

# PATHWAYS FOR UNDERSTANDING

*The Magic Flute* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart



The Met  
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Opera  
Guild

# ***The Magic Flute***

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## **PRODUCTION INFORMATION**

**Music:** Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

**Text (English):** Emanuel Schikaneder

**English Translation:** J.D. McClatchy

**World Premiere:** Vienna, Theater auf der Wieden  
Austria, September 30, 1791

**Final Dress Rehearsal Date:** Friday, December 13, 2013

*Note: the following times are approximate*

10:30am – 12:30pm

### **Cast:**

<b>Pamina</b>	Heidi Stober
<b>Queen of the Night</b>	Albina Shagimuratova
<b>Tamino</b>	Alek Shrader
<b>Papageno</b>	Nathan Gunn
<b>Speaker</b>	Shenyang
<b>Sarastro</b>	Eric Owens

### **Production Team:**

<b>Conductor</b>	Jane Glover
<b>Production</b>	Julie Taymor
<b>Set Designer</b>	George Tsypin
<b>Costume Designer</b>	Julie Taymor
<b>Lighting Designer</b>	Donald Holder
<b>Puppet Designers</b>	Julie Taymor and Michael Curry
<b>Choreographer</b>	Mark Dendy

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# An Introduction to *Pathways for Understanding Study Materials*

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The goal of *Pathways for Understanding* materials is to provide multiple “pathways” for learning about a specific opera as well as the operatic art form, and to allow teachers to create lessons that work best for their particular teaching style, subject area, and class of students.

## **Meet the Characters / The Story/ Resources**

Fostering familiarity with specific operas as well as the operatic art form, these sections describe characters and story, and provide historical context. Guiding questions are included to suggest connections to other subject areas, encourage higher-order thinking, and promote a broader understanding of the opera and its potential significance to other areas of learning.

## **Guided Listening**

The Guided Listening section highlights key musical moments from the opera and provides areas of focus for listening to each musical excerpt. Main topics and questions are introduced, giving teachers of all musical backgrounds (or none at all) the means to discuss the music of the opera with their students. A complimentary CD of the full opera, as well as the full libretto (with English translation), are provided as part of the Guided Listening resources and are sent via mail.

## **Guiding Questions / Discussion Points**

Guiding Questions or Discussion Points appear within several sections of these materials to spark discussion in your classroom and facilitate student exploration. Note that these questions are not intended to serve as “official” learning outcomes for the opera experience; rather, we hope that they act as a point of departure for prompting meaningful analysis and conversation amongst students. We are aware that teachers incorporate the study of opera into their classrooms in many ways and to address a variety of student outcomes, and we expect that individual teachers will adapt these materials to best serve their specific curriculum and instructional goals.

### **CD/Libretto Provided**

Mozart: *The Magic Flute*

Rebecca Evans, Elizabeth Vidal, Majella Cullagh, Sarah Fox, Diana Montague, Lesley Garrett, Barry Banks, Simon Keenlyside, and John Tomlinson

London Philharmonic Orchestra, Geoffrey Mitchell Choir  
Sir Charles Mackerras (Conductor)

## Meet the Characters

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Mozart was able to include a wide sampling of musical styles in *The Magic Flute*, thanks in no small part to Schikaneder's libretto which provided him with many colorful characters, each requiring a distinct voice. The vocal demands of the opera vary, from the easily managed Papageno to the stratospheric heights of fancy reached by the Queen of the Night. This is largely due to the fact that Mozart composed with specific singers in mind for the opera's premiere performance. Schikaneder, who originated the role of Papageno in addition to writing the libretto, was an ordinary comic actor, so Mozart kept his character's vocal lines relatively simple. On the other hand, Mozart's sister-in-law, the virtuosic *coloratura soprano* Josepha Hoffer, originated the role of the Queen of the Night, and Mozart created for her a part that guaranteed to wow the audience with its exceptional difficulty.

- Tamino** (tenor): An Javanese prince who is enlisted by the Queen of the Night to rescue her daughter, Pamina. He falls in love with a portrait of Pamina and uses his magic flute to triumph over obstacles.
- Papageno** (baritone): A bird catcher for the Queen of the Night, Papageno is a simple, jovial man who only desires food, drink, and a wife of his own. He joins Tamino in his quest to save Pamina.
- Pamina** (soprano): Daughter of the Queen of the Night. She is being held prisoner by the evil Monostatos. She falls in love with Prince Tamino.
- Queen of the Night** (*coloratura soprano*): Pamina's mother. The Queen asks Prince Tamino and Papageno to rescue her daughter. Her attendants give Tamino a magic flute and Papageno a magic glockenspiel to aid them in their quest.
- Sarastro** (bass): Priest of the Sun. He invites Tamino and Papageno to prove their worth through a series of tests; if they pass, they will be rewarded with brides.
- Monostatos** (tenor): A Moor who is Sarastro's servant and overseer at the temple. He has evil intentions towards Pamina.
- Papagena** (soprano): Papageno's bride.

## The Story of *The Magic Flute*: Synopsis

A mythical land between the sun and the moon. Three ladies in the service of the Queen of the Night save Prince Tamino from a serpent. When they leave to tell the queen, the birdcatcher Papageno appears ("I'm Papageno"). He boasts to Tamino that it was he who killed the creature. The ladies return to give Tamino a portrait of the queen's daughter, Pamina, who they say has been enslaved by the evil Sarastro. Tamino immediately falls in love with the girl's picture ("This portrait's beauty"). The queen, appearing in a burst of thunder, tells Tamino about the loss of her daughter and commands him to rescue her ("My fate is grief"). The ladies give a magic flute to Tamino and silver bells to Papageno to ensure their safety on the journey and appoint three spirits to guide them (Quintet: "Hm! hm! hm! hm!").

