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NEWS RELEASE

FIRST TUESDAY DISCUSSION AT UD TO EXPLORE CHARACTER OF MOZART'S DON GIOVANNI

DAYTON, Ohio — Is he a villain or a hero? A sinner or simply a lost soul?

Interpreting the character of Mozart's infamous Don Giovanni depends on interpreting the context of the opera itself, and even that may lead only to ambiguity, says Alan Kimbrough, professor of English and assistant director of the honors and scholars program at the University of Dayton. But Kimbrough intends to have some fun exploring the possibilities in "Mozart's View of Don Giovanni: Rake as Rebel or Seducer as Sinner?" — the first in the 2000-2001 "First Tuesday" lecture series at UD.

The discussion will be at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 3, in UD's Sears Recital Hall in the Jesse Philips Humanities Center. The series, which is free and open to the public and held on the first Tuesday of each month during its season, is designed to complement and promote local arts events. Kimbrough's lecture will correspond with the Dayton Opera Association's production of *Don Giovanni*, opening Oct. 21 at Memorial Hall.

"If we view the opera in the context of the traditional, or ironic, comedy, we have to decide if Don Giovanni is the hero or the villain," Kimbrough said. "If we see it in the context of Enlightenment revolution against superstition, then Giovanni is clearly a hero. There is also the context of the traditional religious orthodoxy, in which case he is a damned, unrepentant sinner.

"The last and clearly the most important context, of course, is the musical one," Kimbrough added. "But there may indeed be several others leading to very different — even quite opposed — archetypes for Don Giovanni.

"I hope the audience will come away with a heightened understanding of how we are being asked to see and respond to Giovanni at various points in the opera, but there remains the

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very real possibility that the opera will leave us with so many unresolved ambiguities that our final response must be marked by considerable ambivalence as well. Only when a particular director takes the liberty of resolving those ambiguities through his directoral decisions are we exposed to a more single-minded assessment of Giovanni."

No matter what final assessment, if any, may come of Mozart's musical portrait of the dissolute nobleman, Kimbrough advocates the First Tuesday discussion as a fun and thought-provoking exploration that will heighten the opera experience for audience members.

All First Tuesday sessions begin at 7:30 p.m. in Sears Recital Hall. Other lectures in the 2000-2001 series are:

- Nov. 7 — "Bach's Passion According to St. Matthew," presented by Richard Benedum, professor of music at UD, in conjunction with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra performance of the *St. Matthew Passion*.
- Feb. 6 — "One Woman's Journey to Her Bountiful Home," presented by Marsha Hanna, artistic director of the Human Race Theatre, in conjunction with the theater company's presentation of *A Trip to Bountiful*.
- March 6 — "Handel's *Messiah* Over 258 Years," presented by Thomas Dozeman, professor of Old Testament at United Theological Seminary, in conjunction with the Dayton Bach Society's performance of the *Messiah*.
- April 3 — "The Arts: Quo Vadis in the Twenty-First Century?" A panel of arts scholars representing several disciplines will discuss the future directions and developments in his or her field.

For information about the series, call the UD music department office at (937) 229-3936.

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For media interviews, call Alan Kimbrough at (937) 229-4615.