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2024/25 STUDY GUIDE

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

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Stuart Howe (Nemorino), *The Elixir of Love*, 2005. Manitoba Opera. Photo: R. Tinker.

FAST FACTS

- *The Elixir of Love* was composed by Italian composer Gaetano Donizetti, to a libretto written by Felice Romani.
- Donizetti was known for composing at a fast pace. In fact, he wrote the music for the opera in just six weeks.
- *The Elixir of Love* is considered a masterwork of the *bel canto* style. Other famous composers who wrote in this style include Rossini and Bellini.
- The tenor aria from Act 2 (“Una furtiva lagrima”) is one of the most famous songs in opera repertoire.
- Art imitates life - the wealthy Adina purchases an exemption for Nemorino, to get the young man out of a military contract. This same thing happened to Donizetti: Marianna Pezzoli-Grattaroli, a highly successful businesswoman from the composer’s hometown of Bergamo, purchased for him an exemption from military service so that he could continue to write music (he had at this point dedicated no fewer than four compositions to her).



Nikki Einfeld (Adina). *The Elixir of Love*, Manitoba Opera 2005. Photo: R. Tinker.

THE PRODUCTION

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

October 26, 30, November 1, 2024
Dress Rehearsal / Student Night: October 24, 2024

Centennial Concert Hall

Music composed by Gaetano Donizetti
Libretto by Felice Romani
Based on the libretto for *Le Philtre* by Eugène Scribe

Approximately 2 hours 50 minutes in two acts, including one 20-minute intermission

Premiere Performance: Teatro della Canobbiana, Milan, May 12, 1832

Sung in Italian with projected English translations

Conducted by Tyrone Paterson

Directed by Ann Hodges

PRINCIPAL CAST

Adina	Soprano	ANDRIANA CHUCHMAN
Nemorino	Tenor	JONAH HOSKINS
Belcore	Baritone	JOELL WILLIAMS
Dulcamara	Bass	PETER MCGILLIVRAY
Giannetta	Soprano	KAREN SANTOS

MANITOBA OPERA CHORUS

WINNIPEG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



Terry Hodges (Dr. Dulcamara) with the Manitoba Opera Chorus.
The Elixir of Love, 2005. Manitoba Opera. Photo: R. Tinker.

INTRODUCTION & SYNOPSIS

INTRODUCING

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

“Adina, a wealthy village girl, flirts with Nemorino and Belcore, an army sergeant. Dulcamara hawks a ‘love potion,’ really only wine. Nemorino enlists in his rival’s unit for money for the potion. He does not yet know that his rich uncle has died, leaving everything to him, and thinks the sudden attention from the village girls is due to the potion. Adina, who loves him, fears she will lose him. But when she buys his release from the army, the couple confess their love. The crowd credits the potion, and deluges Dulcamara with orders for bottles of their own.” - Milton Brener, *Opera Offstage*



Stuart Howe (Nemorino), Nikki Einfeld (Adina), and Gregory Dahl (Belcore).
The Elixir of Love, Manitoba Opera 2005. Photo: R. Tinker.

SYNOPSIS

Place: A remote Italian village

Time: The 1950s

Act I

In a sleepy Italian village popular with tourists who visit to see ‘remote Italian life,’ a group of tourists arrive, led by their sophisticated guide, Adina. The villager Nemorino is hopelessly in love with Adina and when he hears her tell the story of Tristan and Isolde, he is convinced a magic potion will help him gain the tour guide’s affections. Sgt. Belcore arrives and flirts with Adina, even asking for her hand in marriage. She rejects Belcore’s advances, saying she cannot be won that easily. When they are alone, Nemorino declares his love for her. Adina is too proud to encourage this unsophisticated villager and advises him to find someone else to love.

The mysterious Doctor Dulcamara arrives. Claiming to offer a miraculous cure for every ill, he sells his wares to both tourists and villagers. Nemorino asks Dulcamara if he stocks Isolde’s love potion. Seizing a chance to make some easy money, Dulcamara instantly produces his ‘elixir of love’ in reality,



Terry Hodges (Dr. Dulcamara) with Peter Sywy (supernumerary)
and members of the Manitoba Opera Chorus.
The Elixir of Love, 2005. Manitoba Opera. Photo: R. Tinker.

THE PRODUCTION

a bottle of cheap wine. Dulcamara warns Nemorino that the elixir will not take effect for 24 hours. By the time Nemorino discovers his deception, Dulcamara plans to have left the village.

Nemorino consumes the entire bottle and quickly becomes more confident. Seeing Adina, he delights in ignoring her. Confused and annoyed by Nemorino's indifference, Adina impulsively agrees to marry Belcore the next week. Nemorino laughs, believing that the next day she will love him. He taunts Belcore which infuriates Adina more. Suddenly, Belcore's troops arrive with orders to return to duty. Belcore suggests moving the wedding to that evening. Still annoyed at Nemorino, Adina spontaneously agrees. Nemorino is horrified; by the time the elixir works its magic, Adina will already be married. He pleads with her to wait one more day. She stubbornly refuses, wanting revenge for his forgetting her so easily. Everyone celebrates the engagement while Nemorino frantically looks for Dulcamara.

ACT II

The pre-wedding party is in full swing. Dulcamara invites Adina to sing a duet. Adina is distracted, however, because Nemorino is absent. The notary arrives, and Belcore hurries Adina to the wedding ceremony.

Nemorino despairs at the prospect of losing Adina, begging Doctor Dulcamara for



Nikki Einfeld (Adina), and Gregory Dahl (Belcore). *The Elixir of Love*, Manitoba Opera 2005. Photo: R. Tinker.



