



The Elixir of Love **Performance Guide**

Dayton Opera's Artists-in-Residence present an English version of the comic opera *The Elixir of Love* by Gaetano Donizetti. Sassy cowgirl Adina can't seem to convince shy ranch hand Nemorino to declare his love for her. But when a rival love interest appears on the scene, Nemorino buys an alleged love potion to win Adina's heart and... things do not go as expected! The Artists-in-Residence narrate the action, explaining the elements of drama and opera along the way.

This guide is divided into three parts:

- **Before the Show:** Learn more about the artists
- **During the Show:** Follow along with the story by reading or watching a synopsis
- **Flip It on Flip:** Consider the real-life counterpart of the elixir – the placebo effect

BEFORE THE SHOW

Meet the Artists

Dayton Opera was founded in 1962 to enrich the cultural life of the Miami Valley. In 2003, Dayton Opera moved from its long-time home of Memorial Hall to its current home at the Benjamin and Marian Schuster Performing Arts Center. Many accomplished and well-known singers have been heard in Dayton Opera productions throughout the years. They include Martina Arroyo, Placido Domingo, Robert Merrill, Roberta Peters, Jerome Hines, Erie Mills, Samuel Ramey, James Morris and Mary Jane Johnson.

The Dayton Opera Artists-in-Residence Program was established in 1987 to serve as a professional training program for young singers as a bridge to move from the university/conservatory education experience into the arena of a professional opera company.

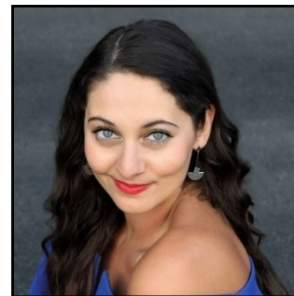
Read more about our Artists in Residence here! <https://daytonperformingarts.org/opera/artists-in-residence-program/>.



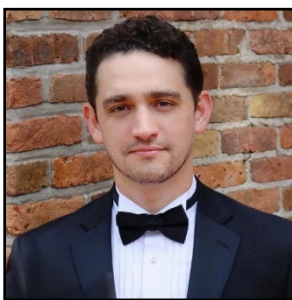
Naomi Brigell
Mezzo-soprano



Sankara Harouna
Baritone



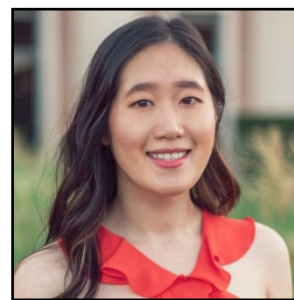
Lauren Nash Silberstein
Soprano



Carl Rosenthal
Tenor



Sarah Stembel
Soprano



Alison Hsieh
Pianist

Find **@daytonopera** on Twitter and Facebook and **@daytonoperaofficial** on Instagram.

DURING THE SHOW

The Elixir of Love features one of the best-loved and most famous **arias for tenor** (the highest male voice type): “Una furtiva lagrima” or “One secret tear,” which has been used in dozens of movies, TV shows and commercials. Our production is in English but listen to this famous recording in Italian by Luciano Pavarotti: <https://youtu.be/abFvqievYXo>.

Synopsis

❖ **Option 1 - Watch on YouTube:** <https://youtu.be/5OR4Fv4fnzQ> (6 ½ minutes)

❖ **Option 2 - Read**

The shy young farmer Nemorino (*neh-mohr-EEN-oh*) sighs for the wealthy landowner Adina (*ah-DEE-nah*). She reads aloud the story of Tristan and Isolde and of the magic love potion that makes Isolde fall in love with Tristan. Both Nemorino and Adina wish they had such a magic potion.

Sergeant Belcore (*bel-COHR-eh*) arrives, full of swagger, and makes advances on Adina, who flirts with him much to Nemorino’s chagrin. Doctor Dulcamara (*dool-cah-MAHR-ah*), a quack healer, arrives peddling self-help books filled with recipes for miraculous cures. Nemorino asks if she sells the elixir of Queen Isolde, and Dulcamara produces just the potion (in our production, a bottle of Gatorade left from lunch). She claims it will work in only 24 hours — just enough time for Dulcamara to get out of town! Nemorino tries the potion and finds new courage.

Adina is irritated by Nemorino’s sudden indifference, and when Belcore returns, she accepts his marriage proposal. Belcore suggests they marry immediately, and Nemorino begs Adina to delay the wedding for just one day (to allow time for the potion to work). To make Nemorino jealous, Adina leaves with Belcore.

In a panic, Nemorino asks Dulcamara for another bottle of elixir to speed up the effect, but the good doctor demands payment first. As Nemorino bemoans his lack of funds, Belcore offers him a signing bonus if he enlists in the army. They joyously march off together.

Watching them leave, Adina learns from Dulcamara of the elixir and of Nemorino’s enlistment. She realizes not only how much Nemorino truly loves her but that she loves him as well. She leaves with tears in her eyes, thinking she has lost him. Adina buys back his enlistment papers and confesses her love. With this success, Dulcamara now plans to peddle the magical elixir!

FLIP IT ON FLIP

Magic potions have a real life counterpart in the scientific phenomenon known as “the placebo effect.” Consider how the power of an idea can shape reality at www.flip.com using the **join code 3c6abf36** and the **guest password muse123!**. Your responses won’t be made public to anyone except Muse Machine. We may like your response well enough to share it, but we will ask your teacher for permission first.

Magic Potions and the Placebo Effect



The magic potion is a common trope in fantasy and fairy tales. Its effects, which are usually temporary, are similar to a real-life phenomenon called “the placebo effect.” Watch the video about the mysteries of the placebo.

Then, consider how the elixir affects Nemorino’s situation in today’s Muse Machine performance of *The Elixir of Love* presented by Dayton Opera. **Can believing that something will work help in reality? How or why?**

Attachments

- TED-Ed Video: The power of the placebo effect
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z03FQGIggo0>
- The brief story of Tristan and Isolde
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QkFwo0-cDg>
- Dayton Opera on the Road
<https://daytonperformingarts.org/opera/dayton-opera-on-the-road/>