

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

The Elixir of Love: The Characters (Music)

GAETANO DONIZETTI

Students Will

- Read “**The Story of the Opera**”
- Read the information sheet “**The Characters**” included with the lesson
- Listen to audio selections from *The Elixir of Love* online
- Discuss and answer questions on the appropriate portion(s) of the **Activity Worksheet**

Copies for the Student

- “The Story of the Opera”
- “The Characters”
- **Music Activity Worksheet**

Copy for the Teacher: Music Activity Worksheet Answer Key

Getting Ready

Print copies of the information sheet “The Characters” and the **Activity Worksheet** for each student. Decide which section(s) of the worksheet you wish your group to complete. Print a copy for the teacher of the Sample Answers for the **Activity Worksheet**. Prepare internet access to *The Elixir of Love* online listening selections.

Gather pens, pencils and additional writing paper as needed for your group.

Introduction

Have your students read “The Story of the Opera”. Give each student a copy of the information sheet “The Characters” or display it on-screen. Read through the information, discussing each character and listening to the online selections as you go.

Guided/Independent Practice

Depending on your grade level, the ability of your students, and time constraints, you may choose to have students work as a whole class, in small groups, with a partner, or individually. Read the directions on the **Activity Worksheet**. Have students complete the portion(s) of the **Activity Worksheet** you have chosen with an opportunity for questions. If students are working with a partner or in small groups, give them time to discuss their answers before writing them down. Have students share their answers individually or by groups and tell why they gave their answers.

Evaluation

Have students discuss and evaluate the answers of others. The teacher may want to guide the discussion with the sample answers provided. After individual or small group responses have been shared and/or turned in, the students can then formulate comprehensive answers as a class with the teacher asking questions to guide the discussion.

For Further Study

The teacher may want to have students do additional research on *The Elixir of Love*. Students may want to do additional research on Gaetano Donizetti, his other works, or other related topics online or in their school library. Their findings can be shared with the class at the beginning of a later lesson.

TEKS: Music**Music, Level I: Grade 9** (117.310.C.5.C/D)

(5) Historical and cultural relevance. The student relates music to history, culture, and the world. The student is expected to (C) identify and describe the uses of music in societies and cultures and (D) identify and explore the relationship between music and other academic disciplines.

Music, Level II: Grade 10 (117.311.C.5.B/C)

(5) Historical and cultural relevance. The student relates music to history, culture, and the world. The student is expected to (B) define uses of music in societies and cultures and (C) identify and explore the relationships between music and other academic disciplines.

Music, Level III: Grade 11 (117.312.C.5.B/C)

(5) Historical and cultural relevance. The student relates music to history, culture, and the world. The student is expected to (B) explore the relevance of music to societies and cultures and (C) define the relationships between music content and concepts and other academic disciplines.

Music, Level IV: Grade 12 (117.313.C.5.B/C)

(5) Historical cultural relevance. The student relates music to history, culture, and the world. The student is expected to (B) evaluate the relevance of music to societies and cultures and (C) define the relationships between music content and concepts and other academic disciplines.

TEKS: Language Arts**6th Grade** (110.22.B.7.B/D)

(7) Multiple genres: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts-- literary elements. The student recognizes and analyzes literary elements within and across increasingly complex traditional, contemporary, classical, and diverse literary texts. The student is expected to: (B) analyze how the characters' internal and external responses develop the plot; (D) analyze how the setting, including historical and cultural settings, influences character and plot development.

7th Grade (110.23.B.7.B/D)

(7) Multiple genres: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts-- literary elements. The student recognizes and analyzes literary elements within and across increasingly complex traditional, contemporary, classical, and diverse literary texts. The student is expected to: (B) analyze how characters' qualities influence events and resolution of the conflict; and (D) analyze how the setting influences character and plot development.

8th Grade (110.24.B.7.B/D)

(7) Multiple genres: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts-- literary elements. The student recognizes and analyzes literary elements within and across increasingly complex traditional, contemporary, classical, and diverse literary texts. The student is expected to: (B) analyze how characters' motivations and behaviors influence events and resolution of the conflict; and (D) explain how the setting influences the values and beliefs of characters.

English Language Arts and Reading, English I (110.36.C.6.B/D)

(6) Multiple genres: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts-- literary elements. The student recognizes and analyzes literary elements within and across increasingly complex traditional, contemporary, classical, and diverse literary texts. The student is expected to: (B) analyze how authors develop complex yet believable characters in works of fiction through a range of literary devices, including character foils; and (D) analyze how the setting influences the theme.

