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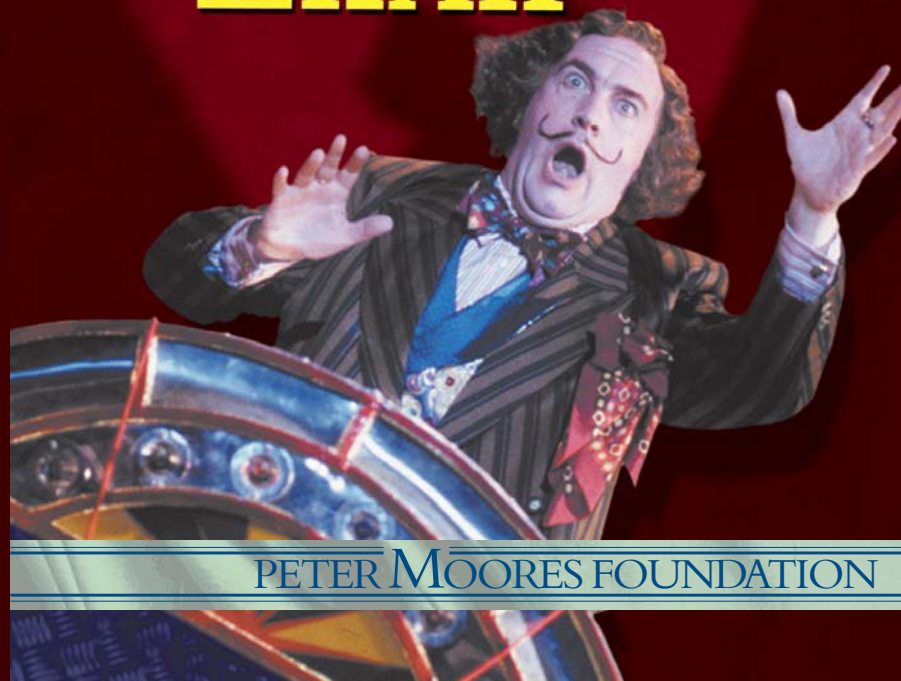


David Parry

The Elixir of Love

The Elixir of Love

CHANDOS
OPERA IN
ENGLISH



PETER MOORES FOUNDATION



Zoe Dominic

Sir Geraint Evans

16 February 1922 – 19 September 1992

This recording is dedicated to the memory of Geraint Evans, the great Welsh baritone and an early protégé of Peter Moores.

Geraint made his debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in 1948 and was one of the first amongst British artists to sing abroad after the Second World War. During an international career spanning thirty-six years and more than seventy different roles he not only endeared himself to audiences world-wide through his inimitable artistry, but also ensured that managements were alerted to the talents of other British artists: many were to owe the beginning of their careers in the USA to his influence.

He made his farewell to the British operatic stage on 4 June 1984, at Covent Garden. Typically, he chose to do so in the role of Dr Dulcamara so that he could share his gratitude for the laughter and tears he had found in the 'love potion' of opera, the dispensing of which had brought him and others so much pleasure throughout his career.

The knighthood Geraint Evans received in 1969 was the first to be accorded to a singer while still performing, since that conferred on the English baritone Sir Charles Santley in 1907.



Gaetano Donizetti

Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848)

The Elixir of Love

Opera in two acts
Libretto by Felice Romani after Eugène Scribe's *Le Philtre*
English version by Arthur Jacobs

Nemorino, a young peasant.....Barry Banks *tenor*
Adina, the wealthy owner of a farm.....Mary Plazas *soprano*
Belcore, a sergeant in the army.....Ashley Holland *baritone*
Dr Dulcamara, a quack doctor.....Andrew Shore *baritone*
Giannetta, a peasant girl.....Helen Williams *soprano*

Geoffrey Mitchell Choir

Philharmonia Orchestra

Gareth Hancock assistant conductor

David Parry

The four main characters are sung by the artists who took these roles in the English National Opera's new production of *The Elixir of Love*, first given on 26 January 1998. Coincidentally, three of them, Mary Plazas, Barry Banks and Ashley Holland, are former Peter Moores Foundation Scholarship winners.

COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I

No. 1: Prelude and Introduction

[1]	Prelude	2:39	[62]
[2]	'After long and heavy labour' <i>Giannetta, Harvesters</i>	2:09	[62]
[3]	'How delightful, how enchanting!' <i>Nemorino, Giannetta, Harvesters</i>	3:37	[62]
[4]	'That's a really happy ending' <i>Adina, Giannetta, Harvesters, Nemorino</i>	0:31	[62]
[5]	"'Lovely was Queen Isolda'" <i>Adina, Nemorino, Giannetta, Harvesters</i>	3:53	[63]
[6]	Marziale	1:24	[64]
[7]	'To the one who shines in beauty' <i>Belcore, Adina, Giannetta, Harvesters, Nemorino</i>	3:38	[64]
[8]	'If you love me as I love you' <i>Belcore, Adina, Nemorino, Giannetta, Harvesters</i>	4:30	[64]
[9]	'Too soon, my lovely creature' <i>Belcore, Adina</i>	0:44	[66]

Time Page

No. 2: Scene and Duet

[10]	'The same old tedious passion!' <i>Adina, Nemorino</i>	1:29	[66]
[11]	'For example, ask the breezes' <i>Adina, Nemorino</i>	3:33	[67]
[12]	'Such affection is but folly' <i>Adina, Nemorino</i>	3:25	[68]

No. 3: Chorus and Cavatina

[13]	'What's the meaning of that kind of fanfare?' <i>Villagers</i>	1:46	[69]
[14]	'Attention! Attention!' <i>Dulcamara, Villagers</i>	7:53	[69]
[15]	'Have courage!' <i>Nemorino, Dulcamara</i>	0:44	[72]

No. 4: Duet

[16]	'It was Tristan who employed it' <i>Nemorino, Dulcamara</i>	7:37	[72]
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	Time	Page
No. 5: Finale I		
[17] 'Magical potion! I have you!' <i>Nemorino</i>	1:36	[75]
[18] 'Who is that madman?' <i>Adina, Nemorino</i>	0:59	[75]
[19] 'Trallarallara' <i>Nemorino, Adina</i>	1:04	[76]
[20] 'Oh, let her laugh and mock at me' <i>Nemorino, Adina</i>	5:34	[76]
[21] 'Tran, tran, tran, tran' <i>Belcore, Adina, Nemorino</i>	2:00	[78]
[22] 'Ha, ha! Of course, that's quite all right' <i>Nemorino, Belcore, Adina</i>	1:24	[79]
[23] 'One moment, sergeant!' <i>Giannetta, Belcore, Soldiers, Villagers, Nemorino, Adina</i>	3:04	[80]
[24] 'Adina, think again' <i>Nemorino, Belcore, Adina, Giannetta, Villagers, Soldiers</i>	4:52	[82]
[25] 'Today's our wedding' <i>Adina, Nemorino, Giannetta, Belcore, Villagers, Soldiers</i>	3:11	[83]

TT 73:20

COMPACT DISC TWO

Act II

	Time	Page
No. 6: Introductory Chorus		
[1] 'Sing up, then.' <i>Belcore, Dulcamara, Giannetta, Villagers, Adina</i>	2:27	[85]
[2] 'Since singing is your pleasure' <i>Dulcamara, Belcore, Giannetta, Villagers</i>	1:10	[85]
[3] 'I am rich and you are pretty' <i>Dulcamara, Adina, Villagers</i>	2:27	[85]
[4] 'Pray silence!' <i>Belcore, Villagers, Dulcamara, Adina, Giannetta</i>	1:57	[86]
[5] 'I always like a wedding' <i>Dulcamara, Nemorino</i>	1:52	[87]
No. 7: Scene and Duet		
[6] 'Is that not like a woman' <i>Belcore, Nemorino</i>	1:13	[88]
[7] 'Twenty florins!' <i>Nemorino, Belcore</i>	4:42	[89]
[8] 'Shake my hand, then, my young shaver' <i>Belcore, Nemorino</i>	3:29	[90]

	Time	Page
No. 8: Chorus		
[9] 'Can it be possible?' <i>Village Women, Giannetta</i>	4:20	[90]
No. 9: Quartet		
[10] 'I've polished off two bottles now' <i>Nemorino, Village Women, Giannetta, Adina, Dulcamara</i>	1:39	[92]
[11] 'It's magnificent!' <i>Nemorino, Adina, Dulcamara, Giannetta, Villagers</i>	2:27	[93]
[12] 'I see it perfectly' <i>Nemorino, Adina, Dulcamara, Giannetta, Villagers</i>	3:11	[95]
[13] 'Why should he seem so happy?' <i>Adina, Dulcamara</i>	1:31	[96]
No. 10: Duet		
[14] 'How he loved me!' <i>Adina, Dulcamara</i>	4:20	[96]
[15] 'With a look of love and laughter' <i>Adina, Dulcamara</i>	2:49	[98]

	Time	Page
No. 11: Romance		
[16] 'Only one teardrop glistened there' <i>Nemorino</i>	5:13	[99]
No. 12: Recitative		
[17] 'Here she is.' <i>Nemorino, Adina</i>	1:36	[100]
[18] 'Take it!' <i>Adina, Nemorino</i>	3:46	[100]
[19] 'All right. Take this, then!' <i>Nemorino, Adina</i>	4:20	[101]
No. 13: Finale II		
[20] 'Halt! Right turn!' <i>Belcore, Adina, Dulcamara, Nemorino, Villagers, Giannetta</i>	1:58	[102]
[21] 'It will give you cheeks likes peaches' <i>Dulcamara, Villagers, Adina, Nemorino, Belcore</i>	2:38	[103]

Donizetti: The Elixir of Love

Once graphically described as *Don Pasquale*'s country cousin, *L'elisir d'amore* (The Elixir of Love), which preceded *Pasquale* by eleven years, has won all hearts since it was first produced at the Teatro della Canobbiana in Milan in 1832, and no wonder given its succession of surefire arias and ensembles – not a dud among them – and four roles in which singing actors can excel. A contemporary critic wrote after the premiere, 'The style of this score is vital and brilliant. The shading from *buffo* to *serio* is subtly graduated and the emotions are expressed with great passion... It reveals a great master at work whose orchestration is always relevant to the situation... To praise the composer more lavishly would be unfair to the opera; his work needs no exaggerated compliments'.

Perhaps this reflects the fact that at the time of the work's composition, Donizetti was a happy man. At thirty-four he had already completed thirty-nine operas and had achieved fame with the composition of *Anna Bolena* two years earlier, which had placed him on a par with his contemporary and rival, Bellini. In March 1832 he had presented a new work

in Milan, at La Scala, *Ugo, conte di Parigi*, which had flopped, but even that did not affect the composer's new-found fame. So when he was approached by Alessandro Lanari, impresario of the Canobbiana, *L'elisir* was the result.

This delightful comedy stood apart from the operatic ethos of the day which preferred gory melodrama to comedy. To be sure, Donizetti was adept at that kind of fare, viz *Lucia di Lammermoor*, but he was also alive to the tradition of *opera buffa*, and the work in that field of his great predecessor, Rossini, and he loved nothing more than writing, for fun, his own comic texts. He was also accomplished at working fast and to order. He needed to be in the case of *L'elisir* because the commission from the Canobbiana came at the last moment when another commission fell through. Donizetti called on Felice Romani, who had worked with him on *Bolena* and *Ugo*, to provide a libretto. In the first place Lanari had suggested that Donizetti merely revise an old work, possibly one unknown to the Milanese. Donizetti was furious and countered, 'Are you making fun of me? It's not my custom to patch

up my works or anybody else's. Just wait and see what I can do in fourteen days! I give you my word I'll do it if Romani will help me'.

This conversation is related by a contemporary witness, Romani's future wife Emilia Branca, a young girl at the time, whose family was friendly with the composer. She claimed that Donizetti and Romani had agreed to accept Lanari's demand to complete the Opera in two weeks. Branca may well have been wrong in her later memory of what happened; it is probable that the commission gave the authors rather more time than she would allow, perhaps a month.

There was no question in those days of creating an original story: you simply adapted an existing book. After much genial discussion the authors alighted on Eugène Scribe's *Le Philtre* (The love potion) and embellished it to advantage. Romani cut Scribe's text (written for an opera by Auber) and added material of his own. The French names were changed into Italian, and the setting was moved from a Basque village to an Italian village. Altogether Romani turned the conventionality of Scribe's book into a subtler, more romantic text. The added sentiment, as in Nemorino's famous *romanza* 'Una furtiva lagrima', was very much to Donizetti's taste: it is this elegiac element in Donizetti's writing which makes his characters

much more than comic ciphers and lends the work its individuality and emotional feeling. Actually, Romani opposed the addition of Nemorino's *romanza*. According to his widow, the librettist said, 'What's the point of that rustic bumpkin whining pathetically, when everything ought to be festive and gay?' But the composer won over his disapproving partner, who provided the singularly appropriate lines.

Apparently Donizetti was not willing to sacrifice the good life entirely to the composition of the new work, even though time was so short. One day, however, when he was due for supper at the Brancas' house, he rushed in late. 'Forgive me,' he cried, 'I was on the way here when I went past Romani's house and stopped to see if he could give me some text. In fact he handed me a whole duet. On reading the verses I simply had to set them to music on the spot so inspired was I by them... Tonight before going to bed I'll orchestrate them, send them to the copyist tomorrow who will then give them to the singers... Everything is moving at full steam.'

Later that evening, that very passage, the duet 'Chiedi all'aura lusinghiera' (For example, ask the breezes) was sung by Donizetti at the piano, Emilia Branca recalling that he could sing pleasantly. She added, 'He played very well. He was handsome: tall, slender, his broad

forehead crowned with black curls, his features regular... His look was good-natured, frank and open. He was above all *simpatico* and the fair sex was devoted to him'.

The action of the Opera takes place within the context of village life, admirably depicted in the bluster of Sergeant Belcore and the quick wit of the fast-talking Dr Dulcamara, not to forget the lively contribution of the peasants themselves, who are made very much to partake in the emotions of the moment.

The piece is felicitously constructed. In a natural sequence Donizetti introduces three of his four principals. Nemorino is at once characterised in his short cavatina, 'Quanto è bella!' (How delightful) in which his longing for his beloved but seemingly unobtainable Adina is sweetly expressed, as is his fundamentally shy nature (something tenors taking the part love to exploit). This forms part of the choral introduction. On the other side of the stage Adina is heard laughing over the tale she is reading: the story of Tristan and Isolde and its love potion, which she proceeds to read aloud from. Her teasing nature is thus adumbrated.

A march brings on the ridiculous Belcore whose cavatina effectively delineates his preening character. A deal later the quack Dulcamara is described in an equally unerring

manner in his recitative and aria, 'Udite, udite, o rustici' (Attention! Attention! You country folk!), in which he tries to purvey his medicines and cures in one of the most extended and most engaging patter arias in all *opera buffa*, a veritable torrent of words. Here, as throughout, the chorus is integrated into the musical action, nowhere more so than when the girls, discovering Nemorino's new found wealth, chase after him, though he thinks it is the elixir at work: 'Dell' elisir mirabile' (I've polished off two bottles now).

For the rest, until the aria for Nemorino near the end, Donizetti develops the plot as a series of charming and/or spirited duets and ensembles. Flowing, melodious lines, such as Adina's aforementioned 'Chiedi all'aura lusinghiera', in which she gently tells him she is fickle like the gentle breezes always in motion, are often contrasted with sharply-accented passages or, as in the Act 1 Finale, the action is held up to allow Nemorino a solo, 'Adina, credimi' (Adina, think again), in which he appeals to his loved one to believe in his true love and wait a day before she weds Belcore. Nemorino and Belcore are given cleverly differentiated modes of expression in the recruiting duet 'Venti scudi' (Twenty florins). In the encounter for Adina and Dulcamara the potency of the imagined elixir is perfectly set

off against the potency of Adina's feelings for Nemorino as she says a glance, a smile and a tender gesture will be the strongest potion of all: the *allegro* section of this duet is one of the score's most exhilarating passages.

In the final solos for hero and heroine the composer touches the heart. There's genuine pathos in 'Una furtiva lagrima' (Only one teardrop), with its elegiac bassoon obbligato, a *romanza* with a subtle minor-major melody. No wonder it has become one of the best-loved arias in all Italian opera, often sung separately. When Adina enters, she tells him touchingly that she has bought back his recruitment papers and hands them to him as she sings 'Prendi, per me sei libero' (Take it. I make you free again), a sensuous, long-breathed melody which markedly contrasts with her earlier, brittle music.

So the Opera seemed destined for success from its inauguration, but Donizetti didn't hold out too much hope for such a success at the premiere because he had severe reservations about the available cast: Sabine Heinefetter as Adina, Giambattista Genero as Nemorino, Henri-Bernard Dabade (who had created the role of William Tell) as Belcore and Giuseppe Frezzolini as Dulcamara. He commented to his collaborator, 'We have a German prima donna, a tenor who stammers, a buffo with the voice

of a goat and a French basso who has little to offer, and yet we must honour them. Courage, dear Romani, keep up your spirits'. In fact the occasion proved a triumph and the work had to be repeated 32 times after the first night. Later that year Ricordi, in preparing the score for publication, asked Donizetti for a dedication. He wrote back, 'Since you kindly leave me the choice of dedication for *The Elixir of Love* I am very grateful. Let it be To the Fair Sex of Milan. Who knows better how to distil it? Who knows better how to bestow it?'

Whatever the merits of the premiere, the work was soon taken up in many houses. It was first given in London at the Lyceum Theatre in 1836 and the following year entered the repertory of Her Majesty's. None of the participants at the initial performance is remembered today, but *The Times* commented, 'On the whole there was sufficient to constitute a delightful evening's entertainment: the plot was good, the music pleasing, the singing everything that could be desired and the band excellent'. The ambitious Irish singer-composer Michael Balfe conducted (in place of Benedict) but *The Morning Post* wished Balfe had been singing rather than conducting. The paper added that the house was tolerably filled, the audience not brilliant and fashionable as at

the King's: 'We greatly question whether the love of Italian music is sufficiently advanced in this country to make this experiment successful.' The Lyceum was then known as The English Opera House, hence that comment.

The work was first given in New York, in English (as it is, of course, here), in 1838, and first performed in Paris at the Théâtre Italien – to immense delight – in 1839. Throughout the nineteenth century it attracted the most glamorous casts, including Fanny Persiani as Adina, Mario as Nemorino, Antonio Tamburini as Belcore and Luigi Lablache as Dulcamara, which became one of his most famous roles. He and Mario appeared in a legendary staging in London in the late 1840s of which there is a famous print. At La Scala in 1900 Toscanini conducted the piece with Caruso making his name in the house as Nemorino, his various recordings of 'Una furtiva lagrima' being among the glories of the gramophone's early days. He later conquered the Metropolitan in the part and has been followed there by such noted tenors as Schipa, Gigli, Tagliavini, Pavarotti (who made Nemorino very much his own) and Domingo. Zeffirelli staged the opera unforgettably at Glyndebourne in the 1960s with Eugenia Ratti, later Freni, as Adina and Luigi Alva as Nemorino.

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Synopsis

Act I

Entrance to Adina's farm

It is harvest time and on a local farm Giannetta and her fellow harvesters are resting, sheltering from the midday sun. Nemorino, a young peasant, is hopelessly in love with Adina, the wealthy owner of the farm. Adina reads to the harvesters the story of Tristan, who vainly pursued the Queen Isolda. He won her love by drinking a magic love potion, which made him irresistible.

Belcore, a recruiting sergeant arrives with his platoon. He courts Adina and promptly asks for her hand in marriage, much to Nemorino's despair. Adina, however, does not immediately accept: he has not yet earned her love. Adina invites Belcore and his platoon to taste the local wine and the harvesters return to work. Nemorino calls Adina back and speaks of his burning passion for her, but she tells him such affection is folly. Instead he should go to town and look after his rich and ailing uncle. Besides, she herself is fickle, her mind changes with every hour. Nevertheless Nemorino vows to love her until he dies.

The village square

Later, in the village square, the travelling quack

doctor Dulcamara arrives and details the astounding curative properties of his potions and elixirs to an attentive crowd, who buy a few and then disperse. Nemorino asks Dulcamara for Tristan's love potion, which Dulcamara quickly sells to him. Dulcamara tells Nemorino the potion takes twenty-four hours to work. This gives the doctor time to leave the village before his deception can be discovered: the elixir is nothing more than a bottle of cheap wine.

Nemorino drinks the wine, rapidly becoming tipsy. He treats Adina indifferently while confidently waiting for the elixir to take effect on her. Adina is surprised and piqued to see Nemorino so indifferent to her and when Belcore continues his wooing she accepts without delay, saying she will marry him in six days' time. Nemorino laughs at their plans, confident the elixir will guarantee Adina's love the next morning. New orders arrive for Belcore: he must leave the village tomorrow. Adina, now furious at Nemorino's reaction to her plans, moves the marriage forward to that very evening. Nemorino pleads with Adina to wait until morning, but to no avail. Adina invites everyone to her marriage feast and all mock Nemorino, who fears his plans are to be undone.

Act II

Wedding banquet inside Adina's farmhouse

At the banquet to celebrate the marriage of Adina and Belcore, Dulcamara sings a barcarolle with Adina which tells of a girl who rejects a wealthy suitor in order to marry her true love, a young gondolier. The notary arrives and everyone retires to witness the drawing up of the marriage contract; Dulcamara, however, stays to indulge his love of food.

Nemorino has seen the notary arrive. Although he has no more money left he begs Dulcamara for more of the elixir. Dulcamara demands cash and tells Nemorino he will be leaving the village in fifteen minutes' time. Belcore appears and proposes that Nemorino's problems can be easily solved: join his regiment and receive twenty florins. Belcore describes the wonderful life of a soldier and Nemorino, desperate, signs up and rushes off to find Dulcamara.

Outside in the farm yard

Giannetta and the village womenfolk have learnt that, unbeknownst to Nemorino, his uncle has died leaving him a fortune. Nemorino appears and the women crowd round and pay court to him. He thinks the elixir at last is taking effect. Adina and

Dulcamara enter, both amazed at the attention Nemorino is receiving. Dulcamara believes his potion is indeed magic and Adina admits to herself her fondness for Nemorino. Giannetta and the women beg Nemorino to dance with them while Adina tries to tell him enlisting is a mistake; before they can speak further, Giannetta and the women drag Nemorino off.

Dulcamara tells Adina how Nemorino purchased the elixir to win her heart. Adina realises how cruel she has been and that she loves Nemorino. Dulcamara offers her a potion to help attract him, but she prefers to use her seductive charm. Nemorino returns seeking Adina: when he was flirting with the village women, he spied a furtive tear in her eye; she must love him. When Adina appears Nemorino acts indifferently to her. She tells him she has bought him out of his contract of enlistment.

As she turns to leave he asks her if she has nothing else to say. When she answers no, he angrily responds that he will join the army anyway. Adina breaks down and admits she does love him and will always be his.

Dulcamara, Belcore and the villagers return. Belcore accepts the fact that he is losing Adina. Dulcamara tells everyone of Nemorino's inheritance and claims that his magic potion not only brings love but also wealth. Villagers buy up the remaining bottles of cheap wine

and Dulcamara drives off to cheering and jubilation.

