

CALGARY opera

Opera in Schools Study Guide 2018-19



Nemorino and the Magic Potion

Music by Gaetano Donizetti with an excerpt by Gioachino Rossini, adapted by Mel Kirby

Libretto by Felice Romani with an excerpt by Angelo Anelli, translated and adapted by Aaron Coates

On Tour February/March 2019

Introduction

The music -- the artistry -- the grand emotion -- the spectacle! This is the fantastic world of the opera. Calgary Opera would like to thank you for booking our performance of ***Nemorino and the Magic Potion***.

Opera is a unique and exciting art form which combines the disciplines of music, drama, literature, dance, and visual and technical arts like no other. Calgary Opera's production is directed by renowned Calgary director Aaron Coates and designed by Scott Reid. Set against the backdrop of a modern-day rodeo fairground, ***Nemorino and the Magic Potion*** tells the story of a young man, Nemorino, who wants to attract the attention of the beautiful Adina but doesn't feel that he is worthy of it. He goes to the lengths of buying an expensive "magic" potion that is supposed to make him interesting and irresistible, but in the end realizes that he is perfect and worthy of her attention just the way he is.

This guide will give you the backstage tour of all that is opera -- terminology, jobs, inside info about the composers and librettists, cool activities and suggestions, all of which are designed to make ***Nemorino*** an experience you and your students will not forget soon.

In this guide you will see the many ways you can incorporate ***Nemorino and the Magic Potion*** and the arts into your classroom. A study of the performing and fine arts helps students develop critical analysis skills, problem solving, perseverance, and a drive for excellence. The creative skills children develop through the arts carry them toward new ideas, new experiences and new challenges.

There is nothing like the excitement and magic of a live professional performance!

Thank you for giving your students this special opportunity,

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About the Composer- Gaetano Maria Donizetti

Photo courtesy of BBC.co.uk



Gaetano Maria Donizetti was born to a poor family in Bergamo, a small town in northern Italy, on November 29, 1797. His musical talent was recognized early in his life. Donizetti had several teachers during his early musical education, including the famous opera

composer Simon Mayr, and later, in Bologna, the renowned teacher Padre Mattei. Donizetti's father insisted, however, that his son return to Bergamo and support himself by giving music lessons. Donizetti disliked the life of a music teacher and decided to enlist in the army.

While he was stationed in Venice, Donizetti found time for composition. His first opera, *Enrico, Conte di Borgogna*, had a successful premiere in 1818. His second opera, *Zoraide de Granata* (1822), was so well received that Donizetti was discharged from the army and exempted from any further military service so that he could devote himself completely to music.

In order to support himself Donizetti accepted every commission that came along. He was an extremely hard worker, composing daily from 7 a.m. to late afternoon. He became known for his dependability to produce in a tight schedule, often completing three or four operas a year. Donizetti was determined to master the many varied types and genres of opera popular in Italy at the time. He aimed to produce spontaneous, interesting new works that would satisfy the audience's demands for freshness and originality without compromising his own artistic ambitions.

Although Donizetti was able to produce quickly, his extreme haste in composing has caused some critics to suggest that his work occasionally suffers from inconsistency, feeble orchestration, and superficiality though his melodic genius and playfulness always shine through.

During the years 1822-28, Donizetti produced a string of successful operas, most notably comedies. These works are seldom heard today. The Romantic influence of Bellini is evident in Donizetti's next operas, the most famous of which is *Elisabetta al Castello di Kenilworth* (1829). In 1830, Donizetti reached his artistic maturity with *Anna Bolena* and his international reputation was established. *Anna*, like many of the composer's works, is a romanticized version of English history. Cherished by the world's leading dramatic coloratura sopranos, the opera provides an opportunity for the ultimate display of vocal and histrionic skills.

Two years after *Anna Bolena*, *L'Elisir d'Amore* (*The Elixir of Love*) scored a success in Milan. Donizetti is said to have composed this opera in eight days. This sentimental pastoral comedy

contains many beautiful melodies and is one of the composer's most frequently performed works.