Stuart Howe (Nemorino) with the Manitoba Opera Chorus. *The Elixir of Love*, 2005. Manitoba Opera. Photo: R. Tinker.

another dose of the love potion. The doctor says he will happily oblige - in return for cash. The penniless Nemorino is easy prey for his rival Belcore, who offers him money to enlist. Nemorino agrees, confident he will at least have Adina's love for one day.

Meanwhile, Giannetta spreads the news that Nemorino's rich uncle has died, making Nemorino a millionaire. Nemorino arrives with his second bottle of elixir (wine!) and is astonished that women suddenly adore him. He is convinced the elixir must be working. Dulcamara, too, starts to believe in the power of his own potion. Adina tries to get Nemorino's attention. Nemorino is delighted that she now desires him and decides to let her suffer for a little while longer. He leaves, pursued by Giannetta and the women.

Adina realizes her foolishness and finally acknowledges her feelings for him. She resolves to win him back.

Nemorino, alone, recalls a furtive tear he had seen in Adina's eye. Although he may die a soldier, he now knows she loves him. Adina returns, having repaid Belcore the recruitment fee, releasing Nemorino from the army. She finally confesses her love to him. Nemorino can hardly believe his ears. Both celebrate their love.

When they learn of the inheritance, Doctor Dulcamara credits his powerful potion. As everyone celebrates, Dulcamara leaves to sell his magic elixir to the next group of gullible customers.

THE PRINCIPAL ARTISTS & ROLES



ANDRIANA CHUCHMAN

ADINA (a wealthy landowner)

“Ms. Chuchman radiates enough vocal allure, physical beauty and charm to light up the stage.” - *The Chicago Tribune*

Andriana Chuchman is a highly acclaimed Winnipeg-born soprano known for her versatility across a broad range of operatic roles, from Mozart and Handel to contemporary works. She has performed with prestigious opera companies worldwide, including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the Canadian Opera

Company. Her repertoire includes Giulietta in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, Cleopatra in *Giulio Cesare*, and Mary in Jake Heggie’s *It’s a Wonderful Life*. In concert, she has performed with orchestras such as the Detroit Symphony and Toronto Symphony, and at festivals including Ravinia and Lincoln Center’s White Lights Festival. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Voice Performance from the University of Manitoba and has received several awards, including the 2019 Emerging Star of the Year from San Francisco Opera.

Ms. Chuchman appeared in Manitoba Opera’s 2005 production of *The Elixir of Love* as Giannetta, and most recently appeared with the company as a soloist in the 50th Anniversary Concert (2023).



JONAH HOSKINS

NEMORINO (a simple peasant, in love with Adina)

“He brought sweetness and light to Nemorino . . . Hoskins also exuded an appealing stage presence.” - *Bachtrack*

Born in 1996 in Saratoga Springs in Utah, Jonah made his operatic debut as the First Spirit in *The Magic Flute* and continued performing the roles of Tamino (*The Magic Flute*), Fenton (*Falstaff*), Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*) and Septimius (*Theodora*). The role of Don Curzio (*Le nozze di Figaro*) took him to the Santa Fe Opera where he has gone on to sing the roles of Count Almaviva (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), the Sailor

(*Tristan and Isolde*), and Nemorino (*The Elixir of Love*). In 2022 he made his role debut as Dean of the Faculty in Massenet’s *Cendrillon* at the Metropolitan Opera.

Mr. Hoskins has been celebrated in acclaimed international competitions. In autumn 2021 he was awarded with the second prize at Plácido Domingo’s Operalia Competition at the Bolshoi Theatre and received the Extraordinary Artistic Promise Award at the Lotte Lenya Competition, and placed first in the National Opera Association in 2019.

Mr. Hoskins makes his Manitoba Opera debut as Nemorino.

THE PRINCIPAL ARTISTS & ROLES



JORELL WILLIAMS

BELCORE (a self-assured seargeant who courts Adina)

“A robust baritone capable of descending to delicate threads of sound” - *Operawire*

American baritone Jorell Williams is celebrated for his resonant voice and expressive depth, performing on prominent concert and opera stages worldwide. In the 2023/24 season, he made debut engagements with several organizations, including Greek National Opera and Symphony Nova Scotia, while returning to others like the National Philharmonic Orchestra. He recently gave a standout

performance as Maduka in the world premiere of *Of The Sea* with Tapestry Opera. Other notable roles include Don Pasquale with Opera Omaha and Escamillo in *Carmen* with Pacific Opera Victoria. Mr. Williams holds degrees from the Manhattan School of Music and SUNY Purchase and actively advocates for artist rights, serving as an advisor on equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives.

Mr. Williams makes his Manitoba Opera debut as Belcore.



PETER MCGILLIVRAY

DULCAMARA (a traveling medical charlatan)

“[A] hugely charismatic singer crafting a larger-than-life persona including no-holds barred physical comedy skills.”
- *Winnipeg Free Press*

Born in Saskatchewan and now based in northern Ontario, baritone Peter McGillivray has been described in the national press as “a gifted comic actor” with a “rich, flexible and strong voice.” Recent seasons have seen him specializing in comic roles such as Dr. Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville*, Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*, Schaunard in *La Bohème*, and

Falke in *Die Fledermaus*. He also excels in interpreting more dramatic fare such as Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, and concert performances of Handel’s *Messiah*, Mahler’s *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, Haydn’s *Creation*, and Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*. He has performed lead roles with the Canadian Opera Company as well as with opera companies in Dallas, Victoria, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Manitoba, Hamilton, Ottawa, and Quebec City. Additionally, he spent the 2010/11 season on the roster of the Metropolitan Opera in productions of *La Bohème* and Strauss’ *Capriccio*.

Mr. McGillivray most recently appeared with Manitoba Opera as Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola* (2022).

