



Lyric
Unlimited
 LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO
 2016/17

**BACK-
 STAGE
 PASS!**

The Magic Flute

By Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart



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The Magic Flute (Die Zauberflöte)

Opera in two acts, sung in German with projected English titles

by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder

Premiered September 30, 1791, Theater auf der Wieden, Vienna

THE CHARACTERS (in order of vocal appearance)

Tamino, a princeTenor
Three Ladies, attendants to the Queen of the Night
Soprano, Mezzo-soprano, Contralto
Papageno, a birdcatcher Baritone
The Queen of the NightSoprano
Monostatos, servant of SarastroTenor
Pamina, daughter of the Queen of the NightSoprano
Three Boys, spirit guidesTrebles
Sarastro, lord of the realm of light Bass
Speaker for Sarastro's orderBass-Baritone
Two Priests of Sarastro's orderTenor, Baritone
Papagena, Papageno's intendedSoprano
Two Men in Armor, guardians of the final trialsTenor, Bass
Slaves, priests, Sarastro's entourage

SETTING

Lyric's production is set in a 1960s Chicago suburban home

ACT I

The Queen of the Night sends a serpent to pursue Prince Tamino, who faints. The serpent is killed by the queen's three ladies-in-waiting. After admiring the handsome prince, they leave to report to their mistress.

Once awake, Tamino assumes that an extraordinary power saved him. He meets Papageno, the queen's birdcatcher (*Aria: Der Vogelfänger*), who boasts that he strangled the serpent. Overhearing this, the ladies seal his lips with a padlock. They give Tamino a portrait of the queen's daughter, Pamina, who has been abducted by Sarastro. Tamino is enraptured by the portrait (*Aria: Dies Bildnis*) and the queen tells Tamino that Pamina will be the prince's reward if he rescues her.

The ladies unlock Papageno's mouth and inform him that he is to be Tamino's traveling companion. Each man receives protection: a magic flute for Tamino, magic bells for Papageno. The Three Boys appear to guide them to Sarastro's realm.

Sarastro's loathsome overseer, Monostatos, is menacing Pamina when he is surprised by Papageno. After the terrified Monostatos flees, the birdcatcher reveals to Pamina that she is loved by a prince. She sympathizes with Papageno, who longs for a sweetheart.

Having followed the Three Boys, Tamino approaches the portals of Sarastro's temples. When he approaches the Temple of Wisdom, a dignified priest emerges. He informs Tamino that Sarastro rules here. Remembering the queen's distress, Tamino is appalled, but the priest reprimands him for taking a woman's words to heart. Left in darkness, the apprehensive Tamino is overwhelmed with joy when voices announce that Pamina is alive. Hearing Papageno's pipe in the distance, Tamino rushes off to search for him and Pamina.

Monostatos is about to capture Papageno and Pamina when the birdcatcher plays his bells, at which the overseer and his followers dance away. Sarastro then arrives, Pamina confesses that she wished to escape because Monostatos demanded her love. Sarastro says gently that he will neither punish her nor free her. Monostatos drags in Tamino. When he asks for a reward, Sarastro orders that he receive seventy-seven lashes instead. After relinquishing the flute and bells, Tamino and Papageno are led to the Initiation Temple.

ACT II

The priests agree that Tamino may undertake the trials for admission to their brotherhood. Sarastro explains that the gods have chosen Pamina for Tamino; this is why Sarastro has abducted her from her mother, whom he considers dangerous. Sarastro instructs Pamina to bid her beloved farewell before his trials begin. The priests pray with Sarastro (*Aria with Chorus: O Isis und Osiris*).

The prince vows to conquer all obstacles to win Pamina. Papageno is uninterested in the trials until he hears that Sarastro has chosen a bride for him named Papagena. Both men are ordered to remain silent. Papageno finds this difficult when the queen's ladies appear. Steadfast Tamino and unhappy Papageno are led to their next trial.

Monostatos is about to kiss the sleeping Pamina when he is stopped by the queen. Giving her daughter a dagger, she commands that Pamina slay Sarastro (*Aria: Der Hölle Rache*). Monostatos again threatens Pamina, but this time Sarastro intervenes and comforts her.

