

Sincerity and Seduction in *Don Giovanni*

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This article considers the nature of seduction in Mozart's 'Don Giovanni' in light of recent musicological scholarship on the title character. Using Casanova's memoirs as a point of reference, Johnson argues that Mozart and da Ponte deliberately employ a tone of sincerity that keeps to the surface in conveying Giovanni's words but reveals little about his motivations and withholds ultimate judgment about his character. Johnson contends that this tone of sincerity produces a powerfully seductive effect upon listeners as well and is a major factor in the polarized critical reception of the opera that continues to this day. The article combines musical, literary, and dramatic analysis and contains musical examples from 'Don Giovanni' and 'Così fan tutte.'

One point of entry to Mozart's *Don Giovanni* is to consider Beethoven's sentiment, expressed late in life, that the sacred art of music "ought never to permit itself to be degraded to the position of being a foil for so scandalous a subject."¹ Beethoven's indignation grew from his own religious view of art. He wrote to the Archduke Rudolf in 1823: "There can be no loftier mission than to come nearer than other men to the Divinity and to disseminate the divine rays among mankind." Despite the opera's divinely punitive ending—with Don Giovanni sent to hell for his crimes and the other characters pledging to keep to the straight and narrow—there is much to offend along the way. Beethoven was not alone in censuring Mozart for depicting the life of a libertine. John Ruskin worded his condemnation in superlatives: "No such spectacle of unconscious (and in that unconsciousness all the more fearful) moral degradation of the highest faculty to the lowest purpose can be found in history."²

The modern version of this view objects not to immorality per se,

but to sexism. The philosopher Daniel Herwitz argues that, despite ample proofs of Don Giovanni's wickedness, the effect of the opera is to praise and elevate him. This for Herwitz implicates its composer. "The Don makes the music more sexist because the Don is also a rapist, a bastard to women, and a man who beats up other men." Suggesting that the collaboration of da Ponte and Mozart "betray[s] the sexism of their male fantasy," Herwitz concludes that the opera "identifies the character of the Don with the music that characterizes him, which also conflates him with the composer himself" (Herwitz 2006, 133, 134).

To appreciate such sentiments, you need go no further than Leporello's "Catalogue" aria. Here the servant proudly enumerates his master's conquests: in Italy six hundred and forty, in Germany two hundred thirty-one, in France one hundred, in Turkey ninety-one, "but in Spain there are already one thousand and three!" Don Giovanni conquers country wenches, chambermaids, and city ladies; countesses, baronesses, marchionesses, and princesses; slender ones in summer, plumpish ones in winter, and older ones for the sake of the list. But "sua passion predominante è la giovin principiante," Leporello sings: "His overriding passion is for virgins." Here as elsewhere the librettist Lorenzo da Ponte skates on the far side of sexual innuendo to approach vulgarity. "Provided she wears a skirt, you know what he's going to do!" (Mozart and da Ponte 1974, I:v, 62–75).³

The way Giovanni speaks of those 2,065 women is at least as startling as their number. "It's all part of love," he says. "If a man is faithful only to one, he is cruel to all the others. I, a man of boundless generosity, love every one of them" (Mozart and da Ponte 1974, II:i, 233–35). Surely the view is a knowing lie, or perhaps self-deceit. Either way, it keeps him from thinking twice. But as is well known, Søren Kierkegaard proposed a third possibility, which in fact explains Giovanni's successes more credibly than either deceit or delusion. Namely, that what he says is true: that seduction is a misnomer, that his love is selfless, and that constancy to one would deprive all others. Kierkegaard takes this position in *Either/Or*:

I should rather not call him a deceiver. To be a seducer requires a certain amount of reflection and consciousness, and as soon as this is

present, then it is proper to speak of cunning and intrigues and crafty plans. This consciousness is lacking in Don Giovanni. Therefore, he does not seduce. He desires, and this desire acts seductively.

