

The Magic Flute Inquiry Guide

Des Moines Metro Opera

March 7, 2022



Applause Series

Presented by the Lauridsen Family Foundation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THE MAGIC FLUTE - 2

THE ARTISTS - 3

THE STORY - 4

WHAT IS OPERA - 5

INQUIRIES - 6-7

REFLECTION - 8

RESOURCES - i-xi

SOURCES xii

Dear Teachers,

Welcome back to another season of the Applause Series with Des Moines Performing Arts! We are so excited to invite you back to the theater and are eager to share *The Magic Flute* story with you and your students.

This guide is intended to cultivate students' interest in *The Magic Flute*, whether or not they have any prior acquaintance with opera. Whether this marks the first encounter with the genre or the 100th, this performance offers a way in for students as it pairs the classic score, projections on the big screen, and vivid imagery and costumes. Audience members are encouraged to think about opera—and the performing arts as a whole—as a medium of both entertainment and creative expression. Audience members are encouraged to experience, interpret, and enjoy even if opera isn't generally part of their usual entertainment!

This guide provides additional teaching materials to help deepen your experience, provide contextual information about the story, history and performers on stage and help connect the theater to the classroom.

Thank you for your commitment both to your students and to providing them opportunities to experience the arts. We are SO happy you are coming to visit us.

See you at the theater,
Des Moines Performing Arts

Thank you to our donors

SUPPORT FOR DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND THE APPLAUSE SERIES IS PROVIDED BY THE LAURIDSEN FAMILY ENDOWMENT AND MANY DONORS INCLUDING

Hollie Allen & Mandy Lechtenberg, Robert Angelici, William & Mary Bishop, Bravo Greater Des Moines, Mary Buckton, Greg & Sharon Chlebicki, Corteva Agriscience, Denise Daniels, Duane L. Gregg, Hy-Vee, Inc., Illuminated Marketing & Development, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, Judith & Richard Jacavino, Mary Ann Juhl, Allaire Jutting, Dr. Amr & Karol Kamhawy, Steven & Jan Koch Household, Sam J. Kranovich, Judith A. Lindquist Fund, Roger G. & Donna M. Loof, Russ & Mary Marshall, Noel & Sheri Martinez, Mary Miller, Nationwide, Polk County Board of Supervisors, Prairie Meadows, Principal, Robert & Dianen Reed, Mary Scarpino, Matt & Jennifer Suhr, West Bancorporation Foundation, Inc., Gary Wiele, Myril & Jean Wiese Household, Windsor Charitable Foundation, and Catherine W. Yung & Jeffrey J. Webb and the Bob and Mary Lu Parks Endowment Fund

About The Magic Flute

Mozart's *The Magic Flute*—his last opera to be produced before his untimely death at age 35—is a remarkable combination of musical and dramatic styles, from the earthly to the otherworldly. The fable centers around noble Prince Tamino and bird-catcher Papageno's quest to rescue Pamina, the Queen of the Night's daughter. During their journey, the two are tested as they overcome evil to discover the truth. The story begins as a magical rescue mission, a plot outline that would have been familiar to Viennese audiences of the popular theater, but soon transforms into a fable with bigger themes of enlightenment.

The production you will experience is a new, genre-bending interpretation of Mozart's most famous opera. It puts the singers in front of a giant screen, interacting in real-time with animations projected all around them, creating the impression that gigantic comics, cartoons, and folk art coming to life.

The Magic Flute - (Die Zauberflöt in German)
An opera in two acts, sung in English*

Note: In this special performance for school audiences you will only experience Act I.

- Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
- Libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder
- English translation by J. D. McClatchy
- First performed September 30, 1791 at the Freihaus-theater auf der Wieden, Vienna, Austria



Opera's most famous
fairytale finds new life in
a fantastical film world.

