

Manitoba
Opera

Don Giovanni

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte



Study Guide
October 2003

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Welcome to Manitoba Opera

This Study Guide has been created to assist you in preparing your students for their visit to the opera. It is our hope that you will be able to add this to your existing curriculum in order to expand your students' understanding of opera, literature, history, and the fine arts. Materials in the Study Guide may be copied and distributed to students. Some students may wish to go over the information at home if there is insufficient time to discuss in class. Make the opera experience more meaningful and enjoyable by sharing with them knowledge and background on opera and *Don Giovanni* before they attend.

Please Note: The Dress Rehearsal is the last opportunity the singers will have on stage to work with the orchestra before Opening Night. Since vocal demands are so great on opera singers, some singers choose not to sing in full voice during the Dress Rehearsal in order to preserve their vocal chords and avoid unnecessary strain.



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Cover photo from Manitoba Opera 2003-2004 Brochure

All Other Photos are from Fort Worth Opera's 1986 production of *Don Giovanni*

A Short Introduction to Opera

An **opera**, like a play, is a dramatic form of theatre that includes scenery, **props** and costumes. However, in opera, the actors are trained singers who sing their lines instead of speaking them. An **orchestra** accompanies the singers. A **conductor** coordinates both the singers on stage and the musicians in the **pit**.

Opera consists of many dimensions that are combined to make it a unique whole: the human voice, orchestral music, the visual arts (scenery, costumes and special effects), drama (tragedy or comedy), and occasionally dance. The melding of these elements can make you cry tears of joy or sadness, produce laughter or anger, but most importantly transport you to a magical land of music and song.

Opera originated in Florence, Italy, in the late 1500's, with a small group of men who were members of a Camerata (Italian for society). The intellectuals, poets and musicians of the Camerata decided they wanted words to be a featured aspect of music. They used ancient Greek drama as their inspiration, including the use of a **chorus** to comment on the action. The Camerata laid down three principles for their new art form:

- ◆ The text must be understood; the accompaniment must be very simple and should not distract from the words.
- ◆ The words must be sung with correct and natural declamation, as if they were spoken, and must avoid the rhythms of songs.
- ◆ The melody must interpret the feeling of the text.

The first significant composer to fully develop the ideas of the Camerata was Jacopo Peri (1561-1633), whose opera *Dafne* was performed in 1594 and is regarded as the first opera.

Operas are divided into scenes and **acts** that contain different types of vocal pieces for one or many singers. An **aria** is a vocal solo that focuses on a character's emotions rather than actions. A recitative is sung dialogue or speech that occurs between arias and **ensembles**.

Composers write the **score** or the music for the opera. Sometimes the composer will also write the text of the opera, but most often they work with a **librettist**. The story of the opera is written as a **libretto**, a text that is easily set to music. In the past, the libretto was also bound and sold to the audience. Today, the audience can easily follow the plot with the use of **surtitles**. Surtitles are the English translation of the libretto, which are projected onto a screen above the stage.

Many question the difference between an opera and a musical like *Les Miserables* or *Phantom of the Opera*. There are many differences. For instance, the musical style is an important difference between the two art forms; opera is usually **classical** and complex, while musicals feature pop songs and sometimes rock and roll. Also, singers in musicals have microphones hidden in their costumes or wigs to amplify their voices. The voices of opera singers are so strong, no amplification is needed, even in a large venue. Furthermore, operas are almost completely sung, while the use of spoken words are more common to musicals. There are some operas with spoken words and these are called **singspiels** (German) and **opera-comique** (French). Examples are Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Bizet's *Carmen*, respectively.

All terms in **bold** are defined in the Glossary.

Audience Etiquette

The following list of **Do's** and **Do Not's** will help you (and those around you) enjoy the experience of a night at the opera:

- ◆ **Do** dress in whatever you are comfortable in. However, going to the opera can be an opportunity to get dressed in formal attire.
- ◆ **Do** be on time. Latecomers disturb the rest of the audience and the singers. They will only be seated at suitable breaks- often not until **intermission**.
- ◆ **Do** find your seat with the help of your teacher or an usher. It is also customary to remove your hat in respect to the artists and to the person sitting behind you.
- ◆ **Do** turn off cell phones, pagers, digital watch alarms and all electronic devices.
- ◆ **Do Not** take photos. The flash can be very disturbing to the artists and audience members alike.
- ◆ **Do Not** chew gum, eat, drink, or talk. Let the action on stage surround you. As an audience member, you are a very important part of the process taking place. Without you there is no show.
- ◆ **Do** get settled and comfortable prior to the performance beginning. Check your program before the performance, rustling through the program during the show can disrupt everyone.
- ◆ **Do** CLAP as the lights are dimmed and the **conductor** appears and bows to the audience. Watch as the **conductor** then turns to the **orchestra** and takes up his or her **baton** to signal the beginning of the opera.
- ◆ **Do** listen to the **prelude** or **overture** before the curtain rises. This is part of the performance and an opportunity to identify common musical themes that may reoccur during the opera.
- ◆ **Do** sit still, only whisper when it is absolutely necessary, as a whisper is heard all over the theatre, and NEVER (except in an emergency) stand during the performance.
- ◆ **Do** applaud (or shout **Bravo!**) at the end of an **aria** or **chorus** piece to signify your enjoyment. The end of a piece can be identified by a pause in the music.
- ◆ **Do** laugh when something is funny.
- ◆ **Do** read the English **surtitles** projected above the stage. Most operas are not sung in English (*Don Giovanni* is sung in Italian). Use the surtitles to understand the story.
- ◆ **Do** listen for subtleties in the music. The **tempo**, volume and complexity of the music and singing often depict the “feeling” or “sense” of the action or character. Also, notice repeated words or phrases; they are usually significant.

Finally, have fun and enjoy the show!!!!

Manitoba Opera
presents

Don Giovanni

November 2003, Manitoba Centennial Concert Hall
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte

First Performance: Count Nostitz National Theatre in Prague on October 29, 1787

Sung in Italian with English surtitles
Approximately 3 hours, including one 20-minute intermission

Cast & Crew

Don Giovanni, a licentious nobleman
Don Pedro, Commendatore of Seville
Donna Anna, Don Pedro's daughter
Don Ottavio, Donna Anna's fiancé
Donna Elvira, a noble lady of Burgos
Leporello, servant of Don Giovanni
Zerlina, a peasant girl
Masetto, fiancé of Zerlina
Townpeople

Baritone	Jeff Mattsey
Bass	Stefan Szkarafrowsky
Soprano	Cheryl Hickman
Tenor	Benjamin Butterfield
Soprano	Heidi Klassen
Bass	Taras Kulish
Soprano	Nikki Einfeld
Baritone	Alexander Dobson
	Manitoba Opera Chorus

Conductor
Director
Lighting Designer
Set Designer
Costumes
Stage Manager
Assistant Stage Manager #1
Assistant Stage Manager #2

Tadeusz Biernacki
Tom Diamond
Robert Thomson
Lawrence Shafer
Malabar, Toronto
Michael Walton
Ha Neul Kim
Tiffany Taylor

Pronunciation Guide

Don Giovanni	doh(n)-jaw-VAH(n)-nee
Leporello	leh-paw- <u>REH</u> (l)-law
Donna Anna	DOH(n)--nah AH(n)-nah
Don Ottavio	doh(n)-aw(t)-TAH-vyaw
Donna Elvira	DOH(n)--nah ehl-VEE-rah
Zerlina	dzehr-LEE-nah
Masetto	mah-zay(t)-taw
Commendatore	koh(m)-mehn-dah-TOH-reh



Statue of the Commendatore (Act II, scene 3)

About the Composer- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born January 27, 1756 in Salzburg, Austria, son of Leopold Mozart, a violinist and composer in the service of the Prince Archbishop. He started music lessons when he was three. By the time he was five years old, Mozart was already composing his own music and playing for empresses, electors and royal families. A child prodigy, Mozart was especially gifted in playing the piano, the harpsichord, and the organ, all the while composing for other instruments and vocal music. He was also fluent in Italian and French as well as his native German. There is no evidence of his formal schooling and it appears that his father was his tutor in all subjects. His father recognized his son's exceptional talent and was determined to make him famous. A relatively poor family had much to gain financially with a child prodigy among its members.

