

OPERA WALKTHROUGH

Die Zauberflote (1791)

W. A. Mozart (1756 – 1791)

Characters	Voice	Occupation	Symbol
Tamino	Tenor	A prince	FIRE
Papageno	Baritone	A bird catcher	AIR
Pamina	Soprano	A princess	WATER
Queen of the Night	Coloratura	Pamina's mother	MOON
Sarastro	Bass	High Priest of the Sun	SUN
Monostatos	Tenor	A Moor	EARTH
Three Ladies	2 Sopranos, 1 Mezzo	Servants of the Queen	
Three Boys	Treble, Alto, Mezzo	Messengers	
Speaker of the Temple	Bass-Baritone	An old Priest of the Sun	
Three Priests	Tenor, 2 Basses	Priests of the Sun	
Papagena	Soprano	Papageno's future mate	
Two Armoured Men	Tenor, Bass	Temple guards	
Three Slaves	2 Tenors, Bass	Servants to Monostatos	
Chorus	Various	Priests, women, slaves	

QUEEN'S REALM

HIGH PRIEST'S REALM

Dominant Gender	Female	Male
Dominant time	Night	Day
Dominant Heavenly Body	Moon	Sun
Dominant Metal	Silver	Gold
Dominant Element	Water	Fire

OVERTURE

Three chords representing the Masons begins the overture.

Key of Eb Major (three flats) represents Masonry.

A fugato represents Masonic universal brotherhood.

A "magic" flute plays second theme.

Three Masonic chords appear in the middle of both the overture and the opera representing balance.

Act I – Scene 1

In a rocky area with a round temple in the Queen of the Night's realm.

1) Solo and Trio – Tamino and Three Ladies – Tamino is being chased by a serpent. He is wearing oriental clothing and carrying a bow with no arrows. He faints. Three Ladies wearing veils come out of the temple with silver spears and slay the serpent. They each want to stay with Tamino alone while the other two report to the Queen of the Night. After failing to decide, all three go to the temple to report to the Queen of the Night.

Tamino's oriental clothes represent coming from the East (direction of the rising sun).
As a potential initiate of the Temple of the Sun, Tamino's element is FIRE.
Empty arrow quiver represents Tamino's unenlightened status (not armed with self-wisdom).
Serpent represents temptations of women and Tamino's sexual awakening.
Tamino's fainting represents his death and rebirth (leaving childhood and innocence behind).
Three Ladies carry silver spears (metal femininity).
Ladies represent unenlightenment, Catholicism, and female Masonry.
Ladies' yearning for Tamino represents something they can never have (a mate).
Veils represent the Ladies' inability to become enlightened, see the world clearly, and separation from truth.

Spoken Dialogue – Tamino wakes up and sees the slain serpent, wondering who saved him. Hearing someone else approach, he hides.

2) Aria - Papageno – Papageno enters wearing feathers and carrying a birdcage. Papageno describes his role as bird catcher as well as his desire for a wife.

Papageno in old French means “parrot man”. As a bird he identifies with the element of AIR.
Birds are Masonic symbols used as warnings against female curiosity (Queen collects and destroys them).
Papageno working for the Queen represents the cosmos being out of balance until Day and Night unite.

Spoken Dialogue – Tamino makes himself known and learns that Papageno catches birds for the Queen of the Night in exchange for food and drink brought by the Three Ladies. Papageno pretends to have slain the serpent. The Three Ladies enter to punish Papageno for lying, giving him water instead of wine, a stone instead of sugarloaves, and a gold padlock over his mouth in place of figs. They give Tamino a portrait of the Queen's daughter, Pamina, and promise that happiness can be his if he can love her. They depart, followed by Papageno.

In female Masonry, a silver padlock on the lips is a symbol of discretion and a warning against gossip. Papageno's padlock is golden because he is a man.

3) Aria - Tamino – Tamino experiences love for the first time as he gazes on the portrait of Pamina.

Spoken Dialogue – The Three Ladies return announcing the arrival of their Queen. She has observed Tamino's emotions and commissions him to rescue her daughter from captivity by Sarastro, High Priest of Isis and Osiris. Night falls and the Queen appears from beneath the mountains amid thunder and lightning.

4) Recitative and Aria – Queen of the Night – The Queen explains that her daughter Pamina is being held captive by Sarastro and if Tamino can rescue her, she can become his wife. The Queen then disappears and light is restored.

The Queen's recitative is accompanied by the orchestra (usually reserved for important dramatic moments). The Queen can be said to represent Maria Theresa (Holy Roman Empress and pre-Enlightenment Catholic).