(Kierkegaard 1959, 1:97)

Penetrating Don Giovanni's real motivations is not as simple as it seems. Other nineteenth-century commentators in the spirit of Kierkegaard found no cause for censure.⁴ By contrast, more recent commentators have taken a step back from accentuating the heroic in Don Giovanni. Some have pointed to a curious absence at the heart of the opera. In these readings, far from being the embodiment of a heroic ideal, Don Giovanni is all surface and no substance. So Bernard Williams writes that Don Giovanni "seems to have no depth adequate to the work in which he plays the central role." It is not that there is something hidden in Giovanni's soul, Williams observes; instead, he is "virtually characterless" (1981, 82). Wye Jamison Allanbrook calls Giovanni No-Man. His actions, she writes, do not rise to the level of the grand or tragic: "he is not evil but banal, not noble but punctilious, and without fear where true courage would discern what properly is to be feared" (1983, 218).

For the musicologist Joseph Kerman, Giovanni's blankness explains why nineteenth-century thinkers so readily projected the horrors and ideals of their age onto the opera. It also accounts for what Kerman believes are substantial weaknesses in the work. While the music of *Don Giovanni* is peerless in Mozart's entire repertoire—it is "Mozart's richest score" and the "dearest of all his operas to the musician"—its dramatic realization is severely flawed (Kerman 1988, 99). According to Kerman, da Ponte faltered by inadequately conveying charm and ingenuity in Giovanni, and Mozart compounded the weakness by adding very little to his character musically. The result is an altogether underwhelming presence for a Mozartian hero.

Giovanni has a single solo aria that might qualify as genuine self-expression, the orgasmic "Fin ch'han dal vino," which comes midway through the opera. (He sings his other two arias, "Deh vieni alla finestra" and "Metà di voi," disguised as his servant Leporello.) "Fin ch'han dal vino" is relentless and obsessive, without subtlety, comment,

or development. For Kerman, it is “a jingle that never evolves” (1990, 120). “The singular fact is that until the end almost all of the action and musical expression goes to illuminate the people with whom he is involved, not Don Giovanni himself,” Kerman writes. “This is a dramatic mistake” (1988, 102).

In my view, this is not a dramatic mistake. Da Ponte and Mozart knew exactly what they were doing. Instead of weakening the opera, the cipher at its center is the key to its particular power. The view derives from the observation that Don Giovanni employs the secret of all great lovers: sincerity. Sincerity is not self-expression. It is as foreign to the principled earnestness of the nineteenth century as it is to our own time’s demand for authenticity. In Lionel Trilling’s classic definition, sincerity is “a congruence between avowal and actual feeling” (1972, 2; see also Johnson 2005). A person who is sincere need not be consistent in his claims. He need only believe what he says—truly and fully—in the moment of utterance. And that might well be at odds with other sincere claims before and after. It is Don Giovanni’s unfailing sincerity of tone that makes grasping his character so difficult.

Da Ponte’s fellow Venetian Giacomo Casanova maintains this same tone of sincerity for the length of his twelve-volume autobiography as he recounts his own romantic conquests, which occur on average about once every thirty pages. Ingenuous and immediate, Casanova seems to tell us everything, including his setbacks and humiliations, his illnesses and debilities, each time he is impotent, and the shame he feels when visiting prostitutes. Throughout the *Memoirs* Casanova repeats a single theme: that he is neither a seducer nor a deceiver. He writes near the end of the work: “I venture to say that I was often virtuous in the act of vice. Seduction was never characteristic of me; for I have never seduced except unconsciously, being seduced myself.” The “professional seducer is an abominable creature,” he adds, a “true criminal,” and the “enemy of the object on which he has his designs” (1966–71, 12: 111).