Papageno forgets his vow of silence when an old woman arrives to keep him company. The Three Boys return the flute and bells. Tamino plays his flute, and its sound immediately brings Pamina. When he refuses to speak to her, she is heartbroken (*Aria: Ach, ich fühl's*).

After trumpets call the prince and the birdcatcher to the next trial, the priests praise Tamino and inform Papageno he will not be admitted to the brotherhood. He couldn't care less – all he wants is good wine and company. The old woman appears again and warns him that he will be locked up forever if he does not marry her. Once he agrees, she turns into lovely Papagena! When Papageno tries to embrace her, the priests drag her away.

Pamina attempts suicide, but the Three Boys stop her and assure her of Tamino's love. Ecstatic to be joined by Pamina, the prince successfully negotiates the final trials and voices are heard welcoming the couple to the temple.

Papageno is about to kill himself when the Three Boys advise him to play the bells. When he does so, Papagena miraculously appears. The queen and her cohorts attempt to storm the temple, but are defeated. Sarastro proclaims the sun's victory over darkness. As the priests offer thanks to Isis and Osiris (*Chorus: Heil sei euch Geweihten!*), Tamino and Pamina receive the laurels of wisdom.



Papageno costume sketch by Dale Ferguson

Mozart's Musical Game of Thrones

By David Buch

Although *The Magic Flute* is a rich and multifaceted opera, it is a simple fairy tale at its core. That tale concerns the difficult struggle of a young prince and princess in attaining the throne of leadership. The magic of music helps them reach their goal.

We owe much of the opera's charm to Emanuel Schikaneder, the librettist, impresario, and singing actor who was the first Papageno. All of Schikaneder's librettos offered an abundance of opportunities for fresh and engaging music to please the Viennese audience, which included connoisseurs such as Mozart himself.

Schikaneder created fantasy operas using stories from German fairy tales. He inserted comic scenes for the character that he himself would be playing in the production—typically a simple but good-hearted trickster. The royal protagonists of his stories, meanwhile, have to figure out who is bad and who is good. That recognition happens later in the story as the questions and problems of the early part of the story are resolved through surprise developments or revelations.

The plot unfolds like a musical variety show of sorts, with heroic, comic, and ceremonial styles blended in just the right proportion. Funny or ironic passages contrast with moments of lyrical beauty. There are numbers that have a folksy cheerfulness to them with melodies styled after the popular music of the day. These pieces have an innocent, playful quality found in children's songs of Mozart's time.

The music is also full of lively dance rhythms of Mozart's time. Some are from the formal dance styles of the nobility, used in connection with the noble characters and ideas. Others are simple and cheerful, suggesting more casual circumstances and characters. There are also more serious styles of music, like the fast, virtuoso lines for the evil Queen of the Night; the moving, poignant music for the royal lovers Pamina and Tamino; and dramatic orchestral interludes. Mozart wrote for the orchestra in unique ways, emphasizing instruments that heighten the dramatic and supernatural



The Three Boys costume sketch by Dale Ferguson

aspects of the story. He gave special attention to the low strings, trombones, and basset horns (a deep, mellow-sounding instrument related to the clarinet—rarely heard today).

All these elements contribute to a non-stop, entertaining experience of pure fantasy and otherworldly charm and beauty.

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A New Flute: About Lyric's Production

By David Buch

At the heart of *The Magic Flute* is a fairy tale, a magical story appealing to the imagination of childhood. In this new production, conceived and directed by the Australian Neil Armfield, the fairy tale is placed right at the center, but it has a new twist.

It is set in the early 1960s, and in a Chicago suburb, mostly populated by German-speaking immigrants, a precocious fourteen-year-old boy hits on the idea of a domestic performance of their favorite opera, Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. He engages two of his friends (they become the Three Boys in the production) and various members of the German-speaking community, several with musical training and proficiency learned in their native Austria and Germany.

The setting is a typical suburban house and yard of middle-century America. The children create the props and costumes from household items, partly inspired by images from the Disney films of the time. Their inventiveness and imaginations prove up to the task, as common articles like cans and cardboard boxes serve as the material to create the theatrical devices required by the fantastic libretto.

