



MANITOBA OPERA



NOVEMBER 24 | 27 | 30

## Study Guide

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# DON GIOVANNI



Jeff Mattsey (Don Giovanni) and Stefan Szkafarowsky (Commendatore)  
in *Don Giovanni*, 2003, Manitoba Opera.  
Photo: R.Tinker

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## Fast Facts

- *Don Giovanni* is an Italian opera in two acts, composed by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart with a libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte.
- A timeless classic of tragedy and dark comedy, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* tells the legendary story of Don Juan, the dangerous and irresistible cad whose incessant pursuit of women at any cost earns him a dramatic punishment as the supernatural demands his repentance.
- The premiere performance took place at Count Nostitz National Theatre in Prague on October 29, 1787.
- Manitoba Opera's 2018 production, with sets and costumes by Edmonton Opera, places the story in Spain where bad boy Giovanni is a celebrated matador with a "rock star" persona.
- Oriol Tomas makes his Manitoba Opera directing debut, with Tyrone Paterson in the pit conducting the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.
- Manitoba Opera last staged *Don Giovanni* in 2003.



Portrait of Francisco D'Andrade as Don Juan in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* by Max Slevogt, 1912

### THE LEGEND OF DON JUAN

The first written dramatization of the Don Juan character appeared in a play called *El Burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra* (*The Trickster of Seville and the Stone Guest*) by the Spanish monk and playwright Tirso de Molina, published in and around 1630. Over the centuries, Don Juan has since become a famous legendary character who has featured in many literary and musical works by artists such as Molière, Baudelaire, Camus, Kierkegaard, George Bernard Shaw, Byron, Gluck, Richard Strauss, and Mozart.

Despite slight variations, Don Juan is traditionally depicted as an arrogant libertine who devotes his life to seducing women and is, ultimately, damned.

# Production Information



November 24, 27, 30, 2018

**Dress Rehearsal / Student Night:** November 22, 2018

Centennial Concert Hall

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte

Approximately 3 hours in two acts

Premiered at Count Nostitz National Theatre in Prague on October 29, 1787

Sung in Italian with projected English translations

## PRINCIPAL CAST

Don Giovanni	Baritone	DANIEL OKULITCH
Leporello	Bass-Baritone	STEPHEN HEGEDUS
Donna Elvira	Soprano	MONICA HUISMAN
Commendatore	Bass	KIRK EICHELBERGER
Zerlina	Soprano	ANDREA LETT
Donna Anna	Soprano	JESSICA STRONG
Don Ottavio	Tenor	OWEN MCCAUSLAND
Masetto	Baritone	JOHNATHON KIRBY

Manitoba Opera Chorus  
Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra

Conductor	TYRONE PATERSON
Director	ORIOLO TOMAS
Sets & Costumes	EDMONTON OPERA
Lighting designer	SCOTT HENDERSON
Stage manager	ROBERT PEL
Assistant stage managers	KATHRYN BALL MATTHEW LAGACE
Projected titles	SHELDON JOHNSON

# Synopsis

## The plot of Don Giovanni in a minute:

Don Giovanni is a nobleman who travels far and wide with his attendant Leporello seducing women along the way. One night, when he leaves the bedroom of soon-to-be-married Donna Anna, her father catches Don Giovanni and challenges him to a duel. Don Giovanni kills the old man and runs off. Donna Anna and her fiancé Don Ottavio swear to have their revenge on this deceptive stranger.

Don Giovanni then tries to seduce newlywed Zerlina, but his past catches up with him when jilted ex-lover Donna Elvira starts to sabotage his every move. She teams up with Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, and Zerlina's husband Masetto to teach Don Giovanni a lesson, which forces him to make a run for it. While on the run, Don Giovanni is confronted by the ghost of Donna Anna's father. In jest, Don Giovanni invites the ghost to his house for dinner — to his surprise, the ghost actually does attend. The gates of hell open up and swallow a defiant Don Giovanni, sentencing him to eternal punishment for his immorality.

## Detailed synopsis:

### Act One

Outside the Commendatore's palace at night, Leporello grumbles about his duties as servant to Don Giovanni, a nobleman. Soon Don Giovanni appears from the palace, chased by Donna Anna, the soon-to-be-married woman he has tried to seduce. The Commendatore (Donna Anna's father) enters and challenges Don Giovanni to a duel. Don Giovanni kills the old man and runs away.

Donna Anna enters with her fiancé Don Ottavio and discovers the Commendatore's dead body. Beside herself with grief, she makes Don Ottavio swear vengeance on the mysterious man who killed her father.

