

Il flauto magico

The Plot

The scene takes place in an ancient imaginary Egypt.

Act I

Mountain scenery in the background of a temple.

A terrible snake is running after Prince Tamino - dressed as a hunter - through a wood. Overcome by fear, he faints. Three young ladies, provided with helmet and lance, go out of a temple and soon slaughter the monstrous reptile: before hastily going away to inform Astrifiamante (the powerful Queen of the Night) about the achieved mission, they pause to look at the young man's fine face. Having recovered his senses and having seen the dead snake. Tamino thinks he owes his salvation to a strange creature, which has just appeared: it is Papageno, a feather-covered vagabond, who is playing a pipe. He has to capture birds and give them to the three ladies, so that they can deliver them to their Queen. The fowler makes Tamino understand he is his savior, but he is soon punished for his lie by the ladies, who, after reappearing, shut his mouth with a golden padlock.

The ladies give the portrait of Astrifiamante's daughter to Tamino, who is struck by the girl's beauty. As he hears that Pamina (this is the girl's name) has been abducted by the wicked tyrant Sarastro, he unhesitatingly offers to rescue her. Unexpectedly the wood is torn and the Queen of the Night, with her mantle dotted with stars, looms out of the darkness: she promises her daughter in marriage to Tamino if he succeeds in freeing her. In order to help him in this venture, the ladies give him a golden flute, gifted with magic powers, then they free Papageno from the padlock, give him magic hand-bells and order him to follow Tamino to Sarastro's castle.

A hall, in Sarastro's palace.

Pamina tried to run away in order to get out of the insistences of the Moor Monostatos (the head of Sarastro's guards), but she has been soon recaptured and taken to the palace by force. At the sight of Papageno, feather-covered, Monostatos gets frightened and runs away; Papageno too, who has never seen a black man, at first runs away, but then draws back and, having recognized Pamina as the girl of the portrait, he tells her that a prince is in love with her and wants to rescue her. and persuades her to go away with him. A friendship immediately arises between Pamina and Papageno.

A wood.

Tamino is going along a path, guided by three genii seated on a flying vessel. He arrives at the temple of Isis: two doors, the one of Reason and the one of Nature, are shut: whereas a priest shows himself at the third one, the one of Wisdom. He is the Orator, who calmly tells Tamino that right reasons led Sarastro to deliver Pamina from her mother's influence.

Tamino is happy because he has heard that Pamina is alive and thanks the Gods by playing the flute for the first time: the animals of the forest, charmed by that wonderful sound, quietly surround him.

Papageno, who is escorting Pamina, replies the flute with his pipe: the couple have been looking for each other long, but they haven't met yet. Monostatos and the slaves seize the fugitives, but they are almost hypnotized by the magic hand-bells, and depart.

In his way back from beating, Sarastro arrives with his train. He doesn't look like a wicked tyrant: his people cheer him. Pamina begs his pardon for her flight and explains her reasons. Sarastro says he could give her to a worthy knight as his wife, but tells her again that he'll never let her go back to her mother. Suddenly Monostatos reappears with Tamino, whom he sighted near the temple;

Pamina and Tamino, who have never met before, recognize and embrace each other, whereas the head of the guards, who has asked for a reward for his behaviour, is whipped because he tried to lust after the prisoner.

Sarastro orders Tamino to be taken to the temple, and Papageno follows him. A great destiny is in store for the lovers.

Act II

A palm-wood with architectures.

Sarastro explains to his priests the purpose that induced him to abduct Pamina and to protect Tamino: the union of the couple - if they prove worthy of the mission that the Gods have assigned to them - will thwart the Queen of the Night's plans (taking possession of his reign and his temple) and bring again harmony between the reign of Night and the reign of Sun. Everyone prays Isis and Osiris; two priests take Tamino and Papageno to the tests of initiation.

Entrance-hall of the temple.

Tamino and Papageno, wearing a cowl, are preparing themselves, firm of purpose the Prince, terror-struck the fowler, who would want to find a girlfriend, his Papagena. Their first test is the silence one. The couple, who have been left alone, are approached by the Queen of the Night and the three ladies, who try to dissuade them from their enterprise, by telling them Sarastro and his supporters' deceits. But Tamino doesn't care about them and goes on his way.

A thicket.

Monostatos stealthily goes near Pamina, who is sleeping under a bower of flower and roses, and tries to kiss her. Astrifiammante arrives and the girl, in despair because she thinks Tamino has left her, flings herself into her mother's arms, looking for consolation. Then Astrifiammante tells her the story of her life: formerly, Pamina's father reigned over Sun and Night, in the harmony of Universe. Shortly before dying, he consigned the sevenfold Circle of Sun, that gives domination, to the initiates of Sarastro, who now keeps it on his breast. In order to regain possession of the magic sign, the Queen has hatch a plot, destined to come to nothing because Tamino has devoted himself to the initiates. Then she delivers a dagger to her daughter and orders her to murder Sarastro. but Monostatos, who has heard everything, threatens to reveal the conspiracy. Sarastro arrives, expels the moor and reassures the girl, who is afraid of his revenge upon her mother: he sweetly tells her that in his reign there are only Love and Forgiveness, presupposition of Happiness.

Entrance-hall of the temple.

Tamino and Papageno are going on with their test. A horrible old woman appears and declares she is Papagena, Papageno's fiancée, provoking the fowler's bewilderment; then she disappears with a rumble of thunder. The three genii arrive and let down food and drink from the sky to give refreshment to the couple of initiates.

Sarastro, in the heart of the temple, gather together Tamino and Pamina to say good-bye to them. Now Tamino has to overcome the great test by walking on the fire and plunging into the water - that will submerge him - without pausing.

A garden.

Papageno consoles himself with a glass of red wine. The old woman appears to him again in a dream and, after having ordered him, using threats, to marry her, she changes into Papagena, a beautiful and young creature.



TEATRO LIRICO DI CAGLIARI
F O N D A Z I O N E

In front of the temple the three genii notice Pamina, who, upset, holds a dagger in her hands. They approach her and talk with her about Tamino and his love for her.

Tamino sets about getting over the tests of fire and water: Pamina arrives, embraces him and, together with him, expresses her joy. To the sound of the magic flute, they'll cross the fire and the water. Sarastro's people flock to praise the Gods' favourites.

Papageno is on the point of committing suicide: he is in despair because he can't find Papagena. This time too the genii arrive and advise him to make the magic hand-bells sound. As if by magic Papagena arrives; the two embrace each other and plan their future.

Cragged scenery.

The Queen of the Night, together with Monostatos, the traitor, and the three ladies, secretly tries to get near the temple to get into and murder Sarastro. But the earth, with an earth shock, cracks and swallows them up.

In the temple of Sun.

Sarastro on the throne, surrounded by the priests, celebrates the victory of Sun over Darkness with Tamino and Pamina.