RODNEY FARNSWORTH

Tamino at the Temples' Portals: A Literary-Musical Analysis of a Key Passage from *Die Zauberflöte*

With an increasing intensity over the last two decades, Mozart's *Zauberflöte* has received more scholarly and critical attention than any other opera, save possibly his *Don Giovanni* and Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. The greater part of the resulting studies have addressed three problems, which might be termed the *Zauberflöte* Questions:

1) Was the libretto entirely the work of Emanuel Schikaneder or, as some have suggested, also that of Carl Ludwig Giesecke? Although the question remains open, there has been, in recent decades, a very strong trend of scholarly opinion in Schikaneder's favor, making it possible to accept his authorship of the entire libretto as a working hypothesis. Be this as it may, authorship is of little importance to a study written, as this is, in defense of a libretto rather than of a particular librettist or, to put it another way, in defense of the *Zauberflöte* librettist rather than any particular candidate for that office. In this regard, one thing is made clear by the scholarship: Mozart is not one of the likely candidates; the words he set were written by someone else.[1]

1 Several important studies published during the first half of the century evidence skepticism concerning Schikaneder's abilities as a writer. Although Alfred Einstein grants that he was probably the librettist of the opera, he suggests that Giesecke might have written the dialogue of Tamino and the Old Priest at the temples' portals, since the 'Diktion ein wenig über Schikaneders Vermögen hinausgeht' (*Mozart: Sein Charakter, sein Werk* [Stockholm: Bermann-Fischer 1947] 604); in short, Einstein would deny Schikaneder one of the finest pieces of writing in the libretto. Similarly, Edward J. Dent seems inclined to assign the low-comedy scenes to Schikaneder and to reserve the more serious ones for Giesecke (*Mozart's Operas: A Critical Study*, 2nd ed. [Oxford: Oxford University Press 1947]. However, by the 1950's one can detect a decided change in the climate of opinion. Dent is ready to revise his former opinion to one less skeptical of Schikaneder's abilities ('Emanuel Schikaneder,' *Music and Letters*, 37 [1956) 14-21). This article is essentially a favorable review of Egon von Komorzynski's biography, *Emanuel Schikaneder: Ein*

CANADIAN REVIEW OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE/REVUE CANADIENNE DE LITTÉRATURE COMPARÉE
CRCL/RCLC DECEMBER/DÉCEMBRE 1981
0319-051X/81/0000-0483 $01.25/©Canadian Comparative Literature Association

2) Was the conception of the plot completely changed in mid-course of the musical setting of the libretto? Here again, conclusive documentation is lacking, and as a result scholars have remained close to the text in trying to answer this question. Scene 15 of Act 1, from which the passage to be analyzed below is taken, has offered important keys toward answering this question, which has generated several works important to mine.[2]

3) Was this opera intended, by the persons involved in its creation, to be a pro-Masonic work? Several studies on this subject have made valuable contributions to an understanding of the Masonic symbols and ideas of the opera.[3]

Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Theaters (Wien: Doblinger 1951). Komorzynski proves, on the basis of other librettos by Schikaneder and of the latter's experience in staging Shakespeare and the German classics, that he had more than enough ability and culture to write the entire *Zauberflöte* libretto on his own, including Tamino's dialogue with the Priest. Alfons Rosenberg carries this defense of Schikaneder further in Chapter 2 of his *'Die Zauberflöte': Geschichte und Deutung von Mozarts Oper* (München: Prestel 1964) 37-70. Brigid Brophy accepts the multiple authorship of the libretto and Schikaneder's lack of abilities (*Mozart the Dramatist: A New View of Mozart, His Operas and his Age* [London: Faber and Faber 1964] 131). Edward Malcolm Batley attacks Brophy's having not apprised herself of Komorzynski's work before making her unquestioning acceptance of multiple authorship ('Emanuel Schikaneder: The Librettist of *Die Zauberflöte*,' *Music and Letters*, 46 [1965] 231-6; republished as Chapter 7 of his *Preface to* The Magic Flute [London: Dobson 1969] 105-13). Of the two studies to have appeared in recent years, one holds to traditional views on the librettist question, but states 'that *Die Zauberflöte* was more than just a silly pantomime with the bonus of sublime music by Mozart' (Charles Osborne, *The Complete Operas of Mozart* [New York: Atheneum 1978] 324); the more substantial of the two sets aside the Giesecke authorship and states that 'the libretto of *Die Zauberflöte*, for those who can read German, is more than decent' (William Mann, *The Operas of Mozart* [New York: Oxford University Press 1977] 599).

