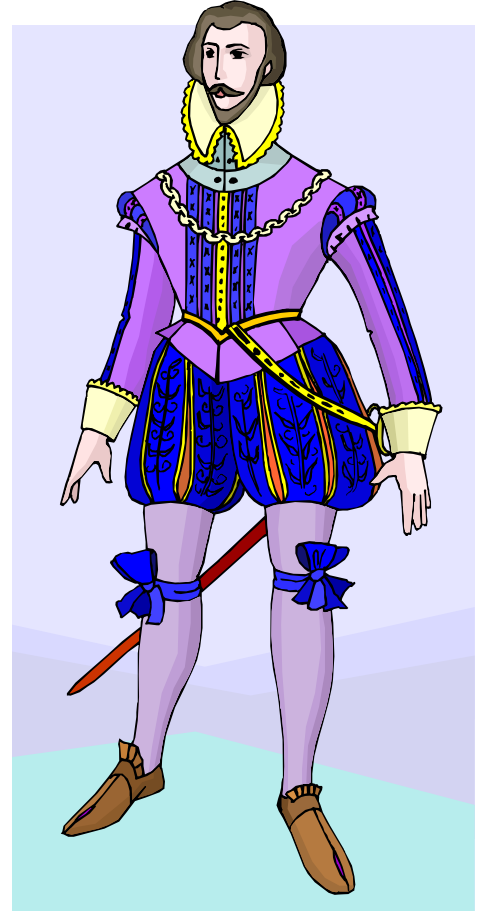
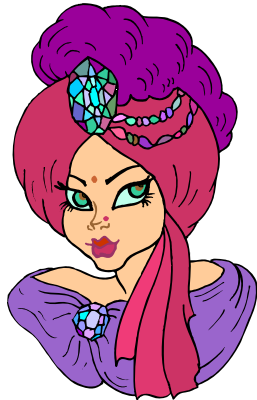


DON GIOVANNI

Lorenzo Da Ponte (1749 - 1838), librettist
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791), composer



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Don Giovanni Lesson 1

Ask anyone you meet and they have probably heard of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. They can probably also hum a tune of his or name something he composed. I won't attempt to offer you a comprehensive biography of this musical genius (countless volumes have already been written on the man). However, looking into his life, at least on the surface, will be our starting point.

Objectives:

- The students will gain knowledge of Wolfgang Mozart.
- The students will develop a basis upon which they might relate to the composer.

Activities:

- bring in some of your personal favorite Mozart works for the students to listen to
- **Word Search**
- Materials needed: picture of Wolfgang Mozart, white construction paper, crayons or markers, scissors, glue, many old magazines that you don't mind having cut up
 1. Glue Mozart's portrait in the center of the drawing paper.
 2. Have the students go through the magazines and cut out pictures that they associate with the life of or pieces of Mozart that you discussed in class.
 3. Have the students past the pictures they cut out and draw or color any other objects that come to their mind.



Mozart the Magician

Joannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Thoeophilus Gottlieb Amadeus Mozart (a.k.a. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart) was born Monday, January 27th 1756 in the town of Salzburg, Austria. His proud parents, Leopold and Anna Maria, were overjoyed with the birth of their 7th and last child and they were especially pleased that he survived past infancy (Wolfgang and his sister “Nannerl” were the only 2 Mozart children to live that long). Wolfgang’s dad, Leopold, was a professional musician and before long he realized that his only son was a child prodigy. According to Sir Webster and his dictionary a **prodigy** is “a highly talented child or youth”. This definition does not begin to describe the greatness of this young **wunderkind** or “wonder child”.



At the age of three, Wolfgang already sat in front of the harpsichord attempting to find harmonic successions of thirds. When Wolfgang was four, his father began to teach him the elements of harpsichord playing. Music obviously came to him as naturally as breathing. Wolfgang never attended schools of any kind. His non-musical education may not have been extensive, although it included Latin and modern languages (Italian, French, and some English), which were of practical value on his many journeys. Leopold Mozart, recognizing the extraordinary gifts of his two children (for Maria Anna, five years Wolfgang’s senior, was also strongly talented) decided to exhibit his children before all of Europe with Wolfgang playing both the piano and the violin.

When Wolfgang was six years old, an extensive concert tour took him to the foremost European concert halls and royal courts. Wherever he performed, the sweet charm of his personality and his incredible genius as a performer conquered the hearts of his audience. Francis I of Vienna referred to him as "ein kleine hexenmeister" (a little master-wizard). Wolfgang’s music was truly magical and seemed to cast a spell of wonder and awe upon its listeners. In fact, his talent was so unbelievable that for a time it was rumored that young Mozart was actually a midget pretending to be a child.