Sarastro's slave Monostatos pursues Pamina but is frightened away by Papageno. The birdcatcher tells Pamina that Tamino loves her and is on his way to save her. Led by the three spirits to the temple of Sarastro, Tamino learns from a high priest that it is the Queen, not Sarastro, who is evil. Hearing that Pamina is safe, Tamino charms the wild animals with his flute, then rushes off to follow the sound of Papageno's pipes. Monostatos and his men chase Papageno and Pamina but are left helpless when Papageno plays his magic bells. Sarastro enters in great ceremony. He punishes Monostatos and promises Pamina that he will eventually set her free. Pamina catches a glimpse of Tamino, who is led into the temple with Papageno.

Sarastro tells the priests that Tamino will undergo initiation rites ("O Isis and Osiris"). Monostatos tries to kiss the sleeping Pamina ("Men were born to be great lovers") but is surprised by the appearance of the Queen of the Night. The Queen gives her daughter a dagger and orders her to murder Sarastro ("Here in my heart, Hell's bitterness").

Sarastro finds the desperate Pamina and consoles her, explaining that he is not interested in vengeance ("Within our sacred temple"). Tamino and Papageno are told by a priest that they must remain silent and are not allowed to eat, a vow that

Papageno immediately breaks when he takes a glass of water from a flirtatious old lady. When he asks her name, the old lady vanishes. The three spirits appear to guide Tamino through the rest of his journey and to tell Papageno to be quiet. Tamino remains silent even when Pamina appears. Misunderstanding his vow for coldness, she is heartbroken (“Now my heart is filled with sadness”).

The priests inform Tamino that he has only two more trials to complete his initiation. Papageno, who has given up on entering the brotherhood, longs for a wife instead (“A cuddly wife or sweetheart”). He eventually settles for the old lady. When he promises to be faithful she turns into a beautiful young Papagena but immediately disappears. Pamina and Tamino are reunited and face the ordeals of water and fire together, protected by the magic flute.

Papageno tries to hang himself on a tree but is saved by the three spirits, who remind him that if he uses his magic bells he will find true happiness. When he plays the bells, Papagena appears and the two start making family plans (Duet: “Pa-pa-pa-pageno!”). The Queen of the Night, her three ladies, and Monostatos attack the temple but are defeated and banished. Sarastro blesses Pamina and Tamino as all join in hailing the triumph of courage, virtue, and wisdom.

THE METROPOLITAN OPERA

## The Story of *The Magic Flute*: Guiding Questions

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- The Queen of the Night is a more powerful being than Tamino, so why do you think she needs his help to reclaim Pamina?
- Can you think of examples in history or your own life when a powerful person or entity has required the help of somebody less “important”?
- The character of the Queen of the Night may have been modeled on the Austrian empress Maria Theresa, a devout Roman Catholic who rejected the idea of religious toleration. Within this historical context, who might the character of Tamino represent?
- At the beginning of Act II, why does Sarastro want Tamino and Papageno to be led through the Temple of Ordeal? What greater plan might he have in store for Tamino?
- What other religions or cultures feature purification rituals? What do these rituals involve? How are they similar or different to the trials that Tamino and Papageno must face?
- Do you think the Queen of the Night cares more about Pamina’s welfare or her own desire to wreak revenge on Sarastro?
- Do you think there’s a chance Pamina will obey her mother’s demands to murder Sarastro? Consider a time in your own life when someone you love or admire has asked you to do something that you feel is wrong.
- Why is Pamina so quick to interpret Tamino’s silence as coldness? Which events leading up to their encounter might have contributed to Pamina’s vulnerability?



## The Story of *The Magic Flute*: Guiding Questions (cont.)

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- In what ways is Pamina a strong character? In what ways is she weak? Can a strong woman also exhibit vulnerability? Who are some iconic women in contemporary culture or throughout history that have demonstrated this quality?
- Papageno provides comic relief to the telling of *The Magic Flute*. Why might Mozart and Schikaneder have considered this to be an important element? What kind of an audience were they writing for?
- What other forms of theatrical entertainment feature characters that are purely comedic? Where might this approach of juxtaposing dramatic and comedic characters have originated?
- What does Pamina and Tamino's decision to face the final ordeal together suggest about the dynamic of their relationship?
- Consider the age in which *The Magic Flute* was written. Is Pamina's acceptance as an Initiate into an all-male Priesthood extraordinary? What does this action suggest about her character in general?

## The History of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*

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*The Magic Flute* (or in its original German, *Die Zauberflöte*) is technically a *Singspiel* ("song play") instead of an opera because of its spoken dialogue. *Singspiels* were traditionally light, comic vernacular alternatives to the more serious – and more exclusive – Italian opera of the time. Keeping with their entertaining mission, many *Singspiels* traditionally featured "magic" instruments (like the flute and the glockenspiel) and whimsical characters (like Papageno). It was musical theater for the common people.

In March 1791, Mozart's old Salzburg acquaintance, the actor and impresario Emanuel Schikaneder, commissioned a *Singspiel* for his suburban Viennese venue, the *Freihaus-Theater auf der Wieden*. Both Mozart and Schikaneder were Freemasons, and while *The Magic Flute* can be enjoyed simply as a delightful fairytale (or "magic opera" as Schikaneder's liked to call it), its many references to the creators' secret fraternal brotherhood are unmistakable.

The very world of *The Magic Flute* is patterned after the Masonic conception of the universe. In the Masonic tradition, the universe is governed by two heavenly bodies: the sun and moon. This is translated quite literally into the characters of the opera, with Sarastro representing the sun, and his nemesis, the Queen of the Night, embodying the moon. In Mozart and Schikaneder's day, Freemasons were often under attack from the imperial household in Vienna and the Roman Catholic Church. One of the Masonry's most powerful enemies was the Austrian empress Maria Theresa, who suppressed the order in 1764 and may have been the model for the Queen of the Night. Sarastro, on the other hand, symbolizes the sovereign who rules according to the principals of *Enlightenment* philosophy: reason, wisdom, and nature. The character of Tamino may be based on Maria Theresa's son, the beloved Joseph II, who reversed his mother's policy and was a friend and supporter of the Masons.

