

# Don Giovanni:

A Guide for Educators

The Metropolitan  
Opera

Marty Sohl/Metropolitan Opera



## VILLAIN, HERO, LIBERTINE, AND EVERYONE'S FAVORITE SCOUNDREL: *DON GIOVANNI*

is more than just an operatic character. Based on a literary figure that first appeared on stage in the 17th century, he emerges in Mozart's opera as a force of nature, subject to nothing and no one—until the work's final scene. The second of three stage works Mozart wrote with librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte (following *Le Nozze di Figaro* and preceding *Così fan tutte*), *Don Giovanni* is both a masterpiece of Italian comic opera and a work of unsettling moral ambivalence. Mozart's dramatic—and at times surprisingly dark—music re-imagines the mythical character of Don Juan, imbuing him with a personal magnetism so powerful that the opera has remained at the center of the repertoire ever since its first performance.

Similarly, the dramatic scope of *Don Giovanni* ranges from farce to horror, with moments of genuine comedy back to back with seduction, murder, and supernatural judgment. This duality of tone is evident from the very opening moments of the opera: it begins with some of the most portentous chords of Mozart's entire output, but quickly shifts to the lighthearted style familiar from his other comedies. "The starting point of the opera is a death," Michael Grandage, the Tony Award-winning director of the Met's production points out, "and the brilliance of the work is that Mozart then takes us to a play about life."

This guide is intended to help your students appreciate *Don Giovanni* as a product of its time and the social upheavals of the age of the Enlightenment. The materials on the following pages are designed to provide context, deepen background knowledge, and enrich the overall experience of this Final Dress Rehearsal performance. This guide also includes biographical data about the composer and information on the opera's literary source, and a series of activities to bring the opera and its music into the classroom.

## THE WORK:

### *DON GIOVANNI*

An opera in two acts, sung in Italian  
Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte  
First performed October 29, 1787 at the National Theater (now Estates Theater), Prague, Habsburg Empire (now Czech Republic)

## PRODUCTION

Cornelius Meister, Conductor  
Michael Grandage, Production  
Christopher Oram, Set and Costume Design  
Paule Constable, Lighting Design  
Ben Wright, Choreography

## STARRING

in order of vocal appearance

Ildar Abdrazakov  
LEPORELLO (bass)

Rachel Willis-Sørensen  
DONNA ANNA (soprano)

Luca Pisaroni  
DON GIOVANNI (baritone)

Štefan Kocán  
THE COMMENDATORE (bass)

Stanislas de Barbeyrac  
DON OTTAVIO (tenor)

Federica Lombardi  
DONNA ELVIRA (soprano)

Aida Garifullina  
ZERLINA (soprano)

Brandon Cedel  
MASETTO (baritone)

Production a gift of the Richard and Susan Braddock Family Foundation, and Sarah and Howard Solomon

Additional funding from Jane and Jerry del Missier, and Mr. and Mrs. Ezra K. Zilkha

Revival a gift of the Metropolitan Opera Club

## ABOUT THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE



**Photo: Johnathan Tichler/  
Metropolitan Opera**

The Metropolitan Opera is a vibrant home for the most creative and talented singers, conductors, composers, musicians, stage directors, designers, visual artists, choreographers, and dancers from around the world.

The Metropolitan Opera was founded in 1883, with its first opera house built on Broadway and 39th Street by a group of wealthy businessmen who wanted their own theater. In the company's early years, the management changed course several times, first performing everything in Italian (even *Carmen* and *Lohengrin*), then everything in German (even *Aida* and *Faust*), before finally settling into a policy of performing most works in their original language.

Almost from the beginning, it was clear that the opera house on 39th Street did not have adequate stage facilities. But it was not until the Met joined with other New York institutions in forming Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts that a new home became possible. The new Metropolitan Opera House, which opened at Lincoln Center in September of 1966, was equipped with the finest technical facilities of the day.

Each season the Met stages more than 200 opera performances in New York. More than 800,000 people attend the performances in the opera house during the season, and millions more experience the Met through new media distribution initiatives and state-of-the-art technology.

This guide includes several sections with a variety of background material *Don Giovanni*.

• **The Source, The Story, and Who's Who in *Don Giovanni***

• **A Timeline: The historical context of the opera's story and composition**

• **A Closer Look: A brief article highlighting an important aspect of Mozart's *Don Giovanni***

• **Guided Listening: A series of musical excerpts with questions and a roadmap to possible student responses**

• **Student Critique: A performance activity, highlighting specific aspects of this production; and topics for wrap-up discussion following students' attendance**

• **Further Resources: Recommendations for additional study, both online and in print**

• **Glossary: Common musical terms found in this guide and in the concert hall**

The materials in this guide will focus on several aspects of *Don Giovanni*:

- The character of Don Giovanni as a literary trope
- The opera's ambiguous placement between comic and serious
- Mozart's use of music to create entertaining and memorable characters
- Creative choices made by the artists of the Metropolitan Opera for this production
- The opera as a unified work of art, involving the efforts of composer, librettist, and Met artists

This guide is intended to cultivate students' interest in *Don Giovanni*, whether or not they have any prior acquaintance with opera. It includes materials for students with a wide range of musical backgrounds, and seeks to encourage them to think about opera – and the performing arts as a whole – as a medium of both entertainment and creative expression.



**Photo: Marty Sohl/  
Metropolitan Opera**

## SUMMARY

*Don Giovanni* tells the story of a gentleman—Don Giovanni—and his never-ending quest to seduce as many women as he can. The opera begins with a masked Don Giovanni making a narrow escape from a noble lady, Donna Anna, as she struggles with him. Her father, the Commendatore, comes to her aid and challenges Giovanni to a duel, but Giovanni prevails, killing the Commendatore and escaping with his servant, Leporello. Donna Anna and her fiancé, Don Ottavio, realizing who her attacker was, join forces with Donna Elvira, another of Giovanni's victims, to bring him to justice. In the meantime, Giovanni and Leporello happen upon the wedding party of two peasants, Zerlina and Masetto. Giovanni fixes his eye on Zerlina and conspires to entertain her alone that evening during a ball at his house. When Giovanni later tries to seduce Zerlina, her friends come to her aid. Giovanni tries to pin the blame on Leporello, Anna, Ottavio, and Elvira reveal themselves as masked guests, and everyone recognizes Giovanni as a scoundrel.

