



**SAN FRANCISCO OPERA PRESENTS DONIZETTI'S *ELIXIR OF LOVE*,
STARRING INVA MULA AND RAMÓN VARGAS,
OCTOBER 29–NOVEMBER 26 AT THE WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE**

SAN FRANCISCO (October 21, 2008) – **San Francisco Opera** presents **Gaetano Donizetti's** boisterous comedy, *The Elixir of Love*, **October 29–November 26** at the War Memorial Opera House. In a production new to Bay Area audiences, Director **James Robinson** ingeniously updates this classic Italian tale to the delightful innocence of a Napa Valley county fair circa 1915. Stunning Albanian soprano, **Inva Mula** and internationally renowned Mexican tenor, **Ramón Vargas** headline a brilliant cast which features three international artists in their company debut.

A flirtatious tale of innocent love and boundless devotion, last seen at SFO in 2001, *The Elixir of Love* will have audiences rooting for the shy, love-struck Nemorino as he naïvely relies on a “love potion” to help him win the heart of the beautiful Adina. In his first San Francisco Opera appearance in eight years, Ramón Vargas stars as Nemorino, the bashful Italian immigrant who is transformed into a plucky entrepreneur selling ice cream from the back of his Model T truck. Unaware that the potion he has purchased is a sham, Nemorino finds his courage and eventually the love he has been pining for, singing joyfully in his unforgettable tenor aria “Una furtive lagrima” (“A furtive tear”). Inva Mula makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Adina, the carefree object of Nemorino’s affection, a role she has sung to critical acclaim across Europe. Ms. Mula is well known to American pop-culture as the breathtaking voice behind the memorable blue diva in the film *The Fifth Element*.

Preeminent Italian bass-baritone **Alessandro Corbelli** is Dulcamara, the quack doctor and travelling salesman who convinces Nemorino that a cheap bottle of wine is in fact a magic love potion. Young Italian baritone **Giorgio Caoduro** is the dashing Sergeant Belcore, Adina's short-term fiancé and Nemorino's main competition. Adina's friend and chatty town gossip, Gianetta, is played by Korean soprano **Ji-Young Yang**, a second-year Adler Fellow.

Distinguished bel canto stylist **Bruno Campanella** returns to San Francisco Opera to conduct the same opera that marked his U.S. debut with this company in 1992. This production features work by Broadway set designer **Allen Moyer**, Tony Award winning costume designer **Martin Pakledinaz**, and lighting designer **Paul Palazzo**.

Special to this presentation of *The Elixir of Love*, San Francisco Opera will offer two performances of Donizetti's opera in a condensed two-hour version for families. In a showcase of San Francisco Opera Center talent, the young, energetic cast is made up of current and former Adler Fellows. A perfect introduction to the magic of opera for children and families, *The Elixir of Love for Families* will be sung in English at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 8 and Saturday, November 15 at the War Memorial Opera House.

Sung in Italian with English supertitles, the eight performances of *The Elixir of Love* are scheduled for **October 29 (7:30 p.m.)**, **November 1 (8 p.m.)**, **November 5 (7:30 p.m.)**, **November 9 (2 p.m.)**, **November 14 (8 p.m.)**, **November 18 (8 p.m.)**, **November 23 (2 p.m.)**, and **November 26 (7:30 p.m.)**.

Tickets and Information

Tickets for *Elixir of Love* range from \$15 to \$290 each and may be purchased online at www.sfopera.com or from the San Francisco Opera Box Office either in person or by phone at **(415) 864-3330**. Standing Room tickets go on sale at 10 a.m. on the day of each performance; tickets are \$10 each, cash only.

All performances will feature an informative Opera Talk by Italian conductor and educator, Giancarlo Aquilanti. Talks begin fifty-five minutes before each performance in the orchestra section

of the War Memorial Opera House and are presented free of charge to patrons with tickets for the corresponding performance.

The War Memorial Opera House is located at 301 Van Ness Avenue at Grove Street. Patrons are encouraged to use public transportation to attend San Francisco Opera performances. The War Memorial Opera House is within walking distance of the Civic Center BART station and near numerous bus lines, including 5, 21, 47, 49 and the F Market Street. For more public transportation information, visit www.bart.gov and www.sfmuni.com.