Don Giovanni is now outside a bar flirting with a beautiful woman. She turns out to be Donna Elvira, a woman he had previously seduced and who was now following him around. Leporello distracts Donna Elvira by recounting the thousands of women his boss has 'conquered' while Don Giovanni makes a prompt escape.

Don Giovanni arrives at a party where people are celebrating the wedding of Zerlina and Masetto, a young peasant couple. Don Giovanni flirts with the bride and angers Masetto, who is quickly taken away by Leporello. Now alone with Zerlina, Don Giovanni turns on the charm. Donna Elvira, however, charges into the scene and exposes his lying ways to Zerlina. Donna Anna and Don Ottavio have a chance encounter with Don Giovanni, who predictably begins to flirt with Donna Anna. Donna Elvira returns and denounces Don Giovanni as a cheat once again, but Don Giovanni declares her a madwoman and leads her away. Left alone, Donna Anna recognizes Don Giovanni's voice — this was the man who tried to seduce her and then killed her father.

Don Giovanni throws a party for Zerlina and Masetto and gets very drunk. Zerlina apologizes to her husband for being drawn to Don Giovanni. Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, and Donna Elvira arrive at the party as Don Giovanni manages to isolate Zerlina. Her cries for help bring everyone to the scene and Don Ottavio confronts Don Giovanni. Though he tries to blame Leporello, Don Giovanni convinces no one and is forced to flee.

## Act Two

Outside Donna Elvira's house, Don Giovanni and Leporello exchange clothes and Leporello woos Donna Elvira. Don Giovanni is now free to charm Donna Elvira's maid, but an angry mob led by Masetto soon arrives looking for the villain. Don Giovanni, dressed as Leporello, points them in the wrong direction. He then isolates Masetto and beats him up. Zerlina arrives and comforts her distressed husband.

Leporello and Donna Elvira are alone together when Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Zerlina, and Masetto show up and threaten Leporello (thinking he is Don Giovanni). Leporello flees, leaving Donna Elvira feeling betrayed again.

Don Giovanni is at a cemetery. Leporello rushes in and they change back to their own clothes. Suddenly, a statue of the Commendatore at the cemetery begins to talk: it warns Don Giovanni of his impending doom. Don Giovanni brushes it off and even invites the ghostly statue to dinner at his house. The ghost accepts.

Donna Anna is still mourning her father's death. She wants to delay her marriage to Don Ottavio until Don Giovanni is brought to justice.

At Don Giovanni's house, dinnertime is interrupted by Donna Elvira coming in and trying to convince him to change for the better. Don Giovanni dismisses her. As Donna Elvira exits, her screams are heard, announcing the arrival of the Commendatore's ghostly statue.

The statue orders Don Giovanni to repent, but he defies the supernatural force. As a result, the entire house is set ablaze and the gates to hell open up, sending Don Giovanni into the pit of eternal suffering and damnation.

Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Zerlina, and Masetto observe the remains of Don Giovanni's house. They confirm that justice has been served — this is the fate of those who live without morality.

*-Synopsis courtesy of Edmonton Opera*



Jeff Mattsey (Don Giovanni) and Heidi Klassen (Donna Elvira)  
in *Don Giovanni*, 2003, Manitoba Opera.  
Photo: R.Tinker



# Principal Characters

Name	Description	Pronunciation
Don Giovanni	A young nobleman	dohn djoh-VAH-nee
Leporello	Don Giovanni's servant	leh-poh-REH-loh
Donna Anna	The Commendatore's daughter	dohn-nah AHN-nah
Don Ottavio	Donna Anna's fiancé	dohn oh-TAH-vee-oh
Donna Elvira	A lady of Burgos abandoned by Don Giovanni	dohn-nah ehl-VEE-rah
Zerlina	Masetto's fiancée	zehr-LEE-nah
Masetto	A peasant	mah-ZEH-toh
Commendatore (Don Pedro)	Commandant of Seville; Donna Anna's father	koh-MEN-dah-TOH-reh



*Don Giovanni*, 2003, Manitoba Opera.  
Photo: R.Tinker



## The Principal Artists



### Daniel Okulitch

*Don Giovanni*

Lauded as “flat out brilliant” by *Opera News*, Canadian bass-baritone Daniel Okulitch is a leading interpreter of Mozart roles, most notably those of Don Giovanni, Almaviva, and Figaro which he has performed with some of the most prestigious opera companies and orchestras throughout Europe and North America. He last appeared with MO as Count Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* in 2015.



