A MINI-GUIDE

The Story ................................................................. 2
Meet the Cast ............................................................ 6
Meet the Creator of Little Red ................................. 8
The Composers ......................................................... 9
The Story:
Little Red’s Most Unusual Day

SCENE 1—Outside Mrs. Hood’s House
Little Red appears and begins to tell the audience about her most unusual day. Unfortunately, Forest Ranger Dudley interrupts her and sings about how he is a wonderful and well-mannered man. After introducing himself, Dudley notices Mrs. Hood, Little Red’s mother, picking flowers in her yard. Her husband died when Little Red was a young girl, making her a widow. Mrs. Hood finishes filling her basket with flowers and leaves them at her door as she goes inside. Dudley has a big crush on Mrs. Hood and wants to ask her to the Forest Ranger’s Ball, but he is too shy to ask. Instead, he writes her a letter and leaves it for her in the basket of flowers. Mrs. Hood returns with Little Red and sends her off to Granny’s house after she reminds her never to talk, play, or walk with strangers.

SCENE 2—Somewhere in the Forest
Mr. Bigbad, the Big Bad Wolf, arrives and introduces himself as a “fellow of wide-spread fame.” He is extremely proud of the reputation and his ability to find little children to eat. Mr. Bigbad is on the lookout for Little Red as she will be his next tasty morsel! Little Red appears, reminding herself of the promise she made to not stray from the path. She is quickly surprised by the arrival of Mr. Bigbad! He scares her so badly, she exclaims that she is headed to Granny’s as she runs away. While Mr. Bigbad is upset that he scared off Little Red, he is pleased to know where she is headed. Soon, Dudley arrives and Mr. Bigbad struggles to get his attention. When he finally has it, he asks Dudley to tell him the way to Granny’s house. Dudley gives him directions but explains that Granny always keeps her door locked. She only opens her door to certain people, so he won’t be able to talk to her. Mr. Bigbad slyly asks if Granny would open her door to Dudley, to which he replies, “of course!” As Dudley turns to leave, Mr. Bigbad attacks him and steals his Forest Ranger uniform.

SCENE 3—Granny’s House
While Granny waters the flowers in her garden, she sings of her secret wish. She would love to have a handsome, young man take her to the ball. As she goes inside, Little Red arrives with her basket of flowers (the same basket that contains Dudley’s note). She leaves the basket at the door and decides to go off and pick some berries. Granny hears Little Red’s voice and comes to the door. Upon opening the door, Granny doesn’t see anyone, but does see the basket of flowers. She picks up the basket and discovers the note! She reads it aloud and believes that Dudley wants to take her to the ball. Granny believes her wish has come true and runs back in the house to get ready! Soon, Mr. Bigbad arrives at Granny’s door disguised as Forest Ranger Dudley. Mimicking Dudley’s voice, he asks Granny to open the door. Granny, not noticing Mr. Bigbad’s big ears and eyes, begins to flirt with him, mistaking him as Dudley. Mr. Bigbad is disgusted at the thought of being kissed and begins to run from Granny. He stops and remembers that he, after all, is the big bad wolf—she should be running from him! He takes off the ranger hat and turns to chase Granny who runs and locks herself in the closet.
Little Red returns and knocks on the door. Mr. Bigbad, pretending to be Granny, jumps in the bed and invites Little Red to come in. Little Red enters and goes to the bedside where she notices “Granny’s” abnormal features. Finally, Mr. Bigbad jumps out of bed and begins to chase Little Red. Granny comes out of the closet and chases the wolf with a broom.

Suddenly, there is another knock at the door. It’s Dudley, in his official Forest Ranger underwear, coming to investigate all the yelling. Granny and Little Red are afraid they will get into trouble for being noisy and “not nice.” Mr. Bigbad is afraid he will be put in a zoo. All three decide to hide in the bed under the blankets. Dudley comes in and is surprised to find the room empty. He sits down on the bed which causes the other three to jump out. Mr. Bigbad and Little Red begin to explain at once, while Granny runs out of the room.

Suddenly, there is another knock at the door. They hear Mrs. Hood’s voice and immediately panic over getting in trouble with Mom! As she walks into the house, the three of them strike an innocent pose, as if they were having a tea party. When Mrs. Hood questions their behavior, all three speak at once, trying to defend themselves. Dudley blows his Forest Ranger whistle to silence the yelling. He blames the whole ordeal on his shyness and explains to Mom that he wants to take her to the ball.Mom agrees to go and the two sing a lovely duet.