At the age of twelve Mozart had composed his first true opera, *La finta semplice* (The Pretended Simpleton). The singers refused to perform in a piece conducted by a little boy and there were accusations that the piece was written by his father, not the son. The theatre cancelled the contract and refused to pay Mozart his fee. During his teenage years, Mozart toured most of Europe, visiting Vienna once and Italy three times before returning home to Salzburg in 1774. In 1777, his parents thought it would be best for Mozart to find work elsewhere. Mozart and his mother moved to Munich, and then to Mannheim before settling in Paris. He returned to Salzburg in 1779 after the death of his mother. During this time, Mozart wrote many sonatas, operas, sacred works, symphonies, concertos, serenades and dramatic music. In 1781, the success of the opera seria, *Idomeneo*, prompted the young composer to take permanent residence in Vienna.

Soon after his next operatic success, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (The Abduction from the Seraglio) in 1782, Mozart married a young woman by the name of Constanze Weber and they lived in Vienna for the rest of their lives. The couple would have six children, only two of whom survived infancy. Soon after, Mozart would meet Lorenzo Da Ponte with whom he would collaborate to create his three greatest operas: *Le nozze di Figaro* (The Marriage of Figaro), *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*.

Mozart's years in Vienna coincided with the reign of Emperor Joseph II (1780-1790). It was a period of enlightened reform throughout Europe, including Vienna. Censorship was largely abolished and tolerance laws for minorities were adopted. Joseph was a practical man. A childless bachelor, he kept a simple household. He dressed in plain clothing and thought of himself as the people's emperor. Some reforms he imposed included censured funeral banquets, better training for physicians, increased availability of medical treatment, and protection of illegitimate children against discrimination. He also opened the royal hunting grounds as parks for the general public. Joseph was also a dedicated musician and practised at least one hour a day.

Mozart was one of the first self-employed musicians in Vienna. A typical day for Mozart during his early years in Vienna would entail arising at six, composing until nine or ten, giving lessons until about one, giving concerts in the evening, and then composing for a few more hours. He would sleep only five or six hours a night. The musical scene in Vienna was intense. Mozart was in demand as a guest artist and accompanist. The public also continually craved new compositions, thus Mozart was constantly composing. He would often compose a whole piece in his mind before committing it to paper. He would also carry scraps of paper so he could jot down ideas at any time.

Although he had a steady income from new works, ticket sales from concerts, royalties from publishers and fees from lessons, he did not know how to manage his money properly. Mozart and his wife spent lavishly. He dressed like nobility, as he felt his image was essential to his success. He also gave generously to his friends and charity. He never saved money and when emergencies occurred like the illness of wife Constanze, he had to borrow money.

In 1791, Mozart died from a feverish illness. He had been working on a Requiem Mass that had been commissioned anonymously. Mozart became obsessed with the notion that the mass was for *his* funeral, but we now know that a Count Walsegg commissioned it. There are a few myths that surround the death of Mozart, some of which are perpetuated by the 1984 film *Amadeus*. The first myth is that Mozart was poisoned. The film and other sources imply that rival composer Antonio Salieri was involved in his death. This is completely untrue and was denied by Salieri on his deathbed. Recent research suggests that Mozart died of rheumatic fever, an illness he had suffered many times in the past.

The second myth surrounding Mozart's death is that he was buried in a pauper's grave forgotten by the rest of the world. Again, this myth is false. Mozart's funeral was no different than most Viennese funerals of the time. Emperor Joseph II had issued a series of ordinances to cut down on the spread of disease and on ostentation. All cemeteries within the city limits were closed and new ones were opened a distance out of town. After the church ceremony the corpse would be carried without ceremony to the cemetery. To speed up the decomposition process no coffins were used. Bodies were placed in linen sacks placed in a grave with others, and covered with lime and earth. To save space no memorial stones were to be placed by the grave, but could be erected by the cemetery wall. This was the type of funeral that Mozart had.

Mozart was not forgotten. His death was announced in many European papers and many members of the Viennese music community were at his funeral, though his wife, Constanze was too ill to attend. Mourners accompanied his body to the city gates, but few could afford a carriage for the long journey to the cemetery for the burial. Soon the funeral customs of this time changed and future generations unfamiliar with these customs inferred that Mozart had been buried as a pauper. In the end, it doesn't matter how Mozart died. His music will live forever.

From Shakespeare and Swift I learned to write, but from Mozart I got my ideas. Mozart was the greatest of all musicians, He taught me how to say profound things and at the same time remain flippant and lively.

George Bernard Shaw

About the Librettist – Lorenzo Da Ponte

The librettist is the writer of the text or words in the opera. Lorenzo Da Ponte composed the words for three of Mozart's operas – *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan tutte*. Born in 1749 in Italy, Da Ponte's birth name was Emanuele Conegliano but, when his widowed father married a Roman Catholic and converted from Judaism to Catholicism, Da Ponte's name was changed to that of the Bishop who baptized him, as was the custom of the time.

Da Ponte started his varied careers as a priest then, after a few years, became a professor in Rhetoric. This also was a short-lived career, forced to end when Da Ponte was banned for teaching in the Venetian Republic after publishing some verses deemed highly subversive. That combined with his apparently scandalous personal life – he enjoyed gambling and women – caused him to be banished from Venice for 15 years.

Da Ponte moved to Vienna in 1782. Fortunately for Da Ponte, the new emperor, Joseph II, preferred traditional Italian opera over the German *singspiel* (sung play). Da Ponte was named the new court theatre poet where he stayed busy composing librettos, working with the composer Salieri. A falling out with Salieri led Da Ponte to Salieri's rival, Mozart. His work with Mozart remains among his best known.

Eventually, Da Ponte's lifestyle caused him to be banished from Vienna, apparently Da Ponte was quite a Don Giovanni himself. Shortly after, he married, although technically he was still a priest. Although his financial struggles remained with him throughout his life, it appears that he was a faithful husband and father to their four children.

After living in London during the early years of the 19th century, the Da Ponte family moved to the United States. Unable to live on his work as a poet and scholar, Da Ponte, along with his wife tried various ways to survive, including retail (owning a grocery store and later a book store), manufacturing (artificial flowers), and running a boarding house.

In 1826, Da Ponte, with assistance from others, brought Italian opera to America, with the premiere of *Don Giovanni* in New York that May. In 1838, at 89 years of age, Da Ponte died. Ironically, he was buried in the same manner as the composer to whom he owed his lasting fame: in an unmarked, long forgotten grave.

Compiled from materials from the Cleveland Opera and San Diego Opera companies.

Synopsis – *Don Giovanni*

Setting: Seville, Spain, 18th century

Act One

At night, outside the Commendatore's palace, Don Giovanni's servant, Leporello grumbles about his duties to the immoral nobleman. Soon the masked Don appears, pursued by Donna Anna, the Commendatore's daughter, whom he has tried to seduce. When the Commendatore himself answers Anna's cries he is killed in a duel by Giovanni, who escapes. Anna now returns with her fiancé, Don Ottavio. Finding her father dead, she makes Ottavio swear vengeance on the unknown assassin.

At dawn, Giovanni flirts with a high-strung traveler outside a tavern. She turns out to be Donna Elvira, a woman he once seduced with a promise of marriage in Burgos. Donna Elvira chastises her lover for his faithlessness. Giovanni makes his escape and Leporello distracts Elvira by reciting his master's long catalogue of conquests. Elvira vows to have her revenge.

Peasants arrive, celebrating the nuptials of their friends Zerlina and Masetto; when Giovanni joins in, he pursues the bride, angering the groom, who is removed by Leporello. Alone with Zerlina, the Don applies his charm, but Elvira interrupts and protectively whisks the girl away. Anna and Ottavio enter asking the Don to help them in their search for her father's killer. Elvira warns the pair not to trust anything the Don says. Declaring Elvira mad, he leads her off. Anna, having recognized his voice, realizes Giovanni was her attacker. Ottavio declares he won't rest until justice is served.