Don Giovanni next attempts to seduce Elvira's maid through an elaborate ruse involving switching clothes with Leporello and a feigned romance with Elvira. After several cases of mistaken identity, Giovanni and Leporello meet up again in a graveyard. Giovanni notices the tomb of the Commendatore and tauntingly invites the dead man's statue to his palace for dinner. Later that evening, Giovanni is enjoying supper when the "stone guest" arrives. It gives Giovanni one last chance to repent, but he refuses. The statue then drags Giovanni down to hell. The opera ends with Leporello, Anna, Ottavio, Elvira, Zerlina, and Masetto reflecting on their futures now that Giovanni has been brought to justice.



**Photo: Marty Sohl/  
Metropolitan Opera**

## THE SOURCE: THE DON JUAN MYTH

In the late 18th century, the literary character of Don Juan was well known across Europe. As a hero-villain with an extraordinary weakness for women, he had been featured in many plays and operas since his first appearance on stage in the tragic drama *El Burlador de Sevilla y Convidado de Piedra* (“The Trickster of Seville, or The Stone Guest”) by the Spanish writer Tirso de Molina, in 1630. The essential characters of the popular legend include a gentleman—Don Juan himself—who attempts to seduce a noble lady whose father comes to her defense, only to be killed by Don Juan. Later, Don Juan happens upon the father’s tomb and mockingly invites its statue to dine with him. This “stone guest” duly arrives for dinner and claims Don Juan’s life in payment for his transgressions. Molière’s 1665 play *Dom Juan; ou, le Festin de Pierre* (“Don Juan; or, The Feast of Stone”) incorporates these elements but uses the title character as a veiled commentary on the hypocrisy and excesses of the aristocracy in the author’s lifetime.

When Mozart accepted a commission from Prague’s National Theater to compose a new opera, the Don Juan figure was already a universally recognized character on the musical stage—in tragedies, comedies, and even farces. In fact, at the same time, the San Moisè theater in Venice was featuring a version of *Don Giovanni* that treated its source material mockingly, with characters remarking that the story was so hackneyed that it was fit for use only at country fairs. In his own text, Mozart’s librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte incorporated elements from several previous versions of the story but also provided much that was wholly original. Together with Da Ponte, Mozart created characters of enduring power, nobility, depravity, and fascination. Since the time of its premiere, it is Mozart’s version of the Don Giovanni myth that has become the touchstone for all subsequent discussions of the character.

## SYNOPSIS

Act I: *Seville, in the mid-18th century.* Leporello, Don Giovanni's servant, is complaining about his master as he keeps watch at night outside the palace of the Commendatore, a nobleman. Suddenly, the Commendatore's daughter, Donna Anna, comes running out of the building, struggling with Giovanni, who is wearing a mask. She has found him hiding in her room but has resisted his approaches and now wants to know his identity. Alerted by his daughter's cries, the elderly Commendatore appears. He challenges the masked stranger to a duel and is killed. Giovanni and Leporello escape. Anna asks her fiancé, Don Ottavio, to avenge her father's death.

The following morning, Giovanni directs his attentions toward another woman who is traveling alone. The tables are turned, however, when the woman turns out to be looking for him: she is Donna Elvira, who had been seduced and then abandoned by Giovanni in another city and is desperate about his betrayal. Giovanni slips away, leaving Leporello to distract Elvira. Leporello explains to her that she is neither the first nor the last woman to fall victim to his master and shows her a catalogue with the names of the 2,065 other women Giovanni has seduced.

Giovanni and Leporello run into the wedding party of two young peasants, Zerlina and Masetto. Giovanni offers to provide a grand feast and tells Leporello to escort the groom, Masetto, to his palace. Masetto balks at first, but eventually complies, leaving Giovanni alone to flirt with his bride. He tells Zerlina that she is destined for a better life and promises to marry her. Just as he is on the verge of successfully seducing her, Elvira appears, denouncing Giovanni and leading Zerlina off to safety.

Giovanni complains about his bad day when Anna and Ottavio appear. They ask for his help in their mission of revenge, unaware that the masked man who killed Anna's father is Giovanni himself. Elvira returns, continuing her denunciation of Giovanni, who in turn tries to convince Anna and Ottavio that Elvira is mad. As soon as Giovanni has left, Anna realizes that this was the voice of the man in her bedroom—Giovanni is her father's murderer. She again asks Ottavio to avenge her, as he wonders how to restore her happiness. Leporello tells his master that he took Masetto to his palace, but that Zerlina arrived there too, accompanied by the angry Elvira. He managed to lock Elvira out and Zerlina in, Leporello says. Giovanni looks forward to an evening of dancing and drinking.

Masetto has come to Giovanni's palace to find Zerlina, who asks his forgiveness for having fallen for Giovanni's charms. Masetto hides as Giovanni appears and resumes his flirtatious talk with Zerlina. When Giovanni spots the groom he scolds him for leaving his bride alone, then escorts them both back to the party. Elvira, Anna, and Ottavio arrive wearing masks. Prompted by Giovanni, Leporello invites them in, unaware of their identity.

In the ballroom, Leporello distracts Masetto as Giovanni yet again attempts to seduce Zerlina. She cries out. Giovanni tries to pin the seduction on Leporello, but this time he's been caught. Elvira, Anna, and Ottavio take off their masks and confront him at last.

## VOICE TYPE

Since the early 19th century, singing voices have usually been classified in six basic types, three male and three female, according to their range:

### SOPRANO

the highest-pitched type of human voice, normally possessed only by women and boys

### MEZZO-SOPRANO

the female voice whose range lies between the soprano and the contralto (Italian "mezzo"=middle, medium)

### CONTRALTO

the lowest female voice, also called an alto

### COUNTERTENOR

a male singing voice whose vocal range is equivalent to that of a contralto, mezzo-soprano, or (less frequently) a soprano, usually through the use of falsetto

### TENOR

the highest naturally occurring voice type in adult males

### BARITONE

the male voice lying below the tenor and above the bass

### BASS

the lowest male voice

Act II Leporello tries to convince his master to abandon his pursuit of women, but Giovanni insists that he needs them more than air or food. Now he has his eye on Elvira's servant girl. To accomplish her seduction, he convinces Leporello to switch clothes with him. Giovanni calls out to Elvira's window. When she comes down, the disguised Leporello leads her off for a walk, leaving Giovanni free to serenade Elvira's maid. His song is interrupted by Masetto, leading a posse to find his bride's seducer. Still pretending to be Leporello, Giovanni sends the men off in various directions, then beats up Masetto and hurries off. Zerlina finds her bruised bridegroom and comforts him.

