



The Elixir of Love

**Donizetti's charming comedy,
live at the Neal S. Blaisdell Concert Hall**

Friday, February 17 | 7:30 pm
Sunday, February 19 | 4:00 pm



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Aloha kākou!

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the second production in your Hawai'i Opera Theatre's 2022/2023 Season as we continue our exploration of the lighter side of opera. After nearly three years living through a pandemic, I felt we all needed a break from the heavy – but oh so glorious – tragic operas that have served as the core of our repertoire over our 60+ year history in Hawai'i.

The Elixir of Love is one of my very favorite operas. In fact, I've directed the opera multiple times over the years. Two of those productions were for Pocket Opera, a wonderful little company based in San Francisco, using the English translation we're using at HOT for our production. Pocket Opera was founded by pianist Donald Pippin in 1978, and he served as its artistic director until his death in 2021 at the age of 96. His mission was to make opera more accessible by performing everything in English, utilizing his own clever translations, and stripping away the trappings of grand opera to make it more intimate and affordable. Over his time, Donald translated over 90 operas, many of which have been used by professional opera companies around the world. He also led the "Pocket Philharmonic" from the keyboard and narrated every single performance until the last couple years of his life.

Donald was the first to engage me as a professional singer, and later as a director, and I will be forever in his debt. I was involved in dozens of productions with Pocket Opera over the course of 20+ years, as singer, director, and a few times, both (which I do not recommend...). More than any other mentor, he taught me the power of words in opera. His translations were meticulous and well thought out, and for me *Elixir* is his very best. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do, especially in our gorgeous new production which sets the action right here in our beautiful Hawaiian home.

“... you are now
part of our 'ohana.”

Mahalo nui loa for everything you do to make opera possible. Whether this is your first time at an HOT production or your 100th, please know you are now part of our 'ohana.

A hui hou!



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andrew Morgan".

Andrew Morgan
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Hawai'i Opera Theatre

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A New Mission

HOT is embarking on an exciting exploration to refresh its mission statement. Our goal is to build upon the core values that we hold dear as an organization while also reflecting on our purpose as a mission-driven non-profit opera company in the 21st Century.

Why refresh our mission statement now?

The last time HOT revised its mission statement was in 2015. The world has changed a lot in those few years, and so have we! Ultimately, we want to arrive at a purpose-driven mission statement that goes beyond merely stating what Hawai'i Opera Theatre does, and instead answers the question of what our purpose is in Hawai'i and beyond.

Our Process

Throughout the year, we've asked board members, staff, students, parents, cast members, and volunteers what HOT means to them. Each person brings their own unique perspective to this question, and taken together, they form a rich mosaic of our organization which will ultimately help to inspire our refreshed mission statement. Later this year, we plan to reveal our refreshed mission statement and to share the journey that got us there – through the responses, images and words from members of our special HOT 'ohana.

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The Elixir of Love

Composed by Gaetano Donizetti

Italian Libretto by Felice Romani

English Translation by Donald Pippin

.....

Cast

Adina

Natalie Image*

Nemorino

Andrew Stenson*

Dulcamara

Efraín Solís*

Belcore

Igor Vieira*

Giannetta

Martina Bingham

Artistic Team

Conductor

Benjamin Makino

Director

Maria Todaro*

Répétiteur

Jimin Seo*

Chorus Director

Nola Nāhulu

Chorus Coordinator

Chris Walsh

Lighting Designer

Donald James Ranney*

Costume Designer

Katherine James

Scenic Designer & Artist

Michelle Bisbee*

Hair and Makeup Designer

Mei Chibana

Production Stage Manager

Emily Rose Carr Hunt

Rehearsal Stage Manager

Brandann R. Hill-Mann

*HOT Debut



ACT I

The opera opens on a contemporary village in Hawai'i coming to life. Nemorino, a poor young maintenance employee at the sugarcane farm, is madly in love with the successful owner and manager, Adina. Nemorino thinks she is beyond his reach, but she is also in love with him. She teases him and tells the story of how Tristan won the heart of Isolde by drinking a magic love potion.