### Jessica Strong

*Donna Anna*

Winnipeg-born soprano Jessica Strong has been hailed as a “superb discovery” by *Operà Magazine* and been praised for possessing “a powerful top, a seductive vibrato and assured coloratura” (*Opera Canada*). She currently works primarily in Germany, performing regularly with Oper Frankfurt. This will be her MO debut.



### Stephen Hegedus

*Leporello*

Hailed by the *Ottawa Citizen* as a singer possessing “...an instrument of rare beauty, majestic and commanding from the bottom of his range to the top...,” Canadian bass-baritone Stephen Hegedus is frequently heard with leading orchestras and opera companies in Canada and abroad. This will be his MO debut.



### Monica Huisman

*Donna Elvira*

Acclaimed Winnipeg soprano Monica Huisman has been hailed as possessing a voice that “embodies both flawless technique and dramatic impact” (*Opera Canada*). Ms. Huisman has delighted audiences from Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw to Guatemala City with the reputation of her “silken” voice “consistently crafting each note into a work of art” (*Winnipeg Free Press*). She last appeared with MO in *Falstaff* (2016) as Alice Ford.



## **Owen McCausland**

*Don Ottavio*

New Brunswick-born tenor Owen McCausland, a graduate of the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble Program, is increasingly in demand for engagements with important opera companies and symphonies across Canada. Mr. McCausland has appeared with companies such as Canadian Opera Company, Pacific Opera Victoria, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and Orchestre symphonique de Montréal.



## **Johnathon Kirby**

*Masetto*

Baritone Johnathon Kirby is from Newmarket, Ontario. He made his professional opera debut with Opera Nova Scotia in 2011 and is a student of the Emerging Artist Program at Calgary Opera, where he made his mainstage debut in 2017.



## **Andrea Lett**

*Zerlina*

Praised for her “clear voice soaring to stratospheric heights” (*Opera Canada*), locally based emerging soprano Andrea Lett has performed across Canada with companies such as Saskatoon Opera, Manitoba Underground Opera, The Winnipeg Gilbert and Sullivan Society, and Opera Nuova, as well as San Francisco Opera and Santa Fe Opera.



## **Kirk Eichelberger**

*Commendatore*

American bass Kirk Eichelberger has been praised for “commanding the stage at every turn” (*San Francisco Chronicle*) and for his “resonant bass and riveting stage presence.” (*Dayton City Paper*). He has appeared with opera companies throughout the United States and last appeared with Manitoba Opera in *Il Trovatore* (2008) as Ferrando.

# The Composer

## Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Born: January 27, 1756

Died: December 5, 1791

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 voice and other instruments. He was 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. Mozart's older sister, Maria Anna (Marianne), was also an exceptionally gifted musician.

When she and Wolfgang were young, their father took them on tours of many cities to show off their musical talents, but Marianne was forced to abandon her performing career when she was old enough marry.

At the age of 12, 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. The theatre cancelled the contract and refused to pay Mozart his fee. During his teenage years, Mozart toured Europe 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 his 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 which 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 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 10, 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 Composer

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.

While Mozart had composed several operas over the years, it wasn't until his collaboration with librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte that his operatic career really took off. First, in 1786 when *The Marriage of Figaro* was a great success in its Viennese premiere, and then in 1787 the pair collaborated again on *Don Giovanni*, an opera based on the famous character of Don Juan, an immoral lothario who ruins hearts and lives, and pays the ultimate price.

In 1787, Mozart became the chamber composer of Emperor Joseph II. This was a part-time appointment, but the Emperor hoped it would keep the composer and his talents in Vienna. That same year, Ludwig van Beethoven came to Vienna in the hopes of studying with Mozart, though that unfortunately never came to fruition.

In 1791, Mozart was very productive. In this year he composed some of his greatest works – the opera *The Magic Flute*, for instance, or his great clarinet concerto, his string quartets, and most notably, his unfinished *Requiem*. And then, Mozart became ill and was soon bedridden. On December 5th, 1791, Mozart passed away from his illness at the age of 35. Recent research suggests that Mozart died of rheumatic fever, an illness he had suffered many times in the past.

In his lifetime, Mozart composed over 600 works.

# The Librettist

**Lorenzo Da Ponte** was born March 10, 1749, in Ceneda, in the Republic of Venice (now Vittorio Veneto, Italy). Young Lorenzo took to schooling and, in 1770 took Minor Orders and became a Professor of Literature, and then became an ordained priest in 1773. At this point, Da Ponte began to write poetry, and moved to Venice to live as a teacher of languages. Although Da Ponte was a priest, he was not a very chaste man, and in 1779 was banished from Venice for (allegedly) living in and arranging the entertainments of a brothel.