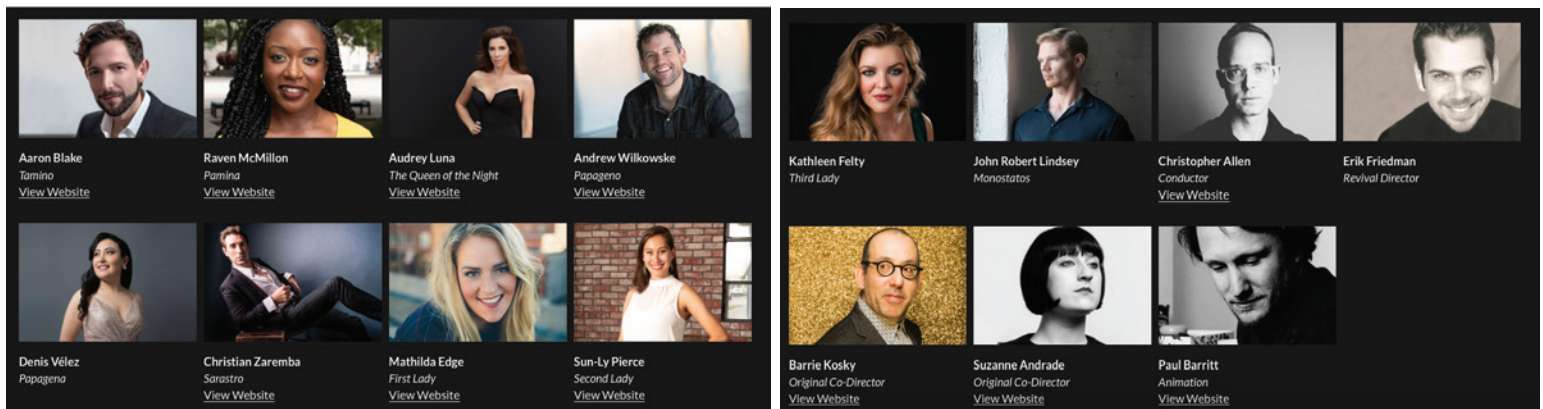
Watch a preview of the performance here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhDC0sD6IDM>

The Artists

About Des Moines Metro Opera



Des Moines Metro Opera (DMMO), based in Indianola, Iowa, is one of the state's largest performing arts organizations, annually producing over 100 performances in the metro area and around the region. Founded by Robert L. Larsen as Artistic Director and Douglas Duncan as Managing Director, DMMO is now celebrating its 50th Season as one of the country's best summer festival companies. Featuring remarkable vocal talent, professional theatre opportunities, and educational initiatives in music, we welcome them to the Civic Center stage for this special presentation as part of their anniversary season!



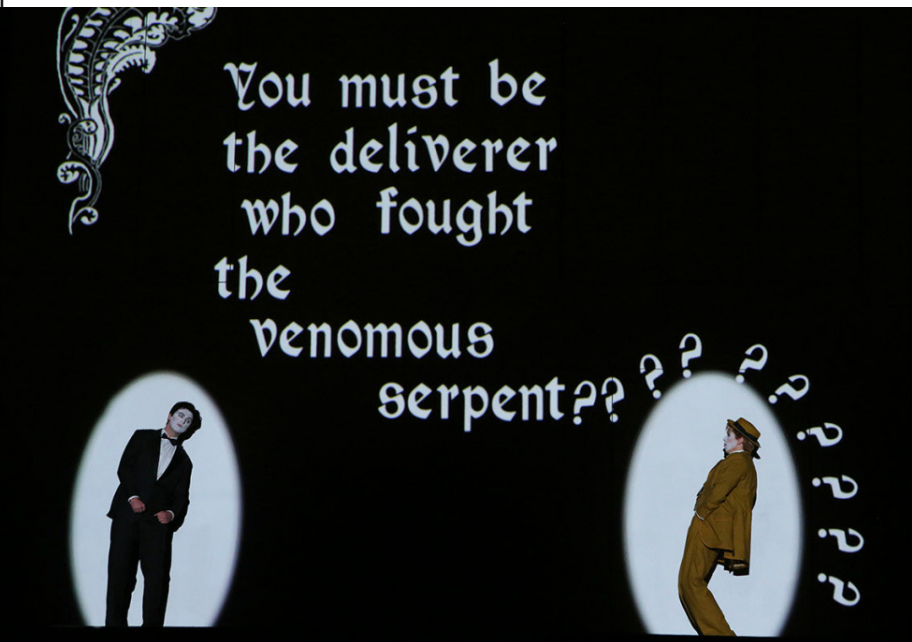
<https://desmoinesmetroopera.org/productions/magicflute>

MEET THE ARTISTS

Use the list of characters to match the performers and the other roles required for the production.