The story of the opera portrays the education of mankind, progressing from chaos through religious superstition to rationalistic enlightenment, ultimately to make "the

Earth a heavenly kingdom, and mortals like gods.” The trials that Tamino must endure in order to attain enlightenment are much like the steps that an initiate must go through in order gain acceptance into a Masonic lodge: undergoing interrogation, then being tested by darkness, silence, and the four elements (fire, water, earth, and air).

The number three, which was important to the Masons, features prominently in *The Magic Flute*. There are the Three Ladies and the Three Boys, and Tamino (who learns the importance of the three qualities of virtue, discretion, and beneficence) must knock on three doors to enter three temples. In the score, the rituals of brotherhood are punctuated by a threefold chord that is heard three times, and the opera opens and closes in a key featuring three flats: E-flat major.

*The Magic Flute* premiered on September 30, 1791, with Schikaneder himself playing the part of Papageno. With over 200 performances given before 1800, the opera became popular all over Europe, and by the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a staple of the European repertory. Director-designer Julie Taymor’s abridged “family” production premiered at the Metropolitan Opera on December 29, 2006, with a newly crafted English libretto by the poet, librettist and translator, J.D. McClatchy.

# Guided Listening: "Overture"

CD 1, Track 1 | Libretto pg. 116

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The "Overture," is Mozart's introduction to the entire opera.

- How does the music in general make you feel? What sort of impression do you get from this piece about what is to come in the rest of the opera? What tone does it suggest to you? Serious? Playful? Mysterious? Romantic?
- Consider the opening section of the overture. What mood does it convey? Which instrument(s) in particular help to create this mood? Can you hear how Mozart has incorporated the number three into this section? How many initial chords are stated? By what interval does each chord ascend? How many accidentals does the opening key signature contain?
- An exhilarating chatter breaks out in the violins and makes its way around the whole orchestra. How many times do you hear the violin theme reiterated in different instruments? What happens to the volume as this theme spreads? As the volume changes, does the mood change also?
- There is a brief duet between two woodwind instruments. Can you identify these two instruments? Why might Mozart have chosen them specifically? What qualities do they have in common? Do they remind you of particular characters from the opera?
- What adjectives would you use to describe the final few bars of the overture? When the timpani (pitched drums) enter, what images come to mind? How do you think the whole opera might end: tragically or triumphantly?

## Guided Listening: "I'm sure that there could never be"

CD 1, Track 3 | Libretto pg. 117-118

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**Tamino sees a stranger in a bird costume in the distance. We come to find out it is Papageno, and he introduces himself to us.**

- This aria features an ascending five-note motif that is played multiple times on the panpipe. Why might Papageno be associated with a panpipe? How might it help him in his profession as a birdcatcher? Who do you suspect would really play the panpipe in a production of *The Magic Flute*: the singer portraying Papageno or one of the musicians in the orchestra?
- Would you describe this song as unpredictable or repetitive? Why might Mozart have composed such a simple song for Papageno? Does the singer portraying Papageno perform every verse the same? What techniques does he use to bring out the nuances of the libretto?
- Do the pitches of Papageno's melody move in more of a 'step' or 'leaping' motion? Perhaps try tracing the melody with your finger or a pen and paper: do the notes go up and down a lot or a little? What does this tell you about Papageno's personality?

## Guided Listening: "Such loveliness beyond compare"

CD 1, Track 4 | Libretto pg. 119

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**Tamino examines a beautiful portrait of Pamina and falls instantly in love with her.**

- How would you describe the shape of Tamino's melodic lines? Are they mostly long or short? Smooth (*legato*) or bumpy (*staccato*)? What emotions does Tamino's melody convey? Would you interpret it differently if there were no words?
- What are some words that are emphasized through their musical setting? Which words are sung on multiple pitches? Held for a longer period of time? Sung on a particularly high note? Do you perceive these words to be important to the aria?
- The middle section of the aria picks up in pace. How does Mozart achieve a sense of movement in this section? How does the shift in tempo alter the mood of the aria? Is there a reason Tamino might be singing faster?
- How would you describe the accompaniment in general? Is it simple or complex? Light or heavy? Do you think the accompaniment illustrates the beauty of Pamina's portrait, the emotions Tamino is experiencing, or both? What else might it be illustrating?

## Guided Listening: "Don't be afraid, now hear my song"

CD 1, Track 5 | Libretto pg. 120

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The Queen of the Night appears and pours out her anguish to Tamino. She tells him to rescue Pamina.

- This aria begins with quite a long instrumental introduction. What do you imagine is happening onstage during this introduction? How does Mozart build musical intensity throughout this section? How would you describe the changes volume, instrumental range and orchestration? How might Tamino feel when he first sees the Queen of the Night?
- When the Queen of the Night turns her focus to Tamino as Pamina's defender, how does the music change? What kind of a feeling is created by the dotted rhythms and churning chords in the instrumental accompaniment? How does the melody differ in this section? Does it alter your perception of the Queen of the Night?
- The aria ends with a virtuosic display of stratospheric *coloratura* singing. How would you describe the tone color produced by this vocal technique? If you were to literally assign a color, what color might that be? Does the use of *coloratura* singing make the Queen of the Night seem more human or immortal? Genuine or conniving? Victimized or vengeful? Vulnerable or powerful? Impassioned or embittered?

## Guided Listening:

“The wrath of hell is burning in my bosom”

CD 2, Track 7 | Libretto pg. 135

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In this vengeful aria, the Queen of the Night threatens to disown Pamina if she does not kill Sarastro.