Leporello is still with Elvira, baffling her with his insistence that they stay in the shadows. He manages to slip away just as Anna and Ottavio appear, but is then surprised by the arrival of Zerlina and Masetto. All four believe him to be Giovanni and are ready to punish him, except for Elvira who now, her love restored, defends him. Fearing for his life, Leporello reveals his true identity, which causes Zerlina to accuse him of beating up Masetto, while Elvira charges him with deceit and seduction. Leporello manages to escape. Ottavio proclaims his resolve to take revenge on Giovanni. Elvira is torn between a yearning for retribution and her renewed love for her seducer.

Giovanni and Leporello find each other hiding in the graveyard. As he laughs over his adventures of the night, a strange voice scolds him. It comes from the marble statue on the Commendatore's grave. Unflinching, Giovanni forces the terrified Leporello to invite the statue to his palace for dinner. The statue accepts. Ottavio, anticipating that Giovanni will soon be brought to justice, is satisfied, but Anna, who is still mourning her father, can't share his sense of resolution. Ottavio accuses her of not loving him. Indeed she does, she replies, but he must be patient until time can heal her wounds.

Giovanni is enjoying dinner at his palace, with Leporello serving and musicians playing. Elvira enters, in love, not in anger, and makes a last desperate attempt to convince Giovanni to change his life and make amends. He laughs at her. Exasperated, she leaves but moments later is heard screaming in terror. Giovanni sends Leporello to investigate. A fearful knocking is heard—the statue has come to dinner. The marble Commendatore demands that Giovanni repent. He refuses: he will bow to no man, alive or dead. When the statue extends its hand, Giovanni coolly offers his own and is dragged down to hell.

Elvira, Anna, Ottavio, Zerlina, Masetto, and Leporello contemplate their future and the fate of an immoral man.

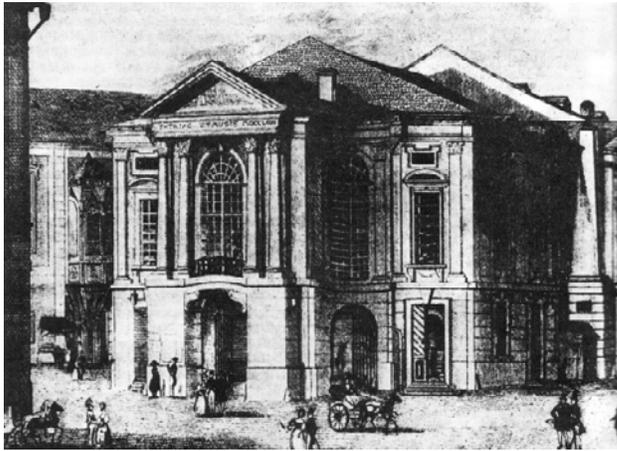
# WHO'S WHO IN *DON GIOVANNI*

Character		Pronunciation Guide	Voice Type	The Lowdown
Don Giovanni	A nobleman and notorious libertine	donn joe-VAHN-nee	Baritone	A force of nature, Don Giovanni flouts
Leporello	Don Giovanni's servant, often an unwilling accessory to his master's crimes	leh-po-REL-low	Bass	Leporello provides both comic relief and commonsense moral commentary.
Donna Elvira	A noblewoman from another city	DON-nah el-VEE-ra	Soprano	One of Don Giovanni's conquests, Elvira is torn between wanting to bring him to justice and longing to be reunited with him.
The Commendatore	An elderly nobleman, Donna Anna's father	co-men-da- TOR-ay	Bass	Though Don Giovanni kills him in the opening scene, the Commendatore's pursuit of justice extends beyond the grave.
Donna Anna	The Commendatore's daughter and Don Ottavio's fiancée	DON-nah AHN-nah	Soprano	Don Giovanni's attempted assault on Anna sets her on a course of righteous anger.
Don Ottavio	An honorable young nobleman, engaged to Donna Anna	donn oh-TAH-vee-oh	Tenor	Honest and dutiful, Ottavio is ultimately powerless compared to Don Giovanni.
Zerlina	A peasant girl, Masetto's bride	dzair-LEE-na	Soprano	Though engaged to Masetto, Zerlina is flirtatious and initially seems receptive to Giovanni's attentions.
Masetto	A peasant, Zerlina's fiancé	mah-ZET-toe	Bass	Masetto's low social status forces him to withstand Giovanni's various abuses.

- **1630** Tirso de Molina publishes *El Burlador de Sevilla y Convidado de Piedra* (“The Trickster of Seville, or The Stone Guest”), one of the earliest incarnations of the Don Juan myth, which will appear throughout the 17th and 18th centuries in various literary and operatic guises under titles including *Don Juan*, *Don Giovanni*, *Il Dissoluto Punito*, and *Il Convitato di Pietra*.
  
- **1756** Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is born on January 27, one of the two surviving children of Leopold Mozart, a composer in the service of the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg.
  
- **1762** At the age of seven, Mozart performs for the Empress Maria Theresia in Vienna, as a keyboard prodigy and composer. Over the next 11 years, the Mozart family tours throughout Europe, performing for members of the royalty and nobility.
  
- **1767** Mozart completes his first full-length dramatic work, *Apollo et Hyacinthus*, based on a Latin text drawn from Ovid. It is first performed in Salzburg on May 13.
  
- **1781** Mozart relocates to Vienna, seeking to make his living as an independent composer and performer in the culturally rich Habsburg capital, rather than solely under contract to a wealthy patron or the church.
  
- **1781** The poet and ex-priest Lorenzo Da Ponte moves to Vienna, having been chased out of Venice owing to his liberal politics and illicit involvement with several married women. In Vienna, he soon attracts the notice of Emperor Joseph II, who appoints Da Ponte as the poet to the court theater. His libretti for Mozart, Antonio Salieri, and Vicente Martín y Soler exemplify the remarkable achievements of Italian opera buffa in Vienna at the time.
  
- **1783** Having attempted unsuccessfully to establish a tradition of German-language drama at his court theater, Emperor Joseph II disbands his German performing troupe and re-establishes Italian opera buffa as the court’s preferred operatic genre.



**A posthumous portrait of Mozart by Barbara Krafft (Vienna, Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde)**



**The Estates Theater in 1797**



**Antonio Scotti in the title role of *Don Giovanni* in an 1899 performance at the Metropolitan Opera (Photo: Aime Dupont/Metropolitan Opera)**

- **1786** Mozart completes *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the first of his collaborations with Da Ponte. It premieres at the Burgtheater, Joseph II's court theater, on May 1.