English Language Arts and Reading, English II (110.37.C.6.B/D)

(6) Multiple genres: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts-- literary elements. The student recognizes and analyzes literary elements within and across increasingly complex traditional, contemporary, classical, and diverse literary texts. The student is expected to: (B) analyze how authors develop complex yet believable characters, including archetypes, through historical and cultural settings and events; and (D) analyze how historical and cultural settings influence characterization, plot, and theme across texts.

English Language Arts and Reading, English III (110.38.C.6.B/D)

(6) Multiple genres: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts-- literary elements. The student recognizes and analyzes literary elements within and across increasingly complex traditional, contemporary, classical, and diverse literary texts. The student is expected to: (B) analyze how characters' behaviors and underlying motivations contribute to moral dilemmas that influence the plot and theme; and (D) analyze how the historical, social, and economic context of setting(s) influences the plot, characterization, and theme.

English Language Arts and Reading, English IV (110.39.C.6.B/D)

(6) Multiple genres: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts-- literary elements. The student recognizes and analyzes literary elements within and across increasingly complex traditional, contemporary, classical, and diverse literary texts. The student is expected to: (B) analyze how characters' behaviors and underlying motivations contribute to moral dilemmas that influence the plot and theme; and (D) evaluate how the historical, social, and economic context of setting(s) influences the plot, characterization, and theme.

Correlates

Language Arts, Drama

Gardner's Intelligences

Verbal-Linguistic, Musical, Interpersonal

Bloom's Taxonomy

Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Evaluation, Synthesis

Bibliography

Warrack, John and West, Ewan, The Oxford Dictionary of Opera, Oxford University Press, 1992.
Freeman, John W., Stories of the Great Operas, W. W. Norton & Company, 1984.
Goulding, Phil G., Ticket to the Opera, Fawcett Columbine, 1996.

Online Resources

www.oxfordmusiconline.com

The Characters

Adina: (soprano) A landowner and confident young woman who seems to be all business. However, her choice in literature reveals a romantic side. Adina dreams of falling in love with a handsome hero. When Belcore shows up, however, she has enough sense to know that marrying a man whom she hardly knows would be foolish. When Nemorino tells her of his love for her, she is not impressed. But when he later acts uninterested, she finds that she does indeed have feelings for him. She must realize both which man truly loves her and which man she really loves. Watch and listen as Adina tells of the story she has been reading of Tristan and Isolde. (From a full production of the opera) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dl2N6EKhDGO>

Nemorino: (tenor) An employee of Adina's who has been in love with her for a long time. Nemorino is shy and is not confident that Adina could have feelings for him. Up to now, she only seems to care about herself. When Nemorino sees Belcore ask Adina to marry, he knows that he must act quickly or lose any chance of marrying Adina himself. He is desperate enough to spend the last of his money on a love potion. Just as he is about to give up hope, he sees a sign that Adina does have feelings for him. Watch and listen to "*Una furtiva lagrima*," ("A tear on her cheek") as Nemorino sings about a single tear he saw on Adina's cheek. He insists that he would die to comfort her. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ZhOQFVRiPw&list=RD5ZhOQFVRiPw&start_radio=1

Belcore: (baritone) A handsome and successful army officer, Belcore is convinced that he can win over any woman. He feels that he deserves the most beautiful wife he can find, and that any young woman would jump at the chance to marry him. When he asks Adina to marry him, he is surprised that she hesitates. Watch and listen as Belcore recruits Nemorino for the army. Belcore thinks that he will get Nemorino out of the way. Nemorino is only interested in the signing bonus, which will buy more elixir. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQuatbmmr_A

Doctor Dulcamara: (bass) A quack physician who sells cheap wine as medicine to anyone he can convince to part with their hard earned money. He convinces Nemorino that his elixir will help him only after Nemorino tells him he is looking for a love potion like the fabled one in the story that Adina was reading. When Nemorino comes back for more, but has no money, Dulcamara refuses to help him. Watch and listen to "*Udite, udite*," as the doctor introduces himself. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUzl6DJvLKM>

Also available online are full versions of the opera:

- <https://youtu.be/14dAP2z79Go?si=aO5j7SvgyNGusOYf> (Complete Opera)
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYb1fgXWwp8> (Complete Opera)

THE STORY OF THE OPERA

The villagers are coming in from a long, hot day. They enjoy hearing Adina read from the story of *Tristan and Isolde* and the magic love potion. Nemorino watches from a distance, yearning for even a word from Adina. He approaches her afterwards and professes his love. She shoos him away with brisk (and beautiful) words about the need for fickleness.