2 Dent argues for the change, in midcomposition, of the Queen of Night from good to evil and of Sarastro from evil to good, primarily on the basis of influences and contemporaneous events (Dent, *Mozart's Operas* 218-9). Einstein, on the other hand, sees no reason to suspect such disunity (Einstein, 604-5). Brophy offers a more textually founded argument in support of Dent's view (Brophy, 144-8). Yet Batley shows, also with a close textual analysis, that there is a strong unity in the plot ('Textual Unity in *Die Zauberflöte*,' *Music Review*, 27 [1966] 81-92; republished as Chapter 8 of his *Preface to* The Magic Flute, 114-30). In proving his thesis, Batley focuses on the scene between Tamino and the Priest. In *Die humanistische Idee in der* Zauberflöte: *Ein Beitrag zur Dramaturgie der Oper* (Berlin: Ministerium für Kultur [D.D.R.] 1954), Götz Friedrich emphatically dismisses those critics who support the disunity theory (see especially pp. 37, 60).

3 Paul Nettl handles the Masonic aspect exhaustively in his *Mozart and Masonry* (New York: Philosophical Library 1957). Rosenberg and Brophy emphasize the im-

My study is directed entirely toward a fourth *Zauberflöte* question: how do the music and the text combine to create a masterpiece of the standard repertoire, which is neither pure music nor spoken drama, but a real marriage of both? While this is certainly not a marriage of equals, it is all too easy to write in praise of Mozart's musical setting at the expense of what he has set – Schikaneder's libretto. It must always be remembered that apart from the overture and other purely orchestral passages (and even these grow out of the text), Mozart's music is basically a setting of words concerning which, to repeat, there is absolutely no documentary evidence to support his authorship. In order to understand how this opera has successfully functioned on the stage for nearly two hundred years, one must study the dramatic and verbal framework (that is, the libretto) into which the music has been placed, as well as the music *qua* music. It is to be hoped that my study will make a contribution toward an understanding of the complex interrelation of libretto and music which gives *Die Zauberflöte* its dramatic viability.

To my knowledge, the only student of this opera to pose and answer this fourth question, thereby defining the work's dramatic quality, is Joseph Kerman, the author of *Opera as Drama*.[4] Unfortunately, there is a dangerous flaw in his methodology. The following passage indicates, as much by what it says as by what it omits, how Kerman tends to overemphasize the role of the composer and de-emphasize that of the librettist: 'For the composer, I should like to believe that the essential problem is to clarify the central dramatic idea, to refine the vision. This cannot be left to the librettist; the dramatist is the composer' (p. 267). Kerman has brilliantly defined the essential role of the composer, but he overstates his case when he concludes that the composer is the dramatist.[5] If one labels the person who clarifies and refines the dramatic idea of vision the opera's 'dramatist,' then what label does one attach to the implied person who conceives and initiates 'the central dramatic idea' – the predramatist? In treating *Die Zauberflöte*, Kerman never states precisely who originates the dramatic idea and vision nor, indeed, ever defines

portance of the opera's Masonic elements. Perhaps the most valuable approach to the Masonic question is that of Jacques Chailley, who employs Freemason lore as a key to the symbolism of the libretto – a particularly useful approach in a ritual scene like that of Tamino before the temples' portals (The Magic Flute, *Masonic Opera: An Interpretation of the Libretto and the Music*, tr. Herbert Weinstock [New York: Knopf 1971] passim).

4 Joseph Kerman, *Opera as Drama* (New York: Vintage 1956). All references to this work are cited in the text in parentheses (emphasis mine).

5 Concerning this passage in Kerman, see Ulrich Weisstein, 'The Libretto as Literature,' *Books Abroad* 35 (1961) 16.

their exact nature. Furthermore, he never explains how the composer can be called the sole dramatist of an opera, a *Singspiel* to be exact, almost half of which is spoken dialogue. But most important of all, Kerman pays only slight attention to Mozart's sublime and incontestable contribution to the dramatics of *Die Zauberflöte* – the music. In short, he neglects discussing the means by which a composer truly refines the initial vision.