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A graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music where he was a Peter Moores scholar, **Barry Banks** has established himself as one of the finest tenors of his generation. Appearances include Nemorino (*The Elixir of Love*) for English National Opera, the title role in *Le Comte Ory* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera, the title role in *Candide* for Chicago Lyric Opera, Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) for Welsh National Opera, Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) at the Salzburg Festival, La Monnaie and for Leipzig Opera, Glyndebourne Touring Opera and Scottish Opera, Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*) and Argirio (*Tancredi*) for Frankfurt Opera and Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*) for the Metropolitan Opera and the BBC's Stravinsky Festival. Recordings include *La bohème*, *Un ballo in maschera* and *La calisto*, and *Don Pasquale* (for Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Mary Plazas studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, where she was a Peter Moores scholar, and the National Opera

Studio, and won the 1991 Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Scholarship. She made her debut as the Heavenly Voice in *Don Carlos* for English National Opera and from 1995 to 1998 was an ENO Company Principal. Her roles have included the title role in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Adina, Mimì, Leila, Nannetta, Michaela, Marzelline (*Fidelio*) and Susanna, and she has performed with the Royal Opera Covent Garden, Metropolitan Opera, Opera North, Glyndebourne Touring Opera and Garsington Opera amongst others. Recent appearances include *The Rake's Progress* with New Israeli Opera in Tel Aviv, *Flight* for Glyndebourne and Glyndebourne Touring Opera and *Powder Her Face* for Almeida Opera. Television appearances include Opera Factory's *Le nozze di Figaro*, and First Enchantress (*Dido and Aeneas*), also for Chandos. Recordings include Pacini's *Maria, regina d'Inghilterra* for Opera Rara, *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*, and Marguerite (*Faust*) (for Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Ashley Holland studied at Warwick University and the Royal Northern College of Music, where he won the Webster Booth/Esso Competition and the Curtis Gold Medal, and was a Peter Moores scholar. Recently he also won the prestigious RANIERI I Cestelli opera

competition at the Hamburg State Opera. He is currently a principal baritone at English National Opera where his roles have included Belcore, Lescaut (*Manon*), Zurga (*The Pearl Fishers*), Sharpless (*Madam Butterfly*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) and Cecil (*Mary Stuart*). Other appearances include Don Giovanni for Calgary Opera, Bosun (*Billy Budd*) for Opéra national de Paris-Bastille and Antonio in concert performances of *Linda di Chamounix*.

Andrew Shore is acknowledged as Britain's premier *buffo* baritone. He has worked for all the major British companies, including English National Opera, the Royal Opera Covent Garden, Opera North, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Scottish Opera and Welsh National Opera, as well as appearing abroad with San Diego Opera, New Israeli Opera, the Opéra national de Paris-Bastille and Opéra comique, and in Nantes, Montpellier, Amsterdam, Vancouver and Ottawa. His many engagements have included the title roles of *Wozzeck*, *Falstaff*, *King Priam*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Don Pasquale*, as well as Dulcamara (*The Elixir of Love*), Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*) and Varlaam (*Boris Godunov*). His recordings include *The Makropulos Affair*, and *Don Pasquale*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Tosca* and *La*

bohème (for Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Helen Williams studied at the Royal Northern College of Music and made her Glyndebourne Festival debut as Sashka (*The Electrification of the Soviet Union*). Other roles include Emmie (*Albert Herring*) for Glyndebourne Festival Opera's tour to Rome, Dalinda (*Ariodante*) and Amor (*Orpheus and Eurydice*) with English National Opera, Yvette (*La rondine*) with the Royal Opera and the world premiere of *Hey Persephone!* at Aldeburgh and the Almeida festival.

Geoffrey Mitchell's singing career encompassed a remarkably wide repertoire from early to contemporary music. This resulted in conducting invitations from the BBC and subsequently to a wider involvement with his own singers and this led to the establishment of the **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir**. Early recordings resulted in the choir's long-term involvement with Opera Rara for whom they have recorded fifteen operas, and they are currently enjoying a growing reputation with further work from the BBC and international recording companies.

When he formed the **Philharmonia Orchestra** Walter Legge realised his great ambition of

forming a hand-picked orchestra of world-class standing. The Philharmonia Orchestra gave its first concert under Sir Thomas Beecham in October 1945 and rapidly became recognised as one of the world's truly great orchestras. Many world-famous conductors have been associated with it and it remains the world's most recorded orchestra, with a discography of over one thousand recordings including operas for the Peter Moores Foundation/Opera Rara. The Philharmonia's position as 'London's leading orchestra' stems from its vitality, unique warmth of sound and commitment to commissioning and performing music by leading contemporary composers such as the late Witold Lutoslawski, Sir Harrison Birtwistle and the Orchestra's visiting composer, James MacMillan.

David Parry studied with Sergiu Celibidache and began his career as Sir John Pritchard's assistant. He made his debut with English Music Theatre and went on to become a staff conductor at Städtische Bühnen Dortmund and at Opera North. He was Music Director of Opera 80 from 1983 to 1987, and since 1992 has been the founding Music Director of the contemporary opera festival Almeida Opera.

He pursues a busy career both in opera and in concert. His repertoire extends from Mozart

and early nineteenth-century Italian opera to Janáček, Britten and contemporary music. In England he has appeared regularly at English National Opera and in concert with the Philharmonia. In 1996 he made his debut at the Glyndebourne Festival with *Così fan tutte*.

He is a frequent visitor to Spain where he has appeared with most of the opera companies and symphony orchestras. He gave the Spanish premiere of *Peter Grimes* in Madrid, and in 1996 he conducted the first Spanish production of *The Rake's Progress*, inaugurated two new concert halls with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and a new opera house with *Carmen*. He has also appeared in Italy, where he conducted *Ricciardo e Zoraide* in the Rossini Opera Festival at Pesaro, in France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, and in

Sweden where he conducted an acclaimed production of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Outside Europe David Parry has appeared at the Hong Kong International Festival, with the UNAM Symphony Orchestra at Mexico City, with a tour of *Carmen* in Japan and, in 1996, conducting a new production of *Kát'a Kabanová* for the New Zealand Festival.

He has recorded extensively for the Opera Rara label, the most recent issue being Donizetti's *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*, which won the Prix Cecilia in Belgium, and for Chandos he has conducted the award-winning recording of *Tosca*, three recordings of operatic arias (with Bruce Ford, Diana Montague and Dennis O'Neill), *Faust*, *Don Pasquale*, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci* and highlights from *Der Rosenkavalier*.

PETER MOORES, CBE, DL

Peter Moores was born in Lancashire, the son of Sir John Moores, founder of the giant Littlewoods mail order, chain store and football pools group. He was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford, where he read modern languages – he was already fluent in German and Italian. It was opera, however, which was his great love. He had worked at Glyndebourne Festival Opera before going up to university, and after Oxford he became a production student at the Vienna State Opera, combining this with a three-year course at the Vienna Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

By the end of his third year at the Academy Moores had produced the Vienna premiere of Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, had worked as Assistant Producer at the San Carlo Opera House, Naples, the Geneva Festival and Rome Opera, and seemed set for a successful operatic career. At this point he received a letter from his father asking him to come home as he was needed in the firm. Family loyalty being paramount, he returned to Liverpool.

By 1977, he was Chairman of Littlewoods. Three years later he stepped down from the post, although still remaining on the Board. He was a director of a merchant bank from 1978 to 1992. From 1981 to 1983 he was a Governor of the BBC, and a Trustee of the Tate Gallery from 1978 until 1985; from 1988 to 1992 he was a director of Scottish Opera. He received the Gold Medal of the Italian Republic in 1974, an Honorary MA from Christ Church, Oxford, in 1975, and was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Northern College of Music in 1985. In May 1992 he became Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire, and in the New Year's Honours List for 1991, he was made a CBE for his charitable services to the Arts.



Peter Moores, CBE, DL

Christina Burton/PMF

Whilst still in his early twenties, Peter Moores had started giving financial support to various young artists, several of whom – Joan Sutherland, Colin Davis and the late Geraint Evans amongst them – were to become world-famous. In 1964 he set aside a substantial part of his inheritance to establish the Peter Moores Foundation, a charity designed to support those causes dear to his heart: to make music and the arts more accessible to more people; to give encouragement to the young and to improve race relations.

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

In the field of music, the main areas supported by the Peter Moores Foundation are:

- the recording of operas from the core repertoire sung in English translation; the recording or staging of rare Italian opera from the *bel canto* era of the early nineteenth century (repertoire which would otherwise only be accessible to scholars); the nurturing of promising young opera singers; new operatic work.

The Foundation awards scholarships annually to students and post-graduates for furthering their vocal studies at the Royal Northern College of Music. In addition, project awards may be given to facilitate language tuition in the appropriate country, attendance at masterclasses or summer courses, specialised repertoire study with an acknowledged expert in the field, or post-graduate performance training.

The Foundation encourages new operatic work by contributing to recordings, the publication of scores and stage productions.

Since 1964 the Foundation has supported the recording of more than forty operas, many of these sung in English, in translation. It has always been Peter Moores's belief that to enjoy opera to the full, there must be no language barrier, particularly for newcomers and particularly in the popular repertoire – hence the *Opera in English* series launched with Chandos in 1995. This includes many of the English language recordings funded by the Foundation in the 1970s and 1980s and is now the largest recorded collection of operas sung in English.

Donizetti: Der Liebestrank

Die einmal sehr treffend als "Don Pasquales Vetter vom Lande" beschriebene und um elf Jahre ältere Oper *L'elisir d'amore* hat seit ihrer Uraufführung 1832 am Teatro della Canobbiana in Mailand alle Herzen erobert. Verwunderlich ist dies nicht, wenn man an die vielen großartigen, durchweg begeisternden Arien und Ensemblelieder und die vier bravourösen Hauptrollen für Schauspieler mit Gesangstalent denkt. Nach der Premiere schrieb ein zeitgenössischer Kritiker: "Vom Stil her ist die Partitur lebendig und brillant. Der Übergang von *buffo* zu *serio* erfolgt in subtilen Abstufungen, und die Gefühle werden mit großer Leidenschaft zum Ausdruck gebracht... Hier präsentiert sich das Werk eines großen Meisters, der mit seiner Orchestrierung stets der Situation gerecht wird... Wollte man den Komponisten noch überschwenglicher loben, täte man der Oper Unrecht; seine Arbeit bedarf keiner übertriebenen Komplimente".

Vielleicht spiegelt sich darin die Tatsache wider, daß Donizetti in dieser Schaffensperiode einfach ein glücklicher Mensch war. Der 34-jährige hatte bereits 39 Opern komponiert und zwei Jahre zuvor mit *Anna Bolena* den

Ruhm erlangt, der ihn mit seinem Zeitgenossen und Rivalen Vincenzo Bellini gleichsetzte. Im März 1832 hatte Donizetti an der Mailänder Scala sein neues Werk *Ugo, conte di Parigi* vorgestellt; obwohl es durchfiel, tat dies dem Renommee des Komponisten keinen Abbruch, und als er von Alessandro Lanari, dem Impresario des Teatro della Canobbiana, angesprochen wurde, war *L'elisir* das Ergebnis.

Diese wunderbare Komödie entsprach eigentlich nicht dem Operngeschmack der damaligen Zeit, nach dem ein blutrünstiges Melodrama vorzuziehen war. Zweifellos beherrschte Donizetti auch ersteres Metier, wie *Lucia di Lammermoor* beweist, aber er war sich durchaus der Tradition der *opera buffa* bewußt und kannte die Werke seines großen Vorgängers Rossini auf diesem Gebiet. Auch hatte er die größte Freude daran, einfach aus Spaß selbst komische Texte zu schreiben. Darüber hinaus verstand er sich darauf, schnelle Auftragsarbeiten zu erledigen. Im Fall von *L'elisir* mußte er das auch, denn damit mußte er am Teatro della Canobbiana kurzfristig einspringen. Donizetti bat Felice Romani, mit

dem er an *Bolena* und *Ugo* zusammengearbeitet hatte, ein Libretto zu verfassen. Zunächst hatte Lanari dem Komponisten vorgeschlagen, einfach ein älteres Werk zu überarbeiten, vielleicht eines, das in Mailand unbekannt war. Donizetti erwiderte entrüstet: "Machen Sie sich über mich lustig? Ich bin es nicht gewohnt, meine Werke oder die anderer zusammenzuflicken. Warten Sie nur, Sie werden schon sehen, was ich in vierzehn Tagen zustande bringen kann. Ich gebe Ihnen mein Wort: Ich schaffe es, wenn mir Romani nur hilft".

Dieses Gespräch wurde aus erster Hand weitergegeben – von Emilia Branca, der späteren Ehefrau Romanis, die damals noch ein junges Mädchen und deren Familie mit dem Komponisten befreundet war. Donizetti und Romani seien überein gekommen, auf die Forderung Lanaris einzugehen und die Oper binnen zwei Wochen fertigzustellen. Doch vielleicht hatte Branca später die Ereignisse nicht mehr so recht im Sinn; wahrscheinlich ließ der Auftrag den Verfassern doch etwas mehr Zeit, als sie eingestehen wollte. Einen Monat vielleicht.

Damals kam niemand auf den Gedanken, eine Originalgeschichte neu zu verfassen; man bearbeitete einfach ein bereits vorhandenes Buch. Nach eingehender Diskussion in freundlicher Atmosphäre einigten sich die

Verfasser auf *Le Philtre* von Eugène Scribe. Ihre Beiträge waren nur von Vorteil: Romani kürzte den Text von Scribe (der für eine Oper von Auber verfaßt worden war) und fügte eigenes Material hinzu. Die französischen Namen wurden gegen italienische ausgetauscht, und als Handlungsort diente statt eines baskischen nun ein italienisches Dorf. Alles in allem gelang es Romani, aus der konventionellen Vorlage Scribes einen subtileren, romantischeren Text zu schaffen. Die größere Gefühlsbetontheit, wie in Nemorinos berühmter Romanze "Una furtiva lagrima", entsprach sehr dem Geschmack Donizettis; gerade durch dieses elegische Element im Wesen des Komponisten, das sich über die Charakterisierung reiner Komödientypen erhebt, gewinnt das Werk an Individualität und emotionalem Tiefgang. Romani wiederum sprach sich gegen die Einbeziehung der Romanze Nemorinos aus. Seiner Witwe zufolge meinte der Librettist: "Was soll es, diesen Bauerntölpel so erbärmlich jammern zu lassen, wenn doch alles festlich und vergnügt sein soll?" Indes bewog der Komponist seinen widerstrebenden Mitarbeiter schließlich doch dazu, die mustergültig passenden Zeilen zu liefern.

Bei allem Zeit- und Arbeitsdruck mochte Donizetti offenbar nicht gänzlich auf die schönen Dinge des Lebens verzichten. Eines

Tages, als er bei den Brancas zum Abendessen angemeldet war, stürzte er verspätet herein. "Verzeiht mir", rief er, "ich war auf dem Wege hierher, als ich bei Romani vorbeischaute, um zu sehen, ob er noch etwas Text für mich hätte. Er gab mir tatsächlich ein ganzes Duett. Als ich die Verse las, mußte ich sie einfach an Ort und Stelle vertonen, so sehr war ich davon inspiriert... Heute Abend, noch vor dem Zubettgehen, werde ich sie orchestrieren und dann morgen dem Kopisten schicken, der sie an die Sänger weitergeben wird... Alles geht mit Volldampf voran."

Später am selben Abend wurde genau diese Passage, das Duett "Chiedi all'aura lusinghiera" (Frag den schmeichelnden Zephir) von Donizetti am Klavier gesungen; Emilia Branca erinnerte sich, daß er eine angenehme Gesangsstimme besaß. "Er spielte sehr gut. Er war gutaussehend, groß, schlank, die breite Stirn von schwarzen Locken gekrönt, mit regelmäßigen Zügen... Er hatte einen gutmütigen Blick, offen und ehrlich. Er war vor allem *simpatico*, und das schöne Geschlecht war ihm ergeben."

Die Opernhandlung spielt im Kontext des Dorflebens, das durch die Aufschneiderei des Sergeanten Belcore und die Geistesgegenwart des gewitzten Dr. Dulcamara auf bewundernswerte Weise dargestellt wird, nicht

zu vergessen der lebhaft Beitrag des Bauernvölkchens selbst, das an den Gefühlen des Augenblicks deutlich teilhat.

Der Aufbau des Stückes ist besonders gut gelungen. In natürlicher Abfolge führt Donizetti drei seiner vier Hauptfiguren ein. Nemorino wird sofort durch seine kurze Kavatine "Quanto è bella!" (Wie schön sie ist!) charakterisiert, in der nicht nur seine Sehnsucht nach der geliebten, aber scheinbar unerreichbaren Adina auf sympathische Weise zum Ausdruck kommt, sondern auch sein im Grunde schüchternes Wesen (ein Aspekt, den manche Tenöre bei diesem Part gern ausschöpfen). Das alles ist Teil der Einleitung durch den Chor. Auf der anderen Seite der Bühne hört man Adina über eine Erzählung lachen, die sie gerade liest – die Geschichte von Tristan und Isolde und dem Liebestrank, aus der sie anschließend vorliest. Auf diese Weise wird ihr neckendes Wesen angedeutet.

Ein Marsch leitet zum Auftritt des lächerlichen Belcore über, dessen Kavatine sein pfauenhaftes Wesen treffend skizziert. Gleichmaßen treffsicher charakterisiert die Kavatine "Udite, udite, o rustici" (Hört zu! Hört zu, ihr Landleute!) den Quacksalber Dulcamara, als er versucht, seine Mittelchen loszuwerden. Es ist eine der längsten und

amüsantesten Schwatzarien der gesamten *opera buffa*, ein wahrhaftiger Wortschwall. Hier wie im gesamten Werk ist der Chor in die musikalische Handlung integriert, und dies nirgendwo deutlicher als in dem Moment, wo die Mädchen, die von Nemorinos neu gewonnenem Reichtum wissen, hinter ihm herjagen – während er meint, hier sei das Elixier am Werk: "Dell' elisir mirabile" (Vom wundersamen Trank).

Abgesehen von der Arie für Nemorino gegen Ende, entwickelt Donizetti ansonsten die Handlung als eine Serie von reizenden und/oder temperamentvollen Duetten und Ensembles. Fließende, melodische Linien wie in dem bereits erwähnten Duett "Chiedi all'aura lusinghiera", in der Adina Nemorino behutsam sagt, daß sie so unbeständig ist wie die sanften Brisen, werden oft mit scharf akzentuierten Passagen kontrastiert; oder die Handlung wird, wie im Finale des 1. Aktes, unterbrochen, um Nemorino das Solo "Adina, credimi" (Adina, glaub mir) zu erlauben, in dem er an die Geliebte appelliert, noch einen Tag zu warten, bevor sie Belcore heiratet, da sie es sonst beide bereuen würden. Nemorino und Belcore haben im Werbeduett "Venti scudi" (Zwanzig Scudi) raffiniert voneinander differenzierte Ausdrucksweisen. In der Begegnung zwischen Adina und Dulcamara

wird ein perfekter Gegensatz zwischen der Wirkungskraft des vermeintlichen Elixiers und der Intensität der Gefühle Adinas für Nemorino geschaffen, als sie einen Blick, ein Lächeln und eine liebevolle Geste als das wirkungsvollste aller Elixiere bezeichnet. Das *Allegro* aus diesem Duett ist eine der heitersten Passagen in der gesamten Partitur.

In den letzten Soli für den Helden und die Heldin rührt der Komponist das Herz. "Una furtiva lagrima" (Eine verstoßene Träne), eine Romanze mit subtiler Moll-Dur-Melodie und einem elegischen Fagottobbligato, besitzt echtes Pathos. Kein Wunder, daß sie heute zu den meistgeliebten italienischen Opernarien überhaupt zählt und oft als eigenständiges Stück gesungen wird. Als Adina auftritt, teilt sie Nemorino auf rührende Weise mit, daß sie seinen Werbevertrag zurückgekauft hat, und überreicht ihn mit den Worten "Prendi, per me sei libero" (Nimm, durch mich bist du frei), eine sinnliche, getragene Melodie, die in deutlichem Gegensatz zu ihrer früheren, spröden Musik steht.

Der Erfolg der Oper schien also prädestiniert zu sein, doch Donizetti hegte bei der Premiere keine großen Hoffnungen, weil er ernste Bedenken im Hinblick auf die Besetzung hatte: Sabine Heinefetter als Adina, Giambattista Genero als Nemorino, Henri-

Bernard Dabade (der die Rolle des Wilhelm Tell schuf) als Belcore und Giuseppe Frezzolini als Dulcamara. Gegenüber seinem Librettisten bemerkte er: "Wir haben eine deutsche Primadonna, einen stotternden Tenor, einen Buffo mit Ziegenstimme und einen französischen Baß, der wenig zu bieten hat, aber dennoch müssen wir ihnen Ehre erweisen. Nur Mut, mein lieber Romani, immer tapfer bleiben". Tatsächlich war die Aufführung ein Triumph, und das Werk mußte nach der Premiere noch 32 Mal gegeben werden. Als Ricordi im weiteren Verlauf des Jahres die Partitur für den Druck vorbereitete, bat er Donizetti um eine Widmung. Dieser schrieb zurück: "Sie überlassen mir freundlicherweise die Wahl einer Widmung für den *Liebestrank*, und ich darf Sie meines Dankes versichern. Es sei: Für die Damen von Mailand. Wer weiß ihn besser zu destillieren? Wer weiß ihn besser zu schenken?"

Was man auch von den Leistungen bei der Premiere halten mag, das Werk wurde bald von vielen Bühnen übernommen. In London wurde es erstmals 1836 im Lyceum Theatre gegeben; im darauffolgenden Jahr nahm Her Majesty's Theatre es in sein Repertoire auf. An die Künstler, die bei der Uraufführung mitwirkten, erinnert sich heute niemand mehr, aber in der *Times* hieß es, "Alles in allem

gereichte es zu einem wunderbar unterhaltsamen Abend: Die Handlung war gut aufgebaut, die Musik ansprechend, der Gesang alles, was man sich wünschen könnte, und das Orchester hervorragend". Der ehrgeizige irische Sänger und Komponist Michael Balfe hatte (in Vertretung von Benedict) dirigiert, aber der Kritiker der *Morning Post* hätte es vorgezogen, wenn Balfe statt dessen gesungen hätte. Die Zeitung berichtete weiter, die Vorstellung sei recht gut besucht gewesen, obwohl das Publikum, anders als im King's Theatre, nicht prächtig gekleidet oder modisch gewesen sei: "Wir stellen entschieden in Frage, ob die Liebe zur italienischen Musik in diesem Lande hinreichend weit verbreitet ist, um den Erfolg dieses Experiments zu sichern." Zur Erläuterung: Das Lyceum Theatre war damals als Das Englische Opernhaus bekannt.