In quick succession, Donizetti produced a series of notable operas, of which *Il Furioso all'Isola di San Domingo* (1833), *Lucrezia Borgia* (1833), and *Maria Stuarda* (1834) are the best known. In 1835, Donizetti experienced failure abroad but acclaim at home. While his *Marino Faliero* was not received well by Parisian audiences, Donizetti triumphed in Naples with *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

Several years later, the composer had a run-in with Italy's political censors, so he travelled to Paris, where *La Fille du Régiment* (*The Daughter of the Regiment*) and *La Favorite* (completed in 1840) were well received. The former, though sung in French, is a thoroughly Italian comedy, while the latter is a typical example of French grand opera. For Vienna, the composer then wrote *Linda di Chamounix* (1842) and *Maria di Rohan* (1843). *Linda*, the better known of the two, is an opera semiseria, combining comedy, romance, and pathos.

Donizetti's early operas were often written to accommodate the talents of a particular singer, with pages of purely vocalistic writing that severely hampered the drama. As he matured, however the composer's dramatic instincts began to take precedence over sheer vocal display. By the time he completed his last well-known opera, *Don Pasquale* (1843), his mastery of the drama was complete and this bubbly, brittle comedy ranks as one of the greatest examples of opera buffa ever written.

Donizetti also played an invaluable role in the development of Italian opera, planting the seeds that enabled opera to flourish in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Donizetti, to a much greater extent than Rossini and Bellini, exerted a tremendous influence on the operas of Giuseppe Verdi. The composer will always be remembered best, however, for the rich musical catalogue of his own works: *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La Fille du Régiment*, and *Don Pasquale* have never left the repertory. The recently renewed interest in music of the bel canto period has led opera companies to bring new life to many of his other stage works.

While Donizetti's professional life was quite successful, his personal life was filled with tragedy. None of his three children survived more than three or four days after birth, and his beloved wife Virginia died tragically in 1837 at the age of 29 during an outbreak of cholera. It was a blow from which Donizetti never recovered. He battled frequent bouts of depression and insanity, and in 1845 he suffered a stroke that left him completely paralyzed. He died on April 8, 1848. Italy, as well as the entire musical world, mourned the loss of this gentle, even-tempered man and gifted musician.

Compiled from New York City Opera, Fort Worth Opera 2000 Study Guide and Manitoba Opera's 2005 Study Guide

Excerpt from *Italian Girl in Algiers* composed by Gioachino Rossini

Musical adaptation for Opera in Schools tour by Mel Kirby



Mel Kirby is the Emerging Artist Coordinator at Calgary Opera. He is also the one responsible for choosing the piece for the Opera in Schools tour every year. The purpose of the Opera in Schools tour is to present the classics of opera to young school audiences. This year he chose the famous piece *The Elixir of Love* (originally known in Italian as *L'Elisir d'Amore*) composed by Gaetano Donizetti. The original opera is over two hours long, so Mr. Kirby had the job of condensing it to a 45-minute piece.

The other purpose of the Opera in Schools tour is to give an opportunity to Calgary Opera's eight young Emerging Artists to learn and perform a work repeatedly over the course of the four-week tour. The original *The Elixir of Love* opera does not have a very large role for the mezzo-soprano voice type, however, the Emerging Artist program typically has two mezzo-soprano singers. To remedy this problem and give the mezzo-sopranos equally large roles as the other singers in the show, Mr. Kirby changed the role of Dulcamara in the opera from a male baritone to a female mezzo-soprano. In addition, he brought in an excerpt from the opera *The Italian Woman in Algiers*, composed by Gioachino Rossini that was written for the mezzo-soprano voice type. As a result, all the Emerging Artists have opportunities to sing and the young audiences at the school tour can hear all four major voice types: soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor and baritone.

About the librettist Felice Romani



Photo courtesy of Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=393294>

Born in Genoa, Italy, in 1788, Felice Romani 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

composers 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, and Giuseppe Verdi, all the great bel canto opera style 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.

Compiled from the San Diego Opera 1996 Study Guide and the San Francisco Opera Guide 2000 Study Guide and the 2005 Manitoba Opera Study Guide.

Excerpt from *Italian Girl in Algiers* with libretto by Angelo Anelli

Adapted for Opera in Schools tour by librettist Aaron Coates



Calgary area actor, writer and director Aaron Coates adapted the story of *The Elixir of Love* to become the Opera in Schools tour show *Nemorino and the Magic Potion*. He is also the director of the tour. While most aspects of the original plot have been kept the same, he changed the setting to a modern-day rodeo fairground and he made some changes to accommodate for the shorter time frame, from over two hours down to 45 minutes, and to accommodate the introduction of the mezzo-soprano voice, as previously mentioned.

