



**Opera on Wheels
Teacher's Guide**

The Magic Flute

by
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

**Touring Version Adapted from the Original
by
Nashville Opera**

Plot Synopsis: The Magic Flute (Touring Version)

In a far away kingdom, a handsome prince named Tamino is seeking the land of the Queen of the Night. However, as he nears this strange kingdom, he is attacked by a horrible serpent. Believing he will be killed, he calls for help and then faints. Two ladies in the service of the Queen appear and kill the serpent. The ladies have saved the handsome prince and wish to stay and keep watch over him, but they must return to the Queen and tell her of his arrival.

As Tamino awakens, he is visited by Papageno, a bird catcher in the service of the Queen. Papageno is quite funny looking and loves to play his panpipes. Tamino mistakenly thinks that it is Papageno who has saved him. Although Papageno knows the truth, he chooses to go along with Tamino and boast of his strength.

The ladies quickly return and reveal the truth to Tamino – it was they who killed the serpent. To punish Papageno, they give him a rock and vinegar instead of the usual supply of food and wine. To insure that Papageno never lies again, they seal his mouth with a padlock! The ladies give Tamino a portrait of the Queen of the Night's daughter, Princess Pamina. They tell him that Sarastro, the head priest of the temple, has abducted Pamina and ask Tamino to rescue her.

Tamino heartily agrees, as he finds the Princess quite beautiful. The Queen appears and promises Tamino that if he indeed is able to rescue Pamina, he may marry her as well.

Tamino and Papageno prepare for battle against Sarastro. The ladies return and remove the padlock that Papageno has been forced to wear. The ladies warn Papageno of the evils of lying. They provide Tamino with a magic flute that will protect him from danger. The ladies also instruct Papageno to go along with Tamino, very much against his will. To encourage him, they provide him with a set of magic bells for protection.

Somehow Papageno gets separated from Tamino and the ladies and becomes lost! As Papageno struggles to find Tamino, he stumbles upon Princess Pamina. She is initially scared of his birdlike appearance, but he assures her that he plans on rescuing her with Tamino. He also shares his dream of finding a pretty wife who looks just like him.

As Papageno and Pamina begin to escape, they are captured by an evil group of slaves. However, Papageno plays his magic bells and they are able to break free. They think they have escaped completely, when Sarastro himself enters! Pamina confesses that she was trying to escape, because Sarastro stole her from her own mother. Sarastro tells Pamina that he took her away to try and slow down the Queen's evil plan to take over his kingdom. Pamina knows that she cannot, but tells Sarastro that Prince Tamino may be able to help.

Sarastro calls for Tamino, and after being informed of the lies of the Queen and her ladies, Tamino agrees to help Sarastro hunt down the evil Queen. The ladies reappear to try and convince Tamino and Papageno to join their evil forces but to no avail. The men are committed to follow the ways of Sarastro and his followers.

The Queen appears again, but the brave Pamina sends Tamino and Papageno away, leaving her to face her mother alone. The Queen gives Pamina a knife and tells her that since Tamino will not kill Sarastro, she must. Once the Queen leaves, Tamino and Papageno return to find Pamina crying. They are not alone long when the Queen returns to destroy Tamino and Papageno. However, with the powers of the bells and the magic flute to help them, they destroy the evil powers of the Queen.

Tamino asks Pamina to become his wife. Although Papageno is happy for his new friends, he is sad that he does not have a wife himself. Just then, a young bird-like girl appears. Knowing that they are meant to be together, Papageno asks Pamina to marry him. They all sing together, in praise of virtue and integrity.

Meet the Cast

Toledo Opera's 2010 Resident Artists make up the cast of *The Magic Flute*. They come from different parts of the country and live in Toledo for two months, performing the Opera on Wheels touring program in schools throughout northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan. This year's artists are:

Jennifer Cresswell, soprano

1st Lady/Pamina

Jennifer Cresswell was last seen at Toledo Opera as Alice in *The Adventures of Alice in Opera Land* and as Frasquita in *Carmen*. In 2008 Ms. Cresswell was a regional winner and national finalist in the National Society of Arts and Letters competition, as well as a semi-finalist for the Irma Cooper International Singing Competition. Her collegiate roles include Blanche in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and Anna Murrant in *Streetscene*. Ms. Cresswell now lives in Toledo with her husband Brad Cresswell, Programing Director with WGTE, and their son Elliott.