Dressing for the wedding feast he has planned for the peasants, Giovanni exuberantly downs champagne. Outside the palace, Zerlina begs Masetto to forgive her flirtation with the Don. Masetto hides when the Don appears, emerging from the shadows as Giovanni corners Zerlina. The three enter the palace together. Elvira, Anna and Ottavio arrive in masks and are invited to the feast by Leporello.

During the festivities, Leporello entices Masetto into the dance as Giovanni draws Zerlina out of the room. When the girl's cries for help put him on the spot, Giovanni tries to blame Leporello. But no one is convinced; Elvira, Anna and Ottavio unmask and confront Giovanni, who barely escapes Ottavio's drawn sword.

Act Two

Leporello threatens to quit, so Giovanni bribes him to stay but refuses to give up womanizing. Under Elvira's balcony, Leporello exchanges cloaks with Giovanni to woo the lady in his master's stead. Leporello leads Elvira off, leaving the Don free to serenade Elvira's maid. Masetto passes with a band of armed peasants bent on punishing Giovanni. The disguised Don gives them false directions and then beats Masetto. Zerlina arrives and tenderly consoles her betrothed.

In a passageway, Elvira and Leporello are surprised by Anna, Ottavio, Zerlina and Masetto, who, mistaking servant for master, threaten Leporello. Frightened, he unmask and escapes. When

Anna departs, Ottavio affirms his confidence in their love. Elvira, frustrated at her second betrayal by the Don, voices her rage.

Leporello catches up with his master in a cemetery, where a voice warns Giovanni of his doom. It is the statue of the Commendatore, which the Don proposes Leporello invite to dinner. When the servant reluctantly stammers an invitation, the statue accepts.

In her home, Anna, still in mourning, puts off Ottavio's offer of marriage until her father is avenged.

At the palace, Leporello is serving Giovanni's dinner when Elvira rushes in, begging the Don, whom she still loves, to reform. But he waves her out contemptuously. At the door, her screams announce the arrival of the Commendatore's statue. While Leporello cowers under the table, Giovanni admits the Stone Guest. Unafraid, Don Giovanni offers this supernatural statue his hand. The Guest holds Giovanni in his grip, warning him to repent or face eternal damnation. Giovanni boldly refuses. Flames engulf his house, and the sinner is dragged to hell.

Among the castle ruins, Anna, Ottavio, Zerlina, and Masetto are still searching for the Don. Leporello tells them of the strange events of the evening, confirmed by Elvira. They close with the refrain, "Death is the just reward for a misspent life."

Compiled from Opera News and Dallas Opera



Don Giovanni serenades Donna Elvira as Leporello hides. (Act I, Scene 2)

What To Listen For

Drama vs. Giacosa:

Since *Don Giovanni* is known as a *dramma giocosa*, the opera contains elements of both, drama and humor, sometimes simultaneously. The "*dramma*" moments have elements of the traditional *opera seria* or serious and tragic opera to them and the "*giocosa*" has elements of the *opera buffa* or comic opera of the time (late 18th century). Most of the characters fall neatly into one or the other category. Clearly Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, the Commendatore (Donna Anna's father) and to a good extent, Donna Elvira, fall into the "serious" category, while Leporello and the two peasants, Zerlina and Masetto are in the "*buffa*" category. That leaves Don Giovanni himself about whom more has been written and said than almost any other operatic character of all time. He generally fits in to whatever is going on at the time, occasionally acting as a serious foil to his servant Leporello's comic character and at other times playing the comedian as he sings a mock serenade to Donna Elvira's maid. Except for his flashy but brief "Champaigne Aria" he has no real aria of his own, yet his presence permeates the entire opera, even when he is not physically present on stage at the moment. (As students follow the opera, it might be useful to make a 2-column chart, one exemplifying the serious moments and the other illustrating the comic ones.

Overture—The Overture, in two distinct sections, emphasizes the contrast between serious and comic. The opening music of the overture foretells the climactic scene at the banquet when the statue comes to dinner. Two *fortissimo*, syncopated chords in the full orchestra, followed by deathly silence introduces the "drama" portion of the opera. This is followed by syncopated melody in the violins with the pulses between the beats to increase the tension. The dynamics are marked *crescendo* in the ascending scale and *piano* in the descent. Each measure of these four consecutive scales starts one note higher, thus heightening the tension. All of this and more will return in the climactic scene near the end of the opera when the statue of the Commendatore accepts Don Giovanni's offer to dine with him. The "drama" portion of the Overture now stated, we come now to the main body of the overture, a bright traditional sonata-allegro form with a "*giocoso*" feel, which to many represent the character of the impetuous, pleasure-seeking Don.

Opening Scene—Leporello is alone on stage while Don Giovanni is inside the palace trying to seduce the daughter of the Commendatore. In a light, staccato, comic aria Leporello bemoans his lot as servant to the Don. Part of the style of an *opera buffa* is to have a comic bass sing lots of words in a rapid-fire patter style, often on one note.

Two trios—Donna Anna emerges from the palace in the clutches of Don Giovanni. She and Don Giovanni sing alternate, imitative lines as she tries to save her honor and virtue while he muses over what fury this instills in him. This is clearly a serious moment, yet in the third line to this trio, Leporello is heard mumbling in a patter line how he got stuck in the service of such a libertine.

Donna Anna's father, the Commendatore comes to her aid and the Don challenges him to a duel. Dramatic, upwardly rushing strings accompany a brief swordfight as the old man is no match for the Don and succumbs to a mortal thrust of his sword. A unique trio for three basses follows. The interweaving of the three bass lines, each one according to his own character—the dying Commendatore in halting phrases, the Don declaring that the old fool got what he deserved and Leporello wanting to get far away from there—is a master stroke in the serious side of the drama.

Donna Anna and Don Ottavio—Don Ottavio is Donna Anna's fiancé and has come to console her over the tragic death of her father. Their duet, completely in a minor key reflects Donna Anna's grief and Don Ottavio's oath of revenge

"Catalog Aria"—One of Mozart's great comic arias is known as the "Catalog Aria." As Don Giovanni has moved on to other adventures and conquest, he encounters an old flame Donna Elvira. Since he ran out on her before, he does not wish to offer any explanations, so he leaves Leporello to explain why he deserted her. Leporello, in his "Catalog Aria," recites a litany of the Don's previous conquests: 640 in Italy, 231 in England, 100 in France, 91 in Turkey and 1,003 in Spain. Running up and down the scale with rapid-fire precision, he describes the types of women Don Giovanni has seduced—Countesses, Baronesses, Marchionesses and Princesses. As he describes the large ones ("*ella grande maestosa*" ("the large and tall ones")), Mozart gives him a slow, ascending melodic line culminating in a long held high note, as the orchestra does a slow *crescendo* over a pedal bass. This leads immediately to a light and delicate "*la piccina*" ("the tiny one") in a repetitive patter. All in all, this is a tour de force for Leporello and it convinces Donna Elvira to get even with the man who first seduced then abandoned her.

Zerlina, Masetto and the Don—On his next adventure, Don Giovanni encounters an engaged peasant couple, Zerlina and Masetto. The fact that they are engaged does not stop him from using his wily seduction technique on Zerlina. She is naïve and although she is able to resist him at first, she falls for his charm. Their duet at first has separate alternating lines, but when she is caught in his clutches, they sing in perfect harmony. While not exactly comic in character, its lightness and charm fit more into the "*giocosa*" mold than the "*dramma*."

Donna Elvira—Having experienced the lying, deceitful Don first hand, Donna Elvira just happens by before the Don can complete his assignation with Zerlina. In a fiery aria of fury, "*Ah, fuggi il traditor!*" she warns the young girl against her new suitor. This aria is in a serious and dramatic style, almost a throw-back to the earlier Baroque era *opera seria* with added embellishments and dramatically dotted rhythms in the orchestral accompaniment. One of the ways in which a dramatic run is differentiated from a comic patter is as follows: the dramatic run will be melismatic with many notes on one syllable, while comic patter will have many notes, but each one belonging to a different syllable.