- Consider the melodic phrases sung by the Queen of the Night before she reaches her *coloratura* section. What is the general contour of each phrase: ascending or descending? Think about the inflection of your own voice when you are speaking furiously to someone. Do your sentences tend to rise or fall?
- The *coloratura* section of this aria differs from that of “Don’t be afraid, now hear my song” because the pitches are sung entirely as vocalize [using only one vowel (ah), instead of words]. Does this impact the dramatic implications of the *coloratura*? What is the effect of the repeated pitches within this section? Is it feasible that the Queen of the Night could be laughing, even when she is so angry?
- Does the Queen of the Night ever give Pamina an opportunity to respond to her demands? What kind of power dynamic exists between the two women throughout this aria? What kinds of staging ideas might you employ to illustrate this dynamic?



## **Guided Listening: "Now I know that love can vanish"**

CD 2, Track 11 (0:00-3:08) | Libretto pg. 138

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Tamino and Pagageno have been sworn to silence by the brotherhood. Tamino plays his flute, and Pamina hears him. She pleads with Tamino, asking him to speak to her, but he will not answer. She believes he no longer loves her.

- What is the mood of this piece? What is the tone? What descriptive words would you use to describe it? What emotions does it express?
- What does the text and melodic structure of this aria tell you about how Pamina is feeling? Do you think she is unhappy? Why or why not? How can you tell? Give examples.
- Mozart uses a great deal of mellismatic texture in this aria. Why do you think he chose this very specific technique to represent Pamina's feelings? How does it make you feel about Pamina? Does it evoke a specific image of her character for you? What might that be?
- Pamina's aria has a lot of dynamic changes. Why do you think Mozart chose this? Is that how you would have written Pamina's aria? What do you like or what would you change about this scene?
- How would you stage this aria? What would Pamina wear? How and why did you make these choices?

## Guided Listening: "If only I could meet her"

CD 2, Track 15 | Libretto pg. 140

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**Papageno longs for a pretty wife to love.**

- This aria is somewhat of a duet between Papageno and his magic bells, just as "I'm sure that there could never be" is somewhat of a duet between Papageno and his panpipe. Why might Mozart have chosen to divide attention between Papageno and his instruments in both arias? Which traditional Western instrument is being used to create the sound of the bells?
- What is the time signature of the faster section in this aria? Does the rhythmic feel remind you of a particular kind of dance? How does this feel relate to the kinds of fantasies Papageno is entertaining?
- Each verse of this aria is preceded by an instrumental break. What might Papageno be doing during these breaks?
- Both this aria and Tamino's aria, "Such loveliness beyond compare," show the men singing about a true love that they are yet to meet. How does the feel of this aria differ from the feel of Tamino's? In particular, how do the melodic lines in each aria differ? What does this tell you about each man and/or the object of his affection?

## Guided Listening: “Pa-pa-ge-na! – Pa-pa-ge-no!”

CD 2, Track 24 | Libretto pg. 146

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**Papageno and Papagena are united at last.**

- What is unusual about the way in which Papageno and Papagena first sing each other’s names? What does this tell us about how each character is feeling? How do their feelings transform throughout this section? How is this illustrated in the music and the way in which their utterances evolve?
- In the section in which Papageno and Papagena sing about starting a family, their vocal lines interact in two different ways. How would you describe each of these interactions? What does this musical approach suggest about the correlation between Papageno and Papagena’s hopes for the future?
- How would you describe the overall tempo of this duet? Do you think it is appropriate? What kind of physical gesture might you associate with the underlying rhythmic feel? How might you translate this gesture into a dance movement for the two lovers to perform onstage?

## ***The Magic Flute Resources: About the Composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)***

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg, Austria, where his father, Leopold, was a violinist and composer in the service of the Prince Archbishop. Leopold dreamed of becoming the leading musician in the Prince's court – but when he recognized Wolfgang's potential, he decided to give up his own ambitions to promote his son's talents.

Mozart learned his first simple pieces for clavier (a predecessor of the piano) at the age of four, and began to write his own pieces at the age of five. Leopold was determined to make his talented son famous; a child prodigy, he wagered, could bring in a lot of money for a relatively poor family. But Leopold also believed that his son's talent was God-given, and it was his duty to share it with the world.

In 1762, before Mozart was six years old, his father brought him and his sister Maria Anna to Munich to perform before Bavarian royalty. After a similar visit to the Court at Vienna, Mozart and his sister caused such a sensation that they were able to tour Europe for three-and-a-half years. When he was twelve years old, Mozart wrote his first opera, *La Finta Semplice*, and he resumed his travels. Eventually returning home to Salzburg in 1771, he spent his teenage years composing masses, concertos, divertimenti and serenades for the local ruler, Archbishop Colloredo.

In 1781, at the age of twenty-five, Mozart wrote his first great opera, *Idomeneo*, and was summoned by Archbishop Colloredo, who was then visiting Vienna. But Mozart was treated so disrespectfully in the Archbishop's service that he resigned, and at his last meeting, he was kicked out of the Archbishop's Vienna residence.

Mozart stayed in Vienna, determined to make a living as an independent composer. He married Constanze Weber, and the newlyweds survived on the money Mozart made by teaching a few pupils. In the early 1780s, he met librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte, who provided him with the libretto for *Le Nozze di Figaro*. *Nozze* premiered in Vienna

on May 1st, 1786, and was enthusiastically received by the public. Mozart and Da Ponte's next opera, *Don Giovanni*, had a successful premiere in Prague in October of 1787, but a slightly different version performed in Vienna the next year was not as well-received. Meanwhile, Mozart's financial situation worsened. Though he became Court Composer to the Holy Roman Emperor, he was not paid well for his work. In 1789, he was offered a more generous salary by the Prussian Emperor, but Mozart refused to leave Vienna.

Mozart's monetary troubles worsened. His wife, Constanze, got sick, and a third opera written in collaboration with Da Ponte, *Così fan tutte*, was not successful enough to solve all his problems. In 1791, he wrote two final operas: *Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute)* and *La Clemenza di Tito*.

Throughout that year Mozart became ill and increasingly despondent. When he died on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1791, his funeral was attended by a few friends but not by his wife, who was too ill and grief-stricken to leave her home. He died penniless and, according to the Viennese custom of the time, was buried in a mass grave. He was just 35 years old.

