

PART VIII

REASON, REVOLUTION, ROMANTICISM: THE EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURIES

Chapter 26

The Classical Style in Music, the Development of Opera, and Mozart's *Don Giovanni*

I. Opera

1. Opera has a long continuous history that dates back to seventeenth-century Florence.
2. An intellectual circle known as the *Camerata* developed opera while attempting to understand Greek drama and the power music held to sway the emotions of the ancient Greeks.
3. The first masterpiece in this genre is Claudio Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* (1607).
4. The growth of opera took place throughout Europe.
5. An opera is defined as a drama that is sung throughout and presented on stage with scenery and action.
6. Handel and Mozart were both renowned composers of opera.

II. The Don Juan Theme

1. Spain's Tirso de Molina's *The Trickster of Seville* inspired many imitators, notably in the Italian *commedia dell'arte*.
2. He next appears in Molière's *Don Juan* (1665).
3. Mozart collaborated with the librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte on the opera *Don Giovanni: The Rake Punished*.
4. Da Ponte combined the vitality and passion of Tirso's with the wit and scheming intelligence of Molière's.
5. In *Don Giovanni*, Mozart shows his ability to assume the personality and state of mind of his principal character and his genius to create music suitable to each.