Mr. Coates wanted to create an interesting story that was set in a place that as Albertans we can relate to. Most kids in southern Alberta either know about or have been to the big exhibition and fair that happens in Calgary every summer. We are aware of cowboy culture and bull riders, and we are also aware of the markets that accompany these fairs where people sell all kinds of creams and potions to make you look younger, feel happier, and have a better life.

One very interesting part of the original story for Mr. Coates was that Nemorino, the main character, feels like he is no one special, that there is nothing unique about him, and he certainly doesn't believe that he could get the beautiful Adina to like him. Therefore, he tries to find a cure, a way to make himself better and more interesting than he is, with the love potion that he buys from Dulcamara.

Mr. Coates felt that this is a story we all relate to, not feeling good enough, being shy and feeling like there is nothing special about who we are. It is only after a time in the story that Adina realizes she loves Nemorino and Nemorino realizes that who he is really is good and interesting enough.

Mr. Coates wanted to explore the fascination many people feel with fame. The 3 main characters, Nemorino, Adina and Belcore are at 3 different stages in their search for fame. Nemorino is at the very beginning, no one knows who he is, he is not known for anything, although he would like to be. Adina is starting to have her first tastes of fame and is on the edge of becoming well known for her trick riding talents, and finally Belcore is already a famous and successful bull rider. Fame seems important to all three of them. In the end Nemorino realizes that fame does not make you a better person and that it is more important to know and believe in yourself. On the other hand, Belcore, with his bull-riding fame, assumes that anything he wants is his, but also finds out that this is not the case - that his fame cannot win him the friendship and love of the beautiful Adina.

Another difference Mr. Coates wanted to achieve with the adaptation is making it more like our lives today in that Adina, the lead female in the story, has big dreams for herself. Unlike the original story of *The Elixir of Love*, he wanted to show the reality of our modern lives where men and women all have big dreams and can work towards them equally.

Finally, he brought the superhero Spiderman into the story. In the original *Elixir of Love*, Adina reads to a group of friends the story of Tristan and Isolde and how Tristan won Isolde's affection with a love potion. Nemorino hears this and gets the idea of finding his own potion to attract Adina's attention. In our school version, Adina is reading a Spider Man comic. Mr. Coates chose Spider Man because most kids recognize that character, but also because Spider Man is

the story of the young Peter Parker who doesn't believe that he is anything special, just like our Nemorino.

Artistic and Production Team



Set Designer Scott Reid

Scott Reid has been designing for theatre, opera and dance for over 20 years. He is a set, lighting and projection designer. Based in Calgary, Scott's designs have been seen across North America. Scott received both his BFA and MFA in Theatre Design from the University of Alberta. He has worked with Calgary Opera many times in both set and projection design.



Director Aaron Coates

Aaron is a director, writer, actor, and the Associate Artistic Director of Cowtown Opera. He studied acting at Mount Royal University and at École Philippe Gaulier in Paris. Aaron spent nine seasons as Co-Artistic Producer of *Dirty Laundry*, Calgary's live improvised soap opera. He has worked with Calgary Opera for many years in many different roles including director and librettist.



Stage Manager Donna Sharpe

This is Donna Sharpe's 15th season with Calgary Opera. Donna will return to Banff in 2018 as Faculty Member and stage management mentor with the summer opera program. This is her first time stage managing the school tour



Pianist/Repetiteur Evan Mounce

Pianist Evan Mounce enjoys a close association with Calgary Opera, Cowtown Opera, Cantaré Children's Choir, and the Calgary Philharmonic Chorus. Primarily a self-taught pianist (Piano for Dummies circa 2003), in 2015 he decided to get serious about lessons and currently studies with Kathleen van Mourik. Evan holds a MMus from the University of Toronto in saxophone performance.



Costume Designer Cathleen Gasca

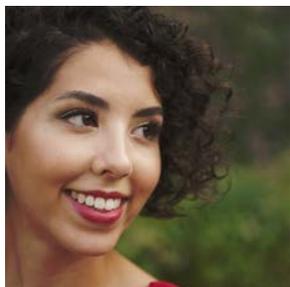
Cathleen studied costume design at the Trozmer Universidad de Diseno in Mexico and at Nova Scotia College of Art & Design Halifax. She has been both stitcher and costume designer for Calgary Opera, Theatre Calgary, Storybook Theatre and more.

