

Title: *Don Giovanni*
Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Librettist: Lorenzo da Ponte
Premiere: October 29, 1787
Production: Co-production of Houston Grand Opera, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Gran Teatre del Liceu (Barcelona) and the Israeli Opera
Estimated run time: 3:15
Intermissions: 1

Plot summary:

ACT I: Leporello, servant to the nobleman Don Giovanni, keeps watch outside the Commendatore's home at night. Suddenly, the Commendatore's daughter, Donna Anna, rushes out, struggling with the masked Giovanni and followed by her father. The Commendatore challenges Giovanni to a duel and is killed. Giovanni and Leporello escape. Anna asks her fiancé, Don Ottavio, to avenge her father's death.

In the morning, Giovanni and Leporello encounter Donna Elvira, one of the women previously subject to Giovanni's seduction, who is devastated by his betrayal. Leporello tells her she is neither the first nor the last woman subjected to Giovanni's behavior and shows her his catalogue with the name of every woman Giovanni has seduced.

Peasants celebrate the marriage of Masetto and Zerlina. Giovanni flirts with the bride, telling her she is destined for a better life. But Elvira urges Zerlina to flee her suitor. She also warns Anna, who is still unaware of the identity of her father's murderer and has asked Giovanni for help in finding the man. Giovanni, for his part, insists that Elvira is mad, and Anna and Ottavio wonder what to believe. As Giovanni leaves, Anna suddenly recognizes his voice as that of the murderer. Devastated but determined, she once more asks Ottavio to avenge her. He wonders how to restore her peace of mind. Giovanni, who has invited the entire wedding party to his home, looks forward to an evening of drinking and dancing.

Outside Giovanni's home, Zerlina asks Masetto to forgive her. Giovanni enters and leads them both inside. Anna, Elvira, and Ottavio appear masked and are invited in by Leporello. In the ballroom, Giovanni dances with Zerlina, then tries to drag her into the adjoining room. When she cries for help, Giovanni blames Leporello. Anna, Elvira, and Ottavio take off their masks and, along with Zerlina and Masetto, accuse Giovanni, who is momentarily surprised but manages to slip away.

ACT II: Having exchanged clothes with Giovanni, Leporello takes Elvira on a nighttime walk, leaving his master free to serenade her maid. When Masetto arrives with a band of peasants to hunt down Giovanni, the disguised Don sends them off in various directions, then beats up Masetto. Zerlina finds her bruised fiancé and comforts him.

Later that night, Leporello—still believed by Elvira to be Giovanni—is surprised by Anna, Ottavio, Zerlina, and Masetto, who all denounce the supposed Don. Fearing for his life, Leporello reveals his true identity before making his escape. Ottavio proclaims that he will take revenge on Giovanni and asks the others to look after Anna. Elvira thinks about Giovanni, whom she still loves in spite of everything.

In a cemetery, Giovanni and Leporello meet the statue of the Commendatore, who warns Giovanni that by morning he will laugh no longer. Giovanni forces the terrified Leporello to invite the statue to dinner. The statue accepts.

Once again, Ottavio asks Anna to marry him, but she replies that she will not until her father's death has been avenged.

Elvira arrives at Giovanni's home. She makes a last desperate attempt to persuade him to change his life, but he only laughs at her. The figure of the Commendatore enters and asks Giovanni to repent. When he boldly refuses, he is consumed by flames. Elvira, Anna, Ottavio, Zerlina, Masetto, and Leporello appear, contemplating their futures and the fate of an immoral man.

Director's notes: [Holten's perspective on DG characters](#)

Areas of sensitivity: Implied/attempted rape;
Sexual harassment/assault;
Nudity (A supernumerary consensually disrobes onstage);
Discordant power balance/abuse of power
Violence/ Staged murder of the Commendatore;
The piece takes a dark, satirical view of sexual intimacy

Nomenclature: Avoid references to the individuals that DG seduces as "conquests;" or other language that defines women's identity solely in relation to DG's actions