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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756-1791)

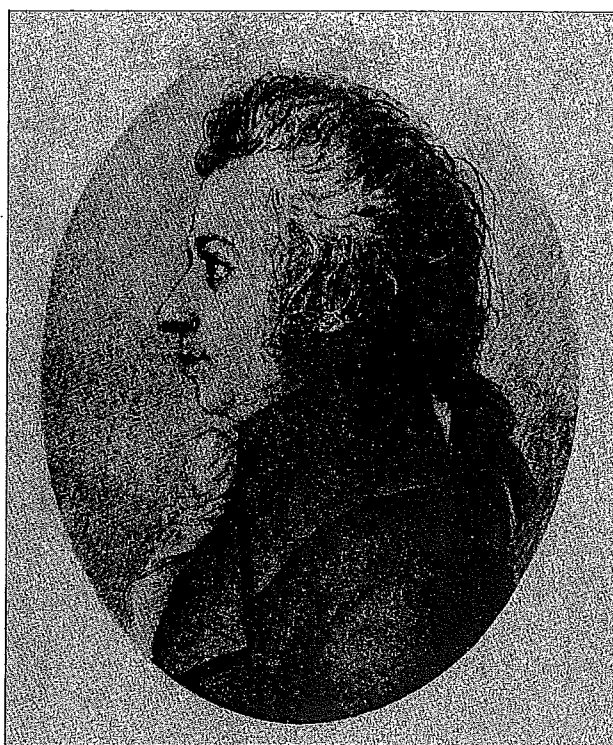
## **DON GIOVANNI**

Il dissoluto punito ossia il Don Giovanni · The Dissolute Punished or Don Giovanni  
Der bestrafte Wüstling oder Don Giovanni · Le libertin puni ou Don Juan

KV 527

Dramma giocoso in due atti  
in two acts · in zwei Akten · en deux actes

Libretto: Lorenzo da Ponte



*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Silverpoint drawing by D. Stock, 1789.*

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# Synopsis

Lionel Salter

## ACT ONE

On a dark night in Seville, Leporello is keeping watch, grumbling, outside a house in which his master Don Giovanni is engaged in his latest amorous pursuit. His target is Donna Anna, daughter of the Commendatore; but she, discovering only that the intruder is not her fiancé Don Ottavio, rouses the household and hampers Giovanni's escape. Her father appears and challenges him to a duel which he reluctantly accepts. They fight, the old man is killed, and Giovanni makes off. Anna has meantime fetched Ottavio, and finding her father lying dead makes Ottavio swear revenge on the unknown murderer.

As Giovanni and Leporello make their way through the deserted streets, they perceive a young woman in distress. Seizing his opportunity, Giovanni goes to console her, only to find that it is Donna Elvira whom he has already seduced and deserted. She turns on him furiously, but he pushes Leporello forward to distract her attention while he makes his escape. Leporello half censoriously, half admiringly, reads her the extensive catalogue of his master's conquests.

In the next scene, set in the countryside, villagers celebrate the forthcoming wedding of Masetto and the pretty Zerlina, on whom Giovanni's roving eye

immediately alights. He invites everyone to his villa nearby for refreshments, ordering Leporello to take special care of Masetto, who, though demurring at leaving his bride alone with the handsome nobleman, is dragged away. Giovanni exercises all his charm on Zerlina, who is ready to succumb to his advances when Elvira suddenly appears and, warning Zerlina of her peril, sweeps her away. Donna Anna comes by with Ottavio and, recognising Giovanni only as a nobleman of her acquaintance, asks his help in discovering her father's murderer. While he is promising to do anything he can, Elvira returns and denounces him. Embarrassed, he tries to pass this off as an outburst of hysteria; but their suspicions have been aroused, and when Anna is alone with Ottavio she affirms that she now recognises Giovanni as the would-be seducer who killed her father, and reminds Ottavio of his oath. Meanwhile, not in the least deterred, Giovanni orders Leporello to prepare a grand supper-party for all the villagers at his home, where he is confident of increasing the score in Leporello's catalogue.

The villagers begin to arrive in Giovanni's garden, among them Zerlina, trying to soothe her jealous Masetto. Giovanni renews his intentions to her, and when Masetto inconveniently intervenes he coolly leads them into the house to join the dancing. Now Elvira, Anna and Ottavio enter, wearing elegant

masks and set on vengeance. At Giovanni's bidding, Leporello invites the newcomers inside.