Despite his unfortunate end, Mozart's musical genius is still cherished today, and his timeless operatic masterpieces are known and celebrated throughout the world.

# ***The Magic Flute Resources:*** **The Enlightenment & Singspiel**

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## **THE ENLIGHTENMENT**

The Enlightenment is an era in Western civilization, centered upon the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Much like the Renaissance, it was defined by its gravitation toward learning, innovation and knowledge, though it was specifically characterized by a widespread application of the scientific method to all sorts of disciplines, including music. Enlightenment thinkers believed the universe was governed by mathematical laws, and that rational thinking and the scientific method were the keys to uncovering them. God was thought to have created an ordered world in which everything, from the smallest snail to the greatest king, had its proper place.

Before the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, music had been self-justifying, and written for its own sake. People composed and played music because it sounded good, or in the case of church music, sounded holy and fulfilled a purpose. But *how* and *why* the music elicited these responses remained largely unknown. During the Renaissance, people became dissatisfied with this level of understanding. Thinkers and philosophers began analyzing music just as they analyzed everything else, giving birth to Music Theory and Music Criticism. These crucial discoveries and thinking processes were efforts to make discussion about music more exact and scientific, instead of based merely on guesses and assumptions. It was in the midst of all of this theorizing that the major and minor scales were discovered, as well as chord structure, neither of which had been formally understood before.

During the Enlightenment, theorists also began to realize that music affected people's emotions. They said that man's different moods and mental states could all be influenced by music, giving composers the ability to control the emotions of audience members through the music they wrote. This influence was called the Doctrine of Affectations. As the Doctrine of Affectations gained popularity, the need arose to discover what all of these different affectations were. All elements of music were analyzed – melody, harmony, rhythm – and everything was labeled according to the

emotional effect it supposedly had. One little three-note melodic phrase might be called "happy," while a certain rhythmic pattern might be "vengeful" – and theorists compiled volumes of glossaries and references to write it all down. Sometimes the groupings were obvious, but just as often they were arbitrary.

Another idea that also took hold in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was the Theory of Imitation of Nature. An extension of the era's general fascination with nature, this theory held that the composer's work was to imitate natural sounds, from trees to heartbeats. By Mozart's time, both the Doctrine of Affections and the Theory of Imitation were well established. It was not uncommon for composers in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to write music with a dictionary of affectations on hand, using it as a sort of thesaurus for musical ideas. Mozart often adhered to these guidelines, and their influence can be felt in *The Magic Flute*, which pays homage to Enlightenment philosophy in both the music and the story.

## **SINGSPIEL**

*Singspiel* is a form of German music drama that has spoken dialogue interspersed with songs, much like the English *ballad opera*. With its use of the vernacular and simple melodies, *singspiel* constituted a form of entertainment that was more accessible to the general public of its day than the alternative, *grand opera*.

The origins of *singspiel* can be traced back to German religious plays (specifically, miracle plays) which interspersed dialogue with song. By the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, miracle plays had evolved into secular *singspiele*, and were being performed in translated or imitated English and Italian songs and plays, as well as in original German creations.

*Singspiel* enjoyed a revival in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, thanks to the success of the English ballad opera in Germany. At first librettists simply adapted these ballad operas, but they soon turned to translating or arranging French comic operas, for which the German composers provided new music in an appealing melodic vernacular. Many of the 18<sup>th</sup> century *singspiel* tunes found their way into German song collections and thus in the course of time have virtually become folksongs.

*Singspiel* plots are generally comic or romantic in nature, and frequently include elements of magic, fantastical creatures, and comically exaggerated characterizations of good and evil. They were also usually performed by traveling troupes (such as the troupe run by Emanuel Schikaneder), rather than by established companies within metropolitan centers.

While Mozart's *The Magic Flute* is a prime example of *singspiel*, Mozart identified it in his catalog as a "German opera." It is one of his earlier works – *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (1782) – that actually bears the description "Singspiel" on its title page. It was created at the behest of the music-loving Habsburg emperor Joseph II, who wanted a new stage piece written in German. The composer whipped up a giddy diversion that also took advantage of the contemporary rage in Vienna for anything Turkish (considered to be exotic) while showcasing the technical accomplishments of his singers.

Other notable *singspiele* include Haydn's *Philemon and Baucis* (1773), Beethoven's *Fidelio* (1805), and Weber's *Der Freischütz* (1821).



# ***The Magic Flute Resources: Online Resources***

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Note: click on the blue link below the description to visit the corresponding page.

- **The Magic Flute – Queen Of The Night Aria**  
Opera Excerpt (Emma Pearson), Opera Australia (2013)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s42gakaNJXA>
- **Learn to play 'Papageno's Call'**  
Informational Video, Opera Australia (2013)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSwZVniUV1o>
- **Opera In 60 Seconds: The Magic Flute**  
Informational Video, Minnesota Opera (2013)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvpjeyvI550>
- **LA Opera's THE MAGIC FLUTE trailer**  
Production Preview, Los Angeles Opera (2013)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcQwXwVwxe0>
- **The Magic Flute trailer**  
Production Preview, English National Opera (2013)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYQm0gUP2Ys>
- **COT presents Mozart's "The Magic Flute"**  
Production Preview/Artist Interviews, Chicago Opera Theater (2012)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYQm0gUP2Ys>
- **George Fay; The Bird Man of ENO**  
Behind-the-Scenes, English National Opera (2012)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K---0OteBZk>
- **YOU ASKED THE QUESTIONS: Alek Shrader as Tamino in The Magic Flute**  
Artist Interview, San Francisco Opera (2012)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1sv7UHxgpl>
- **The Magic Flute – The Metropolitan Opera**  
Opera Excerpt (Nathan Gunn), Metropolitan Opera (2011)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2Nxm-rlkQ>
- **The Magic Flute: Behind the Scenes: Vocal Acrobatics**  
Behind-the-Scenes, Seattle Opera (2011)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2QEnNgd4AA>
- **The Magic Flute: Costumes with Zandra Rhodes**  
Behind-the-Scenes, Seattle Opera (2011)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8MAcPt42ZI>
- **The Magic Flute: Preview Trailer**  
Production Preview, Seattle Opera (2011)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMuGKAeL8r8>

## **Additional Resources: The Emergence of Opera**

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The origins of opera stretch back to ancient Greece, where playwrights used music and dance to augment moments of action in their stories. At this time, it was popular to write plays in Attic, a sing-song language, where half the words were sung and half were spoken. Dance was also a pivotal part of Greek drama; a chorus danced throughout scenes in an effort to highlight the play's themes.