For further information about *The Elixir of Love* and San Francisco Opera's 2008-2009 Season, please visit www.sfoopera.com.

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This press release and downloadable 2008–09 Season photographs are available at www.sfoopera.com/press. For further press information, please contact:

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THE ELIXIR OF LOVE: PRODUCTION INFORMATION

* San Francisco Opera Debut †Current Adler Fellow

All performances take place at the War Memorial Opera House.

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE by Gaetano Donizetti
Adapted from a co-production with Opera Colorado,
Boston Lyric Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Michigan Opera
Theater and Fort Worth Opera

PRODUCTION NEW TO SAN FRANCISCO OPERA
October 29 (7:30 p.m.); **November 1*** (8 p.m.),
5* (7:30 p.m.), **9*** (2 p.m.), **14** (8 p.m.), **18** (8 p.m.),
23 (2 p.m.), **26** (7:30 p.m.), **2008**

Libretto by Felice Romani
First performance: Milan, May 12, 1832
Approximate running time: 2 hours, 30 minutes
Sung in Italian with English supertitles

Cast:

<i>Adina</i>	Inva Mula*
<i>Nemorino</i>	Ramón Vargas
<i>Belcore</i>	Giorgio Caoduro*
<i>Dulcamara</i>	Alessandro Corbelli*
<i>Giannetta</i>	Ji Young Yang†

Production Team:

<i>Conductor</i>	Bruno Campanella
<i>Director</i>	James Robinson
<i>Set Designer</i>	Allen Moyer
<i>Costume Designer</i>	Martin Pakledinaz*
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	Paul Palazzo*
<i>Chorus Director</i>	Ian Robertson

• OperaVision Performance. San Francisco Opera introduced OperaVision in 2007 as an innovative way to give balcony audiences a better view of the stage. OperaVision screens, hung from the ceiling of the balcony section, provide close-up and mid-range ensemble shots in high-definition video. Supertitles are shown at the bottom of each screen.

About the Artists

Albanian soprano **INVA MULA** (*Adina*) makes her San Francisco Opera debut this season in a role she has performed at Hamburg State Opera and at the Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse. She has sung in major concert houses and theaters all over the world, including the title role of *Manon*, Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*), Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Violetta (*La Traviata*), and Nannetta (*Falstaff*) at La Scala; Musetta (*La Bohème*) at the Metropolitan Opera; Violetta with Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Micaëla (*Carmen*), Marie (Bizet's *Ivan IV*), and Violetta at Paris Opera; the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Antonia (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) at Vienna State Opera; Manon and Gilda at Barcelona's Teatre del Liceu; Antonia, Mimì (*La Bohème*), and Violetta at Madrid's Teatro Real; Nannetta with Lyric Opera of Chicago; and Musetta, Gilda, and Susanna (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) at Los Angeles Opera. Mula's recent performances include Gilda at the Teatro Arriaga in Bilbao; Violetta in Toronto; Corinna (*Il Viaggio a Reims*) for the reopening of the Monte Carlo opera house; the title role of *Thaïs* in Las Palmas; Micaëla at the Maggio Musicale Festival in Florence; and Antonia in Toulouse. She is a former first prize winner of the George Enescu Competition, the Grand Prix at the *Madama Butterfly* Competition in Barcelona, and winner of the inaugural *Operalia* Competition. Mula's discography includes a recording of *Carmen* (Micaëla) with Roberto Alagna and Bizet's *Ivan IV* (Marie) with the National Orchestra of France. Upcoming engagements include Violetta in Avignon; Mimì (*La*

Bohème) at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin; Manon at Vienna State Opera; Micaëla (*Carmen*) and Marguerite (*Faust*) in Toulouse; and Gilda at Teatro Real in Madrid.

