



San Francisco Opera's Mozart's *DON GIOVANNI*

Curriculum Connections California Content Standards Kindergarten through Grade 12

SOCIAL STUDIES

PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

Self-Identity.

Family: Immediate & Extended. Caring brother and sister relationship.

Roles of family members in your life and the choices you make.

Time: Past, Present, Future.

Place: Neighborhood, City, State, Continent, World, Universe.

CIVICS

Social Hierarchy: Class, Status. Ex. royalty, servants. How is class indicated by the music, the costumes and other elements in *Don Giovanni*?

Types of Government: Monarchy.

Freemasons: Ritual and symbols.

Political events during Mozart's time.

Study Enlightenment hierarchy and etiquette. How would court parties be conducted? Where would Don Giovanni and Donna Anna have been sitting? What about Masetto?

Examine the need for revenge (vengeance) demonstrated by the characters in the opera; how does personal revenge relate to justice and the law?

GEOGRAPHY

The Opera's setting: Where is this place? What is this culture?

Map locations mentioned in the opera.

Location of Mozart's birth. Where else did he live?

Examine where you live; how does your environment represent your lifestyle or personality?

Draw a map of Austria during Mozart's time. Compare it to a current map of Austria.

Draw a map of Spain. Change the proportions so that you have to make it larger or smaller using scale.

Map the places mentioned in the opera.

Trace librettist Lorenzo da Ponte's travels. Draw a map showing the different places where he lived.

Trace Mozart's travels and draw a map of the different places where he lived.

Trace the travels of chocolate and coffee; where were they initially used?

Review the cast list for this production of the opera; where do the singers come from?

Map the locations where *Don Giovanni* has been performed. List the years in which the opera was performed.

Map the locations where Don Giovanni has wooed his conquests, or where chocolate and coffee come from. Use Google Maps.

HISTORY

Research when Mozart was born and the time period when Mozart lived. What are the differences and similarities between Mozart's Europe and Europe today?

Research the life of Lorenzo da Ponte.

Research the history of Sevilla.

Examine the power relationships in the opera.

Research tyrannical rulers throughout history.

During what time period is *Don Giovanni* set? What was the government of Spain at the time? Examine class system of Spain during *Don Giovanni*'s time.

The opera was written two years before the French Revolution. How do its ideas about power structures reflect the class conflict in Europe at the time? What was happening in America when the opera was written? What were the social structures in America at the time?

Create a Venn diagram: what was true about the time of *Don Giovanni*, what is true about our time, and what overlaps?

Research the story of *Don Giovanni*; was the story based on a real character?

What kind of social background or class did *Don Giovanni* come from? How does it affect his actions in the opera? How does his class affect how the other characters treat him? Examine particularly his relationship with Leporello and Zerlina and Masetto.

What was the code of courtly behavior that *Don Giovanni* was expected to abide by? How does he transgress it?

The history of "oaths" and how they are and were used in social and legal contracts. (*Don Giovanni* takes a solemn oath to prove he is not lying to Donna Elvira)

The history and social significance of betrothal versus the more modern idea of engagement.

What is the relationship between Leporello and Donna Elvira? How does this relationship change when Leporello dresses up as *Don Giovanni*?

Examine *Don Giovanni* through the lens of the Enlightenment. Is he a symbol of liberty or social disruption?

What was the concept of heaven and hell at the time of the opera? Where were heaven and hell located?

What kind of weapons would they have had in *Don Giovanni*'s time? Where did they get gunpowder? What is it made of? How does it work?

What kind of people would have access to chocolate and coffee during the time of *Don Giovanni*?

How does clothing indicate what culture, what status you belong to?

What are the class relationships in your school? How do you address different people in the hierarchy based on their relationship to you?

*Examples: Applying the History-Social Science Standards to Mozart's *DON GIOVANNI*

GRADE 2

People Who Make a Difference

- 2.1 Students differentiate between things that happened long ago and things that happened yesterday.

Lesson: Watch all or part of a DVD of *Don Giovanni*. Ask the students to make a Venn diagram labeling one circle as “then”, one as “now” and the intersection of the two circles as, “both then and now”. Ask them to provide examples of things they saw in the opera that could be put in one of those three areas of the diagram.

- 2.2 Students demonstrate map skills by describing the absolute and relative locations of people, places, and environments.

Watch the DVD of *Don Giovanni*, focusing on Leporello's Catalog Aria.

Lessons: Get out a map of Europe and ask students to find a mark the country in which *Don Giovanni* takes place (Spain) and the countries represented on Leporello's list.

Social structures and class relations

- Don Giovanni was a count; study different classes of royalty. Examine class system during Mozart's time.
- Discuss the class structure depicted in *Don Giovanni*. What was nobility expected to do and how did they behave in the opera? Zerlina is left with Don Giovanni because he is a “gentleman,” which implies a code of conduct that offers her protection. In contrast, is Don Ottavio's behavior a more standard example? Examine Masetto and Leporello's actions (at the end of the opera) in regards to the expected behavior of a nobleman.
- Explore the class relationships in your school. How do you address different people in the hierarchy based on their relationship to you?
- How would servants like Leporello and Zerlina have been educated during that time?
- Do we have equivalents to Don Giovanni and Donna Elvira in America today? Why not?
- Learn about the currency used in the time of *Don Giovanni*. How did Don Giovanni make his money? Why does he treat everything around him as property?

The System and Laws

- Research feudal law. Research other systems of power in which a particular class has control over another because of birth or wealth.
- What were the criminal laws at the time? How would Don Giovanni have been punished if he had been caught?

Women in *Don Giovanni*

- Based on the opera, what do you think the status of women was during Mozart's time? Research the roles for women in Mozart's time.
- What was status of women in Spain during the time of the opera?
- Explore the power relationship between Don Giovanni and Donna Elvira, Donna Anna and Zerlina? What are the rules of their relationships and how are they broken in the opera?
- What were ideals of beauty during Mozart's time, for both men and women? What would have clothes looked like for upper and lower classes?
- Compare and contrast wedding traditions. Do dowries still exist? If so, where?

History of Opera

- How Opera began, history of San Francisco Opera, history of the Adler Fellow Program.

ACTIVITIES

Assign different topics from the time of the opera to small groups, and have the students present to each other: money and trade, social structures, government of Spain, military, the arts, etc.

Map settings in which play and opera take place.

How do people win in this opera? What do they think they have gained when they win? What is their own personal concept of winning? Create a board game or card game that would have been typical of the era involving the characters from *Don Giovanni*.

Pick another time period in which to set *Don Giovanni*. Research and design costumes and sets to reflect trends, society at that time.

Write a letter from one character to another using the writing materials used at the time of *Don Giovanni*

Create timelines of events in opera; Mozart's operas.

Create an organizational chart of the character relationships in *Don Giovanni*.

Researching the backstory or the story that comes after *Don Giovanni*.

Research the development and reception of *Don Giovanni*, the play and the opera.

Why would an artist be commissioned to write an opera? How do new operas get made today?

Research the history of the mask; when was it developed, how was it used in the opera, and how is it used today? Mask as an equalizer. You can also create masks.