The philosopher Aristotle, in 'The Poetics,' outlined the first guidelines for drama, known as the Six Elements of Drama. Aristotle suggested that a play's action should take place in one day, portray only one chain of events, and be set in one general location. Over the centuries, playwrights and composers took Aristotle's advice more seriously. The tradition of including music and dance as an integral part of theatre continued through Roman times and into the Middle Ages. Liturgical drama, as well as vernacular plays, often combined incidental music with acting.

Opera can also be traced to the Gregorian chants of the early Christian Church. Music was an integral part of worship, and incorporated ancient melodies from Hebrew, Greek, Roman, and Byzantine cultures. The Church's organization of music throughout the early Middle Ages gave it structure, codifying scales, modes, and notation to indicate pitch and rhythm. The chants were originally sung in single-line melodies (monophony), but over time more voices were added to compliment the main melody, resulting in the beginning of polyphony (many independent voices or parts sung simultaneously).

However, the Church objected polyphony, worried that the intricate weaving of melodies and words obscured the liturgical text. Since conveying the meaning of the text was the primary reason for singing in church, polyphony was viewed as too secular by Church leaders, and was banished from the Liturgy by Pope John XXII in 1322. Harmonic music followed, which developed as songs with one-line melodies, accompanied by instruments. Then, in 1364, during the pontificate of Pope Urban V, a composer and priest named Guillaume de Machaut composed a polyphonic setting of

the mass entitled *La Messe de Notre Dame*. This was the first time that the Church officially sanctioned polyphony in sacred music.

Another early contributor to the emergence of opera was Alfonso the Wise, ruler of Castile, Spain, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Also known as the Emperor of Culture, he was a great troubadour and made noted contributions to music's development. First, he dedicated his musical poems, the "Cantigas de Santa Maria," to Saint Mary, which helped end the church's objection to the musical style. His "Cantigas" are one of the largest collections of monophonic songs from the Middle Ages. Secondly, he played a crucial role in the introduction of instruments from the Moorish kingdoms in southern Spain. These instruments, from the timpani to lute, came from Persia and the Arabic culture of the Middle East. Throughout the European Renaissance (14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries), minstrels and troubadours continued to compose harmonic folk songs which informed and entertained. Some songs were mere gossip; others were songs of love and heroes. These contained a one-line melody accompanied by guitars, lutes, or pipes.

Martin Luther (1483–1546) continued to reform church music by composing music in his native tongue (German) for use in services. He also simplified the style so that average people in the congregation could sing it. Luther turned to the one-line melodies and folk tunes of the troubadours and minstrels and adapted them to religious texts. His reforms had great impact upon the music of Europe: the common people began to read and sing music.

From the church at this time also emerged the motet, a vocal composition in polyphonic style, with Biblical or similar text which was intended for use in religious services. Several voices sang sacred text accompanied by instruments, and this format laid the groundwork for the madrigal—one of the last steps in preparing the way for opera. Sung in the native language of the people in their homes, taverns, and village squares, madrigals were written for a small number of voices, between two and eight, and used secular (rather than biblical or liturgical) texts.

When refugee scholars from the fall of Constantinople (1453) flooded Italy and Europe, their knowledge of the classics of Rome and Greece added to the development of European musical traditions. Into this world of renewed interest in learning and culture came a group of men from Florence who formed a club, the Camerata, for the advancement of music and Greek theater. Their goal was to recreate Greek drama as they imagined it must have been presented. The Camerata struggled to solve problems that confronted composers, and were interested in investigating the theory and philosophy of music. The Camerata also experimented with the solo song, a forerunner of the opera aria.

Not surprisingly, Greek and Roman mythology and tragedies provided the subject matter of the first librettists. The presence of immortals and heroes made singing seem natural to the characters. Composers used instrumental accompaniment to help establish harmony, which freed them to experiment with instrumental music for preludes or overtures. Development of the recitative and the instrumental bridge enabled writers to connect the song, dance, and scene of the drama into the spectacle which was to become opera. This connector-recitative later evolved into a form of religious drama known as oratorio, a large concert piece which includes an orchestra, a choir, and soloists.

Members of the Camerata—Jacopo Peri, Ottavio Rinuccini, and Jacopo Corsi—are credited with writing the first opera, *Dafne*, based on the Greek myth. Their early efforts were crucial in establishing the musical styles of the new genre in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. A sizeable orchestra was used and singers were in costume. *Dafne* became famous across Europe.

The Camerata set the scene, and onto the budding operatic stage came Claudio Monteverdi. He is considered the last great composer of madrigals and the first great composer of Italian opera. He was revolutionary in developing the orchestra's tone-color and instrumentation. He developed two techniques to heighten dramatic tension: *pizzicato*—plucking strings instead of bowing them; and *tremolo*—rapid repetition of a single note. Modern orchestration owes him as much gratitude as does

opera. In his operas, such as *Orfeo* (1607), the music was more than a vehicle for the words; it expressed and interpreted the poetry of the libretto. His orchestral combinations for *Orfeo* were considered to be the beginning of the golden age of Baroque instrumental music.

