Rajah find the ideal wife: a princess! The neighbors are doubtful but intrigued, as is Rajah. The Jackal tells him to “take a bath and brush your hair - Weave some beautiful clothes to wear”, while he, the Jackal, is to go and meet the King, returning in three days time. Fortunately for Rajah, his friends the Weavers, Farmers, Children, Village Elders and Peacocks are willing to help him.

Once at the palace, the Jackal impresses the court with his confident appearance (not to mention his very special and expensive shoes). Now while ‘rajah’ means king, our Rajah is a mere weaver. Without telling a single lie, the jackal makes him sound so impressive that the King and Queen are quite won over, as are the advisers from the Prime Minister all the way down to the Deputy Deputy Deputy Deputy Deputy Deputy Prime Minister. Besides the King needs a male heir, and the Princess is getting rather expensive. The Jackal is given a purse of gold with which to greet his master and begin to arrange the marriage.

Act 2

The Peacocks, Myna Birds, Koel Birds, Brain-Fever Birds, Doves, Frogs, Jackals and Mosquitoes are under orders from the Jackal to make as much noise as possible outside the palace, and the King is understandably alarmed. The Jackal explains that this is his master’s wedding procession: “No bridegroom’s train was ever larger!” It takes another bag of gold to buy some peace so that the King can get dressed without being deafened.

As the Jackal is weighing the purse of gold with satisfaction, Rajah arrives, magnificently attired. Knowing that his rustic tones would give him away, the Jackal instructs Rajah not to say a single word. Sure enough, the Weaver’s dignified silence impresses the court deeply. A feast is prepared and the Jackal shares some of the gold with the Birds and the Beasts; Rajah and the Princess arrive together, Rajah smiling broadly but the Princess looking cross.

After the wedding, it becomes clear that the Princess is very angry to have been married to a man who refuses to speak. Rajah, meanwhile, cannot work out how to get into the marriage bed - literally! He wrecks the mosquito net, and as the dreaded insects invade, Rajah forgets his vow of silence. In a moment he has revealed his true identity.

The Princess is furious, but even in her rage, she comes up with a plan to get rid of the Mosquitoes. Rajah falls in love with her for being so clever and vows to obey her. Meanwhile, she decides to make the best of things by organizing his education in reading, dancing, music, fencing and archery. The results are stunning! So popular does Rajah become that the King is persuaded to declare him his heir-apparent. Chincha-Chancha Cooroo!
LIST OF SCENES

Act 1
Scene 1: Prologue
Scene 2: Rajah the Weaver at Home
Scene 3: The Feverish Scythe
Scene 4: The Sickly Cow
Scene 5: The Weaver Consoled
Scene 6: The Weaver Prepares
Scene 7: The Jackal Meets the King
Scene 8: The King and Queen’s Pleasure

Act 2
INTERLUDE
Scene 9: The Wedding Procession
Scene 10: The King’s Alarm
Scene 11: Before the Wedding
Scene 12: The Feast
Scene 13: The Wedding-Night
Scene 14: The Weaver’s Training
Scene 15: The Cabinet Meets
Scene 16: The Investiture

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Story-Teller: Jill Singer
The Kids: Ilan Balzac, Elke Bentley, Leetka Katzenblickstein, Marin Manoach, Julia Teller
Rajah the Weaver: Laura Bigler
Jackal: Sophia Teller
Lead Peacock: Julianna Walsh
King: Jeff Bigler
Queen: Lisa Racolta-Danielyan
Prime Minister: Eloise Botka
Deputy Prime Minister: Lonnie Bass
Princess: Kathryn Fernandopulle

The Villagers

Farmers/Koel Birds:
Caitlin Anderson, Rachel Cooper, Polina Danielyan, Hannah Erickson*, Nathan Gilbert, Patricia Hawkins*, Jack Ramde*, Danny Scibelli*

Village Children/Mosquitoes:
Elke Bentley*, Margot Kelsey, Julie Klump, Elizabeth Morse, Dawn Peters, Sara St. Antoine*, Julia Teller*, Ava Weinstein

Village Elders/Doves:
Juli Berndt*, Bill Laskin*, Izzy Laskin*, Kathy Lindsay, Marin Manoach*, Joanne Nicklas*, Aster Vyrros*, Marina Vyrros

Weavers/Jackals:
Adira Balzac*, Ilan Balzac*, Heather Barney, Lynn Colletti, David Gordon Mitten, Nicci Stamos*, Aimee Yermish*

The Courtiers

Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers:

Frogs/Courtiers:
Tom Gould, Ben Jerome*, Kostas Jerome, Charles Leiserson, Katie Leiserson*, Margery Meadow, Rick Nilsson, Sophia Nilsson*

Myna Birds/Courtiers:

Peacocks/Courtiers:

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Story-Teller: Katie Hamill
The Kids: Linnea Fried, Dina Gorelik, Alice Merrill Hunter, Sacha Licholai, Lia Nachtigal
Rajah the Weaver: Yuval Agam
Jackal: Robyn Lindsay
Lead Peacock: Margaret Rowe
King: Nate Burket
Queen: Emilija Baksys
Prime Minister: Eloise Botka
Deputy Prime Minister: Lonnie Bass
Princess: Nicole McElhoe

The Villagers

Farmers/Koel Birds:
Caitlin Anderson, Anat Beck*, Hannah Erickson*, Ada LaMaster*, Steve LaMaster*, Edan Nachtigal*

Village Children/Mosquitoes:
Debjani Banerji, Linnea Fried*, Addie Kelsey, Penelope Kibbe*, Lia Nachtigal*, Sara St. Antoine

Village Elders/Doves:
Popi Kokkinogenis*, Kerry LaRose*, Susan LaRose, Sacha Licholai*, Chanda McCreary, Dan McKanan*, Oriana McKanan*, Tammy McKanan

Weavers/Jackals:

The Courtiers

Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers:
Lonnie Bass*, Eloise Botka*, Ruth Hertzman-Miller*, Sue Holcomb*, Kathy Lindsay*, Rachel Miller*, Jeff Moore*

Frogs/Courtiers:

Myna Birds/Courtiers:
Gal Agam, Hadar Agam, Maya Agam*, Yigal Agam, Davide Pettenuzzo, Leo Pettenuzzo

Peacocks/Courtiers:
Mark Bildman*, Maia Levitt*, Anya Miller, Liz Morse*, Fiona O’Loughlin*, Margaret Rowe*

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The Leads

**Story-Teller:** Jill Singer
**The Kids:** Ilan Balzac, Elke Bentley, Leetka Katzenblickstein, Marin Manoach, Julia Teller
**Rajah the Weaver:** Laura Bigler
**Jackal:** Sophia Teller
**Lead Peacock:** Margaret Rowe
**King:** Jeff Bigler
**Queen:** Lisa Racolta-Danielyan
**Prime Minister:** Lonnie Miller
**Deputy Prime Minister:** Emma Adler
**Princess:** Kathryn Fernandopulle

The Villagers

**Farmers/Koel Birds:**
Rachel Cooper*, Polina Danielyan, Nathan Gilbert, Patricia Hawkins*, Jack Ramde*, Danny Scibelli*

**Village Children/Mosquitoes:**
Elke Bentley*, Margot Kelsey, Julie Klump, Elizabeth Morse, Dawn Peters, Sara St. Antoine*, Julia Teller*, Ava Weinstein

**Village Elders/Doves:**
Juli Berndt*, Bill Laskin*, Izzy Laskin*, Kathy Lindsay, Marin Manoach*, Joanne Nicklas*, Aster Vyrros*, Marina Vyrros

**Weavers/Jackals:**
Adira Balzac*, Ilan Balzac*, Lynn Colletti, Hope Kelley, Glenn McElhoe, Nicci Stamos*, Aimee Yermish*

The Courtiers

**Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers:**

**Frogs/Courtiers:**

**Myna Birds/Courtiers:**

**Peacocks/Courtiers:**

* = Soloist
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Thanks and Congratulations to the

North Cambridge Family Opera Company

for another great year and for 17 years of great performances!

Craig A. Kelley
Cambridge City Council
www.CraigKelley.org
Cast - Sunday, March 13, 5 pm

The Leads

Story-Teller: Katie Hamill
The Kids: Linnea Fried, Dina Gorelik, Alice Merrill Hunter, Sacha Licholai, Lia Nachtigal
Rajah the Weaver: Yuval Agam
Jackal: Robyn Lindsay
Lead Peacock: Julianna Walsh
King: Nate Burket
Queen: Emilija Baksys
Prime Minister: Lonnie Miller
Deputy Prime Minister: Emma Adler
Princess: Nicole McElhoe

The Villagers

Farmers/Koel Birds:
Rachel Cooper*, Ada LaMaster*, Steve LaMaster*, Jack Ramde*, Danny Scibelli
Village Children/Mosquitoes:
Debjani Banerji, Eloise Botka, Linnea Fried*, Addie Kelsey, Penelope Kibbe*, Lia Nachtigal*, Sara St. Antoine
Village Elders/Doves:
Popi Kokkinogenis*, Kerry LaRose*, Susan LaRose, Sacha Licholai*, Chanda McCreary, Dan McKanan*, Oriana McKanan*, Tammy McKanan
Weavers/Jackals:

The Courtiers

Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers:
Emma Adler*, Ruth Hertzman-Miller*, Sue Holcomb*, Kathy Lindsay*, Lonnie Miller*, Rachel Miller*, Jeff Moore*
Frogs/Courtiers:
Myna Birds/Courtiers:
Gal Agam, Hadar Agam, Maya Agam*, Yigal Agam, Davide Pettenuzzo, Leo Pettenuzzo
Peacocks/Courtiers:
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**Cast - Saturday, March 19, 3 pm**

**The Leads**

**Story-Teller:** Katie Hamill  
**The Kids:** Linnea Fried, Dina Gorelik, Alice Merrill Hunter, Sacha Licholai, Julia Teller  
**Rajah the Weaver:** Yuval Agam  
**Jackal:** Robyn Lindsay  
**Lead Peacock:** Julianna Walsh  
**King:** Nate Burkett  
**Queen:** Emilija Baksys  
**Prime Minister:** Lonnie Miller  
**Deputy Prime Minister:** Lonnie Bass  
**Princess:** Nicole McElhoe

**The Villagers**

**Farmers/Koel Birds:**  
Caitlin Anderson, Anat Beck*, Hannah Erickson*, Ada LaMaster*, Steve LaMaster*, Edan Nachtigal*

**Village Children/Mosquitoes:**  
Debjani Banerji, Eloise Botka, Linnea Fried*, Addie Kelsey, Penelope Kibbe*, Sara St. Antoine, Julia Teller*

**Village Elders/Doves:**  
Popi Kokkinogenis*, Kerry LaRose*, Susan LaRose, Sacha Licholai*, Chanda McCreary, Dan McKanan*, Oriana McKanan*, Tammy McKanan

**Weavers/Jackals:**  

**The Courtiers**

**Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers:**  
Lonnie Bass*, Ruth Hertzman-Miller*, Sue Holcomb*, Kathy Lindsay*, Lonnie Miller*, Rachel Miller*, Jeff Moore*