Lucy Finkel, soprano

2nd Lady/Queen of the Night/Papagena

Lucy Finkel lives in New York City. She has a Bachelor of Music from Grand Valley State University in Michigan and recently completed her Master of Music degree at the New England Conservatory. While there, she performed in their opera outreach program and also as La Ciesca in *Gianni Schicchi*, Jumelle in Milhaud's *Orpheus* and Cupid in Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld*. She has also sung the roles of Maria in *West Side Story* with Ash Lawn Opera Festival, Susannah in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Prelude to Performance, and Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* with both the American Singer's Opera Project and Chelsea Opera.

Dustin Scott, tenor

Tamino

Dustin Scott, a native of southeastern Michigan. He recently performed the role of Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore* with the Green Mountain Opera Festival in Vermont and the title role in John Rutter's *The Reluctant Dragon* as part of the Rackham Symphony Choir's Singing it Real outreach program in Detroit. Mr. Scott completed his Master of Music degree in voice performance at the University of Michigan. With the University of Michigan Opera he performed the roles of the Lyric Tenor in Argento's *Postcard from Morocco*, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, and Principál komediantů in Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*.

Adam Cavagnaro, baritone

Papageno/Sarastro

Adam Cavagnaro is completing his Master of Music Degree at Manhattan School of Music in New York. Mr. Cavagnaro began studying classical voice in his undergraduate career at Montclair State University, where he performed the roles of The Baker in Sondheim's *Into the Woods*, John Sorell in Menotti's *The Consul*, and David in Samuel Barber's *A Hand of Bridge*. At MSM he has performed in the main stage Opera Studio as Joe Harland in John Musto's *Later the Same Evening*, a New York Premier, and as Bi-Curious George in *Love/Hate* by Jack Perla in conjunction with American Opera Projects.

Cherie Osswald, Pianist/Accompanist

From concert stage and recital hall to recording studio, theatre, church and *academe*, Ms. Osswald's career as a versatile pianist, arranger, singer, coach, commissioned composer, educator, and music director has spanned several decades. Especially enjoying collaborative work with vocalists, Cherie has performed in hundreds of operatic, musical comedy, and theatrical productions, from coast to coast, including several appearances with Toledo Opera. Ms. Osswald holds a bachelor's degree in vocal performance and a master's degree in piano performance.

The Composer

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(January 27, 1756-December 5, 1791)

Mozart was born in the city of Salzburg, the capital of the independent archbishopric of Salzburg, which today is part of Austria. His parents were Leopold and Anna Maria Pertl Mozart. Mozart's musical abilities soon became apparent, to the delight of his father who was also a composer and one of Europe's leading musical pedagogues. When Mozart's sister Nannerl was seven, she began to take harpsichord lessons from her father and although Mozart was only three years old, he soon began to play as well, often spending hours practicing. Throughout his childhood, he received intense musical training from his father, including instruction in clavier, violin and organ.

Recognizing his children's special musical talent, Leopold began to concentrate solely on their education and instruction. He was known to be an exacting taskmaster, who pushed his children towards perfection. Leopold decided to take his two children on a tour of Europe to display their abilities and in January 1762, the family left for Munich. Next, the group left for Vienna, where Leopold reported in a letter "We are being talked of everywhere...everyone is amazed, especially at the boy, and everyone whom I have heard says that his genius is incomprehensible." Invitations from all over Europe poured in. Leopold tried to arrange as many concerts as possible. Leopold felt that it was God's will that he exhibit his children. While the public and private concerts and recitals were greatly successful, the work was grueling.