THE PRINCIPAL ARTISTS & ROLES



KAREN SANTOS

GIANNETTA (adina's friend)

“During Karen Santos’ aria, ‘Porgi, amor’, the entire club was silent and fixated on her heartbreaking honesty. To hear this soprano’s rich, velvety voice was truly a highlight.”

- *Schmopera*

Karen Santos is a versatile soprano and visual artist from Mexico City, now based in Canada, known for her rich vocal tone and stage presence. One of her recent performances was the one-woman opera *At the Statue of Venus* by Jake Heggie, where she also created the set’s art pieces,

showcasing her visual arts background. Other leading operatic roles have included the Countess (*The Marriage of Figaro*) and Belinda/Anna (*Dido & Aeneas*) with Manitoba Underground Opera, Susanna (*The Marriage of Figaro*) with Manhattan Opera Studio, Isabelle/Madeline (*The Face on the Barroom Floor*) with the Little Opera Company, Rodrigo (Handel’s *Rodrigo*) and Angela (*Angela and her Sisters*) with the University of Manitoba Opera Theatre, Papagena (*The Magic Flute*) and Lady Anna (*Patience*) with Opera NUOVA and Micaëla (*Carmen*) with Festival de Ópera en Oaxaca.

Ms. Santos made her Carnegie Hall debut in 2017 with the Manhattan Opera Studio. She earned her Master of Music at the University of Manitoba. In addition to her vocal career, Karen holds a Fine Arts degree from the University of British Columbia and continues to integrate her visual artistry into her operatic work.

Ms Santos makes her Manitoba Opera main stage debut as Giannetta.

THE COMPOSER

GAETANO DONIZETTI



Gaetano Donizetti was born on November 29, 1797 in Bergamo, Italy. His father managed a pawnshop, and his mother was a seamstress. Despite his parents' aspirations for him to be apprenticed to an architect or lawyer, the young Gaetano was only

interested in art, music and poetry. He was entered into the Bergamo School of Music at age nine, and studied with a professor (J.S. Mayr) who encouraged him to enroll at the same school that Rossini had attended: the Lico Filarmonico in Bologna. There he studied singing, harpsichord, harmony and counterpoint. In 1818 his early opera *Enrico di Borgogna* was performed in Venice, and he received a commission for another opera (*Una follia*) shortly thereafter. Neither opera received much notice, and Donizetti sought to return home to Bergamo to focus on refining his composition.

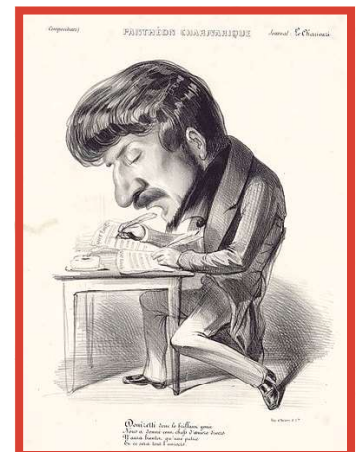
He became a prolific composer, composing no fewer than 31 operas over the next 12 years. His found great success with his opera *Anna Bolena* in 1830, which brought him fame across all of Europe and eventually across the Atlantic. Two years later he succeeded again with *The Elixir of Love* with libretto by Felice Romani, a well-known theatre poet.

Donizetti was known to work frantically and incessantly. *The Elixir of Love* was written in a span of 6 weeks, he completed the full opera *Il Campanello di Notte* in just nine days, and wrote the last act of *La Favorita* in mere hours. A famous print cartoon of the time depicted him writing with one quill pen in each hand—one for *opera buffa* (comic opera), and one for *opera seria* (serious

opera). By the age of 47, when a complete mental collapse ended his career, he had written 77 operas and almost 650 other musical compositions. He had a profound impact on the future of opera; along with Rossini and Bellini, Donizetti wrote in a new *bel canto* style characterized by beautiful melodies and plots that balance energetic action with tender emotional development. His most famous comic operas include *The Elixir of Love* (1832), *The Daughter of the Regiment* (1840), and *Don Pasquale* (1843), and his well-known serious operas include *Anna Bolena* (1830), *La Favorite* (1840), and *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835).

Donizetti's personal life was marked with tragedy. His wife, Virginia, died from complications following childbirth in 1837. Their infant son also perished. Donizetti had lost two children already, as well as his parents, and his life entered an era of tragic decline. In 1845 he left Vienna for Paris, where he suffered a breakdown brought on by the mental and physical ravages of syphilis, and was rendered paralyzed and semiconscious. He was later moved to his family's home in Bergamo, where he died on April 8, 1848.

Donizetti had a tremendous impact on the career of composer Giuseppe Verdi. Verdi went again and again to La Scala in Milan to hear Donizetti's works performed. His admiration of the older composer continued throughout his life, prompting him to visit Donizetti when he was in ailing health, and working to preserve his legacy after his death.



THE LIBRETTIST

FELICE ROMANI



Felice Romani was born in Genoa, Italy, in 1788. He was a very famous librettist in his day. Although he studied law to make his family happy, his passion was literature, and he became friends with important literary figures

in Italy in the early 19th century.

Romani was offered the position of court poet in Vienna, but he chose to concentrate on writing librettos. He wrote the librettos for many well known and less well-known operas and became the librettist for La Scala, the famous opera house in Milan. Among the many composers with whom he worked were Vincenzo Bellini, Gioachino Rossini, Gaetano Donizetti, and Giuseppe Verdi, all great bel canto opera composers. Romani's libretto for *The Elixir of Love* was adapted from the work of another libretto for the opera *Le Philtre*. He renamed the characters, but his original libretto did not suggest a change of the setting from Spain. Many productions, however, locate the opera in an Italian village. Romani often adapted other works, keeping up to date with French drama. Despite this 'borrowing' from others, Romani set himself high standards, insisting on making the words as important as the music. Romani died in 1865 in Moneglia, Italy.