Das Werk wurde 1838 erstmals in New York gegeben, und zwar auf englisch (wie hier); 1839 folgte die Pariser Uraufführung im Théâtre Italien, wo es begeistert aufgenommen wurde. Während des gesamten 19. Jahrhunderts wurden die prominentesten Künstler von dieser Oper in Bann gezogen, darunter Fanny Persiani in der Rolle der Adina, Mario als Nemorino, Antonio Tamburini als Belcore und Luigi Lablache als Dulcamara, später eine seiner berühmtesten Rollen. Er und

Mario wirkten in den späten vierziger Jahren bei einer legendären Inszenierung in London mit, von der ein berühmter Stich erhalten ist. Als Toscanini im Jahre 1900 das Werk an der Mailänder Scala dirigierte, machte sich Caruso dort einen Namen als Nemorino; seine verschiedenen Aufnahmen von "Una furtiva lagrima" zählen zu den Kostbarkeiten aus der Frühzeit des Grammophons. Später begeisterte er in der Rolle an der New Yorker Metropolitan Opera, und andere berühmte Tenöre, wie Schipa, Gigli, Tagliavini, Pavarotti (der sich die Rolle des Nemorino besonders zu eigen gemacht hat) und Domingo, folgten ihm dort nach. Zefirelli leitete in den sechziger Jahren eine unvergeßliche Inszenierung in Glyndebourne, mit Eugenia Ratti (später Freni) als Adina und Luigi Alva als Nemorino.

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Handlung

1. Akt

Der Eingang zu Adinas Bauernhof

Erntezeit auf dem Bauernhof. Giannetta und die anderen Schnitter haben Schutz vor der Mittagssonne gesucht und ruhen sich aus. Nemorino, ein junger Bauer, ist hoffnungslos

in die reiche Gutsbesitzerin Adina verliebt. Adina erzählt den Erntearbeitern die Geschichte von Tristan und seiner aussichtslosen Liebe zur Königin Isolde. Er gewann schließlich ihr Herz, indem er einen verzauberten Liebestrank zu sich nahm, der ihn unwiderstehlich machte.

Sergeant Belcore trifft mit seiner Truppe ein. Er bringt Adina ein Ständchen und bittet sie zur Verzweiflung Nemorinos um ihre Hand. Doch Adina gibt nicht gleich ihr Jawort; Belcore hat sich ihre Liebe noch nicht verdient. Adina lädt ihn und seine Truppe ein, den einheimischen Wein zu probieren, und die Erntearbeiter packen wieder zu. Nemorino ruft Adina zurück und bekennt die brennende Leidenschaft, die er für sie empfindet. Sie erwidert ihm, solche Zuneigung sei töricht. Er täte besser daran, in die Stadt zu seinem reichen, kranken Onkel zu gehen. Sie selbst sei treulos und launisch. Dennoch versichert ihr Nemorino seine Liebe bis in den Tod.

Der Dorfplatz

Später, auf dem Dorfplatz, berichtet der umherziehende Quacksalber Dulcamara der aufmerksamen Menge in allen Einzelheiten über die erstaunliche Heilkraft seiner Mittelchen. Er findet einige Abnehmer, und

die Menge zerstreut sich. Nemorino bittet Dulcamara um den Zaubertrank des Tristan. Der Quacksalber verkauft ihm schnell das Elixier, sagt ihm aber, daß die Wirkung erst nach 24 Stunden eintritt. So hat er genug Zeit, das Dorf zu verlassen, bevor der Betrug aufgedeckt wird: Der Liebestrank ist in Wirklichkeit nur eine Flasche billigen Weins.

Nemorino nimmt den Trank zu sich und verfällt schnell in einen Rausch. Während er darauf wartet, daß das vermeintliche Elixier seine Wirkung entwickelt, zeigt er Adina die kalte Schulter. Sie ist überrascht und pikiert, daß er ihr gegenüber so gleichgültig auftritt, und als Belcore weiter um sie wirbt, sagt sie unverzüglich zu und verspricht, ihn binnen sechs Tagen zu heiraten. Nemorino lacht über ihre Pläne, denn er ist überzeugt, daß der Liebestrank ihm am nächsten Morgen das Herz Adinas sichern wird. Belcore erhält neue Befehle; er muß nun das Dorf am nächsten Morgen verlassen. Adina, verärgert über Nemorinos Reaktion auf ihr Vorhaben, will nun die Hochzeit noch auf diesen Abend vorziehen. Vergeblich fleht Nemorino sie an, bis zum nächsten Morgen zu warten. Adina lädt zu ihrem Hochzeitsschmaus ein, und alles verspottet Nemorino, der nun fürchtet, daß seine Pläne scheitern werden.

2. Akt Hochzeitsessen im Innern von Adinas Bauernhof

Beim Festmahl zur Feier der Hochzeit Adinas und Belcores singt Dulcamara zusammen mit Adina eine Barkarole, in der es um ein junges Mädchen geht, das seinen wohlhabenden Freier zurückweist, um ihre wahre Liebe, einen jungen Gondoliere, zu heiraten. Der Notar trifft ein, und alle ziehen sich zurück, um als Zeugen beim Aufsetzen des Ehevertrags zugegen zu sein. Dulcamara allerdings bleibt zurück, um sich voll Leidenschaft dem Festmahl zu widmen.

Nemorino hat die Ankunft des Notars bemerkt. Er bittet Dulcamara, ihm noch etwas von dem Liebestrank zu geben, hat aber kein Geld mehr. Dulcamara verlangt Zahlung in bar und kündigt an, daß er in einer Viertelstunde das Dorf verlassen werde. Belcore kommt hinzu und versichert Nemorino, daß seine Probleme sich leicht aus der Welt schaffen lassen. Er brauche nur dem Regiment beizutreten und werde daraufhin zwanzig Scudi erhalten. Belcore schildert das herrliche Soldatenleben, und der verzweifelte Nemorino willigt ein und eilt davon, um Dulcamara zu finden.

Draußen auf dem Hof

Giannetta und die Frauen des Dorfes haben erfahren, daß Nemorinos Onkel gestorben ist und ihm ein Vermögen hinterlassen hat. Nemorino erscheint, und die Frauen scharen sich um ihn und umwerben ihn. Er glaubt, daß der Liebestrank zu wirken beginnt – von der Erbschaft weiß er noch nichts. Adina und Dulcamara gesellen sich hinzu und sind beide verblüfft darüber, daß Nemorino so im Mittelpunkt steht. Dulcamara kommt zu der Überzeugung, daß sein Trank tatsächlich Zauberkraft besitzt, und Adina gesteht sich selbst ihre Zuneigung zu Nemorino. Giannetta und die Frauen fordern Nemorino zum Tanz auf, während Adina ihn davon überzeugen will, daß es ein Fehler sei, zum Militär zu gehen; doch bevor die beiden weiter darüber reden können, schleppen die Frauen Nemorino davon.

Dulcamara erzählt Adina, daß Nemorino den Liebestrank gekauft habe, um ihr Herz zu erobern. Sie erkennt, wie grausam sie gehandelt hat, und daß sie Nemorino liebt. Dulcamara bietet ihr einen Trank an, um die Zuneigung des jungen Bauern zu gewinnen, aber sie verläßt sich lieber auf ihren eigenen verführerischen Charme. Nemorino kehrt auf der Suche nach Adina zurück: Als er zuvor mit den Dorffrauen flirtete, hatte er in ihrem Auge

eine verstohlene Träne gesehen. Sie muß ihn doch lieben! Als Adina erscheint, stellt sich Nemorino gleichgültig. Sie sagt ihm, daß sie ihn vom Militär losgekauft hat, und bekennt ihre Liebe.

Als sie seine Frage, ob sie ihm sonst nichts zu sagen habe, verneint, erklärt er, dann wolle er als Soldat sterben. Gerührt bekennt Adina ihre ewige Liebe.

Dulcamara, Belcore und die Dorfbewohner kehren dazu. Belcore findet sich damit ab, daß er Adina verliert. Dulcamara erzählt den Anwesenden von der Erbschaft Nemorinos und behauptet, sein Zaubertrank habe nicht nur Liebe, sondern auch Reichtum beschert. Einige der Dorfbewohner kaufen die restlichen Flaschen auf, und Dulcamara verläßt unter Hurrarufen und Jubel das Dorf.

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Übersetzung: Andreas Klatt

Nach seinem Abgang vom Royal Northern College of Music, wo er als Peter Moores Stipendiat studiert hatte, konnte sich **Barry Banks** als einer der Spitzentenöre seiner Generation durchsetzen. Zu seinen Rollen zählen unter anderem Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*) für die English National Opera, die Titelrollen in *Le Comte Ory* (Glyndebourne

Touring Opera) und *Candide* für die Chicago Lyric Opera, Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) für die Welsh National Opera, Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) für die Salzburger Festspiele, La Monnaie, die Leipziger Oper, die Glyndebourne Touring Opera und die Scottish Opera; Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*) und Argirio (*Tancredi*) für die Frankfurter Oper und Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*) für die Metropolitan Opera und das Strawinsky-Festival der BBC. Aufgenommen hat er u.a. *La bohème*, *Un ballo in maschera* und *La calisto* sowie *Don Pasquale* (für Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Mary Plazas studierte am Royal Northern College of Music, wo sie ein Peter Moores Stipendium erhielt, und am National Opera Studio; 1991 erhielt sie das Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Stipendium. Sie debütierte als die Stimme im *Don Carlos* an der English National Opera; von 1995–1998 war sie als ENO Company Principal verpflichtet. Unter anderem verkörperte sie die Titelrolle in *Das schlaue Füchslein* sowie die Adina, Mimì, Leila, Nannetta, Michaela, Marzelline (*Fidelio*) und Susanna. Sie ist u.a. auch mit der Royal Opera Covent Garden, der Metropolitan Opera, der Opera North, der Glyndebourne Touring Opera und der Garsington Opera aufgetreten.

In jüngster Zeit hat sie in *The Rake's Progress* an der Neuen israelischen Oper in Tel Aviv, in *Flight* (Glyndebourne und Glyndebourne Touring Opera) und in *Powder Her Face* (Almeida Opera) mitgewirkt. Im Fernsehen sah man sie in *Le nozze di Figaro* für die Opera Factory und als Erste Zauberin (*Dido and Aeneas*), ebenfalls für Chandos. Aufgenommen hat sie u.a. Pacinis *Maria, regina d'Inghilterra* für Opera Rara, *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* sowie die Rolle der Marguerite (*Faust*) für Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation.

Ashley Holland studierte Musik an der Universität Warwick und am Royal Northern College of Music, wo er den Webster Booth/Esso Wettbewerb und die Curtis Goldmedaille gewann und ein Peter Moores Stipendium erhielt. Vor kurzem gewann er auch den renommierten Opernwettbewerb RANIERI I Cestelli an der Hamburger Staatsoper. Zur Zeit singt er als erster Bariton an der English National Opera, wo er unter anderem folgende Rollen verkörpert hat: Belcore, Lescaut (*Manon*), Zurga (*Les Pêcheurs de perles*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) und Cecil (*Maria Stuarda*). Außerdem ist er u.a. als Don Giovanni an der Calgary Opera, als Bosun (*Billy Budd*) an der Opéra national de Paris-

Bastille und als Antonio in konzertanten Aufführungen von *Linda di Chamounix* aufgetreten.

Andrew Shore gilt als der beste Baritonbuffo in Großbritannien. Er hat für alle bedeutenden britischen Ensembles gesungen, u.a. die English National Opera, die Royal Opera Covent Garden, die Opera North, die Glyndebourne Festival Opera, die Scottish Opera und die Welsh National Opera. Außerdem ist er im Ausland an der San Diego Opera, der Neuen israelischen Oper, der Opéra national de Paris-Bastille und Opéra comique in Paris sowie in Nantes, Montpellier, Amsterdam, Vancouver und Ottawa aufgetreten. Im Rahmen seiner zahlreichen Verpflichtungen hat er die Titelrollen in *Wozzeck*, *Falstaff*, *King Priam*, *Gianni Schicchi* und *Don Pasquale* gesungen; außerdem Dulcamara (*L'elisir d'amore*), Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*) und Warlaam (*Boris Godunow*). Aufgenommen hat er u.a. *Die Sache Makropoulos* und *Don Pasquale*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Tosca* und *La bohème* (für Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Helen Williams studierte am Royal Northern College of Music und debütierte auf dem Glyndebourne Festival als Sashka (*The*

Electrification of the Soviet Union). Man erlebte sie auch als Emmie (*Albert Herring*) auf der Rom-Tournee der Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Dalinda (*Ariodante*) und Amor (*Orfeo ed Euridice*) an der English National Opera sowie als Yvette (*La rondine*) an der Royal Opera; außerdem hat sie bei der Welturaufführung von *Hey Persephone!* in Aldeburgh und auf dem Almeida Festival mitgewirkt.

Geoffrey Mitchell hat im Lauf seiner Gesangskarriere ein erstaunlich umfangreiches Repertoire erschlossen, von alter bis hin zu zeitgenössischer Musik. Daraus ergaben sich erst Dirigieraufträge von der BBC, dann eine ausgedehntere Zusammenarbeit mit seinen Sängern, die wiederum zur Gründung des **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir** führte. Frühe Schallplattenaufnahmen hatten zur Folge, daß der Chor langfristige Beziehungen zu Opera Rara einging, für die er 15 Opern aufgezeichnet hat. Derzeit genießt er dank weiterer Verpflichtungen für die BBC und internationale Schallplattenfirmen wachsendes Ansehen.

Mit der Gründung des **Philharmonia Orchestra** verwirklichte Walter Legge sein hohes Ziel, ein handverlesenes Orchester der

Spitzenklasse aufzustellen. Das Philharmonia Orchestra gab sein erstes Konzert unter Sir Thomas Beecham im Oktober 1945 und war bald als eines der wahrhaft großen Orchester der Welt angesehen. Viele bekannte Dirigenten haben mit ihm zusammengearbeitet, und es ist und bleibt das meistaufgezeichnete Orchester der Welt. Seine Diskographie, darunter auch Opern für die Peter Moores Foundation/Opera Rara, beläuft sich auf über tausend Aufnahmen. Der Rang des Philharmonia Orchestra als "das führende Orchester Londons" ist auf seine Vitalität zurückzuführen, seinen einmalig warmen Klang und sein Engagement für die Vergabe von Kompositionsaufträgen und die Aufführung der Musik bedeutender Gegenwartskomponisten wie dem verstorbenen Witold Lutoslawski, Sir Harrison Birtwistle und James MacMillan, dem Gastkomponisten des Orchesters.

David Parry studierte bei Sergiu Celibidache und begann seine Laufbahn als Sir John Pritchards musikalischer Assistent. Er debütierte mit dem English Music Theatre und wurde Kapellmeister an den Städtischen Bühnen Dortmund sowie an Opera North in Leeds. Von 1983 bis 1987 fungierte er als Musikdirektor für Opera 80 und seit 1992 ist er der Musikdirektor

(und Gründer) des zeitgenössischen Opern-Festivals Almeida Opera.

Parrys Tätigkeitsbereich ist nicht nur das Opernhaus, sondern auch der Konzertsaal. Sein Repertoire erstreckt sich von Mozart und der italienischen Oper des frühen 19. Jahrhunderts bis zu Janáček, Britten und zeitgenössischer Musik. In England dirigiert er regelmäßig an der English National Opera und konzertiert mit dem Philharmonia Orchestra, 1996 machte er mit *Così fan tutte* sein Debüt bei dem Glyndebourne Festival.

David Parry gastiert häufig in Spanien, wo er bereits mit den meisten Opernkompanien und Sinfonieorchestern aufgetreten ist. Die spanische Premiere von *Peter Grimes* fand unter seiner Leitung in Madrid statt; 1996 dirigierte er die erste spanische Inszenierung von *The Rake's Progress* (Strawinsky) und weihte zwei neue Konzertsäle mit der Neunten Sinfonie von Beethoven sowie ein neues Opernhaus mit *Carmen* ein. In Italien leitete er *Ricciardo e Zoraide* bei dem Rossini-Festival in Pesaro. Er tritt in Frankreich, Deutschland, Belgien, den Niederlanden und Schweden auf, wo er eine gefeierte Inszenierung von Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* dirigierte.

Außerhalb Europas ist David Parry bei dem Hongkong International Festival und mit dem

UNAM Symphony Orchestra in Mexico City aufgetreten, war mit *Carmen* in Japan auf Tournee und leitete eine Neuinszenierung von *Káťa Kabanová* für das Festival in Neuseeland.

Parry hat zahlreiche Werke für das Label Opera Rara eingespielt, zuletzt *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* von Donizetti, das in Belgien mit

dem Prix Cecilia ausgezeichnet wurde; für Chandos hat er eine preisgekrönte *Tosca* aufgenommen, drei Aufnahmen operatischen Arien (mit Bruce Ford, Diana Montague und Dennis O'Neill), *Faust*, *Don Pasquale*, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci* und Auszüge vom *Rosenkavalier*.

Donizetti: L'Élixir d'amour

Décrit comme étant le cousin de campagne de *Don Pasquale*, *L'élisir d'amore*, qui précéda *Don Pasquale* de onze ans, a conquis tous les cœurs depuis sa création au Teatro della Canobbiana de Milan en 1832. Ce succès n'a rien de surprenant si l'on considère sa succession d'ensembles et d'arias assurés dont aucun n'accuse une quelconque faiblesse, et ses quatre rôles principaux qui permettent à des chanteurs-acteurs de briller. Après la première, un critique de l'époque écrivit : "Le style de la partition est plein de vitalité et de brillant. La progression du *buffo* au *serio* est subtilement graduée, et les émotions y sont exprimées avec une grande passion... Elle révèle un grand maître d'œuvre dont l'orchestration est toujours appropriée à la situation... Louer plus avant le compositeur serait faire injustice à l'opéra; son œuvre n'a pas besoin de compliments excessifs".

Tout ceci résulte peut-être du fait qu'au moment de la composition de l'œuvre, Donizetti était un homme heureux. A trente-quatre ans, il avait déjà écrit trente-neuf opéras, et était parvenu à la célébrité avec la composition, deux ans plus tôt, de *Anna*

Bolena, qui l'avait placé à égalité avec son contemporain et rival, Bellini. En mars 1832, il avait présenté une nouvelle œuvre à la Scala de Milan, *Ugo, conte di Parigi*, et bien que celle-ci ait été un échec, cela n'affecta en rien la nouvelle gloire du compositeur. Aussi, quand l'impressario du Teatro della Canobbiana, Alessandro Lanari, lui demanda un nouvel opéra, le résultat fut *L'élisir d'amore*.

Cette ravissante comédie se situait à part dans le monde de l'opéra de l'époque qui préférait les mélodrames sanglants aux comédies. Mais s'il ne fait aucun doute que Donizetti était un adepte du genre dramatique, comme le montre *Lucia di Lammermoor*, il était également sensible à la tradition de l'*opera buffa*, et aux œuvres de son grand prédécesseur dans ce domaine, Rossini, et rien ne l'amusait davantage que d'écrire, pour le plaisir, ses propres textes comiques. Il était également maître dans l'art de travailler rapidement et sur commande. Il eut grandement besoin de ces qualités dans le cas de *L'élisir d'amore*, car le Teatro della Canobbiana lui passa cette commande au dernier moment, quand un autre commanditaire se désista. Donizetti

demanda alors à Felice Romani, qui avait travaillé avec lui à *Anna Bolena* et à *Ugo, conte di Parigi*, de lui écrire le livret. Au départ, Lanari avait suggéré à Donizetti de simplement revoir une de ses œuvres anciennes, peut-être une que le public milanais ne connaissait pas. Cette idée rendit Donizetti furieux, et il riposta : "Seriez-vous en train de vous moquer de moi? Il n'est pas dans mes habitudes de rapiécer mes œuvres ou celles des autres. Attendez plutôt, et vous verrez ce que je peux faire en quatorze jours! Je vous donne ma parole que j'y parviendrai si Romani m'apporte son aide".

Cette conversation fut rapportée par un témoin de l'époque, la future épouse de Romani, Emilia Branca, qui était une jeune fille à ce moment-là, et dont la famille était amie du compositeur. Elle prétendit que Donizetti et Romani avaient accepté la demande de Lanari de terminer l'opéra en deux semaines. Il se peut qu'elle se soit trompée dans ses souvenirs à propos de ce qui se passa réellement; il est probable qu'ils eurent plus de temps à leur disposition, peut-être un mois.

A cette époque, il n'était pas question de créer des histoires originales: elles étaient tout simplement adaptées à partir de livres existants. Après une longue discussion cordiale, les

auteurs se décidèrent pour *Le Philtre* d'Eugène Scribe, (écrit pour un opéra d'Auber), et ajouta des éléments de son cru. Les noms français furent transposés en italien, et le lieu de l'action passa d'un village basque à un village italien. Romani transforma complètement l'histoire conventionnelle de Scribe pour en faire un texte plus romantique et plus subtil; il ajouta du sentiment, comme dans la célèbre *romanza* de Nemorino, "Una furtiva lagrima", ce qui fut tout à fait dans le goût du compositeur. C'est cet élément élégiaque dans l'écriture de Donizetti qui confère à ses personnages une dimension allant au-delà du simple comique, et confère à l'œuvre son originalité et son émotion. En fait, Romani s'était opposé à l'ajout de la *romanza* de Nemorino. Selon le témoignage de sa veuve, le librettiste déclara : "Quel intérêt y-a-t-il à voir pleurnicher de manière pathétique ce péquenot quand tout se doit d'être festif et gai?" Mais Donizetti l'emporta sur son partenaire récalcitrant, qui lui écrivit des paroles singulièrement appropriées.

Apparemment, Donizetti n'eut aucune intention de sacrifier entièrement les plaisirs de l'existence à la composition de sa nouvelle œuvre et ce, malgré le peu de temps dont il disposait. Cependant, un soir il arriva en retard à un dîner chez la famille de Branca.

“Pardonnez-moi”, s’exclama-t-il, “J’étais en chemin, mais comme je suis passé près de chez Romani, je me suis arrêté pour voir s’il pouvait me donner de nouveaux textes. En fait, il me tendit tout un duo. A sa lecture, je fus pris d’une telle inspiration qu’il me fallut le mettre en musique immédiatement... Ce soir, j’en ferai l’orchestration avant de me coucher, et demain je l’enverrai au copiste qui le donnera aux chanteurs... Tout progresse à pas de géants.”

Plus tard ce soir là, Donizetti au piano chanta le duo en question, “Chiedi all’aura lusinghiera” (Demande aux vents), Emilia Branca se souvenant qu’il pouvait chanter de manière fort charmante. Elle ajoute: “Il jouait très bien. Il était beau: grand, mince, son large front couronné de mèches brunes, les traits du visage réguliers... Son aspect était agréable, franc et ouvert. Il était par-dessus tout *simpatico*, et le beau sexe lui était entièrement dévoué”.

L’action de l’opéra se situe dans un village dont la vie est admirablement représentée par les fanfaronnades du sergent Belcore, la malice du Dr Dulcamara, sans oublier les interventions enjouées des paysans eux-mêmes, qui prennent une grande part aux émotions du moment.

La pièce est merveilleusement construite. Dans une séquence s’enchaînant avec naturel, Donizetti introduit trois de ses quatre

personnages principaux. Nemorino est d’emblée caractérisé par sa brève cavatine, “Quanto è bella!” (Ha, comme elle est belle); il y exprime avec tendresse son amour pour Adina qui semble hors de portée, et dévoile la nature fondamentalement timide de son tempérament (un aspect que les ténors qui chantent ce rôle aiment exploiter). Ceci fait partie de l’introduction chorale. A l’autre bout de la scène, Adina rit du conte qu’elle est en train de lire – l’histoire de Tristan et Iseult et de son philtre d’amour, qu’elle commence à lire à voix haute. Son caractère aguicheur est ainsi ébauché.