A military regiment arrives, led by the pompous Sergeant Belcore, who immediately introduces himself to Adina and asks her to marry him. Adina promises to consider Belcore's offer, pushing Nemorino to confess his feelings. Left alone with Nemorino, Adina tries to provoke him to action by asserting that his time would be better spent in town looking after his sick uncle rather than hoping to win her love.

Dr. Dulcamara, a traveling "Doctor Feelgood," arrives to promote an elixir capable of curing anything. A hopeful Nemorino asks if the doctor has anything like the love potion in Adina's book. Dulcamara claims he does, attaching a fake label to a bottle of cheap wine. He explains that

Synopsis

Nemorino will have to wait until the next day to see the results... just enough time for the doctor to make a clean exit. Nemorino buys the bottle – conveniently priced at the amount in his pocket – and immediately drinks it. As the wine takes effect, he becomes sure that he will be irresistible to Adina by tomorrow, so he feigns cheerful indifference toward her. Infuriated, Adina retaliates by flirting with Belcore. When urgent orders arrive for the sergeant to return to his garrison, Adina agrees to marry him at once. The shocked Nemorino begs her to wait one more day, but she dismisses him. Instead, she invites the entire village to her banquet. Desperate, Nemorino can only seek out Dulcamara for more help.

ACT II

As the curtain opens, the townspeople are preparing to celebrate the wedding. Adina wonders why Nemorino isn't there, as she doesn't want to sign the marriage contract until he appears. Nemorino finds Dulcamara and pleads for another bottle of the elixir, but no money means no help. Belcore wanders in, bewildered that Adina continues to delay the wedding. When Nemorino expresses his desperate need for cash, the sergeant figures he can get a rival suitor out of the way by persuading him to join the army for the enlistment bonus.

With his new elixir in hand, Nemorino suddenly finds himself besieged by a group of women. Nemorino believes the elixir is finally taking effect. What he doesn't realize – but the women do – is that his uncle has recently passed away, leaving him with a sizable inheritance. Adina feels responsible for Nemorino's enlistment, but her concern turns to jealousy when she sees him with the other women. Dulcamara boasts about the power of his elixir and offers to sell some to Adina, but she is confident in her ability to win Nemorino on her own. Not surprisingly, love wins in the end.

Keeping it Local

What do you think of when you think of Hawai'i?

Opera probably isn't the first thing that comes to mind, but with a show involving over fifty kama'aina from costume design to set build and chorus, it just might. But it doesn't stop there. The set for *Elixir* was built in HOT's Waipahu scene shop, and it was our first production in over 15 years that was both designed and built locally.

Months ago, HOT's design team toured Hawai'i Plantation Villages for inspiration and historical background.

"We wanted to explore the island of O'ahu and create an authentic, Hawai'i-centered set. With this show taking place in a fictional quaint town outside a sugarcane farm,

we knew a good place to start would be Hawai'i Plantation Villages," said HOT Scenic Designer Michelle Bisbee. We hope to have many more projects like this one that utilize our amazing local resources so that when people think of Hawai'i, opera isn't too far behind.



“We wanted to explore the island of O’ahu and create an authentic, Hawai’i-centered set.”

Director's Notes

HOT's invitation to direct this unique custom-made production of *The Elixir of Love* fulfills an artistic dream of mine.

I was grateful that Andrew and his team encouraged and trusted my vision to set this opera in Hawai'i, using the background of a sugarcane farm (alluding to the traditional magic of Hawaiian "Hana Aloha"). My goal in changing the setting was to have this piece reach the hearts of its community by reflecting Hawai'i.

“I hope that the newcomers will be transported by the beauty of Donizetti's music and relate to some aspects of the characters we are painting here.”

I hope that the newcomers will be transported by the beauty of Donizetti's music and relate to some aspects of the characters we are painting here. I also hope to surprise the aficionados with a very different approach of the original presentation, while not changing the text, the motivations of Adina and Nemorino are put to light differently, maybe telling us that, when in love, we could all be a Nemorino and an Adina.