Instead, Kerman directs much of his argument toward making questionable attributions to Mozart of aspects central to the libretto, such as plot and ideas. Without offering the slightest shred of evidence, he hazards this conjecture: 'Mozart appears to have been in charge; he really learned to bully his librettist' (p. 124). Since Schikaneder was the composer's employer and since Mozart was in dire financial straits, such bullying on Mozart's part seems unlikely.[6] Again without providing documentation or, perhaps more to the point, a quotation from the musical setting, Kerman attributes an important aspect of the plot entirely to the composer: 'Pamina assists Tamino; what the supposedly misogynic Freemasons thought of this, I cannot say, but *Mozart made* it the center of *his drama*' (p. 125). Kerman is quick to attribute lofty sentiments to the composer and the stylistic flaws to the librettist. If the composer clarifies ideas, then one had perhaps better seek for his contributions in his setting; yet, in support of the following statement on the subject, Kerman cites a quotation not from the music but from the libretto:

> *Mozart's view* of destiny is rather mystic than Manichaean. In Sarastro's realm sin merits neither glamour nor damnation, it is simply checked as inevitably as day follows night:
>
> Die Strahlen der Sonne vertreiben die Nacht,
> Zernichten der Heuchler erschlichene Macht. (p. 124)

And yet, while Kerman deprives the librettist of absolutely all credit for the noble ideas expressed through the scenario, prose, and verse, he readily blames him for the poor prosody: 'Ideals can be cheapened, and doubtless they are by Schikaneder's doggerel' (p. 128). Only if there were some documentation to prove that Mozart came to the librettist carrying a plot sketch, with a corresponding list of lofty notions, and asked the latter to fill it out with 'doggerel,' could one then accept Kerman's opinions concerning the genesis of *Die Zauberflöte*. And, since no such evidence is available, we should do well not to assign those elements

6 Einstein, 603; Dent, *Mozart's Operas*, 211-2

which we admire in the text to the composer and those which we do not to the librettist. By carefully distinguishing the musical contributions of the composer from the verbal ones of the librettist, one might construct a solid proof for what is best in Kerman's thesis – that the composer, *by means of his music*, clarifies the central dramatic idea and refines the vision. In fact, I think one will find that the composer is not the sole dramatist of his opera; and, if he were to prove more important than the librettist, it would be only because, leaving aside all conjectures on the relative genius of each, his contribution comes in the final stage of the work's creation, when the whole is, indeed, clarified and refined.

In spite of all his oversights, Kerman clears away a major misconception which has often obstructed a balanced study of this *Singspiel*. He admirably delineates the essential difference between a musical work for the stage like *Die Zauberflöte* and a work of absolute music like the *Jupiter Symphony* – surprisingly, a distinction not always made by audiences and by writers on music:

> You can hear it said that *The Magic Flute* is a supreme work of art entirely on account of its wonderful music and in spite of the foolish accompanying plot. That is the 'pure-music' view of opera. But the truth is that its adherents would not tolerate fully a third of the music of *The Magic Flute* in the concert hall, outside its dramatic framework; think of Papageno's folk songs, or *Tamino's great recitative with the Orator*, or the unimaginably bare march for the Ordeals. (p. 127)

But even here, Kerman avoids the crucial point: Mozart has set a preexisting dramatic text, and this above all else prevents the music of *Die Zauberflöte* from being pure or absolute. Nothing could better demonstrate the conscious and careful way in which the musical setting develops from the text of this *Singspiel* than by a musico-literary analysis of a passage from scene 15 of Act 1 which Kerman refers to above as 'Tamino's great recitative with the Orator':[7]

> TAMINO.
> *(Er geht an die Pforte zur rechten Seite, macht sie auf, und als er hinein will, hört man von fern eine Stimme.)*
> STIMME. Zurück!

7 The following is my literal, line-by-line translation: (*He* [Tamino] *goes to the door on the right-hand side, opens it, and is about to enter when a distant voice is heard.)*
VOICE: Back!

