



**HoustonGrandOpera**

510 Preston Street  
Houston, Texas 77002-1504  
Tel: 713-546-0200  
Fax: 713-228-4355  
HGO.org

**Patrick Summers**

Artistic & Music Director  
*Margaret Alkek Williams Chair*

**Perryn Leech**

Managing Director

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Media Contact:**

**Melissa Arredondo**

Melissa@elmopr.com  
713-524-0661

**Judith Kurnick**

HGO Director of Communications  
jkurnick@hgo.org  
713-546-0240

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## Houston Grand Opera Celebrates 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at Miller Outdoor Theatre with *The Elixir of Love*

*HGO offers two free performances of Donizetti's comic opera May 19 and 20*

Houston, May 12, 2017 – Houston Grand Opera (HGO) marks the sixth decade of making the art of opera accessible to all audiences at Miller Outdoor Theatre with two free, fully staged performances of **Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*** on **May 19 and 20**, starting at **8 p.m.** A magic elixir gives a love-struck young man the extra dose of confidence he needs to thwart a rival and win the woman of his dreams, but the elixir creates just as many problems as it solves. The bright, sunny production is set on the Amalfi Coast in the 1950s—complete with Vespas and a hot air balloon. With beautiful melodies and a hilarious story, it's the perfect entry point to the world of opera for the young and the young-at-heart.

The young man, Nemorino, and his sweetheart, Adina, will be sung by HGO Studio artists **Chris Bozeka** and **Mane Galoyan**, with fellow Studio artists **Ben Edquist** as his rival, Belcore, and **Federico De Michelis** as the “doctor” who provides the elixir. HGO Studio alumna **Alicia Gianni** will sing Giannetta. This fully staged production was directed during HGO's 2016–17 season by **Daniel Slater** and will be revived by director **Tim Claydon**. The opera will feature sets and costumes by **Robert Innes Hopkins** and musical direction by HGO Studio alumna **Emily Senturia**, with the **Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus**.

HGO will be live tweeting during the performances and encourages people to follow along using **#HGOoutdoors**.

“Nowhere is the power of opera more evident than in the thousands of Houstonians who turn out to HGO's performances year after year at Miller Outdoor Theatre,” said **Perryn Leech, HGO managing director**. “And our live Twitter feeds are confirming that this is a great way for people to discover opera for the first time. We invite all

Houstonians to bring a picnic, see and hear why this art form is still going strong after 400 years, and share their experience.”

HGO’s free performances at Miller Outdoor Theatre are made possible by the generous funders of the company’s NEXUS initiative: Anchorage Foundation of Texas; BBVA Compass; The Brown Foundation, Inc.; The Wortham Foundation, Inc.; Nabors Industries; and Shell Oil Company. The performances are also supported by the City of Houston through the Miller Theatre Advisory Board.

HGO first began performing at Miller Theatre in 1957 with two comedic operas, **Suppé’s *The Beautiful Galatea*** and **Ibert’s *Angélique***. In 1972, HGO launched the Spring Opera Festival, which presented several productions each year at Miller until 1980. One production, **Scott Joplin’s** folk opera ***Treemonisha***, orchestrated by **Gunther Schuller**, went on to be recorded and performed on Broadway.

Some years at Miller Theatre did not go without incident. In June 2001, Tropical Storm Allison made landfall during the performance of ***Carmen***. Houstonian Gene Voss, who was in the audience that night, recalls, “[Former HGO General Director] David Gockley came on stage at the beginning and said they’d anticipated canceling the performance, but because so many of us showed up, the show would go on!”

Another year, during **Verdi’s *Rigoletto***, the artist singing the title role fell ill during the performance. HGO Studio alumnus **Octavio Moreno** immediately took over the role, singing from the orchestra pit as the sick singer acted the part on stage. Soprano and HGO fan Kristen Turner recalls this moment as one of the reasons she decided to study opera. “I wanted to be a part of something that felt like family, and HGO solidified that for me,” Kristen reflects.

### **Donizetti’s *The Elixir of Love* at Miller Outdoor Theatre**

**WHEN:** Friday, May 19, and Saturday, May 20, at 8 p.m.

**WHERE:** 6000 Hermann Park Drive, Houston TX 77030

**TICKETS:** Free tickets for covered seating are available (limit 4 per person) at the Miller box office on the day of the performance. Open seating on the hill. Visit [MillerOutdoorTheatre.com](http://MillerOutdoorTheatre.com) for information.

#### **CAST:**

Nemorino, Chris Bozeka †  
Adina, Mane Galoyan †  
Belcore, Ben Edquist †  
Dr. Dulcamara, Federico De Michelis †  
Giannetta, Alicia Gianni ‡

#### **CREATIVE TEAM:**

Conductor, Emily Senturia ‡  
Production, Daniel Slater  
Revival Director/Choreographer, Tim Claydon  
Set and Costume Designer, Robert Innes Hopkins, *sets adapted by the HGO Technical Department*  
Original Lighting Designer Simon Mills  
Revival Lighting Designer, Michael James Clark  
Chorus Master, Richard Bado ‡

An Opera North production

† HGO Studio artist

‡ Former HGO Studio artist

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## About Houston Grand Opera

Since its inception in 1955, Houston Grand Opera has grown from a small regional organization into an internationally renowned opera company. HGO enjoys a reputation for commissioning and producing new works, including 63 world premieres and seven American premieres since 1973. In addition to producing and performing world-class opera, HGO contributes to the cultural enrichment of Houston and the nation through a diverse and innovative program of performances, community events, and education projects that reaches the widest possible public. HGO has toured extensively, including trips to Europe and Asia, and has won a Tony, two Grammy awards, and two Emmy awards—the only opera company to have won all three honors.

Through HGOco, Houston Grand Opera creates opportunities for Houstonians of all ages and backgrounds to create, participate in, and observe art. The NEXUS Initiative is HGO's multi-year ticket underwriting program that allows Houstonians of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy world-class opera without the barrier of price. Since 2007 NEXUS has enabled more than 225,000 Houstonians to experience first-quality opera through discounted single tickets and subscriptions, subsidized student performances, and free productions.

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**Media Contact:** Melissa Arredondo, [melissa@elmorepr.com](mailto:melissa@elmorepr.com) 713-524-0661

**Director of Communications:** Judith Kurnick, [jkurnick@hgo.org](mailto:jkurnick@hgo.org) 713-546-0240

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