Maria Todaro
Director

Artist Profiles

Natalie Image

Adina



HOMETOWN: Tsawwassen, BC, Canada

RECENT & UPCOMING:

- Solo Recital, City of Delta
- Soloist, Opera in the Park (Vancouver Opera)
- Competitor, Veronica Dunne International Competition
- Competitor, Concours musical international de Montréal

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- Galatea, *Acis and Galatea* (San Francisco Chamber Orchestra)
- Title role, *Cinderella* (Opera San Jose)
- Barbarina, *Le nozze di Figaro* (San Francisco Opera)

HOT DEBUT: Yes

If my life were a book, it would be called:

"From Apples to Arias"

Andrew Stenson

Nemorino



HOMETOWN: Rochester, Minnesota

RECENT & UPCOMING:

- Young Sailor and Shepherd, *Tristan und Isolde* (Seattle Opera)
- Pang, *Turandot* (Houston Grand Opera)
- Tamino, *The Magic Flute* (Utah Opera)
- Almaviva, *The Barber of Seville* (Garsington Festival UK)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- Title role, *Candide* (Glimmerglass Festival)
- Ferrando, *Così fan tutte* (Lyric Opera of Chicago)
- Beppe, *I Pagliacci* (Metropolitan Opera)

HOT DEBUT: Yes

If my life were a book, it would be called:

"Oedipus Rex"

Efraín Solís

Dulcamara



HOMETOWN: Santa Ana, California

RECENT & UPCOMING:

- Jailer/Doctor/Thierry, *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (San Francisco Opera)
- Figaro, *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Opera San Jose)
- Germano, *La Scala di Seta* (Opera Santa Barbara)
- Papageno, *Die Zauberflöte* (Santa Rosa Symphony)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- Charlie, *Three Decembers* (Opera San Jose, Florida Grand Opera, Virginia Opera)
- Dandini, *La Cenerentola* (San Francisco Opera)
- Papageno, *The Magic Flute* (San Francisco Opera)

HOT DEBUT: Yes

If my life were a book, it would be called:

"What's Opera, Doc?"

Igor Vieira

Belcore



HOMETOWN: Rio De Janeiro, Brazil

RECENT & UPCOMING:

- Dulcamara, *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Napa Valley Festival)
- Scarpia, *Tosca* (Tacoma Opera)
- Harlekin, *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Theatro São Pedro in Brazil)
- Bartolo, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Port Angeles Symphony)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- Gubetta, *Lucrezia Borgia* (San Francisco Opera)
- Orff, *Carmina Burana* (San Francisco Symphony)
- Dvorak Requiem (Prague Philharmonic)

HOT DEBUT: Yes

If my life were a book, it would be called:

"Persistence!"

Martina Bingham

Gianetta



HOMETOWN: Antioch, California

RECENT & UPCOMING:

- Bastienne, *Bastien und Bastienne*, (HOT Digital)
- Barbarina, *Le nozze di Figaro*, (Hawai'i Opera Theatre)
- Soprano soloist, *Carmina Burana*, (Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra)
- Soprano soloist, *Mozart Requiem*, (Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- HOT Mae Z. Orvis Opera Studio Artist
- Encouragement Award, 7th K Vocal Competition
- Co-founder, Balcony Series

HOT DEBUT: *Le nozze di Figaro*, 2020

If my life were a book, it would be called:

"Soprano vs. the World: A Musical Comedy"

Benjamin Makino

Conductor



HOMETOWN: Fullerton, California

RECENT & UPCOMING:

- *Hometown to the World* (HOT Digital)
- *Madame Butterfly* (Hawai'i Opera Theatre)
- *Both Eyes Open* (World Premiere)
- *La Cenerentola* (Opera Modesto)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- US premier of *Tell Tale Heart* by Stewart Copeland
- *Le vin herbé* (Long Beach Opera)
- *Both Eyes Open* at the Opera America New Works Forum

HOT DEBUT: *La Traviata*, 2019

If my life were a book, it would be called:

"What I Talk About When I Talk About Running."

