

Donizetti's comic opera...

The Elixir of Love!

(L'elisir d'amore)

Sung in English

FEATURING CAST, CHORUS &
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ACCOMPANIED BY PLAYERS
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Tues 22nd - Sat 26th October 2013, 7:15pm

Venue! THE CRESCENT THEATRE
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Welcome!

It is with pleasure that we welcome back Director/Producer, Sarah Helsby Hughes of Heritage Opera, and Musical Director James Longstaffe. Again they've worked tirelessly and with great fun. James, who also MD'd us through our successful 2013 Spring concerts, has made a commitment to stay with Midland Opera for as long as he is able. Long may he reign!

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Life is never boring at M.O!

Our leap into opera is undertaken with passion each year, overcoming odds with positivity and enthusiasm, and 2014 is no exception. On finding our regular slot unavailable at the Crescent, we were thrown into an exciting rethink. So - with the support of you and our members - we are delighted to announce the following 2014 programme. And if you like what you see, why not sing with us?

~~~~~

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WE HOPE YOU ENJOY TONIGHT'S PERFORMANCE!

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MAIN INTERVAL: Refreshments will be served in the foyer during the main interval. The Promenade Bar will be open before and after the performance and during the interval. Patrons requiring drinks during the interval and particularly at the end of the performance are urged to order them in advance. Smoking is not permitted in the auditorium. Neither is the use of cameras and tape recorders. First aid facilities are provided by St John's Ambulance which gives its services voluntarily. In accordance with the requirement of the licensing justices: a) The public may leave at the end of the performance by all exits and entrances other than those used as queue waiting rooms and the doors of all such exits and entrances shall at all times be open. b) All gangways, passages, and staircases shall be kept entirely free from chairs or other obstruction. c) Persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the intersecting gangways. If standing be permitted at the rear of the seating, sufficient space shall be left for persons to pass easily to and fro. THE CRESCENT THEATRE Licensee and Manager.



Director's notes

Sarah Helsby-Hughes

Hello, and welcome to this year's operatic offering from Midland Opera. Donizetti's perennial favourite, his comedy masterpiece, "The Elixir of Love".

When I was in my third year at school, I had a massive crush on a boy called David Wright. I used to watch the school gates every day and hope to glimpse the object of my adoration as he came out of school to buy his lunch. Of course, he never knew I had such longings for him. He was a worldly and sophisticated sixth-former, and a lowly third-former like me was so very far below his notice.

I couldn't have known it then, but those old feelings of unrequited passion were to help me greatly as I began to look again at this opera about growing up and learning to love.

The themes examined - unrequited love, pride, class difference, fraud, dishonesty, coming of age - are as relevant today as they have always been. Great comedy is indeed universal, commenting on subjects that have affected humans for centuries.

"The Elixir of Love" is no different. We follow young love-struck hero, Nemorino - as he learns about himself and about the object of his affection, Adina. We root for him as he grows from a naive boy into a young man in control of his own feelings and destiny. It's a story everyone can identify with. We have all had feelings for someone who didn't know we existed or, worse, who DID know but who did not feel the same way about us. It is a part of youth, a part of growing up.

I have set the opera in the middle of the 20th Century, at the very start of the war years. I feel that the universality of the subject lends itself to many interpretations - and the chance to make the Dulcamara character assume the mantle of the wartime black marketeer, the 'Spiv', was too good an opportunity to miss! The other characters happily fall into place, and I am sure you will enjoy influences from "Dad's Army" to "Cabaret" along the way.

I do hope you'll have a spiffing time.

TTFN, Sarah

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Music by Gaetano Donizetti. Original libretto by Felice Romani.
From the Schirmer Score, reduced by James Longstaffe, with English translation by Sarah Helsby-Hughes

