



THE ELIXIR OF LOVE FOR SCHOOLS

SOURCE MATERIAL

L'Elisir d'Amore (The Elixir of Love) is an opera in two acts composed by Gaetano Donizetti. Donizetti's librettist Felice Romani based the plot of *L'Elisir d'Amore* on another opera, Daniel-François-Esprit Auber's *Le Philtre*, which had a libretto by Eugène Scribe. *Le Philtre*, which premiered earlier in Paris at the Opéra-Comique on June 15, 1831, was the source material for Donizetti and Romani's new version of the story set in Italy. Donizetti's opera premiered at the Teatro della Canobbiana, Milan on May 12, 1832.

AUBER'S LE PHILTRE

Le Philtre is an opera in two acts by Daniel-François-Esprit Auber (1782-1871), a prominent French composer. *Le Philtre* premiered to great success in 1831. This romantic comedy about village life was set in the Pays Basque and starred the great tenor, Adolphe Nourrit, who also created Arnold in Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*. The great success of Auber's works was due in part to the expertly tailored librettos of Eugène Scribe (1791-1861) a French dramatist and librettist who was known for perfecting the "well-made play" (*pièce bien faite*).

A comic opera featuring folk melodies, *Le Philtre*, with is centered around the lead tenor role of Guillaume, who becomes Nemorino in Donizetti's opera. In *Le Philtre*, Guillaume is portrayed as a heroic character, as opposed to *Elixir's* uncertain, insecure Nemorino.

The setting of *Le Philtre*, a Basque village in Spain, becomes an Italian village in Donizetti's self-described "playful melodrama." *L'Elisir d'Amore* features four main stock characters: the manly bossy sergeant Belcore (baritone), Doctor Dulcamara (bass), the traveling quack who sells magical elixirs that cure every possible ailment, the smart, beautiful wealthy Adina (soprano), and Nemorino (tenor), the shy, simple young man with little confidence. Donizetti chose to focus on writing for a vocal quartet of soprano, tenor, baritone, and bass, and the role of Jeannette/Giannetta (soprano) became a supporting role.

Donizetti made one major addition to *L'Elisir d'Amore*, of an aria to be sung by the tenor, Nemorino. *Una Furtiva Lagrima (A Furtive Tear)* is the most famous piece in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and a well-loved favorite in the operatic repertoire.

source: britannica.com, frenchopera.suite101.com