In October of 1762, Mozart came down with what is now believed to be a rheumatic nodular eruption now associated with tuberculosis. Although he was treated, this episode was most likely a sign of future health problems. The family continued to tour Europe, departing on June 9, 1763 for a three-year journey. Mozart spent the long hours on the road composing. While he could not record his work, since the jolting of the carriage made writing impossible, he would work out the music, carry it in his head, and wait until he had a chance to record it on paper. A typical tour included the following stops: Munich, Augsburg, Ulm, Ludwigsburg, Bruchsal, Schwetzingen, Heidelberg, Mannheim, Worms, Mainz, Frankfurt on Main, Coblenz, Bonn, Bruhl, Cologne, Aix-la-Chapelle, Liège, Tillemonde, Louvain, Brussels, Mons, and Paris.

On December 24, the family reached Versailles, where they would stay for two weeks, and were able to experience life in the most famous of European courts. Leopold wrote in his journal, "My Wolfgang was graciously privileged to stand beside the Queen, talking to her constantly, entertaining her and kissing her hands repeatedly, besides partaking of the dishes which she handed to him from the table." That same month, two sonatas, dedicated to Madame la Comtesse de Tessé, were Mozart's first published works.

Three trips to Italy followed, from December 1769 to March 1773. A popular anecdote relates that Mozart heard Gergorio Allegri's *Misere* performed once in the Sistine Chapel and was so inspired that he returned home and wrote it out in its entirety from memory, thus producing the first illegal copy of this closely-guarded property of the Vatican! During his trips, Mozart met a great number of important musicians and learned much about other composers. Johann Christian Bach, son of Johann Sebastian Bach, became a friend of Mozart. Even non-musicians caught Mozart's attention. He was so inspired by the sound of Benjamin Franklin's glass harmonica that he composed several pieces of music for the new instrument.

On August 4, 1782, Mozart married Constanze Weber. The two had six children, but only two sons survived infancy, neither of whom married nor had children of their own. In the same year, his opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio* opened and was a great success. He soon began a series of concerts at which he performed his own concertos and also served as conductor. Also during his early years in Vienna, Mozart met Joseph Haydn and the two became friends. Mozart

would dedicate six quartets to Haydn throughout his career. Mozart's adult life was fraught with financial trouble and health problems. In 1786 he moved into an apartment in Vienna and composed *The Marriage of Figaro*; this was followed in 1787 by *Don Giovanni*. Although not always celebrated in Vienna, Mozart found a receptive audience in Prague, where *Don Giovanni* premiered. In the years that followed, Mozart produced more compositions, including *The Magic Flute*. Mozart remained ill and scholars disagree about the cause of his death at 1:00 am on December 5, 1791. Possibilities include trichinosis, mercury poisoning and rheumatic fever. Scholars also blame the practice of bleeding for causing Mozart to become substantially weakened as his health worsened. Physicians would drain blood from a patient in order to cure them of almost any ailment from which they suffered. When Mozart died, he was working to finish his renowned *Requiem*. Constanze hired Franz Xavier Sussmayr, Mozart's only pupil, to finish the work, which premiered the following year.

MOZART QUOTES

"When I am completely myself, entirely alone, and of good cheer - say traveling in a carriage, or walking after a good meal, or during the night when I cannot sleep - it is on such occasions that my ideas flow best, and most abundantly. Whence and how they come, I know not, nor can I force them."

"I pay no attention whatever to anybody's praise or blame. I simply follow my own feelings."

"Nevertheless the passions, whether violent or not, should never be so expressed as to reach the point of causing disgust; and music, even in situations of the greatest horror, should never be painful to the ear but should flatter and charm it, and thereby always remain music."

"Melody is the essence of music. I compare a good melodist to a fine racer, and counterpoint to hack post-horses."

"Neither a lofty degree of intelligence nor imagination nor both together go to the making of genius. Love, love, love, that is the soul of genius."

The Magic Flute (Die Zauberflöte) is among the last works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. He conducted the premiere in September of 1791 and was dead a little more than two months later, a bit shy of his thirty-sixth birthday.

The work reflects the Masonic rituals and Enlightenment political philosophy that Mozart and Schikaneder, his librettist, shared an interest in as Masonic lodge brothers. There are few, if any, other works that portray child-like wonder in quite the way that *The Magic Flute* does. In addition to many gorgeous ensembles and virtuoso showpieces, the score is a study in imaginative and evocative orchestration. Listen for the orchestral glockenspiel that portrays Papageno's magic bells, bringing us into a world of fable and wonder. They hypnotize Monastatos's henchmen in Act I and bring Papagena to him in Act II. The solo trombones play the solemn chords that are the motif of the priests of Isis and Osiris, both at the beginning of the overture and in the opening of Act II.

