

A Study Guide for

The Magic Flute

by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

from the
**Opera Guild
of San Antonio**



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SYNOPSIS: *The Magic Flute*

Setting: A fantasy version of ancient Egypt.

Cast of Characters:

Tamino	tenor	a young handsome prince
Papageno	baritone	a happy bird-catcher who longs for a wife
Pamina	soprano	daughter of the Queen of the Night
Sarastro	bass	a wise Sun Priest, representative of morality and insight
Queen of the Night	coloratura soprano	a powerful opponent of Sarastro; representative of irrationality and evil
Three ladies	2 sopranos and a mezzo-soprano	attendants of the Queen of the Night
Monostatos	tenor	traitor, Sarastro's servant who wants Pamina for his own
Three Boys	treble, alto and mezzo-soprano	guides for Tamino and Papageno
Papagena	soprano	Papageno's love match
Speaker	bass	speaker of the Sun Temple
Priests, slaves, armored men, etc.	chorus and others	

Act One

While hunting, Prince Tamino happens upon the kingdom of the Queen of the Night. A monstrous serpent begins chasing him and he faints from exhaustion. Before the serpent can do harm, the Three Ladies kill him. They all fall in love with Tamino and argue about who should watch over him. Unable to agree, they all leave to tell the Queen of the Night.

When he awakes, Tamino sees Papageno, a bird catcher, and thinks he has killed the serpent. Papageno lies and takes credit for saving Tamino. The Three Ladies return and, overhearing Papageno's lies, padlock his mouth as punishment. The Ladies give Tamino a gift, a portrait of Pamina, the Queen's daughter, who has been captured by Sarastro. Tamino falls in love with the young woman's image.

The Queen of the Night appears, grieving for her daughter, and promises Tamino he can marry Pamina if he can rescue her. The ladies remove the padlock from Papageno and bid him to accompany Tamino. They give Tamino a magic flute and Papageno a chime of bells to protect them from danger. The men set forth, guided by Three Boys.

Meanwhile, in Sarastro's palace, Monostatos is trying to win Pamina over, but she absolutely refuses. In a rage, he storms out. Papageno, sent ahead by Tamino, secretly enters the chamber and befriends Pamina. He tells her about her rescuer, Tamino. Pamina rejoices to hear that Tamino is in love with her, and offers sympathy to Papageno, who longs for a "Papagena" to love. Monostatos returns, but Papageno and Monostatos are mutually frightened of the other's appearance and Monostatos runs away.

The Three Boys lead Tamino to the entrance of the Sun Temple, where he is to fulfill his destiny. There are three doors, representing Nature, Reason, and Wisdom. A priest emerges and implies that Tamino has been misled. Tamino despairs at first, but learning that Pamina is yet alive, he rejoices by playing the Magic Flute. The melody bewitches many strange and exotic animals who draw near.

Papageno and Pamina, unable to find Tamino, are almost captured by Monostatos and his slaves, but Papageno plays his bells and enchants them to dance away, blissfully and involuntarily.

The Sun Priests find Papageno and Pamina and she begs Sarastro's forgiveness for trying to escape. She relates Monostatos' ill-treatment of her. Sarastro accepts her apology but will not let her return to the evil influence of her power-hungry mother.

Monostatos suddenly enters with Tamino as his captive. Tamino and Pamina instantly recognize each other and embrace in love. Monostatos demands a reward for his faithful service. Instead, Sarastro has him punished for his bad behavior. It is evident that Sarastro is not a wicked kidnapper but a positive leader who demands morality and truth. The two sweethearts are separated and Tamino is prepared by the priests to undergo the trials that will make him more worthy of Pamina.

Act Two

At the Temple of the Sun, Sarastro prays for Isis's and Osiris's protection of Tamino and Pamina throughout the trials. Tamino and Papageno first undergo the Trial of Silence. Papageno wavers but Tamino remains firm, even when the Three Ladies come to tempt them.

During this time, The Queen of the Night visits Pamina, giving her a knife and telling her to murder Sarastro. Monostatos eavesdrops and threatens to tell Sarastro if Pamina will not submit to him. Sarastro intercedes and even forgives the Queen for her hatred.

In the last part of the Trial of Silence, an old crone visits Papageno, revealing she is Papagena, his future wife. Just as he is about to question her more, she disappears. When Papageno finally finds her and agrees to marry, she transforms from a crone to a beautiful young woman—but a priest shoos her away—since Papageno broke the vow of silence. Papageno, despairing of ever finding her again, tries to hang himself, but the Three Boys appear and remind him of the Magic Bells. Papageno plays a merry little tune and Papagena finds him. They sing about their future together with lots of children.

When Pamina visits Tamino during the Trial of Silence, he cannot speak to her. Pamina mistakes his silence for a sign that he no longer loves her. Distraught, she decides to kill herself, but is prevented from doing so by the Three Boys who tell her the truth and lead her back to Tamino.