Monteverdi's experimentation with instruments and his willingness to break the rules of the past enabled him to breathe life into opera. He was far ahead of his time, freeing instruments to communicate emotion, and his orchestration was valued not only for the sounds instruments created but also for the emotional effects they could convey. In his work, music blended with the poetry of the libretto to create an emotional spectacle. His audiences were moved to an understanding of the possibilities of music's role in drama.

## Additional Resources: Metropolitan Opera Facts

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Wallace K. Harrison, *architect*  
Cyril Harris, *acoustical consultant*

The current opera house, located at Lincoln Center, is the **second home** of the Metropolitan Opera. The original Metropolitan Opera House was located at Broadway and 39th Street.

The Met's new home at Lincoln Center cost **\$49 million** to build and construction took four years.

The Met is the **second-deepest building** in Manhattan. It consists of ten floors. There are six floors above and three floors below the stage level, and all levels are cushioned with anti-vibration pads for sound-proofing.

The opera season generally runs from September to April, during which time the opera company puts on **seven performances per week** (two on Saturdays) from a repertoire of 21-25 different operas.

The auditorium can seat **3,800 people** on its five tiers: Orchestra, Parterre, Dress Circle, Balcony, and Family Circle. Additionally, there is standing room space for 253 people on various levels.

There are **no 90° angles** anywhere in the auditorium, and the boxes have irregular, shell-patterned decorations. This design distributes sound evenly throughout the auditorium and prevents it from being "swallowed."

A **single African rosewood** tree was used to panel the walls. This tree, imported from London, was almost 100 feet long and about 6 feet in diameter.

The ceiling of the opera house rises 72 feet above the orchestra floor and is covered with over **one million** 2½-inch square sheets of nearly transparent 23-carat gold leaf. Not only does the gold add to the glamour of the interior, but it also cuts down on the need for maintenance and repainting.

Upon entering the opera house, one may notice that the ceiling in the outer lobbies has a **greenish color**. These ceilings are covered with a Dutch alloy which contains copper and turns green when it tarnishes.

There are **two house curtains** in the auditorium – the “Guillotine” curtain, and the Wagner curtain. The Guillotine curtain is made of gold velour, and rises and descends vertically. The Wagner curtain is a design that was conceived by composer Richard Wagner. This type of curtain was first used in 1886 in Bayreuth, Germany and is a motorized tableau drape with an adjustable speed. The existing curtain at the Met is woven of 1,150 yards of gold-pattered Scalamandre silk and was installed in 1990. It is the biggest Wagner curtain in the world.

The **“Sputnik” chandeliers** were a gift from the Austrian government. The central chandelier is 17 feet in diameter and is surrounded by 8 starbursts of varying sizes. The 12 satellite clusters can be raised to avoid blocking the stage. Altogether, the chandeliers contain over 3,000 light bulbs.

Not all the chairs at the Met are the same size; they vary in width from 19 to 23 inches. This **staggered seating** arrangement provides the best possible sight lines.

The conductor’s podium is **motorized** so that it can be adjusted to any height.

## **Additional Resources: Reflections after the Opera**

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After every opera performance, the director, conductor, and performers reflect and evaluate the different aspects of their production, so that they can improve it for the next night. In a similar way, these Guiding Questions encourage active reflection, both individually and collectively, on your student's opera experience.

**Think about the portrayal of the characters in the production at the Met.**

- How were the characters similar or different from what you expected? Try to identify specific qualities or actions that had an impact on your ideas and thinking.
- Did the performers' voices match the character they were playing? Why or why not?
- Did any characters gain prominence in live performance? If so, how was this achieved? (Consider the impact of specific staging.)
- What did the performers do to depict the nature of the relationships between characters? In other words, how did you know from the characters' actions (not just their words) how they felt about the other characters in the story?
- Stereotypically, most opera performers are considered singers first, and actors second. Was this the case? How did each performer's portrayal affect your understanding of (or connection with) their character?

**Consider the production elements of the performance.**

- How did the director choose to portray the story visually? Did the production have a consistent tone? How did the tone and style of each performer's actions (movement, characterization, staging) compare with the tone and style of the visual elements (set design, costume design, lighting design)?
- How did the set designer's work affect the production? Did the style of the setting help you understand the characters in a new way?
- How did different costume elements impact the portrayal of each character?
- How did the lighting designer's work affect the production?
- Did you agree with the artistic choices made by the directors and designers? If you think changes should be made, explain specifically what you'd change and why.



# **Additional Resources:**

## **A Guide to Voice Parts and Families of the Orchestra**

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### **Voice Parts**

#### **SOPRANO**

Sopranos have the highest voices, and usually play the heroines of an opera. This means they often sing many arias, and fall in love and/or die more often than other female voice types.

#### **MEZZO-SOPRANO, or MEZZO**

This is the middle female voice, and has a darker, warmer sound than the soprano. Mezzos often play mothers and villainesses, although sometimes they are cast as seductive heroines. Mezzos also play young men on occasion, aptly called “pants roles” or “trouser roles.”

#### **CONTRALTO, or ALTO**

Contralto, or alto, is the lowest female voice. Contralto is a rare voice type. Altos usually portray older females, witches and old gypsies.

#### **COUNTERTENOR**

Also often known as alto, this is the highest male voice, and another vocal rarity. Countertenors sing in a similar range as a contralto. Countertenor roles are most common in baroque opera, but some contemporary composers also write parts for countertenors.

#### **TENOR**

If there are no countertenors on stage, then the highest male voice in opera is the tenor. Tenors are usually the heroes who “get the girl” or die horribly in the attempt.

#### **BARITONE**

The middle male voice. In comic opera, the baritone is often a schemer, but in tragic opera, he is more likely to play the villain.

#### **BASS**

The lowest male voice. Low voices usually suggest age and wisdom in serious opera, and basses usually play kings, fathers, and grandfathers. In comic opera, basses often portray old characters that are foolish or laughable.