The pan flute is Papageno's way of luring birds in order to catch them. He calls for Tamino with it in Act I and for Papagena in Act II. Of course, Tamino's magic flute figures prominently throughout the adventure. And the interplay between Tamino's flute and Papageno's pan flute is particularly eloquent.

The Fascinating Age of Mozart

1750

- J.S. Bach dies and the Baroque Period in music ends
- George Washington works as a surveyor and mapmaker
- Thomas Pickney, US diplomat and Revolutionary War hero, is born
- Slavery is legal in all 13 US colonies

1751

- Mozart's sister, Nannerl, is born
- The Pennsylvania Hospital, the first in the colonies, is founded on Feb. 11
- James Madison is born
- Benjamin Franklin publishes *New Experiments and Observations on Electricity*
- The minuet is the most popular dance in Europe

1752

- Benjamin Franklin performs his famous kite experiment and proves that lightning is a form of electricity
- Betsy Ross is born
- The Liberty Bell arrives in Philadelphia
- William Smellie's *Treatise on Midwifery* is published, the first scientific approach to obstetrics

1753

- African American poet and slave Phyllis Wheatley is born in Africa
- The first steam engine is imported into the colonies and arrives in New Jersey

1754

- The Seven Years' War (or French and Indian War) begins in the colonies over disputes concerning land in the Ohio River Valley
- The first woman to successfully obtain the degree of medical doctor graduates from the University of Halle, Germany

1755

- Alexander Hamilton is born, as is Aaron Burr, who kills Hamilton in the famous duel of 1804
- John Marshall, chief justice of the Supreme Court from 1801-1835, is born

1756

- Joannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart (later christened Wolfgang Amadeus) is born in Salzburg, Austria
- Britain declares war on France, and the Seven Years' War spreads to Europe
- Frederick the Great leads Prussia into Saxony

1757

- Russia joins the Treaty of Versailles; a Russian army attacks East Prussia

1758

- The first state Indian reservation is founded in New Jersey

1759

- At age 3, Mozart begins to play the harpsichord
- George Frederick Handel dies

1760

- George III becomes King of England
- Josiah Wedgwood opens his pottery business
- The first Jewish prayer books are printed in the American colonies
- Mozart plays short pieces on several instruments

1761

- Mozart, aged 5, begins composing; Benjamin Franklin invents the glass harmonica

1762

- The Mozart family moves from Vienna to Salzburg
- Peter III is overthrown by his wife, Catherine the Great, and her supporters in Russia
- The first St. Patrick's Day parade takes place in New York City

1763

- Mozart and his family set out on a three-year tour of Europe, during which Mozart and Nannerl perform
- The Mason-Dixon line is constructed between Maryland and Pennsylvania to settle a property dispute; the boundaries were later extended to divide slave and free states

1764

- Mozart composes his first symphony
- St. Louis is founded by French traders
- The Sugar Act taxes the American colonies

1765

- The Sons of Liberty form and use violence and intimidation to force British stamp agents to resign and to stop Americans from buying British goods.
- The potato arrives in Europe and it is discovered that Ireland's climate is well suited to growing this popular food

1766

- Daniel Boone travels to Kentucky territory through the Cumberland Gap

1767

- Andrew Jackson is born in South Carolina; the New York Assembly is suspended by the British in response to colonists refusing to quarter troops

1768

- Mozart completes his first opera, *La Finta Semplice*

1769

- Napoleon is born in Corsica
- David Garrick organizes the first Shakespeare festival at Stratford-Upon-Avon
- Mozart makes his first visit to Italy

1770

- Mozart begins ten years of employment under the Archbishop of Salzburg
- Ludwig von Beethoven is born; Handel's Messiah is first performed in New York
- The Boston Massacre occurs
- William Wordsworth (British poet) is born

1771

- The first bound edition of Encyclopedia Britannica is produced

1773

- The Boston Tea party occurs
- Phyllis Wheatley publishes *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*