**Frogs/Courtiers:**  

**Myna Birds/Courtiers:**  
Gal Agam, Hadar Agam, Maya Agam*, Yigal Agam, Davide Pettenuzzo, Leo Pettenuzzo

**Peacocks/Courtiers:**  
Mark Bildman*, Lisa Ferrante-Walsh*, Maia Levitt*, Anya Miller, Liz Morse, Fiona O’Loughlin*, Julianna Walsh*

* = Soloist
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Cast – Saturday, March 19, 7 pm

The Leads

Story-Teller: Jill Singer
The Kids: Ilan Balzac, Elke Bentley,
Leetka Katzenblickstein, Marin Manoach,
Julia Teller
Rajah the Weaver: Laura Bigler
Jackal: Sophia Teller
Lead Peacock: Margaret Rowe
King: Jeff Bigler
Queen: Lisa Racolta-Danielyan
Prime Minister: Eloise Botka
Deputy Prime Minister: Lonnie Bass
Princess: Kathryn Fernandopulle

The Villagers

Farmers/Koel Birds:
Rachel Cooper*, Polina Danielyan, Nathan Gilbert, Patricia Hawkins*,
Jack Ramde*, Danny Scibelli*
Village Children/Mosquitoes:
Elke Bentley*, Margot Kelsey, Julie Klump, Elizabeth Morse, Dawn Peters,
Sara St. Antoine*, Julia Teller*, Ava Weinstein
Village Elders/Doves:
Juli Berndt*, Bill Laskin*, Izzy Laskin*, Kathy Lindsay, Marin Manoach*,
Joanne Nicklas*, Aster Vyrros*, Marina Vyrros
Weavers/Jackals:
Adira Balzac*, Ilan Balzac*, Heather Barney, Lynn Colletti,
David Gordon Mitten, Nicci Stamos*, Aimee Yermish*

The Courtiers

Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers:
Katarina Dvornik*, Aviva Gould*, Addie Kelsey*
Frogs/Courtiers:
Tom Gould, Ben Jerome*, Kostas Jerome, Charles Leiserson,
Katie Leiserson*, Rick Nilsson, Sophia Nilsson*
Myna Birds/Courtiers:
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Story-Teller: Katie Hamill
The Kids: Linnea Fried, Dina Gorelik, Alice Merrill Hunter, Sacha Licholai, Lia Nachtigal
Rajah the Weaver: Yuval Agam
Jackal: Robyn Lindsay
Lead Peacock: Julianna Walsh
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* = Soloist
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Cast - Sunday, March 20, 5 pm

The Leads

Story-Teller: Jill Singer
The Kids: Ilan Balzac, Elke Bentley, Leetka Katzenblickstein, Marin Manoach, Julia Teller
Rajah the Weaver: Laura Bigler
Jackal: Sophia Teller
Lead Peacock: Margaret Rowe
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Deputy Prime Minister: Emma Adler
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Weavers/Jackals:
Adira Balzac*, Ilan Balzac*, Heather Barney, Lynn Colletti, David Gordon Mitten, Nicci Stamos*, Aimee Yermish*

The Courtiers

Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers:
Frogs/Courtiers:
Myna Birds/Courtiers:
Peacocks/Courtiers:

* = Soloist

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The Weaver’s Wedding was the first production we mounted at the Peabody School after moving back here from the King Open School in 2009. It was nice to be back in North Cambridge, but we weren’t sure we would be able to accommodate our large casts on this much smaller stage. And we ran into some major roadblocks, including a couple of missed rehearsals due to snow, a whole lot of lost computer files, T-shirts that were misprinted in the first round, and problems of this being a new opera for us: creating solos, getting the orchestration done, dealing with 17 different subchoruses, and figuring out all of those darn 5/4 and 7/4 rhythms! And yet, when all was said and done, we had a beautiful production that was unlike anything we had ever performed before.

This year has not been without its challenges (hello, crumbled sets), but seven years later, we have learned how to produce this show, and we have had many partners along the way. First and foremost, we’d like to thank our hosts, the Peabody School and the co-resident Rindge Avenue Upper School, with their respective principals, Jennifer Ford and Julie Craven. Thanks also to the teachers whose stage and classrooms we’ve been sharing: Josh DeWitte, Summar Elguindy, LeeAnn Sutton, and Patrick Wroge. And custodians Chris, Bobby, Todd, and José have, as usual, made our stay here easy and pleasant.

Speaking of crumbled sets, our eternal thanks go to Peter Watson who stepped up in an emergency situation, helping us to re-create the designs he had originated for us in 2009. We now feel especially lucky to have our sets and props stored in the clean and DRY storage location generously donated by David Sandberg and Dina Mardell, so many thanks to them. We also extend our gratitude to Neena Gulati and Anisha Nakagawa, both of whom took time to help our choreography team create the beautiful movement that you see on the stage today.

We would like to thank Iggy’s Bread of the World, as well as Mark Bildman’s Cambridge Cookie Company, both of whom donate their wares to our rehearsals and performances: check them out at intermission! In addition, our sponsors CIC, Porter Square Books, and Thalia Tringo Real Estate have provided much-needed support, for which we are grateful. Whole Foods has generously donated much of our concessions food, so thank you to them as well. And Beanfields Family-Owned Bean and Rice Chips have sponsored us at a major level this year in addition to providing their delicious chips to our lobby. They even make a very brief appearance in our performance, so keep an eye out for them. Thank you, Beanfields! As always, thank you, too, to our past and current members for volunteering their time, donating their money, and creating this very special community.

Finally, we are grateful to the W11 Children’s Opera Trust, who originally commissioned this lovely work, and to Bernard Hughes and William Radice, who created it. We are sorry that neither of them was able to join us this year, but we send them our love and gratitude. Chincha-chancha cooroo!
Congratulations to all our friends and neighbors participating in North Cambridge Family Opera!

Todd Zinn, Realtor

Todd came to real estate after his first career as an elementary school teacher, including 8 years at Cambridge Friends School. While staying home with his newborn twin boys, Todd fell in love with real estate during the process of searching for a larger home. He made it his new profession. Todd's passion for architecture, design, and local history are contagious. Still a teacher at heart, in his new role, he enjoys educating his clients about the process of buying and selling homes.

Thalia Tringo, President

A founding member of North Cambridge Artists Open Studios (NoCA) and longtime North Cambridge resident, Thalia lives in Davis Square. After years working for a larger company, Thalia decided to open her own agency in 2011 and is proud to be a local business owner. She focuses on the Cambridge and Somerville markets and loves introducing people to the rich resources and great lifestyle these two communities offer.

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Will Erickson
Maria Fernandopulle
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Margaret Bigler
Nate Burket
Abbe Cohen Dvornik
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Bob Duggan
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Congratulations to the North Cambridge Family Opera Company for its creativity and for its spirit of community bringing together so many diverse people. I am proud that my son Andy serves on the board; that my granddaughter Emma is performing for the past ten years; and that my daughter-in-law Ann and grandson Ben are helping in the sale of refreshments, Esther Adler

Yuval - truly quite a Rajah! Gal, Maya - you silly birds! Love - ima and aba

To the starring Stars, Lisa and Polina, a farmer, a weaver, and oh my, a Queen, with love and delight, your mom and friends.

Hope: Not only are you a fabulous wife, mother and friend, you make a wonderful mix of weaving and jackaling. It’s great to see you up on stage again and I look forward to future performances at home. Love Craig

Popi the Elder, and Rhea the Crewer, we are proud of you both for your hard work! Love, Mama, Daddy, and Thalia

Eloise, Great job, again! We love you, again! Love, Aunt Michelle, Uncle Jeff, & Apollo.

For Margaret, our beloved Lead Peacock: Singing and dancing, solo and with others, zany and dignified, maybe covered with color? We cannot wait to see you!

Jeff Bigler: Break a leg and enjoy! - Dad

Abbe, Bert, and Katarina: My STARS are getting brighter each year! May you shine brightly at each performance. Love, Mom, Grandma

Kerry, Sue, and Chanda: Many hands make light work, glad you are in the field with us! The McKanans

Ilan, you’re there when the (Beanfields) chips are down. And remember, when jackals fly, they always bring carry on. Love, Mom and Dad.

Break a leg, Katie and Charles! Young Katie has one more solo than we’ll ever have :) Love, Max and Robin

Hooray Dawn! We’re so proud to see you back on the stage...where you belong! :-) We love you! David, Ava and Noah

The koel is known for its song, The peacock for tail-feathers long. The Gilberts are known For their talent and tone; With these birds we never go wrong.

To Sue, David, Kathy, Steve, Carla, and Jennifer: (Sing this!) The opera that you see depends on you, and you, and you, and you and you! (And you!) Thank you for your loyalty!

To the Deputy Deputy Deputy and Deputy Deputy Deputy Deputy Prime Ministers Abbe and Bert, I’ll always agree that you are awesome! Love, your outranked daughter
Splendid!

True
gu
t

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beam mission
Congratulations Sacha!! We are SO proud of you, sweetest girl in the world! You have worked really hard and it has paid off!

Laura & Jeff Bigler: Lots of bravas and bravos coming your way from realms near and far. Oma

To Lonnie, Rachel & Ruth: “Weave Me the Sunshine,” sang Peter Yarrow, adding “Shine on Us Again.” Shine brightly, NCFO Weavers! Rena & Danny M.

Eloise, this is what you love to do and I am so happy you are able to do it. Love, Grandma

Congratulations to our beautiful grand-daughter, Ava, a talented actress, singer, and dancer! Love, Grammy & Papa

Congratulations to the Fabulous Frieds (Linnea and Jeff) from your adoring family.

Carla- Thanks for all you do to make these wonderful shows happen. It really makes a difference.

Go, Leetka! Hit a home run! Sorry I can’t be there to hear you. Enjoy the opera! Love, Uncle Dan

A big and loud cheer for Leo and Davide from mamma and Totti. We love having you sing around the house and can’t wait to see you on stage!!

Penelope, we are so proud of you! You’re our favorite mosquito! We enjoy the hullabaloo! Love, Mommy and Daddy

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Dear Dawn & Ava: Best of luck on your performance. We know it will be great! Sending love from the Virginia Weinsteins (Uncle Josh, Aunt Hallie, Gavi & Mendy)

Julia -- You are a superstar kid, whether you’re on stage, upside down or leading a Hamilton rap. We love you sweetheart! Mom and Sophia.

Margaret R: Step, prance, show yourself off…it is a delight to see you perform and enjoy your opera life. Congratulations! Love, Mama.

Congrats, Katie and Charles. You’re always stars to us - have fun and shine. Xxoooo, Uncle B-li and Aunt Janet

Dear Margaret, I’m proud as a peacock that you are in the opera! Love, Grandma Judy

Oriana, harvest the rice, bind up the wheat, sing like a dove, and be light on your feet. Love, Mama and Papa

Congratulations Margaret, our beautiful lead peacock, may she ever shine bright amongst the flock. - Dad

Chris, thank you for all of your help this year and for filling Mark’s shoes so calmly and ably. And welcome to the Board! --Sue and David

Laura Bigler: Enjoy yourself and have lots of fun! - Grandpa

Congratulations to the NCFO cast and crew!