Une marche introduit le personnage ridicule de Belcore, dont la cavatine trace avec beaucoup d’effet le caractère prétentieux. Plus tard, le charlatan Dulcamara est dépeint d’une manière aussi sûre dans son récitatif et aria, “Udite, udite, o rustici” (Ecoutez, écoutez, vous paysans!), dans laquelle il tente de vendre ses remèdes et ses cures. Cette aria est l’une des plus développées et des plus enthousiasmantes de toute l’histoire de l’*opera buffa*, un véritable torrent de paroles. Ici, comme tout au long de l’œuvre, le chœur est étroitement mêlé à l’action musicale; mais il l’est encore plus lorsque les filles du village, ayant découvert la nouvelle fortune de Nemorino, se mettent à le poursuivre. Lui s’imagine que c’est l’effet de la

potion magique, “Dell’ elisir mirabile” (J’en ai avalé deux bouteilles maintenant).

Pour le reste, jusqu’à l’aria de Nemorino près de la fin, Donizetti développe l’intrigue en une série de duos et d’ensembles tour à tour charmants et spirituels. Des mélodies coulantes et harmonieuses (comme celle de “Chiedi all’aura lusinghiera” d’Adina mentionnée plus haut, dans laquelle elle dit gentiment à Nemorino qu’elle est inconstante comme les vents légers toujours en mouvement), sont fréquemment mises en contrastes avec des passages très accentués, ou comme dans le cas du Finale de l’Acte I, l’action est suspendue pour permettre à Nemorino de chanter un solo, “Adina, credimi” (Adina, réfléchis encore); il implore sa bien-aimée de croire à l’authenticité de son amour, et d’attendre un jour de plus avant d’épouser Belcore. Nemorino et Belcore reçoivent des modes d’expression astucieusement différenciés dans le duo de recrutement “Venti scudi” (Vingt florins). Lors de la rencontre entre Adina et Dulcamara, le pouvoir de la potion magique est parfaitement mis en relief avec le pouvoir des sentiments d’Adina pour Nemorino quand elle dit qu’un regard, un sourire et un geste tendre seront la plus puissante des potions. La section *allegro* de ce duo est l’un des passages les plus grisants de la partition.

Dans les solos du héros et de l’héroïne, à la fin, le compositeur touche le cœur. “Una furtiva lagrima” (Juste une larme), atteint véritablement au pathétique avec son élégiaque accompagnement obblige du basson et sa mélodie se mouvant subtilement entre le majeur et le mineur. On comprend aisément pourquoi cette aria est devenue l’une des plus aimées de tout l’opéra italien, et qu’elle est souvent chantée seule. Quand Adina entre, elle lui dit de manière touchante qu’elle a racheté sa feuille de recrutement. Elle la lui tend en chantant “Prendi, per me sei libero” (Prends-la. Je t’ai rendu ta liberté), une longue et sensuelle mélodie qui produit un contraste très marqué par rapport à sa musique fragile entendue plus tôt.

L’opéra semblait ainsi destiné au succès dès ses débuts. Pourtant, Donizetti n’avait pas tellement espoir que la première représentation fût un succès. En effet, il avait les plus grandes réserves quant à la distribution disponible: Sabine Heinefetter dans le rôle d’Adina, Giambattista Genero dans celui de Nemorino, Henri-Bernard Dabade (qui avait créé le rôle de Guillaume Tell) dans celui de Belcore, et Giuseppe Frezzolini dans celui de Dulcamara. Il commenta ainsi à son collaborateur: “Nous avons une prima donna allemande, un ténor qui bégaye, un buffo avec une voix de chèvre et une basse française qui n’a pas grand chose à

offrir, et pourtant nous devons les honorer. Courage, cher Romani, gardez le moral”. En fait, la création fut un triomphe, et l’œuvre fut reprise trente-deux fois après la première soirée. Plus tard cette année-là, Ricordi, préparant la partition pour la publication, demanda à Donizetti une dédicace. Il lui répondit: “Puisque vous me laissez aimablement le choix d’une dédicace pour *L’Elixir d’amour*, je vous en suis très reconnaissant. Qu’elle soit Pour le Beau Sexe de Milan. Qui sait mieux comment le distiller? Qui sait mieux comment l’accorder?”

Quels qu’aient été les mérites de la première, l’œuvre fut rapidement mise à l’affiche par de nombreux théâtres. Elle fut donnée pour la première fois à Londres au Lyceum Theatre en 1836 et, l’année suivante, elle entra au répertoire du Théâtre de Sa Majesté (Her Majesty’s). L’histoire n’a retenu le nom d’aucun des chanteurs de la première londonienne, mais le *Times* fit ce commentaire: “L’ensemble fut suffisant pour constituer un spectacle fort agréable: l’intrigue était bonne, la musique plaisante, le chant tout ce qu’on pouvait désirer, et l’orchestre excellent”. L’ambitieux chanteur irlandais Michael Balfe était au pupitre (à la place de Benedict), mais le *Morning Post* aurait préféré que Balfe chantât au lieu de diriger. L’article ajouta que la salle

était raisonnablement remplie, le public n’était pas brillant et à la mode, comme celui du King’s Theatre: “Nous nous demandons sérieusement si le goût pour la musique italienne est suffisamment développé dans ce pays pour faire de cette expérience un succès.” Le Lyceum était alors connu sous le nom de The English Opera House, d’où ce commentaire.

L’œuvre fut donnée pour la première fois à New York, en anglais (comme bien entendu ici), en 1838, et à Paris au Théâtre Italien – avec un succès phénoménal – en 1839. Pendant tout le XIXe siècle, elle attira les distributions les plus brillantes, notamment Fanny Persiani dans le rôle d’Adina, Mario dans celui de Nemorino, Antonio Tamburini dans celui de Belcore, et Luigi Lablache dans celui de Dulcamara – qui devint l’un de ses rôles les plus célèbres. Lablache et Mario chantèrent dans une production légendaire donnée à Londres vers la fin des années 1840, et dont il existe une célèbre gravure. A La Scala de Milan, Toscanini dirigea l’œuvre en 1900 avec Caruso qui se fit un nom dans cette maison avec le rôle de Nemorino, et dont les diverses versions de “Una furtiva lagrima” comptent parmi les gloires du début du phonographe. Plus tard, il enthousiasma avec ce rôle le Metropolitan Opera de New York où

il fut suivi par des ténors aussi célèbres que Schipa, Gigli, Tagliavini, Pavarotti (qui fit particulièrement sien le rôle de Nemorino) et Domingo. Zeffirelli mit en scène l’opéra de manière inoubliable à Glyndebourne dans les années 1960, avec Eugenia Ratti dans le rôle d’Adina, repris plus tard par Mirella Freni, et Luigi Alva dans celui de Nemorino.

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Argument

Acte I

Entrée de la ferme d’Adina

C’est la période des moissons. Dans une ferme, Giannetta et ses camarades moissonneurs se reposent à l’ombre du soleil de midi. Nemorino, un jeune paysan, est désespérément amoureux d’Adina, la riche propriétaire de la ferme. Adina raconte aux moissonneurs l’histoire de Tristan, qui poursuivit en vain la reine Iseult. Il gagna son cœur en buvant une potion magique qui le rendit irrésistible.

Belcore, un sergent recruteur, arrive avec son régiment. Il fait la cour à Adina, et la demande rapidement en mariage, au grand désespoir de Nemorino. Cependant, Adina n’accepte pas tout de suite; il n’a pas encore conquis son amour. Adina invite Belcore et son régiment à

goûter le vin du pays tandis que les moissonneurs retournent à leur travail. Nemorino appelle Adina et lui déclare sa flamme, mais elle lui répond qu’une telle passion n’est que folie. Au lieu de cela, il ferait mieux d’aller en ville et prendre soin de son riche oncle qui est malade. En outre, elle est inconstante, et change d’avis toutes les heures. Quoi qu’il en soit, Nemorino fait le vœu de l’aimer jusqu’à son dernier souffle.

La place du village

Un peu plus tard sur la place du village, un charlatan ambulant, le docteur Dulcamara, raconte en détail les extraordinaires propriétés curatives de ses potions et élixirs devant une foule attentive, qui lui en achète quelques-unes, puis se disperse. Nemorino demande alors la potion magique de Tristan à Dulcamara qui s’empresse de la lui vendre. Dulcamara lui dit qu’il faut attendre vingt-quatre heures pour que la potion fasse son effet. Cela permet au docteur de quitter le village avant que sa duperie ne soit découverte: l’élixir n’est rien d’autre en effet qu’une bouteille de vin ordinaire.

Nemorino boit le vin, et devient rapidement pompette. Il traite Adina avec indifférence tout en attendant avec confiance que l’élixir produise un effet sur elle. Adina est surprise et

vexée par le comportement si indifférent de Nemorino à son égard, et quand Belcore continue à lui faire la cour, elle accepte immédiatement, et lui déclare qu'elle l'épousera dans six jours. Nemorino se moque de leur projet, car il est confiant que l'élixir lui garantira l'amour d'Adina le lendemain matin. Mais Belcore reçoit de nouveaux ordres: il doit quitter le village demain matin. Rendue furieuse par la réaction de Nemorino, Adina avance la date du mariage qui sera célébré ce soir même. Nemorino supplie Adina d'attendre jusqu'au lendemain matin, mais sans succès. Adina invite tout le monde au banquet, et tous se moquent de Nemorino, qui craint de voir ses projets anéantis.

Acte II

Banquet de mariage dans la ferme d'Adina

Au banquet tenu en l'honneur du mariage d'Adina et de Belcore, Dulcamara chante avec Adina une barcarolle qui raconte l'histoire d'une jeune fille qui repousse les avances d'un riche prétendant pour épouser celui qu'elle aime véritablement, un jeune gondolier. Le notaire arrive, et tout le monde se retire pour assister à la rédaction du contrat de mariage; cependant, Dulcamara reste pour pouvoir se gaver tout à loisir.

Nemorino a vu le notaire arriver. Bien qu'il

n'ait plus un sou, il supplie Dulcamara de lui donner davantage d'élixir. Dulcamara exige de l'argent liquide, et dit à Nemorino qu'il va quitter le village dans quinze minutes. Belcore apparaît et déclare à Nemorino que son problème peut être facilement réglé: il lui suffit de s'engager dans son régiment, et il recevra alors vingt florins. Belcore lui vante les charmes de la vie militaire, et en désespoir de cause, Nemorino accepte. Il se précipite ensuite à la recherche de Dulcamara.

Dehors dans la cour de la ferme

Giannetta et les femmes du village ont appris à l'insu de Nemorino que son oncle vient de mourir en lui laissant une fortune. Nemorino apparaît, et les femmes l'entourent et lui font la cour. Il croit que l'élixir fait enfin son effet.

Adina et Dulcamara entrent et sont stupéfaits de voir Nemorino entouré d'une telle attention. Dulcamara croit alors que sa potion est vraiment magique, tandis qu'Adina s'avoue à elle-même qu'elle est éprise de Nemorino. Giannetta et les femmes supplient Nemorino de danser avec elles, tandis qu'Adina tente de lui dire que son enrôlement est une erreur; mais avant de pouvoir parler davantage, Giannetta et les femmes entraînent Nemorino.

Dulcamara raconte à Adina comment Nemorino lui a acheté l'élixir pour conquérir

son amour. Adina réalise alors combien elle a été cruelle, et aussi qu'elle aime Nemorino. Dulcamara lui propose une potion pour le séduire, mais elle préfère user de ses charmes. Nemorino revient à la recherche d'Adina. Pendant qu'il flirtait avec les femmes du village, il l'a aperçue en train de verser une larme furtive: elle doit certainement l'aimer. Quand Adina apparaît, Nemorino fait l'indifférent. Elle lui dit qu'elle a racheté sa feuille d'enrôlement.

Au moment où elle se retourne pour partir, il lui demande si elle n'a rien d'autre à lui dire. Quand elle lui répond non, il réagit avec colère et lui dit qu'il va de toute façon s'engager dans l'armée. Adina fond en larmes, et reconnaît qu'elle l'aime et qu'elle lui appartiendra pour toujours.

Dulcamara, Belcore et les villageois reviennent. Belcore accepte le fait qu'il est en train de perdre Adina. Dulcamara raconte à tout le monde l'histoire de l'héritage de Nemorino, et affirme que sa potion magique n'apporte pas seulement l'amour, mais aussi la fortune. Des villageois lui achètent les bouteilles de vin ordinaire qui lui restent, puis il quitte le village tout joyeux et jubiland.

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Traduction: Francis Marchal

Diplômé du Royal Northern College of Music de Manchester où il étudia grâce à une bourse de la Peter Moores Foundation, **Barry Banks** s'est imposé comme l'un des ténors les plus remarquables de sa génération. Il s'est produit dans le rôle de Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*) à l'English National Opera, dans le rôle titre du *Comte Ory* avec le Glyndebourne Touring Opera, dans le rôle titre de *Candide* au Chicago Lyric Opera, dans celui d'Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) au Welsh National Opera, Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) au festival de Salzbourg, au Théâtre de la Monnaie à Bruxelles, à l'Opéra de Leipzig, avec le Glyndebourne Touring Opera et au Scottish Opera, Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*) et Argirio (*Tancredi*) à l'Opéra de Franckfort, et Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*) au Metropolitan Opera de New York et dans le cadre du festival Stravinski de la BBC. Il a enregistré entre autres *La bohème*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *La calisto* et *Don Pasquale* (pour Chandos et la Peter Moores Foundation).

Mary Plazas a étudié au Royal Northern College of Music de Manchester, où elle obtint une bourse de la Peter Moores Foundation, puis au National Opera Studio. Elle obtint également le Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Scholarship 1991. Elle a fait ses débuts dans le

rôle de la Voix céleste (*Don Carlos*) à l'English National Opera, et de 1995 à 1998, elle a été "ENO Company Principal". Elle a chanté les rôles titres dans *Le Petit renard rusé*, Adina, Mimì, Leila, Nannetta, Michaela, Marzelline (*Fidelio*) et Suzanna. Elle s'est produite au Royal Opera Covent Garden de Londres, au Metropolitan Opera de New York, à l'Opera North, avec le Glyndebourne Touring Opera, et au Garsington Opera. Récemment, elle a chanté dans *The Rake's Progress* au Nouveau Opéra israélien à Tel Aviv, dans *Flight* à Glyndebourne et avec le Glyndebourne Touring Opera, et dans *Powder Her Face* à l'Almeida Opera. Parmi ses prestations télévisées, on citera *Le nozze di Figaro* avec l'Opera Factory, et *Dido and Aeneas* (dans le rôle de la Première Sorcière), également pour Chandos. Elle a enregistré *Maria, regina d'Inghilterra* de Pacini pour Opera Rara, *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* et Marguerite (*Faust*) (pour Chandos et la Peter Moores Foundation).

Ashley Holland a fait ses études à l'Université de Warwick et au Royal Northern College of Music de Manchester, où il obtint une bourse de la Peter Moores Foundation et remporta le concours Webster Booth/Esso, et la Curtis Gold Medal. Récemment, il a également

gagné un prix lors du prestigieux concours RANIERI I Cestelli à l'Opéra d'état de Hambourg. Il est actuellement premier bariton à l'English National Opera où il a chanté les rôles de Belcore, Lescaut (*Manon*), Zurga (*Les Pêcheurs de perles*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) et Cecil (*Maria Stuarda*). Il s'est également produit à l'Opéra de Calgary dans le rôle de Don Giovanni, à l'Opéra national de Paris-Bastille dans le rôle de Bosun (*Billy Budd*), et en concert dans le rôle d'Antonio (*Linda di Chamounix*).

Andrew Shore est considéré comme le meilleur bariton bouffe anglais de notre temps. Il s'est produit avec toutes les grandes compagnies anglaises, notamment à l'English National Opera, au Royal Opera Covent Garden de Londres, à l'Opera North, au festival de Glyndebourne, au Scottish Opera et au Welsh Opera. A l'étranger, il a chanté à l'Opéra de San Diego, au Nouveau Opéra israélien, à l'Opéra national de Paris-Bastille et à l'Opéra comique, à Nantes, Montpellier, Amsterdam, Vancouver et Ottawa. Ses nombreux engagements l'ont conduit à chanter les rôles titres de *Wozzeck*, *Falstaff*, *King Priam*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Don Pasquale*, ainsi que ceux de Dulcamara (*L'elisir d'amore*), Don Alphonso

(*Così fan tutte*) et Varlaam (*Boris Goudonov*). Parmi ses enregistrements figurent *L'Affaire Makropoulos*, *Don Pasquale*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Tosca* et *La bohème* (pour Chandos et la Peter Moores Foundation).

Helen Williams a étudié au Royal Northern College of Music de Manchester, et a fait ses débuts au festival de Glyndebourne dans le rôle de Sashka (*The Electrification of the Soviet Union*). Elle a également chanté les rôles d'Emmie (*Albert Herring*) avec le Glyndebourne Festival Opera en tournée à Rome, Dalinda (*Ariodante*) et Amor (*Orfeo ed Euridice*) à l'English National Opera, Yvette (*La rondine*) à Covent Garden, et dans la création mondiale de *Hey Persephone!* à Aldeburgh et au festival d'Almeida.

La carrière de chanteur de Geoffrey Mitchell a couvert un répertoire d'une remarquable étendue allant de la musique ancienne à la musique contemporaine. Elle prit son essor à la suite de plusieurs invitations à diriger que lui offrit la BBC, et à une collaboration plus étroite avec ses propres chanteurs. C'est ainsi qu'il fut amené à fonder le **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir** avec lequel il a enregistré quinze opéras pour Opera Rara. Jouissant d'une réputation grandissante, ils ont d'autres

projets avec la BBC et des maisons de disques internationales.

Quand il créa le **Philharmonia Orchestra**, Walter Legge réalisa sa grande ambition de former un orchestre de niveau international composé de musiciens triés sur le volet. Le Philharmonia Orchestra donna son premier concert sous la direction de Sir Thomas Beecham en octobre 1945, et s'imposa rapidement comme l'un des véritables grands orchestres du monde. De nombreux chefs d'orchestre illustres ont été étroitement associés avec cet orchestre qui demeure aujourd'hui le plus enregistré au monde. En effet, sa discographie compte plus de mille enregistrements incluant des opéras pour la Peter Moores Foundation et Opera Rara. La position de "premier orchestre de Londres" du Philharmonia Orchestra résulte de sa vitalité, de sa sonorité chaleureuse unique et de sa volonté de commander et de jouer des œuvres de compositeurs contemporains importants tels que le regretté Witold Lutoslawski, Sir Harrison Birtwistle, et le compositeur associé de l'orchestre, James MacMillan.

David Parry étudia avec Sergiu Celibidache et commença sa carrière comme assistant de Sir John Pritchard. Il fit ses débuts avec l'English

Music Theatre et devint plus tard chef appointé du Städtische Bühnen Dortmund et d'Opera North. Directeur musical d'Opera 80 de 1983 à 1987, il est depuis 1992 le directeur musical fondateur du festival d'opéra contemporain Almeida Opera.

Il poursuit une carrière très active à l'opéra et dans les salles de concert. Son répertoire va de Mozart et de l'opéra italien du début du XIXe siècle à Janáček, Britten et à la musique contemporaine. En Angleterre, il a fait des apparitions régulières à l'English National Opera et lors de concerts avec le Philharmonia. En 1996, il a fait ses débuts au Festival de Glyndebourne avec *Così fan tutte*.

Il se rend fréquemment en Espagne où il s'est produit avec la plupart des troupes d'opéra et des orchestres symphoniques. Il a donné la première espagnole de *Peter Grimes* à Madrid et, en 1996, a dirigé la première mise en scène espagnole de *The Rake's Progress*. Il a aussi inauguré deux nouvelles salles de concert avec une interprétation de la Neuvième symphonie de Beethoven et un nouvel opéra avec *Carmen*.

Il s'est également produit en Italie où il a dirigé *Ricciardo et Zoraide* au Festival d'opéra de Pesaro (consacré à Rossini), mais il s'est aussi rendu en France, en Allemagne, en Belgique, en Hollande, et en Suède où il a dirigé une mise en scène très applaudie du *Midsummer Night's Dream* de Britten.

Hors d'Europe, David Parry s'est produit au Festival international de Hong Kong, a dirigé l'UNAM Symphony Orchestra à Mexico, a fait une tournée consacrée à *Carmen* au Japon, et, en 1996, a dirigé une nouvelle mise en scène de *Kat'a Kabanová* au Festival de Nouvelle-Zélande.

Il a réalisé un grand nombre d'enregistrements pour le label Opera Rara, le plus récent étant *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* de Donizetti, qui a remporté le prix Cecilia en Belgique, et c'est chez Chandos qu'il a dirigé son enregistrement primé de *Tosca*, trois disques d'aires operatiques (avec Bruce Ford, Diana Montague et Dennis O'Neill), *Faust*, *Don Pasquale*, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci* et extraits du *Rosenkavalier*.

Donizetti: L'elisir d'amore

Un tempo descritto graficamente come il cugino di campagna del *Don Pasquale*, *L'elisir d'amore*, che precede *Pasquale* di undici anni, ha conquistato tutti i cuori da quando fu rappresentato per la prima volta al Teatro della Canobbiana a Milano nel 1832; né c'è da stupirsi, vista la sequela di arie e concertati d'infallibile mira – non uno che faccia cilecca – e quattro ruoli nei quali cantanti/attori possono eccellere. Dopo la premiere un critico contemporaneo scrisse: “Lo stile di questa musica è vitale e brillante. La sfumatura fra *buffo* e *serio* è graduata con finezza e i sentimenti sono espressi con grande passione... Rivela un grande maestro al lavoro, l'orchestrazione è sempre pertinente alla situazione... Non si farebbe giustizia all'opera lodando il compositore più profusamente; la sua musica non ha bisogno di esagerati complimenti”.

Forse ciò rispecchia il fatto che al tempo in cui compose quest'opera Donizetti era un uomo felice. All'età di trentaquattro anni aveva già portato a compimento trentanove opere e due anni prima aveva, con la composizione di *Anna Bolena*, raggiunto una fama che lo aveva

posto alla pari con Bellini, suo contemporaneo e rivale. Nel marzo 1832 aveva presentato un nuovo lavoro a Milano, alla Scala, *Ugo, conte di Parigi*, che aveva fatto fiasco, senza peraltro compromettere la fama che il compositore si era di recente guadagnata. Quindi, quando venne interpellato da Alessandro Lanari, impresario del Canobbiana, il risultato fu *L'elisir*.

Questa deliziosa commedia si distaccava dal carattere operistico del tempo che preferiva cruenti melodrammi alle commedie. Donizetti era indubbiamente capace di trattare il genere tragico – si veda la *Lucia di Lammermoor* – ma era anche ben conscio della tradizione dell'*opera buffa*, e del lavoro compiuto in quel campo dal suo grande predecessore, Rossini, e niente lo allettava quanto lo scrivere, per divertimento, i propri testi comici. Era anche bravo a lavorare celermente e su commissione. E ne aveva bisogno nel caso dell'*Elisir*, perché la commissione ricevuta dal Teatro della Canobbiana gli giunse all'ultimo momento, quando venne a mancare un altro lavoro commissionato. Donizetti si rivolse a Felice Romani, che aveva lavorato con lui alla *Bolena*

e all' *Ugo*, per la stesura del libretto. Dapprima Lanari aveva suggerito a Donizetti di limitarsi semplicemente a riattare un lavoro già fatto in precedenza, possibilmente uno che i milanesi non conoscevano. Donizetti andò su tutte le furie e replicò: "Mi prendete forse in giro? Non è mio costume rabberciare i miei lavori o quelli di chiunque altro. State un po' a vedere cosa son capace di fare in quindici giorni! Vi do' la mia parola d'onore che lo farò, solo che Romani mi aiuti".