CHARACTER		PRONUNCIATION	VOICE TYPE	THE LOWDOWN
Tamino	A young prince	tah-MEE-noe	Tenor	Handsome and courageous, he accepts the Queen's commission to rescue Pamina.
Pamina	Daughter of the Queen of the Night	pah-MEE-nah	Soprano	Her beauty initially attracts Tamino, but she proves to be his match in withstanding the trials they face.
Papageno	A bird-catcher in service to the Queen of the Night	pah-pah-GAY-noe	Baritone	Primarily concerned for his physical well-being rather than loftier pursuits; his highest desire is to find a wife.
Queen of the Night	The powerful ruler of the realm of the moon and stars		Soprano	She is enraged at the abduction of her daughter and commits all of her forces to the defeat of her enemy Sarastro.
Sarastro	High priest of the Sun	zah-RAS-troe	Bass	The leader of a powerful order of priests, he has abducted Pamina and compels her and Tamino to undergo tests and ordeals.

The Story



It doesn't get much more classic than Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. As one of the most well-known works from one of the world's most well-known composers, the whimsical story of the prince rescuing the princess is a familiar one. This is a piece that has been produced constantly all over the world for hundreds of years— with such a rich history, reinvention is difficult to imagine!

This production presented by Des Moines Metro Opera has transformed the familiar material into an unpredictable celebration of light, sound, technology, and innovation on a projected animated backdrop that for both set and props, hearken back to the Nickelodeon era of the 1910s.

Before the Performance:

Use the synopses of *The Magic Flute* on pages i and ii to familiarize yourself with the main events of the classic opera.

After the Performance:

Consider the usual rise and fall of action in traditional stories, like fairy tales (and soap operas)! The end of Act I leaves audiences with a cliff-hanger, at the peak of the conflict in the story!

What predictions can you make about the events to come and how the opera will end?

Also typical of fairy tales is the use of three events to test the character's bravery, virtues and to prove that they are deserving of true love - the hero's reward.

In *The Magic Flute*, the trials are called: the trial of silence, the trial of temptation, and the trial of fire and water. The events are summarized on pages i and ii.

Interested in seeing a performance of Act II? You can watch a different interpretation of *The Magic Flute* from the Royal Opera House here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=diKLCLOXtBE>. (Act II begins at 1:07:35)

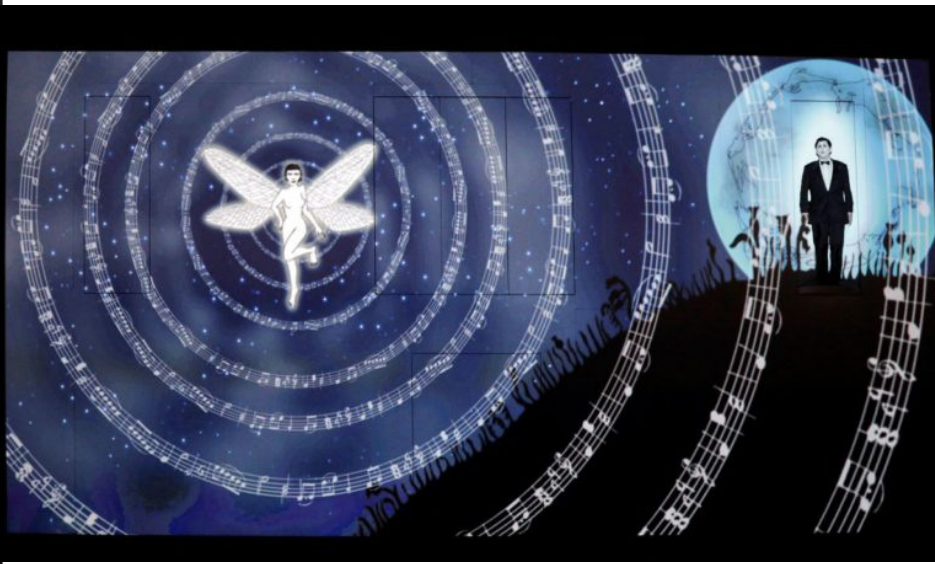


Royal Opera House recording of their production of *The Magic Flute*

Note:

In the Applause Series performance, audiences see only Act I. The performance concludes before the three trials of the second act.

