

THE MAGIC FLUTE

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)

I.

Prince Tamino has unknowingly wandered into the realm of the Queen of the Night while fleeing from a dangerous snake. Just before the snake strikes he loses consciousness. However, three ladies in the service of the Queen of the Night manage to kill the monster just in time. They then leave to inform their mistress, the Queen of the Night, of the arrival of the beautiful youth. When Tamino awakes he meets Papageno the bird man. The latter pretends to be his saviour and is punished for his lie by the ladies when they return. They give Tamino a portrait of the Queen's daughter Pamina. She tells Tamino that her daughter has been abducted by Sarastro, and demands that Tamino free her.

Tamino immediately falls in love with the picture of Pamina and vows to find her and save her. The queen promises Tamino that she will help him on his quest and gives him a magic flute. Papageno, who will accompany Tamino, is given a chime of bells. Both instruments have a special effect on man and animal. Moreover, three boy-spirits will guide them along the way.

Tamino, with Papageno in the lead, wants to enter Sarastro's realm. Monostatos the Moor, who has been ordered to guard Pamina, tries to rape her. But at the sight of Papageno he flees. Papageno tells Pamina that salvation is coming in the person of Tamino. In the meantime, and with the help of the three boy-spirits, the prince has reached the passage to the realm, but is stopped by a guard. He tells Tamino that Sarastro is not his enemy, but the Queen of the Night herself. Indeed, Sarastro has freed Pamina from her power.

When Tamino begins to play his flute, Papageno and Pamina know that he is not far away. When Monostatos returns with his helpers and attempts to waylay the two, Papageno gets out his chimes and so manages to mesmerise the enemies.

Then Sarastro's arrival is announced. Papageno trembles with fear, but Pamina meets him with courage and defends her flight. In the meantime Monostatos has taken Tamino captive and brings him to Sarastro. This is the first time the lovers see each other.

II.

Sarastro announces that Tamino will have to undergo trials to be included in the inner circle. Pamina tries to stop him but without success. Papageno also has to undergo the trials but he is

too weak. Only when he is promised a sweetheart, Papagena, does he agree to go with Tamino. Then the three ladies appear and warn him about Sarastro.

Monostatos once again tries to approach Pamina, but is interrupted by the Queen of the Night. She tells her daughter to take revenge on Sarastro, but Pamina refuses to comply. When she is alone again Monostatos makes another attempt to take advantage of her, but now he is stopped by Sarastro and finally expelled.

The second part of the test begins for Tamino and Papageno, although the latter has difficulty remaining silent. Tamino manages to lure Pamina with his magic flute, but when she asks him questions he does not reply and remains silent. She leaves him in despair and wants to end her life. The three boys once again show her the way back to her lover. Now Tamino and Pamina pass the last part of the test. And Papageno is rewarded with his Papagena.

The Queen of the Night and her followers make one final attempt to invade the temple and win the young couple over, but are frustrated. They are destroyed by natural disasters. Now that Tamino and Pamina have passed all the tests the new day brings a new and hopeful future for the amorous young couple.