Donna Anna—"*Or sai chi l'onore*" ("You know who tried to take my honor") is an aria of vengeance with an emphasis on the high range of the sopranos tessitura. The opening line features wide intervals and later in the aria, long sustained high A's and dramatically rising arpeggio lines to the same high A, point out the dramatic and steadfast nature of Anna's resolve.

"Prayer"—Near the end of Act I, Don Giovanni is giving a lavish party. Three uninvited masked guests appear—Donna Anna, Donna Elvira and Don Ottavio. Not recognizing them, Don Giovanni invites them in. After a moment of hesitation, they decide to accept the invitation, but before they enter they offer a prayer for protection and vengeance. A powerfully dramatic moment, it is one of the most sublime utterances of prayer ever set to music. In a slow tempo marked *adagio*, Anna and Ottavio sing in thirds *a cappella*, while Donna Elvira enters one measure later to the accompaniment of light woodwind chords. Soon an undulating clarinet arpeggio adds support to the underlying harmony. Donna Anna's voice soars ethereally as she unleashes her full emotions.

"Don Giovanni's Serenade"—Near the beginning of Act II, Don Giovanni sings a mock-serenade to Donna Elvira's maid, "*Deh vieni alla finestra*" ("Please come to your window"). His exaggerated mannerisms and effusive words create a humorous scene. The aria is called a *canzonetta* ("little song") and is accompanied by a mandolin with pizzicato strings.

"Sextet"—Act II has constant shifts between the dramatic and the comic and sometimes they are juxtaposed against each other at the same time. One such example is the sextet with Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, Zerlina, Don Ottavio, Masetto and Leporello. The first five have mistakenly accused Leporello for Don Giovanni and denounce him for all his previous misdeeds. The five sing a harmonious ensemble, basically at one with each other while Leporello responds in the typical rapid-fire patter of *basso buffa*.

"The Statue"—from this point to the end of the opera, the mood is virtually entirely *dramma* with the *giocosa* taking a back seat. Don Giovanni and Leporello find themselves in a churchyard cemetery. Suddenly an eerie voice peals out from the statue of the deceased Commendatore in slow, solemn tones, practically all on the same pitch, stating that the Don's days of laughing and mirth shall end before dawn. Three trombones, heard for the first time in the opera, help to create a ghostlike effect. Don Giovanni bids Leporello to invite the statue to dinner, and after some reluctance, he does so.

"Don Giovanni's Comeuppance"—In the final scene Don Giovanni is giving another one of his lavish banquets. A stage band plays some of the popular tunes of the day, including a quote from Mozart's own *Le Nozze di Figaro*. At the height of the festivities a knock is heard at the door. It seems that the statue, which the Don had earlier invited to dinner has, in fact, taken him up on his offer. Suddenly there is a crash of thunder, the lights grow dim and powerful chords peal out. The three trombones heard earlier in the cemetery have a sinister effect and a roll in the timpani adds to the eerie atmosphere. The rhythm is the same as the opening of the Overture. The Commendatore, calls out, "Don Giovanni, you have invited me to dinner and I have come" It is one of the most chilling effect in all of opera as everyone shutters except Don Giovanni himself. He in fact, nonchalantly orders Leporello to serve the statue supper. But the Commendatore does not take part in "earthly banquets" as he calls them. He has come for another purpose, to exhort the Don to repent and mend his ways. A persistent dotted rhythm infuses the orchestral accompaniment. The Commendatore sings a very angular line with alternating unison and diminished chord accompaniment. The melodic minor scales of the overture rise and fall, each one starting a half step or a full step higher than the previous one, heightening the tension. Leporello cowers under the table muttering to himself in triplets. The insistent dotted rhythm returns. In ever rising tones, the Commendatore urges the Don to repent at the last minute before it is too late. The Don grasps his hand and can't break its icy grip. Soon the very gates of hell open as a fiery inferno beckons. A male unison chorus of spirits from down below intones that horror awaits him down below. He finally breaks free from the statue's grasp, but it is too late. As flames engulf the entire stage, in a final scream of agony, echoed by Leporello, Don Giovanni is dragged down to the netherworld as downward rushing minor scales accompany his final outcry. A brief Epilogue in a lighter vein, allows the 6 remaining characters to sort out their reactions as they plan for the future without the specter of Don Giovanni to permeate their lives. "This is the evil-doer's end. Sinners finally meet their just reward, and always will."

From Chevron Texaco Opera Information Centre

Background on the Story Through Articles

Excerpts from **Program Notes: *Don Giovanni* Los Angeles Opera**

Posted Date: 5/28/2003; By Lisa Y. Christensen

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is unquestionably one of history's most beloved composers – the creator of seemingly countless classic works which remain firmly embedded within the Western musical canon. The composer's extraordinary skills became evident at an early age, and throughout his short lifetime (he only lived to the age of 35), he tried his hand at all of the fashionable genres of his day including solo sonatas, chamber music, symphonies, concertos, and of course, operas.

Don Giovanni received its premiere on October 29, 1787 at the National Theatre in Prague. Through an exquisite libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte, Mozart recounts the adventures of the dashing Don Giovanni, a young seducer constantly in search of his next conquest. Many writers have commented on Mozart's clever musical portrayal of his principal character. Don Giovanni's music undergoes seamless metamorphoses each time he sets his eyes on his next female prey. Through these musical transformations, Mozart exposes the conniving aspects of his protagonist's personality.

Indeed, at the time of its creation, the dramatic emphasis typically rested on the character of Don Giovanni himself. Audiences appreciated Mozart's kaleidoscopic portrayal of the Don, who oscillates between charming squire and cunning seducer at various points in the opera, and anticipated the opera's moralistic conclusion. In more recent years, many critics and audience members have turned their attention to the opera's female characters. This shift has led to several significant feminist critiques of the work – a perspective that has painted the protagonist in a much darker light. However one chooses to interpret the work, one thing is clear: the opera presents a rich musical and dramatic landscape which continues to enthrall today's audiences as much as it did over 200 years ago.



Masetto and Zerlina (Act I, Scene 3)

Did Dracula don Giovanni's cloak?

John Hooper in Rome, Monday July 7, 2003; The Guardian

At the end of act one of Mozart's Don Giovanni the great seducer is confronted by his adversaries.

But even though there are five of them, one armed with a pistol, he escapes, singing all the while. Towards the close of Bram Stoker's Dracula, there is an equally implausible scene. The anti-hero's persecutors - again five in number and this time all armed - lure him to a house in London. He succeeds in evading them by jumping through a window. Coincidence? Or something more?

An article published yesterday on the front page of one of Italy's leading national newspapers draws attention to some remarkable parallels between the story of Stoker's seminal Gothic villain and that of the archetypal Latin cad depicted in Lorenzo Da Ponte's libretto more than 100 years earlier.

The article's author, the Turinese critic and novelist Alessandro Barrico, does not go so far as to claim that the vampire count was modeled on opera's most dastardly lady-killer.

But in yesterday's La Repubblica he writes: "Perhaps Stoker had an obsessive love of Don Giovanni. Perhaps, in some hidden corner of his mind, the opera continued to work on him subconsciously, dictating to him various models and devices."

Both works are about seducers, though of different kinds, and the erotic connotations of Dracula's vampirism have been picked up on many times by critics and film-makers.

Other similarities between the two works became clear to him, Mr. Barrico says, as he was listening to Mozart's opera and was struck by the way in which the central character, like Stoker's Count Dracula, was conspicuous by his absence.

"The [other characters] are personalities. He is little more than a force. Everyone speaks about him obsessively ...

"He, on the other hand, scarcely exists. He has no comprehensible psychological profile."

