



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
April 20, 2010

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**KERA'S ART&SEEK LEADS PANEL DISCUSSION
BEFORE NIGHT FALLS: RELATIONSHIPS, POLITICS AND OPERA
PRIOR TO WORLD PREMIERE WITH
FORT WORTH OPERA**

DALLAS/FORT WORTH – Fidel Castro's Cuban revolution comes to life through the eyes of novelist Reinaldo Arenas and the music of Jorge Martín when the Fort Worth Opera presents the world premiere of *Before Night Falls*. Join *Art&Seek* reporter Jerome Weeks for the panel discussion *Before Night Falls: Relationships, Politics and Opera* with composer and librettist Jorge Martín, opera principals Wes Mason and Janice Hall, and costumer Claudia Stephens. The event is free and open to the public. It takes place Wednesday, May 12 at 7:00 p.m. in the Robert J. O'Donnell Lecture-Recital Hall located in the Owen Arts Center, Meadows School of the Arts on the campus of Southern Methodist University, 6101 Bishop Blvd. in Dallas, 75205. Martín will accompany Mason and Hall, who will perform brief selections from the opera during the panel discussion. A reception follows.

Before Night Falls recounts Fidel Castro's rise to power in the mid-1960s through the eyes of a counter-revolutionary, homosexual artist. Imprisoned and tortured by the state for having his manuscripts published outside Cuba, Reinaldo must find a way to escape to America, only to learn he has a fatal disease.

Whether you're an opera novice or a season ticketholder, this behind-the-scenes discussion will educate, inspire and prepare you for the full performance of *Before Night Falls* when it debuts Saturday, May 29 and Sunday, June 6 as part of the Fort Worth Opera Festival. KERA Members receive a 20% discount on tickets to all Fort Worth Opera Festival performances.

Jerome Weeks / Moderator

Art&Seek producer-reporter Jerome Weeks is an award-winning journalist with more than two decades experience as a professional [arts](#) critic. His work appears regularly on KERA-FM, during the *Art&Seek* segment of the television program *Think* on KERA-TV and at www.ArtandSeek.org.

Jorge Martín / Composer

A native of Santiago de Cuba and U.S. citizen since 1965, Martín acquired the adaptation rights to *Before Night Falls* in 1995 and began work on the opera in 2003. He wrote the libretto himself with the help of the book translator. Martín holds multiple degrees in music composition from Yale and Columbia Universities and composes for all musical genres, including opera, orchestral chamber, choral, vocal and solo works.

Wes Mason / Reinaldo Arenas

Baritone Wes Mason debuts with the Fort Worth Opera in the leading role of Reinaldo Arenas in the world premiere of Jorge Martín's *Before Night Falls*. His riveting portrayal in the workshop performance at the Seagle Music Colony prompted the composer and director to cast him in the Fort Worth premiere.

Janice Hall / Mother and The Sea

Soprano Janice Hall makes her fourth appearance with the Fort Worth Opera in the role of Mother/The Sea in *Before Night Falls*. She most recently appeared in *Angels in America*, performed in 2008. Hall has appeared with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, San Diego Opera and Houston Grand Opera and performed Violetta in the New York City Opera's Emmy-winning telecast of *La Traviata* as part of the *Live from Lincoln Center* television series.

Claudia Stephens / Costumer

Claudia Stephens has designed costumes for opera, theater and dance in New York and nationally. Her work with the Fort Worth Opera includes *Before Night Falls* and the 2008 production of *Angels in America*. Her designs have been seen on the stages of the Portland Opera, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Lincoln Center, Julliard, Manhattan School of music and many others. Claudia Stephens is Associate Professor of Costume Design at SMU.

ABOUT ART&SEEK

Art&Seek is a multimedia information service for North Texas arts, music and culture. It includes radio reports on KERA-FM, television features on KERA-TV and an award-winning Web site at www.ArtandSeek.Org. There you will find feature stories about the arts in North Texas, a blog with daily arts news, podcasts and the *Art&Seek* calendar. All arts organizations in North Texas are invited to create a profile page on the *Art&Seek* calendar and post events free of charge. To create a profile page, please visit www.ArtandSeek.org/addus/.

ABOUT FORT WORTH OPERA

Fort Worth Opera seeks to educate, entertain and expand the horizons of current and future audiences and artists through variety and artistic integrity, and to become internationally recognized as an organization that preserves and expands the transcending Art of opera. One of the 14 oldest opera companies in the nation and the oldest in Texas, Fort Worth Opera struck a new course under General Director Darren Keith Woods, condensing its schedule in 2007 into a month of spring performance as the

Fort Worth Opera Festival. Darren Keith Woods, who began his operatic career in 1982 as a character tenor, joined Fort Worth Opera as General Director in 2001. Visit <http://www.fwopera.org/> for more information.

ABOUT KERA

KERA is a not-for-profit public media organization that serves the people of North Texas. The station broadcasts to the fourth-largest population area in the United States. KERA produces original multimedia content, carries the best in national and international public television and radio programs, and provides online resources at kera.org. The station's extensive coverage of the arts can be found at artandseek.org. KERA-TV broadcasts on Channel 13.1. KERA WORLD broadcasts on 13.2. KERA-FM broadcasts on 90.1 in Dallas/Fort Worth/Denton, 88.3 in Wichita Falls, 100.1 in Tyler and 99.3 in Sherman. KERA's new music station KXT 91.7 FM is also streamed online at www.kxt.org.

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