Tour Crew (and cube van driver) Robin Messer

The Performers

CALGARY OPERA EMERGING ARTISTS 2018-19

Every year Calgary Opera chooses eight young artists from across Canada and sometimes from around the world to come to Calgary to learn, train and perform on their way to becoming professional opera singers. This is an opportunity for the young singers to gain professional exposure, sing to a wide variety of audiences both large and small, in houses, theatres, libraries, outside and in many other places and to perform in a professional opera company's mainstage productions.



Marie Civitarese, Soprano (Adina/Addy)

Marie Civitarese was born and raised in Trail, BC. She received a Bachelor of Music in Voice and Opera Performance at State University of New York, Purchase College in 2015, a Master of Music at the University of British Columbia in 2017, and studied at the Mozarteum in Salzburg in 2017. Her roles include Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Tytania (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Gretel and the Dew Fairy (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Papagena (*Die Zauberflöte*), Ciboletta (*Eine Nacht in Venedig*), Damon (*Acis and Galatea*), and Foreign Woman (*The Consul*). This summer she will sing Frasquita in Opera Kelowna's *Carmen*. Marie has been a soloist with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and has performed in orchestral concerts in the Czech Republic and Germany. Marie is an art song enthusiast and enjoys putting on recitals as often as possible.



Megan Miceli, Soprano (Adina/Addy)

Hailing from Mississauga, Ontario, Canadian soprano Megan Miceli is an alumna of McGill University where she holds a Graduate Diploma in Performance and a Masters in Music in Voice and Opera. Some role highlights include performing the world premiere of the Canadian opera *Evangeline*, by Dawn Sonntag, Morgana (*Alcina*), Aurore (*Le portrait de Manon*), Despina (*Così fan tutte*), Giannetta (*L'elisir d'amore*),

L'amour (*Pygmalion*), Rose (*At the Statue of Venus*), and upcoming, Papagena (*The Magic Flute*) with Brott Opera and Berta (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*) with Opera 5. Recently, Megan was honoured with first prize in the Toronto Mozart Vocal Competition. On the concert stage, Megan has performed with the Toronto Mozart Players, The National Academy Orchestra, Opera in Concert, The Cantabile Chorale, McGill Concert Choir, McGill Baroque Orchestra, and The Guelph Symphony Orchestra.



Sarah Bissonnette, Mezzo-Soprano (Dulcamara)

Sarah Bissonnette is a mezzo-soprano from Boucherville, Québec. During her Masters of Opera and Voice at McGill University, she sang the title role in *Ariodante*, First Witch in *Dido and Aeneas* and in scenes from *Cendrillon*. She collaborates with various independent opera organizations in Montréal performing Romeo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, Mercedes in *Carmen*, Second Lady and Spirit in *The Magic Flute*. She previously sang Arminda in *La finta giardiniera* (Freiburg Conservatory) and Giunone in *La Calisto* (Centre for Opera Studies in Italy, Sulmona). She is an eager recital performer and frequent concert soloist and was heard last November in Opéra de Montréal's Gala 2017. Sarah is an alumna of the University of Toronto's Voice Performance and Cégep de Saint-Laurent's music programs.



Yujene Oh, Mezzo-Soprano (Dulcamara)

Yujene Oh, an American born Korean mezzo-soprano, is from Toronto where she received her Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance from the University of Toronto. A passionate interpreter of sacred music, Yujene has performed as a soloist in Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *Cantata BWV 12*, and Vivaldi's *Gloria*. An avid recitalist, she performs fundraising concerts specially to raise awareness of music for students in the underfunded educational systems. She has won several awards and placed first in events such as the National Association of Teachers of Singing, Ontario, the Kiwanis Festival, and the Royal Conservatory of Music regional competition. Recent roles include La Badessa in Puccini's *Suor Angelica*, Apollo in Mozart's *Apollo et Hyacinthus*, and Dame Hannah in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Ruddigore*.