Among other parallels noted by Mr Barrico are:

- Both anti-heroes claim three 'victims' (the peasant girl Zerlina, Donna Elvira and Donna Anna in the case of Don Giovanni; Lucy Westenra and Jonathan and Mina Harker in the case of Dracula);
- Each is faced by enemies who include two pairs of lovers and an elderly man;
- Both have parallel master-servant relationships (with Leporello and Renfield, who both complain of being denied the pleasures enjoyed by the central characters);
- Apart from the seduction of the peasant girl Zerlina, all the significant developments in Mozart's opera, and particularly Don Giovanni's sexual assaults, take place at night;
- When he seduces Donna Anna, he does so wrapped in a vampiresque cloak. She wakes up as if from a dream, in the same way as Lucy does after being attacked by Dracula.

Mr Barrico also notes that Mozart's opera features a character from the ranks of the "undead". Donna Anna's father, the Commendatore, has enough vampire-like attributes to return to life after his murder and drag Don Giovanni down to hell.

Guardian Unlimited © Guardian Newspapers Limited 2003

Don Giovanni

article by Kelley Rourke

"Why are you talking to me about heaven? Heaven needs to correct its own imperfections, since it has a sun that eclipses, a moon that wanes, stars that bode evil influences. In any case, how can I offend heaven if it is so far away from us? Heaven should mind its own business. Doesn't it have anything else to think of besides me?" --- Andrea Perrucci's *Il convitato di pietra*, Naples, 1678

Don Juan has been sneering at conventional morality on stages throughout the world since the early 17th century. The story first appeared in print in 1630 in Barcelona, with *El burlador de Sevilla y Convidado de piedra*. In subsequent years, the Don traveled to Italy, France, Madrid, England, Vienna, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Prague; his story was transmitted through a wide variety of performance styles, from rhymed alexandrine couplets to vulgar commedia dell'arte sketches. By the late 18th century, Mozart and his librettist, Lorenzo da Ponte, had a rich tradition of episodes, characters, and ideology to draw on for their operatic retelling of the tale. Da Ponte's *dramma giocoso* clothes the story of the damned libertine in a dramatic fabric neither entirely tragic nor entirely comic; its overture, with its alternating shades of menace and gaiety, gives us a taste of what lies ahead.

Don Giovanni's sometimes-faithful sidekick, Leporello, opens the opera, complaining of his fate: He must work to facilitate the Don's pleasures, but never enjoys them for himself. The sidekick appears in most other versions of the story under a variety of names, and serves as both comic relief and the voice of reason. Three of Giovanni's conquests appear in the opera: the nobles Donna Anna and Donna Elvira, and the peasant Zerlina. All have their roots in earlier tellings of the tale; traditionally, Don Juan's conquests have been plucked from a wide variety of sources, including nunneries and shipwrecks.

Anna is the first to appear, and when her father, the Commendatore, seeks to protect her from Giovanni's unwelcome attentions, Giovanni kills the old man. Giovanni and Leporello come across Elvira shortly after this episode. She is complaining of her recent betrayal (by Giovanni). Giovanni, not recognizing her at first, suggests they stop to comfort her, but quickly flees the scene when recognized. Leporello attempts to calm Elvira in an aria: "Madamina, il catalogo è questo." In it, he explains to the distraught Elvira that her seduction and abandonment should not be taken personally, as her sisters are many. This "catalogue" of conquests had appeared in the story as early as 1632; however, Mozart's treatment of this relatively brief comic monologue is unparalleled, raising it to one of the great star turns in the basso buffo repertoire, with ample opportunity to exhibit technique, wit, and sensitivity.

Many situations in the opera are farcical in tone, as Giovanni's attempts at seduction are repeatedly thwarted by the appearance of a scorned ex-lover. Giovanni must also contend with Don Ottavio and Masetto (the fiancés of Anna and Zerlina, respectively). Mozart's skillful ensemble writing allows the characters to express simultaneously a variety of perspectives, brilliantly combining dramatic development with musical effect not to mention a formidable technique.

Time and again, Giovanni manages to elude the parties he has injured. When he comes upon a statue of the slain Commendatore, he maintains his confident swagger, going so far as to order Leporello to invite the statue to dinner. The statue accepts the invitation, much to Leporello's horror. In the final scene, the statue appears as promised, offering Giovanni a reciprocal invitation. Still unafraid of retribution, Giovanni accepts, taking the Commendatore's icy hand in his own. When he refuses to repent his sins, Giovanni is dragged to hell. The other characters are left to tidy up the scene in a brief epilogue: Anna postpones her wedding to Ottavio; Elvira joins a convent; Zerlina and Masetto will wed; and Leporello will find another master.

Don Giovanni's musical riches are many, with pitch-perfect musical descriptions of Anna's outrage, Ottavio's tenderness, Elvira's desolation, Masetto's animal rage, and Zerlina's artful feminine wiles. The Don himself has the vaguest musical portrait of the bunch, changing his character according to the situation. He is by turns brutal, gallant, bawdy, sly, and tender. Perhaps it is just this fascinating slipperiness that has attracted audiences to this mythical figure for some 400 years.

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Don Giovanni attempts to win over (Zerlina Act 1, Scene 4)

Recordings of *Don Giovanni*

Mozart: Don Giovanni

Conductor: Carlo Maria Giulini
Performer: Joan Sutherland, Luigi Alva, et al.
Label: Emi Classics - #67873

Mozart - Don Giovanni

Conductor: Herbert von Karajan
Performer: Samuel Ramey, Anna Tomowa-Sintow, et al.
Ensemble: Berliner Philharmoniker
Label: Polygram Records - #419179

Mozart - Don Giovanni [ORIGINAL RECORDING REMASTERED]

Conductor: Carlo Maria Giulini
Performer: Eberhard Wächter, Joan Sutherland, et al.
Label: Emi Classics - #56232

Mozart – Don Giovanni

Conductor: Sir Colin Davis
Performer: Ingvar Wixell, Martina Arroyo, Kiri Te Kanawa et al.
Label: Phillips 422 541-2

Suggested Books

- Boyden, Matthew. *Opera, The Rough Guide*, The Rough Guides Ltd, 1997.
- Brener, Milton. *Opera Offstage*, Walker & Co., 1996.
- Cross, Milton. *The Complete Stories of the Great Operas*, Doubleday, 1952.
- Earl of Harewood, ed. *The New Kobbe's Complete Opera Book*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976.
- Forman, Sir Denis. *A Night at the Opera*, Random House Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1994.
- Jellinek, George. *History Through the Opera Glass*, Pro. Am Music Resources, 1994.
- Orrey, Leslie (Rodney Milnes ed.). *A Concise History of Opera*, Thames and Hudson, 1987.
- Plotkin, Fred. *Opera 101: A Complete Guide to Learning & Loving Opera*, Hyperion, 1994.
- Pogue, David Speck, Scott. *Opera for Dummies*, John Wiley & Sons, 1997.
- Simon, Henry. *One Hundred Great Operas and Their Stories*, Doubleday, 1989.
- Walsh, Michael. *Who's Afraid of Opera?* Fireside, 1994.

The Operatic Voice

Operatic singing developed in Europe during the 17th century. The vocal demands are far greater on an opera singer than on any other singer. Opera singers rarely use microphones, and therefore must develop their voices to make a sound that will project and be heard above an orchestra and be heard throughout a large theatre.

After years of practice and study, an opera singer learns to use his or her body as an amplification device. By controlling the muscles of the diaphragm (a muscle beneath the lungs and above the stomach) the singer can regulate the amount of breath used. By tightening the diaphragm the singer can push out the right amount of air to make the vocal cords vibrate. The speed at which the cords vibrate determines the pitch. As the sound passes through the mouth it resonates in the upper chest cavities and the sinus cavities of the face and head. These cavities act as small echo chambers and help amplify the sound. The shape of the mouth and the placement of the tongue near the lips contribute to the tone and sound of the words.

Many singers begin their operatic training in university. Opera students study singing, music history, composition and vocal pedagogy (voice teaching). In addition to music classes, they study diction and often study at least one foreign language. After university, singers begin to work in the professional world. Their first roles are usually small parts, but if they continue to study and train, they may move on to the bigger principal roles.