Tenor **RAMÓN VARGAS** (*Nemorino*) made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1999 as Riccardo (*Un Ballo in Maschera*) and went on to perform Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) later that season. Born in Mexico City, Vargas won the 1986 Enrico Caruso Tenor Competition in Milan, launching his international career. He has appeared in leading roles at the world's major opera houses: La Scala (Alfredo in *La Traviata*, Edgardo, and the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*); Vienna State Opera (Earl of Leicester in *Maria Stuarda*, Nemorino, Edgardo, and Rodolfo in *La Bohème*); Royal Opera, Covent Garden (Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Alfredo, the Duke of Mantua, Rodolfo); Paris Opera (the Duke of Mantua, Alfredo); the Metropolitan Opera (the title role of *Faust*, Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*, the Duke of Mantua, Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola*, Nemorino, and Rodolfo); Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires (Fernand in *La Favorite*); Madrid's Teatro Real (the title role of *Werther*); and others. Recent engagements include Rodolfo (*Luisa Miller*) and Alfredo in Munich, the title role of *Don Carlos* at Vienna State Opera, the title role of *La Clemenza di Tito* at the Met, Rodolfo (*Luisa Miller*) at Paris Opera, and Roméo (*Roméo et Juliette*) in Vienna. The Grammy Award nominee's broad discography includes several solo albums; *La Bohème* (EMI) and *La Traviata* (Decca), both opposite Angela Gheorghiu; and *Eugene Onegin* (Decca), opposite Renée Fleming and Dmitri Hvorostovsky. Upcoming engagements include a return to the role of Rodolfo (*La Bohème*) at the Met; Des Grieux (*Manon*) and Lensky at Vienna State Opera; Riccardo (*Un Ballo in Maschera*) at Paris Opera; and Rodolfo (*Luisa Miller*) in Munich.

Italian baritone **GIORGIO CAODURO** (*Belcore*) is rapidly becoming one of the leading Italian baritones active today. He makes his San Francisco Opera debut this season in the role he has performed at Rome's Teatro dell'Opera, Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, Berlin's Linden Opera, and the Teatro Regio in Turin. Caoduro's recent engagements include Ping (*Turandot*) in Naples, Venice, and Turin; Albert (*Werther*) and Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*) in Genoa; Enrico (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) in Bologna; the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Berlin's Linden Opera, the Aix-en-Provence Festival, and in Luxembourg; the title role in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with the Dallas Opera and Paris Opera; and Dandini (*La Cenerentola*) with the Glyndebourne Festival, Paris Opera, and in Genoa and Trieste. The baritone is a former first prize winner of the Aslico International Opera Competition and the Lignano Sabbia d'Oro Competition. Future engagements include his Royal Opera, Covent Garden debut as Ping; Riccardo (*I Puritani*) in Athens; Count Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) and Rodrigo (*Don Carlo*) at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna; and Figaro (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*) at the Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse.

Italian bass-baritone **ALESSANDRO CORBELLI** (*Dulcamara*) makes his San Francisco Opera debut in a role he recently performed in Leipzig and at the Metropolitan Opera. Since his debut at the age of twenty-one, he has become an outstanding exponent of the bel canto and Mozart baritone roles. He has performed in all of the world's major opera houses, including La Scala; Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Paris Opera; Vienna State Opera; the Metropolitan Opera; Houston Grand Opera; and the opera companies of Munich, Cologne, Geneva, Madrid, Barcelona, Toulouse, Rome, Naples, Bologna, Florence, and Turin. His repertoire includes Don Alfonso and Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*); the title roles of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Don Pasquale*, *Falstaff*, and *Gianni Schicchi*; Leporello (*Don Giovanni*); Dandini and Don Magnifico (*La Cenerentola*); Figaro and Bartolo (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*); Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*); Giorgio Germont (*La Traviata*); and Zurga (*The Pearl Fishers*). Additional credits include Sulpice (*La Fille du Régiment*) and the title role of *Gianni Schicchi* at the Metropolitan Opera; Don Geronio (*Il Turco in Italia*) at Bavarian State Opera; Don Magnifico at the Glyndebourne

Festival; Sulpice at La Scala; and Falstaff at Paris Opera. Corbelli's discography includes *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Così fan tutte* for Telarc led by Charles Mackerras; *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Cenerentola* and *L'Italiana in Algeri* for Teldec; and *Il Turco in Italia* and *La Cenerentola* for Decca. Future engagements include Don Geronio in Copenhagen; Don Magnifico at the Met; Doctor Bartolo at Royal Opera, Covent Garden; and Falstaff in Toulouse and at La Scala.