Da Ponte then moved to Gorizia, Austria, and was engaged as a writer there. Soon after he found work translating libretti at a theatre, and was introduced to the then-popular composer, Antonio Salieri. With his help, Da Ponte became the librettist of the Italian Theatre in Vienna. There he found a patron, Raimund Wetzlar von Plankenstern, who was also the benefactor of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. As court librettist, Da Ponte would often collaborate with composers such as Mozart and Salieri. All of the librettist's works were adaptations of pre-existing plots, with the exception of a few such as *Così fan tutte*. Many, such as *The Marriage of Figaro*, were adapted and molded to suit the purposes of the composer, occasion and casting needs.

After the death of Austrian Emperor Joseph II in 1790, Da Ponte lost his patron, and was dismissed from the Imperial Service in 1791. As he could still not return to Venice, Da Ponte then travelled to London and, in 1803, became the librettist of the King's Theatre, until he fled to the United States in 1805 due to debt and bankruptcy. In America, Da Ponte first lived in New York, then Pennsylvania, where he ran a grocery store and gave lessons in Italian. He later returned to New York, opened a bookstore, and eventually became the first professor of Italian literature at Columbia College. He introduced opera to New York, and produced a performance of *Don Giovanni* in 1825. He also introduced the music of Gioachino Rossini to America. In 1828, at the age of 79, Da Ponte became a U.S. citizen, and at 84 he founded the New York Opera Company, which only lasted two seasons before being disbanded (it was, however, the predecessor of both the New York Academy of Music and the New York Metropolitan Opera).

Da Ponte died August 17, 1838 in New York, and an enormous funeral was held for him in St. Patrick's Cathedral. His collaborations with Mozart still are played around the world to this day.

## What is a Libretto?

**Libretto means "little book" in Italian. It refers to the written text of an opera set to music by the composer. Today, we commonly refer to an opera as being 'by' the composer of the music, but the text is a vital component and is normally written first. In earlier times it was often regarded as more important than the music, and it was common for audience members to purchase the libretto to read.**

**Early composers were usually contracted to set music to a pre-existing text. Only later did composers (such as Mozart and Verdi) work in close collaboration with their librettists. A few composers – notably Wagner – wrote their own texts.**





# Musical Highlights



Heidi Klassen (Donna Elvira), Taras Kulish (Leporello)  
in *Don Giovanni*, Manitoba Opera, 2003.  
Photo: R.Tinker



Benjamin Butterfield (Don Ottavio), Cheryl Hickman  
(Donna Anna), and Stefan Szkafarowsky (Commendatore)  
in *Don Giovanni*, Manitoba Opera, 2003.  
Photo: R.Tinker



Stefan Szkafarowsky (Commendatore) and Jeff Mattsey  
(Don Giovanni) in *Don Giovanni*, Manitoba Opera, 2003.  
Photo: R.Tinker



Jeff Jattsey (Don Giovanni) and Nikki Einfeld (Zerlina) in  
*Don Giovanni*, Manitoba Opera, 2003.  
Photo: R.Tinker



# Don Giovanni: Comedy or Tragedy?

Article courtesy of Florida Grand Opera

When Mozart and Da Ponte wrote *Don Giovanni* they had little or no idea of the great intellectual debate which their masterpiece would inspire over the next two centuries: Is the work to be interpreted as a dark, moralistic tragedy or as a more lighthearted, comic piece? Different conductors and directors have often chosen to emphasize one interpretation or the other. To understand exactly what was intended by the work's creators, one needs to know a bit about the traditions of opera and theater at the time of *Don Giovanni's* birth.

According to eighteenth century theorists, the role of the theater was a didactic one: all drama had to instruct audiences to forsake evil and do good. In a typical **tragedy** the public was supposed to be moved to pity by seeing the hero of the drama overcome by the forces of evil. Both the main character and those surrounding him were drawn from the **higher classes**, and usually were such persons as kings, princes, nobles or mythological figures. In **comedy**, the focus was on the **middle and lower classes** – peasants, servants, commoners – where the baser human characteristics such as uncouthness, miserliness, incredulity and gluttony were held up to ridicule. By the late eighteenth century, the different social classes were brought together onstage, with their various attributes and foibles contrasted for the edification and enjoyment of the public.