Artist Profiles

Maria Todaro

Director



HOMETOWN: Paris, France

RECENT & UPCOMING:

- *I 'Amant Anonyme* (Minnesota Opera)
- *Le nozze di Figaro* (Fargo-Moorehead Opera)
- *L'Amant Anonyme* (Atlanta Opera)
- *Gianni Schicchi* (New Jersey Festival Orchestra)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- Founder and General Director of the Phoenicia International Festival of the Voice upstate NY
- Director of the 1st Drive-in in the US, second in the world, live performance of *Tosca* during Covid-19
- 1st Volumetrics staging of *Tosca*, presenting Opera borrowing the vocabulary of Video Games

HOT DEBUT: Yes

If my life were a book, it would be called:

"Overthinking and over serving"

Jimin Seo

Répétiteur



HOMETOWN: Seoul, South Korea

RECENT & UPCOMING:

- *Otello* (University of North Texas)
- *Le nozze di Figaro* (Miami Music Festival)
- *The Bartered Bride* (Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati)
- *Don Pasquale* (Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati Bootcamp)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- Pulcinella Suite (Conducting; University of North Texas)
- Siegfried Idyll (Conducting; University of North Texas)
- Des Knaben Wunderhorn (Conducting; Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati)

HOT DEBUT: Yes

Nola Nāhulu

Chorus Director



HOMETOWN: Makaha, Hawai'i

RECENT & UPCOMING:

- *Madame Butterfly* (Hawai'i Opera Theatre)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- 28 seasons preparing our HOT Chorus with Beebe Freitas

HOT DEBUT: No

Michelle A. Bisbee

Scenic Designer & Artist



HOMETOWN: Mayfield Heights, Ohio

RECENT & UPCOMING:

- Scenic Designer, *The Game's Afoot* (Mānoa Valley Theater)
- Scenic Designer, *The Play That Goes Wrong* (Mānoa Valley Theater)
- Scenic Designer, *Twelfth Night* (Lyric Repertory Company)
- Scenic Designer, *The Chinese Lady* (Mānoa Valley Theater)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- Associate Professor Scenic Design, Properties, and Scenic Art, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
- Assistant Head of Props, *Cirque du Soleil* and *Beatles, Love*
- Props and Puppets Technician, *Cirque du Soleil's KA*

HOT DEBUT: Yes

Donald James Ranney

Lighting Designer



HOMETOWN: Honolulu, Hawai'i

RECENT & UPCOMING:

- Indigeneity, Tau Dance Theatre at the Cache Valley Arts (Ellen Eccles Theatre)
- Imaginary Homelands, Monkey and Waterfall (Paliku Theatre)
- Makalapua, The Lili'u Project (Leeward Community College)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- 45 years as a technician at Leeward Community College
- Lighting and Scenic Design for multiple local dance and theatre companies
- 44 years of teaching

HOT DEBUT: Yes

Mei Chibana

Hair and Makeup Designer



HOMETOWN: Honolulu, Hawai'i

RECENT & UPCOMING:

- *Madame Butterfly* (Hawai'i Opera Theatre)
- *The Elixir of Love* (Hawai'i Opera Theatre)
- *Gianni Schicchi* (Hawai'i Opera Theatre)
- Gridiron: Society of Professional Journalists Hawai'i Chapter, 2023

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- Wig & Makeup designer for HOT's *The Tragedy of Carmen* and *Madame Butterfly*

HOT DEBUT: No

Katherine James

Costume Designer



HOMETOWN: Berkeley, California

RECENT & UPCOMING:

- Designer, Events in Apparel
- Costume Designer, *Soul Surfer* the movie
- Costumer, Julie Taymor's *The Tempest*

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- Costume Designer *The Elixir of Love* (Hawai'i Opera Theatre)

HOT DEBUT: No





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Conductor's Note

The movie *Senso* opens with a scene at the famous Teatro La Fenice in Venice. The stuffy theater is packed with a cross section of Venetian society; the opera itself a backdrop for a vivid meeting of people of all kinds, gossiping, protesting, falling in love.

