

IF YOU WISH TO BE LOVED, SO LOVE

PREMIERE OF GAETANO DONIZETTI'S THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

Sometimes only a love potion helps! The first taste of Gaetano Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*, which premiered in 1832, tantalized audiences, as they found themselves addicted to the sweet, lavish melodies that the composer instilled in the opera, epitomized by the piece's most famous aria: Nemorino's touching lament "Una furtiva lagrima." Rolando Villazón, who often appeared on stage as Nemorino himself, presents Donizetti's *bel canto* masterpiece at the Oper Leipzig as a roving spaghetti western, filled with esprit and poignant depth. Johannes Leiacker designed the stage and set, and Thibault von Craenenbroeck designed the costumes, using period pieces found in a costume collection in Rome. Giedrė Šlekytė musically directs.

A love potion will fix it. At least that's what Nemorino (Piotr Buszewski) hopes: A little nobody, he's lost his heart to the charming Adina (Bianca Tognocchi, making her role debut) – but she's more interested in the dashing Belcore (Jonathan Michie). What luck that the travelling miracle doctor Dulcamara (Sejong Chang) has – just by chance! – just the right tincture in stock. This miracle elixir (which of course is nothing more than a stiff drink) takes effect nearly immediately. With his freshly-won self-confidence, Nemorino ascends to the rank of most sought-after bachelor in all the land, possibly helped by rumors of a considerable inheritance. Nemorino manages to outdo his rival – and win Adina's heart in the process.

For the first opera premiere of the 2019/20 season, the Oper Leipzig will stage a major Italian opera. Gaetano Donizetti – who, with Rossini and Bellini, is regarded as one of the three masters of *bel canto* – composed this operatic love potion in the space of 14 days. In his production, Rolando Villazón convincingly dares to transfer the plot to a 1940s Western movie film set, creating a play within a play. The action takes place on the film set of the Italo-Western "The Wild, Wild Girl" – with Adina and Belcore in the leading roles. Dulcamara is the film's director and plays the doctor in the movie. His assistant director Giannetta finds herself in front of the camera when an actress shows up missing. Nemorino is nothing more than an extra, head over heels in love with Adina, but too naive to reliably distinguish between reality and fiction. In order to separate the two plot levels from each other, Villazón relies on a gesture and mimic inspired by commedia dell'arte on his "film set," a technique that very nearly creates pantomimic moments.

Premiere: Saturday, September 14, 2019, 7:00pm

Further Performances: September 22/03. October 3 / November 1, 2019 / January 4/ March 13 / April 25, 2020
(all performances feature an introduction 45 minutes before curtain)

Gaetano Donizetti

The Elixir of Love

Melodrama in two acts | Text by Felice Romani | In Italian with German supertitles

Direction:

Musical Director **Giedrė Šlekytė**

Stage Director **Rolando Villazón**

Stage Designer **Johannes Leiacker**

Costume Designer **Thibault Vancraenenbroeck**

Co-Costume Designer **Agnès Barruel**

Lighting Designer **Davy Cunningham**

Chorus Master **Alexander Stessin**

Dramaturgy **Elisabeth Kühne**

Cast:

Adina **Bianca Tognocchi** | Giannetta **Sandra Maxheimer** | Nemorino **Piotr Buszewski** | Belcore

Jonathan Michie | Dulcamara **Sejong Chang**

Chorus of the Oper Leipzig | Oper Leipzig Supernumeraries | Gewandhaus Orchestra