TAMINO. Zurück? so wag ich hier mein Glück!
(Er geht zur linken Pforte, eine Stimme von innen.)
STIMME. Zurück!
TAMINO. Auch hier ruft man zurück? *(sieht sich um)*
Da sehe ich noch eine Thür!
Vielleicht find ich den Eingang hier.
(Er klopft, ein alter Priester erscheint.)
PRIESTER. Wo willst du kühner Fremdling, hin?
Was suchst du hier im Heiligthum?
TAMINO. Der Lieb und Tugend Eigenthum.
PRIESTER. Die Worte sind von hohem Sinn!
Allein, wie willst du diese finden?
Dich leitet Lieb und Tugend nicht,
Weil Tod und Rache dich entzünden.
TAMINO. Nur Rache für den Bösewicht.
PRIESTER. Den wirst du wohl bey uns nicht finden.
TAMINO. Sarastro herrscht in diesen Gründen?
PRIESTER. Ja, ja! Sarastro herrschet hier!
TAMINO. Doch in dem Weisheitstempel nicht?
PRIESTER. Er herrscht im Weisheitstempel hier.
TAMINO. So ist denn alles Heucheley! *(will gehen.)*

TAMINO: Back? then I'll try my luck here!
(He goes to the left hand door; a voice is heard from within.)
VOICE: Back!
TAMINO: Here, too, someone cries back? *(he looks around.)*
I see yet another door there.
Perhaps I can enter here.
(He knocks; an old priest appears.)
PRIEST: What are you here for, bold stranger?
What do you seek here in this holy place?
TAMINO: That which, by rights, belongs to love and virtue.
PRIEST: Your words bespeak a lofty mind!
Yet, how will you find these?
Virtue and love do not lead you,
Since death and vengeance inflame you.
TAMINO: Vengeance solely for the scoundrel!
PRIEST: You shall not find him among us.
TAMINO: Does Sarastro rule in this realm?
PRIEST: Yes, indeed, Sarastro rules here.
TAMINO: Surely not in the Temple of Wisdom?
PRIEST: He rules here in the Temple of Wisdom.
TAMINO: So then everything is hypocrisy!
(He starts to leave.)

PRIESTER. Willst du schon wieder geh'n?
TAMINO. Ja, ich will geh'n, froh und frei, –
Nie euren Tempel seh'n.
PRIESTER. Erklär dich näher mir, dich täuschet ein Betrug.
TAMINO. Sarastro wohnet hier, das ist mir schon genug.
PRIESTER. Wenn du dein Leben liebst, so rede, bleibe da!
Sarastro hassest du?
TAMINO. Ich haß ihn ewig! Ja –
PRIESTER. Nur gieb mir deine Gründe an.
TAMINO. Er ist ein Unmensch, ein Tyrann!
PRIESTER. Ist das, was du gesagt, erwiesen?
TAMINO. Durch ein unglücklich Weib bewiesen,
Das Gram und Jammer niederdrückt.
PRIESTER. Ein Weib hat also dich berückt?
Ein Weib thut wenig, plaudert viel.
Du Jüngling glaubst dem Zungenspiel?
O legte doch Sarastro dir
Die Absicht seiner Handlung für.
TAMINO. Die Absicht ist nur allzu klar;
Riß nicht der Räuber ohn' Erbarmen,
Paminen aus der Mutter Armen?
PRIESTER. Ja, Jüngling! was du sagst, ist wahr.

PRIEST: Are you leaving so soon?
TAMINO: Yes, I want to leave, glad and free,
Never to see your temple again!
PRIEST: Explain yourself to me; you've been taken in by some deception.
TAMINO: Sarastro dwells here; that's quite enough for me.
PRIEST: If you value your life, speak, stay there!
Do you hate Sarastro?
TAMINO: I'll always hate him! yes -
PRIEST: Give me your reason for doing so.
TAMINO: He is a monster and a tyrant!
PRIEST: Is there proof for what you say?
TAMINO: I have proof from an unhappy woman,
Oppressed by grief and misery.
PRIEST: Has a woman so beguiled you?
A woman does little, prattles much.
Do you, youth, believe this chatter?
Oh, would that Sarastro were able to reveal to you
The purpose of his actions.
TAMINO: His purpose is all too clear;
Didn't this pitiless robber tear
Pamina out of her Mother's arms?
PRIEST: Yes, youth! what you say is true.