Questa conversazione è narrata da un testimonio contemporaneo, Emilia Branca, futura moglie di Romani, allora una giovinetta, la cui famiglia era amica del compositore. Essa afferma che Donizetti e Romani si accordarono ad accettare la richiesta di Lanari di completare l'opera in due settimane. Può ben darsi che Branca si sia sbagliata ricordando più tardi ciò che era accaduto; è probabile che la commissione abbia dato agli autori un po' più di tempo, un mese forse.

A quei tempi creare un soggetto originale era fuori discussione: semplicemente veniva adottato un libro già esistente. Dopo lunghe ed amichevoli discussioni gli autori si fermarono su *Le Philtre* di Eugène Scribe e lo adattarono felicemente. Romani tagliò il testo di Scribe (scritto per un'opera di Auber) e vi aggiunse materiale proprio. I nomi francesi vennero

tramutati in nomi italiani, l'ambientazione venne spostata da un villaggio basco ad un villaggio italiano. Romani, nell'insieme, volse la convenzionalità del libro di Scribe in un testo più fine e più romantico, ed il sentimento che vi aggiunse – come nella famosa romanza di Nemorino, "Una furtiva lagrime" – molto si adattava al gusto di Donizetti; è questo elemento elegiaco della scrittura donizettiana che eleva i suoi personaggi dalla loro chiave comica e che dà all'opera la sua individualità ed emotività. Romani, peraltro, si era opposto all'inclusione della romanza di Nemorino. Secondo la sua vedova, il librettista disse: "A qual pro' il patetico piagnucolio di questo zoticone quando tutto dovrebbe essere allegro e festivo?" Ma il compositore prevalse sul suo sconsigliato partner, il quale finì per fornire il singolarmente appropriato testo.

A quanto pare Donizetti non intendeva sacrificare interamente la bella vita per la composizione di una nuova opera, anche se il tempo scarseggiava. Un giorno, comunque, quando era atteso a cena a casa dei Branca, giunse trafelato in ritardo. "Perdonatemi", esclamò. "Ero per la strada quando sono passato dalla casa di Romani e mi sono fermato per vedere se aveva un po' di testo da darmi. Infatti, mi ha consegnato un duetto intero. Leggendo i versi, semplicemente, ho dovuto

metterli in musica sull'istante, tanto mi avevano ispirato... Stasera, prima di andare a letto, li strumentierò e domani li manderò al copista che li passerà ai cantanti... Tutto sta andando a gonfie vele."

Più tardi, quella sera, lo stesso passaggio – il duetto, "Chiedi all'aria lusinghiera" – venne cantato al pianoforte da Donizetti. Emilia Branca ricorda che Donizetti aveva una voce piacevole. Aggiunge: "Suonava molto bene. Era un bell'uomo: alto, slanciato, l'ampia fronte coronata da riccioli neri, le fattezze regolari... Il suo aspetto denotava una buona indole, sincera ed aperta. Soprattutto era simpatico, ed il bel sesso gli era devoto".

L'azione dell'opera si svolge entro il contesto della vita di paese, ammirevolmente descritta nelle rodomontate di Belcore e nella scaltrezza del garrulo Dottor Dulcamara; né si dimentichi il vivace contributo degli stessi paesani che prendono attiva parte alle emozioni del momento.

Il pezzo è felicemente costruito. In una sequenza naturale Donizetti presenta tre dei suoi quattro personaggi principali. Nemorino è immediatamente caratterizzato dalla sua breve cavatina, "Quanto è bella!", nella quale il suo desiderio per l'amata, ma apparentemente irraggiungibile, Adina è espresso con tenerezza, così come è rivelata la sua natura

fondamentalmente timida (cosa che i tenori che interpretano la parte amano sfruttare). Ciò fa parte dell'introduzione corale. Dall'altro lato della scena si sente Adina che ride leggendo la storia di Tristano e Isotta e del filtro magico d'amore; storia che poi continua a leggere ad alta voce. Da ciò si deduce la sua natura canzonatoria.

Una marcia porta in scena il ridicolo Belcore la cui cavatina delinea efficacemente il suo carattere vanitoso. Più in là il ciarlatano Dulcamara è descritto in maniera altrettanto infallibile nel suo recitativo e aria: "Udite, udite, o rustici", in cui cerca di smerciare i suoi medicinali e terapie in una delle più estese ed irresistibili delle arie semiparlato di tutta l'*opera buffa*, un vero torrente di parole. Qui, come per tutta l'opera, il coro è integrato nell'azione musicale, in particolar modo al momento in cui le ragazze, avendo scoperto la ricchezza di nuovo conio di Nemorino, gli danno la caccia, sebbene egli creda che sia l'effetto dell'*elisir*, "Dell'*elisir* mirabile".

Per il resto, fino alla romanza di Nemorino vicino alla fine, Donizetti sviluppa la trama in una serie di incantevoli e oppure briosi duetti e concertati. Frasi scorrevoli e melodiose quali la già citata di Adina, "Chiedi all'aria lusinghiera", in cui ella teneramente gli dice di essere tanto volubile quanto il venticello sempre in moto,

spesso contrastano con passaggi frizzanti, oppure, come nel finale dell'Atto I, l'azione viene trattenuta per far posto all'*a solo* di Nemorino, "Adina, credimi", in cui implora il suo bene di credere al suo sincero amore e di aspettare un giorno prima di sposare Belcore. Nemorino e Belcore si esprimono in modo abilmente differenziato nel duetto dell'arruolamento "Venti scudi". Nell'incontro di Adina con Dulcamara la potenza della fasulla pozione fa da perfetto contrappeso alla potenza dei sentimenti di Adina verso Nemorino mentre dice che uno sguardo, un sorriso, un gesto di tenerezza saranno la più forte delle pozioni; l'*allegro* di questo duetto è uno dei passaggi più scintillanti dell'opera.

Nelle arie finali per l'eroe e per l'eroina il compositore tocca il cuore. C'è un'emozione genuina in "Una furtiva lagrima", con il suo elegiaco *obbligato* del fagotto: una romanza con una fine melodia in minore – maggiore. Non per nulla è diventata una delle arie più amate di tutte l'opera italiana, spesso cantata separatamente. Quando Adina rientra, gli dice, con commossa tenerezza, che lo ha riscattato dall'arruolamento e gli consegna il contratto cantando, "Prendi, per me sei libero": una melodia sensuale, a lungo respiro, che contrasta marcatamente con la sua pungente musica precedente.

E così l'opera sembrò destinata al successo sin dalla sua inaugurazione, ma Donizetti non si fece grandi illusioni circa il successo della prima rappresentazione, avendo serie riserve nei confronti degli interpreti disponibili: Sabine Heinefetter come Adina, Giambattista Genaro come Nemorino, Henri-Bernard Dabade (che aveva creato il ruolo di Guglielmo Tell) come Belcore, e Giuseppe Frezzolini come Dulcamara. Donizetti così commentò al suo collaboratore: "Abbiamo una primadonna tedesca, un tenore balbuziente, un buffo con una voce caprina ed un basso francese che ha poco da offrire, eppure dobbiamo far loro omaggio. Coraggio, caro Romani, tieni in alto lo spirito". In effetti l'occasione si dimostrò un trionfo e l'opera venne replicata 32 volte dopo la prima. Più tardi in quell'anno Ricordi, nel preparare la pubblicazione della partitura, chiese a Donizetti una dedica. Il compositore rispose: "Giacché gentilmente mi avete lasciato la scelta di una dedica per *L'elisir d'amore*, Ve ne sono molto grato. Che sia dedicata al Bel Sesso milanese. Chi meglio sa come distillarlo? Chi meglio sa come elargirlo?"

Qualunque siano stati i meriti della premiere l'opera venne presto adottata in molti teatri. Fu rappresentata per la prima volta a Londra al Lyceum Theatre nel 1836 e l'anno dopo entrò in repertorio allo Her Majesty's Theatre. Oggi

non si ricorda nessuno degli interpreti di quella iniziale esecuzione, ma *The Times* commentò: "Nell'insieme ce n'era a sufficienza per costituire una serata di delizioso trattenimento: la trama era buona, la musica piacevole, i cantanti diedero quanto si poteva desiderare e l'orchestra era eccellente". L'ambizioso cantante-compositore irlandese Michael Balfe diresse (al posto di Benedict), ma *The Morning Post* scrisse che sarebbe stato meglio se Balfe avesse cantato anziché diretto. Il giornale aggiunse che il teatro era tollerabilmente pieno, il pubblico non così brillante né così mondano come al King's: "Ci si domanda seriamente se l'amore per la musica italiana abbia fatto abbastanza progressi in questo paese da assicurare il successo di questo esperimento." Il Lyceum era allora conosciuto come The English Opera House: da ciò il commento.

L'opera fu data per la prima volta a New York, in inglese (come, naturalmente, in questo disco), nel 1838, e rappresentata in prima a Parigi – accolta con immenso diletto – al Théâtre Italien nel 1839. Durante tutto l'Ottocento attrasse gli interpreti più favolosi, fra questi Fanny Persiani come Adina, Mario come Nemorino, Antonio Tamburini come Belcore e Luigi Lablache come Dulcamara: ruolo che divenne uno dei suoi più famosi.

Lablache e Mario apparvero in un leggendario allestimento a Londra nei tardi anni quaranta di quel secolo: di questo allestimento esiste una stampa famosa. Nel 1900 Toscanini diresse l'opera alla Scala con Caruso, che in quel teatro si fece un nome come Nemorino. I suoi vari dischi di "Una furtiva lagrima" sono fra le glorie dei primi anni di storia discografica. Più tardi mandò in estasi il Metropolitan in questo ruolo, dove poi venne seguito da rinomati tenori quali Schipa, Gigli, Tagliavini, Pavarotti (largamente appropriatosi il ruolo di Nemorino) e Domingo. Zeffirelli allestì l'opera memorabilmente a Glyndebourne nel 1960 con Eugenia Ratti (poi Freni) come Adina e Luigi Alva come Nemorino.

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La trama

Atto I

Ingresso alla fattoria di Adina

E' tempo di mietitura in una fattoria del luogo. Giannetta e i suoi compagni mietitori si riposano al riparo dal sole cocente. Nemorino, un contadinotto, è perdutamente innamorato di Adina, la ricca padrona della fattoria. Adina racconta ai mietitori la leggenda di Tristano che, avendo perseguito invano la Regina Isotta,

si guadagnò il suo amore bevendo un filtro magico che lo rese irresistibile.

Il sergente Belcore arriva con il suo platone. Fa la serenata ad Adina e prontamente la chiede in sposa, con grande disperazione di Nemorino. Adina, peraltro, non l'accetta immediatamente: Belcore non si è ancora meritato il suo amore. Adina invita Belcore e il suo platone ad assaggiare il vino locale e i contadini ritornano alla mietitura. Nemorino richiama Adina e le dichiara la sua ardente passione, ma Adina gli dice che il suo affetto è follia. Piuttosto, farebbe meglio ad andare in città per prendersi cura del suo ricco zio malato, tanto più che lei stessa è volubile e cambia idea di continuo. Ciononostante Nemorino giura di amarla fino alla morte.

La piazza del paese

Più tardi, nella piazza del villaggio, il ciarlatano ambulante Dottor Dulcamara, descrive a un attempato gruppo di persone le mirabolanti qualità terapeutiche delle pozioni e degli elisir di sua invenzione, riuscendo a venderne alcuni esemplari. Il gruppo si disperde. Nemorino chiede a Dulcamara il filtro d'amore di Tristano che Dulcamara gli vende alacremenente. Dulcamara spiega a Nemorino che il filtro diviene efficace dopo ventiquattrore. Ciò darà al dottore il tempo di allontanarsi dal villaggio

prima che il suo inganno venga scoperto: l'elisir altro non è che una bottiglia di vino scadente.

Nemorino beve il vino e rapidamente si ubriaca. Tratta Adina con indifferenza, convinto che ben presto l'elisir farà il suo effetto. L'atteggiamento di Nemorino sorprende e irrita Adina la quale, quando Belcore riprende a corteggiarla, accetta senza indugio la sua proposta dicendogli che lo sposerà dopo sei giorni. Nemorino deride i loro piani, sicuro che l'elisir gli garantirà l'amore di Adina la mattina dopo. Arrivano nuovi ordini per Belcore: dovrà lasciare il villaggio il giorno seguente. Adina, infuriata adesso alla reazione di Nemorino ai suoi progetti, anticipa il matrimonio a quella sera stessa. Nemorino la implora di aspettare fino alla mattina dopo, ma senza risultato. Adina invita tutti al suo banchetto di nozze e tutti si burlano di Nemorino, il quale teme che tutti i suoi piani vadano in fumo.

Atto II

Banchetto di nozze alla fattoria di Adina

Al banchetto per festeggiare le nozze di Adina e Belcore, Dulcamara canta con Adina una barcarola nella quale si racconta la storia di una fanciulla che respinge un facoltoso pretendente per sposare il suo vero amore, un giovane

gondoliere. Arriva il notaio e tutti si ritirano per assistere alla stesura del contratto di matrimonio. Dulcamara, invece, resta indietro per fare onore alle vivande di cui è ghiotto.

Nemorino ha visto arrivare il notaio. Implora Dulcamara di vendergli ancora un po' di elisir, ma non ha più denaro. Dulcamara esige pagamento in contanti e dice a Nemorino che partirà dal paese fra quindici minuti. Appare Belcore che suggerisce a Nemorino una facile soluzione dei suoi problemi: si arruoli nel suo reggimento e riceverà venti scudi. Belcore descrive la splendida vita del soldato e il disperato Nemorino acconsente e corre a cercare Dulcamara.

All'esterno, nel cortile della fattoria

Giannetta e le ragazze del villaggio hanno appreso che lo zio di Nemorino è morto lasciandogli un patrimonio. Appare Nemorino e le donne si affollano intorno a lui, corteggiandolo. Nemorino pensa che l'elisir stia finalmente facendo effetto: la notizia della sua eredità non è ancora giunta fino a lui. Adina e Dulcamara entrano, stupiti ambedue delle attenzioni di cui Nemorino è oggetto. Dulcamara comincia a credere che il suo filtro sia magico davvero e Adina confessa a sé stessa di voler bene a Nemorino. Giannetta e le ragazze invitano Nemorino a ballare con loro

mentre Adina cerca di dirgli che ha fatto male ad arruolarsi. Prima che possano continuare a parlare Giannetta e le sue compagne trascinano via Nemorino.

Dulcamara rivela ad Adina come Nemorino ha acquistato l'elisir per conquistare il suo cuore. Adina si accorge di essersi comportata in maniera crudele, e di essere innamorata di Nemorino. Dulcamara le offre un filtro per riconquistarlo, ma ella preferisce usare la sua capacità di seduzione. Nemorino torna in cerca di Adina: mentre stava civettando con le ragazze del villaggio ha scorto una furtiva lacrima negli occhi di Adina: dunque la ragazza è innamorata di lui. Quando Adina appare, Nemorino finge indifferenza. Ella gli dice che lo ha riscattato dal suo contratto di arruolamento e gli confessa di amarlo.

Fa per allontanarsi, ma Nemorino le chiede se non ha altro da aggiungere. Lei dice di no e il giovane replica con rabbia, dicendo che si arruolerà comunque. Di fronte a questo la ragazza non riesce più a trattenersi: ammette il suo amore per Nemorino e si dichiara sua per sempre.

Ritornano Dulcamara, Belcore e i paesani. Belcore accetta la necessità di rinunciare ad Adina, Dulcamara rivela ai presenti l'eredità ricevuta da Nemorino e subito afferma che il suo elisir non porta solo amore ma anche

ricchezza. Alcuni paesani comprano le bottiglie di vino scadente che sono rimaste e Dulcamara se ne va sulla sua carrozza, accompagnato dalle acclamazioni e dal giubilo universale.

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Traduzione: Marcella Barzetti

Diplomatosi presso il Royal Northern College of Music con una borsa di studio della fondazione Peter Moores, **Barry Banks** si è affermato come uno dei più insigni tenori della sua generazione. Le sue interpretazioni hanno incluso Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*) per l'English National Opera, il ruolo di protagonista ne *Le Comte Ory* per la Glyndebourne Touring Opera ed in *Candide* per la Chicago Lyric Opera, Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) per la Welsh National Opera, Tamino (*Der Zauberflöte*) al Festival di Salisburgo, La Monnaie e Leipzig Opera, Glyndebourne Touring Opera e Scottish Opera, Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*) e Argirio (*Tancredi*) per la Frankfurt Opera, e Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*) per la Metropolitan Opera ed il Festival strawinskiano della BBC. I suoi dischi includono *La bohème*, *Un ballo in maschera* e *La calisto* e *Don Pasquale* (per la Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Mary Plazas ha studiato al Royal Northern College of Music con una borsa di studio della fondazione Peter Moores, e presso il National Opera Studio dove ha vinto nel 1991 la Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Scholarship. Ha debuttato nella parte della Voce Celeste nel *Don Carlos* per l'English National Opera; dal 1995 al 1998 ha fatto parte degli interpreti di rango principale di questa compagnia. I suoi ruoli hanno incluso la parte di protagonista ne *La volpe astuta*, Adina, Mimì, Leila, Nannetta, Michaela, Marzelline (*Fidelio*) e Susanna. Ha inoltre cantato con la Royal Opera Covent Garden, la Metropolitan Opera, Opera North, Glyndebourne Touring Opera e Garsington Opera e in altre sedi. Recentemente è apparsa a Tel Aviv con la Nuova opera israeliana ne *The Rake's Progress*, in *Flight* per Glyndebourne e Glyndebourne Touring Opera ed in *Powder Her Face* per l'Almeida Opera. In televisione ha cantato ne *Le nozze di Figaro* dell'Opera Factory, e in *Dido and Aeneas* (Prima Maga), anche per Chandos. I suoi dischi includono *Maria, regina d'Inghilterra* di Pacini per Opera Rara, *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* e *Marguerite (Faust)* (per la Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Ashley Holland ha studiato all'Università di Warwick e al Royal Northern College of

Music, dove ha vinto il concorso Webster Booth/Esso, la medaglia d'oro Curtis e la borsa di studio della fondazione Peter Moores. Di recente ha pure vinto il prestigioso concorso lirico RANIERI I Cestelli, promosso dall'Opera Nazionale di Amburgo. Attualmente è primo baritono dell'English National Opera, dove i suoi ruoli hanno incluso Belcore, Lescaut (*Manon*), Zurga (*Les Pêcheurs de perles*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) e Cecil (*Maria Stuarda*). Ha inoltre cantato Don Giovanni per la Calgary Opera, il Nostromo (*Billy Budd*) per l'Opéra national de Paris-Bastille, e Antonio in esecuzioni in forma d'oratorio della *Linda di Chamounix*.

Andrew Shore è riconosciuto come il primo baritono buffo britannico. Ha cantato per tutte le maggiori compagnie britanniche, fra queste la English National Opera, la Royal Opera Covent Garden, Opera North, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Scottish Opera e Welsh National Opera. All'estero ha cantato con la San Diego Opera, Nuova opera israeliana, l'Opéra national de Paris-Bastille e l'Opéra comique di Parigi, ed a Nantes, Montpellier, Amsterdam, Vancouver e Ottawa. I suoi numerosi ingaggi hanno compreso i ruoli di protagonista di *Wozzeck*, *Falstaff*, *King Priam*,

Gianni Schicchi, *Don Pasquale*, così come quelli di Dulcamara (*L'elisir d'amore*), Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*) e Varlaam (*Boris Godunov*). I suoi dischi includono *Il caso Makropulos*, e *Don Pasquale*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Tosca* e *La bohème* (per la Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Helen Williams ha studiato al Royal Northern College of Music ed ha debuttato al Festival di Glyndebourne nella parte di Sashka (*The Electrification of the Soviet Union*). Altri ruoli includono Emmie (*Albert Herring*) per la tournée della Glyndebourne Festival Opera a Roma. Dalinda (*Ariodante*) e Amor (*Orfeo ed Euridice*) con l'English National Opera, Yvette (*La rondine*) per la Royal Opera, e la prima mondiale di *Hey Persephone!* ai festivals di Aldeburgh e dell'Almeida.

La carriera vocale di Geoffrey Mitchell si distingue per il repertorio eccezionalmente ampio, che va dalla musica antica a quella contemporanea. Tale fatto gli ha fruttato numerosi inviti della BBC ad esibirsi nel ruolo di direttore e, in seguito, un'attività più impegnativa in sintonia con propri cantanti nonché la conseguente formazione del **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir**. Dopo le prime registrazioni su disco il complesso ha potuto

stabilire regolari rapporti di lavoro con la compagnia Opera Rara, per la quale ha registrato ben 15 opere. Attualmente gode di crescente reputazione grazie agli ulteriori incarichi ricevuti dalla BBC e dalle case discografiche internazionali.

Con la costituzione della **Philharmonia Orchestra** Walter Legge realizzò il suo grande sogno di creare un complesso di classe internazionale con strumentisti selezionati rigorosamente. L'orchestra, che diede il primo concerto nell'ottobre del 1945 sotto la bacchetta di Sir Thomas Beecham, si affermò ben presto come uno tra i complessi mondiali di effettiva grandezza. La Philharmonia, da tempo associata a numerosi direttori di fama internazionale, è senz'altro il complesso sinfonico con il maggior numero di registrazioni discografiche all'attivo (oltre mille), che includono alcune opere per la Peter Moores Foundation/Opera Rara. La sua posizione di "principale orchestra londinese" è dovuta all'energia, all'incomparabile intensità sonora e all'impegno con cui commissiona ed esegue opere musicali di eminenti compositori contemporanei, come quelle del defunto Witold Lutoslawski, di Sir Harrison Birtwistle e di James MacMillan, ospite della Philharmonia Orchestra.

David Parry ha studiato con Sergiu Celibidache ed ha iniziato la sua carriera come assistente di Sir John Pritchard. Ha fatto il suo debutto con l'English Music Theatre ed è poi diventato direttore stabile della Städtische Bühnen Dortmund e di Opera North. Dal 1983 al 1987 è stato direttore artistico di Opera 80 e dal 1992 Direttore Musicale fondatore del festival di opera contemporanea dell'Almeida Opera.

Svolge un'intensa attività sia nel teatro lirico sia in campo sinfonico. Il suo repertorio da va Mozart e l'opera italiana del Ottocento a Janáček e Britten e la musica contemporanea. In Inghilterra ha diretto frequentemente alla English National Opera ed in concerti sinfonici con la Philharmonia. Nel 1996 ha debuttato al festival di Glyndebourne con *Così fan tutte*.

Dirige spesso in Spagna nella maggior parte dei teatri lirici e con orchestra sinfoniche. Ha diretto la prima spagnola di *Peter Grimes* a Madrid e nel 1996 il primo allestimento spagnolo della *Rake's Progress*, ha inaugurato due nuove sale di concerti con la Nona sinfonia di Beethoven ed un nuovo teatro lirico con la *Carmen*. Altre tournées l'hanno portato in Italia, dove ha diretto *Ricciardo e Zoraide* al Festival Rossini di Pesaro, in Francia, Germania, Belgio, Olanda, e Svezia dove ha

diretto con grande successo *A Midsummer Night's Dream* di Britten.