Following a very successful run of performances of *Figaro* in Prague, Pasquale Bondini, the Italian impresario of the city's National Theater, commissions Mozart to compose a new opera based on the Don Juan story.

- **1787** The opera *Don Giovanni* by Giuseppe Gazzaniga, based on a libretto by Giovanni Bertati, premieres on February 5 in Venice at the San Moisè theater. The work is modeled as a play-within-a-play, in which a traveling opera company decides to revive the old Don Juan story, although the players complain that the plot is stale and overused. Although Da Ponte later neglected to mention it in his memoirs, he was not only aware of Bertati's text, he drew on and improved it in crafting his own *Don Giovanni*.

Mozart begins composition of *Don Giovanni* over the summer, although he delays composition of the overture until very shortly before the first performance.

*Don Giovanni* premieres at the National Theater in Prague (now known as the Estates Theater) on October 29, with Mozart conducting the first four performances. The opera's originality is such that it inspires commentary well into the 19th century and beyond.

- **1788** *Don Giovanni* premieres in Vienna at the Burgtheater on May 7. For this production, Mozart substitutes several new arias to suit the vocal abilities of his singers. Some of these musical numbers, such as Ottavio's aria "Dalla sua pace," remain in the version of the opera most frequently performed today.
- **1791** Mozart falls ill on November 22 and dies on December 5, likely from rheumatic fever.

## DON GIOVANNI: SERIOUSLY COMIC OR COMICALLY SERIOUS?

What kind of work is *Don Giovanni*? Mozart called it an “opera buffa,” a comic opera. Lorenzo Da Ponte preferred “dramma giocoso,” a playful or jocular drama. The terms in fact are closely related and their meanings overlap. A number of 18th-century operas carry the designation of *dramma giocoso*, but the genre as a whole was usually referred to as *opera buffa*—generally speaking, a comic work with an Italian text, tuneful solo and ensemble numbers separated by recitative rather than spoken dialogue, and a happy ending.

Opera buffa forms the counterpart to opera seria, a type of work that featured serious stories and characters drawn from mythology or Classical history and a narrative style that tended towards the static, with a succession of solo arias and recitatives and very few ensembles or choruses. Opera buffa, on the other hand, presented figures from the middle and lower classes of society and naturalistic plots that explored man’s common foibles. These stories are often centered around a household, using this microcosm of society to comment on contemporary morals, aristocratic indiscretions, and the vagaries of love.

Compared to opera seria, opera buffa employs a much more flexible approach to the structure of arias and ensembles, which are crafted to reflect the social status and dramatic situation of individual characters. Rather than being stand-alone reflections, the musical numbers in an opera buffa help advance the plot, especially in the case of the ensemble finale, a composition in several sections at the end of an act in which multiple characters sing together. Mozart’s finales surpass their predecessors not only in length, but also in their level of complexity, masterfully exploiting the forward momentum of the action and set to some of the composer’s most vividly dramatic music.



**Don Giovanni confronts the stone guest in a painting by Alexandre-Évariste Fragonard, ca 1830-35 (Musée des Beaux-Arts de Strasbourg)**

The Guided Listening Activities are designed to introduce students to a selection of memorable moments from the opera. They include information on what is happening dramatically, a description of the musical style, and a roadmap of musical features to listen for. Guided Listening Activities can be used by students and teachers of varying levels of musical experience.

## IN PREPARATION

For this activity, teachers will need access to a recording of *Don Giovanni* and the libretto.

## OVERTURE

As is customary in most operas, *Don Giovanni* opens with an “overture,” an instrumental work that is performed before the start of the dramatic action. In his opera overtures, Mozart often incorporated subtle musical foreshadowings of the music to come, and *Don Giovanni* includes one of the most striking examples in his operatic output. The overture begins with forceful, foreboding chords in the dark key of D minor—a chilling gesture that will return late in the opera, coinciding with a monumentally (one might even say statuesquely) striking dramatic development. The eerie tone that Mozart sets in the opening of the Overture, however, soon gives way to a much more rapid and lighthearted section, demonstrating that even in *Don Giovanni*’s world of attempted seduction and violence, comic diversion is never very far away.

What to listen for:

- the difference between the serious, portentous opening and the rest of the overture
- how Mozart sets the stage musically for the action to come

- 00:00 Following two crashing, forceful chords, the orchestra proceeds with a quiet and halting passage with dotted figures. The eerie atmosphere continues, soon developing into running minor-mode scales. The tempo is quite slow, the feeling one of grim foreboding.
- 02:02 After the end of the slow introduction, the key shifts to the major mode with a sudden change in tempo. The constantly running, rapid accompaniment contributes to a feeling of active energy.
- 02:48 The second main theme of this section begins, an accented figure in unison strings, which is soon interrupted by a more delicate gesture in the violins.
- 03:32 The first and second themes are combined in a development section that shifts freely from key to key. The addition of the development section makes this overture more structurally complex than many others of the time.
- 04:44 The first theme returns in the home key, marking the beginning of the “recapitulation” section.
- 05:49 This closing section rounds out the overture, bringing the action to a satisfactory close. At the very end of the piece, the key suddenly shifts, which prepares the way for the opening song of the opera to follow.

## "MADAMINA! IL CATALOGO È QUESTO"

Donna Elvira has just appeared on the scene, simultaneously lamenting her betrayal by Don Giovanni and pursuing him for vengeance and/or reconciliation. Without initially knowing who she is, Giovanni's interest is piqued by this hapless but attractive woman, and he approaches her. They simultaneously recognize one another, and Giovanni is forced into the awkward situation of being accosted by a woman he had previously abandoned. He makes a hasty exit, and it is left to Leporello to explain to Elvira that she is neither the first nor the last woman to suffer such treatment from Giovanni. He sings his famous "catalogue aria" in which he enumerates the many, many women who have fallen to Giovanni's charms.

What to listen for:

- Leporello's comical and repetitive style of declaiming the text
- the relatively simple melodic shape of Leporello's music

- 00:00 In a brief introductory section, Leporello explains that he has kept a record of all of the women that Don Giovanni has loved and invites Donna Elvira to review the list with him.
- 00:21 Leporello launches into his catalogue of Don Giovanni's conquests: in Italy, 640; in Germany, 231; but in Spain, "mille e tre"-1,003. His music can hardly be called melodic because of its extremely limited range and repetition—an apt representation of the habitual nature of Giovanni's dalliances.
- 01:50 Leporello's speech is rapid-fire and his melody repetitious as he lists the ranks of women Giovanni has seduced: peasant girls, maidservants, city girls, countesses, baronesses, princesses.
- 02:13 As Leporello describes Giovanni's techniques of seduction, his style shifts, taking the form of a courtly dance.
- 04:17 Leporello drives home his indictment of Giovanni's character by noting that "it doesn't matter if she's rich, ugly or beautiful," only that if she wears a petticoat, he knows what he wants.