These theatrical traditions are reflected in the operas of the time. The tragedies are called **opera seria** (serious operas); these deal with important people and grand events. The plot exposition is achieved through recitative, dialogue which is sung on musical pitches. There are different types of recitative common to opera seria: **recitative secco** (dry recitative), in which the words are sung with only a harpsichord as accompaniment, and **recitative accompagnato**, in which the vocal lines are accompanied by instruments of the full orchestra. The latter, sometimes called **dramatic recitative**, is exemplified in *Don Giovanni* by the introductions to Donna Anna's aria "Or sai che l'onore" and Elvira's "Mi tradi" (aria is the Italian word for "song") The arias in opera seria are quite formal, usually in an **A-B-A** structure in which the opening movement (A) is followed by a contrasting section (B), then a repeat of A with vocal ornamentation displaying the singer's virtuosity. The vocal embellishments are known as **coloratura**, characterized by fast runs and leaps (also called fioritura). Dramatically, these vocal ornaments were intended to express more intensity of emotion in the character, but more often than not they became a singer's self-indulgent moment of "showing-off."

The opposite of opera seria is **opera buffa** (comic opera). The characters in opera buffa are classified into three different types: 1) **parti serie**: "serious" characters, usually higher classes, who represent such virtuous qualities as courage, honesty, and faithfulness; 2) **parti buffe**: "comic" characters, usually the lower classes, who portray the opposite qualities such as inconstancy, cowardice, and servility; 3) **mezzi caratteri**: "middle" characters who borrow various characteristics from both of the other types. In opera buffa, the character differentiation is reflected in the musical language of the characters: a fast **parlando** (conversation-like vocal line) for comic characters (called "patter" when many words are sung as quickly as possible), and florid **roulades** (vocal ornaments, like coloratura) for the serious ones. Nonetheless, all the vocal types can sing together, and an essential feature of eighteenth-century comic opera was the large **ensemble** at the end of each act, in which most of the major characters were featured together.

Although *Don Giovanni* has been subtitled a **drama giocosa** (humorous drama), Mozart himself listed *Don Giovanni* as an opera buffa in his catalog of works. In his memoirs, Da Ponte recalled that the composer had originally intended this work to be written as an opera seria, and that it was the librettist who persuaded him to alter his point of view. Certainly, *Don Giovanni* contains all the above-described elements of both genres. The libretto includes all the character types from comic opera: Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, Don Ottavio, and the Commendatore are all **parti serie**, Leporello, Zerlina, and Masetto are all **parti buffe**, and Don Giovanni himself, who has both a serious and comic side and is equally at home with the nobles and the peasants, is a **mezzo carattere**. The musical score contains the formal arias of opera seria, but Mozart imbued the form with greater depth of characterization; every note and musical phrase is dramatically motivated. Mozart and Da Ponte developed what has become known as the **chain finale**, a series of musical sections at the end of each act played without interruption of recitative for nearly 20 minutes, in which the plot builds to a climax. The music in these finales operated much as a movie camera does today; moving from a “wide angle” shot of the general situation to a “zoom” or “close-up” on a single character’s thoughts and feelings, then back to the broader scene.

Mozart and Da Ponte had already blurred the distinction between opera seria and opera buffa in *The Marriage of Figaro*, which contains such contrasting arias as Bartolo’s buffo patter song, “La vendetta” (“Taking vengeance”) and the Countess’s noble expression of her love, “Porgi amor.” In *Don Giovanni* darker elements are more present; the plot goes beyond scheming servants and sexual politics to deal with murder, rape, vengeance, and eternal damnation. For many years, most performances of the opera stress this darkness, ending the opera with the death of Giovanni and eliminating the epilogue, with its optimistic final sextet. This practice helped to reinforce the opinion of those who believed the opera to be a tragedy. The more current practice of restoring the original ending has re-shifted the balance back to what Mozart and Da Ponte had intended, a work in which the humorous elements are balanced with the serious ones. This is what makes *Don Giovanni* such a unique, individual masterpiece – the fact that it is so filled with musical and dramatic variety, and, true to life, juxtaposes the comic with the tragic.

# Student Activities

Curriculum Connections to the Manitoba curriculum Frameworks for Grade 9 - 12 are provided below each activity. For a more in-depth look at the connections, view our Manitoba Curriculum Connections documents at [www.manitobaopera.mb.ca/learn](http://www.manitobaopera.mb.ca/learn).