The moment is interrupted by another knock at the door. This time it’s Lumbering Jack! Mr. Bigbad is extremely afraid of Jack and his mighty axe! Dudley reminds Mr. Bigbad that at the end of the story, Lumber Jack chops up the wolf into a hundred little pieces. The wolf takes this as his cue to exit and runs out the door, never to be seen again.

FINALE

Little Red ends the story by telling what happened to each character after the story ends. Mr. Bigbad never gets chopped up because he is an endangered species. Mrs. Hood and Dudley have a great time at the ball and will probably get married. Little Red, well, she learned to obey every one of her mom’s rules!

The original story was quite different from our version! Read Charles Perrault’s original story below. How did the plot change in the opera? How are the characters different?

The Original Little Red
Ratkäppchen (Little Red-Cap) 1857 by Charles Perrault

Once upon a time, there was a dear little girl who was loved by everyone who looked at her, but most of all by her grandmother, and there was nothing that she would not have given to the child. Once she gave her a little cap of red velvet, which suited her so well that she would never wear anything else; so she was called “Little Red-Cap.”
One day her mother said to her, “Come, Little Red-Cap, here is a piece of cake and a bottle of wine; take them to your grandmother, she is ill and weak and they will do her good. Set out before it gets hot, and when you are going, walk nicely and quietly and do not run off the path, or you may fall and break the bottle and then your grandmother will get nothing, and when you go into her room, don’t forget to say, ‘Good morning’ and don’t peep into every corner before you do it.” “I will take great care,” said Little Red-Cap to her mother and gave her word on it. The grandmother lived out in the wood, half a league from the village and just as Little Red-Cap entered the wood, a wolf met her. Red-Cap did not know what a wicked creature he was and was not at all afraid of him.

“Good-day, Little Red-Cap,” said he. “Thank you kindly, wolf.” “Wither away so early, Little Red-Cap?” “To my grandmother’s. What have you got in your apron?” “Cake and wine; yesterday was baking-day, so poor sick grandmother is to have something good, to make her stronger.” “Where does your grandmother live, Little Red-Cap?” “A good quarter of a league farther on in the wood; her house stands under the three large oak-trees, the nut trees are just below; you surely must know it,” replied Little Red-Cap. The wolf thought to himself, “What a tender young creature! What a nice plump mouthful—she will be better to eat than the old woman. I must act craftily so as to catch both.” So he walked for a short time by the side of Little Red-Cap, and then he said, “See Little Red-Cap, how pretty the flowers are about here—why do you not look around? I believe, too, that you do not hear how sweetly the little birds are singing; you walk gravely along as if you were going to school, while everything else out here in the wood is merry.” Little Red-Cap raised her eyes, and when she saw the sunbeams dancing here and there through the trees, and pretty flowers growing everywhere, she thought, “Suppose I take grandmother a fresh nosegay; that would please her too. It is so early in the day that I shall still get there in good time;” and so she ran from the path into the wood to look for flowers. And whenever she had picked one, she fancied that she saw a still prettier one farther on, and ran after it, and so got deeper and deeper into the wood.

Meanwhile the wolf ran straight to the grandmother’s house and knocked at the door. “Who is there?” “Little Red-Cap,” replied the wolf. “She is bringing cake and wine; open the door.” “Lift the latch,” called out the grandmother, “I am too weak, and cannot get up.” The wolf lifted the latch, the door flew open, and without saying a word he went straight to the grandmother’s bed, and devoured her. Then he put on her clothes, dressed himself in her cap, laid himself in bed, and drew the curtains.

Little Red-Cap, however, had been running about picking flowers, and when she had gathered so many that she could carry no more, she remembered her grandmother, and set out on her way to her. She was surprised to find the cottage-door standing open, and when she went into the room, she had such a strange feeling that she said to herself, “Oh dear! How uneasy I feel today, and at other times I like being with grandmother so much.” She called out, “Good morning,” but received no answer; so she went to the bed and drew back the curtains. There lay her grandmother with her cap pulled far over her face, and looking very strange. “Oh grandmother!” she said, “what big ears you have!” “The better to hear you with, my child,” was the reply. “But grandmother, what big eyes you have!” she said. “The better to see you with, my dear.” “But grandmother, what large hands you have!” “The better to hug you with.” “Oh! But grandmother, what a terrible big mouth you have!” “The better to eat you with!”