Pamina reaches her sweetheart and undergoes the last test, the Trial of Fire and Water, by Tamino's side. As Tamino plays the Magic Flute, it holds back the Fire and Water, allowing them to pass safely. Just as they finish the trial, the Queen of the Night is planning to attack the Sun Temple and defeat the order of the priests forever. Monostatos has joined her and the Three Women. Sarastro and his priests defeat the Queen and her dark powers with the powers of Light. Pamina and Tamino are blessed by Sarastro and the priests and inducted into the Temple of the Sun.

Classroom Activities

Before Going to the Opera

<p>Connect and motivate. Ask students: Do you think music can be "magical?" How is music able to change the way people feel? What music sounds most magical to you?</p>	<p>TEKS. MUSIC: 4.5, 5.5, 6.5, 7.5, 8.5. High School, I, II, 5. THEATER: 4.4, 5.4, 6.4, 7.4, 8.4, High School, I, II, 4. LANGUAGE ARTS: 4.4, 5.4, 6.4, 7.4, 8.4.</p>
<p>Read.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and discuss the Rules of Etiquette. • Read about Mozart and the context in which the opera was written. • Read a synopsis (summary) of the story. • As you read, try to infer what the characters are feeling and predict what will happen next. • Younger students: Choral read the synopsis and imitate some of the gestures, expressions, and sounds mentioned. • Discuss: What did you think of the "twist" in the story? Who was the villain—Sarastro or the Queen of the Night? What about Monostatos? 	<p>TEKS. MUSIC: 4.5, 6.5, 7.5, 8.5, High school I.5. THEATRE: 4.4, 5.4, 6.4, 7.4, 8.4, High school I.4. ART: 4.3, 5.3, 6.3, 7.3, 8.3, High school I.3. LANGUAGE ARTS: 4.14, 5.14, 6.14, 6.23, 7.14, 7.23, 8.14, 8.23 High School I. English 1, 9, 20. SOCIAL STUDIES: 5.22, 6.18, 8.27, High school, World History, 20.</p>
<p>Listen and discuss. Opera music sounds very different from popular music. Analyze an aria or other music from <i>The Magic Flute</i>. Listen for voices sounding like musical instruments and musical instruments sounding like birds or bells. Listen for instruments or voices repeating each other's melody.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the mood of the music? • What does the music express about the opera and characters? • How does the music make you feel? • How many voices do you hear singing at any time? 	<p>TEKS: MUSIC: 4.1, 5.1, 6.1, 7.1, 8.1, High school I.1. LANGUAGE ARTS: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, High School English, 15.</p>

During the Performance of the Opera

<p>Listen to the music.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen for the overture, arias and ensembles. • Notice the skill of the singers. • Listen for "impossibly" high notes and rapid or "flashy" singing. • Listen for thunder and other sound effects. 	<p>TEKS: MUSIC: 4.1, 5.1, 6.1, 7.1, 8.1, High school I.1. LANGUAGE ARTS: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, High School English, 15.</p>
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Memorable Songs from *The Magic Flute*

The Queen of the Night:

- A particularly demanding aria, Act II, Scene III, is "Der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen" ("The vengeance of Hell boils in my heart"). It reaches a high F6, which is rare in opera.
- "O zittre nicht, mein lieber Sohn" (Oh, tremble not, my beloved son), Act I, Scene I

Sarastro: (This singing role includes a low F on a few occasions.)

- "O Isis und Osiris" (Oh, Isis and Osiris), Act II, Scene I
- In diesen heil'gen Hallen" (Within these sacred halls), Act II, Scene III

Papageno:

- "Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja" (The birdcatcher am I), Act I, Scene I
- "Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen" (A girl or a woman) - Papageno in Act II, Scene V

Tamino:

- "Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön" (This image is enchantingly beautiful), Act I, Scene I
- "O wenn ich doch" (Oh, If I yet), Act I, Scene III

Monostatos:

- "Alles fühlt der Liebe Freuden" (All feel the joys of love) Act II, Scene III

Pamina:

- "Ach, ich fühl's, es ist verschwunden" (Ah, I feel it, it is gone), Act II, Scene IV

<p>Look at the design and style.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the opera look? Notice colors, sets, costumes, hair, props, lighting, special effects, number of people onstage, etc. • How is the Queen of the Night presented? 	<p>TEKS. ART. 4.1, 5.1, 6.1, 7.1, 8.1, High School, I, II, 1. LANGUAGE ARTS. 4.23, 5.23, 6.23, 7.23, 8.23, High School English, 19, 20.</p>
<p>Listen to the story.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is each character introduced? • Which characters are in opposition? • What problems must be solved? • How does the plot unfold? What twists does it have? 	<p>TEKS. LANGUAGE ARTS. 4.10, 5.10, 6.10, 7.10, 8.10, High School English. 7.</p>