Fuori d'Europa David Parry si è esibito al festival internazionale di Hong Kong, con l'orchestra sinfonica UNAM a Città del Messico e in una serie di rappresentazioni della *Carmen* in Giappone. Nel 1996 ha diretto *Káťa Kabanová* in un nuovo allestimento per il festival della Nuova Zelanda.

Ha inciso numerosi dischi per Opera Rara, fra questi il più recente è quello di *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* di Donizetti, che ha vinto il Priz Cecilia in Belgio; per Chandos ha diretto l'acclamato disco della *Tosca*, tre dischi di grandi arie operistiche (con Bruce Ford, Diana Montague e Dennis O'Neill), *Faust*, *Don Pasquale*, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci* e brani del *Rosenkavalier*.



Andrew Shore as Dr Dulcamara

Photographs from the 1998
ENO production, which moved
the setting to a modern-day
communist-block country.



Ashley Holland as Belcore and Mary Plazas as Adina

Barry Banks as Nemorino and Ashley Holland



Mary Plazas and Barry Banks



COMPACT DISC ONE

Act One

Scene 1

The entrance of Adina's farm.

1 No. 1: Prelude and Introduction

Giannetta and Harvesters

- 2** After long and heavy labour,
When the sun on high is shining,
How we love to lie reclining,
Where the branches hang above.
So the reaper and his neighbour
May be cooled in easy fashion;
But when hearts awake to passion
None can cool the flame of love. *etc.*
Both in sowing and in reaping,
May our life contented prove! *etc.*

Cavatina

Nemorino (*watching Adina*)

- 3** How delightful, how enchanting!
Just to see her I'm filled with rapture.
But how can I hope to capture
One so wise as well as fair?
Always reading, studying and learning,
She devours every book in creation.
But I lack an education,
I can only stand and stare!
Ah, how lovely, how delightful!
Ah, how delightful, how enchanting! *etc.*
Must I only stand and stare?

Oh, I wish I could discover
How to gain a woman's love.
Who can teach me how to gain
a woman's love? *etc.*

Giannetta and Harvesters

So the reaper and his neighbour
May be cooled in easy fashion...

Nemorino

Ah! Who can teach me?

Giannetta and Harvesters

But when hearts awake to passion
None can cool the flame of love. *etc.*

Nemorino

Ah! How to gain a woman's love?
How to gain a woman's love?

Giannetta and Harvesters

Both in sowing and in reaping
May our life contented prove! *etc.*

Nemorino

Oh, how lovely, how delightful!
Can I gain her tender love? *etc.*

Cavatina

Adina

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

- 4** That's a really happy ending
To a most unusual story!

Giannetta and Harvesters

Is it really? Won't you tell us?
Does it tell of love and glory?

Adina

It's the history of Tristan,
Who for love did pine and sigh.

Giannetta and Harvesters

Read it, read it, read it, read it.

Nemorino (*aside*)

I think I'll listen, and perhaps
I'll catch her eye.

Adina (*reading*)

- 5** 'Lovely was Queen Isolda,
And handsome Tristan wooed her.
But vainly he pursued her,
She stood aloof and apart.
But then a kindly sorcerer,
Who saw his deep emotion,
Brewed him a magic potion
Filled with the power of love.
And soon the fair Isolda
To Tristan gave her heart.'

Who'd imagine such a potion
Bringing love by guarantee?
I would win a life's devotion
Were the secret known to me.

Nemorino, Giannetta and Harvesters

Who'd imagine such a potion
Bringing love by guarantee?
I would win a life's devotion
Were the secret known to me. *etc.*
More please! We are waiting!

Adina (*reading*)

'He scarce a drop had tasted,
Its warmth inside him stealing,
When Queen Isolda's feeling
Was changed by magic art.
Fond love began to seize her,
Upwards it seemed to waft her.
Tristan alone could please her,
Then and forever after!
And Tristan blessed the power,
Which gained him Isolda and her heart.'

Who'd imagine such a potion
Bringing love by guarantee?
I would win a life's devotion
Were the secret known to me.

Giannetta and Harvesters

Who'd imagine such a potion
Bringing love by guarantee?
I would win a life's devotion
Were the secret known to me.

Adina and Nemorino

I would win a...

Giannetta and Harvesters

I would win a...

Adina and Nemorino

...life's devotion...

Giannetta and Harvesters

...life's devotion...

Adina and Nemorino
...were the secret...

Giannetta and Harvesters
...were the secret...

Adina and Nemorino
...known to me. *etc.*

Giannetta and Harvesters
...known to me. *etc.*

Scene 2
(*A drum sounds. Enter Belcore.*)

6 Marziale

Cavatina

Belcore

7 To the one who shines in beauty,
Let me offer fairest flowers,
Nourished here by sun and showers
To be worthy of your charms.
And as I present my duty,
I lay siege to your affection.
Place your heart in my protection
And accept a soldier's arms!

Adina
Don't you think he's rather gallant?

Giannetta
Very much so.

Harvesters
Oh, she's lucky.

Adina
Truly gallant!

Nemorino
How can I bear it?

Belcore
Do I see that you're affected?
Can I feel your passion growing stronger?
That is hardly unexpected,
I'm a charmer, and what's more I'm a sergeant.
Every lady, pure or shady,
Feels the soldier's great attraction.
Beauty yields to men of action
At the call of love's alarms.

Adina
Very gallant!

Giannetta
Yes, you're lucky.

Belcore
Beauty yields to men of action
At the call of love's alarms.

Nemorino
What shall I do?

Belcore
Beauty yields to men of action
At the call of love's alarms.

8 If you love me as I love you,
Then away with delay and deadlock!
Choose the day which will declare us
Man and wife in lawful wedlock.

Adina
Gallant sergeant, not quite so hasty.
We must walk before we run!

Nemorino
Can I bear it if she takes him?
All my hopes will be undone!

Belcore
Why this delay now?
Just name the day now!

Adina
Not so hasty!
Not so hasty!

Belcore
Why delay now? Name the day now!
Just name the day, my dearest treasure!

Nemorino
They will truly be undone.

Adina
Not so hasty, not so hasty.
Wed in haste, repent at leisure!

Belcore
Let's gather rosebuds while we may.
What need of doubt or feigning?
In loving or campaigning
Delay is worse than flight!
Declare that you surrender now,
The victor claims his right, his right,
Declare that you surrender now,
The victor claims his right! *etc.*

Adina
These men are so presumptuous,
With self-congratulations,
And victory celebrations,
When halfway through the fight.
The target you are aiming for
Is not yet in your sight! *etc.*

Nemorino
If only I were braver,
If only I were clever!
It's just the same as ever,
My tongue is dumb with fright.
If only I were braver, *etc.*
Why must I always hesitate?
Why can't I speak outright? *etc.*

Belcore
Declare that you surrender now,
Why insist on this delay now?
Oh, won't you name the day now?
Adina, won't you name the day now?
Declare that you surrender.
The victor claims his right.
Lay down your arms, surrender now.
The victor shall not lose his right. *etc.*

Adina
An overhasty marriage
To me were no delight. *etc.*
I'm in no hurry.
The target you are aiming for,
Is not yet in your sight. *etc.*

Giannetta

Oh, won't it be a funny thing
If after her disdain,
Oh, won't it be a funny thing
If he with bold campaigning
Should drop Adina quite.
But she's a sly one,
A very sly one.
She'll put his plan to flight,
She'll put his plan to flight. *etc.*

Harvesters

Oh, won't it be a funny thing
If after her disdain,
Oh, won't it be a funny thing
If he should trap her quite.
But no she's such a sly one,
A very sly one.
She'll put his plan to flight,
She'll put his plan to flight. *etc.*

Recitative

Belcore

- [9] Too soon, my lovely creature,
We must be off to duty.
But may I ask you to let my weary soldiers
Take a few moments' rest?

Adina

They're very welcome.
We should count it an honour
If you'd sample our wine, our local best.

Belcore

I should love to.
Lucky me, a family guest!

Adina (*to the harvesters*)

Time to go back to work now.
We have wasted too much time.
No more distractions.

Harvesters

All right. We'll go.

(*Exeunt all but Nemorino and Adina.*)

Scene 3

No. 2: Scene and Duet

Nemorino

Spare me a moment, Adina!

Adina

- [10] The same old tedious passion!
The usual sighs and tears!
You would do better to go
To your uncle's house in the city
Since I hear that he's ill,
And that it's serious.

Nemorino

I'm the one who is suffering more than my uncle!
I cannot leave the village,
And you know the reason.

Adina

But if he dies and leaves his wealth to others?

Nemorino

What's that to me?

Adina

Oh, very well then – you want to die of hunger!

Nemorino

No, I'm dying of love,
It's just as painful.

Adina

Listen:
I can trust you, I can respect you,
Unlike a certain sergeant
Who thinks all women are his easy victims.
And so, I tell you plainly,
It's quite useless to try and make me love you.
I have a fickle nature,
And any longing,
Which I feel for a moment,
Is soon abandoned.

Nemorino

Adina! Is love so cruel?

Adina

- No, love's a phantom.
[11] For example, ask the breezes,
Why mid lilies and mid roses
Their affection never reposes
But will stray from flower to flower.
They will tell you that their nature,
Is to change with every hour.
'Tis their nature, 'tis their nature
To change with every hour.

Nemorino

What must I do?

Adina

Try not to love me.
Let your grief be soon forgot.

Nemorino

Oh, Adina! No, I cannot.

Adina

Can't you try it? Why not?
Why not? Why not?

Nemorino

Why not? Why not?
Ask the constant flowing waters
Of the streamlet and the river,
Why they seek the sea forever
Though 'tis there that they must die.
They will say 'tis love that draws them,
Though they know no reason why,
Though they know no reason why.

Adina

What's your meaning?

Nemorino

I'll die as they do,
There's no other fate I see.

Adina

Love another, as well you may do.

Nemorino

There is no such hope for me,
No hope for me, no hope for me.

Adina

¹² Such affection is but folly.
Do as I do, ever gaily.
Think no more of melancholy,
Learn to change your lover daily.
Love may come and love may leave you,
For we meet it everywhere.
Yet I know it cannot grieve me,
For my heart is light as air. *etc.*

Nemorino

Ah! You alone are all I long for,
You alone who haunt my vision.
You alone my love is strong for,
Stronger far than your derision.
Though you wear your heart so lightly
And you mock me when I sigh,
Yet my love for you burns brightly.
I shall love you until I die.

Adina

No, no, no.

Nemorino

Till I die.

Adina

No, no, no.

Nemorino

Till I die, until the day I die. *etc.*

Adina

No, no, no. Do as I do,
And remain as light of heart as I.
Love another.

Nemorino

No, no, I die for you.
I die, I die for you.

Adina

Love another.

Nemorino

No!

Adina

I won't stop you.

Nemorino

No, I shall die for you.

Adina

You die for me? You die for me?
Such affection is but folly.
Do as I do, ever gaily.
Think no more of melancholy.
Learn to change your lover daily.

Nemorino

Though you wear your heart so lightly
And you mock me when I sigh,
Yet my love for you burns brightly.
I shall love you until I die.

Adina

No, no, no.

Nemorino

Till I die.

Adina

No, no, no.

Nemorino

Till I die, until the day I die. *etc.*

Adina

No, no, no. Do as I do,
And remain as light of heart as I. *etc.*
(Exeunt Adina and Nemorino.)

Scene 4

The village square.

No. 3: Chorus and Cavatina

Women

¹³ What's the meaning of that kind of fanfare?

Men

Most unusual! Just wait till you see who is arriving!
With his carriage of gold, I am quite sure
He's a man of importance.
Oh, so noble and proud in his bearing,
So proud in his bearing!
Oh, so grand are the clothes he is wearing,
The clothes he is wearing!

Villagers

He is rich and is able to show it,
He's a baron, a marquis, I know it. *etc.*
Some great noble who pays us a visit,
Duke or prince if I'm not incorrect. *etc.*
Yes, look there, he is coming towards us.
Take your hats off and show your respect. *etc.*

Scene 5

(Dulcamara appears.)

Cavatina

Dulcamara

¹⁴ Attention! Attention! You country folk!
Be silent! Pay attention!
I'm sure I need not inform you all
Of whom you see before you.
A doctor anatomical,
Physician astronomical.
From here to the Sahara
Renowned is Dulcamara.
For my skill with my cases
Is known in all the universe
And... and... in other places.
I clear out all the hospitals
By curing all diseases.
No malady can baffle me
From broken legs to sneezes.
The cure for all and sundry
Is the medicine I have got.
Come buy of me, come buy of me.
It will not cost a lot.
Come buy of me, come buy of me.
Don't wait until you rot. *etc.*

It cures all kinds of toothache
Or a painful irritation.
It drives away pneumonia,
Relieves your constipation.
It's all authenticated.
I've letters signed and dated
From grateful former sufferers,
Who swear I speak the truth.
My learning academical,

Both physical and chemical,
Enabled me to brew it,
As only I can do it.
Even a man of seventy
By this regains his youth.
A man of over seventy
Regains his lusty youth.
"Twould hardly be surprising
To see a dead man rising
If but one drop of this were poured
Between his tongue and tooth.

Villagers
Oh!

Dulcamara
You ladies growing elderly,
With foreheads that are wrinkling,
Shampoo with what I sell to you.
Be pretty in a twinkling!
You girls around my carriage,
D'you wish for happy marriage?
Young men, whate'er your trade is,
D'you want to please the ladies?
Then buy the sovereign remedy,
Which I alone have got.
It will not cost a lot, *etc.*
Come all you lads and lasses,
Come sirs and pretty ladies,
Come buy my sovereign remedy,
It will not cost a lot.

For all complaints choleral,
Dyspeptical, arthritical,

Asthmatical, hysterical,
Bronchitical, paralytical,
Rheumatical, scorbutical,
Of pellicle or cuticle,
And all the smartest illnesses,
Which folk in town have got.
For pellicle or cuticle,
Rheumatical, scorbutical,
Asthmatical, hysterical,
Dyspeptical, choleral,
Come all you gallant gentlemen,
Come all you pretty ladies,
The medicine that I'm selling,
Will cure you like a shot.
Come young and old and buy of me,
Come all of high and low degree,
Come buy the sovereign remedy,
Which I alone have got.
Come on, it will not cost a lot, *etc.*

The ingredients are rarer,
Than the costliest of spices.
You will ask me, tell us quickly,
Tell us quickly what the price is.
Eighty florins? No! Forty? No! Twenty?
At that I could sell plenty.
But since you have been so pleasant,
I shall make you all a present,
And to all who buy a bottle,
Seven florins I'll donate.

Villagers
Seven florins! Oh, how generous!
We've no need to hesitate.

Dulcamara

Then observe! This mighty potion,
Which renews a man or beast,
I could sell the whole world over
For ten florins at the least.
But if you would like to savour
Its electrifying flavour,
Then I'll only ask three florins.
Yes, for you I do a favour.

For 'tis clear as stars in heaven,
Three from ten will leave you seven.
Seven florins are your profit,
As you all have understood. *etc.*

Villagers
Yes, that's true. Indeed, I'll take it. *etc.*
Oh, what learning went to make it. *etc.*

Dulcamara
Take it,
Three florins.
Step forward,
Three florins.

Villagers
Oh, how generously he treats us,
As no other doctor would. *etc.*

Dulcamara
Ah, because I love my neighbours,
I delight to do them good.

Villagers
Oh, how generous, how very generous...

Dulcamara

Ah, because I love my neighbours,
I delight to do them good.

Villagers
Yes, he treats us
As no other doctor would.

Dulcamara
I delight... yes, I delight...

Villagers
...as no other doctor would.

Dulcamara
...I delight to do them good.

Villagers
...as no other doctor would.

Dulcamara
Ah, I love my suffering neighbours,
And delight to do them good.

Villagers
No other would.

Dulcamara
Ah, I love my suffering neighbours,
And delight to do them good.
To do them good, *etc.*

Villagers
I'm sure no other doctor would, *etc.*
(*Exeunt Villagers.*)

Scene 6
Recitative

Nemorino

[15] Have courage! Perhaps this doctor was sent by fate

To help me with Adina,
To stop her keeping me at such a distance.
He has the brains to give me expert assistance.
(*to Dulcamara*)

Good doctor, beg your pardon, but am I right in thinking
You understand the passions?

Dulcamara

Quite correct, sir.
Medical science plumbs to the depth of nature.

Nemorino

Then can you let me have
The potion that aroused the passions of Queen
Isolda?

Dulcamara

What? Who? Speak plainly!

No. 4: Duet

Nemorino

[16] It was Tristan who employed it
To awaken love's desiring.

Dulcamara

Ah, why yes! I follow exactly.
I have just what you're requiring.

Nemorino

Have you really?

Dulcamara

Yes, yes indeed.
It's a thing which many people seem to need.

Nemorino

Oh, how lucky! And you supply it?

Dulcamara

Why, of course. I sell it daily.

Nemorino

At what price do people buy it?

Dulcamara

Very cheaply.

Nemorino

Cheaply?

Dulcamara

That is, according...

Nemorino

For a florin? I have no more.

Dulcamara

Just the sum I sell it for.

Nemorino

Here's the money, you are welcome. *etc.*

Dulcamara

Go, Sir Tristan, drink your liquor.

Nemorino

Thank you kindly. Oh, thank you kindly.
You have made me so contented.
With a potion, the best invented,
I can say goodbye to care.
Thank you kindly. Thank you kindly. *etc.*

Dulcamara

On my travels here and yonder,
There's a fool where'er I wander. *etc.*

Nemorino

Thank you kindly. Thank you kindly.
You have made me so contented.
With a potion, the best invented,
I can say goodbye to care. *etc.*

Dulcamara

With that little laddie there,
I've seen nothing to compare.
I've seen nothing, truly nothing,
Truly nothing to compare... *etc.*

Nemorino

Just a moment, if you please, sir.
Just a moment, if you please, sir.
What's the proper way to take it?

Dulcamara

Hold the bottle very firmly
And remember first to shake it.
Then uncork it, but be careful
To prevent evaporation
Of the magic distillation.

Nemorino

Right.

Dulcamara

When you're ready, you may taste it.

Nemorino

Right.

Dulcamara

But be careful you do not waste it.

Nemorino

Right.

Dulcamara

And the benefit I promised,
Will arrive without delay. *etc.*
They will certainly arrive without delay.

Nemorino

Will they really?

Dulcamara

One day of waiting,
Then you'll find it's operating.
(By that time I shall be out of here
And fifty miles away.)

Nemorino

And the flavour?

Dulcamara

You will love it.

Nemorino

I will love it?

Dulcamara

You will love it.
(Beaujolais, bought yesterday!)

Nemorino

Thank you kindly. Oh, thank you kindly.
You have made me so contented.
With a potion, the best invented,
I can say goodbye to care.
Thank you kindly. Thank you kindly. *etc.*

Dulcamara

But with that little laddie there,
I've seen nothing to compare.
I've seen nothing, truly nothing,
Truly nothing to compare. *etc.*
(as Nemorino makes to leave)
Just a moment! Come! Listen!

Nemorino

Yes, doctor?

Dulcamara

Mum's the word. Keep quiet, quiet.
Tell no one. Keep quiet.
This is such a powerful liquor,
It's illegal to supply it.

Nemorino

Oh!

Dulcamara

Yes, I am afraid it isn't legal to supply it.
If it came to public knowledge,
Then we both should be in jail.
Therefore, tell no one.

Nemorino

Take my solemn word of honour,
Not a soul shall hear the tale.

Dulcamara

Remember!

Nemorino

Take my solemn word of honour.
Rest assured, I shall not fail.

Dulcamara

Drink it up and you'll be mellow.
You're a fortunate young fellow,
For tomorrow every woman
Could be deep in love with you.
Drink it up and you'll be mellow. *etc.*

Nemorino

Ah! Good doctor, by heavens above me,
One alone I wish to love me.
And no other, despite her beauty,
Could persuade me to be untrue.
(Smiling fortune my plan has aided.
Hopes that faded now rise anew.) *etc.*

Dulcamara

(By tomorrow, never doubt it,
I'll have disappeared from view.) *etc.*
Go and drink my distillation.
You'll enjoy a new sensation.
From tomorrow every woman
Will be deep in love with you.
(By tomorrow, never doubt it,
I'll have disappeared from view.) *etc.*
But be sure to keep it quiet.

Nemorino

Never fear, sir.

Dulcamara

It's illegal to supply it.

Nemorino

All is clear, sir.

Dulcamara

(By tomorrow, never doubt it,
I'll have disappeared from view.) *etc.*

Nemorino

(Smiling fortune my plan has aided.
Hopes that faded now shall rise anew.) *etc.*

(Exit Dulcamara.)

Scene 7

No. 5: Finale I

Recitative

Nemorino

[17] Magical potion! I have you!
Yes, here I hold you.
How strong must be the power dwelling in you,
For, though I haven't drunk you,
Such joyous feelings fill my heart already.
It really is a pity
To have to wait a day
For the potion to take effect
And end my troubles.
Down with it.
(He drinks.)

Oh, lovely! Delicious!
I'll have another.
Oh, what a warm sensation
Flowing through my body.
Perhaps she also,
She may begin to feel it
In her blood as in my own.
Yes, I am certain
That the lovely Adina
Shares my reaction
And feels within her heart
My great attraction.

Tralarallara. La, la, la, la.

Scene 8

(Enter Adina.)

Adina

[18] Who is that madman?
It can't be! It's Nemorino!
So lighthearted? But why?

Nemorino

Tra, la, la.
(He sees her.)
(The devil! It's her!
But no, I'll let her be.
With sighs and pleading I need weary her no
longer.
No more!
Tomorrow she must give me her heart,
Though she now despise me.)

Adina

(Why, he seems quite indifferent!
This does surprise me!)

Duet

Nemorino

[19] Trallarallara, la, la, la. *etc.*

Adina

(Perhaps he's just pretending
And still is sad at heart.)

Nemorino

Lallarallala, la, *etc.*
(As yet she doesn't feel it.)
Lalleralla, la, *etc.*

Adina

(He's trying to conceal it.)

Nemorino

(As yet she doesn't feel it.)

Adina

(He's trying to conceal it.)

Nemorino

(Tomorrow will reveal it.)

Adina

Ha, ha, ha!

Nemorino

[20] (Oh, let her laugh and mock at me,
Her slave, a little longer.
Tomorrow for a certainty,
Tomorrow she'll be mine.
She laughs at me.) *etc.*

Adina

(He plans to cast the chains away,
But they grow ever stronger.
Enslaving him and binding him,
To do as I design.) *etc.*

Nemorino

(Oh, let her laugh, mock at me,) *etc.*

Adina

(He plans to cast the chains away,) *etc.*

Nemorino

Lallarala, la, la, la, la.

Adina

How wise of you: you're doing as I told you.
My good advice you're heeding.

Nemorino

Why, yes, it's an experiment
I think may be succeeding.

Adina

So you're no longer sighing?

Nemorino

That passion's quickly dying.

Adina

And all your adoration?

Nemorino

A minor irritation.
And by tomorrow morning
It will not worry me.

Adina

Indeed? A transformation.
But shortly we shall see.

Nemorino

Yes, by tomorrow.

Adina

We shall see. We shall see.

Nemorino

(Oh, let her laugh and mock at me,
Her slave, a little longer.)

Adina

(He plans to cast the chains away,
But they grow ever stronger.)

Nemorino

(Tomorrow for a certainty,
Tomorrow she'll be mine.)

