Don Giovanni

Act I

The first act opens as Don Giovanni, dressed in disguise, forces himself on the beautiful Donna Anna while his servant, Leporello, keeps watch and complains about his unfortunate circumstances (“Notte e giorno faticar”/ “Night and day I slave away”). Donna Anna’s screams summon her father, the Commendatore, who engages Don Giovanni in a duel, during which the Commendatore is killed. Don Giovanni escapes with the aid of his servant Leporello, and Donna Anna and her fiancé, Don Ottavio swear revenge.

After fleeing from the home of the Commendatore, Don Giovanni and Leporello happen upon a young woman, Donna Elvira, singing about being abandoned by her lover. Sensing her vulnerability, Don Giovanni approaches to seduce her. The two instantly recognize each other, however, and Don Giovanni who realizes that he is the unfaithful lover about whom she is singing quickly runs away. Leporello attempts to console Donna Elvira by telling her that the Don does not deserve her affection because he unfaithful to all of his lovers (“Madamina, il catalogo è questo”/ “My dear lady, this is the catalogue”).

Don Giovanni and Leporello continue their flight from the Commendatore’s home until they come across the wedding of two peasants, Masetto and Zerlina. Don Giovanni is instantly captivated by Zerlina, and attempts to separate her from Masetto and seduce her by offering to host the wedding at his castle (Duet: “Là ci darem la mano”/ “There we will entwine our hands”). Donna Elvira enters and warns Zerlina of Don Giovanni’s lechery. Meanwhile, Donna Anna and Don Ottavio join the scene and ask for Don Giovanni’s help in discovering the identity of Donna Anna’s attackers. Relieved that he has not been discovered, Don Giovanni agrees to assist them in their search and leaves. With the aid of Donna Elvira, Donna Anna suddenly realizes that Don Giovanni was indeed her attacker. Leporello informs Don Giovanni that wedding guests have begun to arrive at his home, and Don Giovanni cheerfully commands him to invite every girl he can find (“Fin ch’han dal vino calda la testa”/ “Till they are tipsy”).

At Don Giovanni’s castle, Zerlina attempts to console Masetto (“Batti, batti, o bel Masetto”/ “Beat, o beat me, handsome Masetto”). The pair hear Don Giovanni’s approach, and Masetto hides to see how his beloved will behave. Don Giovanni enters and continues his pursuit of Zerlina, but accidentally stumbles into Masetto. He turns the tables by scolding Masetto for leaving Zerlina unattended and leads the pair to his ballroom. Three masked guests arrive at the party—Donna Elvira, Donna Anna, and Don Ottavio—and an unsuspecting Leporello invites them inside.

During the ball, Leporello attempts to distract Masetto by dancing with him while Don Giovanni ushers Zerlina into a private room. Her screams bring the guests running. Don Giovanni quickly tries to frame Leporello, but the three masked guests take off their disguises and reveal Don Giovanni’s crimes. Don Giovanni and Leporello once again flee.
Act II

Leporello threatens to leave his master, but Don Giovanni offers him money. Don Giovanni, unrelenting in his ways, devises a scheme to woo Donna Elvira’s maid by switching clothes with Leporello. When Donna Elvira comes to the window, Don Giovanni sees the opportunity for a clever game, and sends Leporello out to seduce her. From his hiding place, Don Giovanni sings an aria proclaiming his repentance and begging for forgiveness. Donna Elvira acquiesces and comes downstairs where she is escorted away by Leporello so that Don Giovanni can continue his pursuit of her maid. Giovanni begins to serenade the maid with his mandolin (“Deh vieni alla finestra”/ “Ah, come to the window”). Before Don Giovanni can seduce the maid, Don Ottavio and the others arrive hunting for Don Giovanni. Still disguised as Leporello, Don Giovanni convinces the party that he hates his master and joins the hunt. After the party separates, Don Giovanni surprises Masetto and steals his weapon, leaving him to be consoled by Zerlina (“Vedrai carino”/ “Come to me, my dear one”).

As Leporello attempts to abandon Donna Elvira, Don Ottavio and Donna Anna enter. Thinking that he is Don Giovanni because of his disguise they promise to exact vengeance, while Donna Elvira pleads for her lover’s life. Leporello unmasks and reveals himself, and seizes an opportunity to run away.

Leporello encounters Don Giovanni in a graveyard and warns him of danger. Don Giovanni laughs and proceeds to tease Leporello, claiming to have seduced one of his girlfriends. To their surprise, the grave statue of the Commendatore comes to life and warns Don Giovanni to repent for his sins. Unmoved, Don Giovanni invites the stone guest to dinner. The statue eerily nods its head in agreement.

Don Ottavio pressures Donna Anna to marry him, but she says it is inappropriate for her to marry so soon after her father’s death, and reassures him of her love.

Don Giovanni enjoys the feast at his home, which is served by Leporello. The orchestra plays then-contemporary, late-eighteenth-century music including an excerpt from another Mozart opera, Le Nozze di Figaro. Elvira arrives at Don Giovanni’s home and tells him that she feels no anger for him, only pity. Confused, Don Giovanni asks Elvira what she really wants, and she begs him to change his ways. He mocks her request, and proclaims his love for wine and women. Hurt, Elvira leaves, but moments later her screams can be heard from outside. Don Giovanni orders Leporello to investigate. Leporello runs back inside, trembling in terror; the stone guest has arrived as promised. A knock on the front door announces his presence. Leporello stands frozen in fear as Don Giovanni moves to open the door. He is greeted ominously by the statue of the Commendatore, who offers him one last chance to repent for his sins, but Don Giovanni adamantly refuses. Suddenly, a chorus of demons from the underworld appears and surrounds Don Giovanni, dragging him to the depths of hell. Leporello watches all from his hiding place beneath the table. Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Donna Elvira, Zerlina, and Masetto arrive at the feast searching for the host. Leporello tells them of the horrors that have passed: Don Giovanni has paid the ultimate price for his sins. The group announces their plans for a happy future. Donna Anna and Don Ottavio promise to marry after a year of mourning, Donna Elvira declares her intentions to join a convent, Zerlina and Masetto will return home, and Leporello will head to the tavern to find himself a better master. A chorus delivers the final moral of the story: “Such is the end of the evildoer: the death of a sinner always reflects his life.”