

Midland Music Makers
Opera

presents

L'Elisir d'Amore

by Gaetano Donizetti



From 13th to 17th November 2001

The Crescent Theatre 20 Sheepcote Street
Brindleyplace Birmingham B16 8AE 

Midland Music Makers
Opera

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L'Elisir d'Amore

Music by Gaetano Donizetti

Libretto by Felice Romani Translated by Ruth and Thomas Martin for G. Schirmer inc.

Reduced orchestration by Derek Clark. Copyright: Pocket Publications.

CHARACTERS

Adina	<i>a wealthy, educated and capricious farm-keeper</i>	
	<i>(Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday)</i>	Lorraine Payne
	<i>(Wednesday, Friday)</i>	Jayne May-Sysum
Nemorino	<i>a poor young peasant, in love with Adina</i>	Nick Sales
Belcore	<i>a recruiting officer for the army</i>	Robert Hills
Dr. Dulcamara	<i>a perambulating physician</i>	Clive Thursfield
Giannetta	<i>one of Adina's workers</i>	Valerie Matthews

CHORUS LADIES:

Angie Barnbrook, Patricia Bullock, Julia Creaton, Susan Cash, Pam Davies, Sheila Giles, Norma Johnson, Patricia Nixon, Lynda Shepherd, Janet Stanley, Lesley Swinbourne, Helen Walker, Dee White, Anne Willetts, Marrian Yates.

CHORUS GENTLEMEN:

Barry Matthews, David Mellor, Tim Morris, Keith Nield, Malcolm Oakes, John Read, Patrick Sharpe, Bob Shepherd, Richard Kemp, Robin Tarrant, Paul Willetts.

SOLDIERS:

Harry Swinbourne (Also the Notary), Michael Wareham, Joe Wood.

VILLAGE CHILDREN:

Gioia Barnbrook (Park Hill School, Moseley), Katrina Fogarty (Howley Grange School, Halesowen), James Houlbrooke (Hillstone School, Malvern), Ruby Kieft (Park Hill School, Moseley), Jayne Miles (Bleak House Junior School, Oldbury)

Many thanks go to Nic Walsh and Lesley Hadland for their help with the production.

LEADER OF THE ORCHESTRA **Alice Eaton**

Our thanks must also go to anyone who has contributed to this production and whom we may have inadvertently omitted.

Synopsis

Act I

Scene 1 - Adina's farm, Northern Italy c. 1830.

Adina is a wealthy owner of a local farm. In the midday heat she, Giannetta, and a group of peasants and farm workers rest beneath the shade of a tree on her estate. Adina reads voraciously. Nemorino, a young peasant, is hopelessly in love with Adina and in awe of her intellect. The peasants urge their mistress to read to them. Adina recounts the tale of how Tristan won the heart of Isolde by drinking a magic love potion. Adina feels that she, too, would like to be wooed that way.

The bumptious recruiting sergeant, Belcore swaggers into town with his hapless troop. The soldier's conceit amuses Adina, but he is not dissuaded from asking her hand in marriage. Affronted, she asserts her right to choose her own suitor, but invites the troop to stay and take wine with her. The villagers are sent back to work.

When Adina and Nemorino are left alone, he awkwardly declares his love. Tired of his feeble attempts to woo her, she tells him that his time would be better spent looking after his ailing rich uncle, than mooning over her, for she is as fickle as the breeze. Nemorino vows to love her until he dies.

Scene 2 - The Village square.

Villagers hail the arrival of the travelling physician Doctor Dulcamara, who proclaims the virtue of his patent cure-all medicines. Since they appear inexpensive the villagers buy eagerly. When the villagers have gone, Nemorino asks Dulcamara if he sells Tristan's love potion. Pulling out a bottle of Bordeaux, the charlatan declares that he has his own exclusive love potion, coincidentally for just the amount Nemorino has in his pocket. So Nemorino spends his last cent. The potion will need one full day to take effect. (just enough time for Dulcamara to leave town). Nemorino is sworn to secrecy, then hastily starts drinking it.

Adina enters to find him slightly tipsy. Certain of winning her love, he feigns indifference. Strangely bothered by this, she decides to punish him by flirting with Belcore and agreeing to marry him in six days' time. Nemorino laughs at these plans, believing that the elixir will have worked by the next day.

When Belcore receives orders to return immediately to his garrison, he persuades Adina to marry him at once. Horrified, Nemorino begs Adina to wait one more day, but, to punish him for ignoring her, she continues with her charade and invites the entire village to her wedding feast. Nemorino rushes away to find the Doctor.

20 minute INTERVAL

Act 2

Scene 1 - The village square.