WHAT IS A LIBRETTO?

Libretto means "little book" in Italian. It refers to the written text of an opera set to music by the composer. Today, we commonly refer to an opera as being "by" the composer of the music, but the text is a vital component and is normally written first. In earlier times it was often regarded as more important than the music, and it was common for audience members to purchase the libretto to read.

Early composers were usually contracted to set music to a pre-existing text. Only later did composers (such as Mozart and Verdi) work in close collaboration with their librettists. A few composers - notably Wagner - wrote their own texts.



MUSICAL HIGHLIGHTS

UNA PAROLA, O ADINA (Act I)

“A word, O Adina”

Pretty Yende (Adina)
Matthew Polenzani (Nemorino)
The Metropolitan Opera (2018)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DKH7nUaUJI>

Adina tries to convince Nemorino to give up on his affections for her; she’s just not that into him! But he is resolute.



Matthew Polenzani (Nemorino) and Pretty Yende (Adina). *The Elixir of Love*, Metropolitan Opera, 2018. Photo: Karen Almond

UDITE, UDITE O RUSTICI (Act I)

“Listen, you village people”

Ambrogio Maestri (Dulcamara)
The Metropolitan Opera (2012)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9B5_JWwe1mM

Dr. Dulcamara arrives in the town square to hawk his wares to the townsfolk, making outrageous claims about his expertise and the efficacy of his medicines.



Ambrogio Maestri (Dulcamara), *The Elixir of Love*, Metropolitan Opera, 2012. Photo: Ken Howard.

UNA FURTIVA LAGRIMA (Act II)

“One furtive tear”

Juan Diego Flórez, tenor
Rolex Ambassadors Gala (2019)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EptlmrelyTk>

Although the harp and bassoon set a melancholy tone at the start of this aria, the song is actually an expression of joy as Nemorino realizes that the tear he saw in Adina’s eyes means that she truly cares for him. This is one of the most famous tenor arias in all of opera, often performed as a concert piece (as shown in the video above).



Juan Diego Flórez in recital in Barcelona, 2020. Photo: A. Bofill.

BEL CANTO

In a 2019 article for *The Washington Post*, columnist Anne Midgette writes that “opera exists to tell stories . . . specifically through the voices that sing it.”

When we think about opera, the single most defining feature is the human voice. For modern operas and audiences, that means powerful voices, finely trained to project over large orchestras, filling vast concert halls. Opera singing is not amplified, and singers are required to develop sufficient breath support to project their voices into a 3,000-seat theatre.



Teatro La Fenice, Venice, 1837. Public domain.

“Teatro La Fenice is an opera house in Venice, Italy. It is one of the most famous and renowned landmarks in the history of Italian theatre and in the history of opera as a whole. Especially in the 19th century, La Fenice became the site of many famous operatic premieres at which the works of several of the four major bel canto era composers – Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi – were performed.” - Bethany Shepard, 2022

Around the 1830s, in the time that Donizetti wrote *The Elixir of Love*, vocal pedagogy was changing as singers experimented with new methods of breath support and tone production that would enable them to meet the expectations of composers and audiences.

By the time of Donizetti and Bellini, pitch in Italy had generally risen by at least a half step from music of the previous century and required a new style of singing. Along with the increased size of orchestras that accompanied singers in large performance spaces, this led many vocalists to teach and adopt a style of singing that experimented with a lowered larynx, allowing for improved projection. This new style of singing would dominate the operatic world of the 19th century and continues to inform vocal pedagogy into the modern era.

The term bel canto has been used since the 1860s to refer to a style of singing practiced in the 18th and 19th centuries, perhaps best embodied in the works of Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti. It is characterized by beautiful melodies sung by even-toned voices, soaring legato (connected) lines, and displays of vocal pyrotechnics in the nimble cabalettas that followed every heartfelt cavatina. Of particular note is the approach taken by tenors in this style, who sang notes above high B in falsetto rather than full-voiced as one might when singing Verdi or Puccini. Rossini famously lambasted tenor Gilbert-Louis Duprez for attempting to sing a high C in full voice in his *William Tell* (1831), comparing the sound to the squawk of a strangled chicken.

Famous 20th century interpreters of bel canto roles included Maria Callas, Joan Sutherland, and Luciano Pavarotti, and modern champions of the style include Juan Diego Flórez, Lawrence Brownlee, and Lisette Oropesa.

MAGICAL ELIXIRS & SNAKE OIL SALESMEN



Detail of *De kwakzalver* (The Quack), attributed to Dutch painter Jan Steen, ca. 1650-1679.

In *The Elixir of Love*, the titular tincture is procured by the naïve and lovesick Nemorino from the travelling physician Doctor Dulcamara. Nemorino, down to his last pennies and unlucky in love, approaches the self-styled “Encyclopedic Doctor” who entertains an audience of villagers. Dulcamara hawks medicines and salves to cure liver disease and paralysis, smooth wrinkles, eradicate lice and vermin, increase libido, and so on, haggling prices down from extravagantly unaffordable to taking whatever coin he is offered. Nemorino begs him for the love elixir of Queen Isolde. Although the doctor is unfamiliar with the tale of Tristan and Isolde, he nevertheless leaps at the opportunity to make a quick sale, exchanging the erstwhile magical liqueur - SPOILER ALERT - (actually a bottle of red wine) for the sum total of Nemorino’s wealth - a single zecchin (a Venetian ducat), and cautioning the young man that the elixir will require 24 hours to take its effect (giving the fraudulent doctor time enough to get out of town).

This kind of medical quackery is a familiar trope, charlatan doctors being well-documented in histories and fiction.