1774

- British Parliament responds to the Boston Tea Party with the Intolerable Acts
- The First Continental Congress meets in Philadelphia with delegates from every colony except Georgia
- Scientist Joseph publishes his work on the nature of oxygen

1775

- In South Carolina, black slaves outnumber colonists two to one
- The Battle of Lexington and Concord occurs in Massachusetts; the Americans defeat the British
- George Washington is appointed Commander-In-Chief of the American army and the Second Continental Congress is held under its President, John Hancock
- The Battle of Bunker Hill occurs

1776

- Mozart spends the year in Salzburg
- Richard Henry Lee of Virginia introduces a resolution to the Second Continental Congress proposing independence for the American colonies.
- Declaration of Independence is drafted by Thomas Jefferson and passed July 4; the Spanish found several large missions in what is now California, including Mission of San Francisco de Asis and Mission of San Juan Capistrano

1777

- Mozart is dismissed from his position by the Archbishop of Salzburg
- Vermont abolishes slavery
- France recognizes American independence
- The Continental Congress adopts the Articles of Confederation and the Stars and Stripes as the US flag
- Washington's army winters in Valley Forge

1778

- Mozart's mother dies in Paris
- Captain Cook lands in and "discovers" Hawaii
- French author Voltaire dies in Paris
- La Scala Opera House opens in Milan

1779

- Spain declares war on Britain and the siege of Gibraltar begins
- Thomas Jefferson is elected governor of Virginia

1780

- Benedict Arnold is discovered as a traitor and escapes to England
- Marie Theresa of Austria dies
- Charles Town is conquered by the British

1781

- Mozart competes in a pianoforte contest
- The Franciscans establish a settlement in what is now Los Angeles
- Cornwallis surrenders to American forces at Yorktown and all British land operations in America cease
- Hershel discovers the planet Uranus
- Immanuel Kant writes The Critique of Pure Reason

1782

- Mozart marries Constanze Weber and *The Abduction from the Seraglio* premieres in Vienna
- Florida is conquered by Spain

1783

- Mozart's Mass in C Minor is first performed in Salzburg
- Russia settles the Kodiak Islands in Alaska
- The first golf club is founded in St. Andrews, Scotland

1784

- Beaumarchais writes libretto for *The Marriage of Figaro*
- French painter J.L. David paints The Oath of the Horatii

1785

- Thomas Jefferson replaces Benjamin Franklin as the appointed minister to France
- 1786 Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* debuts
- Davy Crockett is born

1787

- *Don Giovanni* premieres in Prague
- Mozart composes *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* (A Little Night Music); his father Leopold dies
- Three-fifths of a state's slave population is counted as the Constitutional Convention apportions representations.
- The US Constitution is signed

1788

- Mozart composes his three "great" symphonies: Symphony in C, Symphony in E flat and Symphony in G minor
- Rioters in France demand food and Marie Antoinette famously declares, "Let them eat cake."
- Immanuel Kant writes his Critique of Practical Reason

1789

- George Washington is elected President, John Adams is Vice President, Thomas Jefferson is Secretary of State and Alexander Hamilton is Secretary of the Treasury
- The French Revolution begins as the Bastille is stormed in Paris on July 14th
- The first steam powered textile factory opens in Manchester, England

1790

- Mozart's *Così fan tutte* debuts
- Benjamin Franklin dies at age 84

1791

- Mozart's *The Magic Flute* opens in Vienna
- Mozart begins working on his Requiem, and dies at age 35 in Vienna
- The Bill of Rights is ratified
- British Parliament abolishes the slave trade

1792

- Haydn, a good friend and admirer of Mozart, begins writing and performing the six "London" symphonies
- Salieri attends rehearsals for the first performance of Mozart's Requiem
- The cornerstone for the White House is laid; the first occupants are President John Adams and his wife, Abigail.

- The French Republic is declared and the guillotine is used for the first time in France
- Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* is published

Opera: Many “Works” Combined

The meaning of the word "opera" comes from the Latin word "opus" which means a "work." What is a "work?" It is something that a person makes or thinks up. It is a poem or a song or a drawing or a composition or any other creative thing a person makes. The plural of opus is opera. "Opera" means "works" in the Latin language. Today we use the word opera to describe one large work of performing art that combines many kinds of performances. Opera = many works that are combined together. In opera there is a symphony orchestra, a dramatic play or comedy, singing and acting, scenery, costumes, special lighting and sometimes dancing.