TIM TOOMEY

State Representative
Somerville / Cambridge
26th Middlesex District
Laura Bigler: Congratulations on your wonderful performance as Rajah! I imagine Carl, Irene, and Carole are also singing your praises. Xoxo Oma

Eloise, you are our Queen of the Opera! Can't wait to see the show. Love, Mom and Dad

Kathy, as usual, your multiple talents have been a large part of the success of this production. Thank you for all of them (and for Sunday eve unwindings). S&D

Ruth: You've made the switch from North Cambridge mom to a weaving jackal quite nicely. What's the next performance in your life? Whatever it is, you'll do great and thanks for sharing. Craig

Jennifer, Bethany, and Carmen, once again you have been such a valuable support for our singers of all ages--thank you! - Sue and David

To Mommy and Daddy and Katarina from Luka. I had fun helping at rehearsal. Come and praise, come and celebrate! Family Opera is really great!

To my darling Marin, you are terrific! Looking forward to another stellar performance. Have fun! Love, hugs and kisses from your Mom

It's been such a joy to watch my adorable peacock transform into a beautiful princess after several years of hard work and dedication. Nicole, your family and friends are so proud of you, we love you!

A big shout out to the technical crew shining light on all the action, especially for Margaret! With love from Auntie Anne

Sophia -- We will always be impressed by your verbal ingenuity, your wonder-working abilities and your sweet, sweet songs. And we will love you always. Mom & Julia

Thanks to Kathy, Rachel, Steve, Liz, Chloe, Jenny, David S and Davis for all your brilliant & creative contributions to this marvelous, beautiful, crazy production! Sue & David

Yigal - we couldn't be prouder of you on your incredible debut! Much love - Maya, Gal, Yuval and Hadar
To Emilija, so happy to see you in an ENCORE production of the Weaver’s Wedding! Toi, toi, toi! Love the Queen Mum

Robbie and Cooper: Where are you? Love Dad

NCFO Laskins: break a leg and have fun with The Weaver’s Wedding! So thrilled to see you in your fourth production. Love, Mom/Lisa

Debjani, thanks for being Penelope’s Family Opera mom! --Dave and Gwen

To the awesome McElhoe duo - thank you Nicole and Glenn for such amazing performances. We are looking forward to many more!

Thank you to Yuval and to our fellow Myna Birds Maya, Hadar, Gal and Yigal for introducing us to the magic world of NCFO! Without you we would not be here this year!! Davide and Leo

Congratulations and love to my faraway peacock Eliza - Grandma Nicklas in Georgia.

Beautiful Rachel, Sophia and Julia, Thank you for sharing your gift of singing and dancing. Much love, Bonna

Penelope, your performance was great! Thanks for teaching me the whole thing! Love, Olivia

Jeff Bigler: We admire and appreciate your hard work and devotion as a real-life dad and fantasy father-in-law. Grammy & Judy
Steve L - You are an inspiration to all of us non-performing Dads out there. Maybe next year you’ll get us all to join you. Great job! Craig

Steve and Ada, You guys are going to do great! So sad I can’t be up there with you, but it’s even better watching you! Break a leg. Maggie

Anat & Lia: Another year making me a proud. Listening to you is a treat, never interpret my goofy imitations otherwise! Edan: the coolest new addition to NCFO ever!

Way to go, Dawn & Ava! Wish we could be there to see you both light up the stage. Thinking of all of you & sending love & hugs—the Colorado Weinsteins

To the village children and members of parliament, My loyal subjects! Keep weaving there, and someday you may become royalty! Love, her imperial majesty the time warp Queen.

Hooray for Katie Leiserson! We are so proud of all your great work to prepare for your first solo and family opera debut! We love you! Mama and Daddy

Литик! Ты всегда наша звезда! Поздравляем замечательными представлениями! Congratulations on more wonderful performances. Love, Mama & Papa, your fans forever

Bravo Elke! Congratulations on your hard work this year at NCFO. What a treat it is for us to be your biggest fans! Lots of Love - Mom and Dad

Margot, we’ve never adored a mosquito as much as we adore you. Congrats on your first opera!! Love, Mom & Dad

To Laura Bigler: Splendid attire and lordly SILENCE?? YOU CAN DO IT! We know you’ll win far more hearts than just the Princess’s. — FaFa & Mary-Jo

To our beloved stars, Laura and Jeff: Break a leg! XO Aunt Pam, Uncle Chris, Jon Jon, Ben & Boo

Congratulations to our wacky wily wonder-working Wobyn. Nice shoes! — Kathy and Jeff

Elo - Congratulations on another fantastic performance and SOLO! I’m proud of you! xox Lizzy
Elizabeth, Julie, Ava, & Dawn—
Thanks for joining us for the singing
and the stinging...it wouldn’t have
been the same without you! xox
Margot & Sara

Congrats, Lonnie B, on your
triumphant return! We’d say it’s
great having you in the show, but
what do you think, Deputy Prime
Minister? Love, mom and :Da

Dear Jack: Congratulations on
your first solo with NCFO! We
are very proud of you hard work
with the opera, school and piano.
Love, Mom and Dad

Laura, Elsie, Meng Mei Hua - A
sweet rose by any name! So happy
and proud to see you take center
stage. Love and hugs from Auntie
Anne and Baobao

Margaret: Have a great show. You
are a star! Miss you, Aunt Marion
& Wolfgang

To Jeff Bigler: Some mistakes turn
out to be a big win in the end, don’t
they. Marrying your daughter to a
[literally] dumb, but _educable_
bloke could just be the greatest of
these. -- Al & Mary-Jo

Avery, Thanks so much for inviting
me to sing with you in The Weavers
Wedding. I will never forget
sharing this special experience.
Mom

Best wishes to Dawn – our lovely
daughter & awesome sister. Thanks
for sharing your special talent of
dancing & singing with all of us!
Love, Mom, Dad & Jon

Izzy, Thanks for spending another
great NCFO season with me. You’re the best Village Child 1 a
Villager 1 could hope for! Love,
Daddy

Thank you, Charles, for putting in
the time and energy to make Katie’s
first family opera experience
possible. I especially appreciate
that you did it so I didn’t have to
sing! Break a leg and enjoy the
dance. Love, Wendy

Addie, you are one TERRIFIC
prime minister! -- Dad I agree! I
agree! I agree! -- Mom, Margot, &
Taps

Dear Ava and Dawn: We’re sure
this debut is just the beginning
for you in opera! Enjoy! Love,
Grandma and Grandpa

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Carla, as always, it’s been such a treat working with you this year. Even faced with the most dire circumstances (drops), you manage to stay cheerful. Thank you--Sue and David

Dear Julie and Elizabeth, We are so proud of our new opera stars! Congratulations! Love, Digby and Deb/MomD

Sue and Dave- As always, you’ve shown us how to build a wonderful and talented musical community. The Kelley family owes you a lot for helping bring live theatre into our lives. Thanks so much! Craig

Congratulations & warm wishes to our favorite feathered friends - Miss Eliza Peacock and Mrs. Joanne Dove. Oma and Opa

Dear Hannah (aka Farmer 1)--You will always be our #1 Farmer! Love Mom, Dad, and all your grandparents

Congratulations Ava! You are our star! We love you! We’re excited to see you in your 1st operatic role — & we can’t wait to see what comes next! Mom, Dad & Noah

Adira, we’re so proud of you, the hard work you’ve put in, and the progress you’ve made! Though you’re a weaver, try not to loom over people. Love, Mom and Dad

To our wonderful granddaughter Elke - Enjoy your performance, we are sure it’s going to be a great show. We love you very much, Ouma, Oupa, and Oumie Joyce

Dear Cambridge Family Opera, you rock! Thank you for bringing all of us together and for your tireless community building! Thank you for the years of creativity, music and arts. Thank you for giving a space to creativity and talents. Grateful parents of happy NCFO children.

For Leetka: Your talent and creativity are boundless! Watch out, Joyce DiDonato. Much Love XXOO, Nana

Liz, I’m sorry I couldn’t perform with you this year but I’m so proud of you and all you’ve done. Way to help everyone show off!

Go Maia Go! Love Dad, Mom, and Zoe

Congratulations to all performers!
To Eliza, and her G&P friends Chloe, Izzy, and Juli - you are all naturals, especially when it comes to a Hullabaloo! Love, Joanne

Hats off to Laura Bigler, the fabulous singing weaver. Love, Grammy

Heather, thanks for your company and competence at auditions, rehearsals, performances, and especially at pizza time. - Sue

GOOD LUCK to all in Weaver’s Wedding

Abbe, Bert and Katarina… Advise the King well, But don’t forget about true love!

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PERFORMANCES:
Saturday April 16, 3:00pm, Broad Institute
Sunday April 17, 6:00pm, Museum of Science
Sunday April 24, 3:00pm, Peabody School

Visit www.familyopera.org for more info or email festival2016@familyopera.org
CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Emma Adler (The Deputy Prime Minister, Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers) is 16 years old and goes to Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. She loves reading and chocolate. This is her ninth year in NCFO.

Gal Agam (Myna Birds/Courtiers) is making his sixth appearance with NCFO, after playing an Audience Kid in last year’s production of Kids Court (2015), a Zebra in Rain Dance (2014), a Worker-Ant in Antiphony (2013), a Film Crew member in Flying High (2012), and a Jawa/Rebel/Allen in Space Opera (2011). Gal is 12 years old and attends Countryside Elementary School in Newton. He loves skiing, ice-skating, swimming and solving puzzles. Gal is looking forward to a great season with NCFO.

Hadar Agam (Myrna Birds/Courtiers) is delighted to share the stage with her husband and three kids (and some wonderful friends). Hadar works from home as a mom, part-time consulting-engineer, travel-planner and family cheerleader, and is looking forward to another great season with NCFO.

Maya Agam (Myrna Bird Soloist, Myrna Birds/Courtiers) is enjoying her second season with NCFO, after having enjoyed it from the audience for many years prior to that. Maya is 8 years old and she attends Countryside Elementary School in Newton. Maya loves art, ballet, swimming, and her friends.

Yigal Agam (Myrna Birds/Courtiers) never thought he would be playing an obnoxious bird on a live stage, but alas, life is full of surprises. This is his NCFO debut after five years of cheering on his family from the sidelines. Yigal thinks he should probably keep his day job as a software engineer for the time being.

Yuval Agam (Rajah the Weaver) is 14 and attends Brown Middle School in Newton. Yuval played Hansel in Kids Court, Kipling in Rain Dance, Gaspard in Antiphony, Jer in Flying High, and a Jawa in Space Opera. Yuval also performed Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat with Turtle Lane Theater, and in several Brown Middle School productions. You can usually find him playing his clarinet, singing in the shower, or winning Mario Kart races. Yuval would like to thank the cast, the crew, and his family for their support and care.

Caitlin Anderson (Farmers/Koel Birds) lives in beautiful North Cambridge with her husband and two daughters. This is her second performance with NCFO and her daughter Hannah Erickson. Thanks to Will and Lorraine for holding down the fort during all the rehearsals!