The fascination in Casanova’s autobiography lies in how little this man’s actions seem to match his declared motivations. He cites with incredulity an enemy who has deemed him a liar, slanderer, counter-

feiter, and spy. The denunciation that brought his arrest and imprisonment in the Venetian Leads accused him of sorcery, irreligion, and dissipation. And he gives ample cause in the course of his writing for believing such charges, with straightforward accounts of sleeping with fourteen-year-olds, inventing fanciful stories, spying, counterfeiting, attempting black magic, and using fictitious names. Still, he dismisses the accusations as slander. Casanova was a chameleon in a society whose colors were largely fixed. Over the course of his life, he forged a series of identities consistent only in denying who he really was, the neglected son of a theater-girl. By perpetually believing what he said, Casanova insisted that he was honorable and honest, even as his stories changed. Consider his defense of inventing the name Seingalt: "I assumed it because it is mine.... There is nothing more true than my name" (8: 135). How could anyone call him an imposter?

Assessing whether Casanova "really means" what he says is futile. In his *Memoirs*, he is in perpetual control of his rhetoric, and the autobiographical genre means that there is never a second opinion. One need only to consider other genres to see how sincerity of tone, especially among seducers, might mask thoroughly deceitful intentions. One such seducer is the Vicomte de Valmont in Choderlos de Laclos' *Liasons dangereuses*. Through its multiple voices, Laclos' epistolary form reveals what Casanova's autobiography does not. "Permit me, Madame, to open my heart to you," Valmont writes to his principal victim, the Présidente de Tourvel. She is taken in and lauds his "honest sincerity" to a companion. But Valmont's letters to the Marquise de Merteuil show him calculating at every step, driven by vengeance and the sheer will to corrupt.

Ah! May she surrender, but may she fight; may she have the means to resist without the means to prevail; may she come to savor the sentiment of her own weakness and be obliged to acknowledge her defeat.... This project is sublime, is it not? (Laclos 1979, 74, 33, 52)

In *Don Giovanni*, da Ponte and Mozart follow the technique of Casanova rather than that of Laclos. With the thunderous opening chords of the overture, Giovanni's damnation seems sure, and yet in most moments we cannot discern whether his sincerity is honest or a mask.

Nor can the other characters. The peasant-girl Zerlina is on the way to her own wedding when Don Giovanni takes her hand, tells her she is destined for higher things, and promises marriage. Only a timely intervention by Donna Elvira keeps Zerlina out of Leporello's catalogue. For her part, Donna Elvira is already on the list and eager to declare to everyone she sees what a monster Don Giovanni is. Nevertheless, late in the opera, she is still ready to believe that Don Giovanni truly loves her. For Donna Anna, assessing Giovanni's sincerity is altogether more urgent. In the opening scene, a cloaked intruder forces his way into her room, either rapes or attempts to rape her, and stabs her father as he rushes to her aid. It is of course Don Giovanni, though she does not know it at the time. When she encounters him only days later, he asks with affecting concern, "Who was the villain that dared to upset the calm of your life?" (Mozart and da Ponte 1974, I:xi–xii, 101–2).

Asking whether Giovanni's sincerity is honest or a mask is another way of asking if he genuinely believes what he says when he says it. If he believes his words, then perhaps Kierkegaard is right and he is a sheer force of nature: unreflective, true to his desires, and at least in this one respect without censure. If Giovanni does not believe his words, then he is a master of deceit and da Ponte is in on the game. In either case, Giovanni's apparent sincerity is powerfully convincing. Part of the strange spell of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* is how easy it is to disregard the fact that its principal character is a would-be rapist and a killer. The libretto possesses a cavalier bluntness, and yet even its brutalities can seem strangely untroubling. "L'ha voluto," Don Giovanni says to Leporello just after the Commandante's death. "He asked for it" is the way Leporello takes it, but the Italian might as easily mean, "*She* asked for it," with reference to whatever has just happened in Donna Anna's bedchamber (I:ii, 34). From start to finish, Don Giovanni's actions are on full view, and still he seems more a likeable rogue than a criminal. Instead of condemning him we're amused, fascinated, intrigued.

Why is this? His sincerity may very well account for his successes within the drama, but it cannot fully explain our own fascination with his exploits. In my view, this effect lies with the music.