What is Opera?



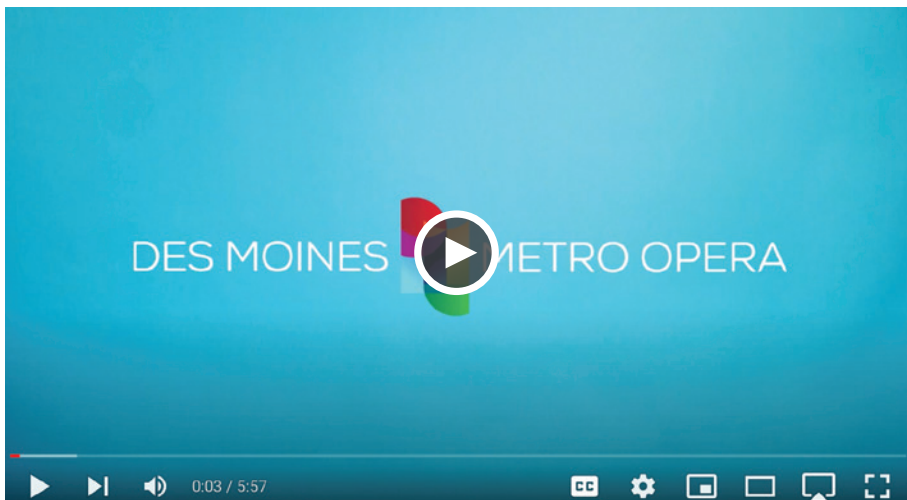
Opera (the Italian for work) is **an art form that tells a story through music and singing**. Unlike a musical, opera singers do not use microphones to amplify their voices. The music, played by the orchestra, is often live. In this school performance, the music will be pre-recorded.

Understanding what defines opera is important for understanding what it all means and how we as audience members interpret the genre and performance.

For a basic primer on opera as an art form, Des Moines Metro Opera has excellent resources to explore!

OPERA Iowa VIRTUAL OPERA CURRICULUM

Use the “What is Opera video” as a start and then review the additional sections to prepare for your experience at the theater.



Inquiry 01

How do different forms, eras, and genres of art influence each other?

How can something classic be made new again?



Re-Mix

The Magic Flute falls under the opera category of singspiel- that is, there are spoken parts as well as sung parts, much like a musical. This production projects the spoken parts onto a screen instead of having the actors recite them, similar to silent films of the early 1900s called nickelodeons.

Watch the Charlie Chaplin short film *The Lion's Cage* and watch for similarities between the film and the visual style of this production of *The Magic Flute*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpjEyBKSfJQ>

Silent movies, fairy tales, classic operas, comics, and musicals are just some of the overlaps and re-mixing in this production of *The Magic Flute*. What other influences did you see? What seemed familiar and/or what connections do you see between the production to other genres or mediums of art?

What is your favorite re-mix of making something classic into something new? Share an example of a re-mix or a new adaptation.



Defined: A **nickelodeon** is an early motion-picture theater, so named because admission at the time typically cost a nickel. Nickelodeons offered showings of one- and two-reel films, lasting from 15 minutes to one hour, that were accompanied by a piano. By 1910 there were 10,000 theaters fueling a huge demand for silent films and projection equipment, paving the way for the development of the modern motion-picture industry.

Inquiry 02

How does the time and culture an artist creates and lives in impact their creation? How is art a product of its time?

Enlightened Opera: The Magic Flute as a Work of the Age of Reason

The era of the European Enlightenment—commonly understood as covering the years between 1680 and 1790—was a time of far-ranging changes to political structures, the social order, and the philosophical understanding of humanity.

Read the selection about The Age of Reason (Enlightenment) on page iii and consider the questions below.

Consider: What is the Enlightenment and how is Mozart, and *The Magic Flute*, in particular, part of this moment in history?