After Going to the Opera

<p>Retell. What was the main idea of the opera? Who were the main characters? What was the sequence of the plot? What was the "twist" in this story?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write about the performance as if you are a critic. • Retell the entire story in 25 words or less. • Write a headline for a newspaper that expresses the main idea. • Act out your favorite part of the opera using words and gestures. • Draw a picture to illustrate a scene in the opera. 	<p>TEKS. LANGUAGE ARTS. 4.10, 4.11, 5.10, 5.11, 6.10, 6.11, 7.10, 7.11 8.10, 8.11, High School English. 7, 10.</p> <p>THEATER. 4.2, 5.2, 6.2, 7.2, 8.2, High School, 2.</p> <p>MUSIC. 4.4, 5.4, 6.4, 7.4, 8.4, High School, 4</p> <p>ART. 4.2, 5.2, 6.2, 7.2, 8.2, High School, 2.</p>
<p>Research and compare.</p> <p>Older students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare the trials of Tamino to the trials of Hercules or other heroes. • Compare the Trial of Silence to the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. • Find out more about what was happening during the late 18th century. Compare what was happening in America (the Revolutionary War and birth of a nation) to what was happening in Europe and other parts of the world. <p>All students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare the art, architecture and culture of ancient Egypt to the setting of the opera. • Compare the fantasy elements in <i>The Magic Flute</i> to those in the <i>Harry Potter</i> books or movies or the <i>Chronicles of Narnia</i>. • Compare the battles between good and evil in the <i>Star Wars</i> series to those in <i>The Magic Flute</i>. • Compare <i>The Magic Flute</i> to fantasy videogames. 	<p>TEKS. LANGUAGE ARTS. 4.13, 4.14, 5.13, 5.14, 6.13, 6.14, 7.13, 7.14, 8.13, 8.14, High School English, 9. SOCIAL STUDIES. 5.2, 5.22, 6.1, 6.18, 8.1, 8.27, High School. American History. 20. World History. 20</p>
<p>Create.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create your own designs for costumes or sets for the opera. • Draw cartoons to show a fantasy world inspired by the opera. 	<p>TEKS. ART. 4.2, 4.3, 5.2, 4.3, 5.2, 5.3, 6.2, 6.3, 7.2, 7.3, 8.2, 8.3, High School. 2, 3.</p>
<p>Make a budget. Create a budget for a student or professional opera production. An opera is often quite expensive to produce and requires many artists and technicians. An opera director or docent can provide students with information.</p>	<p>TEKS. MATH. 4.14, 5.14, 6.11, 7.13, 8.15. SOCIAL STUDIES. 4.13, 5.14.</p>

Write something original.

- Write your own story about a magical flute, talisman or other object.
- What instrument would you make "magical?" What powers would it have? Write your own story, song or poem about it.
- Create your own story about a struggle between forces of light and darkness.
- Write a story with a "twist" in it. Perhaps, like in the opera, create a story in which the person who appears to be the villain is actually the hero, and vice versa.
- Write a new ending for the opera.
- Create a new opera.
- Create new songs for the characters.
- Create your own story about a secret club (like the Freemasons) with secret handshakes and other rituals, code language and symbols.

TEKS. LANGUAGE ARTS. 4.15, 5.15, 6.15, 7.15, 8.15, High School English, 1. TEKS. MUSIC. 4.5, 5.5, 6.5, 7.5, 8.5. High School, I, II, 5. THEATER. 4.4, 5.4, 6.4, 7.4, 8.4, High School, I, II, 4.



Audience Etiquette

TEKS. MUSIC. 4.6, 5.6, 6.6, 7.6, 8.6. High School, I, II, 6. THEATER. 4.5, 5.5, 6.5, 7.5, 8.5, High School, I, II, 5. LANGUAGE ARTS. 4.1, 4.3, 5.1, 5.3, 6.3, 7.3, 8.3, High School English I, 15.

The audience has a vital role in the quality of the performances. The artists are in the same space as the audience. What the audience does directly and immediately affects the performance. Supportive behavior encourages performers to do better than their best—they feel exhilarated and charged by the audience. A rude audience undermines the confidence of the performers and interferes with their concentration, often resulting in a performance that is less than the company's best.