JI YOUNG YANG (*Giannetta*) made her San Francisco Opera debut last season as the Young Shepherd (*Tannhäuser*) and subsequently appeared as Pamina (*The Magic Flute for Families*); Julia Agnes Lee (*Appomattox*); A Singer (*La Rondine*); The Rose (*The Little Prince*); Juliette (*Die Tote Stadt*); and Xenia (*Boris Godunov*). The Korean native is a second-year Adler Fellow who performed Iliia (*Idomeneo*) and Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*) as a participant in the 2006 Merola Opera Program. She was heard earlier this year as Giannetta at Boston Lyric Opera. Last year the soprano appeared as Miss Jessel (*The Turn of the Screw*) at Lincoln Theater in Yountville and as Frasquita (*Carmen*) at the Mondavi Center at U.C. Davis. Yang began her formal studies at Seoul National University and holds both bachelor's and master's degrees from the Manhattan School of Music, as well as a post-graduate diploma from the New England Conservatory. She was a New England regional finalist in the 2006 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and that same year received the Frank and Carmela Pandolfi Award from the Connecticut Opera Guild. She also appears with the Company this fall as Adina in *The Elixir of Love for Families*.

BRUNO CAMPANELLA (*Conductor*) returns to San Francisco Opera to lead the opera with which he made Company and U.S. debut in 1992. The maestro has also led the San Francisco Opera productions of *La Fille du Régiment* (1993) and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (1996). Widely regarded as one of the leading interpreters of Italian opera, he has conducted at Paris Opera; Vienna State Opera; the Metropolitan Opera; Royal Opera, Covent Garden; La Scala; Bavarian State Opera; Lyric Opera of Chicago; and in Barcelona, Turin, Leipzig, Naples, Rome, Palermo, and Florence. Campanella was music director at the Teatro Regio in Turin from 1992 to 1995, and he currently serves as principal guest conductor of that company. Recent engagements include *Ernani* and *Lucrezia Borgia* in Turin; *Norma* in Palermo and Barcelona; *The Elixir of Love* and *Norma* in Leipzig; *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in Munich; *Roberto Devereux* in Trieste; and *La Fille du Régiment* at Royal Opera, Covent Garden, featuring Natalie Dessay and Juan Diego Flórez. His discography includes *La Fille du Régiment* with June Anderson and Alfredo Kraus (EMI), *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* with Katia Ricciarelli, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and *Don Pasquale* (Nuova Era)—recorded live at the Teatro Regio in Turin and the winner of a Gold Record award. Maestro Campanella also recorded *Italian Opera Arias* with Kathleen Battle for Deutsche Grammophon. Future engagements include *The Elixir of Love* in Florence and Chicago; *L'Italiana in Algeri* in Turin and Trieste; *Il Turco in Italia* in Genoa; *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in Paris; and *Maria Stuarda* in Venice.

American stage director **JAMES ROBINSON** made his San Francisco Opera debut in the 2005 production of *Norma*. One of the most widely performed directors in North America, his credits include new productions of *Giulio Cesare*, *La Bohème*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, and Catán's *Salsipuedes* for Houston Grand Opera; *Così fan tutte* and *The Rake's Progress* for the Santa Fe Opera; *Norma* and *Elektra* for Canadian Opera Company; *Nabucco* for the Dallas Opera; Antheil's *Transatlantic*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *Un Ballo in Maschera* for Minnesota Opera; and *The Elixir of Love*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Eugene Onegin* for Opera Colorado, where he served as artistic director from 2000 to 2008. His productions of *Nixon in China* and *Turandot* have been seen widely throughout the U.S. and Canada, and he has directed numerous productions for New York City Opera, including *Il Trittico*, *Il Viaggio a Reims*, and *La Bohème* (broadcast on PBS as part of *Live From Lincoln Center*).

He has directed for Opera Australia, the Royal Swedish Opera, Opera Ireland, and the London Symphony Orchestra. Robinson was recently appointed artistic director of Opera Theatre of St. Louis, where he has directed *Street Scene*, Argento's *Miss Havisham's Fire*, *Nixon in China*, and *Radamisto*. Upcoming projects include a new production of Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles* for St. Louis and the Wexford Festival, Argento's *Casanova* for Minnesota Opera, and *The Abduction from the Seraglio* for the Welsh National Opera.