## "OR SAI, CHI L'ONORE"

At a masked ball at Giovanni's house, Donna Anna has just recognized her host as the man who killed her father. She relates the harrowing tale of the previous night's attack to Don Ottavio, and summoning a great force of will, professes her determination to avenge her father's death. "Or sai, chi l'onore" is Anna's lofty statement of determination: she exposes Giovanni as a villain and implores Ottavio to join her in her quest for vengeance.

What to listen for:

- Anna's heroic musical style
- The restless orchestral accompaniment
- The wide range and held notes of the vocal line

- 00:00 Against a rapid accompaniment in the strings, Donna Anna channels her rage into heroic-sounding pronouncements that she consecutively re-states at higher pitches.
- 00:21 She drives her point home: "Vendetta ti chego" (I ask you for vengeance), producing her highest and most extended notes thus far.
- 00:33 Anna shifts to the minor mode as she recalls the wound in her father's breast and the ground covered with his blood. The orchestral accompaniment pulsates in the background.
- 01:05 The music returns to the melody and text from the beginning of the aria.
- 01:59 The aria closes with Anna insistently repeating her call for vengeance.

## ACT II FINALE EXCERPT, "L'ULTIMA PROVA DELL'AMOR MIO"

In the finale to Act II, Giovanni is enjoying dinner at his house, having earlier provoked Leporello into inviting the statue at the Commendatore's tomb to join him. Giovanni is in typical boisterous spirits when Elvira bursts in and implores him to change his ways. As is typical in "ensemble finales," this extended passage includes sudden, dramatic shifts and several changes of tempo and key. The voices sing both individually and together, and at the dramatic high point of the opera, a new character appears on stage.

What to listen for:

- The shifts in tempo, key, and meter over the course of the excerpt
- The constant increase in dramatic tension
- The sudden intrusion of music from the opening of the overture

- 00:00 As Elvira bursts into Giovanni's supper, the orchestra highlights the interruption with brusque figures. Elvira's music is repetitive and brisk; stylistically, she seems rather unhinged. She speaks of a final test of her love driven by her pity for Giovanni. Don Giovanni and Leporello respond with confusion.
- 00:25 Giovanni mocks Elvira's serious demeanor, and the three characters begin singing at once, each commenting on the situation. The musical tension begins rising as Elvira issues her warnings and Giovanni ignores them, instead proclaiming his love of women and wine.
- 02:11 The orchestra ratchets up the tension with running figures as Elvira tries to leave, and she screams in fright at what she sees there. Leporello responds similarly.
- 02:42 The meter, tempo, and key shift again, now in Allegro duple time, in the closely related key of F major. Leporello's music is breathless as he relates with dread that there is a man of stone at the door. The orchestra punctuates the knocking at the door with loud figures. Giovanni responds with derision and goes to open the door himself.
- 03:31 With a another forceful shift of key and tempo, the orchestra intones the portentous d minor chords from the very beginning of the opera. The statue of the Commendatore enters and calls, "Don Giovanni! A cenar teco m'invitasti! e son venuto!" (You invited me to dinner! And I have come!). The music of the following passage directly quotes the slow introduction of the Overture.
- 04:05 With continuing menace, the statue goes on to remark that he has no need of earthly food; his aim in coming to Don Giovanni's house is more serious. His vocal line moves slowly against agitated scales in the orchestra. It is some of the most ominous music in Mozart's entire output.

## IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the *My Highs & Lows* reproducible handout found in the back of this guide.

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND *DON GIOVANNI*

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1d

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

## ENCOURAGING STUDENT RESPONSE IN ATTENDING THE FINAL DRESS REHEARSAL

Watching and listening to a performance is a unique experience that takes students beyond the printed page to an immersion in images, sound, interpretation, technology, drama, skill, and craft. Performance activities help students analyze different aspects of the experience and engage critically with the performance. They will consider the creative choices that have been made for the particular production they are watching and examine different aspects of the performance.

The Student Critique activity incorporates a reproducible sheet. Students should bring this activity sheet to the final dress rehearsal and fill it out during intermission and/or after the final curtain. The activity directs attention to details of the production that might otherwise go unnoticed.

The activity sheet is called *My Highs & Lows*. It serves to guide students toward a consistent set of objective observations, as well as to help them articulate their own opinions. It is designed to enrich the students' understanding of the art form as a whole. The ratings system encourages students to express their critique: use these ratings to spark discussions that require careful, critical thinking.

The *My Highs & Lows* handout can be found at the back of this guide.

## FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION

Students will enjoy starting the class with an open discussion of the Met performance. What did they like? What didn't they? Did anything surprise them? What would they like to see or hear again? What would they have done differently? The discussion offers an opportunity to apply the notes on students' *My Highs & Lows* sheet, as well as their thoughts about the visual design of the Met production – in short, to see themselves as *Don Giovanni* experts.

When Mozart composed *Don Giovanni*, he designated it an opera buffa, or “comic opera.” But in Lorenzo Da Ponte's libretto, the work was subtitled *dramma giocoso*, a “jolly or playful drama.” Although in Mozart's time these terms were used interchangeably, *dramma giocoso* originally indicated a work that mixed character types from serious opera with the servants, peasants, elderly buffoons, and other figures more typical of opera buffa. In *Don Giovanni*, the text and music contain both comic and serious elements, running the gamut from slapstick to high terror. Encourage students to discuss their spontaneous reactions to *Don Giovanni*. Is it a comedy or a drama? Some of the questions you might want them to reflect on could include:

- What are the essential aspects of comedy? Of drama?
- What type of character is *Don Giovanni*? Is he primarily a comic character or a serious one?
- Does *Don Giovanni* have a happy ending? Why or why not?
- What do you make of the final scene, after Don Giovanni has descended into hell?
- What does the opera's musical style tell you? Do you feel that the music draws you to think of the opera as primarily a work of comedy or drama?