Aliah Atlas (Myrna Birds/Courtiers) is performing with NCFO for the first time. The last time Aliah was on stage was in high school in strictly spoken roles. Aliah works at Juniper Networks with the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) and is one of the many MIT grads in NCFO. Aliah enjoys playing games, making crafts - even with her children - (sewing, cooking, knitting, “if I haven’t tried it yet, it could be fun to try,” etc.), and of course, taunting her children.

Emilija Baksys (The Queen) has evolved from an Indian princess into a princess from another galaxy and has now returned to her original planet and matured into the Queen. She sang the roles of Barbara Strother in Kids Court (2015), Brenda in Flying High (2012), Princess Leia in Space Opera (2011), Hathach in Springtime for Haman (2010), the Princess and the Cow in Weaver’s Wedding (2009), and a Sky Jig Soloist in The Puzzle Jigs (2008). She is graduating from Wheaton College (MA) this May, and in her free time enjoys traveling, playing percussion in the Wheaton orchestra, and acting as a background extra. This is the first opera she has ever been in twice, and she loves it just as much as the first time. She would like to thank David, Sue, Jennifer, Kathy, and the entire cast and crew for making this show fun!

Adira Balzac (Jackal Soloist, Weavers/Jackals) is in the 11th grade at the Nashoba Regional High School. She played a politically-active zebra in Rain Dance and an ever-helpful stagehand in Kids Court, pitching a super-duper food blender. This year’s part-time return to the animal kingdom as a Weaver/Jackal is again in keeping with her life goal of becoming a veterinary researcher. She has co-written and acted in two short plays, Miles of Hope and The Magic Oboe, although production on the latter abruptly ceased under mysterious circumstances. She and her friends have another play still marinating. She also enjoys building and making things, including robotics and artistic creations from the hardware store.

Ilan Balzac (KID/Animal Soloist, Weavers/Jackals) is in 5th grade at the Center School in Stow. He has been typecast in the past as a highly energetic meerkat in Rain Dance, an annoying Jury Kid in Kids Court, and yet another obnoxious kid in this show. He also played the lead surfer dude in Hang Ten, a locally-produced children’s musical. His mischievous nature continues to play into his performance today. In his spare time, he likes to read, practice baseball and archery, play complicated board and card games, and pester both his cats and his sister.

Debjani Banerji (Village Children/Mosquitoes) is delighted to be part of NCFO for the first time. She has cheered on her daughter at numerous NCFO performances and was drawn to this year’s performance based on an Indian folk tale. This is Debjani’s first attempt at singing publicly... Debjani works in hospital management and enjoys spending time with family and friends.

Heather Barney (Weavers/Jackals) returns to NCFO in her eighth performance. Heather also sings
with the Revels Singers and has had roles in past Revels productions: a Québécois village matron in Christmas Revels (2004); and a festive celebrant with Spring Revels (2012, 2013) at Perkins School in Watertown. For more than two decades and going for three, Heather continues to practice 5 Element Acupuncture and healing arts in Cambridge and Providence, RI. She is very happy to once again be performing with her partner David Mitten.

David Bass (Founder and Artistic Director) As a teenager, David was a prolific composer of pretentious music, but during his college studies, he became discouraged with pursuing music professionally. Instead, he received a BS in chemistry from Yale and a doctorate in chemical engineering from MIT, during which time he arranged dozens of songs for the a cappella groups at these institutions. After a 20-year hiatus from musical composition, David wrote the distinctly unpretentious Space Opera for the enjoyment of his three young children, their friends, and their families. He directed productions of Space Opera in the spring of 1999, 2000, 2005, and 2011. His second opera, The Coronation of Esther, was performed in 2001; its sequel, Springtime for Haman, in 2004 and 2010; and Kids Court, his first collaboration, with John Kane, in 2007 and 2015. David has also directed five other family operas, Antiphony in 2002, 2006, and 2013, The Puzzle Jigs in 2003 and 2008, The Weaver’s Wedding in 2009 and again this year, Flying High in 2012, and Rain Dance in 2014. In 2007, he founded the Science Festival Chorus, which performs a concert of songs about science annually at the Cambridge Science Festival. He plans to continue writing and directing music for as long as he can avoid taking himself too seriously.

Lonnie Bass (The Deputy Prime Minister, Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers) is thrilled to be rejoining the Family Opera after a 5-year hiatus for her 11th performance with the company. She was the original Jabba the Hutt in NCFO’s first Space Opera production, but likes to think of herself as a long way since then. She graduated from Oberlin College in 2014, singing in three choirs while she was there. Lonnie will be going to graduate school next year for a Ph.D. in developmental psychology.

Anat Beck-Nachtigal (Villager Soloist, Farmers/ Koel Birds) is celebrating her fifth year in North Cambridge Family Opera, and her first year with her two kids in the opera. Anat loves to sing, dance, and create many art projects. She would like to thank her husband Dani for preparing yummy dinners after rehearsals.

Eilohe Botka (The Prime Minister, Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers, Village Children/Mosquitoes) is a 15-year-old 9th-grader at the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. She rock climbs at Brooklyn Boulders on the BKBeasts and dances with MDC, her school dance company. She loves reading, writing, and hanging out with her friends. Eloise is pleased to be participating in her ninth North Cambridge Family Opera production. Her previous performances with NCFO have been The Puzzle Jigs (2008), Weavers Wedding (2009), Springtime for Haman (2010), Space Opera (2011), Flying High (2012), Antiphony (2013), Rain Dance (2014) and Kids Court (2015). Eloise would like to thank her entire family for supporting her and driving her to and from rehearsals.

Nate Burket (The King) is an experienced performer for extended periods on the stage extension.

Juli Berndt (Dove Soloist, Village Elders/Doves) is an 11-year-old student at the Graham and Parks School in Cambridge. After a few years of watching her friends, she finally got up the courage to join North Cambridge Family Opera. She loves to sing and dance and create imaginary characters that she brings to life with costumes, voice-overs and elaborate story lines. She is hopeful that she will stick to her libretto in Weaver’s Wedding. When she is not singing, Juli likes to draw, skate, play softball and build virtual worlds on Minecraft.

Jeff Bigler (The King) is performing in his seventh season with NCFO. He is a high school teacher, so much like his current role; he is used to giving orders and not being taken seriously. On life’s other stages, Jeff is a proud parent, physics and chemistry teacher, violinist, fiddler and Morris dancer, and is interested in just about everything. He would like to thank his family and friends for being amazing.

Laura Bigler (Rajah the Weaver) is 12 years old and is a 6th-grader at the Sparhawk School in Amesbury. This is her seventh year performing with NCFO, and she is thrilled to have a leading role. Laura never goes anywhere without a song in her head. She plays violin, dances with two Morris dance teams, and competes on a synchronized swim team. She loves fantasy and roleplaying, and her favorite books and movies are J. R. R. Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings series.

Mark Bildman (Villager Soloist, Peacocks/ Courtiers) is finally old enough to be in the Family Opera without his kids, but, not too old to forget that “Family” is what got him started, and “Opera” is what keeps him coming back. He actually enjoys the opportunity to sing harmonies and step outside himself into the characters of the show. It’s a great community of families and he is proud to be a part of it. He says that it is too late for you to join this year, but there’s always next.

Eloise Botka (The Prime Minister, Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers, Village Children/Mosquitoes) is a 15-year-old 9th-grader at the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. She rock climbs at Brooklyn Boulders on the BKBeasts and dances with MDC, her school dance company. She loves reading, writing, and hanging out with her friends. Eloise is pleased to be participating in her ninth North Cambridge Family Opera production. Her previous performances with NCFO have been The Puzzle Jigs (2008), Weavers Wedding (2009), Springtime for Haman (2010), Space Opera (2011), Flying High (2012), Antiphony (2013), Rain Dance (2014) and Kids Court (2015). Eloise would like to thank her entire family for supporting her and driving her to and from rehearsals.

Nate Burket (The King) is an experienced performer

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who has been acting since the age of eight. Besides performing in many community theatre and school productions over the years, he has spent considerable time as a professional musician, having played guitar, piano, and harmonica as well as singing in various bands and groups throughout his life. He is also a working film actor having appeared in the upcoming film “Good Kids” as an extra. His past roles in NCFO performances include Darth Vader in Space Opera, The King in Springtime for Haman, and much younger, The Fly in Antiphony.

Abbe Cohen Dvornik (Prime Minister Soloist, Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers) is slowly working her way through the political ranks in NCFO, from lowly worker ant in Antiphony (2013) to kid with legal decision making powers in Kids Court (2015) all the way up to a role in the government that you see. She has also been singing with her family in NCFO’s Science Festival choruses since 2011. She is enjoying this opportunity to agree with her husband and her daughter.

Avery Cole (Animal Soloist, Peacocks/Courtiers) is 9 years old and is in 4th-grade at the Arthur D. Healey School. She is very excited to be performing in her first NCFO production. Avery previously played the role of a Garden Sprite in a local production of The Secret Garden, and was also a member of the NCFO Science Chorus in 2014. Avery loves to read, write, and draw, as well as play soccer and figure skate when she is not ruffling her tail feathers.

Lynn Colletti (Weavers/Jackals) is the mother of three: two teenage boys and Nicolette, a 5th-grader. Lynn keeps busy raising children; writing informational blogs for websites; editing a science fiction novel with emphasis on cultural coexistence; being one of many lead singers with Women of Note; Skipper of North Shore Ship 5 Sea Scout troop; and School Committee member for the Nashoba Regional School District. She is currently enjoying her time with her daughter, watching her grow as she navigates her way through the opera. “I am constantly amazed at how organized and productive the North Cambridge Family Opera operation is. Thank you, this is a wonderful experience.”

Rachel Cooper (Farmer Soloist, Farmers/Koel Birds) is an ESL Teacher with the Cambridge Public Schools. She first joined NCFO in 2002 as the good queen in Antiphony. Since then she has performed in The Puzzle Jigs in 2003 and Springtime for Haman in 2004. She was excited to return in 2014, with her son Jack, as the Old Zebra in Rain Dance. She is happy to be back for Weaver’s Wedding. Other hobbies include reading and swimming. She would like to thank David, Sue, and Kathy for their many years of wonderful productions of family opera.

Polina Danielyan (Farmers/Koel Birds) is 15 years old and a homeschooler. She has taken college art classes at the School of Museum of Fine Arts.
This is her fourth year in NCFO productions. She was a soldier ant in Antiphony (2013), a meerkat in Rain Dance (2014), and a kid in Kid's Court (2015). In the past, Polina has performed in a youth-run theater company called YouthQuake Theater as Sir Andrew Aguecheek in Twelfth Night and Hermia in A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Polina loves to draw, paint, create digital art, dance and teach gymnastics at the Gymnastic Academy of Boston. She would like to thank her friends and family for their support!

Carmen Denyes (Vocal Coach), soprano and voice teacher, is pleased to be joining NCFO in her fourth production. Carmen has been teaching and performing for the last ten years; she enjoys both continuing to learn about the voice and teaching students to have a lifelong love of music. In addition to teaching students of all ages in her private studio, she is a voice teacher at Lift Up Your Voice. Carmen enjoys teaching others about opera and has served as a teaching artist with the Boston Lyric Opera. Ms. Denyes holds a Masters in vocal performance from the Longy School of Music of Bard College, and received her Bachelor’s of Music from the Cleveland Institute of Music. She is a certified level III teacher in Somatic VoiceWork: The LoVetri Method and an active member of The Voice Foundation and NATS.