The Creative Team

Many people work together to create an opera production. Members of the creative team include the singers, the conductor, the stage director, and the designers (sets, lighting, costumes, wig and make-up). These careers are available to everyone, and often involve many years of study and hard work to master.

The Conductor

Few people realize that the conductor determines and directs the performance that the public hears. The conductor communicates information about the music and the timing of the show to the singers on the stage and to the orchestra through the gestures he or she makes, often using a baton. The conductor is usually referred to as “Maestro” or “Maestra.” The conductor trains for his/her work just like the singers. He or she must be able to play the piano and must have a broad knowledge of singing, the orchestra, and music in general. The orchestral score, with approximately twenty staves (individual lines) of music, must be studied and mastered long before rehearsals even begin. The conductor uses the music as a guide as he or she coaches the singers and the orchestra toward a great performance.

The Stage Director

An operatic stage director faces all the challenges of a theatrical stage director, plus a few special operatic concerns. The opera must be staged to obtain the greatest emotional effect by moving the singers about with a natural flow that enhances the meaning of the story without interfering with the music. The composer has built the framework within which the stage director must work. Entrances, duets, fights, exits, shipwrecks, and all other stage “business” must take place within a specified number of measures or beats. Action must be compressed or extended as written by the composer. Like a conductor, a stage director must be completely familiar with the musical score. He or she must know Italian, French, German, or whatever language is being sung, as well as have a working knowledge of everything and everyone both on stage and backstage.

The Singers

Professional singers are much like professional athletes. They must train for many years to learn to sing opera. Most singers begin taking voice lessons while teenagers and continue on through college and beyond. Unlike other singers, opera singers do not use microphones when performing.

The Designers

The scenic designer creates sets that transform the stage into the appropriate location for the opera story. He or she works with the stage director and the conductor to create a unified vision. The scenic designer may also work as the costume designer and lighting designer, requiring the knowledge of an artist, an architect, and a builder. A general knowledge of music is also necessary, along with a thorough knowledge of the score and the story for each operatic

production that is being designed. The lighting designer creates effects with theater lights to make the stage look like another place. Cleeg lights, spotlights, scoops, and other special lights are used, along with colored gels, to create day and night scenes, shadows, and other special effects. The costume designer works with the rest of the creative staff to make the best costumes to tell the opera's story. This person may also create wigs and makeup effects for the performers.

The Stage Manager

The stage manager acts as an adjunct to the director in rehearsal. He or she records the blocking and sees that cast members stay on script and have necessary props. As the lighting, sound, and set change cues are developed, the stage manager meticulously records the timing of each as it relates to the score and other aspects of the performance, ensuring that the lighting and sound cues are delivered at the right time. Once the house opens, the stage manager essentially takes control, calling the cues for all transitions (this is known as "calling the show"), as well as acting as communications hub for the cast and crew.

The Process: Concept to Opening Night

In the world of professional opera the singer has the part or role fully memorized before the first rehearsal. Singers are often hired to sing a role several years in advance. If the role is new to them they need to learn the notes and the language and they need to interpret the basic character on their own. Voice teachers help to make the voice work technically correct and vocal coaches help with the language, style, and character development. Coaches also play the entire score on the piano so the arias and duets are learned in the context of the whole. Singers are always in the process of learning new roles so that they can work in many places, including other countries. The design team is made up of a set designer, lighting designer, costume designer, and wig and make-up designer. Their job often begins years before the actual rehearsal process, as they choose a look, a style, and a flow for the production. They then work with the opera company to build the sets and costumes.

The entire cast of an opera isn't assembled until approximately three weeks before the opening night. The singers - who are chosen by audition - come from around the world and may not have met each other before the first rehearsal. The conductor leads them through the music with piano accompaniment, showing them his or her interpretation of tempo and phrasing. The stage director shows them where and when and how to move around the stage and how to interpret the drama. This collaboration of conductor and stage director brings to life the opera's plot and music.