## Activity #1: Using the Five C's, Have your Students Analyze the Opera as Drama

**CHARACTERS:** Are they interesting? Believable? Are their actions, words, thoughts consistent?

**CONFLICT:** What conflicts are established? How are they resolved?

**CLIMAX:** To what climax does the conflict lead?

**CONCLUSION:** How well does the conclusion work? Is it consistent? Satisfying? Believable?

**CONTEXT:** What are the historical, physical, and emotional settings? Sets and costumes?

- Give students the synopsis to read and have them re-tell the story after they have read it.
- Ask comprehensive questions.
- Present and discuss the composer and librettist.
- Listen to excerpts from the opera. Watch a DVD of the opera. Have students identify and recognize recurring themes.
- Discuss the historical background, emphasizing the visual and performing arts and history-social science frameworks. Discuss the results of certain events. Whom did they affect? How? Why? Did any changes occur as a result?
- Review the glossary of terms.
- Have the students watch for references to themes in the opera in their everyday lives. The internet, radio, TV, magazines, and movies often refer back to classics.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.2.1; 2.1.2; 5.2.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-M2; DR-C1; DR-R3

Music Curriculum Connections: M-M2; M-C2; M-R1

## Activity #2: Create a Poster, Set, Costume, Media Release, or Ad

- Choose a time and place to set your production.
- Have the students design a poster for *Don Giovanni* including such details as the date, the time, and the people involved.
- Have them draw a set for a production of the opera.
- They might also sketch a costume, wig, and makeup for a character in *Don Giovanni*.
- Have the students write a media release about *Don Giovanni*, including the date, the time, the people involved, and why it would be exciting or fun to attend.
- Have the students create an ad for the opera. Include whatever you feel is the biggest “selling point” of the opera - what makes it exciting? Why should people come to see it?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 2.3.5; 2.3.4; 4.1.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-C2; DR-C3

Music Curriculum Connections: M-C2; M-C3

## Activity #3: A Review

### *Step 1 – Think-Group-Share*

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

1. What did you like about the opera? What did you dislike?
2. What did you think about the sets, props, and costumes?
3. If you were the stage director, would you have done something differently? Why?
4. What were you expecting? Did it live up to your expectations?
5. 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.

### *Step 2 – Class Discussion*

Have the whole class examine the poster papers and discuss the different ideas from each group.

### *Step 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, and revision for consistency of ideas. You might give your students a few samples of reviews for arts events – or ask them to bring in some reviews they find themselves. Have the students fill out the review outline, then complete a rough draft.

1. Purpose (why are you writing this and who is your audience?)
2. Plot Synopsis (including who sang what role, etc.)
3. Paragraph 1 (compare and contrast things you liked or didn't like)
4. Paragraph 2 (compare and contrast things you liked or didn't like)
5. Paragraph 3 (compare and contrast things you liked or didn't like)
6. Summary/Closing Paragraph

### *Step 4 - Peer Conferencing*

Students will exchange reviews to critique and edit. Encourage the students to focus on effective coordination of ideas in sentences and the correct use of grammar and punctuation.

### *Step 5 - Creating the final draft*

Have students make the appropriate adjustments to their reviews. You could also have the students type the pieces and organize them into a newspaper.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.1.1; 1.1.2; 1.2.2; 3.1.3; 3.3.1; 4.1.3; 4.3.1; 4.3.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.1; 4.2.2; 5.2.1; 5.1.1

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-R1; DR-R2; DR-R3; DR-R4

Music Curriculum Connections: M-R1; M-R2; M-R3; M-R4

### Activity #4: Have Your Students Act Out the Story

Have students consider the characters and the role they play in the story. Choose one of the following:

DON GIOVANNI/ DON OTTAVIO / DONNA ELVIRA / DONNA ANNA / COMMENDATORE / LEPORELLO/ ZERLINA/ MASETTO

If you were going to play this character, you would have to discover, create, and imagine background, personality, and physical qualities. Some clues are provided in the story and the music and some you need to make up yourself.

*Pretend you are that character and answer the following questions:*

1. What motivates you? How does this affect your actions? What obstacles stand in your way?
2. What steps in the opera do you take to achieve your objectives? What are the results?
3. What obstacles are beyond your control (laws, social status, others' actions)?
4. What are your (character's) greatest strengths? Greatest weaknesses?
5. What is your relationship to the other characters?
6. How is your character's personality expressed through the music of the opera?
7. Can you think of a modern-day character who has similar characteristics and traits?
8. If your character were alive today, how would s/he be more or less successful?
9. What different steps would s/he take to achieve an objective?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.1.1; 2.1.2; 3.3.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-M1; DR-M2; DR-M3

### Activity #5: Write a Letter from One Character to Another

Have the students choose a moment in the story and have one character write a letter to another. Explore how they would be feeling about the events of the day.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.1.2; 1.1.3; 2.3.5; 4.2.2; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 5.2.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-R3

