

in one act. The Music by Messrs. Gazzaniga, Sarti, Frederici, and Guglielmi. The Words are new, by Lorenzo Da Ponte, poet of this theatre, except those that are not marked with inverted commas." The pages which were free from quotation marks were eight out of twenty-one. However, as we shall see presently, Bertati was as little the inventor of the story of "Don Giovanni" as Da Ponte.

The genesis of Mozart's music is less plain. In the autograph catalogue which Mozart kept there is no entry between June 24 and August 10, and it seems a fair inference that he gave up the month of July to the opera. He entered the overture under date of October 28, one day before its public production. Evidently he had brought the unfinished score with him to Prague in September and there completed it, working principally in a summer house of his friends, the Duscheks, who lived in the suburbs of the city. On the evening of the day on which the first performance was announced, the overture had not been begun. How it was written is a familiar story. Until a late hour at night he sat with a party of merry friends. Then he went to his hotel and prepared to work. On the table was a glass of punch, and his wife sat beside him to keep him awake by telling him stories. In spite of all sleep overcame him, and he was obliged to interrupt his work for several hours; yet at seven o'clock in the morning the copyist was sent for and the overture was ready for him. The tardy work delayed the representation in the evening and the orchestra had to play the overture at sight; but it was a capital band, and Mozart, who conducted, complimented it when he started into the introduction to the first air. The performance was completely successful and floated buoyantly on a tide of enthusiasm which set in when Mozart entered the orchestra, and rose higher and higher as the music went on. On November 4 Mozart wrote to a friend: "On October 29 my opera 'Don Giovanni' was put *in scena* with the most unqualified success. Yesterday it was performed for the fourth time, for my benefit. . . . I only wish my good friends (particularly Bridi and yourself) could be here for a single evening to share in my triumph. Perhaps it will be performed in Vienna. I hope so. They are trying all they can to persuade me to remain two months longer and write another opera; but, flattering as the proposal is, I cannot accept it."

That Mozart was far from occupying the supereminent position amongst composers a century ago that he does now is obvious from the early history of "Don Giovanni." It was six months before the opera was brought out in Vienna, though Gluck had died meanwhile and Mozart had been appointed Chamber Musician by the Emperor Joseph II. Mozart had been dead twenty-six years before the opera was given in London. The incidents connected with its first appearance in one city after another the world over are extremely interesting, and might be read with profit, but to narrate even half of them would swell this preface out of all proportion. I select three of the most important *premieres*—those of Vienna, London, and New York:

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CASTS OF SOME FIRST PERFORMANCES.

CHARACTERS.	PRAGUE, OCTOBER 29, 1787.	VIENNA, MAY 7, 1788.	LONDON, APRIL 12, 1817.	NEW YORK, MAY 23, 1826.
Don Giovanni	Luigi Bassi	Francesco Albertarelli	Giuseppe Ambrogetti	Manuel Garcia
Donna Anna	Teresa Saporiti	Aloysia Lange	Violante Camporese	— Barbieri
Donna Elvira	Caterina Micelli	Caterina Cavalieri	— Hughes	Madame Garcia
Don Ottavio	Antonio Baglioni	Francesco Morella	Gaetano Crivelli	— Milon
Leporello	Felice Ponziani	— Benucci	Giuseppe Naldi	Manuel Garcia, Jr.
Don Pedro } Masetto }	Giuseppe Lolli	Francesco Bussani	Carlo Angrisani	Carlo Angrisani
Zerlina	Teresa Bondini	Luisa Mombelli	Josephine Fodor	Maria Garcia

