Elixir of Love

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Sunday April 29 - 4pm
OPERA UP CLOSE Series
Presents
The Elixir of Love
(L’Elisir d’Amore)
An opera by Gaetano Donizetti
Libretto by Felice Romani
Adapted and Directed by John Concepcion
Cast
(in order of vocal appearance)
Nemorino ......................... James Kryshak
Adina .......................Caitlin Andrews Shirley
Belcore ......................... Michael Cavalieri
Dr. Dulcamara .................. Matthew Carroll
Accompanist .................... Marta Johnson
Host/Narrator .................. John Concepcion

SPECIAL THANKS TO
Lyric Opera of Chicago
Kevin Wall and Homewood-Flossmoor High School,
The Drama Group, Judith Felix and Francine Schulman
From the Director

L'Elisir d'Amore holds a special place in my heart. I was fortunate to be part of the 1991 performance at the Ravinia Festival featuring Luciano Pavarotti and Kathleen Battle. It was a magical evening for me and for the thousands gathered to hear Maestro Pavarotti return to one of his signature roles. The music was captivating, charming and sublime. The love story pulled at my heart and the comic antics of Paul Plishka’s Dr. Dulcamara kept me laughing throughout. Over the years, the music from this opera keeps returning, like a soundtrack to my life. But finally having the opportunity to direct my own version of this wonderful opera and use the singers I love and respect is truly a gift.

At its heart, The Elixir of Love is a romantic love story. Nemorino, a simple country boy, is in love with Adina, a beautiful girl from a wealthy family. If that wasn’t difficult enough to overcome, the handsome Sgt. Belcore has come into town and wants Adina, as well. Love sick Nemorino, in an effort to win Adina’s heart before she marries Belcore, falls victim to Dr. Dulcamara’s promise of a magic elixir (actually, a cheap bordeaux!). Donizetti’s beautiful score offers untold opportunities for the voice to convey deep emotions; Nemorino’s ardent plea for Adina in the opening aria, “Quanto e bella” (“She’s a darling, I adore her!”) and the most famous aria from the opera, “Una furtiva lagrima” (“I saw a tear fall from her face”). Belcore’s music is pompous and militaristic, but yet it offers long florid lines and lyrical beauty. And the lightning fast patter of Dr. Dulcamara’s entrance aria is a tour de force of comic timing and bravura singing. I hope you all get to know and enjoy these wonderful characters and the music from this opera keeps returning, like a soundtrack to my life. But finally having the opportunity to direct my own version of this wonderful opera and use the singers I love and respect is truly a gift.

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Baritone Michael Cavalieri has sung a wide range of styles and repertoire, spanning from concert to opera to ensemble. His roles include Count Almaviva (Le Nozze di Figaro), Guglielmo (Così fan tutte), Gianni Schicchi, and Valentin (Faust). He was recently heard in Light Opera Works productions of Sondheim's A Little Night Music (Carl Magnus) and Gilbert & Sullivan's The Pirates of Penzance (Pirate King), where the Chicago Sun-Times called his voice "rich and juicy." He premiered the role of "The Announcer" in Gustavo Leone's The Leader at the Goodman Theater. Michael contributed over a dozen songs to the complete songbook of Charles Ives for Naxos. In collaboration with RealTime Opera and SO Percussion, Mr. Cavalieri debuted the title role in Feynman, a one-act mixed media opera for percussion and baritone. Mr. Cavalieri sang the role of Pnlgoss for the Milanese debut of Bernstein's Candide with the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano. His recital repertoire includes Schubert, Mahler, Wolf, Duparc, and Argento, performing The Andrée Expedition with J.J Penna. A versatile voice for the stage, his concert work includes Handel's Messiah, Mozart's Mass in C Major, and Orff's Carmina Burana. Mr. Cavalieri holds degrees from Illinois Wesleyan University, Arizona State University, and Yale University. He has sung with Chicago Folks Operetta, Arizona Opera, Yale Opera and Santa Fe Opera and currently sings in the ensembles of the Chicago Symphony Chorus and Lyric Opera.

James Kryshak

James Kryshak (tenor) a native of Baldwinsville, NY made his professional opera debut in 2008 as Don Ottavio in Raylynmor Opera's production of Mozart's Don Giovanni. Other opera roles include; Count Almaviva in Il barbiere di Siviglia; Ernesto in Don Pasquale, Nanki-Poo in The Mikado, Camille in The Merry Widow, Frederik in Pirates of Penzance, Tamino in Die Zauberflöte, Pelléas in Pelléas et Mélisande, and the Prince in Opera For the Young’s 2009 (Madison, WI) production of Rusalka. A winner in both District (2008, 2009) and Regional (2009) levels of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, James sang on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera as a National Semi-Finalist in February 2009. James has also been a Finalist in the Ferruccio Tagliavini International Vocal Competition in Deutschlandsberg, Austria (April 2005) as well as a Semi-Finalist in the Klassik Mania Competition in Vienna (July 2005). Currently, James is a member of the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago. For the 2010-11 Lyric Opera Season, he performed as; Snout in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Joe in La fanciulla del West, Amelia’s Servant in Un ballo in Maschera, and the Second Nobleman in Lohengrin. During the 2011-12 Lyric Opera Season, James will be seen as Scaramuccio in Ariadne auf Naxos, the 2nd Priest in Die Zauberflöte, and the Herald in Rinaldo, as well as Monostatos in the Student Matinee performances of Die Zauberflöte. James holds a Master’s of Music Degree in Opera Performance from the University of Wisconsin Madison where he was the recipient of the Wisconsin Distinguished Voice Excellence Fellowship (2008-09) and studied with Julia Faulkner and William Farlow. He also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in both Music (Voice) and German from Elmhurst College (Elmhurst, IL). Further studies have included two years of vocal study in Vienna with Michele Friedman, an apprenticeship with Des Moines Metro Opera in 2009 and a vocalist in the Tyrolean Opera Program in 2006 under the direction of Elizabeth Bachman.

Marta Johnson

Pianist Marta Johnson, a noted and in-demand collaborator, resides in Chicago and works throughout the area with a broad and ever-expanding array of artists and organizations. Marta enjoys working with musicians of all ages and experience levels, ranging from professionals with companies such as Music of the Baroque, Light Opera Works, and Emerald City Theater, to high schoolers and younger students with the Lyric Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Piven Theater and After School Matters. Marta has moved comfortably among a wide variety of spheres: as Music Director for Chicago Folks Operetta and Emerald City Theater; as Assistant Conductor for Light Opera Works; as a teaching fellow with Chicago Opera Theater; as a member of the faculty at Sherrill Milnes’ VOICExperience and Black Hills State University Summer Institute for the Arts; as a piano apprentice at the International Institute of Vocal Arts in Italy. Other highlights include work with the Elgin Symphony and American Opera Group. Marta Johnson received her undergraduate degree in music from North Park University in Chicago and is a graduate of UW-Milwaukee with an M.M. in Collaborative Arts.