



MUSIC WESTERN
The University of Western Ontario

Faculty of Music

Information

MOZART, AND OPERA, ARE BACK AGAIN AT MUSIC WESTERN

Good versus evil, truth versus deception, order versus chaos. Mozart's ***The Magic Flute*** is the ultimate study in contrasts. It encompasses every major musical style of Mozart's day, from the coloratura aria to the German chorale. It's an erudite study of philosophy, offset by a syrupy love story. It's high drama, with a liberal dose of comic relief. And you just know it has to have a happy ending!

It's time once again for the highlight of Music Western's season, UWOpera's annual production. Building on the smash hit that was last year's production of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, we are delighted to present back-to-back Mozart operas, this year ***The Magic Flute***. We've also added a fifth performance in answer to last year's four completely sold-out shows. ***The Magic Flute*** runs from Wednesday, March 6 to Sunday, March 10 (8:00 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday, 2:00 p.m. Sunday), in Talbot Theatre on the UWO campus. Tickets are available through the Grand Theatre Box Office (519-672-8800) and are already selling well.

UWO's Faculty of Music is now recognized as a major North American centre for the study and training of opera. The custom of double casting most or all roles, despite the ensuing challenges, provides experience for the greatest number of students possible. In addition, UWOpera provides the only fully-staged opera within a hour's drive of London. The high calibre performances, combined with our reasonable ticket prices, means UWOpera is cultural gem for the City of London. Producer/director Theodore Baerg comments, "From my perspective, I'm incredibly proud of what's being achieved here. This is an entirely new production, and everything to do with it — costumes, sets, lighting — has been designed in-house, and is being very well executed by the Talbot Theatre staff. This comprehensive level of preparation shows a real coming of age for UWOpera."

This production will be sung in German with English Surtitles®; dialogue will be in English. The accompanying orchestra is the UWO Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of James McKay. A synopsis of the ***The Magic Flute***, and a brief history of opera at Western are on the following pages. There will be two dress rehearsals, one with each of the casts, to which the media are invited: the evenings of Sunday, March 3rd and Monday, March 4th. Please call (519) 661-3767 to make arrangements if you would like to send a camera crew or reporter.

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W.A. Mozart (1756-1791): *The Magic Flute (Die Zauberflöte)*

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Tamino is being pursued by a supernatural monster – a serpent – and is crying out for help. He falls, and does not get up. Three mysterious ladies enter, coming to Tamino's aid by killing the serpent. They are struck by how handsome the youth is, and they hope he may be the one who will restore repose to their Queen. They leave to deliver this news.

Tamino wakes, confused. He does not know where he is, if he has been dreaming, or who saved him from the monster. A strange-looking man appears carrying a birdcage containing several small birds. He plays a panpipe and sings that he is a merry and cheerful bird-catcher, known well throughout the land. The bird-catcher wishes he had a net for girls, so he could catch them and choose the prettiest one to be his wife. Tamino asks the man who he is, and informs the bird-catcher that he himself is a Prince. The bird-catcher, called Papageno, explains how he survives. He gives his birds to the Three Ladies of the Queen of the Night who, in exchange, give him food and drink. Tamino recognizes this Queen as the powerful Queen of the Night. He begins to question whether the bird-catcher is even human, and asks him if it was he who slayed the monster. Papageno tells a fib and says that indeed he did save Tamino by killing the serpent.

The Three Ladies return, having overheard Papageno bragging to Tamino, and place a padlock on his mouth as punishment for telling lies. They present Tamino with a portrait of the Queen's daughter, Pamina. With one glance at the picture, Tamino falls deeply in love. The Ladies bring a message from their Queen – Pamina has been abducted by the evil Sarastro. Tamino vows gallantly to rescue her. With a clap of thunder the Queen arrives, appointing Tamino Pamina's rescuer. As a reward for saving her daughter, the Queen states, Pamina will be his forever.

Papageno's mouth is still locked. The Ladies remove the lock and make him vow never to lie again. They give Tamino a magic flute for protection, and order Papageno to accompany him on his mission. Papageno is also given for protection a set of silver bells. The men are told that three Spirits will guide them to Sarastro's castle. The Ladies exit, leaving Papageno and Tamino alone.

At Sarastro's castle, Pamina is being held by the cruel Monostatos. He has her in chains and orders the slaves to leave him alone with her. Papageno sees this through a window and dares to go in, frightening both himself and Monostatos, who runs away. Papageno tells Pamina that he is a messenger from her mother. He tells her too of the Prince's love for her, and again bemoans the fact that he is without a wife. They marvel at the beauty of love, and exit.

Meanwhile, the three Spirits lead Tamino to the grove of the Three Temples: Temples of Wisdom; Reason; and Nature. Tamino attempts to enter both the right and left Temples, but is discouraged by voices within shouting, "go back!" He tries the center Temple and is met by the Speaker, who proclaims Sarastro as the ruler there. Tamino tells of his hatred for Sarastro, Pamina's kidnapper. The Speaker confirms that Pamina has indeed been brought there, and is still alive. Tamino is overjoyed and calls to Pamina with his magic flute. He hears in reply the sound of Papageno's bells, and runs off to find him.

Papageno and Pamina are hurrying to find Tamino, but are caught by Monostatos. As they are about to be restrained, Papageno plays his bells, placing a spell upon Monostatos and his slaves. Suddenly there are cries hailing Sarastro, who enters. He assures Pamina that he is keep-

ing her from her mother so that she may have her love. At that moment, Monostatos enters with Tamino. Tamino and Pamina embrace, and Monostatos is punished. Sarastro decrees that Tamino and Pamina must be purified by trials. Their faces are covered, and they are led off.