The army is in town. Sergeant Belcore enters, intent on storming the heart of Adina, the most beautiful and successful girl in town. She seems impressed. Nemorino is full of disgust and despair.

A cart pulls up carrying the Great Dr. Dulcamara, bearing pills and potions for every kind of ailment. He is most proud of his cure-all elixir. Nemorino approaches him quietly and asks whether he possesses the love potion of Queen Isolde. Absolutely, Dulcamara assures him. He will have damsels fawning over him. But he must wait a day for it to work. (Dulcamara has never heard of Isolde, the potion is a cheap Bordeaux, and the time would allow the Doctor to leave town.) He downs the flask and immediately feels robust enough to ignore Adina the next time he sees her. To get even, she consents to marry Belcore. Nemorino, horrified, begs her to wait another day.

Everyone is assembled for the wedding of Adina and the sergeant. Adina privately murmurs that she's waiting to sign the marriage contract until Nemorino arrives. Nemorino seeks out the doctor to ask for another bottle of the elixir. Dulcamara agrees to wait until he can borrow the money. Belcore strides by, puzzled by Adina's postponement. Nemorino laments that he is penniless. Belcore suggests he join the army and receive the volunteer bonus. Nemorino, jubilant, signs and takes the cash back to Dulcamara for another bottle.

Suddenly the village girls surround Nemorino. He thinks this is the effect of the elixir; he does not yet know that his uncle has died and left him a fortune. Adina has felt responsible for his enlistment, but her guilty feeling turns to jealousy and sadness when she sees him with all the girls. Dulcamara offers her the elixir, but she assures him she can win Nemorino back on her own.

Nemorino was by no means indifferent: During all the confusion he noticed a tear upon Adina's cheek. He is sure she cares for him. Adina approaches Nemorino and shows him that she has bought back his military contract. He feigns indifference, and she finally confesses her love. Belcore struts by, finds them together, and consoles himself by proclaiming that the world is full of women for him. Dulcamara redoubles his boasting: The magical elixir can make poor men into millionaires and can bring true love.

Synopsis by Santa Fe Opera

Name _____ Date _____

The Elixir of Love* Music Lesson I: The Characters*Activity Worksheet****Part I**

1. When Adina reads the story of Tristan and Isolde, she seems very impressed by the plot. Do you think she believes she will experience such a powerful love? Why or why not?

2. Do you think it was kind of Adina to reject Nemorino and make fun of his proposal? Why or why not?

3. How would you want to be treated by someone you fall in love with?

4. If you were Nemorino, would you have continued to try to win Adina's heart? Why or why not?

Part II *The Elixir of Love*

5. Do you think Nemorino was foolish to spend all his money on a love potion? Why or why not?

6. Belcore seems rather surprised when Adina first rejects his proposal. Do you agree with Adina's first reaction that the two needed to know each other much better before getting married? Why or Why not?

7. Which of the characters is more like the people in your life? Why?

8. Do you believe that Belcore will find true love? Why or why not?

Part III *The Elixir of Love*

9. Do you think Adina realizes how lucky she is to have a man like Nemorino love her completely?

Why or why not?

10. Do you think that Nemorino and Adina will be happy together? Why or why not?

Many operas are treated as **concept operas**, with stories that can take place in any time or location. The story of *The Elixir of Love* was originally set in a small Italian village in the early 19th century. Some productions of the opera use a more modern setting and costumes. Others have used the American West as the backdrop for the story.

11. Would a different time or place in which the story is portrayed change the story in any real way? Why or why not?

12. If you were to perform this opera, what location and time period would you like to use?

ANSWER KEY *The Elixir of Love* Music Lesson I: The Characters**Activity Worksheet****Part I**

1. When Adina reads of the story of Tristan and Isolde, she seems very impressed by the plot. Do you think she believes she will experience such a powerful love? Why or why not?

Answers will vary greatly and be unique.

2. Do you think it was kind of Adina to reject Nemorino and make fun of his proposal? Why or why not?

Answers will vary greatly and be unique.

3. How would you want to be treated by someone you fall in love with?

Answers will vary greatly and be unique.

4. If you were the Nemorino, would you have continued to try to win Adina's heart? Why or why not?

Answers will vary greatly and be unique.

ANSWER KEY *The Elixir of Love* Music Lesson I: The Characters**Part II**

5. Do you think Nemorino was foolish to spend all his money on a love potion? Why or why not?

Answers will vary greatly and be unique.

6. Belcore seems rather surprised when Adina first rejects his proposal. Do you agree with Adina's first reaction that the two needed to know each other much better before getting married? Why or Why not?

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Why or why not?

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