

## Mozart and Opera

Opera seria: this more serious type was going out of style for late 18<sup>th</sup> century audiences

Opera buffa: this type dealt with everyday sentiments and situations, characters that were human and plausible.

Mozart was considered a master of opera.

- 1) great theatrical sense
- 2) genius for creating characters
- 3) master of melody and the ensemble finale

*The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan Tutte* are all written with Lorenzo da Ponte as librettist.

Traditional qualities of da Ponte's librettos:

- 1) use of stock characters – (wise chamber maid, lazy comical servant, crotchety old doctor)
- 2) lack of realism in the solution of dramatic conflicts (frequent use of mistaken identity)
- 3) individual characters are human, believably drawn – living people who are complicated and fascinating... they change their minds, they give in, they are sorry.

Mozart's musical devices:

Mozart said, "I would like an aria to fit a singer perfectly. Like a well-tailored suit."

Mozart is careful to distinguish musically between characters of differing social classes. (*Don Giovanni's* music will change to suit who he is courting)

Opera Buffa finale: customary to bring all characters back on stage – shows off the composer's skill at writing ensembles. By singing different music, each character preserves his/her identity.

Questions on Don Giovanni:

What style of opera is *Don Giovanni*?

Where was *Don Giovanni* premiered?