TAMINO. Wo ist sie, die er uns geraubt?
Man opferte vieleicht [sic] sie schon?
PRIESTER. Dir dieß zu sagen, theurer Sohn!
Ist jetzund mir noch nicht erlaubt.
TAMINO. Erklär dieß Räthsel, täusch mich nicht.
PRIESTER. Die Zunge bindet Eid und Pflicht.
TAMINO. Wann also wird die Decke schwinden?
PRIESTER. Sobald dich führt der Freundschaft Hand,
Ins Heiligthum zum ew'gen Band. (*geht ab.*)
TAMINO. *(allein)* O ewige Nacht! wann wirst du schwinden?
Wann wird das Licht mein Auge finden?
EINIGE STIMMEN. Bald Jüngling, oder nie!
TAMINO. Bald sagt ihr, oder nie!
Ihr Unsichtbaren, saget mir!
Lebt denn Pamina noch?
DIE STIMMEN. Pamina lebet noch!

I shall argue how the effectiveness of this passage derives from an interworking of text and music, in which neither overpowers the other and in which both function on the same elevated plane. In so doing, I am hardly

TAMINO: Where is she whom he has abducted from us?
Perhaps she has already been sacrificed?
PRIEST: To tell you this, worthy son,
Is not yet granted to me.
TAMINO: Explain this riddle; don't deceive me.
PRIEST: My tongue is bound by oath and duty.
TAMINO: So when will the veil be lifted?
PRIEST: As soon as friendship's hand will guide you,
Into the holy place, towards the eternal brotherhood.
(Exits.)
TAMINO *(alone)*: Oh, eternal night! When will you dissipate?
When will my eyes find the light?
SEVERAL VOICES: Soon youth, or never!
TAMINO: Soon you say, or never!
You invisible ones, tell me!
Is Pamina still alive?
THE VOICES: Pamina still lives!

The German text, based on the first edition (1791) of the libretto, is quoted from *Die Maschinenkomödie*, ed. Otto Rommel (Leipzig: Reclam 1935) I, 281-3. Musical quotations come from the piano-vocal score edited by Erwin Stein (New York: Boosey and Hawkes 1944) 62-71. When I refer to the instrumentation of a particular musical passage, I cite the pages where this passage occurs in the full score of *Die Zauberflöte*, in *Mozarts Werke* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel 1888), Series 5, Vol. 20 to be cited in text as 'orchestra score.'

alone. Indeed, no less a connoisseur than Richard Strauss calls this scene the highpoint of Mozart's dramatic art.[8]

In his history of opera, Donald J. Grout suggests that this passage of *recitativo accompagnato* is a landmark in the development of German opera. He points out that Mozart, in setting it, took an unprecedented step in bringing recitative into the *Singspiel*, which at the composer's time was the sole form of German national opera:

> In the recitatives Mozart solved a problem which the Singspiel had hitherto avoided, namely, that of finding an appropriate musical declamation for German dialogue. In the long scene between Tamino and the High Priest in the first finale we hear how the melodic line – now declamatory, now breaking forth in arioso phrases – is fitted to the accents and rhythm of the language and at the same time suggests most vividly the contrasted feelings of the two interlocutors. Not a note is wasted; there are no meaningless formulae; every phrase plays its part in the dramatic structure of the dialogue, to which the harmonic progressions also contribute a significant share. Such recitative had not been heard in Germany since the time of Bach.[9]

Why did Mozart choose such a sparse setting at this point in the opera? Obviously, since the passage occurs in the Act 1 finale and since the librettist set it in verse, spoken dialogue was out of the question. One possibility remains, however: that Mozart might have employed a *cantilena*, indeed *bel canto*, setting of a fully developed duet. The possibility seems, at first, remote, but is borne out by several structural features which the passage shares with other ensembles of the opera.[10] It may have been, then, that Mozart set this scene in the near-declamatory type of recitative out of a respectful desire to get across the words and idea of this passage. Further evidence for his respect is indicated by Grout's comparing the recitative in this scene to that found in the works of J.S. Bach,

8 *Die Zauberflöte*, writes Strauss, 'enthält . . . ein längeres, die Handlung wirklich bedeutungsvoll fortbildendes Rezitativ: die erhabene Szene zwischen Tamino und dem Priester: zugleich Höhepunkt in Mozarts dramatischem Schaffen' (Vorwort zu *Intermezzo*, in *Betrachtungen und Erinnerungen*, ed. Willi Schuh [Zürich: Atlantis 1957] 140). See also Mann, 618.