When Mozart was 14 he and his father traveled to Rome and went to the Sistine Chapel. In Rome, Mozart attended a performance of the celebrated nine-part *Miserere* by Antonio Allegri (1582-1652) which could be heard only in Rome during Holy Week sung by the papal choir. By papal decree, it was forbidden to sing the work elsewhere, and its only existing copy was strongly guarded by the papal choir. Any attempt to copy the piece or reproduce it in any form was punishable by excommunication. Mozart, however, had heard the work only once when, returning home, he reproduced it in its entirety upon paper. This incomparable feat soon became the subject for awed whispers in Rome, and it was not long before the Pope himself heard the rumors. The Pope summoned Mozart, but instead of punishing the young genius with excommunication, he showered praise upon him and gave him handsome gifts. A few months later, the Pope bestowed upon Mozart the Cross of the Order of the Golden Spur.

From that time on, young Mozart was constantly performing and writing music. He was the toast of Austria, and he gave many concerts of his compositions and loved to improvise at concerts as well. Wherever he appeared, people gaped in awe at his divine gifts. By his early teens, he had mastered the piano, violin and harpsichord, and was writing keyboard pieces, oratorios, symphonies and operas. Leopold gained a good deal of money and also spread Mozart's reputation. These tours continued well into Mozart's late teenage years. Mozart's touring with his father only stopped when he was fired by the Archbishop of Salzburg.

Mozart was happy to leave the Archbishop, for he confined his genius and kept him demoted (sound familiar to modern workers?). He immediately left with his mother (to babysit him instead of pappa) to find work elsewhere. He traveled from Austria to Italy and finally ended up in France. He received a minor position but hated France. Mozart decided to reluctantly return to Salzburg after his mother died from a fever while in Paris.

Mozart wanted to get married and found Constanze Weber willing to say, "I do". Temperamentally they were perfect, both fun-loving and playful, financially, however, they (especially Mozart) were spendthrifts. After a long wait, with Leopold's blessing not forthcoming, they decided to marry on August 4, 1782. Around this time Mozart wrote the score to *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. Later he'd also compose *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*. The Mozarts' money trouble really started to show by the time of *Così fan Tutte* and *La Clemenza di Tito*. His crowning operatic masterpiece, however, was completed in the year of his death, *The Magic Flute*.

Work on ***Die Zauberflöte*** (*The Magic Flute*) occupied much of Mozart's time in the first half of 1791, in collaboration with his friend and fellow-Mason, Emanuel Schikaneder. *The Requiem* was commissioned the same year as the Magic Flute when a stranger asked him to compose a requiem under conditions of secrecy. This commission came from Count Walsegg-Stuppach (not Antonio Salieri a contemporary composer of Mozart's as the movie *Amadeus* would have you believe), who wanted to pass off as his own composition a requiem for his wife. All accounts agree that Mozart's health had deteriorated visibly and rapidly. *The Magic Flute* was performed in Vienna on September 30th, 1791 and death came on December 5th 1791 apparently due to an attack of rheumatic fever, but to the end Mozart felt compelled to continue work on the ***Requiem***, which he did not finish. Fortune never turned for Mozart, and when he died in 1791 at the age of thirty-five, he was buried in an unmarked grave.

Don Giovanni Lesson 2

The story line of *Don Giovanni* deals with mature themes and aggressive ideas about dating and seduction. I have **not** included a synopsis for your students. I urge you to read the synopsis for yourself and then decide upon the best “age appropriate” method of telling the story. For younger students I often use words like, “date”, “kiss” or “hurt” to discuss some of Giovanni’s actions. Your older students might be mature enough to handle the un-abridged version – only you, their teacher, can make that call.

Objectives:

- The students will gain knowledge of the plot and synopsis in *Don Giovanni*.
- The students will begin to the scenes from the opera.

Activities:

- **Tell the story:** Relay the plot to your students in the most age appropriate way.
- **Don Giovanni Story Line:** Have your students make drawing or sketches of the various scenes. If time does not permit each student to finish all eight, assign one or two scenes to each student. When they are finished have them share their pictures.

Synopsis: *Don Giovanni*

ACT I Outside a house in eighteenth-century Seville, Don Giovanni's disgruntled servant, Leporello, stands guard while his master pursues Donna Anna indoors. Pandemonium breaks loose when Anna discovers that her seducer is not her fiance, Don Ottavio. The Commendatore, Anna's father, challenges the disguised Giovanni to a duel, and the Don easily kills the old man. Anna emerges to find her father dead, and although they do not know who the masked seducer was, she and Ottavio swear to avenge him. Walking through the town, Giovanni and Leporello see a mysterious beauty, who turns out to be Donna Elvira, already seduced and abandoned by the libertine. Giovanni makes his escape, and Leporello distracts her with a list of his master's conquests ("Madamina, il catalogo è questo").