The pre-wedding supper is in progress. Dulcamara, self-appointed Master of Ceremonies, sits at the wedding tables. Adina, with growing restlessness is on the lookout for Nemorino and finds herself strangely disturbed by his absence. She is briefly distracted by the doctor, as they sing together a barcarolle about a girl who rejects a wealthy suitor in order to marry her true love, a gondolier. As the guests disperse, Adina leaves with Belcore and the Notary to make final arrangements.

Dulcamara is joined by a frantic Nemorino, begging for another bottle of elixir; his pleas are rejected because he has no money. Belcore returns, impatient for nightfall. He spies Nemorino and, when he hears of his plight, seizes the opportunity to get rid of his rival by persuading him to join the army. He promises him a wonderful life. Nemorino signs and takes the money. They both leave – Nemorino to find Dulcamara.

Scene 2 - In Adina's drawing room.

Some of the village girls, enjoying the party, have gathered in Adina's drawing room, where they hear from Giannetta that Nemorino's uncle has died and left him a fortune. She swears them to silence as not even Nemorino yet knows.

When the youth reels in, giddy from his second bottle of wine, they besiege him with attention. Unaware of his new wealth, Nemorino believes the elixir has finally taken effect. When Adina and Dulcamara enter the room they cannot believe their eyes. Adina has discovered that he has sold his freedom to Belcore and wants to know why. When he is offhand with her she grows furious and feels rejected for the first time in her life. He is finally whisked away by the ambitious girls. Dulcamara tells Adina of the sacrifice Nemorino has made to win her; he also claims that Nemorino's popularity is due to his magic potion, which he offers to her. Adina replies that she will win him back with her own charms.

Scene 3 - The village Square, early next morning.

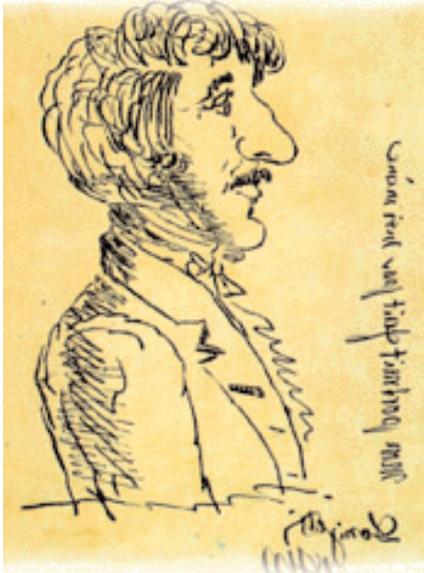
Nemorino is seeking Adina – when he was being courted by the village girls, he espied a furtive tear in her eye – he believes now she really does love him. Adina arrives having redeemed his army papers from Belcore, she says it's because he will be missed by all. Nemorino asks if she has anything further to say. When she says no, he angrily declares that he will join the army. Adina, now desperate to keep him, finally confesses her love for him and asks for forgiveness.

Belcore catches them in an embrace and Adina gently tells him that he has lost her. Belcore, reluctantly accepts this, blaming the Doctor. Never slow to miss an opportunity, Dulcamara claims that his potion is responsible for Nemorino's happiness and wealth and quickly sells more bottles before making his escape.

CURTAIN

Gaetano Donizetti.

If music be the Elixir of Love...



Born in Bergamo, Italy in 1797, Donizetti studied at the Naples Conservatory and at the Liceo Filarmonico. He began composing when still a student, scoring his first success at the age of 21 with his fourth opera, 'Enrico di Borgogna'.

Between 1818 and 1829 Donizetti wrote nearly thirty operas, but it was in 1830 that his gifts were confirmed beyond doubt. 'Anna Bolena' - his 33rd opera - marked a turning point in Donizetti's career. It was widely acclaimed, and he followed this with a number of other successful operas, including 'L'Elisir D'Amore' (1832) and 'Lucrezia Borgia' (1833)

In 1835, and at the height of his fame Donizetti began to compose for the Paris opera houses, making his debut with 'Marin Faliero'. In the same year he also produced one of his most important works, 'Lucia di Lammermoor', based on the novel 'The Bride of Lammermoor' by Sir Walter Scott

After overcoming the distressing death of his wife Virginia in 1837, Donizetti went on to stage further operas, but soon encountered a skirmish with the censors in Naples in 1839 over his opera 'Poliuto'. He returned to Paris, staging the same work under a new title 'Les Martyres'. Donizetti continued composing opera into the latter stages of his life, even as mental disorders brought on by syphilis undermined his body and spirit. He finally died in April 1848.

