

You don't need to be an opera fan to enjoy 'Elixir of Love'

Charming, funny show plays in GP on Saturday

By Edith Decker
of the Daily Courier

Rogue Opera's 2012 production of "Elixir of Love" may be the perfect opera for people who've never been to the opera.

It's light and charming and funny. It's a classic underdog story with a happy ending and lovely singing.

"Elixir" opened at Medford's Craterian last weekend, but has one last performance in Grants Pass on Saturday.

Director Noel Koran has set this production in the 1930s at the beginning of the wine industry in the Rogue Valley and in "The State of Jefferson." The elixir of love, by the way, is wine.

A salesman of the road, in town to fleece ... errrrr... help heal some of the locals sells this amazing concoction to a sweet, gullible, impoverished young man named Nemorino who's in love with the flirty daughter of a wealthy landowner. Adina flatly tells Nemorino to give up, especially since the handsome army sergeant Belcore has come on the scene.



In the finale of "Elixir of Love," the salesman (Igor Vieira) presents his case for his love potion, center, as happy couple Nemorino and Adina (James Callon, Laura Portune) look on, left, and even the sergeant (Kreshnik Zhabjaku) has found new girls to woo, right.

Photo By TERRY TUTTLE

Nemorino begs the salesman for a love potion, but it hasn't taken effect when Belcore convinces Adina to marry him right away. Luckily she has second thoughts and Nemorino buys a second helping of the elixir.

But a better help to his sex appeal is the fact that he's just inherited a large estate and the messenger, Giannetta, has told all the girls that Nemorino's

now a catch — even before she's told him he's rich. Of course, he believes the elixir is really working. And it is, in a way ...

"This is a period of opera where we get the stereotype that opera stories don't make much sense," said Koran in the pre-performance talk. "But this story holds together." That may be because Donizetti himself wrote most of the libretto

as well as the music.

Beyond the story and some of opera's most real characters, the music is elegant and upbeat. The opera exemplifies the best of the Italian belle canto — beautiful songs — style of opera. The singers have a chance to revel in their voices and bring the audience along to enjoy the ride.

Laura Portune was obviously enjoying her role as Adina.

Portune has years of experience in opera and is based in San Diego. Luckily, she's also one of Koran's former students, so he convinced her to take the role. She's at once flirty and snotty in the first act in a way that will take you right back to junior high. But she realizes her mistake and grows before our eyes into a good match for our hayseed hero.

James Callon sings the underdog Nemorino — and one of the most beautiful tenor arias in opera — in the production. Callon played Alfredo in last year's Rogue Opera production of "La Traviata." He's completely believable as the young man in love who doesn't seem to have a chance with his beauty, but remains faithful to his feelings.

That's not only due to his acting, but to his emotional and gorgeous voice. Look for his aria "a furtive tear" ("Una furtiva lagrima").

But stealing the show was baritone Igor Vieira as the salesman Dulcamara, adding comic bits as the showman who's ready to hit the road should the need arise when the folks find out his magic elixirs are snake oil — and a nice cabernet. He even manages to sing while eating, as Dulcamara is not willing to pass up a free meal.

Also well cast as soldier and ladies man Belcore was sung by Kreshnik Zhabjaku, an

Just the ticket

■ **WHAT:** "The Elixir of Love" a comic opera by Gaetano Donizetti, produced by Rogue Opera
 ■ **WHEN:** Saturday at 3 p.m.
 ■ **WHERE:** Grants Pass High School Performing Arts Center, Eighth and Olive streets
 ■ **TICKETS:** \$30 for adults, \$10 for youth; Call 541-608-6400 or see www.rogue-opera.org. Any remaining tickets will be for sale at the door.

Albanian-born baritone who is now based in New York City. This is his third Rogue Opera production. His songs with Adina are a highlight.

The opera is sung in Italian, but you'll follow easily what's going on. And the translation — in colloquial English — is projected right over the stage. "Gosh she's pretty!" sings Nemorino. And the chorus is hardly prim or proper when drinking the new vintage and singing: "Love's gonna get ya and it's sure gonna burn!"

Opera fans will not want to miss this fun performance and those who've never tried the opera will find this a great introduction — no Viking goddesses in brass bras or tormented souls. Just beautiful songs and a great day for the underdog.

