

Profiles & Reviews

The Elixir of Love

By Sandy Carriger

Sacramento Opera opened the 2009-2010 season with Gaetano Donizetti's "Elixir of Love." The production was sung in Italian, with English supertitles. Libretto written by Felice Romani. This classic was first performed in Milan in 1832 but stage director Jose Maria Condemmi updated the setting to take place in Napa Valley during the 1940's. The tale is a comedic love story of boy pines for girl; girl spurns boy, all the obstacles and incidents in between until their ultimate happy union.

Nemorino, a poor but shy farmer, played by Dinyar Vania, is hopelessly in love with Adina, a well-to-do and flirtatious landowner, played by Katrina Thurman. Nemorino tries desperately to win the affections of Adina, but to no avail. Thrown into the mix is the suave and conceited Sargent Belcore, played by David Small, who woos Adina and convinces her to marry him, thus breaking the heart of naive Nemorino.

Enter the snake oil salesman, Dr. Dulcamara, Igor Vieira, who boasts of his cure-all elixir for anything that ails you. Nemorino is duped into believing the Dr. possesses a love potion that will make all women swoon at his feet; he invests his last dollar in the elixir (which is really just wine) to try to win the heart of the object of his affections, Adina.

Thus ensues a comedy of errors...Nemorino becomes a drunken fool, the Sgt. has a wandering eye for the ladies despite his wedding plans, Adina continually teases and taunts Nemorino, the Dr. swindles the townspeople, the wedding gets called off at the last minute.

Katrina Thurman "and her 'silvery, floating soprano' (Bonn General-Anzeiger)...possesses a distinctively beautiful and sizable instrument, which is enlivened by her magnetic, fiery performance, her dramatic intent and infallible comic timing. Dinyar Vania, tenor, is fairly new to the operatic scene with a "lyric voice of astonishing power and beauty." Baritone David Small has been performing in operas and concerts since 1991 and is a splendid singer. And Igor Vieira, a baritone with wonderful comedic presence and excellent vocals, delivered some extremely fast paced and difficult lyrics.

Costumer Yvette Harding deserves mention for her hard work on a slim budget, creating time-appropriate attire. Conductor Timm Rolek provided excellent orchestral balance. Director Condemmi successfully brings his passion for opera to the stage.

Attendance at the opera, performed at the Sacramento Community Center, was sparse; the theater appeared just about

half full. The audience was comprised of mostly middle aged folks. Sad to see that the house was not filled to capacity since most of the revenue from ticket sales supports the Sacramento Opera.

'Elixir' was a fun and lively production. My favorite character was the sly Dr. Dulcamara, with his witty banter and devoted sidekicks. The biggest disappointment at this performance were the supertitles. When I first was exposed to opera, even though performed in a language foreign to my ears, I could follow the story line just fine through the acting and singing. The supertitles were distracting. I had to take the time to read them, thus missing the actors gestures and expressions which I feel detracted from thoroughly enjoying the production.

"The Elixir of Love" was performed at The Sacramento Community Center Theater, 1301 L St. in Sacramento. For tickets, call (916) 808-5181, or visit www.tickets.com or the box office located at the theater.

The 2009-2010 Season continues with Giuseppe Verdi's gripping melodrama *La Traviata* on Friday, February 26, 2010 at 8 pm; Sunday, February 28, 2010 at 2 pm; and Tuesday, March 2, 2010 at 7:30 pm.

Based on the novel and play *La Dame aux Camélias* by Alexandre Dumas, Jr., *La Traviata* is one of the ten most popular operas in the repertoire. The story was immortalized in the classic movie *Camille* starring Greta Garbo and later given a popular update in *Pretty Woman* starring Julia Roberts. Listen for the famous "Drinking Song" and *Sempre libera* aria. The story revolves around the relationship between a stunningly beautiful but frail courtesan and her well-born lover. Don't miss this romantic tale of love, passion, and betrayal.

The Sacramento Opera 2009-2010 Season ends with *A Russian Affair: Highlights from Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin and The Queen of Spades* on Friday, May 7, 2010 at 8 pm and Sunday, May 9, 2010 at 2 pm. Enjoy opera at its grandest in a Russian double-bill featuring concert stagings of two of Tchaikovsky's greatest works, both based on the writings of one of Russia's most acclaimed writers, Alexander Pushkin.

Single tickets for the Sacramento Opera's 2009-2010 Season productions are on sale now through the Sacramento Community Center Theater Box Office, 1301 L Street or 916.808.5181. All performances take place at the Sacramento Community Center Theater, 1301 L Street, and feature the Sacramento Philharmonic Orchestra and projected English translations. More information: www.sacopera.org.