“The term quack originates from quacksalver, or kwakzalver, a Dutch word for a seller of nostrums, medical cures of dubious and secretive origins . . . they plied their trade on street corners and at country fairs, hawking homemade remedies in loud, attention-grabbing voices—hence the term quack, likening their cries to noisy ducks or geese.” - Drago, E. B, 2020.

Even the word “charlatan” is directly related to quackery. The word comes from “Cerretani,” the name for people from Cerreto di Spoleto- a small town in what is now Italy that became notorious in the Middle Ages for widespread fraud committed by its inhabitants who would collect alms on behalf of medical and religious foundations which they would keep for themselves. This evolved to medical charlatanism, exploiting the absence of institutional medicine in rural areas and the superstition of a poorly educated populace. There and across Europe, unscrupulous vendors sold cure-alls concocted from all manner of bizarre and potentially dangerous (or even wholly fictitious) components. One such prescription, written in the 17th century calls for:

“Gold, one half ounce.
Powder of a lion’s heart, four ounces.
Filings of a unicorn’s horn, one half ounce.
Ashes of the whole chameleon, one and a half ounces.
Earthworms, a score.
Dried man’s brain, five ounces.

To be mixed together and digested with universal spirits.”

Such practices were not isolated to Europe. A North American audience might draw parallels to the iconic snake oil salesmen of the old West. The great irony of snake oil

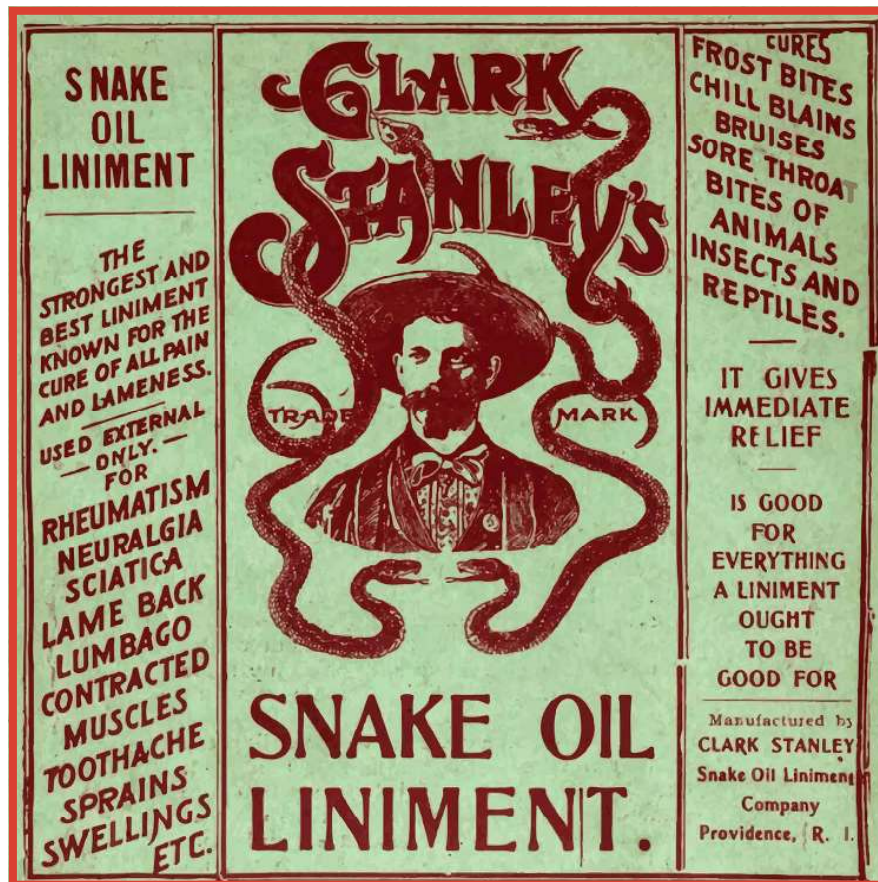
MAGICAL ELIXIRS & SNAKE OIL SALESMEN

is that it originated as a genuine product – an oil derived from Chinese water snakes, high in omega-3 fatty acids and known as a potent anti-inflammatory.

In the late 19th century the American Clark Stanley, a cowboy turned patent medicine vendor, learned about snake oil from Chinese railroad workers. He set about to capitalize on its reputation, unconcerned that Chinese water snakes were nowhere to be found in the American West. From 1879 the “Rattlesnake King” touted a miracle salve produced from rattlesnake oil, the secrets of which he claimed to have learned from a Hopi medicine man. He distributed pamphlets and gave public demonstrations to sell his patent-protected panacea which he prescribed:

“... for the cure of all pain and lameness, for rheumatism, neuralgias, sciatica, contracted muscles, toothaches, sprain, swellings, frost bite, bruises, sore throat, bites of animals, insects, and reptiles.” - Bryant, C.W. & Clark, J., 2024.

It wasn’t until 1916 that this “snake oil” was found to have nothing to do with snakes whatsoever – the recipe consisted of beef fat, red pepper, mineral oil, camphor, and turpentine. For his fraudulent activities spanning over three decades, Stanley was fined \$20 (equivalent to about \$500 today). The damage had been done, and “snake oil salesman” entered the public lexicon as an umbrella term for any person selling a bogus or ineffective product.



Advertisement for Clark Stanley's Snake Oil. (public domain)

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Curriculum Connections to the Manitoba Curriculum Frameworks for Grade 9 - 12 are provided below each activity. For a more in-depth look at the connections, view our Manitoba Curriculum Connections documents at <http://mbopera.ca/school-programs/study-guides/>

ACTIVITY #1 USING THE FIVE C'S

Have Your Students Analyze the Opera as Drama

CHARACTERS

Are they interesting? Believable? Are their actions, words, thoughts consistent?