MAIN CHARACTERS

Adina (A wealthy landowner)

(Tues / Thurs / Sat) Lorraine Payne
(Weds / Fri) Loretta Hopkins

Nemorino (A hapless village lad)

(Tues / Thurs / Sat) Alexander Aldren
(Weds / Fri) Mitesh Khatri

Belcore (An RAF Squadron Leader)

(Tues / Thurs / Sat) Ian McFarlane
(Weds / Fri) Mathieu Lanniel

Dulcamara (A travelling salesman) Clive Thursfield

Giannetta (Chief Land Girl)

(Tues / Thurs / Sat) Louise Wayman
(Weds / Fri) Rachel Jonas-King

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Rachel Jonas-King, Sara Dyble, Valerie Matthews, Vicky Newson

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Mel Taylor, Steve Miller, Tony Wilkinson

~ ORCHESTRA ~

Leader/1st violin ~ *Philippa Green*

2nd Violin	<i>Emily Tyrell</i>	Oboe	<i>Lesley Knowles</i>
Viola	<i>Junghee Keum</i>	Bassoon	<i>Jo Mayne</i>
Cello	<i>Mike Nowland</i>	Trumpet	<i>Simon Crick</i>
Double Bass	<i>Alexia Barbera</i>	French Horn	<i>Cath Cordey</i>
Flute 1	<i>Liz Wrighton</i>	Trombone	<i>Adrian Taylor</i>
Piccolo/Flute 2	<i>Becky Skinner</i>	Timpani	<i>Sarah Balls</i>
Clarinet	<i>Caroline Robinson</i>	Piano/Percussion	<i>Phil Ypres-Smith</i>



IN MEMORY OF STEVE RALPH
- a music lover - with thanks to his family for
supporting this production.
Highest regards, Midland Opera xxx



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players of the Queens
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2013 PRODUCTION TEAM

Musical Director	<i>James Longstaffe</i>
Director/Producer	<i>Sarah Helsby-Hughes</i>
Score Reduction	<i>James Longstaffe</i>
Translation	<i>Sarah Helsby-Hughes</i>
Rehearsal Accompanists	<i>Shah Johan Shabridzuan & James Longstaffe</i>
Assistant Director	<i>Jonathan Newsome</i>
Set Design	<i>Jemima Bruntlett & Sarah Helsby Hughes</i>
Set Realisation	<i>Trevor Woodford</i>
Wardrobe Co-ordination	<i>Emma Skinner and Andrew Cooley</i>
Props	<i>Steve Miller</i>
Set Construction	<i>Trevor Woodford, Malcolm Oakes, Jemima Bruntlett</i>
Stage Manager	<i>Jonathan Newsome</i>
Assistant SMs	<i>Charles Allison, Rob Taylor, Paul & David Taylor</i>

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## FRONT OF HOUSE

*Dave Bowdler, Pat Nixon, Lyn Thursfield, Sylvia Miller, Jessie Venegas-Garcia and Mike Kerslake*

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# The Elixir of Love

## Synopsis

### Act I

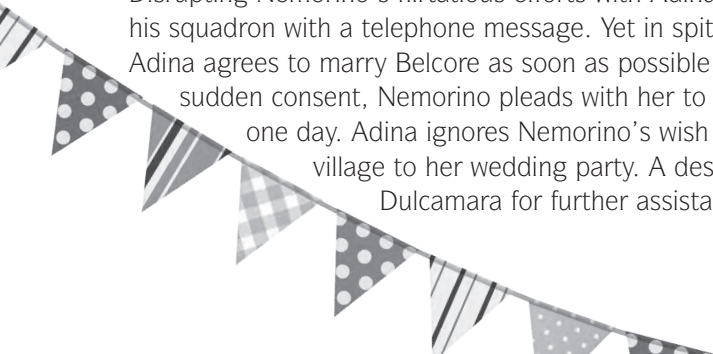
**ENGLAND 1939.** As the workers enjoy a tea break during the harvest, young Nemorino watches Adina, the beautiful local landowner. Adina begins to tell the story of Tristan and Isolde and the love potion, and Nemorino ponders over his love for her. Suddenly, RAF Squadron Leader Belcore arrives with his men, to take part in a local cricket match. Swiftly introducing himself to Adina, he requests her hand in marriage. Taken aback, Adina neither accepts nor rejects the offer and promises to think it over.

When Adina and Nemorino are alone, she urges him to leave the village to care for his sick uncle in the city, dismissing his attempts to win her love. Discontent with her advice, Nemorino reminds Adina that it is impossible to forget one's first true love.

The arrival of a travelling medicine man, Dulcamara, provides an opportunity for Nemorino to enquire after an 'elixir of love' as described in Adina's tale. Dulcamara informs the shy Nemorino that he does indeed supply such a 'potion' (a hastily relabelled brown ale), which Nemorino purchases with his remaining money. In order to avoid being found a fraud, Dulcamara explains that the potion does not take effect for a day. But Nemorino can't wait, and tries it as soon as Dulcamara is out of sight.

When Adina stumbles upon an intoxicated Nemorino, she is surprised, and becomes increasingly frustrated at Nemorino's behaviour. Nemorino - knowing that Adina will be unable to resist him tomorrow - is confident and jovial.

Disrupting Nemorino's flirtatious efforts with Adina, Belcore is summoned to his squadron with a telephone message. Yet in spite of Nemorino's efforts, Adina agrees to marry Belcore as soon as possible. Disillusioned by Adina's sudden consent, Nemorino pleads with her to postpone her decision for one day. Adina ignores Nemorino's wish and proceeds to invite the village to her wedding party. A desperate Nemorino seeks Dulcamara for further assistance.







## 20 minute interval

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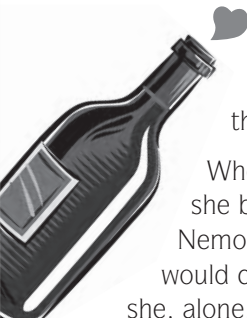