Andrew Derynck, Tenor (Nemorino)

Andrew Derynck hails from the small farming community of Jeanettes Creek, Ontario. He completed both his Opera diploma and his Bachelor of Music at Wilfrid Laurier University, under the tutelage of Soprano Leslie Fagan. No stranger to the stage some of his highlights include: Ernesto in *Don Pasquale* (Vera Causa Opera), Hoffmann in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* (Opera Laurier), Mayor Upfold in *Albert Herring* (Halifax Summer Opera Festival), Rooster

in *The Bremen Town Musicians* (Haliburton Highlands Opera Studio) and Little Bat McLean in *Susannah* (Longreach Opera Workshop). Andrew was an encouragement award winner in the Buffalo/Toronto District Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions 2018.



Jan van der Hoof, Tenor (Nemorino)

Jan van der Hoof completed his Masters in Vocal Performance at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University in 2016. Since 2014 his notable credits include the title character in Rameau's *Pygmalion*, Nemorino in Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'amore* (with Opera McGill Ensemble), Pedrillo in Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Compagnie Baroque Mont-Royal) and Lindoro in *L'Italiana in Algeri* with MYOpera in Toronto. This season he covered Almaviva in *Il Barbieri di Siviglia*, sang Jesse in the Emerging Artist School

Tour production of *Hannaraptor* and made his debut as Ferrando in the Calgary Emerging Artist Showcase of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*.



Adam Harris, Baritone (Belcore)

Toronto-based baritone Adam Harris has been described as an intuitively musical and distinctively dramatic young performer. Past roles include Doctor Falke in *Die Fledermaus* at The Royal Conservatory, Marcello in Opera Kelowna's *La Bohème* and the Baritone in Vivier's *Kopernikus* at the Banff Centre for Performing Arts. Concert credits include *Carmina Burana* with the Indian River Festival and George Butterworth's *Six Songs From a Shropshire Lad* with the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Harris

is also a 2018 Rebanks Family Fellow, having completed a Master's Degree at U of T with Laura Tucker and a Bachelor's degree at Western University with Todd Wieczorek.



Jonah Spungin, Baritone (Belcore)

Ottawa baritone Jonah Spungin is currently completing a Master's in Voice and Opera at McGill University under the instruction of soprano Dominique Labelle. He has performed many roles with Opera McGill and the McGill Savoy Society, notably Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*, Gideon March in *Little Women*, Baron Mirko Zeta in *The Merry Widow*, and Captain Corcoran in *HMS Pinafore*. Also appearing frequently on the concert stage, he most recently sang the title role in Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the McGill Symphony

Orchestra and the baritone solos in the Fauré *Requiem* and Goodall's *Eternal Light Requiem* with the Ottawa Choral Society. An eventful 2017 saw him as a finalist in the Canadian Opera Company Center Stage Competition and as a nominee for the Wirth Vocal Prize.

Preparation & Follow Up Before and During the Opera

The more students are prepared for this experience, the more they will get out of it. Knowledge of the story, the life and times of the composer, and the music is very important to making their opera experience a sensational one!

Before the Opera:

- Read the ***Nemorino and the Magic Potion*** synopsis as it provides a background for teachers in familiarizing students with the story.
- Read the history of the opera and notes from the librettist and familiarize your group with the opera terms in the appendix.
- Learn about the jobs surrounding an opera production (Pulling It Together).
- You may assign some students to report on singing, characters, orchestra, costumes, scenery etc. after the performance at your school.
- ***Nemorino and the Magic Potion*** is sung in English.
- Go over audience expectations.

During the Opera: Audience Expectations

When you are seated it is time to:

- Turn off all cell phones, iPods, and other electronic devices.
- Think about what makes a good audience member.
- Keep movement and voices down to a minimum as this is a live performance.
- Keep food and drinks outside -- every sound is heard by the performers.
- We encourage students to quietly listen to the performance. If they have questions or comments, there will be a question and answer period with the performers after the performance.
- If you must use the washroom during the performance, please do so very quietly.
- Applaud the cast as they take their bows after the performance. If you feel one person did an exceptional job, it is permissible to shout *Bravo!* for a man, *Brava!* for a woman and *Bravi!* for the whole performance (most people stick to *Bravo!*).

What to listen for: One of the world's most famous arias

In the original piece *The Elixir of Love* (*L'Elisir d'Amore*) by Gaetano Donizetti, he wrote an aria (this word is explained in the Appendix on page 18 as: the big number where the singer expresses feelings and shows off the voice) for the tenor character Nemorino.