During the dancing Giovanni manages to inveigle Zerlina into an adjoining room; but her alarmed cries for help bring everyone to her aid. Giovanni tries to bluff it out by pretending he was rescuing her from Leporello, but no one believes him, and when his three new guests unmask and face him there is general confusion, during which he somehow manages to slip away.

## ACT TWO

Elvira's maid has attracted Giovanni's eye, and after buying off Leporello's reluctance to continue in his service, Giovanni forces him to exchange clothes with him so as to carry out his latest design. Standing in the dusk under Elvira's balcony as she laments her lot, he lures her down into the street, and she, mistaking the servant for the master, is led off by Leporello, leaving the field clear for Giovanni to serenade his latest fancy to the accompaniment of a mandolin. But at this moment along comes Masetto with a party of his friends, all armed with sticks and looking for the man who had tried to seduce Zerlina. Giovanni, whom they mistake for Leporello, gives them a description of the clothes Leporello now has on and sends them off in various directions to search for him. When they have gone, he disarms Masetto and gives him a drubbing. Zerlina, coming to look for her bridegroom, finds him nursing his bruises, and she comforts him.

Anna and Ottavio, as well as Masetto and Zerlina,

are hot on the supposed Giovanni's trail, and coming across Leporello in the darkness with Elvira are about to attack him. But when Elvira implores them to spare her husband, Leporello reveals his true identity — to everyone's amazement — and manages to run away. Ottavio now feels he has enough proof of Giovanni's guilt to go to the civil authorities. Left alone Elvira confesses that she feels pity for Giovanni and fear for his peril in spite of the wrongs he has done her.

In a churchyard to which Giovanni and Leporello have escaped, Giovanni's ribald laughter over his recent escapades is interrupted by a ghostly voice from the statue over the Commendatore's grave, warning him of a terrible retribution for his misdeeds. Giovanni's nonchalant reply is to order the trembling Leporello to invite it to supper that night: to Leporello's horror, the statue seems to nod its head in acceptance.

In Anna's house Ottavio, seeking to console her, suggests that they should marry straightaway. When she refuses and he charges her with cruelty, she protests that she does love him but is still too grief-stricken at her father's death, and begs him to have patience.

The finale is set in Giovanni's villa. He is at supper while a wind band plays popular operatic airs of the day. Elvira bursts in with a last appeal to him to mend his ways; but he merely mocks her, and she leaves in despair. As she departs, she is heard to scream outside: Leporello, sent to investigate,

returns in terror to stammer that the Commendatore's statue is approaching. There is heavy knocking at the door, and the statue enters to accept Giovanni's invitation to supper. By the rules of hospitality, it says, will Giovanni now dine with him? Giovanni boldly accepts, but when, obliged to offer his hand in agreement, he feels it in an icy grip, a shudder of fear passes through him. Still, how-

ever, he rejects the statue's urgings that he should repent; and then, before Leporello's horrified gaze, the earth opens up and his stone guest drags Giovanni down into the flames of hell. When the other characters enter with ministers of justice to arrest Giovanni, Leporello tells them what has happened. In a final sextet they point the moral — that sinners cannot finally escape their deserts.

ELVIRA  
E quali sono,  
se non la tua perfidia,  
la leggerezza tua? Ma il giusto cielo  
volle ch'io ti trovassi  
per far le sue, le mie vendette.

GIOVANNI  
Eh, via! Siate più ragionevole.  
(A parte)  
Mi pone a cimento costei.  
(A Donna Elvira)  
Se non credete al labbro mio,  
credete a questo galantuomo.

LEPORELLO  
(A parte)  
Salvo il vero.

GIOVANNI  
(Forte)  
Via, dille un poco.

LEPORELLO  
(Sottovoce a Don Giovanni)  
E cosa devo dirle?

GIOVANNI  
Sì, sì, dille pur tutto.  
(Parte non visto da Donna Elvira.)

ELVIRA  
Ebben, fa presto.

LEPORELLO  
(Balbettando)  
Madama... veramente...  
in questo mondo  
conciossiacosaquandofosseché...  
il quadro non è tondo...

ELVIRA  
Sciagurato!  
Così del mio dolor gioco ti prendi?  
Ah! voi!...  
(Verso Don Giovanni che non crede partito)

Stelle! l'iniquo  
fuggì! misera me! Dove? in qual parte?

