

I, DON GIOVANNI

A film by
CARLOS SAURA

Rating: M
Running time: 120 minutes

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Cast

Lorenzo Balducci	<i>Lorenzo da Ponte</i>
Lino Guanciale	<i>Mozart</i>
Emilia Verginelli	<i>Annetta</i>
Tobias Moretti	<i>Casanova</i>
Ennio Fantastichini	<i>Salieri</i>
Ketevan Kemolidze	<i>Adriana Ferrarese/Donna Elvira</i>
Sergio Foresti	<i>Leporello</i>
Borja Quiza	<i>Don Giovanni</i>
Carlo Lepore	<i>Commendatore</i>
Francesca Inaudi	<i>Costanza</i>
Franco Interlenghi	<i>Padre di Annetta</i>
Cristina Giannelli	<i>Catarina Cavalieri</i>

IO, DON GIOVANNI

Crew

Director	Carlos Saura
Cinematography	Vittorio Storaro
Writer	Raffaello Uboldi
Screenplay	Carlos Saura Raffaello Uboldi Alessandro Vallini
Set Design	Paola Bizzarri Luis Ramirez
Costume Design	Marina Roberti Birgitt Hutter
Film Editing	Julia Juaniz
Music Coordinator	Nicola Tescari
Sound	Stefano Savino
Sound Editing	Silvia Moraes
Visual Effects	Fabrizio Storaro
Make up Designer	Vittorio Sodano Jose Antonio Sanchez
Hair Designer	Aldo Signoretti Paquita Nunez
Production Director	Gian Luca Chiaretti
Executive Producer	Gianluca Arcopinto
Producers	Andrea Occhipinti Andres Vicente Gomez Igor Uboldi

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Venice, 1763. Writer Lorenzo da Ponte is leading a very cavalier life. Originally a priest, his numerous affairs result in him being sent into exile in Vienna.

Supported by his friend and mentor Giacomo Casanova, da Ponte is introduced in Vienna to the King's favourite composer, Salieri, and a newcomer named Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Seeing an opportunity to undermine his rival's ascension, Salieri tricks Mozart into hiring this unknown libertine as his librettist.

But da Ponte's own nature and sentimental wanderings in Vienna only inspire the composer, and lead to one of Mozart's most bold and powerful compositions: *Don Giovanni*.

SYNOPSIS

Venice, 1763. In a church crowded with worshippers and onlookers, a baptism is about to take place. A bishop presides at the ceremony.

Giacomo Casanova, sitting in the crowd, observes the baptism of four Jews with a disapproving look. Among them, there is a young man, Emanuele Conegliano. The boy is not sure that he wants to be welcomed into "the lap of our Holy Mother the Church", but the bishop, noticing the young man's interest in the text of Dante's *Divine Comedy* found in the sacristy, convinces him to accept, promising him full access to the whole library. Once he has been baptized, the young man becomes Lorenzo Da Ponte...

Lorenzo is ordained as a priest but his friendship with Casanova means that he does not give up his libertine ways. He frequents women and prostitutes, but, above all, he uses his talent as a poet to write and distribute texts attacking the Church and the power of the Inquisition.

After an evening in a gambling club with an old gambler, Lorenzo meets Annetta, the old man's daughter, and falls madly in love with her. Lorenzo swears to take care of Annetta and protect her but, as soon as he has made this promise, he comes back down to earth and flees, overcome by a sense of guilt.

Arrested on the charge of belonging to a Masonic society and of acting against the will of the Church, the Holy Inquisition sentences Lorenzo to fifteen years in exile.

Having sought refuge in Vienna, a much more open-minded city, Lorenzo meets the two best singers in Vienna, Ferrarese and Cavalieri, the maestro Salieri and the Emperor Joseph II who, displaying immediate affection for the libertine priest, asks him to write the libretto for Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro".

Lorenzo's first work is a success. The theatre is packed, everyone applauds him. In the crowd attending the performance, we find Annetta.

The years pass. Lorenzo and his mistress, the singer Ferrarese, travel to the Castle of Dux, and meet Casanova who urges Lorenzo to work with Mozart again, advising him to produce a new version of *Don Giovanni*.

This marks the start of a new, extremely close collaboration with the maestro. For Lorenzo and Mozart, the rehearsals are a moment of intense creativity... And, during the rehearsals, Lorenzo reunites with Annetta, now Mozart's pupil. Love blooms between the two of them again but it is now too late for Annetta: she is already betrothed.