Jennifer Dhanjee (Director of Vocal Instruction), soprano, vocal instructor and entrepreneur, is thrilled to complete another season teaching at NCFO with Weaver’s Wedding. This 2016 season marks Jennifer’s eighth year teaching at NCFO, and she feels so grateful to continue being a part of this incredible and supportive community! When not contributing to the hullabaloo at NCFO, Jennifer would like to thank her friends and family for their support! Jennifer holds a cantor position at St. Joseph Parish and Greater Boston. She is also excited to share her passion for the art of teaching voice via the recently launched Lift Up Your Voice, a start-up that helps residents of Greater Boston to discover professional voice instructors who match their needs. Currently, Jennifer holds a cantor position at St. Joseph Parish in Malden, MA, where she sings for regular masses, funerals, and weddings and directs a Teen Worship group. Jennifer holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Voice Performance from the University of Akron and a Master’s degree, also in Voice Performance, from the Longy School of Music. Jennifer would like to thank David & Sue for being the amazing force of love and encouragement behind all that we do here at NCFO!

Chloe Duggan (Courtier Soloist, Peacocks/Courtiers), is a 5th-grader at the Graham and Parks School. It is her first year in the opera, but she has been in The Nutcracker twice. Chloe likes dancing and candy.

Charlotte DuHamel (Frogs/Courtiers) is the proud mother of daughter, Sacha Licholai. This is her second appearance with NCFO, and she would like to thank her husband Greg and the Fried Family for making it possible for her spend Sundays with such a lovely group of people.

Albert Dvornik (Prime Minister Soloist, Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers) started his stage career as a Choral Singer in “The Back Row”, a role he reprised numerous times. After his experiences as an oppressed Water Buffalo in NCFO’s 2014 production, Rain Dance, he promptly decided to pursue a career in management. He is pleased to note that due to his hard work and excellence in group-think, he has risen to an exalted position where he out ranks both his Deputy Deputy Deputy Deputy Prime Minister wife and his Deputy Deputy Deputy Deputy Deputy Prime Minister daughter. Hey, don’t laugh.

Katarina Dvornik (Littlest Prime Minister, Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers), 10, is in the fourth grade at the Healey School in Somerville. She has performed in Antiphony (2013) as a Worker Ant, in Rain Dance (2014) as a Meerkat, and in Kids Court (2015) as a Jury Kid. She has also performed in NCFO’s Science Festival Chorus since 2011. Katarina has enjoyed her dissenting character, since at home she is mostly well-behaved. She likes soccer, reading, and writing and has recently acquired a taste for knitting and the clarinet. (She evidently likes singing and acting, too.) Katarina would like to thank her mom and her dad for being awesome, and her brother for being an excellent sledmate.

Chris Edel (Sets, Frog Soloist, Frogs/Courtiers) is performing for his ninth year with the NCFO. Though a bit green in this production, he does have experience playing both an aquatic animal, Hobo the hippo, and Donovan the Security Guard, a rather reptilian character. In the unreal world outside of the Opera, he is a restorer of fine violins.

Hannah Erickson (Farmer Soloist, Farmers/Koel Birds) is a 3rd-grader at the Peabody School. This is her second year performing with NCFO. She also performs with the Cambridge Children’s Chorus and the Peabody School Early Bird Singers.

Kathryn Fernandopulle (The Princess) is a 12-year-old 7th-grader at Milton Academy. This is her sixth year in NCFO. She has previously been
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a Rebel (Space Opera), Child Star (Flying High), Queens Party Ant (Antiphony), a Leveret (Rain Dance) and Ms. Gretel Fairlawns (Kids Court). She currently sings at her school and is in a production of Beauty and the Beast. She enjoys soccer, lacrosse, playing the flute and baking. She is enjoying her new school and still loves monkeys.

Lisa Ferrante-Walsh (Courtier Soloist, Peacocks/Courtiers) lives in Newton with her husband and three children. This is her third performance with NCFO, and she would like to thank David and Sue for creating a unique organization where she can share her love of music with her daughter Julianna, Lead Peacock. Lisa’s past NCFO roles include StepMother in Kids Court (2015) and Lulu the Lioness in Rain dance (2014). Lisa also sings with Chorus Pro Musica in Boston. When she is not singing, acting or being a mom, Lisa spends her time as a Software Development Manager.

Jeff Fried (Animal Soloist, Frogs/Courtiers) is enjoying his seventh year with NCFO, which has included playing a loud, hairy, clumsy Chewbacca in Space Opera; a belligerent dung beetle in Antiphony; a slow, overweight, but bighearted, Hobo the Hippo in Rain Dance; and a clueless constable in Kids Court. Perfect typecasting in all cases. Jeff has sung in many a cappella groups and choruses, and also included playing a loud, hairy, clumsy Chewbacca in The Witches at ACT (Arlington Children’s Theatre). Nathan really likes reading. He is in the second semester of fourth grade at the Peirce school in Arlington. He has watched some NCFO shows before (4 of them, actually). They were Springtime for Haman, Antiphony, Rain Dance, and Kids Court. When he wrote this, it was the month of January. Goodbye! P.S. Nathan is very (very, very) interested in chemistry, and how one makes paleontology, the study of ancient (or, more correctly, prehistoric) life!

Jonathan Gilbert (Peacock Soloist, Peacocks/Courtiers) is here for his third year with NCFO, having appeared as a gazelle in Rain Dance and a dancing stagehand in Kids Court. Currently a computer programmer in real life, his chequered past includes a reasonable amount of amateur and semi-professional music, dance, and theater, and he’s very appreciative of finding some that he and his son Nathan can do together (for which credit goes to NCFO makeup maven Elizabeth Stone for telling him about it). Someday he’d love to try writing an opera for NCFO if he can get some more composing under his belt, but that’s a secret.

Nathan Benjamin Gilbert (Farmers/Koel Birds) has always liked theater, and has been in two operas, both, in fact North Cambridge Family Operas (Rain Dance and Kids Court). The other theater he’s done was productions at WCT (Watertown Children’s Theatre), and The Witches at ACT (Arlington Children’s Theatre). Nathan really likes reading. He is in the second semester of fourth grade at the Peirce school in Arlington. He has watched some NCFO shows before (4 of them, actually). They were Springtime for Haman, Antiphony, Rain Dance, and Kids Court. When he wrote this, it was the month of January. Goodbye! P.S. Nathan is very (very, very) interested in chemistry, and how one makes paleontology, the study of ancient (or, more correctly, prehistoric) life!

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Dina Gorelik (KID/Villager Soloist, Weavers/Courtiers) is an 8th-grader at The Meadowbrook School. This is her eighth year with NCFO. She has come full circle because her first opera was Weaver’s Wedding, in which she played a Village Child/Mosquito. Last year, Dina was the Production Assistant in Kids Court, and before that, she was Ndanga in Rain Dance. Dina enjoys singing, reading, and talking with herself and others. Thank you to everyone for putting up with her; she really appreciates it!

Lena Gorelik (Animal Soloist, Frogs/Courtiers) is delighted to be performing in Family Opera with her daughter, Dina, for the eighth year in a row. Last year she was a busy Stage Hand in Kids Court, so
this year she is excited to simply relax, and be cool while living in a pool. In Lena’s free time, she loves chatting with her friends over a cup of good tea.

**Aviva Gould** (Prime Minister Soloist, Brain-Fever Bird Soloist, Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers) is in the 8th-grade at Vassal Lane Upper School in Cambridge. Weaver’s Wedding is her seventh NCFO production. When not advising Kings she also appears in Tufts University’s MAGIC CIRCLE Performing Arts Camp and Cambridge’s joint Upper School theater productions, this year in You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown. She also binge watches Netflix, plays in a rock band at school, and practices Kung Fu.

**Tom Gould** (Frogs/Courtiers) is singing for the seventh time in an NCFO production. As a bass, a frog is a natural singing role, but hopping is hard. He adores his children Aviva and Adam, and thanks them for allowing him to sing. When his family’s dogs run away, they go to David and Sue’s house to visit their dogs. So far David has resisted the temptation to organize them into a chorus. Tom dedicates his performance to his wife Maura for her support.

**Sue Hall** (Associate Producer, Stage Manager) Maintaining her tradition of never having seen an NCFO opera production from anywhere other than backstage or onstage, Sue is once again working behind the scenes, corralling all of those wild and crazy birds, insects, amphibians, and mammals (especially the Homo Sapiens variety). When not NCFO’ing, Sue tutors math at the high school. Thanks to Lonnie and David for making this fun and good!

**Aytan Hamill** (Weavers/Jackals) can name that tune in one note. When he isn’t singing, Aytan enjoys swimming, cross-country skiing, and generally hanging out with his brother, Yona. Aytan attends high school in Westwood, MA, and works at the Norwood Public Library. He would like to thank his mom, Tamar Lewis, for all her help and support through the years.

**Katie Hamill** (The Story-Teller) is enjoying her seventh NCFO production with her daughter Anya, her brother Tom, and her nephew Aytan. Previously, she played a Stagehand in Kids Court (2015), Lamia the Lioness in Rain Dance (2014), a Ladybug in Antiphony (2013), a Stage Parent in Flying High (2012), a pointy-eared Alien in Space Opera (2011), and a Chamberlain in Springtime for Haman (2010). When she is not singing and dancing onstage, she can usually be found singing and dancing offstage (often while solving a puzzle or practicing law).

**Tom Hamill** (Animal Soloist, Weavers/Jackals) is a long-term member of NCFO, having appeared each spring since dinosaurs roamed the earth. A graduate of the University of Minnesota School of Music, Tom puts his education to work every day by singing quietly to himself while troubleshooting poorly written Visual Basic. You can find Tom swinging Kerri Brann across the floor at contra dances all over Greater Boston.

**Patricia Hawkins** (Koel Bird Soloist, Farmers/ Koel Birds) is happy to be performing again with NCFO. She also appeared as a Zebra soloist in NCFO’s production of Rain Dance in 2014, which was her first theatrical performance since a high school production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream. This year, Patricia is also enjoying participating in the NCFO Science Festival Chorus’s production of Giants of Science.

**Ruth Hertzman-Miller** (Prime Minister Soloist, Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers) is a physician and epidemiologist living in Newton. She has enjoyed her many roles with NCFO over the years, including Agnes in Kids Court, a Lioness in Rain Dance, and a frustrated train station announcer in Antiphony. She is also an amateur composer and has written two songs for the NCFO Science Festival Chorus, “The Ballad of Michelson and Morley” (about the greatest failed experiment in the history of physics) and “Peanut Man” (about Dr. George Washington Carver). Love and gratitude to David Miller for keeping the home fires burning.