CONCLUSION

How well does the conclusion work? Is it consistent? Satisfying? Believable?

CONFLICT

What conflicts are established? How are they resolved?

CONTEXT

What are the historical, physical, and emotional settings? Sets and costumes?

CLIMAX

To what climax does the conflict lead?

DIRECTIONS

- Give students the synopsis to read and have them re-tell the story after they have read it.
- Ask comprehensive questions.
- Present and discuss the composer and librettist.
- Listen to excerpts from the opera. Watch a DVD of the opera. Have students identify and recognize recurring themes.
- Discuss the historical background, emphasizing the visual and performing arts and history-social science frameworks. Discuss the results of certain events. Whom did they affect? How? Why? Did any changes occur as a result?
- Review the glossary of terms.
- Have the students watch for references to themes in the opera in their everyday lives. The internet, radio, TV, magazines, and movies often refer back to classics.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.2.1; 2.1.2; 5.2.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-M2; DR-C1; DR-R3

Music Curriculum Connections: M-M2; M-C2; M-R1

ACTIVITY #2 CREATE A PRODUCTION

- Choose a time and place to set your production.
- Have the students design a poster for *The Elixir of Love* including such details as the date, the time, and the people involved.
- Have them draw a set for a production of the opera.
- They might also sketch a costume, wig, and makeup for a character in *The Elixir of Love*.
- Have the students write a media release about *The Elixir of Love* including the date, the time, the people involved, and why it would be exciting or fun to attend.
- Have the students create an ad for the opera. Include whatever you feel is the biggest “selling point” of the opera - what makes it exciting? Why should people come to see it?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 2.3.5; 2.3.4; 4.1.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-C2; DR-C3

Music Curriculum Connections: M-C2; M-C3

ACTIVITY #3 A REVIEW

STEP 1 THINK-GROUP-SHARE

Individually, students will write, in point-form, the answers to the following questions:

- What did you like about the opera?
What did you dislike?
- What did you think about the sets, props, and costumes?
- If you were the stage director, would you have done something differently?
Why?
- What were you expecting? Did it live up to your expectations?
- What did you think of the singers' portrayal of their characters?

Break the students into groups to discuss their feelings and reactions to the production. Have the students write on poster papers their answers or important points of their discussion. Encourage the students to go beyond the questions posed.

STEP 2 CLASS DISCUSSION

Have the whole class examine the poster papers and discuss the different ideas from each group.

STEP 3 OUTLINING YOUR REVIEW

Go over the essential aspects of a review including a clearly stated purpose, a coherent comparison/contrast organizational pattern, a summary paragraph capturing the interest of the reader, precise nouns, and revision for consistency of ideas. You might give your students a few samples of reviews for arts events – or ask them to bring in some reviews they find themselves. Have the students fill out the review outline, then complete a rough draft.

- Purpose (why are you writing this and who is your audience?)
- Plot Synopsis (including who sang what role, etc.)
- Paragraph 1 (compare and contrast things you liked or didn't like)
- Paragraph 2 (compare and contrast things you liked or didn't like)
- Paragraph 3 (compare and contrast things you liked or didn't like)
- Summary/Closing Paragraph

STEP 4 PEER CONFERENCING

Students will exchange reviews to critique and edit. Encourage the students to focus on effective coordination of ideas in sentences and the correct use of grammar and punctuation.

STEP 5 CREATING THE FINAL DRAFT

Have students make the appropriate adjustments to their reviews. You could also have the students type the pieces and organize them into a newspaper.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.1.1; 1.1.2; 1.2.2; 3.1.3; 3.3.1; 4.1.3; 4.3.1; 4.3.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.1; 4.2.2; 5.2.1; 5.1.1

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-R1; DR-R2; DR-R3; DR-R4

Music Curriculum Connections: M-R1; M-R2; M-R3; M-R4

ACTIVITY #4 ACT OUT THE STORY

Have students consider the characters and the role they play in the story. Choose one of the following:

ADINA / NEMORINO / BELCORE / DULCAMARA

If you were going to play this character, you would have to discover, create, and imagine background, personality, and physical qualities. Some clues are provided in the story and the music and some you need to make up yourself.

PRETEND YOU ARE THAT CHARACTER AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- What motivates you? How does this affect your actions? What obstacles stand in your way?
- What steps in the opera do you take to achieve your objectives? What are the results?
- What obstacles are beyond your control (laws, social status, others' actions)?
- What are your (character's) greatest strengths? Greatest weaknesses?
- What is your relationship to the other characters?
- How is your character's personality expressed through the music of the opera?
- Can you think of a modern-day character who has similar characteristics and traits?
- If your character were alive today, how would s/he be more or less successful?
- What different steps would s/he take to achieve an objective?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.1.1; 2.1.2; 3.3.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-M1; DR-M2; DR-M3

ACTIVITY #5 WRITE A LETTER

Have the students choose a moment in the story and have one character write a letter to another. Explore how they would be feeling about the events of the day.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.1.2; 1.1.3; 2.3.5; 4.2.2; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 5.2.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-R3

ACTIVITY #6 CAST *THE ELIXIR OF LOVE*

Have the students cast modern-day singers or bands as the performers in *The Elixir of Love*. Who did you choose? What are their costumes like? What did you base your decisions on?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 2.3.1; 2.2.1; 2.2.2; 4.1.2; 5.2.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-M1; DR-C3; DR-R3

Music Curriculum Connections: M-C2; M-R4

ACTIVITY #7 RESEARCH AND REPORT

Have the students study the history and politics of the region now known as Italy at the time that Donizetti was writing *The Elixir of Love*. What authors were popular? What scientific discoveries were being made? How did the social and political life in Italy compare to that in Canada at the time?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 2.2.1; 2.2.2; 3.3.1; 3.3.3; 3.2.2; 3.2.3; 4.3.1; 4.3.2; 4.3.3; 4.2.2; 4.2.3; 5.2.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-C2

ACTIVITY #8 *THE ELIXIR OF LOVE* MOOD BOARD

Often before artists and designers create their work, they make a mood board to set the tone for the piece. This is usually a poster-sized piece of paper covered in images and words, usually from the pages of magazines and newspapers, that together communicates the complex mood of the piece in a way that words can't. It's the same as making a collage, except a mood board is for the purpose of communicating a focused concept.