Lorenzo leaves Ferrarese to devote himself entirely to winning back Annetta... And the image of *Don Giovanni* changes: he is no longer like Casanova, a libertine in love with freedom and passion, but much more like Lorenzo, a man who, after a life of depravity, finds his true love and marries her.

The two lovers end up forgiving each other but a letter arrives at a crucial moment. It's a list that Casanova has given to Ferrarese of all the women that Lorenzo has had in his life. Feeling betrayed, Annetta throws Lorenzo out of her home and out of her life.

The relationship between Mozart and Lorenzo becomes even closer, with each one becoming vital for the other: Lorenzo supports Mozart, whose health worsens following his father's death; Mozart supports Lorenzo in his difficult attempts to win back Annetta. During the rehearsals, the love of Don Giovanni and Zerlina mingles with and takes precedence over that of Lorenzo and Annetta.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Carlos Saura

Born into a family of artists (his mother was a pianist and his brother, Antonio Saura, a painter), he developed his artistic sense in childhood by doing photography. He obtained his directing diploma in Madrid in 1957 at the Institute of Cinema Research and Studies, where he also taught until 1963.

In 1957-1958, he created his first film (*Cuenca*). In 1956, his style, both lyrical and documentary, centred on the problems of the poor, received the recognition of the international community at the Berlin Film Festival, where he received the Silver Bear for his film *La caza*. In 1967, his film *Peppermint Frappé* also received a prize at Berlin.

The movies *La prima Angélica* (*Cousin Angélica*) of 1973 and *Cría cuervos* (*Raising Ravens* [from the Spanish phrase: *cría cuervos y te sacaran los ojos* (raise ravens and they will peck out your eyes)]) of 1975 received the special prize of the jury at the Cannes Film Festival. His movie "Mama cumple 100 años" (*Mom is celebrating her 100 years*) was nominated at the Oscars, for the best foreign film in 1979.

Saura has become known for making movies centered around traditional Latin dance. His "Flamenco Trilogy" of the 1980s includes *Bodas de Sangre*, *Carmen*, and *El amor brujo*, and he later made movies called *Flamenco*, *Tango* and *Fados*.

In 1990, he received the Goya Award for the best director and best script for *¡Ay, Carmela!*. He was chosen as director for the official film of the 1992 Olympic Games of Barcelona, "Marathon" (1993).

DON GIOVANNI

Don Giovanni is an opera in two acts with music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and with Italian libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte. It was premiered in the Estates Theatre in Prague on October 29, 1787. Da Ponte's libretto was billed like many of its time as *dramma giocoso*, a term that denotes a mixing of serious and comic action. Mozart entered the work into his catalogue as an "opera buffa". Although often classified as comic, it is a unique blend of comic (buffa) and drama (seria). The opera blends comedy, melodrama and supernatural elements.

The principal characters of the opera are:

- **Don Giovanni:** young cavalier in continuous search of loving adventures
- **Leporello:** Don Giovanni's servant
- **Commendatore:** The Lord of Seville, Donna Anna's father.
- **Donna Anna:** daughter of the *Commendatore* and bride-to-be of Don Ottavio.
- **Don Ottavio:** promised husband of Donna Anna.
- **Donna Elvira:** noble dame of Burgos, seduced and abandoned by Don Giovanni.
- **Zerlina:** farmer courted by Don Giovanni
- **Masetto:** promised husband of Zerlina

ACT 1

Don Giovanni spends his life seducing women, so much that Leporello, his servant, always in unstable balance between irony, insolence and subjugation towards his master notes in his diary an update list of his conquests.

Don Giovanni kills the Commander in a duel, after having tried to seduce his daughter Donna Anna. Mr. Ottavio, promised husband of Donna Anna, promises her revenge.

Embarked on new conquests, Don Giovanni comes upon Donna Elvira, realizing too late that he may have already seduced and abandoned her in the past. At this, he shoves Leporello forward, ordering him to tell Elvira the truth, and then hurries away.

Shortly after, a group of farmers intend to celebrate the wedding of Zerlina and Masetto. Giovanni launches himself to the conquest of the young bride but when Zerlina is about to surrender his flatteries, Donna Elvira arrives and thwarts the seduction. Followed shortly by Ottavio and Anna who are plotting vengeance on the still unknown murderer of Anna's father, when they run into Giovanni. Anna, unaware that she is speaking to her attacker, pleads for his help.