The result is an intimate performance that becomes a transcendent and ennobling experience for this small community of émigrés. Through the love of music, the delight in theater, and the innocence of childhood, they renew their trust in the nobility of human beings moving beyond the impulse for revenge and domination over others. The imagination of children is the strong frame that allows the details and the magic events to have context.

The adult characters observe the events in the opera's plot and the details of the production simultaneously, just as we, the audience, do when we experience the theatrical event before us, renewing our own sense of community in a larger public venue – Chicago's Civic Opera House.



Sarastro's entrance in Act 1 design by Dale Ferguson

The Magic Flute

A Selected Cultural and Historical Timeline

By Maia Morgan



Benjamin Franklin invents the lightning rod.

1751



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart born January 27, in Salzburg, Austria.

1756

Jean-Jacques Rousseau publishes *The Social Contract*, one of the most famous books to emerge from the Enlightenment. It begins with the provocative line: "Man is born free, but today he is everywhere in chains."

Mozart performs at the Imperial Court in Vienna at age 6.

1762

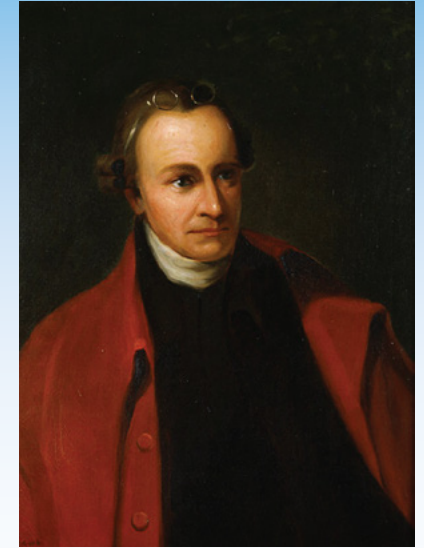


The Mason-Dixon line drawn.

1763

The Magic Flute

A Selected Cultural and Historical Timeline



Eight-year-old Mozart writes his first symphony.

1764

Ten-year-old Mozart writes his first opera.

1766

On May 16, Marie Antoinette, the fourteen-year-old daughter of Empress Maria Theresa of Austria (upon whom some say the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* is modeled) marries fifteen-year-old Louis-Auguste, the future King Louis XVI of France.

1770

On March 23, Patrick Henry gives his "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death" speech to the Virginia Convention.

On April 19, the Battles of Lexington and Concord begin the American Revolution.

1775

The Declaration of Independence is approved July 4 by the Continental Congress.

1776

The Magic Flute

A Selected Cultural and Historical Timeline



The last witch burning in Europe occurs in Switzerland when a woman named Anna Göldi is accused of practicing witchcraft. (In 2008, the Swiss government pronounced her a victim of “judicial murder.”)



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Joseph II, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Austria, abolishes serfdom and passes an edict of religious tolerance.

Mozart breaks with his employer, the Archbishop of Salzburg and has to teach lessons to make ends meet.

Los Angeles is founded under the name El Pueblo de Nuestra Senora La Reina de los Angeles de Rio de Porciuncula by a group of Spanish settlers.

Against his father's wishes, Mozart marries Constanze Weber on August 4. They will have six children; only two sons survive to adulthood.

First successful hot-air balloon flight takes place at Versailles.

The opera house La Scala opens in Milan, Italy.

Mozart's mother dies in Paris while accompanying him on a tour of Europe.

Treaty of Paris ends the American Revolution.

1778

1781

1782

1783

The Magic Flute

A Selected Cultural and Historical Timeline



Mozart's opera *The Marriage of Figaro* premieres in Vienna.

The Theater auf der Wieden opens in Vienna. In its 14-year existence, it will house the premieres of over 350 theatrical works.

George Washington is elected president of the United States with all 69 votes of the Electoral College; takes oath of office in New York City.

On May 5, The French Revolution begins with the storming of the Bastille.

On September 30, *The Magic Flute* (Die Zauberflöte), premieres in Vienna.

On December 4, the first issue of *The Observer*, the world's first Sunday newspaper, is published.

On December 5, Mozart dies in Vienna.

On December 15, the United States Bill of Rights is ratified.

1786

1787

1789

1791