And scarcely had the wolf said this, than with one bound he was out of bed and swallowed up Red-Cap. When the wolf had appeased his appetite, he lay down again in the bed, fell asleep
and began to snore very loud. The huntsman was just passing the house, and thought to himself, “How the woman is snoring! I must just see if she wants anything.” So he went into the room, and when he came to the bed, he saw that the wolf was lying in it. “Do I find thee here, thou old sinner!” said he. “I have long sought thee!” Then just as he was going to fire at it, it occurred to him that the wolf might have devoured the grandmother, and that she might still be saved, so he did not fire, but took a pair of scissors and began to cut open the stomach of the sleeping wolf.

When he had made two snips, he saw the little Red-Cap shining, and then he made two snips more, and the little girl sprang out, crying, “Ah, how frightened I have been! How dark it was inside the wolf.” And after that the aged grandmother came out alive also, but scarcely able to breathe. Red-Cap, however, quickly fetched great stones with which they filled the wolf’s body, and when he awoke, he wanted to run away, but the stones were so heavy, that he fell down at once and fell dead.

Then all three were delighted. The huntsman drew off the wolf’s skin and went home with it; the grandmother ate the cake and drank the wine which Red-Cap had brought and revived, but Red-Cap thought to herself, “As long as I live, I will never by myself leave the path, to run into the wood, when my mother has forbidden me to do so.” It is also related that once when Red-Cap was again taking cakes to the old grandmother, another wolf spoke to her, and tried to entice her from the path. Red-Cap, however, was on her guard, and went straight forward on her way, and told her grandmother that she had met the wolf, and that she had said, “good morning” to her, but with such a wicked look in his eyes, that if they had not been on the public road she was certain he would have eaten her up. “Well,” said the grandmother, “we will shut the door, that he may not come in.” Soon afterwards the wolf knocked, and cried, “Open the door, grandmother, I am little Red-Cap, and am fetching you some cakes.” But they did not speak, or open the door, so the grey-beard stole twice or thrice round the house, and at last jumped on the roof, intending to wait until Red-Cap went home in the evening, and then to steal after her and devour her in the darkness. But the grandmother saw what was in his thoughts.

In front of the house was a great stone trough, so she said to the child, “Take the pail, Red-Cap; I made some sausages yesterday, so carry the water in which I boiled them to the trough.” Red-Cap carried until the great trough was quite full. Then the smell of the sausages reached the wolf, and he sniffed and peeped down and at last stretched out his neck so far that he could no longer keep his footing and began to slip, and slipped down from the roof straight into the great trough, and was drowned. Red-Cap went joyously home and never did anything to harm anyone.
Meet the Cast

The cast is made up of Nashville Opera’s Mary Ragland Emerging Artists. These performers come from all over the country and stay in Nashville for three to four months to take part in our training program. They are part of Little Red’s Most Unusual Day as well as our mainstage productions of Gian Carlo Menotti’s Amahl and the Night Visitors, Benjamin Britten’s The Turn of the Screw, and Giuseppe Verdi’s Rigoletto. We asked our singers some questions so that you can get to know them!

Helen Zhibing Huang, soprano

From Beijing, China
Has sung with Portland Opera, Central City Opera, Opera Berlin
What is your favorite holiday? Chinese New Year! It’s the biggest holiday in my family with lots of food.
What is the farthest you’ve traveled? Since I’m from China, probably New York! I’ve also been to Washington state, Canada and will visit Australia next summer.
What do you like to do for fun? Eat and yoga to balance the eating.
What’s a little-known fact about you? I ice-skated and played field hockey in high school.

Kaylee Nichols, mezzo-soprano

From Columbus, Ohio, but I lived in Nashville from second grade through high school!
Has sung with Opera Project Columbus, Nashville Opera
Do you have any pets? I love dogs and have a Beagle/Basset mix named Pete.
What do you like to do for fun? Explore, play with Pete, and cook.
What’s a little-known fact about you? I used to want to be a professional soccer player!

Michael Anderson, tenor

From New Jersey
Has sung with Palm Beach Opera, Dayton Opera, Saratoga Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Central City Opera
What’s your favorite sport? Hockey—I played it growing up.
Where’s the farthest you’ve traveled? Alaska, Newfoundland, France, Denmark and Italy.
What’s an interesting fact about you? I’ve performed in the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade.
What was your first solo song? I sang “Chim-Chiminey” from Mary Poppins in elementary school chorus!
Spencer Reichman, baritone

From Austin, TX
Has performed with Shreveport Opera, New Orleans Opera, Chautauqua Opera
Favorite Food? BBQ—my least favorite is broccoli
What do you do for fun? Play board games and video games
What did you want to be when you grew up? A lawyer
Interesting fact about yourself? I have a collection of different-colored sports coats, between 45–55 different coats!