QUEEN OF THE NIGHT BACKSTORY - The Queen was once married to the High Priest of the Sun (Pamina's father and Sarastro's predecessor). The old practice of matrilineal succession by husband sacrifice stated that all men were subservient to the mother goddess. Upon the death of Pamina's father, the Queen would inherit the Kingdom of Day, rule both kingdoms, and take other husbands for short terms who would then be sacrificed until Pamina succeeded her mother as ruler of both Night and Day. In the second stage of civilization, one husband rebels, establishes male succession, and abolishes the right of

husband sacrifice. Pamina's father makes Sarastro his successor to the Kingdom of Day by giving him the Sevenfold Circle of the Sun. Sarastro then takes the heir to the throne of the Kingdom of the Night (Pamina) under his wing so that she can become the wife of Sarastro's successor (Tamino) and reestablish the old link between Night and Day under a new patriarchal direction. The Queen is jaded because she did not inherit the Kingdom of Day from her husband and that men have plotted to replace the matriarchal society with a patriarchal society.

5) Quintet – Tamino, Papageno, and Three Ladies - Papageno points to the padlock on his mouth. Tamino does not know how to help him. The three ladies remove the padlock and warn Papageno never to lie again. The Three Ladies give Tamino a golden flute (gilded wood) that will protect him and inform Papageno that the Queen has chosen him to accompany Tamino to rescue Pamina. They give Papageno a chest of silver bells that will protect him. The ladies tell Tamino and Papageno to follow the Three Boys who appear and will show them the way to Sarastro's castle.

The flute is golden because it was made by a man (Pamina's father) and is useless in the hands of women. The flute and its music symbolizes the universe in harmony and balance. The flute was made from the deepest roots of an ancient oak tree during a thunderstorm. The flute embodies the four elements:

blown with AIR, came from deep EARTH, made during a storm (WATER) with lightning (FIRE).

The Three Boys are described as "fair, gentle, and wise" representing the three Masonic pillars. The Three Boys are the polar opposites to the Three Ladies. The Three Boys working for the Queen of the Night is another example of the cosmos being out of balance.

Act I – Scene 2

A chamber inside Sarastro's castle decorated in the Egyptian and Turkish styles.

6) Trio – Monostatos, Pamina, and Papageno – Pamina has been caught trying to escape from Monostatos. He has several slaves chain her. She is worried about her mother's grief (The Queen of the Night) and faints. Monostatos orders the slaves away. Papageno enters through the window and sees Monostatos. They are frightened by each other and run away.

Monostatos' dark skin represents his cruel persona and his eventual affinity to the Queen of the Night. Monostatos' dark skin identifies him with the element of EARTH. Monostatos' presence in the castle represents the cosmos being out of balance. Chains are Masonic symbols representing ignorance and limitation (Monostatos). Pamina's fainting and awakening represents her rebirth in the same way as Tamino in Scene 1. As a female, Pamina's element is WATER.

Spoken Dialogue – Papageno returns and identifies Pamina (now awake) by the portrait. He tells her a prince has been sent by her mother to rescue her and that the prince is in love with her. Papageno mentions that he does not have a wife or girlfriend. Pamina assures him that his heart is noble and he will find someone.

7 Duet – Pamina and Papageno – The two commiserate about the nobility and importance of love between a man and a woman.

Act I – Scene 3

A grove outside Sarastro's castle in front of three temples (Nature, Wisdom, Reason)

8) Finale – PART 1 - The Three Boys lead Tamino to the temples and tell him to be steadfast, patient, and impassive. They leave. Tamino tries to enter the first temple (Reason) and is turned back. He then tries to enter the second temple (Nature) and is also turned back. He knocks on the third temple door (Wisdom) and the Speaker (an old priest) answers.

PART 2 - Tamino explains that he wishes to rescue Pamina from the evil Sarastro. The Speaker tells Tamino that he has been deceived by the Queen and the Three Ladies. The Speaker leaves and the priests from inside the temple let Tamino know that Pamina is still alive.

PART 3 - Tamino is so happy to hear the news that he plays the Magic Flute causing the animals to come out of the forest. He tries to call Pamina with the flute. He hears Papageno's pipes.

PART 4 - Papageno and Pamina are running from Monostatos and his slaves. He plays his pipes to signal Tamino who replies with the flute. Monostatos and his slaves catch up to Papageno and Pamina. Papageno plays his silver bells which causes Monostatos and the slaves to dance happily away. Papageno and Pamina contemplate how harmony eases hardships.