## Act 2

As the wedding celebrations commence in the clubhouse, the guests are entertained by a barcarolle performed by Adina and Dulcamara. Yet the absence of Nemorino concerns Adina and she decides not to sign her marriage contract until he appears. Meanwhile, Nemorino desperately seeks a second bottle of elixir from Dulcamara, despite having no money to purchase the potion. Dulcamara agrees to wait fifteen minutes for Nemorino to find the money.

A confused Belcore is bewildered at the postponement of the wedding, and unaware of Nemorino's intentions, persuades Nemorino to join the RAF in order to earn money and receive a volunteer bonus to buy more elixir.

Nemorino instantly returns to Dulcamara and consumes a second bottle of potion, following which he is besieged by a group of irresistible Land Girls. Oblivious to the news of his uncle's death (and his inherited fortune), Nemorino naively believes that the elixir is working.



When Adina discovers Nemorino relishing the female attention, she becomes uncontrollably jealous. Dulcamara breaks the news of Nemorino's conscription, and insists that if she took the potion, Adina would conquer Nemorino's love. However Adina refuses, insisting that she, alone, will win Nemorino.

Noticing Adina's distress at the sight of himself with the Land Girls, Nemorino is certain that Adina cares for him. Adina visits the newly-recruited Nemorino, having bought off his enlistment papers, and they finally declare their love for one another. Belcore stumbles across the pair. Understanding Adina's reasoning for postponing their wedding, Belcore admits defeat and takes leave. Hearing news of the potion's success, Dulcamara reveals Nemorino's inheritance to the village and brags about the power of his miraculous elixir.



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# BIOGRAPHIES

*A little about tonight's performers, and their directorial team.*

*(in alphabetical order)*

**ALEX ALDREN** **Nemorino**

**(Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday)**



Alex Aldren began singing seriously in 2010 when while continuing his medical degree at the University of Birmingham he was awarded a scholarship from the CBSO to study with internationally

acclaimed tenor Justin Lavender. Praised as 'ringingly resonant' by Opera magazine, Alex is tackling the tenor repertoire at an exciting pace, which has not gone unnoticed. Already Alex's roles are as diverse as Alfredo in La Traviata (Park Opera, Bracknell), Aeneas in Dido and Aeneas (Armonico Consort), Brunello Orlando Generoso (Barber Opera) and Sam Sharkey in Paul Bunyan (British Youth Opera) the performance of which was described as 'a comic delight' and 'most promising of the tenors'. Highlights of 2013 so far include performing Maria from West Side Story to an audience of over 5000 at the Royal Albert Hall, a concert tour in Cuba and performing alongside Ian Bostridge as a Britten-Pears Young Artist at the Aldeburgh festival. In October Alex will make his international debut as the artist in residence at Britten Days Festival in Cologne.

**SARAH HELSBY HUGHES**

**Producer / Director**



Sarah hails from Liverpool, and studied singing at Birmingham Conservatoire.

Since graduation, Sarah's singing career has taken her all over the world, including

performances in Europe, the USA and Japan. She has appeared for many opera companies, including Mid-Wales Opera, Carl Rosa Opera, Lyric Opera Dublin, D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, Opera North, Opera Ireland, Pavilion Opera, New Devon Opera, and City of Birmingham Touring Opera.

She directed several student-led projects whilst at Birmingham, and has combined a singing and directing career ever since. She is Artistic Director of Heritage Opera, a professional chamber opera company. Productions for HO include: Dido and Aeneas, The Magic Flute, Die Fledermaus (co-translated with Nick Sales), HMS Pinafore, Tosca, Così fan Tutte, Carmen (also translated), Madame Butterfly, Don Giovanni, The Marriage of Figaro, Rigoletto (also translated) La Bohème, and The Barber of Seville (also translated). Under her management, Heritage Opera gave the world première of Jonathan Dove's chamber opera, Mansfield Park (in which she created the rôle of Mary Crawford). This summer she directed the youth production of The Phantom of the Opera for the ClassicFEST festival in Harrogate. This is Sarah's second production for Midland Opera, having directed Turandot in 2012.

Future projects include Tosca, The Flying Dutchman (singing Senta), and Les Misérables for ClassicFEST youth festival in 2014.

**LORETTA HOPKINS     Adina**

**(Wednesday, Friday)**



Loretta Hopkins studied music at the University of Edinburgh and Birmingham Conservatoire, where she gained a postgraduate diploma, generously