Just as da Ponte never reveals what Don Giovanni is really think-

ing, Mozart keeps resolutely to the surface in his musical depictions. The music does not comment upon Giovanni's actions, much less pass judgment or condemn. In fact, it backs him up at every turn. Mozart certainly had the ability to offer such comment had he wanted. His *Così fan tutte*, for instance, an opera filled with dissimulation, carries musical clues that comment on the deceit. When Guglielmo and Ferrando appear in "Turkish" disguises to test the fidelity of their lovers, Fiordiligi orders them to leave and declares her own steadfast fidelity. At the word "fede" (faith), a small wavering gesture sounds in the violins; at the word "diede" (pledged), two measures later, the half-step fluctuation recurs in thirds (see Example 1). In itself, the gesture is perhaps unremarkable, but it reappears during the servant Despina's lusty recommendation of deceit to the two sisters (see Examples 2 and 3). And later, as Ferrando presses close to Fiordiligi and pleads for her affection, the same figure in the violins announces what she cannot bring herself to say. "My God, the way you look at me and sigh!" Ferrando responds. "With that look and those dear sighs, a sweet ray shines into my heart."⁵ What was first a tiny doubt now signals surrender (see Example 4). Daniel Hertz points to a similar instance in the orchestra when Guglielmo promises a feast in honor of Venus early in the opera.

Fiordiligi

l'in - tat - ta fe - de che per noi già si die - de

Example 1. From "Temerari," *Così fan tutte*.

Despina

Par ch'ab bian gu - sto

Example 2. From “Una donna a quindici anni,” *Così fan tutte*.

Despina

e qual re - gi - na dall' al - to

so - glio, col posso e vo -

Example 3. From “Una donna a quindici anni,” *Così fan tutte*.

Ferrando

O ciel!

Example 4. From “Barbara!,” *Così fan tutte*.

The pattern of sixteenth notes in the first violins recalls the “Turkish” music in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Heartz observes, and may be interpreted as “a hint of the disguises to come” (1990, 239).

In *Don Giovanni*, by contrast, there are no moments when the orchestra conveys the thoughts or reveals the intentions of its principal character. This is the musical version of sincerity. The orchestra gives us no reason to doubt the truth of Giovanni’s words. For this reason, it is not enough to say that Mozart’s music abets the attempted seductions on the stage. The music reaches beyond the flickering virtue of the drama’s characters to draw us into Giovanni’s tainted moral universe. The real seducer in *Don Giovanni* is Mozart, and the seduction is not a fiction. This is what Beethoven must have meant in deploring the work.

Consider the scene in Act Two when Donna Elvira, who until now has spared no occasion to curse her lover as a traitor, appears at a window and, believing herself alone, sings that she still has feelings for him (Mozart and da Ponte 1974, II: ii, 235–45). Her musical line—hesitant, broken, not properly a melody—conveys the nature of her thoughts (see Example 5). Don Giovanni is below, and he seizes his chance to beg forgiveness and declare that he also still loves her. He does this in the very melody she has sung as the tonality shifts from A to E major (see Example 6). The new key is related to A but brighter, which quickens the attention without drawing attention. The musical line is the same, but in Giovanni’s hands its silences prompt Donna Elvira to reply. This is Giovanni’s gift: to read another’s heart and reply as a kindred spirit.

This happens not just with his words but with his music. Like Casanova, Don Giovanni assumes the shades of his surroundings, slipping into *buffa* when he is with Leporello, a virtuosic *seria* style with Elvira, and a folk-like simplicity with Zerlina. When Giovanni swaps his clothes with Leporello the better to woo a servant-girl, Mozart offers the musical equivalent by hiding the orchestra behind a whispered pizzicato and giving the accompaniment to a mandolin. In fact, Don Giovanni is the only character in the opera for whom Mozart has not fashioned a characteristic style consistent with social rank.⁶ For Joseph Kerman, this is an element of his incomplete depiction, and to claim

Donna Elvira

Ah, ta - ci, in - giu - sto co - re!

Non pal - pi - tar mi - in se - no!

Example 5. From “Ah, taci, ingiusto core,” *Don Giovanni*.