### Activity #6: Cast *Don Giovanni*

Have the students cast modern-day singers or bands as the performers in *Don Giovanni*. Who did you choose? What are their costumes like? What did you base your decisions on?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 2.3.1; 2.2.1; 2.2.2; 4.1.2; 5.2.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-M1; DR-C3; DR-R3

Music Curriculum Connections: M-C2; M-R4

## Activity #7: Research and Report

Have the students study the history and politics of Mozart's time, particularly the year when *Don Giovanni* premiered (1737). What authors were popular? What scientific discoveries were being made? What was the social and political life in Europe at the time (as well as in Canada)?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 2.2.1; 2.2.2; 3.3.1; 3.3.3; 3.2.2; 3.2.3; 4.3.1; 4.3.2; 4.3.3; 4.2.2; 4.2.3; 5.2.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-C2

Music Curriculum Connections: M-C2

## Activity #8: *Don Giovanni* Mood Board

Often before artists and designers create their work, they make a mood board to set the tone for the piece. This is usually a poster-sized piece of paper covered in images and words, usually from the pages of magazines and newspapers, that together communicates the complex mood of the piece in a way that words can't. It's the same as making a collage, except a mood board is for the purpose of communicating a focused concept.

Have your students go through a stack of old magazines and newspapers to create a mood board for *Don Giovanni*. They can create one each or work together on a large one for the class. Consider elements like colours, textures, phrases, faces, patterns, and images that represent the opera.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 2.3.5; 2.3.4; 2.2.3; 4.1.1; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.4.1; 5.1.1

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-M3; DR-R3

Music Curriculum Connections: M-R2

## Activity #9: Musical Interpretation of Literature

### *Step 1 - Prepare a Musical Outline*

Working in small groups, have your students choose a play, novel, or story that they've read and think about how they'd go about adapting it into an opera. Have them write out an outline and try to structure the beginnings of the opera. Which parts of the drama would be highlighted with which types of music? Would they have a large chorus to back up the principal singers or would the opera be more intimate? Which singing voices (soprano, baritone, tenor, etc.) would best suit each character?

### *Step 2 - Compose and Perform an Overture*

How could the elements of music (ie., rhythm, pitch, dynamics, etc.) be used to communicate the mood of the piece within the overture? Which instruments would be used? Allow students some time to work on composing their overture based on their answers to these questions. Students can then perform their overture for the class either as a composed and rehearsed piece or improvised. Alternatively, they may choose to present their overture by describing the characteristics of the elements of the music within their piece.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.1.2; 2.3.5; 2.2.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 4.1.2; 4.4.3; 4.4.2; 4.2.5; 5.1.1; 5.1.2; 5.1.4

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-CR2; DR-M1; DR-M2

Music Curriculum Connections: M-CR2; M-CR3; M-M3



## Activity #10: Active Listening

Play the first few minutes of the *Don Giovanni* CD. Ask your students to listen closely to the music and jot down their thoughts, feelings, and first impressions. Then have your students share their reactions with the classroom. Ask them to listen again and pay close attention to the elements of music (ie. rhythm, pitch, dynamics, etc.) then explore questions such as the following:

- What are the instruments used to make the music?
- How does this music make me feel?
- What is the mood of the piece?
- What type of emotions do the singers bring forth?
- Does the music have a steady beat or pulse?
- What is the size of the ensemble?
- What do the singing voices tell us about those characters?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.1.1; 1.12; 1.2.2; 2.3.1; 2.2.3; 4.4.3; 5.2.1

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-R1

Music Curriculum Connections: M-R2



The oldest known advertisement for *Don Giovanni*, dated 1788.

**Activity #14: Opera Comprehension Tests***The 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. \_\_\_\_\_ Considered the first opera.
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. \_\_\_\_\_ The person who is in charge of all the action on the stage.