ACT II

Tamino and Papageno are brought, without flute or bells, to the grove. Sarastro states that, by the gods design, Pamina is to be Tamino's destiny. He prays for Tamino's strength, and leads the two men to the forecourt of the first Temple. Tamino swears to the Priests that he will submit to every trial. They insist that unless Papageno submits also, he will never meet the wife he so desires. Reluctantly, Papageno agrees. The first trial is a test of silence. They may not speak to any woman whom they encounter, including Pamina. The Priests then abandon them in the dark temple. The three Ladies, having snuck into the temple, try to convince Tamino that the Priests are liars. They tempt both men to talk, using all of their guile, but Tamino remains resolute. The Priests catch the Ladies in the temple, and send them out. The trial continues.

Pamina has been sleeping, with Monostatos nearby. The Queen of the Night appears and orders her daughter to murder Sarastro, the mighty orb of the Sun. If she refuses, she will be disowned. The Queen leaves Pamina to carry out her duty. Sarastro enters and dismisses Monostatos, who flees to the Queen of the Night. Sarastro confides in Pamina that within his sacred portal, revenge is not known, and enemies are forgiven.

Papageno and Tamino have been led into another dark hall. Papageno resents not being able to talk, and complains that he cannot even get a glass of water. An old woman suddenly enters, carrying a glass of water just for him. After Papageno inquires about her, she declares herself as his love. Before she can reveal her name, she is dragged off. The Spirits enter and return the magic flute and bells to the men. A food-laden table appears and Papageno eats. Tamino plays his flute, which Pamina hears. She enters, but Tamino refuses to speak to her. She believes he no longer loves her and rushes off to find death. With this, Tamino has passed the first trial; Sarastro and the Priests congratulate him. Pamina is allowed to bid him farewell before the next trial.

Papageno is wandering alone. The Priests enter to say that the gods have forgiven him for breaking his vow of silence, but tell him that he will never experience the privilege of the ordained. But all Papageno wants is a glass of wine and a pretty little wife. He is sad and lonely without her. The old woman returns and asks him to swear to be true to her, or he will be imprisoned forever. Reluctantly Papageno swears, and the old woman is transformed into a beautiful young Papagena, but is quickly taken away by the Priests.

The three Spirits have found Pamina with a dagger, wracked with despair. She is about to kill herself in her grief over losing Tamino. They assure her that Tamino still loves her and that they will take her to him. Armoured men are escorting Tamino, but Pamina finds them and vows to accompany Tamino into the dark Temple to be consecrated with him. Together they pass through the trials of fire and water. They emerge from the trials victorious.

Papageno is lonelier than ever, having seen his love but being deprived of her. He is sad that he did not behave better so that he might have kept her. He too vows to kill himself should Papagena not appear on the count of three. The boys return and remind him of his magic bells. He plays them, and she appears. They will be husband and wife, and will be blessed with many children.

Monostatos has brought the Three Ladies and The Queen of the Night to the Temple, after the Queen has promised that Pamina will be his wife. As they are about to offer vengeance against Sarastro and his followers, a great storm erupts and they are all plunged into eternal night. Sarastro and the power of the Sun have triumphed over evil. Beauty and wisdom are rewarded, and all rejoice in the power of good and light.



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HISTORY OF OPERA AT WESTERN

Opera at the University of Western Ontario enjoys a long and distinguished history, dating back to the 1940s and '50s when Professor Alfred Rosé — a nephew of Gustav Mahler— taught voice and opera at Music Teacher's College. This tradition was continued in the 1970s in the newly formed Faculty of Music when the acclaimed operatic tenor Martin Chambers was on faculty and directed the UWO opera program in fully-staged performances of *The Magic Flute*, *Dialogues des Carmelites*, *The Merry Widow*, and others. During the 1980s opera activity was manifested in concert presentations, scenes and excerpts. The year 1991 saw the revival of the fully staged production, and since then the UWO Opera Workshop, or UWOpera as it is known, has grown in excellence and popularity each year.

Western has long benefited from the presence of active opera professionals on faculty, and since his arrival in 1996, acclaimed Canadian baritone Theodore Baerg has taken the opera program at Western to even greater heights. In 1998 Western became the first university in Canada to use the Canadian Opera Company's Surtitle® technology, with a production of Puccini's *Suor Angelica* in its original Italian. Both the 1999 production of *Die Fledermaus* and the 2001 production of *Le Nozze di Figaro* were sold-out smash hits, and *The Magic Flute* in 2002 promises to be no less. Ted Baerg brings extensive experience in the international world of opera to his role as director and producer of opera at Western. Students enrolled in the opera program tackle a broad range of repertoire, from productions that tread a fine line between opera and musical theatre such as *Candide* in 1993, to powerful contemporary works like *The Consul* in 2000.

Many singers who studied at Western's Faculty of Music have forged significant careers on the major opera, theatre and concert stages of the world. Among them are Michael Schade, Nancy Argenta, Louise Pitre, Kevin McMillan, Adrienne Pieczonka, Paul Massell, Robert Grenier, Brian McIntosh, and Darryl Edwards — and the tradition continues with a new generation of exciting young singers such as Krisztina Szabo, John Tessier, Jennie Such and others who are taking their places among the rising stars of the genre. Many others such as Robert Cooper and Allison Doig have become highly regarded directors. Western is proud of its long contribution to opera life in Canada and abroad and of its continuing role in training young singers and preparing them for professional life.