Professional singers develop a number of roles in their repertoire. Since the principal artists are required to have their parts memorized before rehearsals begin, singers must prepare well in advance of each contract. Singers have voice teachers who help them refine their singing techniques and many will also have an acting coach. Even a well-established singer will have a vocal coach to teach singing and acting techniques for specific roles.

Each person's vocal tract is constructed differently. The roles that a singer performs are dependent mostly upon their vocal range, but within the vocal ranges, there are many colours and weights of voice that further determine which roles he or she can sing safely. Vocal colour refers to the richness of the sound and vocal weight refers to how powerful a voice sounds.

After the role has been studied intensely and the singer is hired to perform, they arrive at the opera company for the rehearsals. This time is spent refining the music with the conductor and staging the action with the stage director. Each director has a different idea of how the character should be played, and each conductor has a different idea of how the character should sound, therefore the singer must modify his or her techniques to reach the desired result.

Physical health is a major priority to a singer. Contrary to popular belief not all opera singers are overweight. Conventional wisdom used to state that excessive weight gave added volume and richness to the voice however, in recent years, people have discovered that physical fitness can give similar benefits to a voice. Plus, the overall health benefits of being in shape overshadow any loss of vocal power. Most singers, like professional athletes try to avoid such substances as tobacco, alcohol and caffeine.

There are six basic vocal categories:

Women:

Soprano: The highest female voice, similar to a flute in range and tone colour. Usually plays the heroine in the opera since a high, bright sound can easily suggest youth and innocence.

Mezzo-Soprano: The middle-range female voice, similar to an oboe in range and tone colour. Called an alto in choral arrangements, can play a wide variety of characters including gypsies, mothers and even the part of a young man (trouser role).

Contralto: The lowest female voice, similar to an English horn in range and tone colour. Usually plays unique roles including fortune-tellers, witches and older women. Not very common.

Men:

Tenor: The highest male voice, similar to a trumpet in range, tone color and acoustical “ring.” Usually plays the hero or the romantic lead in the opera.

Baritone: The middle-range male voice, similar to a French horn in tone color. Often plays the leader of mischief in comic opera or the villain in tragic opera, sometimes even the hero.

Bass: The lowest male voice, similar to a trombone or bassoon in tone color. Usually portrays old, wise men, or foolish, comic men.

The vocal parts overlap each other. The notes that are high for baritone to sing are low for a tenor. The notes that are low for a baritone to sing are high for a bass. For this reason you may see a high range mezzo-soprano singing a soprano’s role or a low range baritone singing a bass’ role.

The following terms can be used to describe special characteristics in a vocal range:

Coloratura: a light, bright voice that has the ability to sing many notes quickly, usually with an extended upper range.

Lyric: A light to medium weight voice, often singing beautiful sweeping melodies.

Dramatic: Dark, heavy and powerful voice, capable of sustained and forceful singing.



Glossary: Important Words in Opera

Act- a section of the opera that is then divided into scenes.

Aria- means “air” in Italian. This is a piece of music written for a one singer (soloist), usually with instrumental accompaniment.

Aside- a secret comment from an actor directly to the audience that the other characters cannot hear.

Baritone- the middle singing range of the male voice. Jeff Mattsey (Don Giovanni) is an example of this vocal range.

Bass- the lowest singing range of the male voice. Stefan Szkaferowsky (Commendatore) is an example of this vocal range.

Basso buffo (Italian)- a bass singer who specializes in comic characters.

Basso profundo (Italian)- the most serious bass voice.

Baton- short stick that the conductor uses to lead the orchestra.

Bel Canto- Italian phrase literally meaning “beautiful singing.” A traditional Italian style of singing emphasizing tone, phrasing, coloratura passages, and technique. Also refers to the operas written in this style.

Blocking- directions given to the performers for movement on stage.

Bravo (Italian)- a form of appreciation shouted by audience members at the end of a particularly pleasing performance. Technically, Bravo refers to a male performer, Brava refers to a female performer and Bravi refers to many performers.

Buffo- from the Italian for “buffoon.” A singer of comic roles (basso-buffo) or a comic opera (opera-buffa.)

Cadenza- a passage of singing, often at the end of an aria, which shows off the singer's vocal ability.

Castrato (Italian)- a castrated male prized for his high singing voice.

Choreographer- the person who designs the steps of a dance.

Chorus- a group of singers of all vocal ranges, singing together to support the vocal leads.

Classical- the period in music which comes after the Baroque and before the Romantic, roughly from the birth of Mozart to shortly after the death of Beethoven. It represents the greatest standardization in orchestral form and tonality.

Coloratura- elaborate ornamentation of music written for a singer using many fast notes and trills. Also used to describe a singer who sings this type of music.

Composer- the individual who writes all the music for both voice and instrument.

Comprimario (Italian)- a nineteenth century term referring to secondary or supporting roles such as confidantes, messengers, and matchmakers.

Contralto- the lowest female voice range.

Conductor- the person responsible for the musical interpretation and coordination of the performance. The conductor controls the tempo, the dynamic level and the balance between singers and orchestra. You will see this person standing in the orchestra pit conducting the musicians and the singers. The conductor for *Don Giovanni* is Tadeusz Biernacki.

Countertenor- a male singer with the highest male voice range, generally singing within the female contralto or mezzo soprano range.

Crescendo- a build in the volume or dynamic of the music.

Cue- a signal to enter or exit from the stage, to move or to change lighting or scenery; or a signal given by the conductor to the musicians.

Curtain Call- occurs at the end of the performance when all the cast members and the conductor take bows. This can occur in front of the curtain or on the open stage.

Designer- a production can have two or three designers: a lighting designer, a costume designer, a set designer, or someone who is both costume and set designer. They work closely with the stage director to give the production a distinctive look.

Diva- literally, “goddess” in Italian. An important female opera star. The masculine form is divo.

Dress Rehearsal- the final rehearsal before opening night, includes costumes, lights, makeup, etc. Sometimes it is necessary to stop for adjustments, but an attempt is made to make it as much like a regular performance as possible.

Duet- music that is written for two people to sing together.

Encore- a piece that is performed after the last scheduled piece of a concert. An encore is usually performed because the audience wants to hear more music even though the concert is over.

Ensemble- a part of the opera written for a group of two or more singers. This may or may not include the chorus.

Falsetto- the upper part of a voice in which the vocal cords do not vibrate completely. Usually used by males to imitate a female voice.

Finale- the last musical number of an opera or an act.

Grand Opera- spectacular French opera of the Romantic period, lavishly staged, with a historically-based plot, a huge cast, an unusually-large orchestra, and ballet. It also refers to opera without spoken dialogue.

Helden- German prefix meaning “heroic”. Can also apply to other voices, but usually used in “heldentenor.”

House- the auditorium and front of the theatre excluding the stage and backstage areas.

Interlude- a short piece of instrumental music played between scenes and acts.

Intermission- a break between acts of an opera. The lights go on and the audience is free to move around. *Don Giovanni* has one 20 minute intermission.

Librettist- the writer of the opera's text. The librettist for *Don Giovanni* is Lorenzo da Ponte.

Libretto- Italian for "little book." It is the text or story of the opera.

Lyric- used to describe a light to medium weight voice with an innocent quality, capable of both sustained, forceful singing and delicate effects.

Maestro- means "master" in Italian. Used as a courtesy title for the conductor (male or female).

Mark- to sing, but not at full voice. A full-length opera is very hard on a singer's voice so most performers mark during rehearsals. During the Dress Rehearsal singers try to sing at full voice for part if not all of the rehearsal.

Mezzo-soprano- the middle singing range for a female voice.

Motif or Leitmotif- a recurring musical theme used to identify an emotion, person, place, or object.

Opera- a dramatic presentation which is set to music. Almost all of it is sung, and the orchestra is an equal partner with the singers. Like a play, an opera is acted on stage with costumes, scenery, makeup, etc. Opera is the plural form of the Latin word opus, which means "work."