9 Donald J. Grout, *A Short History of Opera*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press 1965), 294-5

10 I can detect no differences between the poetic meter of this passage and that of other lyric passages. Moreover, like most of the opera's ensembles, the passage is dynamic; that is, it has a self-contained dramatic segment during which the plot moves forward, causing a change in the situation – examples from Act I: 'Zu hülfe!' (scene 1); 'Hm! hm!' (scenes 7 and 8); 'Du feines Täubchen' (scenes 11 and 12); the rest of the finale (scenes 16-19).

where it was used to set no less a text than the *Evangelium* narration; this may offer yet another example in this opera of a returning to the venerable Baroque tradition for forms elevated by traditional, religious employment.[11] Be this as it may, the philosophical tone of the interchange between Tamino and the Priest has found an ideal correspondent in this type of recitative.

It might be argued that the passage's atypical use of recitative has little to do with the opera's entire make-up, which consists mainly of full-vocal setting and spoken dialogues. Aside from Tamino's recitative monologues which immediately precede and follow the passage in question, there are only two other recitative passages in the entire opera; both occur at key points in the plot, but are quite short.[12] It may be that the unusual musical treatment of the passage has been designed to set it off and to emphasize its key importance to the opera's structure. For, as E.M. Batley shows, it marks the center of the plot development. He goes so far as to say that the unity of the opera depends upon it, calling it the pivot around which the plot revolves and proving it to be the turning point in the character development of the protagonist, Tamino.[13] For in the course of this passage, the latter is won away from the Queen of Night's forces, which he hitherto has considered to be of Good, and is won over to the side of Sarastro's brotherhood, which he has hitherto considered as evil. Although Tamino does not fully comprehend the nature of the brotherhood by the end of his dialogue with the Old Priest, as indicated by his ritualistic plea for enlightenment at its conclusion, he has taken the crucial step. It must be admitted in support of Batley's argument that if one were to judge strictly by the stage action, the conversion must occur in the course of this passage; for the subject is never broached again during the rest of Act I and, when it is next mentioned in the first scene of Act II, we learn that Tamino is already requesting acceptance into Sarastro's brotherhood. Thus the young man's world-view most clearly undergoes a reversal during this encounter with the Priest. Moreover, if one remembers that Tamino's joining the brotherhood, and, closely linked with it, his winning Pamina's hand are the two ends toward which the entire plot is directed, it becomes clear that the dialogue is of utmost importance to the opera's plot development. This

11 See Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Hayden, Mozart, Beethoven*, rev. ed. (New York: Norton 1972) 319.

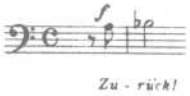
12 The first recitative passage, which is in the Italian style (Grout, 295, n. 30), introduces the Queen of Night's first aria (Act I, scene 6). It is significant that the other, which is in the German style, is sung by Sarastro at the conclusion of the opera (Act II, scene 30).

13 Batley, 'Textual Unity,' 84-5.

alone would justify a thorough study of it, and to my knowledge, no such study exists. While there are several illuminating and highly useful studies of the entire opera, these perforce treat this passage briefly.[14]

The passage in question occurs near the beginning of the finale, just after Tamino has been led by the Three Genii to the portals of three temples, respectively labeled as Wisdom *(Weisheit)*, Reason *(Vernunft)*, and Nature *(Natur)*. Tamino is intent on winning Pamina, the Queen of Night's daughter, from Sarastro, whom he believes to be evil. Tamino is prevented from entering the portal of the first temple by voices which laconically command him not to enter. Musically, Mozart creates an aura of mystery by employing an unprepared chromatic progression from A to B♭; although the keys g and D intervene, this prepares for the eventual harmonic change to E♭:

EX. 1



Upon his trying a second door, he receives a similar command, but now set in the key of E♭. Although conjectures concerning the use of keys for extra-musical purposes are risky, there is evidence to support Mozart's having used them in this way for his operas.[15] This return to E♭ seems no exception. For, since the opera begins, ends, and remains predominantly in this key, and since the harmonic progression up to this point has not employed E♭ in the finale (just prior to this the progres-

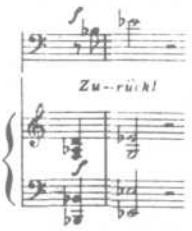
14 Rosenberg, 86-7; Chailley, 216-20; Friedrich, 62-4; Thilo Cornelissen, *Die Zauberflöte* (Berlin: Lienau 1963) 61-4. Of general interest are the notes to W.H. Auden and Chester Kallman's translation, *The Magic Flute* (New York: Random House 1956), 103-8.

