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LOVE, LAUGHTER AND *BEL CANTO* BLISS SERVED UP IN COC'S CROWD-PLEASING OPERATIC POTION, *THE ELIXIR OF LOVE*

Toronto – Laughter and love stories carry over into the new Canadian Opera Company production of Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*, one of the most popular comedies of the opera world for almost 200 years. *The Elixir of Love* runs for eight performances at Toronto's Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts on **October 11, 15, 17, 21, 27, 29, November 2, 4, 2017**.

The classic Cinderella story is presented with a twist in *The Elixir of Love* with a poor and uneducated young man (Nemorino) who dreams of winning the heart of a rich, clever and beautiful woman (Adina) through the aid of a magic elixir. In the hands of distinguished American director **James Robinson** this romantic comedy comes to the COC as a “**delightful confection that leaves audiences beaming from overture to finale**” (*Riverfront Times*).

Robinson's “ingenious update” (*Napa Valley Register*) captures the idyllic nostalgia of a picturesque summer in a small town pre-World War I, with a landscape reminiscent of the worlds of the musicals *The Music Man* and *Meet Me in St. Louis*. Period costumes by original costume designer **Martin Pakledinaz** and a charm-filled rural set design by **Allen Moyer**, with lighting design by **Paul Palazzo**, work together to deliver a “**brightly colored cartoon sensibility...like Thornton Wilder set to an Italianate musical track**” (*San Francisco Chronicle*). Originally imagined with the bucolic setting of the American countryside as a 2008 co-production for several U.S. opera companies, **Robinson's** staging of *The Elixir of Love* has been given a subtle Canadian remodeling for its COC debut intended to suggest a Niagara-on-the-Lake locale. **Amanda Seymour** joins the creative team as the revival costume designer.

Toronto-born **Yves Abel**, a regular guest artist with the world's great opera houses and symphonies, makes a highly anticipated COC debut conducting Donizetti's bubbly elixir of *bel canto* bliss. Enchanting melodies run throughout this flirtatious tale with none more famous than Nemorino's heartfelt, “Una furtiva lagrima,” one of the best-loved arias in all of opera.

Donizetti's instantly appealing score is also a showpiece for rising operatic talent. This production is a showcase for the return of three recent graduates of the COC Ensemble Studio training program now making their way on the world stage: tenor **Andrew Haji**, quickly becoming a sought-after voice on the operatic and concert stages, is the love-sick Nemorino; soprano **Simone Osborne**, one of the most exciting emerging artists in the opera world, is the rich and beautiful Adina; and bass-baritone **Gordon Bintner**, appearing in major roles this season with Oper Frankfurt, is Belcore, Nemorino's rival for Adina's affections.

English baritone **Andrew Shore**, one of the most distinguished singing actors working on the lyric stage, is the travelling conman Doctor Dulcamara. COC Ensemble Studio soprano **Lauren Eberwein** is Giannetta, Adina's friend.

The Elixir of Love is the most famous of Donizetti's operas, which stand out in the operatic repertoire, as described by *The Grove Dictionary of Music*, “**through the grace and spontaneity of their melodies, their formal poise, their effortless dramatic pace and above all the romantic vitality that underlies their veneer of artifice.**” An immediate success at the time of its premiere in Milan in 1832, *The Elixir of Love* remains popular with audiences to this day. Written in the *bel canto* style, it is designed to show off the human voice to maximum effect and demands great virtuosity from its singers.

All COC performances of *The Elixir of Love* feature the **COC Orchestra** and **Chorus**. *The Elixir of Love* is sung in Italian with English SURTITLES™, and was last presented at the COC in 1999.

This new production of *The Elixir of Love* joins the COC's repertoire having originally been conceived as a 2008 co-production between Opera Colorado, Boston Lyric Opera, San Francisco Opera, Fort Worth Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre.

TICKET INFORMATION

Single tickets for *The Elixir of Love* range from **\$35 – \$225** and box seats, when available, are **\$350**. Tickets are now on sale, available online at coc.ca, by calling **416-363-8231**, or in person at the **Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts Box Office** (145 Queen St. W.). For more information on **specially priced tickets** available to **young people under the age of 15, standing room, Opera Under 30** presented by **TD Bank Group, student groups** and **rush seating**, visit coc.ca.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The COC Ensemble Studio, underwritten in part by Peter M. Deeb, Marjorie and Roy Linden, RBC Foundation and The Slight Family Foundation, is Canada's premier training program for young opera professionals and provides advanced instruction, hands-on experience, and career development opportunities. The Ensemble Studio is also supported by the Government of Canada, the Hal Jackman Foundation and other generous donors.

About the Canadian Opera Company

Based in Toronto, the Canadian Opera Company is the largest producer of opera in Canada and one of the largest in North America. The COC enjoys a loyal audience support-base and one of the highest attendance and subscription rates in North America. Under its leadership team of General Director Alexander Neef and Music Director Johannes Debus, the COC is increasingly capturing the opera world's attention. The COC maintains its international reputation for artistic excellence and creative innovation by creating new productions within its diverse repertoire, collaborating with leading opera companies and festivals, and attracting the world's foremost Canadian and international artists. The COC performs in its own opera house, the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, hailed internationally as one of the finest in the world. Designed by Diamond Schmitt Architects, the Four Seasons Centre opened in 2006. For more information on the COC, visit www.coc.ca.

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