

L'elisir d'amore

GAETANO DONIZETTI / 1832

SUNG IN ITALIAN
APPROXIMATE RUNNING TIME: 130 minutes

"Una furtiva lagrima" is one of the most popular score ever composed for tenors. The success of this Donizetti's work is not ascribable to this track only, as a matter of fact, the opera is full of pearls that made crowds fall.

When rehearsals begun, the score had not been completed yet, Donizetti, in fact was quite concerned and pessimistic about this opera's future, however, it proved to be a hit ever since it was first staged in Milan on 12 May 1832. Donizetti dedicated the opera to "bel sesso" without clarifying who that referred to, though.



MAIN CHARACTERS

Adina, rich and educated landowner (soprano)

Nemorino, young villager desperate for Adina's love (tenor)

Belcore, sergeant (baritone)

Doctor Dulcamara, charlatan (basso)

THE PLOT

The plot unfolds in a small Basque village, where capricious Adina draws all men's attention. Young and naive Nemorino is desperately in love with her and after many ups and downs and the purchasing of a so called love potion will gain her love.

Act 1

It all starts with Nemorino confessing his feelings for Adina, a rich landowner who likes tormenting him with indifference. After hearing the woman reading some lines from Tristan und Isolde, the poor man starts having fantasies of using a love potion to win the woman's heart. Sergeant Belcore enters and courts Adina who appears to be more than happy about it. This makes Nemorino grow anxious and restless, to the point that, when he bumps into a phony doctor in town, the poor guy buys all the lies the doctor tries to sell and also asks him for a love potion. The "doctor" takes a bottle of cheap wine and palms it off on the poor fellow telling him to drink it up and wait for 24 hours to see the effects which will allow the doctor to be long gone. Nemorino follows the instruction and as the alcohol makes him feel more self-confident he goes to Adina to court her but she rebuffs him and, to wind him up, she eventually informs him she is going to marry the Sergeant.

Act 2

The wedding ceremony starts without Nemorino and Adina tries to postpone the signing of the marriage contract as her vengeance will be more effective if Nemorino witnesses it. The young boy is devastated and, desperate for a way out, returns to Dulcamara to purchase another bottle of the magic elixir. However he does not have money and, in order to be able to pay, decides to join the army, thus gaining 20 crones. Meanwhile, the rumour of Nemorino inheriting a big sum of money is spread in town and all girls are suddenly after him, which makes Adina considerably jealous. He ascribes his new womanizer status to the effect of the elixir. Dulcamara tells Adina the boy is really in love with her, to the extent he spent all he had in a potion that would supposedly help him to win her over and that in order to be able to afford it the poor lot joined the army. At the end of the opera, Adina manages to put her hands on the boy's enlistment contract and, to make him stay, eventually confesses her feelings for him, while Belcore resolves that he would find a new girl to court somewhere else and Dulcamara leave all happy about his elixir.

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