**Sue Holcomb** (Prime Minister Soloist, Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers) is a violinist and violin teacher, and is thrilled to be returning for her fourteenth NCFO production. She played Barbara Strother in Kids Court (2007), a Piece Activist and Tree Jig in The Puzzle Jigs (2008), a Courtier in The Weaver’s Wedding (2009), Samireh the Concubine in Springtime for Haman (2010), a Rebel and Sandperson in Space Opera (2011), Bambi the Choreographer and a Stage Parent in Flying High (2012), the Worker Queen Antonomasia in Antiphony (2013), Lulu the Lioness in Rain Dance (2014), and the Celebrity Agent in Kids Court (2015).

**Bernard Hughes** (Composer) is a British composer, who was born and lives in London. He has had music performed by ensembles including the BBC Singers, Trinity Boys’ Choir and Juice Vocal Ensemble at major British venues including Symphony Hall, Birmingham and St Paul’s Cathedral. He has recently been appointed Composer-in-Residence at the prestigious St Paul’s Girls’ School in London, following in the footsteps of Holst and Vaughan Williams. Recent premieres have included choral works for the Seattle Pro Musica, which is being performed again in March 2016. The orchestral work ANAPHORA has recently been released on CD, performed by the Brno Philharmonic Orchestra. His first solo CD, I am the Song, featuring Bernard’s choral music, is being released in April 2016. Weaver’s Wedding was composed for W11 Opera in London in 2006 and has previously been performed by NCFO. Bernard is married with two children.
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Pen and Matilda, who both travelled to Cambridge for the original NCFO production, although Matilda had to be left outside in her stroller. The opera is dedicated to Bernard’s son Pen (now 10) who was born during its composition. Bernard is delighted NCFO is reviving the opera he wrote with William Radice and is sorry not to be able to travel to see the production. For more information visit www.bernardhughes.co.uk.

Ben Jerome (Frog Soloist, Frogs/Courtiers) is the father of two wonderful children. He comes from a family that loves singing. Growing up in Haiti, he sang in his church choir, and played the violin.

Kostas Jerome (Frogs/Courtiers) is a 2nd-grader at Shady Hill School in Cambridge. He loves playing soccer, singing, and dancing. Kostas’ favorite musical instrument is the drum.

Leetka Katzenblickstein (KID/Animal Soloist, Myna Birds/Courtiers) is 12 years old. This is her fourth show with NCFO and she is very excited to be back again! Leetka also plays the cello. Right now she’s a member of four orchestras, including the UMass Lowell String Ensemble and the Lowell Philharmonic Orchestra, and she’s also preparing to compete in a concerto competition. When she’s not practicing, she can be found reading, reviewing books on her blog, or just generally being herself.

Hope Kelley (Weavers/Jackals) has been in the annual Cambridge Science Festival Choruses and NCFO operas since 2007, enjoying a variety of roles (Earth Jig, Child, Mosquito, Villager, Stormtrooper, Red Ant, Cameraman, Water Buffalo, and Security Guard) and happily performing with her two sons. Because of the draw of college and CRLS theater productions, Hope is performing alone this year—though thankfully enjoying the company of all of the other members of the two casts.

Addie Kelsey (Prime Minister Soloist, Brain-Fever Bird Soloist, Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers, Village Children/Mosquitoes) is in 7th-grade at Vassal Lane Upper School. She enjoys hiking, reading, singing, dancing, and learning how to climb silks and do flips in aerial arts. This is her third year in North Cambridge Family Opera. In past years, she has been a Worker Ant in Antiphony and a Leveret in Rain Dance. Addie would like to thank Jennifer Dhanjee for taking her on as a voice student this year!

Margot Kelsey (Village Children/Mosquitoes) is a 3rd-grader at Graham and Parks School. She likes playing piano, dancing, sewing, reading, and staying home doing nothing much at all (preferably in her pajamas). This is her first time performing with NCFO.

John Kernochan (Frogs/Courtiers) From deep within the mists of fog, we can hear the chorus song of a Frog. Let us not him discourage or inhibit. Instead let us revel in a glorious “ribbit”!

Penelope Kibbe (Village Soloist, Village Children/Mosquitoes) is a second grader at the Peabody School. She loves to read, sing, and play with her sister Olivia!

Julie Klump (Village Children/Mosquitoes) This is Julie’s debut with the NCFO. She is grateful that her daughter Elizabeth convinced her to audition. She enjoyed every minute.

Pipi Kokkinogenis (Village Child Soloist, Village Elders/Doves) is happy to return for her fourth year with North Cambridge Family Opera, having played a Stagehand in Kids Court, a Baboon in Rain Dance, and a Worker Ant in Antiphony. She is a 13-year-old homeschooler who loves computer games and making movies.

Ada Grace LaMaster (Koel Bird Soloist, Farmers/Koel Birds) is performing in her second NCFO production, Weaver’s Wedding. She loves performing and spending time with all the friends she has made in the company. When not singing, Ada enjoys climbing and puzzles. Ada is in 2nd Grade at the King Open School in Cambridge.

Steve LaMaster (Assistant Director, Villager Soloist, Farmers/Koel Birds) has been performing with the NCFO since the first production of Kids Court in (gulp!) 2007 with his daughter Maggie, and now gets to rehearse and perform with his second daughter, Ada. Steve is still waiting for his immense talent to be discovered, but knows his big break is just around the corner, so he jumps, dashes, and runs to get the work done.

Kerry LaRose (Animal Soloist, Village Elders/Doves) is this my second year with NCFO, and I am an 11-year-old homeschooler. I love animals, 4H, baking, reading, crocheting and everything about Family Opera! I want to thank everyone who makes Family Opera possible, and the audience for coming to watch.

Sue LaRose (Village Elders/Doves) This is my first year in Family Opera, but I truly enjoyed watching Kerry and Chanda in last year’s production. I enjoy sports, Family Opera, and spending time with my family. Thanks to all who make NCFO possible.

Bill Laskin (Villager Soloist, Village Elders/Doves) I am tickled to be in my fourth NCFO production with daughter Izzy. Every year brings the challenge of remembering notes, lines, and movement, but also the joy of collaborating with a great community of kids and adults. This year I’m even chancing a (brief) solo. Fingers crossed. Thanks, David, Sue, Kathy, Rachel, and everyone else for making winter Sunday afternoons so much fun!

Isabel Laskin (Village Child Soloist, Village...
CAST BIOS

Elders/Doves) I am excited to be in another NCFO production with my Dad. This is my fourth one! I am in 5th-grade at Graham & Parks. I am happy to have enticed several of my classmates to be in Weaver’s Wedding with me. I love to dance, sing, play gym hockey at afterschool, and read. Thanks for coming!

Charles E. Leiserson (Frogs/Courtiers) is performing in the North Cambridge Family Opera for the first time. Most of his previous singing experience has been in the context of the bathroom shower, although he had early experience as a boy soprano in the Choir of Men and Boys at Trinity Church on the Green in New Haven, Connecticut, and he performed in several musicals and a barbershop quartet during high school in Branford, Connecticut. Charles is Edwin Sibley Webster Professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at MIT, where he studies algorithms and parallel computing. He would like to thank his three older kids for “encouraging” his spontaneous singing at home (they called it the Daddy Disease), his wife Wendy for her cheerful support, and his daughter Katie (also a frog) for insisting on participating in NCFO. Thanks also to Ben and Kostas Jerome for introducing us to NCFO and to our friends and family members who have come to hear us.

Katherine Hope (Katie) Leiserson (Frog Soloist, Frogs/Courtiers), age 8, is a 2nd-grader at Shady Hill School and is performing in the North Cambridge Family Opera for the first time. She had a brief solo as part of the All American Band in the First Church in Belmont, Unitarian-Universalist Youth Choir’s presentation of Bye Bye Birdie in November 2014. She loves her cat Tigger, her American Girl dolls, and practicing piano. I would like to thank my Shady Hill classmate Kostas Jerome for bringing me in to NCFO. I also want to thank my daddy for participating in Weaver’s Wedding with me and my mama for answering most of the phone calls and emails.

Maia Levitt (Animal Soloist, Peacocks/Courtiers) is an 8th-grader at Vassal Lane Upper School in Cambridge. In her spare time she enjoys memorizing all of the lyrics to Hamilton, reading, and playing music. She is very excited to finally embrace her inner narcissist as a peacock for her sixth year with NCFO.

Sacha Licholai (KID/Dove Soloist/Villager Soloist, Village Elders/Doves) is taking part in NCFO for the second time. She likes to sing, dance and act and loves Family Opera. She is 12 and in 6th-grade. Woop woop.

Kathy Lindsay (Dramatic Director, Prime Minister Soloist, Brain-Fever Bird Soloist, Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers, Village Elders/Doves) is proud to be passing the shawl to the next generation, her clever, crafty, brainy, wonder-working daughter Robyn.
While singing feverishly with her husband Jeff, she has found an agree-able role where she can direct the king and anyone else wise enough to listen. She has also been known to feed and dress women and men. Future goals include improving her skills in juggling, chess, and knitting.

Robyn Lindsay (The Jackal) is a longtime performer with the NCFO, having started at 7-years-old as a rebel in Space Opera 2000, and continuing to perform with the group until 2010 with Springtime for Haman, in which she had the role of Queen Esther. In addition to her roles with NCFO, she also received vocal training for much of high school. After high school, she took a hiatus from performing with the group to go to WPI to study Robotics Engineering, as well as, Electrical and Computer Engineering. While there, Robyn was a part of the Alden Voices chorus, performed some of the solo pieces in the school’s production of Edges: A Song Cycle, and was a member of the chorus for several of the school’s musicals and cabarets. This year, after graduating with both of her degrees and starting work in Boston as an embedded software engineer, Robyn is thrilled to return to NCFO once more and to play the part of the cunning and wily Jackal. In addition to music, Robyn also enjoys hiking, camping, and other outdoor activities, as well as playing board games, travelling, and using her engineering skills to hack together cool gadgets for around the house.

Marin Manoach (KID/Villager Soloist, Village Elders/Doves) is 11 years-old and in the 5th-grade at the Baldwin School. She’s also been on stage singing and playing the piano at her school and, along with a friend, won the King Open spelling bee in the first grade. This is her fourth year with NCFO. She enjoys art and music a lot.

Chanda McCreary (Village Elders/Doves) This is my second year in Family Opera. I love to sing, listen to music, and try instruments new to me. I would like to thank David and Sue especially, and everyone else whose dedication to NCFO makes this amazing family experience possible.

Glenn McElhoe (Weaver Soloist, Weavers/Jackals) Weaver’s Wedding is a special opera. After seeing how much fun his daughter and the company had performing it in 2009, he realized that there was a performing artist hidden inside him. He has been doing the opera every year since. Outside of the opera, he sings barbershop with the Vocal Revolution chorus, but NCFO is his favorite because he gets the opportunity to sing with his daughter Nicole, and act like crazy animals with all of the friends he has made over the years who think that sort of thing is completely normal. He works at VMware in Burlington, and thanks his family for all
of their support.

