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# INDIANAPOLIS OPERA



## *Don Giovanni*

March 20-22 2020

Setting and Synopsis

### **Setting:**

24 hours in the city of Seville in southern Spain, 17th century.

### **ACT I**

5:00am: A masked Don Giovanni sneaks into the home of the Commendatore to seduce his daughter, Donna Anna while Leporello, his servant, keeps watch outside. Suddenly, Giovanni rushes out pursued by Donna Anna and a struggle ensues. The Commendatore, awoken by the commotion, challenges Giovanni to a duel and is killed. Giovanni and Leporello escape. Anna returns with her fiancé, Don Ottavio, to discover her murdered father. She implores Don Ottavio to swear vengeance for her father's death. He reluctantly accepts.

8:00am: Giovanni and Leporello encounter one of Giovanni's former conquests, Donna Elvira, who is devastated by his betrayal. Giovanni escapes before Elvira can give him a piece of her mind. Leporello cautions her that she is neither the first nor the last woman to fall victim to Giovanni and illustrates his point by showing her a catalogue with the name of every woman Giovanni has seduced.

1:00pm: The peasant Masetto and his bride Zerlina celebrate on the day of their wedding. Giovanni flirts with the bride, and promises a lavish party in their honor before ordering Leporello to remove Masetto and his friends so that he can be alone with Zerlina. Masetto rebels and must be removed by force. Once they are alone, Giovanni seduces Zerlina promising that she is destined for a better life, and that he himself wishes to marry her. She is about to surrender to his charms when Elvira appears to urge Zerlina to flee her suitor.

2:00pm: A frustrated Giovanni encounters Donna Anna and Don Ottavio. At first suspicious, Giovanni is relieved to learn that they seek his help to avenge the Commendatore's murder. While pledging his allegiance to their cause, Elvira shows up to again accuse the would-be lover. She warns Anna, who is still unaware of the identity of her father's murderer, not to trust the smooth-talking seducer. Giovanni insists that Elvira is crazy, and Anna and Ottavio question who is to be believed. As Giovanni leaves to pursue Elvira, Anna suddenly recognizes his voice and manner 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 and is conflicted as he struggles to believe that a fellow nobleman would be capable of cold-blooded murder.

5:00pm Giovanni, who has invited the entire wedding party to his home, gets a report of the state of affairs from Leporello. Giovanni believes all to be going well as he looks forward to an evening of drinking and dancing. He promises to add at least ten names to his catalog list of conquests by morning!

8:00pm In the garden of Giovanni's home, Zerlina asks Masetto to forgive her. She tells her groom that Giovanni didn't even touch the tip of her finger. She insists that, although he may be upset with her at the moment, she knows how to make it up to him. Hearing Giovanni's voice, Zerlina becomes nervous. Masetto believes it is because there is more to the story that Zerlina has shared. He hides with the intention of discovering the truth. Giovanni enters and once caught, attempts to play it off and invites the two back inside to rejoin the party.

9:00pm Anna, Elvira, and Ottavio appear masked and are invited in by Leporello. In the ballroom, Giovanni dances with Zerlina, then drags 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

11:00pm Having exchanged clothes with Leporello Giovanni serenades Elvira from the shadows, while Leporello plays out the actions. Giovanni scares the would-be lovers away so that he can lure Elvira's maid down from her window. Just then, Masetto arrives with a few friends to hunt down Giovanni. The disguised Don steals Masetto's weapons before beating him up. Zerlina finds her beaten up and bruised fiancé and is relieved to discover that the important parts haven't been damaged. She comforts him with her special charms.

12:00am 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 – after some

consideration, which infuriates Anna – She runs off and Ottavio asks the others to look after her.

1:00am Elvira laments her feelings for Giovanni, whom she still loves in spite of everything. Despite the torment that Giovanni's constant betrayal causes her, she vows to try one last time to save him.

1:45am 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.

3:00am at Donna Anna's home. Once again, Ottavio asks Anna to marry him, but she replies that she will not until her father's death has been avenged.

4:00am 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 Giovanni is dragged to hell.