Set designer **ALLEN MOYER** made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2003 with *The Mother of Us All*, which was also seen at New York City Opera and Glimmerglass Opera, and he returned in 2005 for *Norma*. Other opera credits include *La Bohème*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, and Catán's *Salsipuedes* for Houston Grand Opera; Gordon's *The Grapes of Wrath* for Minnesota Opera; Handel's *Agrippina* and *Così fan tutte* for the Santa Fe Opera; *Carmen* with Seattle Opera; *Nixon in China* and Argento's *Miss Havisham's Fire* for Opera Theatre of St. Louis; *Il Trittico* for New York City Opera; *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Dallas Opera; *La Bohème* for New York City Opera and Glimmerglass Opera; *The Threepenny Opera* in Rome; *Luisa Miller* for the Spoleto Festival; and *Norma* and *Der Fliegende Holländer* for Canadian Opera Company. On Broadway Moyers designed productions of *Grey Gardens*, *The Little Dog Laughed*, *The Constant Wife*, *Twelve Angry Men*, and *Reckless*, among others; he received a Tony Award nomination for his work on *Grey Gardens* as well as the 2006 Hewes Award from the American Theater Wing and an Obie Award for sustained excellence.

American costume designer **MARTIN PAKLEDINAZ** makes his San Francisco Opera debut with this production. He designs for major opera houses in the U.S. and abroad, including Paris Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Los Angeles Opera, the Santa Fe Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Seattle Opera, the Salzburg Festival, and in Tokyo, Amsterdam, Helsinki, and Gothenburg, Sweden. Pakledinaz's work in the dance world includes designs for the Mark Morris Dance Group and Pacific Northwest Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, and New York City Ballet. His work on Broadway includes *The Pajama Game*, *Wonderful Town*, *The Life*, *Golden Child*, and two musicals which earned him Tony Awards: *Thoroughly Modern Millie* and *Kiss Me, Kate*. Current and future projects include *Pirate Queen* and *Grease* on Broadway, a new Christopher Wheeldon piece for New York City Ballet, and the Seattle Opera-Metropolitan Opera co-production of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*. Pakledinaz is a faculty member at the Tisch School of the Arts in New York City.

Making his San Francisco Opera debut this season, **PAUL PALAZZO** has created lighting designs for opera, ballet, and theater across the world. His work has been seen at Minnesota Opera (*Nixon in China*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Il Trovatore*, *Tosca*); Los Angeles Opera (*Hänsel und Gretel*); the Dallas Opera (*Nabucco*); Houston Grand Opera (*Don Pasquale*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*); Opera Colorado (*La Bohème*); Seattle Opera (*Der Rosenkavalier*); Boston Lyric Opera (*Eugene Onegin*, *Rigoletto*); Utah Opera (*La Fanciulla del West*); and Wolf Trap Opera (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*, *Così fan tutte*, and *Le Nozze di Figaro*). On Broadway he has been part of the lighting design team for such hit musicals as *Sunset Boulevard*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Miss Saigon*, *Big*, and *Falsettos*. Palazzo received his master's degree in theatrical design from New York University and won the 1998 "Product of the Year" award from Lighting Design International for his effect projection system, EFX Plus.

IAN ROBERTSON has been chorus director and conductor with San Francisco Opera since 1987, having prepared more than 200 productions for the Company. He was awarded the Olivier Messiaen Foundation Prize in 2003 for his artistic contribution to the preparation of the Company's North American premiere of *Saint François d'Assise*. Robertson made his San Francisco Opera conducting

debut with *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and has since led performances of *Falstaff*, *Lohengrin*, *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, *Don Carlo*, *Turandot*, *Il Trovatore*, and *La Bohème*. He has led the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus in many concerts, conducted *Così fan tutte* and *La Périchole* for San Francisco Opera Center, and has frequently led Merola Opera Program's Grand Finale concerts. Other North American opera credits include productions with Sarasota Opera, Edmonton Opera, and Philadelphia's Curtis Opera Theatre. Before joining San Francisco Opera, Robertson was head of music and chorus director of Scottish Opera, where he led numerous productions, including *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *The Pearl Fishers*, *The Secret of Susanna*, and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. The Scotland native trained at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and the University of Glasgow; he studied conducting under Sir Alexander Gibson. Robertson is currently the artistic director of the San Francisco Festival Chorale and executive director of the San Francisco Boys Chorus.