On the suggestion of Don Giovanni, Leporello organizes a party for the two bridegrooms. All the characters meet again to the party but Donna Anna, Donna Elvira and Don Ottavio are masked. After having again tried to seduce the young bride, Don Giovanni runs away with Leporello.

ACT 2

Don Giovanni and Leporello exchange suits, so that Leporello can distract Donna Elvira and Don Giovanni devote himself with impunity to the young maid.

Everybody is looking for Don Giovanni: Masetto with a group of farmers to avenge Zerlina, Donna Anna with Don Ottavio to avenge the Commander, Donna Elvira to implore him to redeem himself. After a series of misunderstandings, the roles are reestablished.

Sheltered in the cemetery, Don Giovanni comes upon the funeral statue of the Commander and, daredevil, he invites the ghost of the Commander for supper.

In Don Giovanni's palace everything is ready for supper. In front of the statue of the Commander, Don Giovanni refuses to repent and redeem himself therefore he is dragged by the demons to hell. Justice is done: the heart of Donna Anna is still too shaken for the wedding, Masetto and Zerlina go for dinner with friends, Donna Elvira withdraws him in the convent, Leporello goes in search of a better master.

INTERVIEW WITH NICOLA TESCARI (Music Coordinator)

THE FILM AS A MUSICAL PROJECT

For this project, it was necessary to consider how we could reproduce as faithfully as possible the sound of the orchestra and cast at the time of the rehearsals and first performance of *Don Giovanni* in Prague in 1787. In order to come up with a few ideas, in addition to the memoirs of Da Ponte, Mozart and around twenty learned essays, I called on the knowledge of a few musician and musicologist friends (Marco Postinghel, Giovanni Antonini, and Lorenzo Della Cha). Fortunately for us, it soon became apparent that not a great deal is known about the period of the opera's gestation. For example, no one knows for sure if Mozart tried out his arias (jotted down, often before the rehearsal itself) on the harpsichord or the piano, with or without the help of a string or a woodwind quintet.

THE ORCHESTRA

Therefore, I decided to conduct and record a few of the pieces that are performed during the rehearsals at the theatre (*"Scene I, act I"*, *"Ah chi mi dice mai"*, the *"Catalogo"* aria, *"Mi tradi quell'alma ingrata"*), with a group of varying size that goes from the simple basso continuo to the double quintet of the dress rehearsal. The harpsichord, played virtually by Mozart, performs the missing parts of the original orchestration. The tone of this reading should be that of an excitable first performance/reading of the work that would go on to become the milestone of modern melodrama. All with period instruments, tuned to 430Hz. For this first stage, we did the recording in the tiny gothic church of Madonna della Vittoria in Fabrica di Roma.

For the other extracts (*"Overture"*, *"La ci darem la mano"*, *Finale* and *"Voi che sapete che cos'è l'amor"* from *"The Marriage of Figaro"*) I used the Collegium Marianum of Prague, a baroque ensemble based in the very city where *"Don Giovanni"* had its first performance. I chose to conduct a fairly small group of ancient instruments (strings 6/5/4/3/1), the closest one possible to that of the first performance.

THE CAST

The initial challenge set by Carlos Saura was to have no "stand-ins". The singers would therefore have to play themselves in the film too, an undertaking that was far from easy for someone like Ketevan Kemoklidze, who would have to play the role of the Italian diva Adriana Ferrarese and perform numerous non-musical scenes.

And so, with the help of Cristiana Arcari (Cherubino in *"Voi che sapete che cos'è l'amor"*), we launched singing and performance auditions, looking for singers capable of embarking upon this difficult yet exciting adventure with us.

And so a wonderful cast came together: Borja Quiza is Don Giovanni, Sergio Foresti is Leporello, Ketevan Kemoklidze is Donna Elvira, Cristina Giannelli is Donna Anna, Alessandra Marianelli is Zerlina, and Carlo Lepore is Il Commendatore.

THE SET

After the recording, we moved on to the set, where, in addition to paying close attention to the plausibility of each musical scene, it was necessary to help Carlos to stage the opera from the point of view of a musician, carrying out my usual functions as a conductor with the cast and the orchestra. Always off screen though, since a talented new maestro was taking my place on film, Mozart/Lino Guanciale. The work with him was fascinating because, in just four weeks, he integrated the conductor's gestures to such an extent that he looked as if he had been doing it all his life.