

# SIX EASY PIECES (FOR ONE PIANO, FOUR HANDS)

## Based on Mozart's Opera *The Magic Flute*, K. 620

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### Foreword

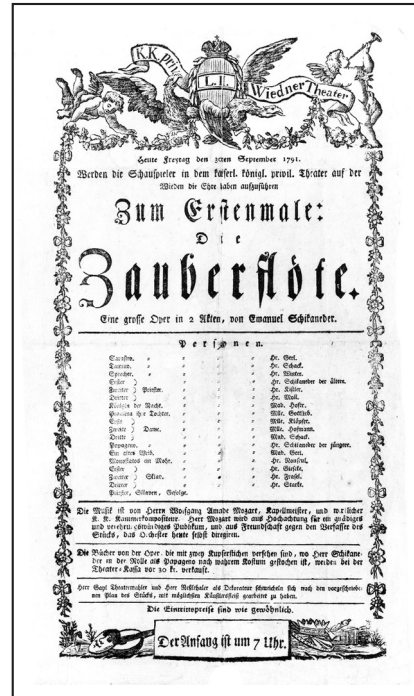
#### Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) completed his opera *The Magic Flute* in the summer of 1791.

The composer presided over the premiere of the work at Vienna's Theater auf der Wieden on September 30, 1791—only two months and five days before his untimely death on December 5 of that year at the age of 35.

*The Magic Flute* was written as a *singspiel*, a genre of folktale musical comedy very popular in the 18th century in the German-speaking world. As befitting the conventions of the genre, the opera features spoken dialogue alternating with ensembles and arias, all spoken or sung in the vernacular German language. Therefore, the singspiels contrast with *opera seria* (serious opera) and *opera buffa* (comic opera), which were written in Italian. Within each story, writers of singspiels typically utilized fantasy and supernatural elements. Additionally, the musical sections of singspiels often contain simple strophic structure.

The fairy-tale plot of *The Magic Flute* is full of supernatural, mythical creatures, often entangled in hyperbolically incongruous situations. The characters are bestowed with magic articles—Prince Tamino with a magic flute endowed with the power to tame wild beasts and protect him on his journeys, and his companion, the bird-catcher Papageno, with magic bells. Riddled with Masonic symbolism (the librettist Emanuel Schikaneder and Mozart belonged to a freemason lodge), the action also abounds in spectacular visual effects. At its core, the story carries a humanistic message of virtue defeating evil, of light prevailing over the forces of darkness.



Play bill of the first performance of *The Magic Flute* on September 30, 1791

The gist of the plot is as follows. Pamina, the daughter of the Queen of the Night, is being held at the Temple of Wisdom belonging to the high priest Sarastro. He is protecting Pamina from her mother's dark powers, and he intends to wed Pamina with Prince Tamino. Pamina and Tamino have been in love, and they long for being united. The Queen of the Night, eager to destroy the Temple of Wisdom, instructs Tamino to enter the temple, kill Sarastro, and bring Pamina back to her. To penetrate the temple, Tamino must pass through several initiation rites, including tests of silence, fire, and water. After successfully completing these trials, Tamino is reunited with Pamina. At the same time, Tamino's comical sidekick Papageno haplessly searches for a wife. He finally finds his mate, Papagena, with the magic powers of his bells. The Queen of the Night's plot is foiled. She is forever banished from the face of the earth, and both couples live happily ever after.

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SECONDO

## Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)  
Christian Gottlob Neefe (1748–1798)

Andante (♩ = ca. 88)

1

5

10

15

20

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PRIMO

## Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Christian Gottlob Neefe (1748–1798)

Andante (♩ = ca. 88)

1 *mf*

5 *p* *f*

10 *p* *a*

15 *f* *p* *f* *p*

20 *p* *f* *p* *f*

*a*