The name of the aria is 'Una Furtiva Lagrima' in Italian, which translates loosely as 'one single tear'. This refers to the one tear that Nemorino sees on Adina's face that leads him to realize that she does care for him after all. It is a sweet moment for him, he has secretly been admiring her from afar but did not think he was worthy of her love. It is a tender moment in the opera.

This aria is very difficult to sing but has been done so successfully throughout history by some very famous tenor opera singers. Watch the famous Luciano Pavarotti sing it here and see if you can pick it out when our Emerging Artists come to sing it for you:

<https://youtu.be/2J7JM0tGqRY>

After the Opera

After the Opera Activities:

One of the best ways to encourage critical thinking in the arts is to encourage students' honesty and draw out the details of their opinions. A productive evaluation session, spoken, written, visual or dramatized, may include the following activities:

- **Sing Like an Opera Star!** Anywhere, everywhere! This is just fun. Try different tones, low to high, high to low. Think like a composer, if you change the way you sing something does it change the meaning? Is it more interesting to ask your parents for something if you sing it to them? Maybe they will be more likely to say yes! Try it out. Sing for your supper!
- **Illustrated Synopses:** Find the illustrated synopsis of *L'Elisir d'Amore* by Gaetano Donizetti at this website: <https://www.metopera.org/discover/education/illustrated-synopses/elisir-damore/> This is the original story that *Nemorino and the Magic Potion* was based upon. Look at and read through the illustrated story and talk about how it is different from the *Nemorino* version we presented.
- **Write, draw or a record a newspaper, radio, television or web review!**
 - Did you find the opera entertaining? Moving? Funny? When? Why?
 - Was there an outstanding performance for you? Describe.
 - What parts of the opera engaged you? What parts did not? Why? Be specific.
 - Did you notice a particular element of the opera? (Costumes, scenery, orchestra etc.)
 - Present your review with a partner in the form of Ebert and Roeper show and give it thumbs up or down. Write a newspaper review for your school or community newspaper. Record a radio review or podcast about the opera.
- **Create your own mini-opera.** *Nemorino* is an opera about the importance of believing in yourself. What is important to you? Create an opera based on an issue or idea you care about, starring you! Start by writing the words (libretto) and then add some music using instruments you have at home or school.
- **Calgary Opera is known for its outstanding sets. Design your own interesting set for this play.** Designer Scott Reid's set design for *Nemorino* reflect librettist Aaron Coate's and director Donna Sharpe's vision of *Nemorino* as set in a rodeo fairground with popular rodeo and fairground characters. He would have started by sketching out his ideas and then creating a 3-D diorama for the director to look over. Create your own! Think about a story that exists or the mini-opera you wrote in the previous exercise, where does the story take place? How can you make the set reflect the action of the story?

- **Design your own opera project** - what aspect of the opera do you want to know more about? (Technical, costumes, language, voices etc.) You can find out so many things online at wonderful websites like <http://kidsmusiccorner.co.uk/> and <http://www.theatretrust.org.uk/discover-theatres/theatre-faqs/253-who-works-in-a-theatre>

- **Become an opera star.** Play the *improv opera game*.
 - Form a team of 3-5 people.
 - Ask for a famous story or fairy tale from the audience (ie. Little Red Riding Hood).
 - Retell and reenact the story by singing all the lines, as the character would, loudly and proudly to the audience.
 - Experiment with different tones, pitches and volumes to create your character, how does changing the tone change the meaning of what you are singing?
 - Try it until every group has had a turn at creating their own tune!

Nemorino and the Magic Potion

The Principal Characters

Nemorino – Tenor voice type – played by Andrew Derynck & Jan van der Hooft
Adina/Addy – Soprano voice type – played by Megan Miceli & Marie Civitarese
Belcore – Baritone voice type – Adam Harris & Jonah Spungin
Dulcamara – Mezzo-soprano voice type – Sarah Bissonnette & Yujene Oh

Synopsis

SCENE 1 - On the Fairgrounds

It's the last day of a travelling fair. A group of workers prepare for the day. Nemorino, a young carnival worker, is sad because he doesn't have the guts to ask out or even talk to a trick rider named Adina.