15 Mozart's deep concern with key changes for dramatic effect can be documented by his letter to his father dated 26 September 1781, concerning a passage from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail:* in this remarkable piece of self-analysis, he describes how he indicates Osmin's losing his temper by modulating to a remote key; for, in Mozart's words,

> da sein Zorn immer wächst, so muß – da man glaubt, die Aria sei schon zu Ende – das allegro assai – ganz in einem andern Zeitmaß, und in einem andern Ton – eben den besten Effekt machen. Denn ein Mensch, der sich in einem so heftigen Zorn befindet, überschreitet alle Ordnung, Maß und Ziel, er kennt sich nicht – so muß sich auch die Musik nicht mehr kennen. – Weil aber die Leidenschaften, heftig oder nicht, niemals bis zum Ekel ausgedrückt sein müssen, und die Musik, auch in der schaudervollsten Lage, das Ohr niemalen beleidigen, sondern doch dabei vergnügen muß, folglich allzeit Musik bleiben muß, so habe ich keinen fremden Ton zum F (zum Ton der

sion has been C-F-d-f-G-e-D-g[16]), Mozart gives a tonal emphasis to the three doors in general and the second door in particular.[17] The three flats of E♭ correspond numerically and sequentially to the three doors: the scale-tone B♭ predominates at the first door (EX.1), E♭ at the second (EX.2), A♭ at the third (EX.3). Yet one question remains: why is E♭ fully reached only at the portal of the second, left-hand temple, the *Tempel der Natur?* Perhaps it is because Tamino already innately possesses the *Vernunft* (represented by the first temple), will gain *Weisheit* (third temple) from the Old Priest who will appear there, but becomes a part of *Natur* (second) only by the eventual unity with Pamina towards which the plot tends:

EX.2



These choral pronouncements, encountered by Tamino at the first two doors, contribute to the mysterious, solemn confrontation between him and the Old Priest, which occurs when the young man tries to enter the third door. The Priest steps out of that door to a dignified rhythmic figure in the strings (orchestra score, p. 81), which is one of the dotted patterns (♩. ♪ – ⌈ z ⌉) usually associated with stately marches:

EX. 3

Aria), sondern einen befreundeten dazu, aber nicht den nächsten, d-minor, sondern den weitern, a-minor, gewählt (*Briefe*, ed. Willi Reich [Zürich: Manesse 1948] 228).

16 Cornelissen, 63

17 The harmonics of Tamino's movement among the portals is a very complex problem which is treated admirably by William Mann (p. 618). He correlates Tamino's 'jaunty steps' to the first door with its D-major setting, and he find the g-minor modulation expressive of Tamino's 'more cautious walk' to the second door. After the second door, however, and several bars after the appearance of the priest at the third door, the tonality remains at E♭ or very close – either its relative minor, c, or its subdominant, A♭ -major. See also Chailley, 161-3 and 216.

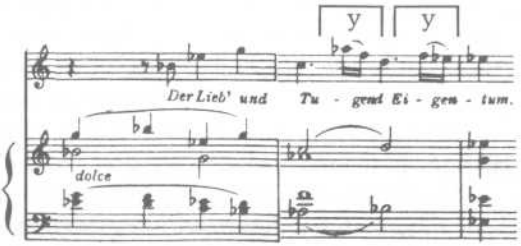
One writer goes so far as to term this rhythmic pattern a *leitmotiv* because it prevails throughout the opera in all important priestly pronouncements.[18] Be that as it may, for the purposes of this paper it is important to note that this pattern recurs in the priest's key pronouncements throughout the Priest-Tamino dialogue. Schikaneder endows the Priest's opening questions (ll. 7-8) with a ritualistic quality by using parallelisms of rhetoric and alliteration:

Wo will*st* *du* kühner Fremdling, *hin*?
Was such*st* *du* *hier* im *Heiligthum*?