### **Families of the Orchestra**

<b>STRINGS</b>	violins, violas, cellos, double bass
<b>WOODWIND</b>	piccolos, flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons
<b>BRASS</b>	trumpets, trombones, French horns, baritones, tubas
<b>PERCUSSION</b>	bass drums, kettle drums, timpani, xylophones, piano, bells, gongs, cymbals, chimes

## Additional Resources: Glossary

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<b>adagio</b>	Indication that the music is to be performed at a slow, relaxed pace. A movement for a piece of music with this marking.
<b>allegro</b>	Indicates a fairly fast tempo.
<b>aria</b>	A song for solo voice in an opera, with a clear, formal structure.
<b>arioso</b>	An operatic passage for solo voice, melodic but with no clearly defined form.
<b>baritone</b>	A man's voice, with a range between that of bass and tenor.
<b>ballad opera</b>	A type of opera in which dialogue is interspersed with songs set to popular tunes.
<b>bel canto</b>	Refers to the style cultivated in the 18 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> centuries in Italian opera. This demanded precise intonation, clarity of tone and enunciation, and a virtuoso mastery of the most florid passages.
<b>cabaletta</b>	The final short, fast section of a type of aria in 19 <sup>th</sup> -century Italian opera.
<b>cadenza</b>	A passage in which the solo instrument or voice performs without the orchestra, usually of an improvisatory nature.
<b>chorus</b>	A body of singers who sing and act as a group, either in unison or in harmony; any musical number written for such a group.
<b>coloratura</b>	An elaborate and highly ornamented part for soprano voice, usually written for the upper notes of the voice. The term is also applied to those singers who specialize in the demanding technique required for such parts.
<b>conductor</b>	The director of a musical performance for any sizable body of performers.
<b>contralto</b>	Low-pitched woman's voice, lower than soprano or mezzo-soprano.
<b>crescendo</b>	Meaning "growing," used as a musical direction to indicate that the music is to get gradually louder.
<b>diatonic scale</b>	Notes proper to a key that does not involve accidentals (sharps or flats)
<b>ensemble</b>	From the French word for "together," this term is used when discussing the degree of effective teamwork among a body of performers; in opera, a set piece for a group of soloists.

<b>finale</b>	The final number of an act, when sung by an ensemble.
<b>fortissimo (ff)</b>	Very loud.
<b>forte (f)</b>	Italian for “strong” or “loud.” An indication to perform at a loud volume.
<b>harmony</b>	A simultaneous sounding of notes that usually serves to support a melody.
<b>intermezzo</b>	A piece of music played between the acts of an opera.
<b>intermission</b>	A break between the acts of an opera. The lights go on and the audience is free to move around.
<b>legato</b>	A direction for smooth performance without detached notes.
<b>leitmotif</b>	Melodic element first used by Richard Wagner in his operas to musically represent characters, events, ideas, or emotions.
<b>libretto</b>	The text of an opera.
<b>maestro</b>	Literally “master”; used as a courtesy title for the conductor, whether a man or woman.
<b>melody</b>	A succession of musical tones (i.e., notes not sounded at the same time), often prominent and singable.
<b>mezzo-soprano</b>	Female voice in the middle range, between that of soprano and contralto.
<b>octave</b>	The interval between the first and eighth notes of the diatonic scale
<b>opera buffa</b>	An Italian form that uses comedic elements. The French term “opera bouffe” describes a similar type, although it may have an explicitly satirical intent.
<b>opera seria</b>	Italian for “serious opera.” Used to signify Italian opera of a heroic or dramatic quality during the 18 <sup>th</sup> and early 19 <sup>th</sup> centuries.
<b>operetta</b>	A light opera, whether full-length or not, often using spoken dialogue. The plots are romantic and improbable, even farcical, and the music tuneful and undemanding.
<b>overture</b>	A piece of music preceding an opera.
<b>pentatonic scale</b>	Typical of Japanese, Chinese, and other Far Eastern and folk music, the pentatonic scale divides the octave into five tones and may be played on the piano by striking only the black keys.

<b>pianissimo (pp)</b>	Very softly.
<b>piano (p)</b>	Meaning "flat," or "low". Softly, or quietly.
<b>pitch</b>	The location of a musical sound in the tonal scale; the quality that makes "A" different from "D."
<b>prima donna</b>	The leading woman singer in an operatic cast or company.
<b>prelude</b>	A piece of music that precedes another.
<b>recitative</b>	A style of sung declamation used in opera. It may be either accompanied or unaccompanied except for punctuating chords from the harpsichord.
<b>reprise</b>	A direct repetition of an earlier section in a piece of music, or the repeat of a song.
<b>score</b>	The written or printed book containing all the parts of a piece of music.
<b>serenade</b>	A song by a lover, sung outside the window of his mistress.
<b>singspiel</b>	A German opera with spoken dialogue.
<b>solo</b>	A part for unaccompanied instrument or for an instrument or voice with the dominant role in a work.
<b>soprano</b>	The high female voice; the high, often highest, member of a family of instruments.
<b>tempo</b>	The pace of a piece of music; how fast or how slow it is played.
<b>tenor</b>	A high male voice.
<b>theme</b>	The main idea of a piece of music; analogous to the topic of a written paper, subject to exploration and changes.
<b>timbre</b>	Quality of a tone, also an alternative term for "tone-color."
<b>tone-color</b>	The characteristic quality of tone of an instrument or voice.
<b>trill</b>	Musical ornament consisting of the rapid alternation between the note and the note above it.
<b>trio</b>	A sustained musical passage for three voices.
<b>verismo</b>	A type of "realism" in Italian opera during the late 19 <sup>th</sup> and early 20 <sup>th</sup> centuries, in which the plot was on a contemporary, often violent, theme.

**vocalise** A musical composition consisting of the singing of melody with vowel sounds or nonsense syllables rather than text, as for special effect in classical compositions, in polyphonic jazz singing by special groups, or in virtuoso vocal exercises.

**volume** A description of how loud or soft a sound is.

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