LEPORELLO  
Eh! lasciate che vada. Egli non merta  
che di lui ci pensiate.

ELVIRA  
Il scellerato  
m'ingannò, mi tradì...

LEPORELLO  
Eh! consolatevi;  
non siete voi, non foste e non sarete  
né la prima, né l'ultima. Guardate:  
questo non picciol libro è tutto pieno  
de' nomi di sue belle;  
(Cava di tasca una lista.)  
ogni villa, ogni borgo, ogni paese  
è testimone di sue donnesche imprese.

ELVIRA  
And what are they,  
if not your treachery and profligacy?  
But it was Heaven's will  
that I should find you,  
to be its instrument of vengeance.

GIOVANNI  
Come, come, do be reasonable...  
(Aside)  
This woman's driving me crazy.  
(To Donna Elvira)  
If you won't believe what I say,  
at least believe this honest fellow.

LEPORELLO  
(Aside)  
Anything but...

GIOVANNI  
(Aloud)  
Well, tell her then.

LEPORELLO  
(Sotto voce to Don Giovanni)  
But what am I to tell her?

GIOVANNI  
Oh, tell her everything.  
(Exit unseen by Donna Elvira)

ELVIRA  
Well now, make haste.

LEPORELLO  
(Stammering)  
Madam... to tell the truth...  
in this world, you know, the fact is,  
in a manner of speaking, as it were,  
a square is different from a circle...

ELVIRA  
Wretch!  
Would you mock my grief?  
And you!...  
(Towards Don Giovanni, not knowing  
him gone)

Oh heaven! the villain's fled!  
Woe is me! Where is he? Was it this way?

LEPORELLO  
Oh, let him go: he's not worth  
your thought.

ELVIRA  
But the scoundrel  
deceived me, betrayed me...

LEPORELLO  
Well, console yourself;  
for you neither are, nor were, nor will be,  
the first or the last of them.  
Look at this sizable volume;  
it's full of the names of his conquests.  
(He takes a list from a pocket.)  
Every village, every town, every country  
bears witness to his amorous adventures.

#### No. 4 Aria

LEPORELLO  
[8] Madamina, il catalogo è questo  
delle belle che amò il padron mio:  
un catalogo egli è che ho fatt'io;  
osservate, leggete con me.  
In Italia seicentoquaranta,  
in Almagna duecentotrentuna,  
cento in Francia, in Turchia novantuna,  
ma in Ispagna son già  
mille e tre.  
V'han fra queste contadine,  
cameriere, cittadine,  
v'han contesse, baronesse,  
marchesine, principesse,  
e v'han donne d'ogni grado,  
d'ogni forma, d'ogni età.  
Nella bionda egli ha l'usanza  
di lodar la gentilezza;  
nella bruna, la costanza;  
nella bianca, la dolcezza;  
vuol d'inverno la grassotta,  
vuol d'estate la magrotta;  
è la grande maestosa,  
la piccina è ognor vezzosa.  
Delle vecchie fa conquista  
pel piacer di porle in lista;  
sua passion predominante  
è la giovin principiante;  
non si picca se sia ricca,  
se sia brutta, se sia bella;  
purché porti la gonnella,  
voi sapete quel che fa.

(Parte.)

#### No. 4 Aria

LEPORELLO  
Little lady, this is the list  
of the beauties my master has courted,  
a list I've made out myself;  
take a look, read it with me.  
In Italy six hundred and forty,  
in Germany two hundred and thirty-one,  
a hundred in France,  
ninety-one in Turkey; but in Spain  
already a thousand and three.  
Some you see are country girls,  
waiting-maids, city beauties,  
some are countesses, baronesses,  
marchionesses, princesses:  
women of every rank,  
of every size, of every age.  
He will praise  
a fair girl's kindness,  
a dark one's constancy,  
a white-haired one's sweetness;  
in winter he prefers them plump,  
in summer slim;  
he calls a tall one stately,  
a tiny one always dainty.  
Even the elderly he courts  
for the pleasure of adding her to the list;  
but his supreme passion  
is the young beginner.  
He cares not if she's poor or rich,  
plain or pretty —  
so long as she wears a skirt,  
you know what his game is!

(Exit)

Mozart