Donizetti's musical style, considerably influenced by that of Gioacchino Rossini, is characterised by brilliant and graceful melodies, designed chiefly for virtuoso singers.

biographies

CHARLOTTE EXON (Musical Director)

Charlotte Exon is a music graduate of the University of Birmingham who specialises in both choral and orchestral conducting. Having been awarded the Hyperion Scholarship, she is currently engaged in doctoral study in musicology at the University of Birmingham researching music during the Third Reich. She has had extensive conducting experience with the University ensembles including the Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Wind Ensemble, Chamber Choir and the organisation and conductorship of the University Chamber Choir's first international music tour to Germany and Ukraine. She also directs the Dorset based choral ensemble Cum Sancto Spiritu, which she established in 1997 as a platform for young performers and composers and brings together musicians from all over the country. Internationally, Charlotte is the guest conductor of the Cherkassy Chamber Orchestra in the Ukraine. She has also initiated a music development project in the Ukraine which has included the establishment of a new orchestra and choir in the Cherkassy Region. Although she now dedicates most of her time to conducting, she also indulges in the performance of chamber music as an oboist and pianist and sings with the University of Birmingham Singers.

KATE FORD (Set Designer)

Kate has designed several productions for Midland Music Makers. She lives close to a vineyard in Shropshire and the skein of the vine leaves in Act 1 was drawn from life. Kate is currently working on costumes for the Central Ballet production of 'Pride and Prejudice'.

ROBERT HILLS (Belcore)

This is Robert's first appearance with Midland Music Makers. Previously he has sung principal roles for Randazzo Opera, including *Malatesta* - 'Don Pasquale', *Dr Miracle* - 'Tales of Hoffmann', *Guglielmo* - 'Cosi Fan Tutte', *Figaro* - 'Marriage of Figaro' and 'Barber of Seville' and *Falke* - 'Die Fledermaus'. Robert's most recent appearance was as *Tarara / Corcoran* - 'Utopia Ltd' for Birmingham Savoyards.

AMANDA LAIDLER (Producer)

Amanda has directed musicals and children's theatre as well as opera, and has written and directed pantomimes including 'Cinderella' and 'Aladdin'. Recently she has directed the 'Sibford Millennium Pageant' written by RSC actor David Ryall, for a cast of over 100 including horses and a flock of sheep, and *Oliver!* for Stratford Amateur Operatic at the Swan Theatre. She has also worked as an arts administrator and a stage/company manager for theatre and opera. From 1986 to 1991 she was Company Manager and Assistant to the Director of Wexford Festival Opera. She has worked as professional stage manager or Assistant to the Producer on many musicals and operas for societies in Yorkshire and Warwickshire.

VALERIE MATTHEWS (Giannetta)

Valerie studied at the Royal College of Music, London and joined Midland Music Makers after moving to Birmingham. She has taken many lead rôles including *Maliela* in 'Jewels of the Madonna' and *Alison* in 'The Wandering Scholar'. She is one of the founder members of the CBSO Chorus and has sung the soprano solo in their Brahms Requiem and the minor solo in Szymanowski's 'King Roger'. Valerie was a participant in a Masterclass given by Robert Tear. She sang the soprano solo in St Chad's Cathedral for 'Messiah' in aid of BBC's 'Round the World Messiah'. Valerie played the part of *Frasquita* in MMM's 2000 production of 'Carmen'.

JAYNE MAY-SYSUM (Adina - Wed, Fri,)

Jayne trained at the Welsh College of Music and Drama and is now a professional soprano appearing in recitals and concerts across the UK. She has performed in many prestigious venues including St Martin-in-the-Fields and St John's, Smith Square, London. Closer to home, she has given concerts at The Royal Pump Rooms, Lord Leycester Hospital and The Civic Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon. Later this year, she will be travelling to Uganda for concert engagements and next year will be touring the UK with the romantic show 'Because you're mine'. Other operatic performances include *Sophie* in Massenet's 'Werther' and *Michaela* in 'Carmen'. She has also played lead roles in several Gilbert & Sullivan productions. Radio broadcasts include interviews with Spectrum Radio, London and BBC Coventry & Warwickshire and her CD, 'Discovery' includes performances from Vivaldi's 'Gloria' and 'L'Olimpiade'. Much of Jayne's work in Warwickshire relates to her project 'Singing for the Children' set up to benefit music provision in Warwickshire schools. To date, over £2,000 has been raised.

LORRAINE PAYNE (Adina - Tues, Thurs, Sat)

Lorraine's vocal experience ranges from church music, through Folk music and Light Opera to Rock music (spending 5 years performing and writing with a rock band). In 1991, she started vocal training with Sarah Wright, ex-member of D'Oyly Carte Opera Company and Opera Factory. She began singing in the chorus with Music Makers in 1992 and has since performed as *Marguerite* - 'Faust', *Nedda* in 'I Pagliacci' and *Marenka* in 'The Bartered Bride'. Lorraine has also taken part in music festivals, sung in concerts and operas with Royal Sutton Opera, Halesowen Choral Society & Handsworth Choral Society and sang The "Messiah" at St. Alban's, Highgate. Since 1999 Lorraine has been coached by Margaret Field, and in 2000 enjoyed the rôle of *Cherubino* in the Consensus' Millenium version of 'The Marriage of Figaro'. This is Lorraine's first solo expedition since the birth of Cora Payne in February 2001.