Don Giovanni

El - vi - ra, i - do - lo mi - o,

El - vi - ra, i - do lo - mi - o!

Example 6. From “Ah, taci, ingiusto core,” *Don Giovanni*.

that is an artistic strength is “to argue *ab vacuo*”: “In opera we trust what is done most firmly by the music” (1988, 102). On the contrary. This very musical detachment allows Mozart to achieve his most convincing effects.

When Don Giovanni comes to the payoff line in the scene with Don-

Don Giovanni

Di - scen - di, o gio - ja - bel - la, o

p

Example 7. From “Ah, taci, ingiusto core,” *Don Giovanni*.

na Elvira—“Discendi, o gioia bella,” “Come down, my joy!”—the key modulates a second time, now to C major (see Example 7). A melody blossoms from the musical material of Donna Elvira’s thoughts, but now, spoken aloud as it were by Don Giovanni, it is altogether more sumptuous than in her first halting phrases. The earlier shift from A to E is subtle; this one, from E to C, is bold. The new key, relatively remote from E, is unexpected though not jarring and, while still bright, is considerably warmer. The instrumental modulation that prepares his line enacts Giovanni’s command: the strings descend stepwise. The effect is ravishing.

All of this happens while Don Giovanni and Leporello continue to talk out of Elvira’s hearing, which Mozart sets in a rapid *buffa* style, the speech-like patter of Italian comic opera. Mozart’s astonishing dramatic control is on full display here. Giovanni mimics the musical styles of all whom he encounters with such sincerity that we—not just they—believe him.

The opera contains many such instances of Mozart’s seduction. “Là ci darem la mano,” the aria in which Giovanni promises to marry the peasant Zerlina, narrates her surrender in a sequence that exercises strong musical persuasion. “There we shall join hands, there you will say yes,” Giovanni sings of his country house in a tune of childlike innocence. “Look, it is not far, come my sweet, let’s go.” The slow duple meter is soothing and gentle, and Giovanni’s simple stanza, just as with Donna Elvira, creates the musical expectation for a reply, which Zerlina readily gives: “I want to and yet I don’t; my heart has misgivings; I should indeed be happy, but he might be bluffing me.” The music

conveys Zerlina's indecision in a series of faltering, downward steps in the next exchange. Come, Giovanni coos, I will change your life. She stammers, "But I pity Masetto.... Then quick, I'm not strong" (I: ix, 93–8).

Now Mozart begins to work on us. In the second stanza, he returns to the opening innocent tune, but Giovanni has to sing only two lines instead of four to get Zerlina to answer. This doubles the pace of the conversation and stirs anticipation. Mozart adds a nice dramatic touch by gracing Giovanni's lines with a flute and grounding Zerlina's with a bassoon. We feel them coming together even if we do not consciously register why.

And as the meter shifts to a pastoral 6/8, they do come together. The translator Avril Bardoni has them saying: "Then come, then come, my sweetheart, to remedy the torment of an innocent love!"⁷⁷ Zerlina may well be swept away and think her love is pure—and, whatever his true intentions, Giovanni echoes that sentiment—but the sexual nature of the scene is intimated in that strange last line: "a ristorar le pene d'un innocente amor." The cognate "to restore" (or even "to refresh" or "to revitalize") is much closer to *ristorare* than "to remedy," Bardoni's choice. Lurking near *le pene*, pains, is *il pene*, penis. In its context, *ristorare* may be meant to carry a rather more pointed physical connotation: not to remedy, but to slake and reawaken.

At the words "innocente amor," the violins trace a brief chromatic descent that is conspicuously out of character with the happy duet (see Example 8). Is it a warning that Giovanni's intentions are not at all innocent? Perhaps. But given what we later learn about Zerlina, it might well be an indication that Giovanni and Zerlina both know, and both embrace, what would have happened in the big country house had Donna Elvira not come along. Daniel Hertz links that chromatic descent to moments in "Fin ch'han dal vino," when Giovanni orders Leporello to bring girls off the streets to his party, and in the sextet "Ah non lasciarmi!" late in the opera. In that ensemble, Donna Elvira believes she is alone in the dark with Giovanni, whom she once again calls her husband; she also declares that she is scared to death. "In this opera chromatic lines spell death," Hertz writes, "but also the related

Zerlina
cen - te a - mor! An -

Don Giovanni
cen - te a - mor! An -

Example 8. From “Là ci darem la mano,” *Don Giovanni*.

phenomenon of love death, or the sexual act.... If the censors had only known how suggestive of the erotic Mozart’s music could be, they would surely have banned it” (1990, 181).