*Don Giovanni*

1. Who is the composer? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the name of the legendary character who is said to have inspired the opera *Don Giovanni*?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. In what year did the premiere performance take place? \_\_\_\_\_
4. In what language is the opera performed? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Where does the story of *Don Giovanni* take place? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Who wrote the libretto? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is the name of the character killed by Don Giovanni? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is the name of Don Giovanni's servant? \_\_\_\_\_
9. The role of Don Giovanni is sung by a \_\_\_\_\_ (name the singing voice).
10. The role of Don Ottavio is sung by a \_\_\_\_\_ (name the singing voice).
11. The role of Zerlina is sung by a \_\_\_\_\_ (name the singing voice).
12. *Don Giovanni* combines elements of what two types of opera? \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

## Answer Key

### General Opera

1. Opera
2. Bass
3. Overture
4. Orchestra pit or “the pit”
5. *Daphne*
6. Aria
7. Soprano
8. Duet
9. Contralto
10. Libretto
11. Baritone
12. Stage director

### *Don Giovanni*

1. Mozart
2. Don Juan
3. 1787
4. Italian
5. Spain
6. Lorenzo Da Ponte
7. The Commendatore
8. Leporello
9. Baritone
10. Tenor
11. Soprano
12. opera seria/opera buffa

Manitoba Opera would be pleased to receive a copy of any work related to this opera produced by your students. Please forward to:

Scott Miller  
Education and Outreach Coordinator  
Manitoba Opera, 1060 - 555 Main St., Winnipeg, MB R3B 1C3

or

[smiller@mbopera.ca](mailto:smiller@mbopera.ca)

# Winnipeg Public Library Resources

## Books

The New Grove Masters of Italian Opera: Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, Verdi, Puccini  
[by Philip Gossett]  
New York : Norton, c1983  
Call Number: 782.1092 NEW

## DVD

Don Giovanni  
London: Opus Arte: Royal Opera House [2014]  
Call Number: DVD 792.542 DON

Don Giovanni  
TDK Mediactive [2005]  
Call Number: DVD 792.542 DON

## Scores

Opera's greatest melodies [music] : 71 favorite selections from 42 operas transcribed for simplified piano solo, lower intermediate level  
Author: Neely, Blake.  
Milwaukee, WI : Hal Leonard, [2000]

Don Giovanni [music]  
Author: Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus  
New York: G. Schirmer [1961]  
Call Number: SCORE 782.1 MOZ 1961

## Sounds Recordings

Don Giovanni  
[Place of publication not identified]: Opera D'Oro, [2011]  
Call Number: CD OPERA MOZART DON

The Mozart Album  
Author: Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus  
London: Decca [2009]  
Call Number: CD OPERA MOZART MOZ

## Electronic Resources (Available on Hoopla)

Don Giovanni  
Author: Frick, Gottlob  
United States: Musical Concepts  
Made available through hoopla, 2010.  
Call Number: STREAMING

Don Giovanni  
Author: Damrau, Diana  
United States: DG : Made available through hoopla, 2012.  
Call Number: STREAMING

Don Giovanni - Highlights  
Author: Horne, Marilyn  
United States: Deutsche Grammophon : Made available through hoopla, 2001.  
Call Number: STREAMING



Nikki Einfeld (Zerlina) and Alexander Dobson (Masetto) in *Don Giovanni*, Manitoba Opera, 2003. Photo: R.Tinker



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*The Magic Flute*

*Aida*

*Carmen*

*La Bohème*

*The Daughter of the Regiment*



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204-942-7470 or [education@mbopera.ca](mailto:education@mbopera.ca)

[www.mbopera.ca](http://www.mbopera.ca)

# About Manitoba Opera

Manitoba Opera was founded in 1969 by a group of individuals dedicated to presenting the great works of opera to Manitoban audiences. Manitoba Opera is the province's only full-time professional opera company. The company attracts internationally renowned artists, highlights the best local talent, and is supported by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

## Chorus

The Manitoba Opera Chorus, under the direction of Chorus Master Tadeusz Biernacki, is hailed for their excellent singing and acting abilities. The chorus boasts a core of skilled singers who give generously of their time and talents. Some are voice majors at university, a few are singing teachers, but most work in jobs that aren't music related.

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*This study guide was compiled accumulatively and includes information from the following sources accessed since 2000:*

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BehindTheNames.com  
Bellevue University  
The Billboard Illustrated Encyclopedia of Opera  
The Canadian Opera Company  
Encyclopedia of Manitoba  
Encyclopedia of the Opera by David Ewen  
Fort Worth Opera Study Guide  
GradeSaver.com  
La Scena  
Lyric Opera of Kansas City  
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musicwithease.com  
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New York City Opera  
Opera America Learning Centre  
operabuffa.com; Opera Columbus Study Guide  
Opera News  
Operas Every Child Should Know  
Opera Lyra Ottawa Study Guide  
Opera Today  
Orchestra London Study Guide  
Pacific Opera  
San Diego Opera Study Guide  
San Francisco Opera Guild Study Guide  
schubincave.com  
A Season of Opera  
Skeletons from the Opera Closet  
timelines.com  
Tulsa Opera Study Guide  
University of Chicago Press  
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