Tonight's prime-time network highlights

C = Charter, D = Dish, DT = DirecTV

	C	D	DT	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30
BROADCAST															
KFBI 3	3	48	48	How I Met Your Mother (HD)	How I Met Your Mother (HD)	MLB Baseball: San Francisco Giants at Los Angeles Dodgers from Dodger Stadium (Live)		Burn Notice: Devil You Know Terrorist plans to blow up Miami. (HD)	Burn Notice: Friends and Enemies Lawyer needs protection from biker gang. (HD)						
KOBI 5	5	5	5	NBC 5 News at 6:00 The daily news. (N)	NBC 5 News at 6:30 (N)	Entertainment Tonight (N) (HD)	The Insider (N) (HD)	Betty White's Off Their Rockers (N) (HD)	Best Friends Forever (N) (HD)	Rock Center with Brian Williams (N) (HD)	Law & Order: Special Victims Unit: Father Dearest Biological search. (N) (HD)	NBC 5 News at 11:00 (N)	The Tonight Show with Jay Leno (HD)		
KSYS 8	8	8	8	Nightly Business Report (N) (HD)	The PBS NewsHour (N) (HD)	Oregon Art Beat	Nature: The White Lions Two rare cubs growing up on the savanna. (N) (HD)	NOVA: Deadliest Tomatoes The 2011 tomato season is examined. (R) (HD)	NOVA: Hunt for the Supertwister Data for tornado prediction sought. (R) (HD)	Charlie Rose (N) (HD)					
CREATE 8.3	297			Steves' Europe: France's Dordogne	Equitrek Jordan's treasures.	Garden Smart U.S. Botanic Garden.	Ask This Old House (HD)	For Your Home: Intro to Komen House	K. Brown Kitchen makeover.	Love of Quilting: Fabric 101	Donna Dewberry: Crafty Notions	Cook's Country Parmesan chicken. (HD)	Lidia's Italy in America (HD)	Tommy Tang Vegetables & spices.	Weeknight Meals: Dinner for Two
KTVL 10	10	10	10	News 10 at 6pm (N)	Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? (N)	Inside Edition (N) (HD)	Extra (N) (HD)	Survivor: One World (N) (HD)	Criminal Minds: Profiling 101 The science of criminal profiling. (N) (HD)	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation: Homecoming Bodies found by campaign dinner. (N) (HD)	News 10 at 11pm (N)	Late Show with David Letterman (N)			
CW 10.2	11	11	14	The King of Queens (HD)	The King of Queens: Ticker Treat (HD)	Seinfeld: The Doll Spooky doll scares.	Seinfeld: The Pick Jerry's nose issue.	America's Next Top Model: Barney Cheng Final six travel to Macau. (R) (HD)	America's Next Top Model: Nicholas Tse Learning to act and fight. (N) (HD)	Cops: Ho! Ho! Ho! #8 Call at motel. (HD)	Til Death: Pilot Marriage advice. (HD)	Til Death: Fight Friend Donna. (HD)	That '70s Show Blonde Donna. (HD)		
KDRV 12	12	12	12	Newswatch 12 at 6pm (N)	Newswatch 12 at 6:30pm (N)	Jeopardy!: DC Teen Week #2 (N) (HD)	Wheel of Fortune (N) (HD)	The Middle: The Clover (N) (HD)	Suburgatory Tessa must adjust. (N) (HD)	Modern Family: Disneyland (N) (HD)	Don't Trust B— in Apartment 23 (N)	Revenge: Legacy Amanda begins planning her revenge. (N) (HD)	Newswatch 12 at 11pm (N)	(35) Nightline News of the day. (N) (HD)	
KMVU 13	26	26	26	The Simpsons Wacky family.	The Big Bang Theory (HD)	Two and a Half Men (HD)	The Big Bang Theory (HD)	American Idol: Performance Show (N) (HD)	Fox 26 News First at Ten (N)	(35) TMZ (N)	(65) The Office: Casual Friday (HD)	Friends: The One Where Rachel Tells...			

River will be the theme of monthly poetry reading Friday at art museum

The river is the theme for this month's evening of poetry sharing.

Anyone is welcome to read their poetry or to listen to others. River poems printed on 8 1/2-by-11-inch paper will be placed in a stand in the museum library. Vinyl sheet protectors will be provided.

The event is divided into two sessions, with a snack break between. Each reader shares up to two poems per session.

The gathering is Friday

from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Grants Pass Museum of Art, 229 S.W. G St. Admission is free.

Call the museum at 541-479-3290 for information. Poetry sharing events are held every second Friday of the month.

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Singer/author to read, perform in Ashland

Singer, songwriter and author David Berkeley is giving a concert and book reading Friday at the Unitarian Center, 84 Fourth St., in Ashland. He'll be reading excerpts from his book "140 Goats and a Guitar: The Stories Behind Some Kind of Cure" and performing music from the CD. Tickets to the 8 p.m. concert are \$18 in advance, \$20 at the door, \$10 for youth 12 to 17 and free for children under 12. Call 541-535-3562 or visit www.stclairerevents.com.



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Special production of 'Stuart Little' will be presented Saturday in Medford

A special production of "Stuart Little," featuring both hearing and deaf actors who speak and sign simultaneously, is being presented Saturday in Medford.

The adaptation of E. B. White's fantasy will be at the Craterian Ginger Rogers Theater, 23 S. Central Ave., at 3 p.m. It's presented by Sign-Stage Theatre.

In the story, Stuart, the young and noble mouse with the spirit of a giant, jumps head first into adventures, including rescuing his friend, the bird Margalo, from his family's cat.

As this mild-mannered mouse tries to cope in a "real person's" world, he realizes size isn't important. It's attitude and ability that count.

Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 for youth 18 and younger. Get tickets by calling 541-779-3000 or online at www.craterian.org.

Rogue Opera Presents
M E L O D R A M M A G I O C O S O
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The Elixir of Love

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Contact The Craterian for tickets
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A Salute to the CLASS OF 2012

The Daily Courier is printing **Baby Grad Pages** as a special keepsake featuring our local high school graduates.

Deadline to enter your graduate is Tuesday, June 5 and will publish Saturday, June 9

Place your salute in person, online, by mail or by e-mail. Remember to use a **clear** baby photo. (Please write name and address on back of photo and include a self-addressed envelope and we will return it to you, or you may pick it up at the front lobby.) Send your entries to:

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