

# **DON GIOVANNI LIBRETTO SYNOPSIS (Mozart, 1784)**

## **OVERTURE**

The overture begins in D Minor, before a light-hearted D major allegro.

## **ACT I**

*(The garden of the Commendatore)*

Don Giovanni is an insatiable skirtchaser, and his servant Leporello is not happy that he has to bide his time while his master gets in trouble. Donna Anna tries to prevent the escape of a masked intruder—really, Don Giovanni—who has paid her a nocturnal visit. Anna goes for help while her father, the Commendatore, confronts the intruder. The Commendatore dies at Giovanni's hand. Anna returns with her fiancé, Don Ottavio, and is shocked to find her father dead. She urges Ottavio to swear vengeance on the person responsible for the murder.

The next morning, Giovanni runs into Donna Elvira, a woman he's already seduced. He foists her off on Leporello, who recites his master's long list of conquests.

Next, Giovanni spots the lovely Zerlina, who is about to get married. The Don flirts with her while Leporello intercepts her fuming groom, Masetto. Alone with Zerlina, the Don is ready to consummate the seduction when Elvira interrupts and pulls Zerlina away. Anna and Ottavio arrive to enlist Giovanni's assistance in finding the Commendatore's murderer. The persistent Elvira returns and warns them not to trust Giovanni. Declaring Elvira mad, the Don leads her away. Anna recognizes Giovanni as the man who killed her father and tells Ottavio that Giovanni attacked her.

Giovanni plans a party so he can complete his seduction of Zerlina. Elvira, Anna, and Ottavio arrive in cloaks and masks. During the festivities, Leporello pulls Masetto into a dance as Giovanni draws Zerlina out of the room. Zerlina alarms everyone with her cries for help. Giovanni blames Leporello, but nobody is fooled. Elvira, Anna, and Ottavio unmask and confront Giovanni, but he manages to escape once again.

## **ACT II**

His seduction of Zerlina thwarted, Giovanni decides to pursue Elvira's maid. Leporello advises his master to stop these pursuits and even threatens to depart, but is soon bribed by the Don into exchanging cloaks with him in order to distract Elvira. Despite his silken serenading, the Don is unable to seal the deal due to the untimely arrival of Masetto, who is bent on punishing Giovanni. But Giovanni tricks Masetto and beats him up.

Leporello, still disguised as Giovanni, is trying to escape Elvira when they are surprised by Anna, Ottavio, Zerlina, and Masetto. The frightened Leporello reveals who he really is and then

flees. Zerlina catches Leporello and punishes him; eventually he frees himself. Realizing that she has been betrayed again by Giovanni, Elvira voices her rage and love for the elusive Don.

Beneath the monument to the slain Commendatore, Leporello catches up with his master. The Don receives a stern rebuke from the statue. Leporello is terrified, but Giovanni tells his servant to invite the statue to dinner. To Leporello's horror, the statue accepts the invitation.

Donna Anna begs Don Ottavio to give her time; she is not yet ready to marry him.

Later that evening, Giovanni indulges his appetites, despite Leporello's misgivings. Elvira pleads with the Don to repent, but he ignores her. Elvira screams upon encountering the stone monument. The Don politely invites the statue to enjoy a meal with him. The statue refuses, ordering the Don to repent for his sins. Defiant to the last, Giovanni is dragged down to hell.

The terrified Leporello tells the others what happened. Anna agrees to marry Ottavio after a year of mourning, Elvira decides to retire to a nunnery, Zerlina and Masetto agree to start their lives as a married couple, and Leporello promises to find a better master. They all agree that Don Giovanni's frightful end was just deserts for his depraved life.