Nicole McElhoe (The Princess) is a sixteen-year-old sophomore at Arlington High School. This is her eighth year performing with NCFO. Outside of opera, she has been part of her school's student-directed one-acts, along with productions with Alexander Children's Theater and Long Lake Camp for the Arts. Nicole rows for Arlington Belmont Crew and is part of their varsity girls squad. Weaver’s Wedding was Nicole’s first show with NCFO and she still remembers being a peacock with her first solo of "Pyaow"s and singing about impressing a princess to then becoming the princess. Over the years Nicole has enjoyed all of her roles from her first one-word solo to her more recent lead roles. She sends big thanks to David and Sue for breaking her out of her shell, and special thanks to her Dad for taking part in this with her!

Dan McKanan (Village Elder Soloist, Village Elders/Doves) If Dan McKanan were a soprano dove, he would love everybody, but as a bass dove, he just loves to coo.

Oriana McKanan (Village Elder Soloist, Village Elders/Doves) is 12 years old and homeschooled. She likes to read, sing, draw, knit, act, and hang out with her friends. This is her fourth year in the opera. She hopes you enjoy the show!

Tammy McKanan (Village Elders/Doves) is fully typecast this year as a wise, hardworking, village elder, and a peaceful, loving, nest-building dove.

Margery Meadow (Frogs/Courtiers) is pleased to return to NCFO for her third production. She was a Jackal in Rain Dance (2014) and a Ladybug in Antiphony (2013). Most recently, Margery performed at MassArt with Vermont’s Bread and Puppet Theater. She is a member of the Boston Recorder Society and the Yiddish chorus of the Boston Workmen’s Circle, A Besere Velt (A Better World). Past endeavors include classical flute, modern dance, and bass guitar. She has worked for many years as a software technical writer. Margery likes to read, knit, and cuddle her guinea pigs. Love and thanks to John and Ruth for their support.

Alice Merrill Hunter (KID/Frog Soloist, Frogs/Courtiers) is excited to be back for her second NCFO show, in her first lead role! She is in the 3rd-grade and drama club at JFK Elementary in Somerville, studies piano at Yamaha Music School, and sings with the Cambridge Children’s Chorus and the children’s choir at First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington. She has also acted with Theatre@First in Davis Square.

Jason Merrill (Frog Soloist, Frogs/Courtiers) is happy to be back for his second NCFO show. He's
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often seen on stage with Theatre@First in Davis Square, and will be part of their production of *Metamorphoses* (Ovid, not Kafka) in April. He has been singing in choirs and the occasional musical or opera since age 10. By day he works on the GNU C++ compiler for Red Hat.

**Anya Miller** (*Peacocks/Courtiers*) is enjoying her seventh year with NCFO. She played a Stagehand in *Kids Court* (2015), a Gazelle in *Rain Dance* (2014), Worker Ant in *Antiphony* (2013), Stacie in *Flying High* (2012), a Jawa, Rebel, and Alien in *Space Opera* (2011), and a Chamberlain in *Springtime for Haman* (2010). She also takes ballet classes and is a fan of J-pop and cosplay. She is 13-years-old and in the 8th-grade at Ottoson Middle School in Arlington. Thanks to her Uncle Tom Hamill, her cousin Aytan, and her mom and dad!

**Lonnie Miller** (*The Prime Minister, Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers*) is an undercover journalist for *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*, masquerading as a 14-year-old girl living in Newton. This is her seventh year in North Cambridge Family Opera, probably. It’s hard to count that high when you only have six fingers. Last year in *Kids Court* she was Gretel Fairlawn (and totally not guilty!) She has very abundant free time, being in only four choruses and two different musicals simultaneously, and uses it to read, draw, listen to obscure podcasts, and memorize all 47 rap songs in the musical *Hamilton*. She appreciates the efforts her sister (Rachel Miller), mom (Ruth Hertzman-Miller) and dad make to avoid blowing her cover, and apologizes to her employers on Ursa Minor for doing just that in the first sentence. Oops.

**Rachel Miller** (*Littlest Prime Minister, Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers*) is 8 years old and in the 3rd grade at John Ward School in Newton. She was last seen in NCFO as a soloist Kid in *Kids Court*. She loves pizza more than anything else in the world. When not in school or performing with NCFO, she enjoys doing gymnastics. She would like to thank her mother, Ruth Hertzman-Miller, for helping her learn her part.

**David Gordon Mitten** (*Weavers/Jackals*) is pleased to return to NCFO after being a proud water buffalo in *Rain Dance* (2014). Theatrically, he played Theodore Roosevelt in *Arsenic and Old Lace* in 1953. He sang with the Oberlin College Choir from 1954-57 and in community church choirs throughout his youth. David is presently the James Loeb Professor of Classical Art and Archeology Emeritus at Harvard University. He wants to thank his partner, Heather Barney, and David and Sue for the opportunity to sing with NCFO.

**Jeff Moore** (*Prime Minister Soloist, Brain-Fever Birds/Prime Ministers*), in his fifteenth opera production with NCFO, knows that harmony is essential for effective government, which is why his wife Kathy’s place is in the cabinet. He’s keeping an open mind about the kind of man his wily, wonder-working daughter Robyn has found this time. Jeff lives in Waltham with five thousand jackals.

**Elizabeth Morse** (*Village Children/Mosquitoes*) This is Elizabeth’s first opera performance with the NCFO. She loves to dance at Deborah Mason’s School of Dance and is in the Cambridge Youth Dance Program (CYDP). Elizabeth goes to school at Graham and Parks. She loves opera.

**Liz Morse** (*Associate Choreographer, Peacocks/Courtiers*) is a special education teacher and a dancer. She is so happy she can continue performing with NCFO, as well as, play a role in creating the choreography. This is her fifth performance with NCFO, having previously been a Stagehand (*Kids Court*, 2015), Jackie the Jackal (*Rain Dance*, 2014), a Scorpion (*Antiphony*, 2013) and a Stage Parent (*Flying High*, 2012). She can’t wait to step and prance all over the stage! She would like to thank all of her family and friends for the love and support they have shown her all year long.

**Jeannine Mosely** (*Props Designer*) has designed
props for every NCFO production since 2001 and has performed in the chorus for The Coronation of Esther (2001), Antiphony (2002), The Puzzle Jigs (2003), Springtime for Haman (2004), Space Opera (2005), Weaver’s Wedding (2009) and Antiphony (2013). She is an origami artist, known internationally for her original designs made from business cards, and for her work in the mathematical theory of curved origami. Her works have exhibited at the Mingei International Museum in San Diego, the Peabody-Essex Museum in Salem, the Worcester Art Museum and the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles.

Edan Nachtigal (Villager Soloist, Farmers/Koel Birds) is a 3rd-grader at the Baker School in Brookline. This is Edan’s first year in North Cambridge Family Opera. Edan loves to play with his friends in the snow. He also loves animals, dancing and singing.

Lia Nachtigal (Kid/Mosquito Soloist/Animal Soloist, Village Children/Mosquitoes) is an 8th-grader at the Baker School in Brookline. This is Lia’s fifth year in North Cambridge Family Opera. She is also taking part in her school play. Lia’s passion is horses, and she takes lessons every week.

Joanne Nicklas (Village Elder Soloist, Village Elders/Doves) is happy to be performing with her Peacock daughter Eliza for their third year in NCFO. In previous years, she was a Jury Kid in Kids Court (2015) and a Giraffe in Rain Dance (2014). Joanne lives in Cambridge and teaches ESL at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education.

Richard Nilsson (Frogs/Courtiers) is delighted to sing with North Cambridge Family Opera and especially with his daughter Sophia Nilsson, long may these father-and-daughter days last! He is an architect in private practice as Nilsson Architects, of Somerville. Richard is especially happy to be slightly taller than average and to be a member of this year’s frog sub-chorus, as his height and this casting will put him generally toward the rear of the stage, mostly out of view and ear shot during this excellent opera!

Sophia Nilsson (Frog Soloist, Frogs/Courtiers), a Boston native and Somerville resident, is thrilled to sing and dance with North Cambridge Family Opera and is delighted to be a frog soloist! She is a remarkably accomplished song and dance woman, having twice performed ballet and tap with Deborah Mason School of Dance at Hancock Hall, and sung publicly for municipal dedications in Somerville. Sophia enjoys lacrosse, soccer, art and crafts. She is a mathematics enthusiast currently enrolled in the 2nd-grade of Unidos, Somerville’s Spanish language immersion program.

Fiona O’Loughlin (Peacock Soloist, Peacocks/Courtiers) is 15 years old and a freshman at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. She is delighted to be participating in her fifth NCFO production this year after playing Camera Crew in Flying High in 2012, InsobordinAnt the soldier ant in Antiphony, a hippo in Rain Dance, and a stage hand in last year’s Kids Court. When she isn’t on the stage, Fiona enjoys being behind the scenes, and she was on the real stage crew in CRLS’s production of Footloose this fall.

Mary Penniston (Frogs/Courtiers) works here in Cambridge for Sanofi. She enjoys singing and acting and has been in a variety of choirs and plays in the past, including three NCFO productions. Most recently she was a guard in Kids Court. She feels that clubbing harmless people has prepared her well for her role as a frog, although she expressed disappointment that there was no one to beat up on in this opera.

Dawn Peters (Village Children/Mosquitoes) is performing for the first time with NCFO. She is grateful and happy to have the chance to practice and perform with her daughter, Ava Weinstein. She would like to thank the NCFO staff for this fun performance and her family for their love and support.

Davide Pettenuzzo (Myna Birds/Courtiers) is super
excited to be part of his first opera, and would like to thank his son for giving him the push he needed to get into singing and dancing. When not rehearsing or performing with NCFO, Davide teaches at Brandeis University and hangs out with his two wonderful boys, Leonardo and Tommaso.

Leonardo (Leo) Pettenazzo (Myna Birds/Courtiers) is a 2nd - grader at Williams School in Newton. He loves singing, playing sports with his friends, and going to school. He has been waiting to sing with NCFO since watching Antiphony in 2013 and he is now very excited about being on stage for the first time! He would like to thank his music teacher Jocelyn for helping him with the opera.

Columbine Phoenix (Makeup) This is my fourth year on the NCFO make-up crew! I love doing face-painting and theatrical make-up, in between crunching data at Amazon, selling jewelry at sunspotdesigns.com, and transcribing just about anything that can be typed as the need arises. I’m now a Walthamite (although I think we should be called Tickers or Stemwinders or something like that), and I would like to thank the Charles River for all the great bird-watching opportunities, Elizabeth Stone of Zing! Facepainting for being an awesome teacher, and my pet buckets Dirty and Clean for their invaluable assistance.

Laura Pitone (Villager Soloist, Peacocks/Courtiers) is thrilled to be performing with her daughter, Avery Cole, in her first NCFO production after participating as an audience member for years. She has sung in the NCFO Science Chorus several times with her son, Ethan, and most recently with her daughter. When she is not singing or doing her day job, talent development at an architecture firm, she serves as a member of the Somerville School Committee. She would like to give thanks to the whole NFCO team for making this amazing production possible and her husband Tom for surviving without her on Sunday afternoons.

Carla Procaskey (Producer and General Manager) first appeared in Springtime for Haman in 2004 along with her daughter, Rajani. She fairly quickly decided that back stage was more fun than on stage and has worked on most of the NCFO productions since then. It’s been a wonderful experience! This winter she has been drowning her sorrows about the lack of snow by planning her garden for the spring, trying to learn Spanish, and renewing her love affair with her sewing machine by making Weaver’s Wedding costumes.