PART 5 - Attendants announce Sarastro's arrival. After a procession, Sarastro arrives in a chariot pulled by six lions. Pamina confesses to trying to escape from the castle but only because of Monostatos and his advances. Sarastro sees that she loves another but cannot grant her freedom. Pamina expresses her duty to her mother and Sarastro says she must be guided by a man. Monostatos brings Tamino in to see Sarastro. Pamina and Tamino embrace upon seeing each other. Monostatos pulls them apart and claims to have prevented Pamina's escape from the castle. Sarastro sees through Monostatos and orders that he be punished. Sarastro also orders that Tamino and Papageno be sent to the Temple of Trials. Their heads are covered and the two are led away to be purified for their tests.

END OF ACT I

Act II – Scene 1

In a grove with silvery trees and golden leaves. There are chairs used for meetings.

9) March – Sarastro and the priests enter.

Spoken Dialogue – Sarastro announces that he has sponsored the initiation of Tamino into their order to strengthen it against the wicked ambitions of the Queen of the Night. Tamino's virtue will be rewarded with the hand of the Queen's daughter, Pamina. Acceptance of Tamino as a candidate for the priesthood is represented by three sets of three chords.

Three sets of three knocks represent the "Proclamation of the Degree" (A Masonic vote of approval). The three chords are musical representations of Tamino's acceptance as a candidate for the priesthood.

10) Aria with Chorus – Sarastro and Priests – Sarastro asks Isis and Osiris to watch over the new couple as they go through their trials.

Act II – Scene 2

Night, in the court before the northern temple which is in ruins.

Spoken Dialogue – Two priests lead Tamino and Papageno into the court and remove their veils. Tamino is determined to undergo the trials to rescue Pamina. Papageno is fearful but convinced by the promise of a wife. Both must take a vow of silence in the presence of women.

The ruined temple represents the first Masonic trial entrance room known as the “Cabinet of Reflection”. The darkness in the Cabinet of Reflection represents what must be overcome to gain enlightenment.

11) Duet – Two Priests – The priests warn Tamino and Papageno to guard themselves against the tricks of women. They leave, taking torches with them and leaving Tamino and Papageno in the dark.

12) Quintet – Three Ladies, Tamino, and Papageno – The Three Ladies enter carrying torches and warn Tamino and Papageno that they are doomed. Tamino tells the fearful Papageno to stay quiet and not to listen to rumors from women. The Three Ladies are driven away. Having passed the first test, the priests return to escort Tamino and Papageno to the next trial.

The “Trial by EARTH” is a philosophical interrogation in the hostile environment of the Cabinet of Reflection. The Trial by EARTH is represented here by taking the vow of silence and ignoring the rumors of the Ladies. It is possible that the Three Ladies in this scene are illusions created by Sarastro for the trial.

Act II – Scene 3

A rose garden with Pamina sleeping on a couch while Monostatos looks on.

Spoken Dialogue – Monostatos lusts after the sleeping Pamina.

Monostatos’ lusting for someone he cannot have parallels the Three Ladies lusting over Tamino in Act I.

13) Aria – Monostatos – Monostatos complains that he is forced to forego love because he is dark-skinned and ugly. He tries to kiss Pamina in her sleep but is interrupted by the Queen of the Night’s arrival. Monostatos hides to observe.

Monostatos is Greek for “stands alone or apart”. His dark skin visually sets him apart from everyone else.

Spoken Dialogue – The Queen of the Night gives Pamina a dagger and orders her to kill Sarastro.

The Queen must use others because she has no powers without the Sevenfold Circle of the Sun.

14) Aria – Queen of the Night – The Queen of the Night tells Pamina that if she does not kill Sarastro then she will disown her.

Spoken Dialogue - Monostatos returns and snatches the dagger from the stunned Pamina. If she will love him, he says, he will save her life. She refuses, and Monostatos is about to stab her when Sarastro appears, stops him, and sends him away. Monostatos rushes off to join with the Queen of the Night in subverting Sarastro’s order. Pamina begs Sarastro not to punish her mother, but Sarastro replies that he must have his own form of revenge.

15) Aria – Sarastro – Sarastro states that revenge has no place in the temple, enemies are forgiven, and love leads those who go astray back to their correct path.

This peaceful aria featuring low vocals is in complete contrast to the Queen’s high-pitched and violent aria.

Act II – Scene 4

A hall where Tamino and Papageno are led in by two priests.

Spoken Dialogue – The priests command that Tamino and Papageno remain silent and they leave. Papageno, disguised as an old woman, hobbles in and chats with Papageno, telling him that she is eighteen years old and that she has a sweetheart named Papageno. Just as she is about to reveal her name, a loud clap of thunder sends her hobbling off.

