

General Notes about Mozart and his *Magic Flute* (1791 premiere)

Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

His Operas:

Apollo et Hyacinthus, K. 38 (1767)

Bastien und Bastionen, K. 50 [K.46b] (1768)

La finta semplice, K. 51 [K46a] (1769)

Il rè pastore, K. 208 (1775)

Idomeneo, rè di Creta K. 366 (1781)

The Abduction from the Harem, K. 384 (1782)

The Marriage of Figaro, K. 492 (1786)

Don Giovanni, K. 527 (1787)

Così fan tutte, K. 588 (1789)

The Magic Flute, K. 620 (1791)

Librettist: Emanuel Schikaneder (1751-1812), was an actor, singer, composer, and an impresario. He wrote the libretto for Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute*, and had a great career in the theatre. He was the first Papageno; the part was written for him. Mozart and Schikaneder were fellow masons.

The Magic Flute (Die Zauberflöte)

- REALLY SILLY (comedy) and DEEPLY SERIOUS (hero story)
- TALK and SINGING (Singspiel, like traditional American musical theater)
- FAIRY TALE and HERO QUEST/ALLEGORY

[fairy tale elements: magic, dragon, flute & bells, matching names, archetypal characters]

[hero journey elements: ideal young man, trials, gets girl - like Star Wars, Harry Potter, even with a comic sidekick!]

Premiere: 30 Sept 1791, about 2 months before Mozart died; the opera was immediately and forever popular

Language: Last time Utah Opera performed this opera, the singing in the "Singspiel" was the original German, and the spoken dialogue was English.

Setting: for Utah Opera's production, around 1800 (thus, an 'updating'), in some exotic land (Indiana Jones style) - like a Turkey that Napoleon would have wanted to invade. Set was originally built for Utah Opera's 1996 *Dreamkeepers*, set in Southern Utah (So. Utah transformed to exotic East). Idea of our 2005 *Magic Flute* director Thaddeus Strassberger.

Two Acts.

Theme: Hero quest/ journey from ignorance (dark night) to Enlightenment

Characters and Voices

Voices are types of musical instruments, like strings, flutes, trumpets, and drums. Their particular “sound” (or “timbre”) and range can be used by a composer as a method of characterization.

Mozart wrote streaming beautiful melodies for his characters, and the voices that sing Mozart best are described as “lyric.” They sail on melodies, sounding effortless, and Mozart’s orchestras are not huge the way they became for later composers like Puccini, Verdi, Wagner - so the voices for Mozart don’t have to be immense either.

Pamina	Lyric soprano
Tamino	Lyric tenor (hero)
Queen of the Night	Coloratura soprano
Sarastro, Priest of the Sun	Bass
Papageno, bird-catcher	Baritone (uncorrupted Natural Man)
Papagena	Soprano (sometimes lyric mezzo)
3 Ladies	soprano, soprano, mezzo
3 Spirits	2 boy sopranos, 1 boy alto
Various priests	tenor, baritone, bass
Monostatos	Character tenor (evil version of Natural Man)

Styles of Dialogue and Music used in *Magic Flute*

Spoken dialogue

Recitative (sung speech)

Not much in this opera - mostly spoken dialogue

See Queen of the Nights’ first aria, with movement in scene from spoken dialogue to recite to aria in 2 movements

Arias

Ensembles: duets, trios, quintet!

Chorus - both mixed chorus (SATB) and male chorus (priests)