Students may also find it interesting to brainstorm other works that similarly combine elements of comedy and pathos. Can they think of a movie or television series as a point of comparison? Contemporary culture is full of characters functioning as anti-heroes. Discuss points of similarity between *Don Giovanni* and other anti-heroic characters. What motivates them? What is likeable about them, and what is repellent? What are the techniques that artists use to sway your opinion? How does Mozart's music make students feel about *Don Giovanni*? Is there a difference between the way his own arias express his character and what the music others sing about him tells us?

As a culminating activity, have students discuss how Mozart's *Don Giovanni* would need to change in order for it to be more of a straight comedy. How would it need to change if it were more strictly a drama or tragedy?

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. In fact, the question of how to categorize Mozart's *Don Giovanni* has been a topic of critical debate for more than two centuries.

### IN PRINT

Cairns, David. *Mozart and His Operas*. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006.  
*An engaging and accessible biography of Mozart using his operas as a guide through his developing musical style.*

Miller, Jonathan, ed. *Don Giovanni: Myths of Seduction and Betrayal*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.  
*A collection of essays that explore the historical, philosophical, and psychological roots of the Don Giovanni figure, across opera, literature, and more.*

Rushton, Julian. *W.A. Mozart: Don Giovanni*. Cambridge Opera Handbooks. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.  
*A detailed and scholarly investigation of Don Giovanni, drawn from the Cambridge Opera Handbooks series. It includes sections on the genesis of Mozart's work, its literary sources and Da Ponte's handling of the plot, and in-depth musical analysis.*

### ONLINE

Don Giovanni: Cast Interviews (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EogNQVQI0RU>)  
*Renée Fleming interviews Mariusz Kwiecien, Barbara Frittoli, and Luca Pisaroni from the Met's 2011 production of Don Giovanni, by director Michael Grandage.*

Don Giovanni: Highlights (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPSSIUluLEg>)  
*Excerpts from the Met's production of Don Giovanni, taken from the 2011 Live in HD transmission.*

Introducing Mozart's Don Giovanni (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFOuVrt6nM4>)  
*The Royal Opera House interviews the artists and conductor of its 2014 production of Don Giovanni, and they present their interpretations of Mozart's characters.*

Mariusz Kwiecien performs Don Giovanni's Champagne Aria  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUOWb40Lluw>)  
*An excerpt from the 2014 production at the Royal Opera House*

Vladimir Jurowski on Mozart's Masterpiece Don Giovanni (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1OEGPxqrcY>)  
*An interview with the conductor Vladimir Jurowski on his interpretation of Don Giovanni, from the 2010 production at the Glyndebourne Festival*

## act/scene

Acts and scenes are ways of categorizing sections of operas. An act is a large-scale division of an opera, and each opera will typically include from two to five acts. Acts can be subdivided into scenes, which are often differentiated by a change in setting or characters.

## adagio

Literally “at ease,” adagio is a tempo marking that indicates a slow speed. An adagio tempo marking indicates that the performer should play in a slow and leisurely style.

## allegro

Italian for “cheerful” or “joyful,” Allegro is the most common tempo marking in Western music, indicating a moderately fast to quick speed.

## aria

A song for solo voice accompanied by orchestra. In opera, arias mostly appear during a pause in dramatic action when a character is reflecting musically on his or her emotions. Most arias are lyrical, with a tune that can be hummed, and many arias include musical repetition. For example, the earliest arias in opera consist of music sung with different stanzas of text (strophic arias). Another type of aria, da capo arias, became common by the eighteenth century and feature the return of the opening music and text after a contrasting middle section. Nineteenth-century Italian arias often feature a two-part form that showcases an intensification of emotion from the first section (the cantabile) to the second section (the cabaletta).

## articulation

The smoothness or hardness with which a note is begun and ended. Articulation is a way of indicating the degree to which each note connects to the next, and can be seen while watching the bow of a stringed instrument player. A note can be attacked sharply and made short, or it can flow smoothly into the next note.

## baritone

Literally “deep sounding,” a baritone is what a typical male voice sounds like—the term refers to a male singer with a low but not extremely low vocal range. A baritone will sing notes that are higher than those sung by a bass and lower than those sung by a tenor. Uncommon until the nineteenth century, baritone roles have grown in popularity in opera since the works of Verdi, who often reserved the voice type for villains.

## baroque

A period of music history lasting from approximately 1600 to 1750. The beginning of the Baroque period coincides with the invention of opera as a genre, and its end coincides with the death of the composer Johann Sebastian Bach. The Baroque period saw the rise of modern tonality, an expansion of performing forces, and increased ornamentation. The term “baroque” means bizarre or exaggerated, and was used by critics in the Eighteenth century critics who preferred a simpler and less-ornamented style.

## bass

The lowest sounding line in music. Bass also refers to the lowest singing range for the male voice. Opera composers often choose a bass voice to sing one of two opposite types of roles: comic characters or dramatic and serious characters. For example, Mozart and Rossini wrote comic parts for bass voice, using musical repetition and low register for comic effect. Wagner and Mozart wrote serious parts for bass voice, focusing on the gravity that a low register can contribute to the overall musical texture.

## bel canto

Referring to the Italian vocal style of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, bel canto singing emphasizes lyricism and ornamentation in order to showcase the beauty of the singer's voice. Its focus on lyrical embellishment directly contrasts with a contemporary Germanic focus on a weighty, dramatic style. Bel canto singing is most closely associated with the music of Gioachino Rossini, Vincenzo Bellini, and Gaetano Donizetti.

## cadenza

An ornamented musical elaboration played in a free style by a soloist to display his or her virtuosity. Cadenzas are typically improvised—that is, created by a performer on the spot—though they can also be written out in advance. They most frequently occur near the end of a piece, at a point of harmonic tension when the piece is about to conclude.

## chorus

A section of an opera in which a large group of singers performs together, typically with orchestral accompaniment. Most choruses include at least four different vocal lines, in registers from low to high, with multiple singers per part. The singers are typically from a particular group of people who play a certain role on stage—soldiers, peasants, prisoners, and so on. Choruses may offer a moral or commentary on the plot, or participate in the dramatic action.

## Classical

A period of music history lasting from approximately 1750 to 1830, bordered by the earlier Baroque period and the later Romantic period. Contrasting with the ornamentation common to the preceding Baroque period, Classical music is characterized by simple and elegant melodies, regular harmonic accompaniment, and contrasts between melodic themes. The composers most closely associated with the Classical period include Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Ludwig van Beethoven.

## coloratura

A rapid and elaborate ornamentation by a solo singer, particularly common in operas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Requiring vocal agility and a wide and high range, coloratura showcases the virtuosity of a singer by featuring repeating melodic figures, rapid scales, trills, and other embellishments.