16) Trio – Three Boys – The boys return the flute to Tamino and the bells to Papageno. A table of food appears. The boys tell Tamino that his goal is near and they tell Papageno to be quiet. Papageno begins to eat and Tamino is playing on his flute when Pamina enters, drawn by the sound. Recognizing her lover, she questions him, but he holds to his vow of silence and motions her away. Papageno is also silent because his mouth is full.

This is the “Trial by AIR”. Tamino plays the flute instead of giving in to gluttony, thereby passing the trial.

17) Aria – Pamina – Pamina thinks that because Tamino is not speaking to her that he no longer loves her.

It is possible that Pamina in this scene is an illusion created by Sarastro for the trial.

Spoken Dialogue – Papageno and Tamino hear trumpets calling them onward. Papageno is forcibly led away by his master.

Act II – Scene 5

The interior of a pyramid. Sarastro leads the priests in.

18) Chorus – Priests – The priests thank Isis and Osiris for Tamino’s progress so far in the trials. Through his bold spirit and pure heart, Tamino is predicted to succeed in the final tests.

Spoken Dialogue - Tamino is brought in, and Sarastro commends him on his steadfastness but explains there are two remaining tests. Pamina too is led in and unveiled, but then commanded to bid Tamino a last farewell.

19) Trio – Pamina, Sarastro, and Tamino – Tamino is going to face danger. Pamina is worried that he will be killed. Sarastro and Tamino claim the gods will protect him.

Spoken Dialogue - Two Priests lead Pamina away. Sarastro leads Tamino in the opposite direction, and the other Priests follow them. Papageno enters and finds himself locked in the chamber by walls of flame. He wishes nothing more than a cup of wine, he tells his unseen guardians, but when that appears and he drinks it, he is suddenly overcome by new emotions in his heart. He opens the bells and plays.

20) Aria – Papageno – Papageno sings about his desire for a wife.

Spoken Dialogue – Papagena disguised as the old woman enters. She tells Papageno that he must accept her or die alone, and he agrees to be faithful to her. The disguise falls and Papagena is revealed in her true form, feathered exactly like Papageno. She is led away by the Speaker, however, because he has not yet proved himself worthy of her.

Act II – Scene 6

A small garden among palm trees shortly before dawn.

21) Finale – PART 1 - The Three Boys watch over Pamina from a distance and observe that she is distraught over Tamino's apparent rejection of her love. She enters with the dagger given to her by the Queen of the Night. The Three Boys stop Pamina from killing herself and tell her that Tamino still loves her, promising to take her to him.

PART 2 - The garden changes into two large mountains, one with a thundering waterfall, the other belching out fire. On each side are large rocks, each with a closed, iron door. Two Armoured Men lead Tamino in and tell him if he can overcome his fear of death, he will be purified by the elements.

[Sung in the style of a chorale prelude by Bach \(unknown to the Viennese at the time\) to sound solemn.](#)

As he is about to enter the mountain, Pamina stops him. Tamino is given permission to speak to her and the two decide to go through the trial together. Pamina says the flute will protect them because her father cut it from the deepest roots of a thousand-year-old oak (EARTH) amid a windy storm (AIR) with lightning (FIRE) and rain (WATER).

PART 3 - Tamino and Pamina, protected by the flute, travel through the fire and water. The door opens, revealing a brightly lit temple. The priests invite the couple to enter.

[These are the "Trials of FIRE and WATER". Pamina redeems womanhood by going through the trials with Tamino and succeeding together as equals.](#)

PART 4 - The mountains change back into the garden of the temple. Papageno is distraught that he will never see Papagena again. He contemplates hanging himself. The Three Boys stop him and tell him to play his silver bells to call for Papagena. Summoned by the music, Papagena appears and the two celebrate finding each other and pledge to have many children as they leave together.

PART 5 - The Queen of the Night, the Three Ladies, and Monostatos enter with black torches, intending to attack the temple. The Queen of the Night has promised Monostatos to give him Pamina if he helps destroy the temple and get the Sevenfold Circle of the Sun from Sarastro. A storm destroys their power and casts them out into eternal night. The entire stage is immediately transformed into a sun. Sarastro stands elevated. Tamino and Pamina are both in priestly raiment. The Egyptian priests stand on either side of them. The three boys are holding flowers. All praise the success of Tamino and Pamina, giving thanks to Isis and Osiris. The sun drives away the night.

[Final Chorus is in Eb Major \(the key of three flats\) representing the Masonic victory over darkness.](#)

END OF ACT II