Have your students go through a stack of old magazines and newspapers to create a mood board for *The Elixir of Love*. They can create one each or work together on a large one for the class. Consider elements like colours, textures, phrases, faces, patterns, and images that represent the opera.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 2.3.5; 2.3.4; 2.2.3; 4.1.1; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.4.1; 5.1.1

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-M3; DR-R3

ACTIVITY #9 MUSICAL INTERPRETATION OF LITERATURE

STEP 1 PREPARE A MUSICAL OUTLINE

Working in small groups, have your students choose a play, novel, or story that they've read and think about how they'd go about adapting it into an opera. Have them write out an outline and try to structure the beginnings of the opera. Which parts of the drama would be highlighted with which types of music? Would they have a large chorus to back up the principal singers or would the opera be more intimate? Which singing voices (soprano, baritone, tenor, etc.) would best suit each character?

STEP 2 COMPOSE AND PERFORM AN OVERTURE

How could the elements of music (ie., rhythm, pitch, dynamics, etc.) be used to communicate the mood of the piece within the overture? Which instruments would be used? Allow students some time to work on composing their overture based on their answers to these questions. Students can then perform their overture for the class either as a composed and rehearsed piece or improvised. Alternatively, they may choose to present their overture by describing the characteristics of the elements of the music within their piece.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.1.2; 2.3.5; 2.2.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 4.1.2; 4.4.3; 4.4.2; 4.2.5; 5.1.1; 5.1.2; 5;1;4

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-CR2; DR-M1; DR-M2

Music Curriculum Connections: M-CR2; M-CR3; M-M3

ACTIVITY #10 ACTIVE LISTENING

Play the first few minutes of the *The Elixir of Love* CD (or contact Manitoba Opera about other available recordings). Ask your students to listen closely to the music and jot down their thoughts, feelings, and first impressions. Then have your students share their reactions with the classroom. Ask them to listen again and pay close attention to the elements of music (rhythm, pitch, dynamics, etc.) then explore questions such as the following:

- What are the instruments used to make the music?
- How does this music make me feel?
- What is the mood of the piece?
- What type of emotions do the singers bring forth?
- Does the music have a steady beat or pulse?
- What is the size of the ensemble?
- What do the singing voices tell us about those characters?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.1.1; 1.12; 1.2.2; 2.3.1; 2.2.3; 4.4.3; 5.2.1

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-R1

ACTIVITY #11 OPERA POP QUIZ

- 1 _____ A theatrical production incorporating both vocal and instrumental music, drama, and sometimes dance.
- 2 _____ The lowest male vocal range.
- 3 _____ An instrument introduction to an opera.
- 4 _____ The area where the orchestra is seated.
- 5 _____ Considered the first opera.
- 6 _____ A song for solo voice in an opera.
- 7 _____ The highest female vocal range.
- 8 _____ A song for two voices.
- 9 _____ The lowest female vocal range.
- 10 _____ The Italian word meaning “little book.”
- 11 _____ The middle male vocal range.
- 12 _____ The person who is in charge of all the action on stage.

ACTIVITY #12 *THE ELIXIR OF LOVE* POP QUIZ

- 1 Who is the composer? _____
- 2 Who wrote the libretto? _____
- 3 In what year did the premiere performance take place? _____
- 4 In what language is the opera performed? _____
- 5 Where did the opera premiere? _____
- 6 Where is the opera set? _____
- 7 The role of Adina is sung by what voice part? _____
- 8 The role of Nemorino is sung by what voice part? _____
- 9 What does Dr. Dulcamara sell to Nemorino? _____
- 10 Nemorino sees what that makes him think Adina loves him? _____
- 11 What story does Adina read aloud in Act 1? _____
- 12 How does Nemorino get out of military service? _____

ANSWER KEY POP QUIZ #11 & #12

OPERA

1. Opera
2. Bass
3. Overture
4. Orchestra Pit or “The Pit”
5. Daphne
6. Aria
7. Soprano
8. Duet
9. Contralto
10. Libretto
11. Baritone
12. Stage Director

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

1. Gaetano Donizetti
2. Felice Romani
3. 1832
4. Italian
5. Teatro della Canobbiana
6. Italy
7. Soprano
8. Tenor
9. Wine
10. A single tear
11. Tristan and Isolde
12. Adina buys his contract

Manitoba Opera would be pleased to receive a copy of any work related to this opera produced by your students. Please forward to:

Scott Miller

Education and Community Engagement Coordinator
Manitoba Opera, 1060-555 Main St., Winnipeg, MB R3B 1C3

or
smiller@mbopera.ca

WINNIPEG PUBLIC LIBRARY

BOOKS

The New Grove masters of Italian opera : Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, Verdi, Puccini
Gossett, Philip.
New York : Norton, [1983]
Call Number: 782.1092 NEW

The lives and times of the great composers
Steen, Michael.
Thriplow, Cambridge : Icon Books, 2003.
Call Number: 780.922 STE

SCORES

The Elixir of Love: Opera in Two Acts
Bizet, Georges.
New York : G. Schirmer, [1961] ©1961

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Donizetti: The Elixir of Love
Levine, James.
[United States]
Deutsche Grammophon
Made available through hoopla, 1990.
Call Number: STREAMING

MANITOBA OPERA

BOOKS

Encyclopedia of the Opera
David Ewen

Opera Offstage
Milton Brener

CDS

L'Elisir d'Amore
Orchestra & Chorus of the Royal Opera House
Featuring Ileana Cotrubas, Placido Domingo

L'Elisir d'Amore:
English Chamber Orchestra
Featuring Joan Sutherland, Luciano Pavarotti

LIBRETTO

L'Elisir d'Amore
G.Schirmer's Collection of Opera Librettos

If you need recommendations for additional resources, please contact:
Scott Miller, Education & Community Engagement Coordinator - smiller@mbopera.