Giovanni's wandering eye settles next on the peasant girl Zerlina, so Leporello tries to distract Zerlina's betrothed, Masetto. Just as the Don persuades Zerlina to join him ("Là ci darem la mano"), Elvira appears and convinces her to flee instead. Donna Anna and Don Ottavio enter, asking Giovanni to help find her father's murderer. He agrees, but after he leaves, Anna realizes that Giovanni was her masked assailant and Ottavio vows to avenge her ("Dalla sua pace").

With Leporello, Giovanni arranges a ball for Zerlina and Masetto ("Fin ch'han dal vino"). The peasant girl goes to the ball to find Masetto, who berates her for her flirtation with the Don. She attempts to mollify him ("Batti, batti, o bel Masetto"), but once Giovanni returns, Zerlina's resolve grows weak. She is only able to resist because Masetto is near. Anna, Elvira and Ottavio enter, masked, and Leporello tells them to join the revelers, but a call for help from Zerlina interrupts the party. The maskers rush to her, break down the door, and discover Giovanni trying to strike Leporello with his sword. The reprobate insists that Leporello is guilty, but the three know better. They warn the Don that a storm of vengeance will soon rage around him.

ACT II Fed up, Leporello threatens to quit, so Giovanni bribes him to stay but refuses to give up womanizing. Elvira's maid is the target of the day, and Giovanni switches clothes with Leporello, who keeps Elvira busy while his boss serenades the maid. Masetto arrives with a band of peasants hoping to kill Giovanni. Still disguised as Leporello, the Don tells the band to split up and takes Masetto aside. Once the others are out of earshot, Giovanni beats Masetto with the flat of his sword and leaves. Meanwhile, Leporello, still wearing Giovanni's cloak and hat, has tired of Elvira's cooing and tries to get away from her. Anna, Ottavio, Masetto and Zerlina block his exit and, thinking they've caught Giovanni, agree to kill the reprobate. Leporello reveals himself, begs for mercy, and rushes away. Ottavio swears vengeance ("Il mio tesoro") and Elvira expresses dismay over Giovanni's actions ("Mi tradi quell'alma integra"). Leporello meets his master in the graveyard, near the statue of the Commendatore. As Giovanni boisterously describes his escapades, a voice interrupts and warns the scoundrel that his laughter will be silenced by morning. Leporello sees the statue and thinks in horror that perhaps they have heard the voice of the Commendatore. Giovanni laughs and orders his servant to invite the statue to dinner that evening. Meanwhile, Ottavio tries to discuss marriage with Anna, but she says she cannot think of it in her sorrow ("Non mi dir").

In the great hall of his villa, Giovanni is about to sit down to dinner when Elvira storms in and begs him to return to her. Indifferent, Giovanni demands that she leave, but something terrifying interrupts her departure. She screams and runs through the hall. Her fear is justified: the Commendatore has arrived, as invited. When Giovanni refuses to repent for his misdeeds, the statue drags him to hell. The others rush in, and Leporello tells them what has happened. The libertine has received just punishment.

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Don Giovanni Lesson 3

Objectives:

- The students will gain knowledge of the characters in *Don Giovanni* and demonstrate knowledge of their relationship to one another.
- The students will be able to discuss qualities of good and bad character.

Activities:

- **Character Sketches worksheet**
- ***Don Giovanni* Character Confusion worksheet**
- **I want to be like... OR I don't want to be like...** Have each student pick one character from the opera to write about - either the one they admire the most or the one they admire the least. Have them address WHY they feel that way and WHAT the character did to influence their judgment. Discuss their writing in class.

Don Giovanni Lesson 4 - Post Viewing

Objectives:

- The students will be able to describe the performance they saw.
- The students will be able to critique the performance.
- The students will demonstrate understanding of the characters and plot sequence.

Activities:

It is very important to have a wrap-up session after watching *Don Giovanni* and moving on to the next opera. The following activities will help the students articulate their thoughts on the performance and allow them time to ask questions that may have been generated. Feel free to modify them and choose the one (or ones) that best fit into your time frame.

- **Musical Critique**
Have students write a critique of the performance they saw. Include costuming, staging, and a recommendation to their reader.
- **Don Giovanni Cross Word Puzzle**
- **Discussion groups**
Have the students break into small groups and discuss their highlights with one another.
- **Letter to the performers**
Have each student write a letter to the Opera Company or individual performers they saw and express their positive feelings from the performance. Find an address to send them and, maybe, you'll even get a reply.
- **Scene Scramble**
Have the students cut out the 6 scenes from the worksheet and put them in correct chronological order.

Don Giovanni



prodigy	Wunderkind	Nannerl	Leopold	Salzburg
Wolfgang	Amadeus	Austria	piano	harpsichord
violin	tour	Europe	Miserere	Salieri
Archbishop	Zauberflote	Vienna	Requiem	Schikaneder
librettist	Free Mason	Constanze	Don Giovanni	Requiem