supported by the South Square Trust. She continues to train with Mary Plazas. Loretta was a finalist in Birmingham Conservatoire's Mario Lanza Prize and in the Internationale Sommerakademie Opera Prize organised by the Vienna Conservatoire. Opera rôles include Greta Fiorentino Street Scene, Ham Noye's Fludde, cover, Fox The Cunning Little Vixen (Birmingham Conservatoire), Amore Orfeo ed Euridice (Scarlet Opera), Micaëla Carmen (Bearwood Opera) and, in excerpts, Norina Don Pasquale and Cunegonde Candide (Birmingham Conservatoire).

A regular performer in the chorus at Opera Holland Park, Loretta has performed in productions of Le nozze di Figaro, Eugene Onegin, and Falstaff as well as the rôle of a Sprite in Fantastic Mr Fox by Tobias Picker. In 2013, Loretta was invited back to OHP to sing in Madama Butterfly as The Aunt. Future plans include Fiordiligi Così fan tutte (Barn Theatre Company) and Lisa Pikovaya Dama (Park Opera).

**RACHEL JONAS-KING     Giannetta**

**(Wednesday, Friday)**



Rachel Jonas-King is a soprano fresh from study at Birmingham Conservatoire, under the guidance of various musicians of high standing; Rita Cullis, Robin

Bowman and Stephen Barlow, to mention a few. While at the Conservatoire, she participated in the Delius and Ireland Liederabend as well as the various competitions held there. She also took part in their spring opera production, also held in this theatre. Prior to living in Birmingham, Rachel involved herself in opera productions and concerts in South-East Asia. Among them are Offenbach's Tales of Hoffman in Singapore and Handel's Messiah in Kuala Lumpur. She also participated in ProMusica International Workshop & Masterclass conducted by Opera Plus in association with the Flanders Opera Studio, Belgium. Rachel gained much instruction and exposure from Siew-Tuan Loh, Hein Botenberg and Ronny Lauwers who ran the masterclass.

**MITESH KHATRI     Nemorino**

**(Wednesday, Friday)**



Mitesh completed his postgraduate studies at the Birmingham Conservatoire in 2010, and continues to study with Christine Cairns

whilst maintaining a busy operatic and concert schedule. His professional roles include the Nobleman in Count Ory (Opera South) and Nanki Poo in The Mikado (Opera Anywhere). He has also covered the title role of Fortunio (Grange Park Opera), and Beppe in I Pagliacci (Opera Up Close). Other roles have included Ramiro (La Cenerentola); Jenik (The Bartered Bride); Don Jose (Carmen); Elvino (La Sonnambula); Mr Upfold (Albert Herring); Kaspar (Amahl and the Night Visitors); Amaryllus, (The Poisoned Kiss), and various Gilbert & Sullivan tenor roles.

Professional chorus work has included Idomeneo and Madama Butterfly with Grange Park Opera, the world premiere of Jonathan Dove's Life is a Dream,

with Birmingham Opera and Madama Butterfly with Longborough Festival Opera. Mitesh is a regular soloist on the concert platform, with recent performances including Dvorak Requiem, Handel's Israel in Egypt, Messiah, Ode on St Cecilia's Day and Haydn's Creation.

Future operatic work includes Joe in Fanciulla del West, with Midsummer Opera.

**MATHIEU LANNIEL** Belcore

**(Wednesday, Friday)**



After his ABRSM exams in 2009/2010, Mathieu moved on to work at the opera course at CityLit in Covent Garden, London where he studied under Peter Crockford and Carol Gibb. Performances

here included Papageno in the Magic Flute, Publio in Clemenza di Tito, Florestan in the rarely heard opera comique Veronique by André Messager, along with Purcell's Dido and Aeneas and Giulio Cesare by Handel. Soon after, Mathieu joined the Magdala Opera in Nottingham, singing in concerts under the directorship of Michelle Wegwart. This is Mathieu's first principal rôle with Midland Opera.

**JAMES LONGSTAFFE**

**Musical Director**



James Longstaffe is a conductor, répétiteur and tuba player. He has been principal répétiteur for Oxford Touring Opera since 2006 (for whom he has also conducted productions of operas by Verdi and Rossini), and for the Oxford

Opera Company from 2007 until 2009, taking part in performances of operas such as Le Nozze di Figaro, Così Fan Tutte, The Turn of the Screw, Madama Butterfly, and I Pagliacci. From 2008 to 2010 he was conductor of the Oxford University Sinfonietta, with whom he conducted music by, amongst others, Stravinsky, Webern, Varèse, John Adams, Magnus Lindberg, and Copland. He also conducted the Orchestra of Oxford from 2007 to 2009, whose concerts included a complete performance of Wagner's Das Rheingold. James conducted concerts with the Oxford Chamber Orchestra, East Oxford Community Choir, and the Oxford Sinfonia. This is James's second season with Midland Opera.