Click here to check out this article for a beginners guide to the Enlightenment.

Part One: For Before or After the Show

Use the Timeline of Mozart's life (page iv) and the creation of *The Magic Flute* and consider the events in the timeline (on the top of page iii) of the Enlightenment and major authors and thinkers' publications.

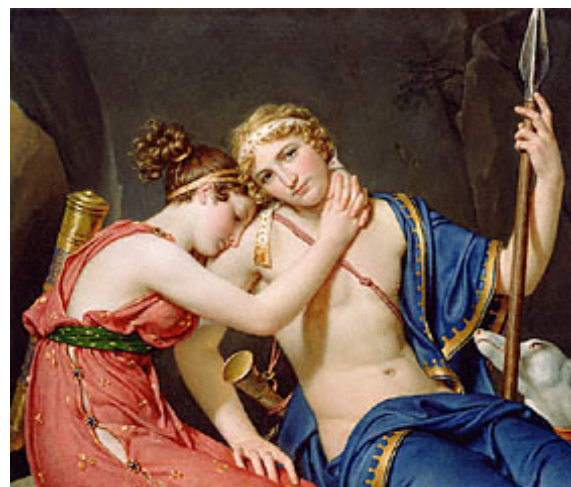
Part Two: For After the Show

Where does *The Magic Flute* fit into the conversation? What does it contribute? What are the big ideas that you see in the story? What is valuable? What is worth fighting for?

How do you see the major themes and ideas of *The Magic Flute* connected to Enlightenment ideas? Or not?

Digging Deeper:

This image bank from the Getty Museum explores visual art in the Neoclassical period of Enlightenment along with background information and questions to make connections to artist's intention and purpose. www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/curricula/neoclassicism/neocl_ib.html



Reflecting on Design



Use the handout on page xi to make notes about when the projection elements appeared and how they affected your impression of the world of *The Magic Flute* and its characters.

Are the designs realistic? Whimsical? Frightening? Did certain images seem to occur at particularly dramatic moments or for specific types of characters? Try to notice each time a repeating element appears in the production. To what effect?

The Magic Flute Synopsis—Text Version

The Story (page 4)

ACT I

In a dark forest, far away...

As he flees from a monstrous serpent, Tamino is rescued at the last second by three ladies who serve the Queen of the Night. When he regains consciousness, the first person Tamino sees is Papageno, so Tamino believes him to be his rescuer.

Papageno, a bird catcher in search of love, does nothing to dispel the misunderstanding. The three ladies punish Papageno for this lie by rendering him mute. They show Tamino a picture of Pamina, the Queen's daughter. Tamino instantly falls in love with Pamina.

The Queen of the Night now appears. She tells Tamino about her daughter's kidnapping at the hands of the evil sorcerer Sarastro. Tamino eagerly agrees to her command that he rescue Pamina. The three ladies give Papageno back his voice and instruct him to accompany Tamino. As protection against danger, they give Tamino a magic flute, Papageno receives magic bells, and three spirits will show Tamino and Papageno the way to Sarastro.

Pamina is tormented by Sarastro's enslaved servant Monostatos, but she is saved when Papageno wanders in, having become separated from Tamino. Both Papageno and Monostatos are frightened by each other. Left alone with Pamina, Papageno announces that her rescuer Tamino will soon arrive. Papageno admits that his own search for love has sadly proved fruitless so far, and Pamina comforts him. The three spirits lead Tamino to the gates of Sarastro's domain. He learns that the Queen is really the evil one, and the good Sarastro was merely trying to get Pamina away from her mother's dark influence. Overjoyed to learn that Pamina is still alive, Tamino plays on his magic flute, enchanting nature with his music.

Papageno and Pamina try to flee, but they are caught by Monostatos and his helpers.

Papageno's magic bells soon put their pursuers out of action. Sarastro and his retinue then enter upon the scene. Monostatos leads in Tamino; Sarastro punishes Monostatos for tormenting Pamina. The long-awaited encounter between Tamino and Pamina is all too brief; Sarastro orders that they must now face a series of trials.