David Rabkin (Makeup, Photography) got his start in makeup painting mice, soldiers and ballerinas in Jose Mateo’s The Nutcracker productions. He came to NCFO when his kids joined, and now just won’t go away. When not doing makeup, he directs current science-focused and issues-driven programming at the Museum of Science, as well as its Planetarium, where you can see his team’s recent production, “From Dream to Discovery.”

Lisa Racolta-Danielyan (The Queen) is 17 years old. She is a homeschooler, but studies at the Harvard Extension School (pursuing a bachelor’s degree in liberal arts with a major in dramatic arts) and New England Conservatory. This is her fourth year with NCFO. Her previous roles in NCFO productions were Recre-Ant (Antiphony, 2013), Bello the Meerkat (Rain Dance, 2014) and Stepmother (Kids Court, 2015). When she was younger, Lisa participated in many other productions with the Boston Children’s Opera and Watertown Children’s Theater. She has been a soloist in most of those productions. Lisa has also performed in a youth-run theater company called YouthQuake Theater (Silvia in Two Gentlemen of Verona, Sebastian in Twelfth Night and Oberon in A Midsummer Night’s Dream). Lisa studies voice with the famous soprano, Jean Danton, while preparing for competitions and performances. She won second place in the American Protégé International Music Talent Competition (2014); was a finalist in the American Protégé Romantic Music Competition (2015); and was a finalist again in the American Protégé Concerto competition (2015). For winning the competitions, she performed in winner recitals at Carnegie Hall multiple times. Lisa would like to thank her family, friends, teachers and the NCFO cast for supporting her passion and another great time in NCFO!

William Radice (Librettist) was born in London in 1951. Now retired, he was Senior Lecturer in Bengali at SOAS, University of London, and is widely known for his translations of Rabindranath Tagore, the great Bengali writer. He is himself a poet, has written libretti for Param Vir and Johan Othman, and has worked with Bernard Hughes since 2005. In 1981 he published a Bengali children’s book, written by the grandfather of the famous Bengali film director, Satyajit Ray, The Stupid Tiger and Other Tales, on one of whose folk tale like stories this opera is based. In 2013 he suffered a serious road accident, which cut short his academic career; he is focusing now on writing an autobiography. He lives...
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in Cambridge, England with his wife; their daughter (a classics teacher), son-in-law (a barrister) and two grandsons. His other daughter and son-in-law are both musicians, and live with their two daughters in Munich.

Jack Ramde (Villager Soloist, Farmers/Koel Birds) is a 4th-grader at Fayerweather Street School in Cambridge. He enjoys singing, dancing and playing video games. He has been studying piano at All Newton Music School for three years. This is Jack’s second appearance with NCFO. He previously appeared as a meerkat in the 2014 production of Rain Dance. He is excited to perform in his second family opera.

Henry Rogers (Jackal Soloist, Weavers/Jackals) is in the 5th-grade at the Baldwin School. This is Henry’s third year in the opera. He was a Soldier Ant in Antiphony and an Audience Kid in Kids Court. This year Henry is a Weaver/Jackal. When he is not at opera he divides his time between practicing the drums, piano, cello and Kung Fu. Henry also likes to experiment with magic and comedy.

Ruth Rogers (Weavers/Jackals) has been a Rebel/Sandperson, a Stage Mom, a Soldier Ant, a Hippo and a Stagehand in past operas, and this year is excited to add the role of Weaver/Jackal to the list. Ruth also enjoys singing with the Science Festival Chorus. She is delighted to be performing again with her son Henry. When not busy with opera or other things, Ruth works as an architect. She would like to thank her husband Sean for his incredible patience during opera/chorus season.

Margaret Rowe (The Lead Peacock, Peacocks/Courtiers) is in the 5th-grade at Shady Hill School. The Weaver’s Wedding performance will mark Margaret’s fourth appearance in NCFO. Her favorite role so far was a Leveret in Rain Dance. In addition to NCFO, Margaret’s favorite hobbies include playing on a basketball team and playing her oboe in the orchestra. Margaret is excited to play Lead Peacock, as it may be her biggest role yet.

Daniel Scibelli (Village Elder Soloist, Farmers/Koel Birds) is returning for his third performance with NCFO. He enjoyed singing in NCFO’s productions of Rain Dance and Kids Court. He is in the 6th-grade at the Eliot School, a Boston public school. Danny loves singing; he also sings with the Trinity Church Choristers in Copley Square, Boston. He loves also playing basketball, ice hockey, and soccer. He enjoys sports, theatre and drawing. He would like to thank everyone at NCFO for giving him this wonderful opportunity.

Jill Singer (The Story-Teller) is thrilled to have her first lead on stage. Last year (Kids Court) was her first show with NCFO, and was her first time on stage- all the other musicals were as part of the orchestra pit. In Kids Court she was a stagehand with strong pinkies. She is a software engineer by day, making the web easier to use with better uis, and by night is a knitter, sewer, sailor, swimmer, and flute player in the Red Herring Morris Dance Team along with the Biglers. Jill has been singing ever since she can remember and is having fun up on the stage.

Sara St. Antoine (Village Soloist, Village Children/Mosquitoes) When she isn’t whining and droning, Sara St. Antoine writes children’s books and tracks the activities of daughters Addie and Margot Kelsey. This is her third NCFO appearance.

Nicolette Stamos (Weaver Soloist, Weavers/Jackals) is a 5th-grade student at The Center School in Newton. Nicolette enjoys playing the clarinet for the school band with her best friends, Avery and Jennifer. Nicolette became involved with NCFO when she participated in the Women of Note 25th anniversary concert, mother-daughter a cappella portion of the concert, where she was spotted by members of the opera and invited to audition. This is Nicolette’s first opera. She is happy to be a part of the opera and excited to have her first ever solo. When not singing or in school, Nicolette is cheering for the local football team, swinging with her soft ball team, hanging with her friends, annoying her older brothers or chasing CJ, the cat.

Elizabeth R. Stone (Makeup Design) is a local makeup artist and facepainter (zingfacepainting.com) who has worked with NCFO since 2002, and enjoyed it thoroughly. She has also worked with MIT’s Gilbert & Sullivan Players, Theatre@First, the Post Meridian Radio Players, MIT’s Gilbert & Sullivan Players, Theatre@First, and other productions. She serves her Feline Overlords Guild, and others. She serves her Feline Overlords Guild, and others. She serves her Feline Overlords Guild, and others.

Julia Teller (Kid/Mosquito Soloist, Village Children/Mosquitoes), 10, is in 4th-grade at Shady Hill School. Weaver’s Wedding is her fourth opera with NCFO. Last year, in Kids Court, she was the Production

Katarina, we love you! Wish we could see the show and miss you! Rob, Aunt Perrin and your friends at:

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Assistant. Previously, she was a Leveret in Rain Dance and Non-Exist Ant in Antiphony. When she's not on stage, Julia loves to do gymnastics, sing, play with her bunny Coco and listen to Hamilton. She would like to thank her sister Sophia, her mom, David, Sue and Coco for all their hard work.

Sophia Teller (The Jackal) is currently a 7th-grader at Shady Hill School. This is her sixth year with NCFO, and she is happy to be performing once again. Previously she was Hansel in Kids Court (2015), Balosi in Rain Dance (2014), Gigale in Antiphony (2013), a Child Star in Flying High (2012), and a Rebel in Space Opera (2011). She is inspired by track, tae-kwon-do, Hamilton and singing (of course!). She would like to thank David, Sue, Kathy, Jennifer, Mom and Julia for helping her along the way.

Aster Vyrros (Villager Soloist, Peacocks/Doves) is performing this year for the second time with NCFO. She enjoys singing, dancing, acting, watching movies and playing with her mini-golden doodle puppy.

Marina Vyrros (Village Elders/Doves) is performing her second opera with NCFO. She enjoys singing, dancing and acting. Unlike her daughter Aster, she is not quite commensurate with her talent in those areas but this has not deterred her from realizing her dream of being in an opera. Marina is a teacher in the Boston Public Schools.

Juliana Walsh (The Lead Peacock, Peacocks/Courtiers) is a 7th-grader at FA Day Middle School in Newton. Weaver’s Wedding is Julianna’s third performance with NCFO. Julianna’s past NCFO performances include Plaintiff Attorney in Kids Court (2015), and a Baboon in Raindance (2014). Julianna is also currently playing the Dragon in her school production of Shrek the Musical, and has played Asaka in Once on This Island, Mary Poppins, Anita in West Side Story, Charlie in Brigadoon and Wilma in You’re a Good Man Charlie Brown. She also sings vocals in a rock band, takes voice lessons and plays the cello. Julianna has two older brothers, a dog, and two cats. Julianna would like to thank her voice teacher Sissy and her mom for being her biggest fan.

Peter Watson (Set Design) teaches Scenic Design, Lighting Design and Technical Theatre at Dana Hall School and Lasell College. He has designed several sets for NCFO, as well as Concord Youth Theatre, and other theatre companies in the Boston area.

Eliza Weinberger (Animal Soloist, Peacocks/Courtiers) is performing this year for the third time with NCFO. She enjoys acting, skiing, cooking and is learning violin. Eliza is a 5th-grader at Winsor School, and her favorite classes are History and Spanish. Eliza also plays hockey on the Cambridge Squirt C team. She is excited about this year’s show!

Ava Weinstein (Village Children/Mosquitoes) is performing for the first time with NCFO. She is not new to the stage, having performed in plays at camp and danced in recitals. She is a 3rd-grader who loves to read, write and sew. She would like to thank her parents for helping her have the courage to join the opera and her friends Margot and Elizabeth for performing with her and making it even more fun.

Bethany Worrell (Vocal Coach) has been hailed as performing with “a gorgeous and flexible soprano that revealed a large measure of dramatic intelligence and musical acumen.” Soprano Bethany Worrell has performed in Boston, Pittsburgh, Chicago, and Salzburg. Bethany is pleased to be returning to the NCFO as a vocal coach this season after working with the singers to prepare Kids Court last year. Bethany teaches private voice and music theory lessons with Lift Up Your Voice and the Worrell Voice Studio. As a performer, Bethany’s upcoming engagements include singing Clorinda in the North End Music and Performing Arts Center (NEMPAC’s) summer production of Cenerentola. Her recent operatic roles include Masha (Four Sisters) with Boston Opera Collaborative, Echo (Ariadne auf...
The North Cambridge Family Opera (NCFO) provides an opportunity for children and adults to experience and enjoy telling a story through song by performing original, high-quality, fully-sung operas and choral works for audiences of all ages. Our casts of children and adults come from Cambridge and other communities in the greater Boston area. We encourage participation by multiple family members. Solo and chorus roles varying widely in difficulty are assigned to both children and adults, so that everyone is both challenged and given an opportunity to succeed. To the extent possible, productions are financed through donations and volunteerism.

NCFO began as participants in the second North Cambridge (NoCa) All Arts Open Studios weekend in May 1999, and has since incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit and produced a family opera every spring. Since 2007, NCFO has also presented a concert of science songs every year as part of the Cambridge Science Festival.

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