Don Giovanni’s ability to imitate the natural temperament of others is fully grasped when Zerlina begs forgiveness from Masetto, but the sequence also reveals what she has learned from Giovanni. “Batti, batti” is cast in the same reassuring duple meter as “Là ci darem,” and it possesses a similarly innocent tune. The lyrics begin, “Beat me, Masetto, beat your poor Zerlina! I shall stand here like a lambkin waiting for your blows.” At the end of the aria, Zerlina moves to the same pastoral 6/8 that she and Giovanni came to. Here she sings, “Let’s make up, my dear! We want to pass our days and nights in joy and gaiety!” (Mozart and da Ponte 1974, I: xvi, 148–56). There’s no reason to doubt her sentiments, judging by the words or the music, but from now on Masetto is suspicious.

And so am I. “He didn’t even touch my fingertips!” Zerlina tells Masetto (I: xvi, 147). Really? From its opening words, their duet was about joining hands! When she next sings to Masetto, who has been roughed up by Giovanni, the balm she offers is overtly sexual. “Touch me here,” she sings seven times, repeating “here” another five times for good measure. (Where is up to the director.) Zerlina’s aria illustrates how Giovanni’s pleasingly reassuring tone becomes so corrosive. Once suspicions arise, you’re either a dupe or a cynic. Donna Elvira’s determination to resist both helps to explain her vacillation throughout the

opera, cursing Giovanni as a monster one moment and eager to marry him the next. Sadly, one has to wonder whether some version of her suffering awaits Masetto.⁸

Mozart remains faithful to Giovanni's unflinching tone of sincerity throughout the opera, but in one extraordinary moment the composer allows the incompatibility of his claims to show. It comes in the *tour de force* setting of three orchestras playing three dances in three different meters (Mozart and da Ponte 1974, I: xx, 180–227). When Donna Anna and Donna Elvira come disguised to Don Giovanni's ball and pair off briefly to dance, an onstage orchestra plays a minuet, the most aristocratic dance of the eighteenth century. When Don Giovanni seizes Zerlina to dance her straight out of the room, a second onstage orchestra plays a contredanse, a form whose roots are in the English country dance. Leporello grabs the peasant Masetto in clownish parody, and a third orchestra strikes up a sprightly "German" dance.

Wonderment over Mozart's technical feat and the sheer fun of trying to hear each orchestra may distract from the larger point. Until now, Don Giovanni has kept the different versions of himself distinct in the minds of his companions. This is the instant when he is caught: Zerlina screams from offstage; Giovanni blames Leporello for the attempted assault; and Elvira, Anna, and Ottavio pull off their masks to sing, "Deceiver! Deceiver!" Here the music remains true to Giovanni's separate stories, but the musical clash reveals them to be fundamentally incompatible. Wye Jamison Allanbrook's designation of Giovanni as No-Man is relevant. From all we can tell, he doesn't so much hide a lasting identity behind a series of masks as use the words and styles of others to construct serial selves. True, Zerlina has seen with horror what Giovanni's promised marriage really means; and Donna Anna positively identifies him as her father's killer. But the deepest question about Don Giovanni—whether he is an ingenuous lover or calculating liar—remains unanswered.