**IAN MCFARLANE** Belcore

**(Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday)**



Ian McFarlane is a Welsh bass-baritone, currently based in the Midlands. After graduating from Keele University, Ian studied privately with Jeremy Huw

Williams, going on to study at Birmingham Conservatoire in 2009/10, where he trained under Gwion Thomas.

Operatic roles have included Aeneas (Dido & Aeneas), Valentine (Faust), Zuniga (Carmen) and Ping (Turandot). Ian sang chorus in Longborough Festival Opera's 2012 production of The Magic Flute, and went on to sing Speaker/Priest/Armed Man in the associated Complete Singer tour. He was also cover for these roles in Co-Opera Co's touring production in 2012/13. In 2013, Ian joined Longborough again, singing chorus in Götterdämmerung as part of their Ring Cycle.

In addition to opera, Ian has sung oratorio and concerts with a number of choirs, and also performs at weddings and other functions. Ian has

extensive choral singing experience. A member of the CBSO Chorus since 2009, he has also sung with BBC National Chorus of Wales and National Youth Choir of Wales.

**LORRAINE PAYNE Adina**

**(Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday)**



Lorraine began vocal training in 1991, and was introduced to opera in 1992. Since then she has appeared as Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, as Marguerite in *Faust*, twice as

Nedda in *I Pagliacci*, as Marenka in *The Bartered Bride*, Adina in MO's 2001 *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Monica in *The Medium*, Servilia in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Oscar in *A Masked Ball*, in the title rôle of *Carmen*, as one-third of *Lady Macbeth*, as Olympia in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, in the title rôle of *Sister Angelica*, and as last year's Liu in *Turandot*. Lorraine is also a regular singer at weddings and other functions. Private vocal tutors include Margaret Field and, currently, Phil Ypres-Smith.

**CLIVE THURSFIELD Dulcamara**



Clive began singing with the Forward Operatic Company, playing a number of rôles including Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* and Allesandro Dell' Acqua

in Strauss's *Night in Venice*. He sang Escamillo in *Carmen* with Kennet Opera, and for RSO performed many major rôles, including Wagner in *Faust* and Don Carlo in *Force of Destiny*. For Consensus Opera he sang rôles including the Count in *The Marriage of*

*Figaro* and M. Aristide de Chateau-Yquem in *Not in Front of the Waiter*. With MO he has played Marco in *Gianni Schicchi*, Iago in *Otello*, Prince Galitsky in *Prince Igor*, Valentin in *Faust*, Dr. Dulcamara in *L'elisir d'amore*, Tonio in *I Pagliacci*, Samuel in *A Masked Ball*, Moràles in *Carmen*, Spalanzani & Crespel in *The Tales of Hoffmann* and The Emperor in last year's *Turandot*.

**LOUISE WAYMAN Giannetta**

**(Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday)**



Louise studied at Birmingham Conservatoire with Christine Cairns where she won the Cecil Drew Oratorio Prize, Gordon Clinton English Song Prize, Conservatoire Singing Prize, Doris Newton Music Club Prize, Reginald Vincent

Lieder Prize, BMus Prize for outstanding achievement and Mario Lanza Society Opera Prize.

Operatic rôles include Amore in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Papagena in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Donna Anna in scenes from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Adina in scenes from Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Birmingham Conservatoire), Micaëla in Bizet's *Carmen* (Oxford International Links) and Belinda in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (Operamus).

Solo engagements have included Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem* and *Exsultate Jubilate*, Haydn's *Creation*, and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* and Bach's *Cantata 51- Jauchzet Gott*. She was a finalist in the 2012 Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards and a semi-finalist in the 2013 Jack Donnelly Memorial Mozart Singing Competition.

Louise appears as a soloist on the recently released disc 'Odes, Songs, Sonatas &c' by the Musical and Amicable Society.

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to all members, guests  
& the production team.***

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*For supporting the operas  
& concerts, for working so hard,  
and for making Midland Opera  
such fun, and what it is today..*

*But mostly, love and thanks to  
all our families and friends.*

*:-) xxx*





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email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_