## conductor

The person who directs the orchestra, setting the tempo, giving interpretive directions to the musicians, and generally holding all the musical elements of a performance together. In orchestra performance, the conductor typically stands on a podium in front of the players and uses a baton to communicate the meter and tempo, and his or her non-baton hand to indicate dynamics, phrasing, and articulation to the musicians. The gestures of a conductor can be likened to a non-verbal language that the musicians understand.

## contralto

A deep female voice, with a vocal range that extends lower than that of a mezzo-soprano. Contraltos are known for having a very wide range and for the power and depth of sound with which they can sing. As is the case for roles for basses, many of the earliest roles in opera for contraltos are comic roles, though nineteenth-century composers also wrote dramatic roles for female singers with a lower range.

## crescendo

A gradual raising of volume in music achieved by increasing the dynamic level. When music crescendos, the performers begin at a softer dynamic level and become incrementally louder. One of the most famous types of crescendos in opera, the Rossini crescendo, includes an increase in volume together with repeating melodic and rhythmic phrases, higher instrumental registers, and the gradual addition of instruments in order to create a particularly dramatic effect.

## diminuendo

A gradual lowering of volume in music achieved by decreasing the dynamic level. During a diminuendo, the performers begin at a louder dynamic level and become incrementally softer.

## dynamics

A musical trait pertaining to loudness and softness. During the eighteenth century, composers began indicating their desired intensity of volume in music by writing words such as piano (soft) and forte (loud) into the musical score. Dynamics encompass a spectrum from pianissimo (very soft) to piano (soft) to mezzo piano (moderately soft), all the way up to fortissimo (very loud). Music can shift to another dynamic level either suddenly or gradually, through a crescendo or diminuendo.

## ensemble

A musical piece for two or more soloists, accompanied by orchestra. Types of ensembles include duets (for two soloists), trios (for three soloists), and quartets (for four soloists). Sometimes singers will respond directly to one another during an ensemble. At other times, singers will each sing to themselves as if the other singers were not on stage. In ensembles, multiple characters may simultaneously express very different emotions from one another.

## finale

The last portion of an act, a finale consists of several musical sections that accompany an escalating dramatic tension. Finales frequently consist of multiple ensembles with different numbers of characters. When it occurs at the end of an early act in the opera, a finale may create a messy situation—and the resolution of this situation will only happen in subsequent acts. One type of finale common in comic operas, a chain finale, features characters entering or exiting from the stage to create unexpected combinations of characters, in turn increasing the opera's dramatic tension.

## forte

Meaning "loud" or "strong" in Italian, forte is a dynamic level in music that indicates a loud volume. Adding the suffix "-issimo" to a word serves as an intensifier—since forte means "loud," fortissimo means "very loud."

## harmony

The simultaneous sounding of pitches to produce chords, and the relationship between different chords as they succeed one another. Throughout much of Western music, systems of rules govern these progressions to help create our sense of musical tension, expectation, and conclusion. Tonal harmony is based on progressions of chords in relationship to a tonic (or home) key. In the 19th century, as composers sought novel sounds to reflect the originality of their invention, they began to employ chords and progressions of greater dissonance and greater distance from the home key. As such dissonances moved beyond mere sound effects into the musical structure itself, the traditional theory of tonal harmony began to become insufficient as a way to understand and describe musical structure.

## intermission

A break between acts of an opera. At the beginning of an intermission, the curtain will fall (that is, close) on stage, and the lights in the auditorium, called the house lights, will become brighter. Intermissions provide audiences with a chance to walk around, talk with one another, and reflect on what they have seen and what could happen next. The break in the performance may also correspond with a change of time or scene in the story of the opera—the next act may take place hours or months later, or be set in a different location. Usually lights will dim and a bell may sound to indicate that the intermission is drawing to a close and the opera is about to resume.

## legato

A type of articulation in which a melody is played with smooth connection between the notes. A legato passage does not include any pauses between notes or any accents at the beginnings of notes, as the notes blend into one another without a break. In contrast, a passage that is played staccato features notes played in a separated manner.

## Leitmotif

From the German for “leading motive,” a leitmotif is a recurring musical idea, or motive, that represents a particular person, object, idea, emotion, or place. This musical idea is usually a few seconds in length and can occur in the music’s melody, harmony, rhythm, or a combination of the three. Leitmotifs are most closely associated with the operas of Richard Wagner, where they are used repeatedly throughout the opera to provide unity; they also less frequently appear in operas of other composers, including Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Strauss.

## libretto

The text of an opera, including all the words that are said or sung by performers. Until the early eighteenth century, a composer would frequently set music to a pre-existing libretto, and any given libretto could thus be set to music multiple times by different composers. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, collaboration between the author of the libretto, known as the librettist, and the composer became more frequent. Some opera composers, most notably Richard Wagner, are known for writing their own text.

## maestro

A title of respect used to address a conductor. The term is often applied to conductors with several decades of experience. However, performers often use this honorific when addressing the conductor.

## melody

A succession of pitches that form an understandable unit. The melody of a piece consists of the tune that a listener can hum or sing. During arias, the singer will usually sing the main melody, though other instruments may play parts of the melody. Sometimes, such as during ensembles, multiple melodies can occur simultaneously.

## mezzo-soprano

A female voice with a range between that of a contralto and soprano. A mezzo-soprano's voice is slightly deeper than that of a soprano, so mezzo-sopranos are often cast in supporting roles as older women, including nurses, confidantes, or maids.

## opera buffa

A term applied to Italian comic operas from the mid-eighteenth through mid-nineteenth centuries. The plot of an opera buffa often features scenes and characters from everyday life and addresses a light or sentimental subject, concluding with a happy ending.

## opera seria

An eighteenth- or nineteenth-century Italian opera employing a noble and serious style. The plot of an opera seria often upholds morality by presenting conflicting emotions such as love versus duty, or by modeling enlightened rulers.

## operetta

Featuring spoken dialogue, songs, and dances, an operetta is a short theatrical piece. Shorter in duration than operas, operettas typically feature a light subject matter, incorporate melodies composed in a popular style, and feature spoken dialogue. Most popular from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, the genre is the precursor of the American musical.

## ornamentation

An embellishment to the melody, rhythm, or harmony of music, intended to make a melody more expressive or ornate. Ornamentation can be either indicated through symbols written into the music or improvised by the performer.