Adina

(Enslaving him and binding him
To do as I design.)

Nemorino

(Oh, let her laugh and mock at me.)

Adina

(He plans to cast the chains away,
He plans to cast the chains away,) *etc.*

Nemorino

(Oh, let her laugh and mock at me, *etc.*
Tomorrow for a certainty,
Tomorrow she'll be mine.)

Adina

(Enslaving him and binding him,
To do as I design.)

Nemorino

(Indeed she shall be mine.
Indeed she shall be mine.)

Adina

(To do as I design.)

Nemorino (*to Adina*)

Tomorrow morning!

Adina

You think so?

Nemorino

One more day! One more day!

Adina

Yes?

Nemorino

Yes.

Adina

Yes?

Nemorino

Yes.
(Oh, let her laugh and mock at me,
Her slave, a little longer.)

Adina

(He plans to cast the chains away,
But they grow ever stronger.)

Nemorino

(Tomorrow for a certainty,
Tomorrow she'll be mine.)

Adina

(Enslaving him and binding him
To do as I design.)

Nemorino

(Oh, let her laugh and mock at me.)

Adina

(He plans to cast the chains away,
He plans to cast the chains away,) *etc.*

Nemorino

(Oh, let her laugh and mock at me.) *etc.*
(Tomorrow for a certainty,
Tomorrow she'll be mine.)

Adina

(Enslaving him and binding him
To do as I design.)

Nemorino

(Indeed she shall be mine,
Indeed she shall be mine,) *etc.*

Adina

(To do as I design.) *etc.*

Scene 9

Belcore (*offstage*)

[21] Tran, tran, tran, tran.

Tran, tran, tran, tran, tran.

Trio

Belcore (*entering*)

In fighting or in love
A slow campaign is tiring.

Adina

(What luck! Belcore's here.)

Belcore

I'm all for rapid firing
In fighting or in love.
Tran, tran, tran, tran.

Nemorino

(Why must he interfere?)

Adina

Well, sergeant, are you pleased
With the area you've inspected?

Belcore

It would be hard to conquer,
So bravely it's protected.

Adina

And do you not consider
It could be made to fall?

Belcore

Ah, would it only weaken!

Adina

Perhaps, sir, it's weakened after all.

Belcore

Really? Can this be possible?

Nemorino

(Suppose my plan miscarried?)

Belcore

Oh, tell me, my beloved one,
When shall we two be married?

Adina

Immediately.

Nemorino

(Oh, heaven!)

Belcore

What day, then?

Adina (*looking at Nemorino*)

Six days hence.

Belcore

Ah, how happy you have made me!

Nemorino

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Belcore

How happy you have made me!

Nemorino

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Belcore

Six days?

Nemorino

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Belcore

I am happy.

Nemorino

That's quite all right. That's quite all right.

[22] Ha, ha! Of course, that's quite all right.

Belcore

(How dare that donkey laugh at me,
My offer to disparage?
Unless he puts a stop to it,
I'll kick him out of sight.)

Nemorino

Ha, ha! That's right.

Belcore

(Unless he puts a stop to it...

Nemorino

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Belcore

...I'll kick him out of sight.)

Adina

(How can he laugh so heartlessly
To hear me talk of marriage?
A fury rises in my soul,
As very well it might.) *etc.*

Nemorino

(His clever little strategy
Will finish in miscarriage!
He'll find I have outwitted him
Before tomorrow night.) *etc.*

Belcore

(How dare the donkey laugh at me,
My offer to disparage? *etc.*
Unless he puts a stop to it,
I'll kick him out of sight.) *etc.*

Adina

(How can he laugh so heartlessly
To hear me talk of marriage?
A fury rises in my soul,
As very well it might.)

Nemorino

(He'll find I have outwitted him
Before tomorrow night.
His clever little strategy
Will finish in miscarriage.)

Belcore

(Oh, how dare he! Oh, how dare he!)

Adina

(A fury
Rises up,
Indeed, as very well it might,) *etc.*

Nemorino

(Tomorrow,
Tomorrow night,
Indeed, before tomorrow night,) *etc.*

Belcore

(Yes, if he won't put a stop to it,
I'll kick him out of sight.) *etc.*

Adina

(A fury rises in my soul,
As very well it might.
Today, a fury rises in my soul,) *etc.*

Nemorino

(Ha, ha, ha, ha!
Tomorrow night,) *etc.*

Belcore

(I'll kick him out of sight,
Unless he puts a stop to it,) *etc.*

Scene 10

*(A drum is heard. Giannetta and the villagers
appear, then Belcore's soldiers rush in.)*

Finale – Quartet

Giannetta

23 One moment, sergeant! Please, look behind you!
Your men are running about to find you.

Belcore

I'm here. What's happened?
Why this commotion?

Soldiers

We've got a message this very minute.
You are to act on it without delay.

Belcore *(taking the letter)*

It's from the captain.
(He reads it.)
Aha! Well! A change of orders.
We must obey.
Go and get ready. We're going away.

Villagers and Soldiers

Away, when is it?

Belcore

This time tomorrow.

Villagers and Soldiers

Oh, Lord! Tomorrow!

Nemorino

(Adina's worried.)

Belcore

The order's definite.
I must obey.

Villagers and Soldiers

I call it rotten luck, this change of station.
To leave so pleasant a situation,
To leave the girls here and go away!
To leave the girls here and go away!

Belcore *(to Adina)*

My darling, you heard it? Tomorrow I'm
leaving!

Women

To leave! So soon! A sad occasion!

Belcore

Oh, think of my devoted heart,
Forever grieving.

Villagers and Soldiers

To leave!
To leave! No consolation!

Nemorino

(Yes, yes, tomorrow! I'm glad he's going.)

Adina

But my devotion
I shall be showing.
I shall be faithful.
This you shall learn.

Nemorino

(I'm glad.
Aha!)

Belcore

Darling!

Nemorino

(Yes, yes, tomorrow, then it's my turn!)

Belcore

If you will love me in all your virtue,
Why not anticipate, how could it hurt you?
We'll wed this evening, with merry-making!

Nemorino

(This very evening!)

Adina *(looking at Nemorino)*

(At last he's shaking.)
(to Belcore)
All right! This evening.

Nemorino

This evening! Oh, Adina!
You cannot mean it?

Adina

Whyever not?

Nemorino

Just wait, I beg you!

Adina

But why?

Nemorino

Wait till tomorrow.

Adina

But why?

Belcore

And what's your business? You need not stay.
You need not stay. *etc.*

Nemorino

Just till tomorrow. Just till tomorrow!
Adina, please not today.

[24] Adina, think again. Delay your wedding,
Or tears of misery you will be shedding.
Can you begrudge it, one day of waiting?
It is so fleeting, the hours will fly.
Tomorrow, dearest, you would repent it.
You would lament it no less than I. *etc.*

Belcore

You must be half-intoxicated,
Or crazy, to state what you have stated.
If I supposed you were in your senses,
Then cold and dead in the dust you'd lie.
Since I in mercy restrain my fury,
Be off, you donkey, and say goodbye. *etc.*

Nemorino (*aside*)

Help me, doctor!

Adina

Ah, show him pity. His mind is hazy.
He's rather stupid, a little crazy.
He thinks I love him as he admires me,
And so pursues me with many a sigh.

Belcore

Be off! You donkey!

Be off now, drunken idiot!

Since I in mercy restrain my fury,
Be off, you donkey, and say goodbye. *etc.*

Adina (*aside*)

The thought of vengeance alone inspires me.
I shall torment him and make him cry.
The thought of vengeance, *etc.*

Nemorino

Oh, Adina! Help me, doctor!
Oh, I'm wretched!
Tomorrow, dearest, tomorrow
You will repent it no less than I.

Belcore

Drunken booby! Drunken booby!
You must be half-intoxicated.
You are surely intoxicated.
Be off, you donkey. Be off, say goodbye.

Adina

I shall torment him and make him cry.
I shall make him cry. *etc.*

Giannetta

The stupid man! He has no gumption.
Yet he possesses a fool's presumption.
He thinks to challenge a valiant sergeant. *etc.*

Nemorino

You will repent it no less than I.

Belcore

You drunken booby, you drunken booby,
Be off, you donkey, and say goodbye.
And say goodbye. *etc.*

Villagers and Soldiers

The stupid man is a fool as we can see,
He has no gumption.
Yet he possesses a fool's presumption,
Shows how stupid a man can be.

Adina

I shall torment him and make him,
And make him cry, indeed.
I shall torment him, yes.
I shall make him cry. *etc.*

Nemorino

How can you begrudge it?
One day, but one day of waiting.
You would repent it no less,
Ah, no less than I. *etc.*

Belcore

Since I in mercy restrain my fury,
Since I, I,
Since I restrain, restrain my fury,
You donkey, be off, you donkey, and say goodbye.
Be off, you donkey, and say goodbye. *etc.*

Giannetta, Villagers and Soldiers

The stupid man, he has no gumption.
Yet he has a fool's presumption.
He thinks to trick a valiant sergeant,
Who won't let such an insult by.
Oh, yes, Adina, so fair and lovely,
Into your arms is about to fly! *etc.*

Adina (*to Belcore*)

[25] Today's our wedding.
Make haste to prepare it.

Nemorino

Oh, doctor! Oh, help me!
Oh, how can I bear it?

Adina, Giannetta, Belcore, Villagers and Soldiers
He's crazy, that's certain.

Nemorino

Oh, doctor! Oh, help me!

Adina (*aside*)

That's how I'll make him pay!

Nemorino

Oh, doctor! Oh, help me!

Giannetta, Belcore, Villagers and Soldiers

He's crazy, that's certain.

Adina

(That's how I'll make him pay!)
(*to everyone*)
My friends, I invite you to our wedding banquet.

Belcore

And then we'll leave dancing when daylight is
done.

Giannetta, Villagers and Soldiers

A real celebration!
Oh, won't it be fun?
Oh, won't it be fun? *etc.*

Adina

My friends, I invite you to our wedding banquet.

Nemorino

Oh, doctor! Oh, help me!
What shall I do? *etc.*

Belcore

I'm ready. I'm ready.

Adina

You'll pay for your disdain.

Adina, Giannetta and Belcore

In feasting and dancing we'll have such a party
With merry carousing and laughter so hearty.
You'll drink to the couple and liquor shall run.
(He's out of his senses. Oh, isn't it fun?)

Nemorino

The sergeant, the soldiers, the girls, all despise me.
Adina, so cruel, will only chastise me.
I'm crushed and deflated, a hundred to one.
I'm crushed and deflated, a hundred to one.

Villagers and Soldiers

In feasting and dancing we'll have such a party
With merry carousing and laughter so hearty. *etc.*
We'll drink to the couple and liquor shall run.
Yes, in feasting and dancing we'll have such a
party *etc.*

Adina, Giannetta and Belcore

Ha, ha, ha, ha! Oh, isn't it fun?
Ha, ha, ha, ha! Oh, isn't it fun?
(He's out of his senses,
His senses, his senses. Oh, isn't it fun?) *etc.*

Nemorino

Oh, help! Oh, help, or all is undone! *etc.*

Villagers and Soldiers

(He's out of his senses. Oh, isn't it fun?) *etc.*

Adina, Giannetta and Belcore

In feasting and dancing we'll have such a party
With merry carousing and laughter so merry.
You'll drink to the couple and liquor shall run.
Oh, you'll drink to the couple and liquor shall run.

Nemorino

The sergeant, the fellows, the girls, all despise me.
Adina, so cruel, will only chastise me.
I'm crushed and deflated, a hundred to one.
Oh, doctor, come help me or all is undone.

Villagers and Soldiers

In feasting and dancing we'll have such a party
etc.
With merry carousing and laughter so hearty. *etc.*
We'll drink to the couple and liquor shall run. *etc.*

Adina, Giannetta and Belcore

In feasting and dancing we'll have such a party
etc.

Nemorino

The sergeant, the fellows, the girls, all despise
me. *etc.*

Villagers and Soldiers

Yes, in feasting and dancing we'll have such a
party *etc.*

Nemorino

Help me, doctor, I beg! *etc.*

Adina, Giannetta, Belcore, Villagers and Soldiers

(He's out of his senses. Oh, isn't it fun?) *etc.*

*(Nemorino rushes off. The others begin to leave, as
do Adina and Belcore arm in arm.)*

COMPACT DISC TWO

Act II

Scene 1

Adina's farm house is set out for a banquet.

No. 6: Introductory Chorus

Belcore, Dulcamara, Giannetta and Villagers

[1] Sing up, then. Sing up. Sing up.

Dulcamara, Giannetta and Villagers

Good health to you and happiness,
Good fortune and prosperity.
We wish in all sincerity,
May they be yours to keep.

Belcore

To wine and lovely women
I give my adoration.
A twin intoxication,
That makes my senses leap. *etc.*

Villagers

Sing up. Sing up.
Sing up. Sing up.

Adina (aside)

Oh, where is Nemorino?
I'd like to see him weep.

Giannetta and Villagers

Good health to you and happiness,
Good fortune and prosperity.
We wish in all sincerity,
May they be yours to keep. *etc.*

Recitative

Dulcamara

[2] Since singing is your pleasure,
A little gift I'll bring you:
A song in lively measure,
Which I propose to sing you.
This song's the latest favourite
Among the city set.
So let me ask the bride here,
To join me in duet.

Belcore, Giannetta and Villagers

Oh, yes, we'd love to hear it.
No pleasure could come near it.
We'll all applaud and cheer it.
Such pleasure we shall get. *etc.*

Barcarolle for two voices

Dulcamara (reading)

'The Fair Maid of Venice
...And the Elderly Senator',
Barcarolle for two voices.
Pray silence!

Villagers

We're ready!

Dulcamara

[3] 'I am rich and you are pretty.
I have money, you have charms.
Surely none in all the city
More would suit each other's arms.'

Adina

'How you flatter with your chatter,
But this matter must be clear.
I'd reject a new protector,
For I love my gondolier.'

Dulcamara

'I'll reward you, never fear.
Make me happy, Nina, dear.'

Adina

'Those are flattering words to hear,
But I love my gondolier.'

Villagers

Brava, bra...

Dulcamara

Pray, silence. Silence!
'Lovely maiden whom I cherish,
Let your fancy turn to me.
Youthful love will quickly perish.
Gold is solid property.'

Adina

'How you flatter with your chatter,
But this matter must be clear.
No endeavour lures me ever,
From my handsome gondolier.'

Dulcamara

'Opportunity is near.
Make me happy, Nina, dear.'

Adina

'No. A constant course I'll steer
With my handsome gondolier.'

Villagers

Thank you, doctor, for your ditty,
Which you brought us from the city.
It's both elegant and witty,
Fit for high society's ear.

Dulcamara

My renown is more than local
For my vocal gift so clear. *etc.*

Villagers

Thank you, doctor, you're a treasure.
It's a pleasure that you're here.

Adina

It's a pleasure that you're here. *etc.*

Dulcamara

For my vocal gift so clear. *etc.*

Villagers

It's a pleasure that you're here. *etc.*
(*Enter a notary.*)

Recitative

Belcore

⁴ Pray silence!
This is the notary,
Whose hand will draw the contract
That makes my joy complete.

Villagers

We're glad to meet you.

Dulcamara

Good notary, with joy I greet you,
Bringer of bliss and lawful love abiding.

Adina (*aside*)

But where is Nemorino?
Where can he be hiding?

Belcore

To sign the deed we'll hurry.
But why that look of worry
There on that lovely forehead?

Adina

It is nothing.
(*aside*)
Vengeance will only bore me
If I can't see him
Suffering here before me.

Belcore

Away, the notary needs us,
And Cupid speeds us.

Dulcamara, Giannetta and Villagers

Sing up, then. Sing up. Sing up.
Good health to you and happiness,
Good fortune and prosperity.
We wish in all sincerity,
May they be yours to keep.

Belcore

To wine and lovely women,
I give my adoration.
A twin intoxication
That makes my senses leap. *etc.*

Villagers

Sing up. Sing up.
Sing up. Sing up.

Adina (*aside*)

Oh, where is Nemorino?
I'd like to see him weep.

Giannetta and Villagers

Good health to you and happiness,
Good fortune and prosperity.
We wish in all sincerity,
May they be yours to keep. *etc.*
(*All leave except Dulcamara.*)

Scene 2

Recitative

Dulcamara

⁵ I always like a wedding: everyone is so charming.
And best of all, for as long as I am able,
I indulge in the pleasures of the table.

Nemorino (*entering*)

I caught sight of the notary.
Yes, I am certain.
Wretched Nemorino, there's no hope left for me.
My heart is breaking.

Dulcamara

'Lovely maiden whom I cherish,
Opportunity is near...'

Nemorino

Why, it's the doctor!

Dulcamara

Yes, I was kindly invited,
By the bride and groom,
And I'm enjoying the celebration.

Nemorino

While I'm in desperation.
I am in mental torture.
Oh, doctor, I need to make myself loved.
Before tomorrow!
This instant, right away!

Dulcamara (*aside*)

Good heavens, he's raving.
(*to Nemorino*)
Just take the potion.
And presto! You have it.

Nemorino

And then I'll have the love of her whom I long
for?

Dulcamara

All of them: you have my promise.
If you want to speed it up,
A double dosage gives double power.
(I'm off in half an hour.)

Nemorino

Doctor, I beg you, give me another bottle.

Dulcamara

Glad to oblige.
I'm happy to help mankind in trouble.
Have you the money?

Nemorino

I've nothing left!

Dulcamara

My friend, in that event I'm sorry.

Come back and tell me as soon as you've acquired
some.
There at the inn you'll find me, and we'll pursue it.
You'd better get a move on.

Nemorino

How can I do it?

(*Dulcamara leaves.*)

Scene 3

(*Enter Belcore.*)

No. 7: Scene and Duet

Belcore (*to himself, conversationally*)

6 Is that not like a woman,
Unpredictable always!
Adina loves me,
Says she's happy to wed me,
Yet would postpone it
Till later on this evening.

Nemorino (*aside*)

There is my rival!
It makes me really furious just to see him.

Belcore

What's this? What's the matter with that blockhead?
Hey! Hey! I say, young fellow!
What is it that's upset you?

Nemorino

What has upset me is that...
Is that I have no money,
And don't know where to find some!

Belcore

Eh? Are you brainless?
If that's why you're upset,
Then join the army,
And twenty florins you'll get.

Nemorino

7 Twenty florins!

Belcore

In ready money.

Nemorino

When? This instant?

Belcore

Yes, indeed, sir.

Nemorino (*aside*)

Oh, temptation!

Belcore

And you shall go with me,
Where fame and glory lead, sir!

Nemorino

No, for fame I am unsuited.
That's not what I'm longing for.

Belcore

If it's love, once you're recruited,
You'll be sought by girls galore.
Ah, you'll be eagerly sought
By girls galore.

Nemorino

Ah, no! Ah, no! Ah!

Soon in fighting and privation
I may meet with pain and sorrow.

Belcore

Twenty florins!

Nemorino

They may tell me to leave my kinsmen,
Leave my country and die tomorrow.

Belcore

In ready money.

Nemorino

But since I'm not rich or clever,
There's no other way whatever
To possess the fair Adina.
Just one more day to make her mine.

Belcore

Mid the trumpeting and drumming,
Mid the marching and the fighting
Love has found a way of coming
Every soldier lad delighting,
Every soldier lad delighting.

Nemorino

Ah, I would ask no other blessing...

Belcore

Love need never cause him sorrow,
Here today and gone tomorrow.
Life is full of gay adventure
For a soldier of the line,
For a soldier of the line.

Nemorino

...Could I only, could I only make her mine.
I would ask no other blessing, *etc.*

Belcore

Life is full of gay adventure
For a soldier of the line. *etc.*
Look at me, sir.
You can see, sir. *etc.*
Life in uniform is fine. *etc.*

Nemorino

Twenty florins!

Belcore

As I promised.

Nemorino

All right. I'll do it.
Where's the money?

Belcore

Just a moment. Take it steady.
First the paper you must sign.
Here, put a cross, then.

Nemorino

(Dulcamara, I must find you without delay.
Now your potion shall work today.)

Belcore

- [8] Shake my hand, then, my young shaver.
I am happy to recruit you.
Very soon you may be braver,
And a man's life I know will suit you.
Soon enough you'll get promotion,

If you follow my example from the start. Yes!

(*aside*)

I've recruited my own rival.
Who'd deny that I am smart? *etc.*
I've ensured my own survival,
In the tactics of the heart. *etc.*

Nemorino

I won't blame you if you wonder
Why I choose your life of daring,
For you know not the heart that's under
My timidity of bearing.
Cash in hand means joy unbounded.
So my freedom I resign.

(*aside*)

He himself will be confounded,
When at last I make her mine. *etc.*

Belcore

Love will cause no pain or sorrow
To a soldier of the line.
Here today and gone tomorrow,
He's a soldier of the line. *etc.*

(*Exeunt Nemorino and Belcore.*)

Scene 4

A farmyard.

(*Enter Giannetta and village women.*)

No. 8: Chorus

Village women

- [9] Can it be possible?

Giannetta

Much more than possible!

Women

Don't say it's probable!

Giannetta

No less than probable!

Women

But in what way, Giannetta, say?

Giannetta

Softly!

Women

Who was it told you?
And where and how?

Giannetta

Don't be so noisy, then.
Please listen quietly. Do as you're bidden.
We all in secrecy must keep it hidden.
Only the pedlar happened to tell me,
And so in confidence I'll share it now.

Women

It was the pedlar, it's always so.
Then it's believable: he's bound to know.
Then it's believable: *etc.*

Giannetta

Softly! Softly! Quietly!

Then let me tell you just what he said.
Nemorino's uncle last Tuesday dropped dead,
Leaving his nephew what no one had guessed:
A fortune, a mansion, land and the rest.

Women

Oh!

Giannetta

But you'll tell nobody what's occurred.
No, not a whisper.

Women

No, not a word.

Giannetta

No, not a whisper.

Women

No, not a word. *etc.*

Giannetta

Quiet!

Women

Quiet!

Giannetta and Women

Now Nemorino swims in the money.
No one will tease him or think him funny.
The girls will willingly fetch and carry
For one whom each would be glad to marry.

Giannetta

But, softly, quietly.
Softly, quietly.

Women

But we'll be silent on what's occurred.
We'll have no whisper. No, not a word.
Quiet, quiet,
Quiet on what's occurred.

Giannetta

Quiet.

Women

Quiet.

Young Women

Now Nemorino swims in the money, *etc.*

Giannetta

But softly, quietly.

Softly, quietly.

Women

But we'll be silent on what's occurred.

We'll have no whisper, no, not a word.

Giannetta and Women

Quiet. Quiet.

No, not a whisper. No, not a word. *etc.*

Scene 5

(*Nemorino appears.*)

No. 9: Quartet

Nemorino

^[10] I've polished off two bottles now,

Just as the doctor ordered.

He said no girl in all the world

Her favour would refuse. *etc.*

Already what he gave to me

Has cheered me and consoled me,

And as my hope revives again,

My fears I seem to lose.

Women

(He's still so meek and reticent,

He can't have heard the news.)

Nemorino (*about to leave*)

Where is she?

Giannetta

Your most obedient!

Nemorino

Giannetta!

Women

Your humble servant!

Nemorino

(What's the reason for their courtesy?

What, indeed? What, indeed?

Ah, I see it!

This is the consequence

Of Dulcamara's drink.

