



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (27 January 1756 – 5 December 1791), was a prolific and influential composer of the Classical era. He composed over six hundred works, many acknowledged as pinnacles of the symphonic, *concertante*, chamber, piano, operatic, and choral music. Mozart was a versatile composer, and wrote in every major genre, including symphony, opera, the solo concerto, chamber music including string quartet and string quintet, and the piano sonata. These forms were not new, but Mozart advanced their technical sophistication and emotional reach. He almost single-handedly developed and popularized the Classical piano concerto. He wrote a great deal of religious music, including large-scale masses, but also dances, divertimenti, serenades, and other forms of light entertainment. Mozart learned voraciously from others, and developed a brilliance and maturity of style that encompassed the light and graceful along with the dark and passionate. His influence on subsequent Western art music is profound. Beethoven wrote his own early compositions in the shadow of Mozart, of whom Joseph Haydn wrote that "posterity will not see such a talent again in 100 years."

The Magic Flute is the story of true lovers who must survive magical ordeals before they can be together. Prince Tamino stumbles into the land of the Queen of Night, where he is attacked by a giant serpent. He is rescued by three ladies, who show him a picture of the beautiful Pamina, and Tamino instantly falls in love. Protected by a golden flute, he sets off with the bird-catcher Papageno to rescue Pamina from the clutches of the sorcerer Sarastro. But the sorcerer is actually a wise priest, who tells Pamina that though she and Tamino are destined for each other, they must first prove their love. When the gods instruct Tamino to take a vow of silence, Pamina fears that all is lost and contemplates suicide, but she is comforted by kind spirits and finds new strength to aid Tamino through the trials of fire and water. Triumphant over all adversity, the lovers unite, as the forces of light banish the darkness, and the magic flute carries the final melody. Since its premiere, *The Magic Flute* has always been one of the most beloved works in the operatic repertoire, and is presently the eighth most frequently performed opera in North America.