## overture

An instrumental piece that occurs before the first act as an introduction to an opera. After the conductor enters the orchestra pit and takes a bow, the music for the overture begins. Most overtures are a few minutes in duration, and set the mood for the opera—even featuring musical themes that will occur later in the opera.

## piano

Abbreviated *p* in a musical score, piano indicates a soft dynamic level. Musicians may achieve a piano sound by using less bow, less air, or less force. In opera, soft music will often correspond with emotions of sadness or moments in the plot when a character is reflecting on a course of action or emotional state. Pianissimo is “very soft,” and can be so quiet that an audience may need to listen carefully in order to discern its melody and harmony.

## pitch

The quality of a musical sound corresponding to its perceived highness or lowness. Scientifically, pitch can be measured as the number of vibrations (or repetitions) of a sound wave per second, which is called its frequency. A sound with a low frequency, like a bass drum, will sound low and have a low pitch, while a sound with a high frequency, like a siren, will sound high.

## prima donna

Meaning “first lady” in Italian, the prima donna is the leading female role in an opera. The term may apply to the role or to the singer herself, who usually sings in the soprano register and is the star of the show. Since the nineteenth century, the term has also been applied to a singer of any gender with a self-centered and demanding personality.

## recitative

A type of vocal writing between speech and song that imitates the accents and inflections of natural speech. Composers often employ recitative for passages of text that involve quick dialogue and the advancement of plot, since the style allows singers to move rapidly through a large amount of text. Recitative may be accompanied either by keyboard or by the whole orchestra.

## rhythm

Rhythm refers to the way music unfolds over time; it is a series of durations in a range from long to short. Along with pitch, it is a basic and indispensable parameter of music. Rhythm is perceived in relation to an underlying beat and within the context of a meter. Western musical notation indicates to the performer the exact duration of each note or rest.

## Romantic

A period of music history lasting from approximately 1830 to 1900. Beginning in literature and later adopted by composers, romanticism reflected a newfound focus on individuality, nature, and emotional extremes. Music from the Romantic period often explores music’s redemptive power, focusing on the sublimity of nature, love, and the mysterious. Composers began to experiment with shortening and lengthening the standard forms and durations of musical works, and also added more expressive harmonies to convey the originality of their musical vision.

## score

The complete musical notation for a piece, the score includes notated lines for all of the different instrumental and vocal parts that unite to constitute a musical composition. In an opera orchestra, the conductor follows the score during rehearsals and performances, while each performer follows his or her individual part.

## Singspiel

Literally “sung play,” a Singspiel is an opera with spoken dialogue. Singspiels are typically in German and are from the Classical or early Romantic eras. The plot of a Singspiel is usually comic in nature, and its music may include songs, choruses, and instrumental numbers that are separated by spoken dialogue.

## solo

A piece, musical passage, or line for a lone singer or other performer, with or without instrumental accompaniment. The most common type of solo in opera is the aria, which is composed for a single voice with orchestral accompaniment.

## soprano

The highest singing range for the female voice. Roles composed for soprano singers are typically among the leading roles in the opera and require soprano singers to show off their virtuosic flexibility and range.

## tempo

Literally “time” in Italian, tempo refers to the speed of a piece of music. Tempo is indicated in a score by a variety of conventional (often Italian) words—such as *allegro*, *adagio*, *vivace*, *moderato*, *grave*, and many more—that not only provide direction on the composer’s desired rate of speed, but also carry associations of gesture and character. For instance, *vivace* indicates not only a brisk speed but also a lively spirit. Additional tempo markings may indicate when a composer asks for a section of music to be sped up (such as “*accelerando*”) or slowed down (such as “*rallentando*”).

## tenor

The highest natural male vocal range. By the nineteenth century, the tenor had become the most common vocal range for male leading roles in operas. Tenor roles often feature high-pitched notes for male voice in order to showcase the singer’s range and power. A related voice type is the countertenor, with a range above that of a tenor and similar to that of a contralto.

## theme/motive

Themes are the melodic ideas that are musical building blocks for a piece. A theme is often recognizable as a distinct tune and may reappear in its original form or in altered form throughout the piece. A motif (or motive) is a brief musical idea that recurs throughout a musical work. Motives can be based on a melodic, rhythmic, or harmonic component, and their repetition makes them recognizable to the listener. In opera, musical motives are often symbolically associated with specific characters or dramatic ideas.

## timbre

Pronounced TAM-bruh, a French word that means “sound color.” It refers to the complex combination of characteristics that give each instrument or voice its unique sound. Just as we can recognize each other by the differences in our speaking voices, operatic singing voices are distinguishable by their unique timbres. Listeners can also identify orchestral instruments by their timbre without being able to see them. The creative combination of different instrumental timbres is one of the artistic aspects of orchestration.

## trill

A rapid alternation between two pitches that are adjacent to one another. Trills are a type of ornamentation, serving to embellish the melodic line, and appear regularly within *coloratura* passages. Trills also may appear near the end of a piece in order to prolong the musical tension before the music concludes.

## verismo

A movement in Italian theater and opera in the late 19th century that embraced realism and explored areas of society previously ignored on the stage: the poor, the lower-class, and the criminal. Its characters are driven by passion to defy reason, morality, and the law. In order to reflect these emotional extremes, composers of verismo opera developed a musical style that communicates raw and unfiltered passions. Musically, verismo operas react against the forced ornamentation of the *bel canto* style and instead emphasize a more natural setting of the text to music. Before its exploration on the operatic stage, the verismo aesthetic first developed within the realm of literature.

# DON GIOVANNI: MY HIGHS & LOWS

January 28, 2019

Conducted by Cornelius Meister

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_

THE STARS:	STAR POWER	MY COMMENTS
Luca Pisaroni as Don Giovanni	*****	
Ildar Abdrazakov as Leporello	*****	
Rachel Willis-Sørensen as Donna Anna	*****	
Federica Lombardi as Donna Elvira	*****	
Stanislas de Barbeyrac as Don Ottavio	*****	
Aida Garifullina as Zerlina	*****	
Brandon Cedel as Masetto	*****	

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN/STAGING
Leporello talks about his boss			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Donna Anna tries to expose her attacker			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
The duel			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN/STAGING
Don Giovanni meets Donna Elvira			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Leporello sings about Giovanni's conquests			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Giovanni sweet-talks Zerlina			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Donna Anna recognizes Giovanni			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
The party			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Leporello and Giovanni trade identities			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Relations between Leporello and Donna Elvira			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Don Giovanni abuses Masetto			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
The graveyard			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
An unexpected guest			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
The big finish			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
And afterwards			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5