If you were in the audience of the premiere of *this* opera in 1832, you'd have likely found yourself in a similarly chaotic scene. You wouldn't be reading a note from the conductor, because there wasn't one. Performances were shaped by singers and orchestra musicians without such a character, and so communication was key for everyone involved. Expectations were high, and audiences and critics were as savage in their disapproval as much as they cheered successes.

“...the theater remains a place where we are still compelled to mix it up...”

While we are a long way away from 1832, I like remembering that the theater remains a place where we are still compelled to mix it up as a group and communicate to each other, as performers, as an audience, as a group of people coming together. And while we may not achieve the particular intensity of that time, we should certainly aspire to its enthusiasm for the people we come across in the theater and what they mean in our lives.

 **Benjamin Makino**
Conductor

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Our nationally recognized education outreach programs reach more than 25,000 students on O'ahu and neighbor islands annually.

HOT's education programs are made possible, in part, by the following sponsors:

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Established in 1991, HOT's Opera for Everyone program offers students from elementary through high school and college classes the opportunity to enjoy the live opera experience for just \$7! Teachers and others working with youth in Hawai'i may reserve seating for the final full orchestra dress rehearsal on the Wednesday before each opera opening.

TOURS TO SCHOOLS

Each year, Hawai'i Opera Theatre produces an opera specifically designed to take "on tour" to schools all around the state. In addition to being a great experience with music and drama, this show can also be used to enhance curriculum.

SCHOOL RESIDENCY

Turn your school, grade level or participating classrooms into an opera production company! The opera residency program has become an annual learning program for the schools and is available for elementary, middle and high schools. Our opera education team leads your students and teachers through the process of producing and performing an opera.



Learn the craft.

ORVIS YOUNG VOICES

Started in 2014, HOT's Education & Outreach created the Orvis Young Voices Studio for singers grades 9 through 12. With group workshops, one-on-one opportunities, performing and watching performances, singers grow as artists and improve themselves as performers. Workshops will cover topics such as diction, acting, interpretation, performance practice, use of the voice, college auditions, and more.



Hone your skills.

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Our professional training program provides opportunities for dozens of premiere vocal artists to shine. Last season, nearly every Hawai'i Opera Theatre performance included artists from this program. The guest artists and master teachers are some of the finest in the United States and Europe, and are working professionals in the field of opera.



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Please call us at 808-596-7372 or email us at education@hawaiiopera.org

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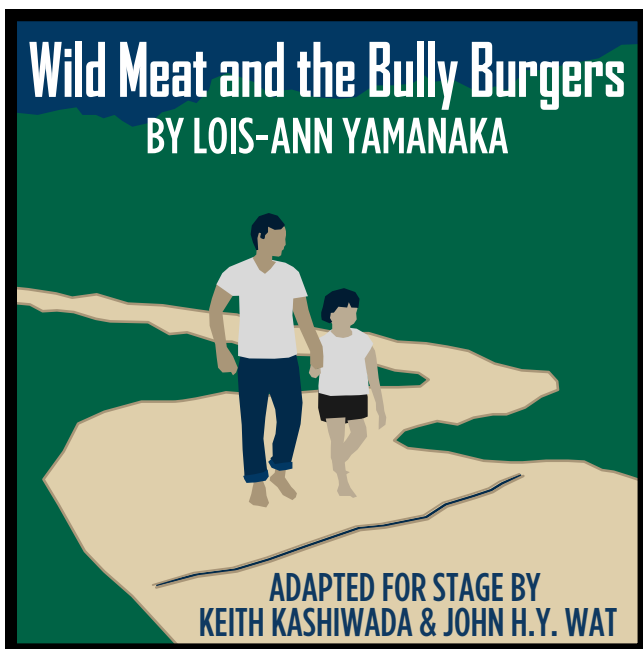
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