The Magic Flute Synopsis—Text Version

The Story (page 4)

ACT II

The trial of silence

Tamino and Papageno must practice being silent. When the three ladies appear and attempt to persuade them to abandon their quest, the trial becomes truly difficult. Tamino remains silent and resolute, while Papageno immediately begins to chatter. Meanwhile, Monostatos again tries to get close to the sleeping Pamina. The Queen of the Night appears and orders her daughter to kill Sarastro. Pamina remains behind, despairing. Sarastro seeks to console Pamina by forswearing any thoughts of revenge.

The trial of temptation

Tamino and Papageno must resist all temptations. As well as the magic flute and magic bells, the three spirits bring Tamino and Papageno food, which Tamino once again steadfastly resists. Even the arrival of Pamina fails to draw a single word from Tamino's lips, which she interprets as a rejection. She laments the cooling of Tamino's love for her.

Before the last trial, Pamina and Tamino are brought together one last time to say farewell to one another. Papageno is not permitted to take part in any further trials. He now wishes only for a glass of wine—and he dreams of his great love.

Pamina believes that she has lost Tamino forever. In her despair, she seeks to end her own life, but is prevented from doing so by the three spirits, who assure her that Tamino still loves her. Gladdened and relieved, Pamina accepts their invitation to see Tamino again. Reunited at last, Tamino and Pamina undergo the final trial together. Pamina suggests that Tamino play the magic flute to provide them with protection.

The trial of fire and water

The music of the magic flute and their love for one another allow Tamino and Pamina to conquer their own fear and overcome the dangers of fire and water.

Papageno is still unsuccessful in his search for the perfect mate. Despairing, he now also seeks to end his life, but is prevented from doing so by the three spirits. Papageno's dream finally comes true: together with the beautiful Papagena, he dreams of being blessed with many children.

Meanwhile...

...the Queen of the Night, the three ladies and the turncoat Monostatos arm themselves for an attack against Sarastro and his retinue. However, their attack is repelled. Tamino and Pamina have reached the end of their trials, and can finally be together.

The Age of Reason

Inquiry 2 (page 7)

1637

PHILOSOPHY
René Descartes writes *Discourse on the Method*, in which he investigates the nature of thought

1687

SCIENCE
Isaac Newton discovers the principle of gravity

1690

GOVERNMENT
John Locke proposes a system of representative government

1750

SCIENCE
Benjamin Franklin proposes the idea that lightning is caused by electricity

1751

EDUCATION/LITERATURE
Denis Diderot begins publishing his *Encyclopédie*, aimed at consolidating all human ideas and knowledge

1759

EDUCATION/LITERATURE
Voltaire publishes *Candide*, a satire of philosophical optimism

1776

GOVERNMENT
The American Declaration of Independence is signed

1789

GOVERNMENT
The French Revolution begins

1781

PHILOSOPHY
Immanuel Kant publishes the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which investigates the interaction between knowledge and experience

1791

GOVERNMENT
Thomas Paine publishes *The Rights of Man*, arguing that revolution is justified when the government does not protect man's natural rights

THE AGE OF REASON

Many of the beliefs we hold today about freedom, government, and the inalienable rights of human beings would have been radical, fringe ideas in Mozart's day. But it was precisely during that period—an era called the “Enlightenment,” coinciding with the late 17th through 18th century—that the roots of our modern belief systems were first developed and debated.

Beginning with philosophers such as René Descartes in France and Benedict Spinoza in Holland, thinkers began to re-examine old perspectives on the nature of the universe. Their yardsticks were logic, reason, and a kind of optimistic doubt, rather than purely religious faith. In England, Francis Bacon introduced the method of scientific examination, a new way of finding the truth based on experiment and observation.

Before long, the tools of reason were being used to examine not only the natural world, but the social world as well. Political thinkers like François-Marie Arouet, known as Voltaire, in France, Jean-Jacques Rousseau in Switzerland, and, in England, Thomas Hobbes, David Hume, and John Locke, voiced the opinion that royalty and class systems were not part of the natural order. They proposed, contrarily, that all people come into the world with “natural” rights—especially a right to liberty. These rights might be masked or distorted, reinforced or weakened, defended or denied by the rules, structures, and class systems of society, but they could not be eliminated. Such views would lead, by the end of the 18th century, to a war of independence in England's American colonies and a revolution, deposing the royalty, in France. By the end of the 18th century, the British-American writer Thomas Paine would refer to his era “the Age of Reason.”

