

Mozart: The Magic Flute

- is an opera . . . a vocal composition with full orchestral accompaniment;
- a secular drama, set to music and acted on stage . . . with costume, scenery etc;
- Classical orchestra of strings plus (in the two Edexcel set works) 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns and towards the end of the Quintet, 2 clarinets. (*But, in the whole opera, also 2 flutes, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones and timpani*)
- a Classical opera is composed in separate movements (typically around 20 – 25) divided into two or three acts;
- there are choruses (for crowd scenes of various types) arias, (for solo voice) duets / trios / quartets etc. (for combinations of solo voices) and recitatives where the characters have dialogue and `tell` the story;
- additionally there is an opening overture for orchestra only;
- Mozart composed 22 operas and other `music-dramas`.

The Magic Flute (a synopsis of the story - Scene 1: nos 1 to 5)

A rough, rocky landscape

Tamino, a handsome prince lost in a distant land, is pursued by a serpent and asks the gods to save him (Aria: "Zu Hilfe! Zu Hilfe!" followed by the Trio: "Stirb, Ungeheuer, durch uns're Macht!"). He faints and three ladies, attendants of the Queen of the Night, appear and kill the serpent. They find the unconscious prince extremely attractive, and each of them tries to convince the other two to leave. After arguing, they reluctantly decide to leave together.

Tamino wakes and is surprised to find himself still alive. Papageno enters dressed as a bird. He describes his life as a bird-catcher, complaining he has no wife or girlfriend (Aria: "Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja"). Tamino introduces himself to Papageno, thinking that Papageno had killed the serpent. Papageno happily takes the credit – claiming he strangled it with his bare hands. The three ladies suddenly reappear and place a padlock over his mouth as a warning not to lie. They give Tamino a portrait of the Queen of the Night's daughter Pamina, with whom Tamino falls instantly in love (Aria: "Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön").

No 4. The three ladies return and tell Tamino that Pamina has been captured by Sarastro, a supposedly evil sorcerer. Tamino vows to rescue Pamina. The Queen of the Night appears and promises Tamino that her daughter Pamina will be his if he rescues her from Sarastro (**Recitative and Aria: "O zittre nicht, mein lieber Sohn"**).

No 5. The Queen leaves and the ladies remove the padlock from Papageno's mouth with a warning not to lie any more. They give Tamino a magic flute which has the power to change sorrow into joy. They also give Papageno magic bells for protection and instruct him to accompany Tamino. Finally, the ladies introduce three child-spirits, who will guide Tamino and Papageno to Sarastro's temple (**Quintet: "Hm! Hm! Hm! Hm!"**).

No 4. Recitative and Aria: "O zittre nicht, mein lieber Sohn."

- opening recitative – telling the story / music is agitated – syncopated / reflecting the text;
- B flat major / pedal / arpeggios;
- simple chords to accompany voice / strings only / chords on beats 1 and 3;
- modulation to G minor / final perfect cadence leading into the aria;
- aria in two sections / `Larghetto` in G minor / mood of despair . . . `condemned to grief` `taken from me` / `Allegro Moderato` in B flat major (relative major) / new hope . . . `You shall go to set her free` ;
- word painting / changes of mood, dynamics and articulation in the orchestra (see Question 2);
- coloratura soprano / dramatic / wide range / wide intervals / vocal agility / long melismas.

No 5. Quintet: "Hm! Hm! Hm! Hm!"

- five soloists . . . two sopranos, one mezzo-soprano (the three ladies) one tenor (Tamino) and one baritone (Papageno);
- a long movement, moving with the changing text through a series of different episodes;
- a `through composed` approach, with little repetition of material;
- B flat major, with modulation to related keys;
- a homophonic texture, with a (very) few examples of imitation (eg bars 107 – 112) and some exchanges between the voices and orchestra (eg bars 53 – 61);
- much of the text is dialogue between the characters (eg bars 3 – 46);
- there are a few passages (in fact four in total) where all five voices are used together, often in more `reflective` moments (eg bars 184 - 203) . . . frequently, these passages are homorhythmic, reflecting a certain unity between the characters` thoughts;
- the three ladies often speak together, again underlining their unity of purpose (eg bars 96 - 109);
- there is some word painting, where the mood and meaning of the text is directly reflected in the music (eg bars 62 - 77);
- and there is `fresh` feel to the music at the Andante, with the addition of clarinets, pizzicato strings and a detached vocal style . . . as if to underline the mystical and spiritual quality of the three children `guides` ;
- mostly the orchestra is used to provide accompaniment to the voices, for example with a straightforward chordal framework (eg at bars 3 - 15);
- at other times the orchestra simply doubles the voices, perhaps with some additional (often parallel) harmonies (eg at bars 34 - 52) or with (characteristically Classical) broken chord figurations (eg bars 142 - 146, bars 214 - 241 etc);
- the orchestra provides short, 1 or 2 bar links (eg at bar 73, 78, 88, 132 - 3 etc) and there are some independent orchestral lines (eg bars 109 – 117).