Esme Wong, pianist

Tour Music Director, Manager/ Pianist

From Sibu, Malaysia
Has performed with United World College of Adriatic, Italy, Sarawak Symphony Orchestra, University of North Texas, and Luther College
Do you have any siblings? 2 younger sisters and 1 younger brother
Do you play any musical instruments? I play piano, violin, percussion and I sing!
Favorite book? Legend of White Snake (Chinese novel)
Can you speak any foreign languages? Mandarin, English, Bahasa Melayu, and can understand Chinese dialects such as Foochow, Hokkien, Cantonese and Hin Hua.

Anna Young, Director of Education & Outreach

Stage Director

From Lives in Nashville, Tennessee, but is from Greenville, South Carolina
Pets? A black cat named “Pants”
Favorite movies? The Little Mermaid, Goonies, La La Land
Favorite food? Chocolate and Tacos
What do you do for fun? Read, watercolor, cook, and play classical guitar
Meet the Creator

**John Davies (1946–Present)**

John Davies began his journey in music at the age of 16. That summer he worked as a waiter at restaurant in Lennox, Massachusetts, during the famous music festival, Tanglewood. At 19, he saw his very first opera, *Falstaff* by Giuseppe Verdi and began studying voice formally at the Boston University School of Fine and Applied Arts. He performed his first opera role, The Speaker in *The Magic Flute*, during this time. He graduated with a degree in vocal performance and began early training as an apprentice at Santa Fe Opera with Western Opera Theater, a part of San Francisco Opera. He went on to appear with companies across the country, establishing a reputation for his characterizations of the basso-buffo (comic roles) of Rossini, Donizetti, and Mozart.

In 1997 he transferred to the other side of the footlights by founding Empire Opera Theater. He then made his mainstream directing debut in 2003. He has gone and continued to direct, appearing with such companies as Indianapolis Opera, Mercury Opera, Opera Theater at Wildwood, and Knoxville Opera. Mr. Davies takes an active interest in the performing arts for young people, spending part of each year writing, narrating and hosting educational programs for opera companies, symphony orchestras and children's museums across the United States. More than 60 North American opera companies have presented his opera companies for young audiences.

Currently, Mr. Davies resides in Dewitt, New York. He is the father of six children and loves to walk, read and write for fun.
Meet the Composers

Jacques Offenbach (1819–1880)

Jakob Levy Eberst was born in Cologne, Germany to a Jewish cantor. His father changed the family’s last name from Eberst to Offenbach after his hometown, Offenbach, Germany. Jacques is the French version of Jacob. Although he was born in Germany, Offenbach is quoted as saying, “I’m deeply saddened to have been born on the Rhine River… I am a Parisian through and through.”

He began his musical study at a young age. He started with both violin and cello and began to write songs as early as age eight. At fourteen, he was accepted into the Paris Conservatory despite the rule against admitting foreigners. He quit after only one year of study and took a job playing cello in the orchestra at the famed Opéra-Comique. He began to write his own works, but had trouble getting anyone to produce or perform them. He eventually opened his own theatre allowing him to perform his works including a large number of operettas (light operas). In the end, he wrote over 90 operettas! Offenbach was also known for playing practical jokes in his orchestra. His tricks ranged from playing wrong notes on purpose to elaborate plans making the music stands of his colleagues collapse in the middle of a performance!

Offenbach is credited as one of the first composers of operetta. This new genre combined spoken dialogue and musical pieces. Johan Strauss Jr. (known as the “Waltz King” and composer of Die Fledermaus) and Arthur Sullivan (of the British duo, Gilbert and Sullivan) followed Offenbach’s lead in creating popular operettas. His most famous work is Les contes d’Hoffmann (The Tales of Hoffmann) which happens to be his only serious opera composition! Unfortunately, Offenbach died three months before it premiered and never knew its success.

Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)

Gioachino Rossini was born on February 29th—a leap year and died of Friday the 13th. He was born into a very musical family, his mother an opera singer and his father a horn player. By the time he was fourteen, he was a working musician playing several instruments and singing at theaters in Bologna Germany. He began composing operas when he was eighteen which include: Barber of Seville, La Cenerentola (Cinderella) and William Tell. He composed Barber of Seville at age 24, and it remains one of the most performed operas of all time.

Rossini had the ability to write delightful melodies and stunning overtures, which earned him notoriety in both operatic and symphonic circles. His overture to William Tell was used in “The Lone Ranger” television show and has become a staple of the symphonic repertoire. At the age of 37, he retired from composing operas and turned to writing songs for solo voice and instrumental pieces. Rossini, unlike many famous composers, enjoyed a great deal of success during his lifetime and his works were loved immediately by the adoring public.