Overall, the developments in thought and politics during the Enlightenment era effected large-scale changes in attitudes towards education, the exercise of the intellect, the rejection of superstition and violence, and the perfectibility of mankind—all ideas that find musical representation in *The Magic Flute*.

Timeline of Mozart's life

Inquiry 2 (page 7)

The Magic Flute History

1756 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is born on January 27, one of two surviving children of Leopold Mozart, a composer in the service of the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg.

1762 At the age of seven, Mozart performs for the Empress Maria Theresa in Vienna, as a keyboard prodigy and composer. Over the next 11 years, the Mozart family tours throughout Europe, performing for members of the royalty and nobility.

1767 Mozart completes his first full-length dramatic work, *Apollo et Hyacinthus*, based on a Latin text drawn from Ovid. It is first performed in Salzburg on May 13.

1776 Emperor Joseph II dismisses the impresario of the Burgtheater, one of the two imperial court theaters in Vienna, and re-opens it as the "Nationaltheater," the home of German drama. Two years later, Joseph founds the National-Singspiel, intended to encourage the composition of music dramas in German. Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782) is the most successful of the singspiels created for the Burgtheater before the failure of the National-Singspiel in 1788.

1781 Mozart relocates to Vienna, seeking to make his living as an independent composer and performer in the culturally rich Habsburg capital, rather than solely under contract to a wealthy patron or the church.

1784 Mozart becomes a Freemason and joins the Viennese lodge "Zur Wohltätigkeit" ("Beneficence"), a community of liberal intellectuals whose philosophical interests aligned closely with the Enlightenment concerns of reason, nature, and the universal brotherhood of fellow men.



Timeline of Mozart's life

Inquiry2 (page 8)

1786 Mozart completes *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the first of his collaborations with the librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte (followed by *Don Giovanni* in 1787 and *Così fan tutte* in 1790). The three works, masterpieces of dramatic structure and musical expression, number among the pinnacles of the opera buffa genre.

1787–89 The German poet Christoph Martin Wieland publishes *Dschinnistan*, a collection of stories, several of which inspire the plot of *Die Zauberflöte*, notably “Lulu, oder Die Zauberflöte,” which tells the story of Prince Lulu, who is enlisted by a “radiant fairy” to rescue a maiden who has been captured by an evil sorcerer, and who is provided with a magic flute to help him in his mission.

1789 The actor, librettist, and theatrical producer Emanuel Schikaneder takes over the direction of the Freihaus-Theater auf der Wieden in Vienna. His repertory includes musical dramas (mostly comprising singspiels), spoken plays with spectacular staging effects, as well as works by serious German dramatists. The theater's audience bridges the different classes of Viennese society.

1791 *Die Zauberflöte* premieres on September 30 at the Theater auf der Wieden, with Schikaneder performing the role of Papageno and Mozart conducting. The opera receives 20 performances by the end of the following month, and over 200 performances by 1800.

1791 Mozart falls ill on November 22 and dies on December 5, likely from rheumatic fever.



Goffredo Amadi Mozart

Reflecting on Design

Inquiry 3 (page 9)

.....

MAGIC FLUTE: Illumination

Use this handout to make notes about when the projection elements appeared and how they affected your impression of the world of *The Magic Flute* and its characters. Are the designs realistic? Whimsical? Frightening? Did certain images seem to occur at particularly dramatic moments or for specific types of characters? Try to notice each time a repeating element appears in the production. To what effect?

**CHARACTER/
SCENE**

DESIGN DETAILS

INTERPRETATION

Resources

Thank you to
The Metropolitan Opera
LA Opera
Des Moines Metro Opera
for their *The Magic Flute* and Opera guide materials
and
Royal Opera House for Act II video resources

Inquiry Links:
Charlie Chaplin's *The Lion Cage*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpjEyBKSfJQ>

Getty Museum
Enlightenment Art
www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/curricula/neoclassicism/neocl_ib.html