The opera is staged in a rehearsal room first. It moves to the theater's stage just a few nights before opening. It is then that the orchestra is brought in to the process, along with the technical aspects of theater such as lights, costumes, sets, and scenery. Technically and logistically, the opera usually comes together in just about five days.

What language is that?

Translating words meant to be sung is a tough job. Subject and verb placement varies between languages and this makes word-order changes often necessary. In turn the pattern of accented and unaccented syllables is altered, which can present problems, because the words must complement the original music and the new pattern may not fit. Lyrics are usually written in meter, like poetry, with the intent to fit them with a melodic line. Imagine translating a current song by someone like Fall Out Boys into French and having it still fit the beat and mean the same thing as it does in English. It is easy to see that the original language offers the best means of communicating through music. The audience, however, must not be "left in the dark" with words they don't understand. To get the best of both worlds, many opera productions are performed in the original language with the English translation of the text projected on a screen above the stage. Projected translations are called surtitles or supertitles.

Audiences aren't alone in needing translations. Singers are trained to have a working knowledge of the languages used in opera, such as Italian, French, German, English, Russian, Spanish, and Czech. But they are usually not fluent and tend to focus most of their energy on studying

pronunciation. Because of this, when a singer is learning a piece, he or she does a literal, word for word translation of the text into English before he or she begins singing the new piece. The singer will also translate the parts of other roles to understand his or her own character's response to what the others are saying. This means that most singers basically translate an entire opera when learning a single role.

Student Activities

Before the performance

Discuss how opera is like a play (they both have a story, characters, costumes, audiences, and words) and how it is different (opera has singers, music throughout, arias, duets, ensembles, etc.). Similar comparisons can be made with movies, television, musical theatre and ballet.

Many people, with different talents and skills, must work together to make an operatic performance happen. Discuss the different members of the “Creative Team” for an opera. Which role or task on the team would you like to take? Why?

Opera isn’t just music. It incorporates all the arts, especially visual art. List all the elements of an opera that are visual (e.g., set, costumes, props, makeup). Discuss how these things can be considered “art.”

An opera company’s Art Director or Graphic Designer is responsible for designing any printed materials that promote or advertise a production. Design and create a poster to promote the upcoming production of *The Magic Flute* at the school.

After the performance

Story Elements

Story Grammar. In simple terms, an opera is a story that is sung. Complete a Story Grammar¹ for *The Magic Flute* by identifying the characters, the setting and the beginning, middle and ending of the story. Or you can use the following Story Grammar format:

- Characters
- Setting
- Problem or Conflict
- Events
- Solution or Resolution
- Theme

Once you have completed the Story Grammar, write a summary of the opera’s story.

Literary Report Card. Select a character (Tamino, Pamina, The Queen of the Night, Papageno) that interested you when you saw *The Magic Flute*. Identify a trait that you think the character showed, such as courageousness, heroism, fearfulness. Then do a Literary (or Opera) Report Card² by grading the character on the trait. Describe how the character earned the grade through his or her actions and portrayal of emotions during the opera.

¹ Mandler, J., & Johnson, N. (1977). Remembrance of Things Parsed: Story structure and recall. *Cognitive Psychology*, 9, 115-151.

² Johnson, T., & Louis, D. (1987). *Literacy through literature*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Personal Response

- Write thank you notes to the performers.
- Draw pictures of what you saw, including favorite parts of the opera.
- Write a review of the performance. Were there particular aspects of it that you liked (a particular voice or singer, the scenery, the costumes, the acting, the telling of the story through music)? Was the opera funny, sad, scary, or a combination of these? Would you recommend this opera to a friend or a relative? Why? Why not?
- Was this your first opera experience? Have you seen other opera performances by Toledo Opera or other opera companies? Based on your experience(s), write an essay on the topic: “Why I Love Opera.”

Class Discussion: What Did You Learn about Opera?

- When you think of opera, what do you think of first? Why?
- Is the subject of *The Magic Flute* relevant to your life? How?
- Is it easy to be an opera singer? Why or why not?
- How many people are involved in putting together an opera production? What are their responsibilities?