Opera buffa (Italian)- an opera about ordinary people, usually, but not always comic. First developed in the eighteenth century.

Opera seria (Italian)- a serious opera. The usual characters are gods and goddesses, or ancient heroes.

Opera-comique (French) or Singspiel (German)- a form of opera which contains spoken dialogue.

Operetta- lighthearted opera with spoken dialogue, such as a musical.

Orchestra- an ensemble, led by a conductor, that is comprised of string, woodwind, brass and percussion instruments.

Orchestra pit- sunken area in front of the stage where the orchestra sits.

Overture- an orchestral introduction to the opera played before the curtain rises. Usually longer than a prelude and can be played as a separate piece.

Pitch- how high or low a note sounds.

Prelude- a short introduction that leads into an act without pause.

Prima Donna- literally, “first lady” in Italian. The leading woman in an opera. Because of the way some of them behaved in the past, it often refers to someone who is acting in a superior and demanding fashion. The term for a leading man is primo uomo.

Principal- a major singing role, or the singer who performs such a role.

Production- the combination of sets, costumes, props, and lights etc.

Props- objects carried or used on stage by the performers.

Proscenium- the front opening of the stage which frames the action.

Quartet- four singers or the music that is written for four singers. Also quintet, sextet, etc

Raked Stage- a stage that slants downwards towards the audience.

Recitative- lines of dialogue that are sung, usually with no recognizable melody. It is used to advance the plot.

Rehearsal- a working session in which the singers prepare for public performance.

Score- the written music of an opera or other musical work.

Serenade- a piece of music honouring someone or something, an extension of the traditional performance of a lover beneath the window of his mistress.

Soprano- the highest range of the female singing voice. Cheryl Hickman (Donna Anna) is an example of this vocal range.

Soubrette (French)- pert young female character with a light soprano voice.

Spinto (Italian)- a lyric voice that has the power and incisiveness for dramatic climaxes.

Stage Areas- refers to the various sections of the stage as seen by those on stage. See diagram in Workshop #1.

Stage Director- the person in charge of the action on stage. He or she shows the singers, chorus and cast where and when to move and helps them create their characters. The stage director develops a concept for how the entire performance should look and feel. He or she works closely with the stage managers, lighting designer, set designers, costume designer and wig and make-up artists to make his or her vision into reality. The director for *Don Giovanni* is Tom Diamond.

Stage Manager- the person who coordinates and manages elements of the performance. The stage manager for *Don Giovanni* is Michael Walton.

Supernumeraries (Supers)- appear on stage in costume in non-singing and usually, non-speaking roles.

Surtitles- the English translations of the opera’s language, in this production Italian, that are projected above the stage during a performance to help the audience follow the story. Much like subtitles in a foreign film.

Synopsis- a short summary of the story of the opera.

Tableau- occurs at the end of a scene or act, when all cast members on stage freeze in position and remain that way until the curtain closes. It looks as though that moment has been captured in a photograph.

Tempo- speed of the music.

Tenor- the highest natural adult male voice. Benjamin Butterfield (Don Ottavio) is an example of this kind of singing voice.

Trill- very quick alternation between two adjacent notes. See coloratura.

Trio- an ensemble of three singers or the music that is written for three singers.

Trouser role-the role of an adolescent boy or young man, written for and sung by a woman, often a mezzo-soprano. Also known as a pants role.

Verismo- describes a realistic style of opera that started in Italy at the end of the 19th century.



Workshop #1– Stage Business

Objectives:

Students will be able to express and apply their knowledge of the areas of the stage through writing and movement.

Students will investigate the historical background of stage positioning.

Pre-class:

Tape a massive grid to the floor of the space you are working in. This can be used to physically point out the areas of the stage as well as be used for the game (“Director Says”).

Activity #1: Group Discussion

Have a group discussion with your class regarding why individuals might need to assign names for the different areas of the theatre, questioning the purpose that it serves.

Activity #2: Historical Significance of the Stage

Explain briefly the historical significance for the set-up of the theatre. Include such points as how the stage was originally raked so that the back portion of the stage was higher than the front portion. This was done because the audience’s seats were not raised as they usually are today. It enabled those individuals sitting in the back row of the theatre to see the players clearly. As a result the back of the stage is called up stage and the front of the stage is referred to as down stage.

You may also choose to discuss which areas of the stage are most important. For example, the strongest entrance is from stage left.

Distribute the “Stage Facts” handout that has been enclosed, so that students can refer to it as you physically go to the taped area that you are explaining. You may choose to have them draw and copy the areas of the stage for themselves.

Activity #3: “Director Says” Game

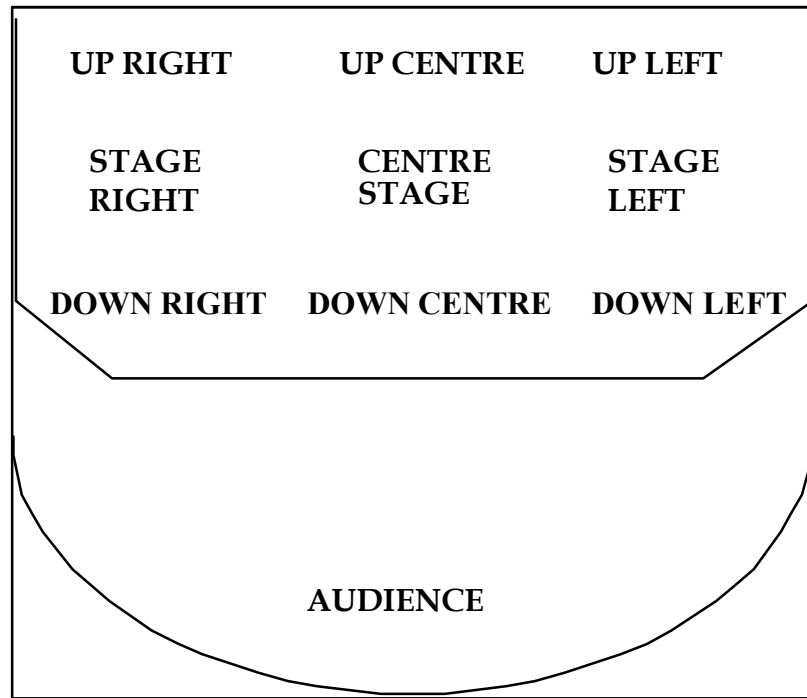
The teacher designates one of the students as the director, or for the first round you can be the director. The remaining students are the performers.

The director gives out the directions: “Move upstage”, “Move stage right,” “Move to up centre,” etc. The director may give out directions to the entire group at once, small groups, or individuals e.g.: “All performers with red socks go to stage left.”

Students are out if they move in any direction other than the one the director gives. The director gives out directions more rapidly, and any performer who moves in the wrong direction or hesitates is out. You may need to have a judge.

Stage Facts

Opera singers are required to act as well as sing and therefore they must understand the stage set-up. In rehearsals, the director will indicate to the singers what they should be doing and where they should do it. To do this they use a special vocabulary. Take a look at the diagram below in order to understand the different areas of the stage.



Workshop #2 – *Don Giovanni*

Objectives:

Student will be able to express their knowledge of the storyline of *Don Giovanni* through verbal and written expression.

Students will be able to express their knowledge of character through writing a character sketch

Activity #1: Story of *Don Giovanni*

Have the student read a version of *Don Giovanni*. You can use the synopsis found in the Study Guide or, most CD versions include a synopsis and often the libretto. You can choose to read it aloud to the students or have them read it silently. Stop to discuss.

For a more dramatic approach, read the libretto as a reader's theatre, having students take turns speaking the different roles. If done in this manner, ask the students to put emotion into their voices and encourage exaggeration. You might have to start them off, but this will provide an interesting way of reading the story.

Another approach is to convert the synopsis into an improvised play. Have students create the dialogue between characters at key points in the story.

Incorporate the music. Have the students discuss what they hear. Some discussion topics include:

What mood does the music create?

What does the music say about the character?

How does it say it?

What emotions are conveyed through the music?