Adina is reading a *Spider-Man* comic book. She calls the workers over and shares the story with them. They all wish they had their own special power so that people would admire them. Belcore, a famous bull rider, struts on, having just won the championship. Everyone is impressed with him. He wants Adina to go out dancing with him, but she doesn't want to. She thinks he has a big ego, and she wants to focus on her show. Nemorino watches the whole thing and wishes he had the courage to talk to Adina.

Belcore leaves with the workers to celebrate, and Nemorino finally summons the courage to ask Adina out. She says he shouldn't bother, comparing herself to the prairie wind, not able to settle. But Nemorino perseveres, comparing his interest in her to a river moving inevitably towards the sea. Adina leaves.

SCENE 2 - In the Fair's Marketplace

Shoppers gather, eager to find bargains. Dulcamara, a seller of "health products", pitches her wares. The crowd is very interested.

Nemorino asks Dulcamara if she has a product that will give him a special power, something to impress Adina. Dulcamara sells a potion to Nemorino for a lot of money. Dulcamara explains to Nemorino that the potion will take effect in 24 hours. Nemorino celebrates, while Dulcamara confides to the audience that she'll be leaving town tomorrow, well before Nemorino notices the potion is a fake.

SCENE 3 - On the Fairgrounds

Nemorino takes the potion and, even though he knows it won't take effect yet, feels giddy. He dances around, startling visitors.

Adina sees him and wonders what has gotten into him. Nemorino ignores her, knowing she won't be able to resist him tomorrow. She laughs him off, which hurts Nemorino's confidence.

Belcore returns, dressed in fancy clothing. He offers to take Adina out dancing and to eat chicken and waffles. Nemorino, with his newfound confidence, laughs at Belcore. Belcore threatens Nemorino, while Adina wonders what Nemorino is up to.

A crew member arrives and alerts Belcore that he has an important email. Belcore discovers that he must do some video re-shoots for his truck commercial and will have to fly away tomorrow. He asks Adina if she wants to come with him, promising to introduce her to his agent. Adina considers it, thinking it will help her career, but not out of interest in Belcore.

Worrying that she will leave and not see him once the potion has taken effect, Nemorino steps in, telling her to change her mind. This further angers Belcore. Dulcamara watches from the side, preparing to leave. Finally, Adina decides to go with Belcore. Belcore says he's throwing a party in the barn tonight. Everyone leaves and Nemorino is left alone.

SCENE 4 - In a Barn

The Fair Workers have decorated the barn for a party. Dulcamara enters and tells the audience that she has had a change of heart and wants to bring together Nemorino and Adina.

Nemorino arrives and Dulcamara offers him a "fast-acting potion", which is really just a drink loaded with caffeine and sugar. Nemorino takes it and feels a surge of energy. Belcore enters and the two of them agree to get along, although both are lying.

Nemorino busts out onto the dance floor and does an amazing dance that impresses everyone. He has finally found the fame he sought.

Adina looks on and feels sad that she treated him badly. Dulcamara offers something to help her.

Nemorino has found fame, but he feels empty without Adina. He goes after her. She confesses that she messed up. They hug.

A crowd gathers around them. Adina and Nemorino thank Dulcamara. Belcore doesn't understand what happened and is upset with Dulcamara. Dulcamara waves goodbye.

Bel Canto Opera

The Elixir of Love, and *Nemorino and the Magic Potion*, is composed in the bel canto style of opera. Bel canto is Italian for beautiful singing and is a style that began in Italy during the late 16th century. It continued to be developed in Italian opera in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries. Bel canto was based upon a very small range of dynamically sung notes. The singers of this style of opera needed to have a very flexible voice, the ability to change between different notes effortlessly and very clear pronunciation. The ultimate bel canto singer would be able to embellish the musical lines with trills and rapid successions of notes. The music is characterised as being light and bubbly, and beautiful to listen to.

The greatest master composers of the bel canto style were Gaetano Donizetti, Vincenzo Bellini and Gioachino Rossini -- all Italian! There were many famous bel canto opera singers in Italy, the male soprano (yes, there are men that can sing soprano roles!) Farinelli, the tenor Manuel del Popolo Garcia, his daughter, the dramatic soprano Maria Malibran, and the soprano Jenny Lind.