Despite the success in Prague, "Don Giovanni" made an utter fiasco in Vienna, though Mozart good-naturedly made changes in and additions to the score in order to humor the singers and add to its attractiveness. Signora Cavalieri claimed her privilege of a grand air, and Mozart wrote the recitative and air *In quali eccessi* and *Mi tradr' quell' alma ingrata* for her. The tenor Morella found *Il mio tesoro* too much for his powers, and Mozart gave him the simpler *Dalla sua pace* as a substitute. The duet *Per queste tue manine* was introduced for Signorina Mombelli and Signor Benucci. In time the Viennese came to like the work more and it had fifteen performances in the first year. Then it disappeared from the active list, and when it returned, four years afterward, it was in a German adaptation. According to Da Ponte, Joseph II., after hearing the work, said: "The opera is divine, perhaps even more beautiful than 'Figaro,' but it will try the teeth of my Viennese;" to which Mozart answered: "We will give them time to chew it." The singer who impersonated *Donna Anna* was Mozart's sister-in-law, with whom he had been violently in love before he married his wife. In London, though the music appears to have been known and liked by the amateurs, it required the breaking down of the opposition of a vexatious cabal to win a hearing for the opera. Mr. Ayrton, manager of The King's Theatre, was a man of energy, however, and was rewarded for his persistency by seeing it make a hit, which saved the season, as "Figaro" had saved the season at Prague. "It filled the boxes and benches of the theatre for the whole season," says Mr. Ebers in his "Seven Years of The King's Theatre," "and restored to a flourishing condition the finances of the concern, which were almost in an exhausted state." It was given twenty-three times in the season to overflowing houses. In New York the production of the opera was due to the presence in the city of Lorenzo Da Ponte. The Garcia company, which came to the city from London in 1825, does not seem to have contemplated performing "Don Giovanni," though in it was Carlo Angrisani, who had participated in the first London performances, and

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the younger Crivelli (Domenico), son of the representative of *Don Ottavio* in the original London production. But Domenico was only second tenor in London, and too poor a singer to undertake the part of *Don Ottavio*. He developed into a respectable composer and teacher. Garcia, the head of the troupe, though a tenor, had sung the part of *Don Giovanni* in London and Paris (following an example set in the latter city by Tacchinardi in 1811), and his wife, daughter and son, all of whom were in his company, could be relied on to do their tasks satisfactorily. A tenor had to be secured, however, and one was found in a Frenchman named Milon, whom I have not yet succeeded in identifying, unless he be the musician who played the violoncello in the first years of the New York Philharmonic Society, and died only a few years ago in Philadelphia, having reached the age of ninety-nine. Castil-Blaze in his "Molière Musicien" relates of the first performance in New York that everything went wrong at the conclusion of the first finale, whereupon Garcia, who had vainly been trying to keep the orchestra and singers in time and tune, at last came to the footlights, sword in hand, stopped the performance, and ordered a new start. Then the finale came happily to an end. The Maria Garcia who was the *Zerlina* on this occasion was famous afterward as Malibran; her brother, who enacted the part of *Leporello*, is still alive in London at the age of ninety-five years. "Don Giovanni" was given eleven times in the course of Garcia's season, and the interest which it created, together with the speedily-won popularity of Signorina Garcia, was probably the reason why an English version of the opera which dominated the New York stage for nearly a quarter of a century made its appearance almost immediately at the Chatham Theatre, in which the part of the dissolute *Don* was enacted by H. Wallack, the uncle of Lester Wallack, so long an admired figure on the American stage. Malibran took part in many of the English performances of the opera, which kept the Italian off the local stage until 1850, when Max Maretzek revived it at the Astor Place Opera House. In Maretzek's company was Amalia Patti, the eldest sister of Adelina Patti, who sang the part of *Elvira*, and Signorina Bertucca (*Zerlina*), who afterward became Madame Maretzek, and is still living in New York. The experience of The King's Theatre was repeated by the Astor Place Opera House in this revival. Says Mr. Maretzek in his "Crotchets and Quavers": "The opera of 'Don Giovanni' brought me support from all classes, and attracted persons of all professions and every description to the Opera House. Fourteen consecutive evenings was it played to crowded houses. This opera alone enables me to conclude the season and satisfy all demands made upon my exchequer."