I see it, I see it,) *etc.*

Giannetta and Women

Oh, look at Nemorino!

Oh, look at Nemorino!

He's really quite a gentleman,

And charming, don't you think?

He's really quite a gentleman, *etc.*

Scene 6

(*Adina and Dulcamara enter from different directions. They are amazed to see all the women courting Nemorino.*)

Nemorino

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Adina and Dulcamara

It can't be!

Nemorino

^[11] It's magnificent!

Oh, doctor! Thank you, doctor.

Now, just as you have promised me,

The girls are at my feet.

Adina

It can't be.

Dulcamara

I'm very gratified.

(*to the women*)

You like him?

Giannetta and Women

We all adore him!

We one and all implore him,

To make our joy complete.

Adina

(I thought I would find him in misery,

But instead he is laughing and joking.

Ah, this could not have happened

If Nemorino loved me still.) *etc.*

Giannetta

(I find him rather lovable.

I'll draw his conversation.

Then maybe he will marry me,

And all my hopes fulfil.) *etc.*

Nemorino

(No word can tell my ecstasy,

This wholly new sensation.

If other girls all favour me,

Then surely Adina will.) *etc.*

Dulcamara

(This spectacle amazes me.

I have no explanation.

'Twas only wine I gave to him,

When he could foot the bill.) *etc.*

Women

(I find him rather lovable.

I'll draw his conversation.

Then maybe he will marry me,

My fondest hopes to fulfil.) *etc.*

Giannetta (*to Nemorino*)

There in the shade

They are dancing a measure.

Shall we not join them?

Nemorino

Oh, yes, with pleasure!

Women

Whom will you dance with?

Giannetta

With me.

Nemorino

Yes.

Women

With me.

Nemorino

Yes.

Giannetta

I am the first one.

Women

It's not decided.

Giannetta

I made the offer.

Women

No, I did. No, I did.

Giannetta (*to Nemorino*)

Come with me.

Nemorino

Gently.

Women

Decide then.

Nemorino

With pleasure.

(*to Giannetta*)

You for the first dance.

(*to the others*)

Then you, then you.

Dulcamara

Wonder of wonders!

My drink's a treasure,

Instantly proving my promise true. *etc.*

Adina

Oh, Nemorino!

Nemorino (*aside*)

Oh, heavens! Adina!

Dulcamara

(They can't resist him.)

Adina

I had to see you.

Belcore told me,

That for the sake of

A little money

You have enlisted.

Giannetta and Women (*astonished*)

Enlisted? Impossible!

Adina

You acted rashly.

And there is more

That I need to say.

Nemorino

I'm all attention. I'm all attention.

Giannetta and Villagers

Come on, come on,

And join the dancing. *etc.*

Nemorino

The charm is working.

(*to Adina*)

What would you say?

Dulcamara

This spectacle amazes me. *etc.*

Giannetta and Villagers

Come on, come on,

And join the dancing. *etc.*

Adina

Please, listen. Please, listen.

Nemorino

What would you say?

Dulcamara

I've never known such a day. *etc.*

Giannetta and Villagers

Let's make our way.

No more delay.

Adina

Please, listen!

Nemorino (*aside*)

¹² I see it perfectly.

I know what ails her.

Power supernatural

Today assails her.

(*to Adina*)

Love comes to torture you,

And well you know it.

And you must show it,

For all to view. *etc.*

Adina (*aside*)

Swiftly and suddenly

My heart betrays me,

Which with impunity

No more obeys me.

Cupid, you punish me,

Your arrow burns me.

And he who spurns me,

I must pursue. *etc.*

Dulcamara

With love they smother him,

And with devotion.

I do believe I have

A magic potion.

There is no doubt of it.

A magic potion.

I'll not run out of it.

Giannetta and Villagers

She reckons easily

To make a victim

Of any man alive,

Once she has picked him.

Nemorino

Love comes to torture you

For all to view. *etc.*

Dulcamara

I'll be a wealthy man

With all I sell them.

Their eyes will tell them

My claims are true, ah.

There is no doubt of it. *etc.*

Adina

(Swiftly and suddenly

My heart betrays me.) *etc.*

Giannetta and Villagers

But this young fellow here

Will soon outfox her.

No doubt it shocks her

As something new. *etc.*

(*Nemorino leaves with Giannetta and the villagers.*)

Scene 7

Recitative

Adina

¹³ Why should he seem so happy?

Dulcamara

I take the credit.

Adina

You take the credit!

Dulcamara

And rightly.

For joy comes at my bidding.

I have rapture for sale, and love undying

Is a matter of prescription.

Now the behaviour

Of that young man in whom you're interested,

Stems from my secret art, proven and tested.

Adina

What nonsense!

Dulcamara

You call it nonsense? You sceptic, how dare you!

Can you be ignorant of the alchemist's lore?

And of the power

Of that mysterious potion

Which captured Queen Isolda?

Adina

Isolda?

Dulcamara

Isolda.

I alone possess the secrets of the mixture.

Adina

(So that's it.)

And so you gave some to Nemorino?

Dulcamara

He came to ask me,

Hoping to win the affection

Of some hard-hearted girl.

Adina

He really loved her?

Dulcamara

With longing and sighing

And vows of love undying.

And to obtain the fee on which

I properly insisted,

He sold his liberty.

Yes, he enlisted.

No. 10: Duet

Adina

¹⁴ (How he loved me! And I so cruel,

I denied a love so true!)

Dulcamara

(She is quite infatuated.)

Adina

(So cruel.)

Dulcamara

(She should have my potion too.)

Adina

(So cruel.)

(*to Dulcamara*)

What's become, then, of Nemorino?

Is his love at last requited?

Dulcamara

Girls in dozens come to court him,

Flocking round him all excited.

It's a happy situation.

I've no doubt that he's delighted.

Adina

(Ah! Which among them may hope to gain him?

Which of them all may now detain him?)

Dulcamara

With a choice of ten or twenty

He's delighted there are plenty.

Like a cock you might have found him

When the hens are all around him.

Adina

(Oh, how foolishly I acted...)

Dulcamara

(She is quite infatuated.) *etc.*

Adina

(...I denied a heart so true.)

Dulcamara

(She should have my potion, too.) *etc.*

Adina

(Oh, disaster! Oh, disaster!

I denied a heart so true.) *etc.*

Dulcamara

With a choice of ten or twenty,

He's delighted there are plenty.

Like a cock you might have found him,

When the hens are all around him.

(She's quite infatuated. She's quite infatuated. *etc.*

She should have my potion, too.)

Fair Adina! Just a moment!

There is hope still! Come, be cheerful!

You are caught now, I can deduce it,

From your manner so sad and tearful.

I can help you.

Adina

You help? How so, sir?

Dulcamara

I will tell you if you come a little closer.

If you want to find the answer,

There's a remedy I know. *etc.*

It is very scientific

And the price is very low.

Adina

Though its power may be terrific,

It is not for me, I know.

Dulcamara

Do you wish a thousand suitors

At your feet with love expiring?

Adina

No, I only wish for one, sir,

And a thousand would be tiring.

Dulcamara

You can make all women jealous

Of your fortunate position.

Adina

Making enemies of others
Is no part of my ambition.

Dulcamara

Do you want to wed a title?

Adina

I would hardly call it vital.

Dulcamara

Noble suitors ten or twenty?

Adina

Nemorino will be plenty.

Dulcamara

What I sell is scientific.

Adina

Yes, I'm sure it's quite terrific.

Dulcamara

The result I guarantee.

Adina

I'm afraid it's not for me.

No, not for me. *etc.*

Your remedy is little use to me.

Dulcamara

What I sell, what I sell,
What I sell is scientific. *etc.*
The result I guarantee. *etc.*

Naughty creature, are you daring,
All my science to disparage?

Adina

There's an even better way, sir,
When a woman hopes for marriage.
Just you wait and Nemorino
Will be mine, you need not fear.

Dulcamara (*aside*)

She is really far too clever.
There's no need of doctors here.
No, there's no need of doctors here. *etc.*

Adina

[15] With a look of love and laughter,
With a smile and a suggestion
I lead the man I'm after
To be bold and put the question.
Though at first he be defiant,
He is mine once I have picked him.
Very soon he'll be compliant
And a more than willing victim.
So I need no magic potion,
For my eyes will work the spell.

With a look of love and laughter,
With a smile and a suggestion, *etc.*

Dulcamara

Ah, I see it. I have nothing
In reply to your female intuition.
Pretty rascal! Pretty rascal!
Oh, my learning! I have nothing
In reply to all your female intuition.
It will help you more than I will
In achieving your ambition.
Yes, more than I will in achieving your ambition.

I have nothing in reply to all your female
intuition.

Adina

Spare me, doctor!

Dulcamara

It will help you more than I will
In achieving your ambition.

Adina

Spare me, doctor!

Dulcamara

By your beauty so abundant
All my skill is now redundant...

Adina

He is mine once I have picked him...

Dulcamara

...For you practise all the chemistry
Of Cupid, I can tell...

Adina

...Such a willing, willing victim.

Dulcamara

...I can very quickly tell.
If I had the skill that you have,
That's the medicine I would sell.

Adina

So I need no magic potion...

Dulcamara

Ah, you sly one!

Adina

...For my eyes will work the spell.
With a look of love and laughter,
With a smile and a suggestion, *etc.*

Dulcamara

Ah! I see it! I have nothing
In reply to your female intuition. *etc.*

Adina

For if I love I can compel,
For in my eyes I own a spell, *etc.*

Dulcamara

If I had the skill that you have,
That's the medicine I would sell. *etc.*

(*They leave.*)

Scene 8

(*Enter Nemorino.*)

No. 11: Romance

Nemorino

[16] Only one teardrop glistened there,
There in her lovely eye.
Jealous of all who courted me
She could not help but cry.
No more I need to know.
No more I need to know.
Plainly she loves me.
I see it, she loves me.
Could I but hold her close to me,
Hold her as mine alone,
For just one moment's ecstasy

Her heart against my own.
So close to me, so close to me alone,
What ecstasy were then my very own!
Heavens, then I could die,
Should fate decree it, decree it.
Ah! Heavens, then I, then I could surely die.
Should fate decree it, then I could die.

Scene 9
(*Enter Adina.*)

No. 12: Recitative

Nemorino
[17] Here she is.
She's more beautiful still,
Now that she loves me.
It's my turn to be indifferent and to seem not to
care
Till she herself feels bound to approach me.

Adina
Nemorino, how are you?

Nemorino
I'm so much in demand.
Young ladies and old ones, pretty and plain ones,
All want me as their husband.

Adina
And you?

Nemorino
Making a decision
Is a difficult matter.
I'm still looking

For undiluted love.
(I'm sure she'll say it.)

Adina
Listen.

Nemorino
(Here it is.)
I'm listening, Adina.

Adina
Tell me, what was the reason
That induced you to choose the life of a soldier?

Nemorino
The reason? Just the wish to be free,
To show my valour,
To find adventure and enjoy a better life.

Adina
Oh, Nemorino,
We should miss you and mourn you.
So I re-purchased the contract of enlistment,
From Belcore.

Nemorino
You did?
(True love in action. The old, old story.)

Aria

Adina
[18] Take it!
Take it. I make you free again.
Stay with the folk who know you.
Doubt not that life will show you
Joy and delight in store.

100

Stay here!
(*giving him the contract*)
Here with your friends and countrymen,
Here you remain respected,
Honoured, respected. Ah!
Come, do not be dejected.
No, nor be sad. No more, no. *etc.*

Nemorino (*aside*)
How she'll confess it.

Adina
Goodbye, then.

Nemorino
What! Are you going?

Adina
Why, yes.

Nemorino
You've nothing more to tell me?

Adina
No, nothing.

Nemorino
[19] All right.
(*throwing down the contract*)
Take this then!
If love will thus forsake me,
Then let the army take me. *etc.*
No peace on earth is left me.
The doctor must have lied. *etc.*
Then let the army take me.
The doctor must have lied.

101

Adina
No, no! 'Twas I deceived you,
And my own heart I denied.
You alone, I swear. You alone
Have my devotion.

Nemorino
Truly?

Adina
Truly, I tell you, I love you,
Love you.

Nemorino
You love me?

Adina
I love you, love you, love you!

Nemorino
You? You?
Ah, now I feel such ecstasy!

Adina
Just as I made you miserable...

Nemorino
Will you love me?

Adina
...Now let me make you happy.

Nemorino
The doctor did not lie.

Adina
No.

Nemorino

Ah, now I feel such ecstasy!

Adina

Yes, I will make you happy. I swear it.

Nemorino

My darling!

Adina

Forget my former cruelty
And take my love undying.

Forget my former cruelty,
Forget what now is over.

I take you as my lover.
I love you ever more.

Forget my former cruelty,
I'm yours for ever more. *etc.*
I love you ever more.

Scene 10

*(Enter Dulcamara, Giannetta and villagers,
Belcore and soldiers.)*

No. 13: Finale II

Belcore

[20] Halt! Right turn!

By thunder!
Shall I present arms to my rival?

Adina

That's how it is, Belcore.
I have made my decision: Nemorino's the one.
Please don't be angry. What is done...

Belcore

...Is done.
Well, Madam Flirt, you're welcome.
Worse luck for you!
The world is full of women,
And in their thousands
I'll have their devotion.

Dulcamara

If you'd be sure, use my exclusive potion!

Nemorino

Most worthy doctor, to you I owe my luck, then.

Villagers

You're joking!

Dulcamara

To me!
It happens that Nemorino
Has at a stroke become
The richest man for a dozen miles around
Through the death of his uncle.

Adina

Death of his uncle?

Nemorino

Death of my uncle?

Giannetta

I knew already.

Dulcamara

Yes, of course, as I did.
But what was known to no one,
Saving only myself,

Was this, that the power of my marvellous draught
Can, in a twinkling,
Not only set at rest the pains of love
But bring wealth to my clients.

Villagers

Marvel of science!

Finale

Dulcamara

[21] It will give you cheeks like peaches
To conform with good aesthetics.
It improves a woman's features
Better far than her cosmetics,
Cures your warts and your carbuncles
And dispatches wealthy uncles,
Makes your bees produce more honey
And from worry keeps you free.

Villagers

Oh, good doctor, here's my money.
Give me one or two or three.

Dulcamara

It will soften the suspicions
Of a husband who is jealous,
Or relax the prohibitions
Of a guardian over-zealous.
It will bring you bonny babies
And protect your dog from rabies
And awaken love and passion
Better far than China tea.

Villagers

Oh, I'd like a double ration.
Make it two or even three.

Dulcamara

*(His carriage having reappeared on stage, he
prepares to depart.)*

Now, good people, I must leave you.
But I warn you as a brother,
Let no charlatan deceive you
With some substitute or other.
For my potion serves the nation.
All the rest is imitation.
So remember Dulcamara,
Who can banish every pain.

Villagers

We'll remember Dulcamara.
May he soon come back again!

Adina and Nemorino

He alone has made me happy,
For his wonder-working potion
Has been quick to ease my pain,
To ease my pain, *etc.*

Belcore

Why, you old pretentious humbug!
Go to hell and there remain,
To hell and there remain. *etc.*

Dulcamara

Good people!
God bless you! *etc.*

Villagers

May he soon come back again! *etc.*

Belcore

Go to hell and there remain!

Adina, Nemorino, Dulcamara and Villagers
God bless you!

Belcore

Go to hell and there remain.
Go to hell!

Adina, Nemorino, Dulcamara and Villagers
God bless you!

*(The carriage moves off. The villagers all salute
Dulcamara.)*

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Mary Plazas and Barry Banks



Mary Plazas and Barry Banks

Catherine Ashmore



Barry Banks

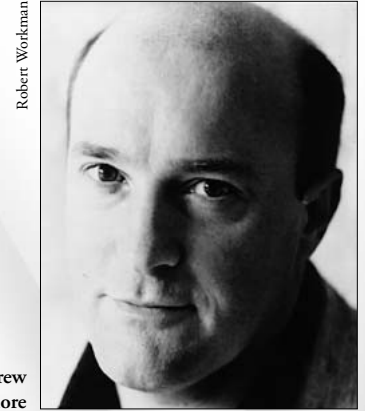
Mark Douet



Mary Plazas



Ashley
Holland



Andrew
Shore

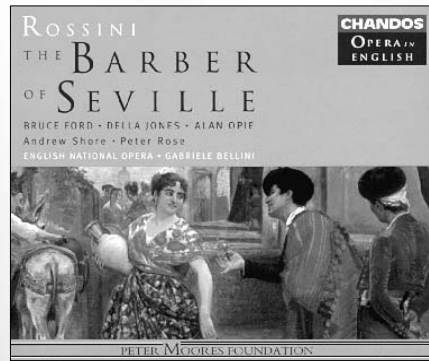
Robert Workman



Helen
Williams



Opera in English on Chandos



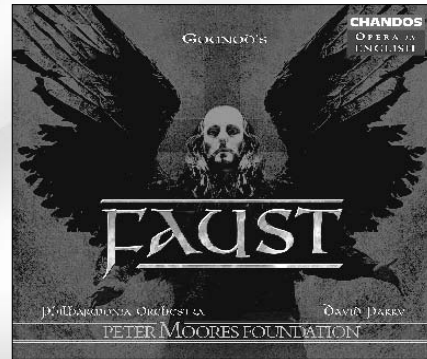
CHAN 7023/4



CHAN 3000(2)



CHAN 3008(2)



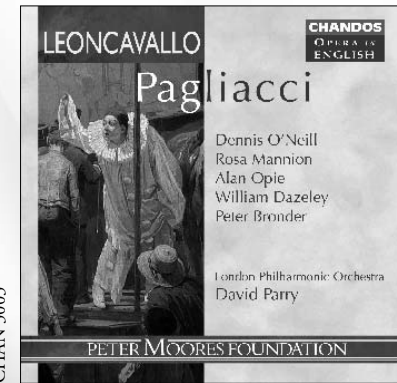
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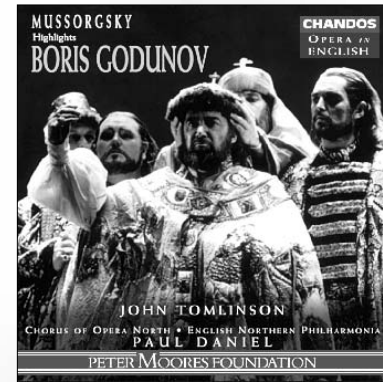
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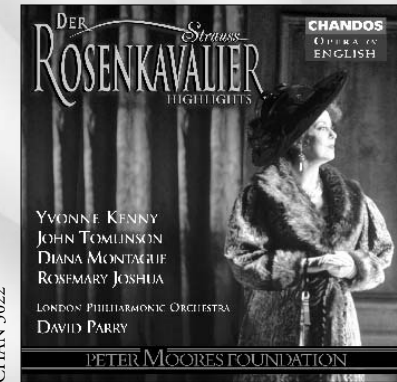
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CHAN 3003



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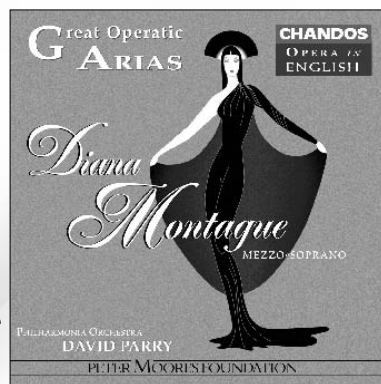
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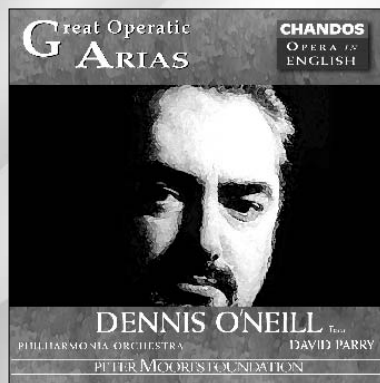
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CHAN 3006



CHAN 3010



CHAN 3013

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CHAN 3019(3)

CHAN 3017(2)



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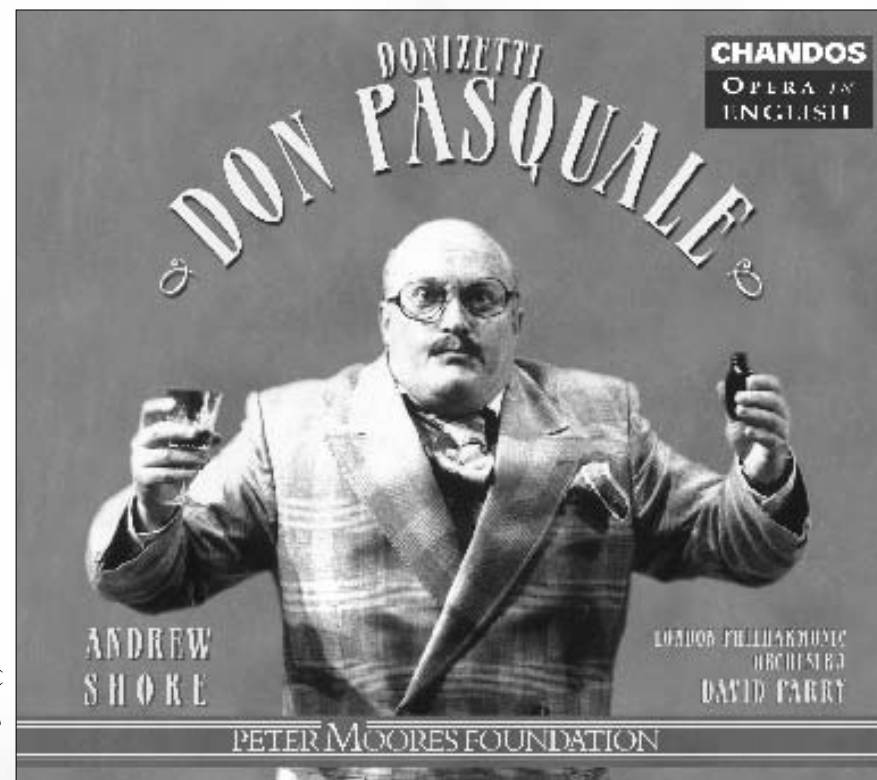
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Booklet photos of the ENO production of *The Elixir of Love* by Bill Rafferty

Steinway concert grand provided and maintained by Steinway & Sons, London

Producer Brian Couzens

Sound engineer Ralph Couzens

Assistant engineer Richard Smoker

Editor Jonathan Cooper

Operas administrator Sue Shortridge

Language coach Charles Kilpatrick

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DONIZETTI: THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

20bit

CHANDOS DIGITAL 2-disc set **CHAN 3027(2)**

Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848)

The Elixir of Love

Opera in two acts

Libretto by Felice Romani after Eugène Scribe's *Le Philtre*

English version by Arthur Jacobs



Nemorino, a young peasant..... Barry Banks *tenor*
Adina, the wealthy owner of a farm..... Mary Plazas *soprano*
Belcore, a sergeant in the army..... Ashley Holland *baritone*
Dr Dulcamara, a quack doctor..... Andrew Shore *baritone*
Giannetta, a peasant girl..... Helen Williams *soprano*

Geoffrey Mitchell Choir

Philharmonia Orchestra

Gareth Hancock assistant conductor

David Parry

COMPACT DISC ONE
TT 73:20

COMPACT DISC TWO
TT 59:15

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CHAN 3027(2)