Activity #2: Sharing with a group

After viewing the Dress Rehearsal, have the students discuss what they saw. To help focus conversations, get the students to create a list of qualities that they feel are key to understanding *Don Giovanni* and its characters.

Activity #3: Character sketch

The students will create and a character sketch for one of three of the main characters:

Don Giovanni

Donna Anna

Donna Elvira

The students will create character sketches on their own or in a group. Have the students fill out the "Character Profile" sheet in detail. The students should keep the following in mind:

What can be assumed about this person?

What is the character's relationship with the other characters?

Why does the character make the choices he or she does?

Make sure to remind students to include evidence from the opera to support their claim.

Remind students of the arias sung by their character. Do the emotions conveyed through the music fit the character sketches?

Optional Extended Activity:

Have the students pick a current song that fits their chosen character. They could then do a short oral presentation connecting their chosen song to the character.

Activity #4: Creating a journal from point of view of a character

Allow students to pick a specific moment in the opera, preferably a point of conflict for the character they have chosen in the last activity. Have the students write a journal of those events from the point of view of their character. Explain to the students that they are to take on the persona of that character and should refer to the character through personal pronouns. Also, remind students that they are only to express information that their character would know. They should use the character sketch from the previous activity to help them.

Character Profile

Name _____

Physical Characteristics (their style and physical attributes)

Psychological Characteristics (mental aspects of character, how do they think about things?)

Emotional Characteristics (are they generally cheerful, sad, snobby, “off-balance” etc.?)

Family

Career/Income (if applicable)

Interests and Hobbies

Other interesting facts

Workshop #3 - How to Write a Review of Don Giovanni

Objectives:

Students will be able to write clear and well-supported expository essays.

Students will utilize observation and critical thinking skills based on real-life, real-time experiences.

Students can submit their writing for publication (school newspaper) or you can send the reviews to Manitoba Opera. We would love to hear what the students thought.

Activity #1- Think-Group-Share

Individually students will write, in point form, the answers to the following questions:

What did you like about the opera? What did you dislike?

What did you think about the sets, props and costumes?

Would you have done something differently? Why?

What were you expecting? Did it live up to your expectations?

What did you think of the singers' portrayal of their characters?

Break the students into groups to discuss their feelings and reactions to the production. Have the students write on poster papers their answers or important points of their discussion. Encourage the students to go beyond the questions posed. Place their poster papers on the walls.

Activity #2- Gallery Walk

Have the groups travel around the room to examine the discussion poster papers. During the walk, students must write down one thing that surprised them, one thing that they didn't think of and one thing that they would like explained. Once this is done, have a large group discussion about the different ideas that they encountered on their walk.

Activity #3- Outlining your review

Go over the essential aspects of a review including:

a clearly stated purpose

a coherent comparison/contrast organizational pattern

a summary paragraph

capturing the interest of the reader

precise nouns

revision for consistency of ideas

You might give your students a few samples of reviews for fine arts events from the newspaper as examples. Have the students fill out the "Review Outline" worksheet. Once this has been completed, students may write their rough draft.

Activity #4- Peer Conferencing

Students will exchange reviews to critique and edit. Have the students use the "Peer Evaluation" worksheet to help guide them. Encourage the students to focus on effective coordination of ideas in sentences and the correct use of grammar and punctuation.

Activity #5- Creating the final draft

Have students make the appropriate adjustments to their reviews. You could also have the students type the pieces up and organize them into a newspaper. Also have the students complete the "Self-evaluation" worksheet. Include this in the total mark.

Review Outline

Purpose (why are you writing this and who is your audience?)

Plot Synopsis (including who sang what role, etc.)

Paragraph #1 (compare and contrast, things you liked or didn't like)

Paragraph #2 (compare and contrast, things you liked or didn't like)

Paragraph #3 (compare and contrast, things you liked or didn't like)

Summary/Closing Paragraph

Peer Evaluation

Date: _____

Name of peer evaluator: _____

Name of Reviewer: _____

Review Title: _____

Scale: 5-Outstanding 4-Above Average 3-Average 2-Needs improvement 1-Unclear
0-Has not been done

Process & Product Assessment:

- _____ Purpose of the piece clearly identified
- _____ Reader clearly taken into account (background, word choice)
- _____ Engaging to the reader (was it interesting to read?)
- _____ Complete sentence structure (grammar, spelling and punctuation)
- _____ Varied length and types of sentences used
- _____ Strong word choices (adjectives, adverbs and nouns)
- _____ Originality and creativity
- _____ Attention to detail and support of beliefs with examples

Total: /40

Comments and Questions:

Other Activities

- Study the history and politics of Mozart’s time, particularly the year when *Don Giovanni* premiered (1787); what authors were popular, what scientific discoveries were being made; what was the social and political life in Canada at the time
- Research Mozart’s and/or Da Ponte’s life, especially looking at their impact on music and opera and what influenced them.
- Find other stories that tell a similar tale to that of *Don Giovanni*, or write a story using the same theme and set it in modern times.
- Write a story about your visit to the Manitoba Opera, write us a letter, or draw a picture to illustrate your memories from the experience.

There are several good opera websites. The Chevron Texaco Opera Information Center has good background information, music clips, and other materials you and your students may enjoy. For its *Don Giovanni* materials, click on

<http://www.operainfo.org/broadcast/operaMain.cgi?id=19&language=1>.

For specific activities, go to the “Teacher Materials” link where you will find activities on opera in general, using *Don Giovanni* to Teach Music and to Teach Humanities. Follow the Links section from this site to access other opera companies.



The Commendatore’s Statue arrives for dinner

Opera Comprehension Test

General Opera

1. _____ A theatrical production incorporating both vocal and instrumental music, drama, and sometimes dance.
2. _____ The lowest male vocal range.
3. _____ An instrumental introduction to an opera.
4. _____ The area where the orchestra is seated.
5. _____ The female vocal range lying between soprano and contralto.
6. _____ A song for solo voice in an opera.
7. _____ The highest female vocal range.
8. _____ A song for two voices.
9. _____ The lowest female vocal range.
10. _____ The Italian word meaning "little book."
11. _____ The middle male vocal range.
12. _____ He/she has the artistic view for the performance of the opera.

Don Giovanni

1. The opera is set in (the name of the country) _____ in the _____ century.
2. _____ wrote the libretto for *Don Giovanni*.
3. The composer of *Don Giovanni* is _____.
4. The language in which *Don Giovanni* is written is _____.
5. _____ is the role for a baritone in *Don Giovanni*.
6. _____ is Don Giovanni's servant.
7. Don Giovanni is visited by the statue of _____ at the end of the opera.

Answers

General Opera

1. opera
2. bass
3. overture
4. pit
5. mezzo-soprano
6. aria
7. soprano
8. duet
9. contralto
10. libretto
11. baritone
12. director

Don Giovanni

1. Seville, Spain; 18th century
2. Lorenzo da Ponte
3. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
4. Italian
5. Don Giovanni and Masetto (both answers are correct)
6. Leporello
7. the Commendatore

Teacher's Evaluation Sheet

Your comments and suggestions are greatly appreciated. Please take a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire and return it to the address below. Thank you for your comments and suggestions.

Name: _____ School: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____ Grade(s) you teach: _____

Subjects: _____

Have you attended other performing arts events with your students in the past year? Yes No
If yes, what were they? _____

How did you find out about Manitoba Opera's Student Dress Rehearsal? _____

Were you able to apply the Teacher's Study Guide in your classroom activities prior to coming to the opera?

Yes No

If not, please elaborate: _____

If so, which sections of the Study Guide did you find most useful?

How appropriate was the information provided in the Study Guide? _____

What would you add/delete? _____

Did you spend classroom time discussing the performance after your students attended the opera?

Yes No

Do you have any comments about the performance itself?

Would you like to receive information on our future Student Dress Rehearsals? Yes No

How would you like to receive information:

Fax Email Letters Other _____

Further comments and suggestions _____

Please return this form to: **Education Coordinator, 380 Graham Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3C 4K2**
Fax: (204) 949-0377