This is due in large part to music that was deliberately crafted to entice and ensnare its listeners. Despite Don Giovanni's final damnation to hell, the music throughout the opera reserves fundamental judgment about his character. Does this make Mozart morally com-

PLICIT with the offences of his creature? The comparison isn't exact, but there is something to be learned from the calculating seducer's mask of sincerity, namely, that one should beware of mistaking surface for substance. In a letter to his father, Mozart boasted: "I can imitate and assimilate all kinds and styles of composition" (quoted in Hertz 1990, 37). Mozart's facility in this regard was unparalleled, and nowhere is it more effectively deployed than in *Don Giovanni*. In a superb instance of form following content, Mozart matched the sincerity of the character with music that was every bit as believable and—in the best possible sense—superficial. The music is constitutive of Don Giovanni's several selves. To offer commentary or disclaimers would weaken the depiction.

Mozart surely shared the prejudices of his own time, but in this case faulting him for endorsing objectionable values misses the point. Mozart rendered with utmost fidelity a man whose thoughts we never know. Using that music to pass judgment on the composer's inner state is as groundless as locating within it Giovanni's true intentions. Despite Beethoven's criticism of the opera, he copied extracts into his sketch books in order to study its powers (see Lockwood 2003, 253). One of them, as potent today as it was in the eighteenth century, was the seductive appeal of sincerity.

End Notes

1. I am grateful to Thomas Kelly and to my colleagues from Boston University's Core Curriculum—especially Bernard Prusak, Roger Shattuck, and Royce Wates—for their insights in conversations about teaching *Don Giovanni*.
2. Beethoven is quoted in Cooper 1985, 127, 118; Ruskin in Allanbrook 1983, 364.
3. The English translations from this opera are my own, although I have also frequently referred to that of Avril Bardoni, which appears in the booklet accompanying the recording of *Don Giovanni* by the Drottningholm Court Theatre Orchestra and Chorus.
4. For example, Théophile Gautier wrote: "It is not debauchery that drives him on; he seeks the dream of his heart with the obstinacy of a Titan who fears neither thunder nor lightning" (quoted in Williams 1981, 84). In the tale "Don Juan" by E.T.A. Hoffmann (1984), the soprano playing Donna Anna appears in the narrator's private box during a performance of the opera. Their

brief conversation, experienced by the narrator as though in a dream, reveals the inner truth of Giovanni: in him is the divine but misdirected principle of love. Her mission is to redeem him. And her failed attempt to do so, coming too late in Giovanni's headlong quest for genuine love, will end in her own death. George Bernard Shaw viewed Giovanni similarly, describing him as a Superman who rose above the small-minded world of bourgeois norms. See also Grey 2006 and Allanbrook 1983, 216.

5. Mozart and da Ponte 1952, I: xi, 115–16, II: i, 205–11, II: vi, 243. Another celebrated example that Mozart knew comes in Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*, when Orestes, terrorized by the Furies for having killed his mother, at last announces that peace has returned to his heart. But accompanying him in the orchestra is a churning, tumultuous rumble. "He is lying!" Gluck called out during a rehearsal in which the orchestra played the passage too softly. "He has just killed his mother!" See for this story La Comtesse de Genlis, in a footnote to the article "Opéra," in *Dictionnaire critique et raisonné des étiquettes de la cour* (1818, 2: 12–13).
6. Wye Jamison Allanbrook makes this point well: "The vitality and spirit which have caused some to see Giovanni as hero, as life force, even as pure Intellect itself, are in reality relentless instinct and a talent for mimicry. Unlike the god Proteus, who, if his captor was patient, would at last assume his proper shape, Giovanni cannot, for he does not have one. A master of the forms, he is also radically dependent on them, for without them he would be invisible" (1983, 286).
7. See the booklet accompanying the performance of *Don Giovanni* by the Drottningholm Court Theatre Orchestra and Chorus, 90.
8. An essay by Berthold Hoeckner (2006) comes to different conclusions in arguing that Don Giovanni awakened Zerlina's sexuality, but that Zerlina quickly matured to transform Giovanni's manipulations and deceit into mutuality with Masetto. For Hoeckner, the musical similarities between "Là ci darem" and "Batti, batti" signify maturity, and Zerlina's promises to nurse Masetto's bruises are "peace-giving gestures." Masetto should hope that he is right.

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