HALL OF FAME

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...from the celebrities, competing with the Light Rail police to find spots that would offer them a clear view of the festivities. The inductees walked down the red carpet with their entourages, were introduced by escorts, and gracefully posed for pictures. Dressed in all their finery, they sparkled and shone like jewels in the chilly air.

This year's inductees cover a wide range of interests from athletes to artists. Posthumously, five of the inductees were represented by living relatives or honored guests. Philanthropist Joan Kroc, known for her generous support of organizations such as the Salvation Army; Entrepreneur Henry J. Kaiser of shipbuilding, construction and Kaiser healthcare; Native American artist Fritz Scholder; Attorney, Governor, and Senator Hiram Johnson; and notably Harvey Milk, San Francisco's Board of Supervisor's member in 1977 and pioneer of the LGBT civil rights movement. Harvey Milk's nephew, Stewart Milk, was joined by Senator Mark Leno and Assemblymember Tom Ammiano.

The remaining eight inductees brought their enthusiasm and energy to the stage as they each introduced the next inductee. Governor Schwarzenegger introduced his long-time friend and trainer, famous pioneer in the fitness world, Joe Weider.

Wordsmith and novelist Danielle Steel and Intel co-founder Andy Grove enriched the evening with stories of why they were considered for this honor. Gold Medal winner of the 1955 Pan American Games the 1960 Olympics Rafer Johnson towered over the podium as he



Hall of Fame 2009 inductees. Earlier images of Joe Weider and Arnold on screen. Courtesy photo to The Gold Country Times

accepted his award. One of the many high points of the evening came when athlete, coach, and commentator John Madden came to the podium to introduce the legendary Chuck Yeager. Known for taking a bus everywhere because of his fear of flying, John Madden jokingly said, "Where else but in California could a man who doesn't fly introduce the greatest pilot in the world?"

With his mumbled quips and self-effacing humor, Madden brought chuckles and laughs to the room as he wedged personal anecdotes in with his 'thank you' speech and introduction. Madden was followed by General Chuck Yeager, test pilot of the supersonic aircraft of the late 1940's, the X-1.

One of my personal heroes was also honored with this group. Ever since 1977, millions of young Californians have dreamed of adventures in space as I have, centered in the universe created by this man. "A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away..." George Lucas created a fantasy world of adventure, extravagant creatures, and the balance between good and evil. His movies have

delighted all of us. Seeing George Lucas entered into the California Hall of Fame for his works in the film industry was a personal honor, one which I will not likely forget. The last honoree, known for her quick wit and storytelling expertise, once again filled the room with smiles and laughs. Television and film star Carol Burnett told the hilarious story of how she was fired as a young girl from a job in a movie theater, only to have her Hollywood Walk of Fame Star located out front. As graceful and professional as ever, Carol Burnett warmed the hearts of all in attendance.

The California Hall of Fame exhibit includes a striking 40-foot wide display that is the focal point of the lobby featuring large scale portraits of the inductees, photographs and bio information. The artifact exhibit, located inside the museum galleries, showcases in greater detail each inductee's unique contribution in over 3,000 square feet and includes more than 100 items. Visit this inspiring exhibit through October 2010. Photos and bios online at: www.californiamuseum.org/exhibits/halloffame.

Pawsitive Pet Care

Winter Tips For Our Pets
By Rose Navarro, RVT

As we have seen in the last few weeks, winter can arrive swiftly leaving us little time to prepare. As the cool crisp air creeps up on us, we find ourselves doing the last minute things that make our life a bit more comfortable during the cold days ahead. As we take care of ourselves, our animals need some protection also.

Dog breeds with heavy coats in winter can withstand cold temperatures as long as they have adequate shelter. I do not worry about my heavy coated dogs until it gets into the 20's, or below, and then I provide them access into the house. The laundry room is equipped with a doggie door that lets them come and go as they please. I have tried to bring them in the house, but with the woodstove going, it is just too

warm, and although they love the attention of staying in, they get overheated and I end up with two panting drooling dogs wanting to go out every five minutes. Through the winter, my outside dogs have a garage that they can go in and out of, and dog houses within the garage are complete with blankets, comforters, and pillows.

Basically dogs need to have a den place where they can curl up and accumulate body heat. Multiple dog households

curl up next to each other for warmth. I move their water bowl in the garage and keep one in the laundry room to keep water from freezing. I also feed extra and provide more calories as the weather gets colder. Just as a hot bowl of soup makes us feel so good on a cold day, I add warm water to their food to provide a comfort food feeling and watch those tails really start wagging! Animals need calories to burn to keep warm. I start increasing ...

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