The origin of the story at the bottom of "Don Giovanni" has not yet been discovered. The tale is doubtless of great antiquity, and either gave rise to the legend of Don Juan Tenorio of Seville or grew out of it. Don Juan Tenorio, according to the legend, kills an enemy in a duel, insults his memory by inviting his statue to dinner, and is sent to perdition because of his refusal to

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repent him of his sins. The story is supposed to have been treated in monkish plays in the middle ages, and it occupied the dramatic mind of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Spain, Italy, France, Germany, and England. The most eminent men who treated it at greater or lesser intervals of time were the Spaniard known as Tirza de Molina; the Frenchman Molière; the Italian Goldoni; and the Englishman Thomas Shadwell, whose "Libertine Destroyed" was brought forward in 1676. Before Mozart, Gluck had treated it as a ballet, Le Tellier as a French comic opera, and Righini and Gazzaniga as an opera. The "Convitato di Pietra" of the last was the model followed by Mozart and his librettist. The story of "Don Giovanni" scarcely needs telling. A dissolute nobleman has entered the house of *Donna Anna* and put an indignity upon her in the dark. She calls for help, he attempts to escape, but the father of the lady intercepts him. They fight and the *Commendatore* is slain. *Don Giovanni* pursues his adventures, and next attempts the seduction of a rustic bride, *Zerlina*, whom he had invited into his palace with her friends. He is frustrated by *Donna Anna*, *Donna Elvira* (to whom he had promised marriage, who is pursuing him, and whom he had turned over to his rascally servant, *Leporello*), and *Don Ottavio*, the affianced lover of *Donna Anna*. In the progress of one of their escapades master and servant find themselves at the foot of a statue erected to the memory of the *Commendatore*. *Don Giovanni* compels *Leporello* to invite the statue to supper, and the invitation is accepted by a nod of the marble head and a sepulchral "Yes!" While *Don Giovanni* is supping, *Elvira* comes to plead with him for the last time to change his mode of life, but is put aside with contumely. Then the statue enters, declines to sup, but demands a return of the visit. *Don Giovanni* accepts in a spirit of bravado, and gives his hand as a pledge. The ghostly visitor calls on the rake to repent, but his admonitions are spurned with contempt. The statue departs, darkness settles on the scene, hell opens, demons surround *Don Giovanni* and drag him into the abyss. This the *finale* as it is enacted, with variations, on the stage to-day. Touching the real finale I beg to offer a comment which I wrote ten years ago for use elsewhere:

No real student can have studied the score deeply or listened discriminatingly to a good performance without discovering that there is a tremendous chasm between the conventional aims of the Italian poet in the book of the opera and the work which emerged from the composer's profound imagination. Da Ponte contemplated a *dramma giocoso*; Mozart humored him until his imagination came within the shadow cast before by the catastrophe, and then he transformed the poet's comedy into a tragedy of crushing power. The climax of Da Ponte's ideal is reached in a picture of the dissolute *Don* wrestling in idle desperation with a host of spectacular devils, and finally disappearing through a trap, while fire bursts out on all sides, the thunders roll, and *Leporello* gazes on the scene crouched in a comic attitude of terror under the table. Such a picture satisfied the tastes of the public of his time, and that public found nothing incongruous in a return to the scene immediately afterward of all the characters save the reprobate who had gone to his reward, to hear a description of the catastrophe from the buffoon under the table, and platitudinously to moralize that the perfidious wretch, having been stored away safely in the realm of Pluto and Proserpine, nothing remained for them to do except to raise their voices in the words of "the old song": Thus do the wicked find their end, dying as they lived:

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*Lep., Mas. e Zerl.
Resti dunque quel birbon
Con Proserpina e Pluton ;
E noi tutti, buona gente,
Ripetiam allegremente
L'antichissima canzon :*

Tutti.

*Questo è il fin di chi fa mal :
E dei perfidi la morte
Alla vita è sempre ugual.*

This *finale* was long ago discarded, and though Mozart set it to music, he did it in a manner which tells more plainly than the situation that it is an anticlimax, that the opera reached its end with the death of its hero.