To show your support and consequently get the best possible performance, follow these guidelines:

- Turn off cell phones and other devices that might make sounds.
- Arrive on time.
- Listen quietly and watch closely. Performers can sense when an audience is "with them."
- Do not talk to others in the audience, even it is about the performance. (Wait for intermission!)
- Try not to make distracting noises or movements of any kind. Anything that would take another person's attention away from the stage is not acceptable behavior.
- If something happens on stage that is meant to be serious (such as a love scene), do not laugh—even if you find it funny. You might spoil the moment for others.
- Do not leave your seat unless it is a serious emergency.
- At the end of each act, applaud if you liked what you saw and heard. Some audiences will also clap at the end of a very good aria or other part of the performance. You may join them, if you wish.
- At the end, if the opera was one of the best shows you have ever seen, you can give the performers a standing ovation by standing, clapping and saying, "**Bravo!**"

Background and Vocabulary

TEKS. SOCIAL STUDIES: 5.22, 6.2, 6.5, 6.15, 6.16, 6.18, 8.27. High school. World history 1, 2, 7, 20, 21. LANGUAGE ARTS: 4.9, 4.14, 5.4, 5.14, 6.4, 6.14, 7.4, 7.14, 8.4, 8.14, High School I. 6, 9. MUSIC. 4.1, 4.5, 5.1, 5.5, 6.1, 6.5, 7.1, 7.5, 8.1, 8.5, high school 1, 5.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Born in Salzburg, Austria; 1756-1791). (Mozart is pronounced "MOAT-zart.") A prolific and influential composer of the Classical Era who composed over 600 musical pieces in his short life. At three years old, he began learning to play the keyboard and by five years of age had created his first musical composition. From age six to seventeen, he traveled abroad with his family, playing concerts with his older sister and producing original works. He then became a favorite at the Salzburg Court where he learned to compose and play in a wide variety of styles and genres. Hoping for greater financial success, Mozart sought better employment and was, for a time, at the court in Vienna. He died somewhat mysteriously at the age of 35. Mozart is a musical genius who is still appreciated by millions throughout the world.

Wunderkind. A child prodigy, like Mozart, who masters one or more skills or arts at an early age; a young genius.

Die Zauberflöte. The "magic flute," in German.

Singspiel. The popular form used by Mozart in his opera, which includes both singing and spoken dialogue.

Freemasonry. A fraternal organization, found in various forms around the world, which has been described as "a system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." Mozart was a Freemason and used many symbols, including groups of three, in his opera, *The Magic Flute*. Through his opera, Mozart was trying to save the Freemasons from critics by demonstrating to the public that the Freemasons (a.k.a. the Sun Priests) held Reason, Truth and Virtue in the highest esteem.

Emanuel Schikaneder. A Freemason and fellow lodge brother of Mozart who wrote the libretto for *The Magic Flute*.

Opera. Opera is a visual and aural presentation of music theater that combines words and music to tell a story. An opera is different from a play. In opera the actors sing the dialogue and the drama is conveyed predominantly through music and songs. This Western classical music art form began in Italy at the end of the 16th century. Operas are usually based on folktales, popular literature, dramas or comedies. Like other forms of theater, opera uses acting, scenery, costumes and other elements to involve the audience. An orchestra or musical ensemble accompanies the singers. Opera may also incorporate dance.

Voices—a role in an opera is written for a voice with a specific vocal range:

- **soprano**—highest female voice
- **mezzo-soprano**—female voice that is lower than a soprano but higher than a contralto
- **contralto**— lowest female voice
- **tenor**—highest male voice
- **baritone**—medium-range male voice
- **bass**—lowest male voice

Note: A **coloratura soprano**, such as needed for the role of the Queen of the Night, is skilled in flexible and rapid singing as well as very high notes. (Coloratura refers to the elaborate ornamentation of a melody)

Overture—musical piece played at the beginning of an opera that incorporates important themes and melodies to be heard later in the singers' arias and ensembles

Aria—song sung by one singer—often a highpoint in an opera—not only expressing the viewpoint of a character, but also showing off the power and beauty of the human voice

Ensemble—music sung by several singers at the same time. They may sing the same melody together or each singer may express a different feeling and sing a different melody.

- **duet**—two people (sometimes in love) sing together
- **trio**—three people sing together
- **quartet**—four people sing together



Resources

- Listen to excerpts from the opera: http://www.amazon.com/gp/recsradio/radio/B000001GXI/ref=pd_krex_listen_dp_img/002-9689545-1675233?ie=UTF8&refTagSuffix=dp_img
- A video clip from the San Francisco Opera: <http://www.sfopera.com/opera.asp?o=254>
- Video clips on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGMz8OlunO0>
- *Trollflöjten*, an acclaimed film version made by Ingmar Bergman in 1975, rated G, with English subtitles.
- For younger students: *The Smurfs and the Magic Flute*, a 1983 children's movie (originally released in 1976) loosely based on "The Magic Flute"
- *The Magic Flute*, a 2006 film version set during World War I, directed by Kenneth Branagh.
- John Updike, A children's book based on *The Magic Flute*, 1962.
- Cameron Dokey, *Sunlight and Shadow*, (part of the Once Upon A Time series), 2004, a retelling and modification of The Magic Flute for teen readers.