NICK SALES (Nemorino)

Since turning full-time professional early in 2001, Staffordshire-born tenor Nick Sales finds himself busier than ever. Major opera rôles this year include *Edgardo* in 'Lucia Di Lammermoor' for Present Opera, *Don Jose* in 'Carmen' for Nottingham Festival Opera, and the title role in Romberg's 'The Student Prince' in Derby and Buxton. On the concert platform, highlights include: 'Messiah' for Ripon Cathedral, Puccini 'Messa Di Gloria' in Canterbury and Wetherby, Vaughan Williams 'A Pilgrim's Journey' and Finzi Lo 'The Full Final Sacrifice' at Sheffield Cathedral, and 'An evening with the unforgettable Mario Lanza' at Buxton Opera House. 2002 promises 'Messiah' for Harrogate Choral Society and a Royal Gala performance of Gilbert & Sullivan's 'Trial By Jury' in the presence of H.R.H. Princess Anne. Nick is delighted to be joining MMM for this production.

CLIVE THURSFIELD (Doctor Dulcamara)

Clive began singing with the Forward Operatic Company where he played a number of rôles including *Prince Orlofsky* in 'Die Fledermaus' and *Allesando Dell Acqua* in Strauss's 'Night in Venice'. He has sung *Escamillo* in 'Carmen' with Kennet Opera and for Royal Sutton Opera has performed *Wagner* in 'Faust', the *Doctor* in 'Macbeth', *Guglielmo* in 'Cosi Fan Tutti', *Morales* in 'Carmen' and *Don Carlo* in 'Force of Destiny'. For Consensus Opera he has sung *Count Robinson* in 'The Secret Marriage', *Lord Dunmow* in Berkeley's 'Dinner Engagement' and *M. Aristide de Chateau-Yquem* in 'Not in Front of the Waiter'. With MMM he has played *Marco* in 'Gianni Schicchi', *Iago* in 'Otello', *Prince Galitsky* in 'Prince Igor' and *Valentin* in 'Faust'. Clive recently played *The Count* in the Consensus' millenium version of 'The Marriage of Figaro' and *Dancairo* and *Morales* in the MMM production of 'Carmen'.

Midland Music Makers
Opera

events

Many thanks to you all for keeping the spirit of Midlands Music Makers alive. We hope you've enjoyed the evening as much as we have, and will join us as we embrace our 2002 programme.

Sunday Nov. 25th 2001

'Christmas Fayre' Concert
Middleton Hall

December 9th 2001

Christmas Concert
St Augustine's Church, Solihull

January 10th 2002

Friends' Evening
Clarendon Suites.

April 19th & 20th 2002

Spring concert
The Friends Meeting House, Bournville

10th - 16th Nov. 2002

Main Opera Production (TBC)
The Crescent Theatre, Brindleyplace

Further 2002 concert dates yet to be confirmed, as previous years. So look out for our publicity leaflets in libraries, arts centres and music shops.

Our policy is one of continuous recruitment in all sections, and singers who are interested in joining us for any of the above events can either use the form on the back cover of the programme or call New Members' Rep. Lorraine Payne (01384 397 531)

INTERVALS: Refreshments will be served in the foyer during the first 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 Jacqueline Green

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Midland Music Makers
Opera
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Midland Music Makers is a friendly and exciting society with which to be involved. Here are some of the ways you can play a part. Fill in the section appropriate to you, and hand it to one of our stewards. Alternatively, post to Midland Music Makers at 37 Wollescote Drive, Solihull, West Midlands B91 3YN

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- I would like to be considered for membership.

My voice range is: Soprano / Contralto / Tenor / Bass / Not quite sure.

(Children under 16 must have the permission of a parent / guardian)

- I would like to take part in a non-singing rôle.

(In virtually every opera we require villagers, peasants, soldiers, children and general onlookers of all ages

- go on, try it, you may uncover secret thespian leanings)

- I'm sure I could do something backstage, painting, scenery changes, design etc.

(You don't have to be Leonardo to help Kate produce her excellent designs)

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- I am interested in becoming a 'Friend of Midland Music Makers.

(see overleaf for details)

MAILING LIST

- I would like to be mailed with advance notice of future productions.

Signed

Name Address

.....

Post Code Telephone

The details disclosed above will be held in the strictest confidence. We will under no circumstances release the information you have entrusted to us to any other interested parties. - MMM