"Don Giovanni" has three times outlived the period which an eminent German critic has set down as the average life of an opera hailed at its birth, or shortly after, as "immortal." As I write, one hundred and twelve years have passed over the head of Mozart's masterpiece, and turning to the statistics of the operatic year, September, 1898, to August, 1899, I find that within that year it was performed once for every year that it has lived in Germany alone. So far as the active list in America is concerned, "Don Giovanni" has only two seniors, its companion, "Le Nozze di Figaro," and Gluck's "Orfeo." Even in Europe, where influences besides popular liking keep operas alive, scarcely half a dozen older than it can yet be heard. France has forgotten Rameau, and all but forgotten Gluck and Grétry; Italy ignores her Pergolesi, Paisiello, and Cimarosa; Austria her Dittersdorf. In Germany one may still, at long intervals, witness a representation of one or the other of Gluck's "Iphigénies" or "Alceste;" but besides the works which I have mentioned, all others that were rivals of "Don Giovanni" in 1787 have gone into the limbo of forgotten things. At the end of the nineteenth century "Don Giovanni" seems to be still young and lusty. In fact it meets less prejudice in the popular and critical mind now than it did a hundred years ago. The revolution accomplished by Wagner has left it practically untouched, so far as appreciation of its beauties goes, and it is still a point of vantage from which to overlook the historical field in both directions. Only in Prague did it achieve instantaneous success; in Vienna "Tarare" won a greater triumph when first brought forward. But no work has kept pace with it in the admiration of the great ones in art. Under its influence Goethe wrote to Schiller that Mozart was the man to compose "Faust." Schiller, in a letter to the poet of "Faust," wrote that he had a certain confidence in the operatic form, a belief that through it tragedy might develop into a nobler form than that existing, as it had been developed out of the choruses in the ancient Bacchic festivals. Goethe answered: "You would have observed a realization in a high degree of the hopes touching the operatic form if you had recently seen 'Don Juan'; but this work is completely isolated, and all prospect of something else of its kind dashed by Mozart's death." Tradition says that

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Beethoven kept a transcript of the trombone parts in the second finale before him on his writing-desk as he did the Egyptian inscription. Shortly after Madame Viardot-Garcia acquired the autograph score of "Don Giovanni" Rossini called upon her and asked the privilege of inspecting it, adding, "I wish to bow the knee before this sacred relic." After poring over a few pages of the score, he placed his hand on Mozart's writing and said, solemnly: "He is the greatest—the master of them all—the only composer who had as much science as he had genius, and as much genius as he had science." On another occasion he said: "*Vous voulez connaître celui de mes ouvrages que j'aime le mieux; eh bien, c'est 'Don Giovanni!'*" Gounod celebrated the centenary of the opera by writing a commentary on the work, which he characterized in the preface of his book as an "unequaled and immortal masterpiece," the "apogee of the lyrical drama," a "wondrous example of truth, beauty of form, appropriateness of characterization, deep insight into the drama, purity of style, richness and restraint in instrumentation, charm and tenderness in the love passages, and power in pathos—in one word, this finished model of dramatic music," adding: "The score of 'Don Giovanni' has exercised the influence of a revelation upon the whole of my life; it has been and remains for me a kind of incarnation of dramatic and musical impeccability. I regard it as a work without blemish, of uninterrupted perfection, and this commentary is but the humble testimony of my veneration and gratitude for the genius to whom I owe the purest and most permanent joys of my life as a musician." In his "Autobiographical Sketch," Wagner confesses that as a lad he cared only for "Die Zauberflöte," and that "Don Giovanni" was distasteful to him on account of the Italian text, which seemed to him rubbish. But in "Opera and Drama," he says: "Is it possible to find anything more perfect than every piece in 'Don Juan'?" Also, "Oh, how doubly dear and above all honor is Mozart to me that it was not possible for him to invent music for 'Tito' like that of 'Don Giovanni,' for 'Così fan tutte' like that of 'Figaro'! How shamefully would it have desecrated music!" And again, "Where else has music won so infinitely rich an individuality, been able to characterize so surely, so definitely, and in such exuberant plenitude as here?"

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H. E. KREHBIEL.

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* The numbers marked with an asterisk were composed for the second representation of the opera.