By the turn of the 20th century, tastes were changing in the world of opera. Opera singing was becoming heavier and more dramatic. It wasn't until the late 20th century that a general interest for the bel canto style was reignited, bringing back into the common repertory several of the most popular bel canto operas, particularly those of Bellini and Donizetti.

<https://www.britannica.com/art/bel-canto>

written by the Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, July 20, 1998. Accessed Jan 25, 2019.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/30/arts/music/30tomm.html>

Anthony Tommasini, Nov 28, 2008, accessed Jan 25, 2019.

Appendix

Opera Terms

The word 'opera' is Italian, derived from the plural of the Latin *opus*, meaning 'work.' Opera, in Italian, is called *opera lirica*, or lyric work. 'Lyric' is defined as 'appropriate song,' so *opera lirica* is a work of theatre that is set to song. Opera combines the best of all worlds: awesome singing, great-sounding orchestra, riveting drama, stunning dance, spectacular sets, lavish costumes, fancy lighting and special effects. All of these characteristics combine to make opera one of the most powerful art forms. Opera is just as entertaining now as it was when it was first created. If you like a good story, you'll like opera. Here are a few things to help you figure it all out.

Libretto: Italian for "little book", a libretto is the words of an opera written by a librettist.

Aria: Italian for an air or song, this is the big number where the singer expresses feelings and shows off the voice.

Recitative: Speech-singing where the singer chants the words in rhythm of free speech. Used to further the plot or set up an aria. It could be considered a forerunner of rap music.

Duet: An aria built for two. Singers express feelings to each other or the audience.

Ensemble: Principal singers singing mostly together, expressing similar or different opinions and emotions.

Fach or Voice Category: German for "compartment." A voice category or range of notes and voice quality in individual singers.

Coloratura Soprano: The highest female voice. This soprano is the 'tweety bird' of opera, singing the highest range of notes with great flexibility. For example, the Queen of the Night role in *The Magic Flute*.

Soprano: The voice has a high range of notes. Voice quality can be dramatic or lyric.

Mezzo-Soprano: Mezzo-Sopranos have the middle range of the female voice.

Tenor: The highest range in the male voice.

Baritone: The middle range of the male voice.

Bass: The lowest of the male voices.

Chorus: A group of community-based singers who provide support to the principal singers, set the scene and create the mood for an opera. The chorus includes all voice categories.

Pulling it Together

It takes a lot of people to produce an opera! An opera production not only involves soloists, chorus and orchestra, but many other people involved in planning, working behind the scenes, in the auditorium and marketing the performance. Here are some of the jobs with brief descriptions.

Conductor:	Directs all music rehearsals; conducts performances
Chorus Master:	Prepares the chorus for performance
Chorus:	Singers living in Calgary (auditioned every year)
Repetiteur:	Plays the piano for all rehearsals
Stage Director:	Moves all performers on stage; works with characterization
Production Manager:	In charge of all aspects of technical production
Head Make-Up Artist:	Responsible for applying make up for all performers
Costume Designer:	Designs and makes costumes for all performers
Dressers:	Fit and alter costumes for performers
Hair and Wigs Artist:	Responsible for styling all hair and wigs for the performers
Stage Manager:	In charge of rehearsal operations for cast & crew and calls cues for cast & crew during the performance.
Assistant Stage Manager:	Assists stage manager with specific responsibilities
Set Designer:	Draws a design for the set, scenery and props
Stage Crew:	Moves scenery and stage props
Lighting Designer:	Devises a lighting plan which is set by the electrician
Electrician:	Responsible for setting stage lights and electrical installations
Title Operator:	Operates the English translations projected above the stage
Props Master:	Works with set designer/director on props and stores them
Front of House Mgr:	In charge of auditorium seating, lobby, ushers
Marketing Director: Development	Responsible for marketing the opera to the public
Director:	Responsible for acquiring opera donors
Education Director:	Designs education programs for the community, for schools, study guides
Volunteer Director:	Responsible for recruiting, assigning and recognizing volunteers
Web designers:	Design the opera website
Opera program:	Requires layout designers, writers etc.
Executive Assistant:	Assists the Managing and Artistic Directors
Managing Director:	Responsible for all aspects of managing the budget and staff of the opera company
Artistic Director:	Responsible for choosing all aspects of the artistic side of the company, such as which operas the company will perform, and which artists will perform in those operas