STUDENT NIGHT

EDUCATE THROUGH LIVE EXPERIENCE

Give your students the opportunity to experience the timeless art form of opera through Manitoba Opera's Student Night at the Opera.

Student Night at the Opera occurs at the final dress rehearsal before Opening Night and is an opportunity for students to experience a fully staged professional opera production at a greatly reduced price.



Student Night for *The Elixir of Love* Thursday, October 24, 7:30 PM

STUDENT NIGHT TICKETS: \$15

Group tickets

K-12 schools, home schools, or youth groups.

Individual tickets

Full-time post-secondary students (must provide valid student ID).

All performances, including the dress rehearsals, take place at the Centennial Concert Hall.

OPERA CLASS

A FREE CLASSROOM WORKSHOP LED BY A PROFESSIONALLY TRAINED OPERA SINGER

Bring an opera singer to your classroom! Students will participate in hands-on learning activities which explore storytelling through music and experience the power of live operatic singing.

Opera Class connects to all four essential learning areas of the K-8 Manitoba Music curriculum framework.

Recommended for Grades 3-6

Free of Charge

Length: 45 minutes

Maximum # of students per workshop: 30



Mezzo soprano Laurelle Czaplinski presents Opera Class at Waldheim School, 2018.

TO BOOK:

SCOTT MILLER, EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR | 204-942-7470 | SMILLER@MBOPERA.CA

OPERA IN A TRUNK

Opera Trunks are a simple, fun, and informative way to introduce your students to the world of opera.

Each trunk is filled with costumes, props, activities, books, DVDs, CDs, and a study guide that will bring opera to life for your students.

Free of Charge | Can be borrowed for three weeks at a time

Recommended for grades K-6



OPERA TRUNKS

Hansel and Gretel

Humperdinck

Based on the classic Brothers Grimm fairy tale, Humperdinck's musical retelling of the story of two mischievous children who discover a delicious gingerbread house hiding a wicked secret combines fantasy, adventure, catchy folk-type songs, and beautiful music.



The Daughter of the Regiment

Donizetti

A feisty orphaned tomboy raised by French soldiers must convince her "fathers" to let her marry

a peasant. A comedy with a happy ending, featuring vocal acrobatics such as the show-stopping "Ah! Mes amis" ("Ah! My friends").

Carmen

Bizet

Music that pulsates with the spirit of Spain, including many opera favourites such as the famous Habanera, and the rousing Toreador Song.

The Magic Flute

Mozart

A fanciful fairytale about a prince out to win his princess with the help of a merry bird catcher.

Aida

Verdi

The grandest of grand operas, *Aida* is an epic love story about an Ethiopian princess who longs to be with Radames, leader of the Egyptian army that conquered her homeland.

La Bohème

Puccini

One of the most romantic operas of all time, a coming-of-age story about love and loss in the Latin Quarter of Paris in the 1830s.

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ABOUT MANITOBA OPERA

Manitoba Opera was founded in 1969 by a group of individuals dedicated to presenting the great works of opera to Manitoba audiences. Manitoba Opera is the province's only full-time professional opera company. The company attracts internationally renowned artists, highlights the best local talent, and features by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

CHORUS

The Manitoba Opera Chorus, under the direction of Chorus Master Tadeusz Biernacki, is hailed for their excellent singing and acting abilities. The chorus boasts a core of skilled singers who give generously of their time and talents. Some are voice majors at university, a few are singing teachers, but most work in jobs that aren't music related.

STAFF

Tadeusz Biernacki

Chorus Master & Assistant Music Director

Michael Blais

Director of Administration

Ashley Boychuk

Grants & Corporate Giving Manager

Bethany Bunko

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WORKS CONSULTED

This study guide was compiled accumulatively and includes information from the following sources accessed since 2000:

BehindTheNames.com
Bellevue University
The Billboard Illustrated Encyclopedia of Opera
britannica.com
The Canadian Opera Company
cia.gov
ClassicalMusic.about.com
Dmitry Murashev's Opera Site libretti & information
Encyclopedia of Manitoba
Encyclopedia of the Opera by David Ewen
Fort Worth Opera Study Guide
GradeSaver.com
Interlude
La Scena
Lyric Opera of Kansas City
Manitoba Archives
Metropolitan Opera
musicwithease.com
Music.MSN.com
New York City Opera
The New York Times
Opera America Learning Centre
Operabase
operabuffa.com
Opera Anecdotes
Opera Columbus Study Guide
Opera News
Opera Offstage
Operas Every Child Should Know
Opera Lyra Ottawa Study Guide
Opera Today
Orchestra London Study Guide
Pacific Opera
San Diego Opera Study Guide
San Francisco Opera Guild Study Guide
schubincave.com
A Season of Opera
Skeletons from the Opera Closet
TheBiography.us
TheGuardian.com
timelines.com
Tulsa Opera Study Guide
University of Chicago Press
University of Manitoba
University of Texas
University of Waterloo
Rimrock Study Guide
Virginia Opera Study Guide
The Washington Post
Wikipedia
The World's Great Operas