It is significant that Tamino's reply (l. 9), that he seeks the rights of Love (*Lieb*) and of Virtue (*Tugend*), is set in the key of E♭;[19] once again emphasis is given to a phrase by presenting it in the principal tonality of the opera as a whole. This reply, as ritualistic as the question, manifests not only Tamino's innate goodness but also his ultimate goals in the course of the plot, for in achieving Pamina's hand and by gaining entrance into the brotherhood, he will find, respectively, Love and Virtue. To emphasize the high – even if misguided – purposes expressed in Tamino's reply, Mozart sets it with a noble *arioso* phrase containing a dotted figure (♩. ♬ – [y]) and accompanies it with a four-part, quasi-chorale harmony of thirds and sixths played by the clarinets, bassoons, cellos, and double basses (orchestra score, p. 81):

EX. 4

(T.)



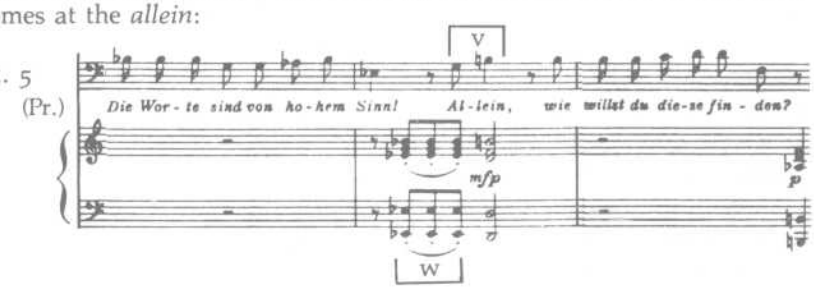
(Cf. [y] with [z] of EX. 3)

The composer punctuates the first part of the Old Priest's reply (l. 10) with an emphatic figure of the repeated E♭ I chord, which then modulates to c, the relative minor of E♭ [w]. This change of mode from major to minor [v] conveys the Priest's change of tone from approbation to one of solemn condemnation for the unknowingly

18 Rosenberg, 86
19 Friedrich, 63; Chailley, 163 and 217

base motivations behind Tamino's high-minded words. The transition comes at the *allein*:

EX. 5



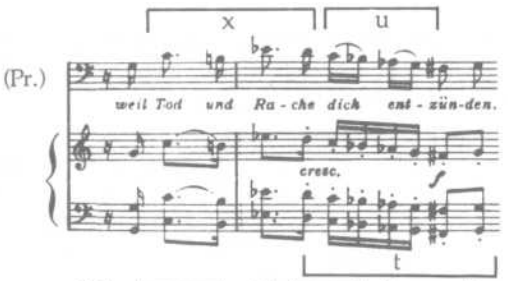
Here, the music underscores a moral qualification by a transition of mood already clearly expressed in the libretto – where it fits as follows:

TAMINO. Der Lieb und Tugend Eigenthum,
PRIESTER. Die Worte sind von hohem Sinn!
Allein, wie willst du diese finden?
Dich leitet Lieb und Tugend nicht,
Weil Tod und Rache dich entzünden.

The last phrase of this pronouncement introduces a sentiment important to the moral fabric and dramatic design of the opera, namely, that revenge is an evil and destructive force which, whatever its rationale, has no place in Sarastro's brotherhood. Tamino gives voice to the opposing sentiment, that an eye-for-an-eye revenge (*Rache*) is justified against the scoundrel (*Bösewicht*), which is what he considers Sarastro to be (l. 14). As Batley points out, the motivation of revenge 'condemns Tamino now as it later condemns the Queen of Night.'[20] Here the priest has revealed the essential flaw in Tamino's character that must be mended by the brotherhood. The librettist has carefully introduced these two contrary notions which he will fully develop during highpoints in Act II: the vengeful attitude of Tamino receives fuller expression in the poetry of the Queen's second aria, 'Der Hölle Rache' (scene 10); the Priest's admonition against revenge, in Sarastro's aria, 'In diesen heil'gen Hallen' (scene 12). Th composer, realizing the importance of the Priest's condemnation, has given it emphasis by a unison accompaniment. By setting the first two syllables of the verbal phrase *dich entzünden* with an unusually melismatic figure [u] and by accompanying this with a staccato as well as crescendo figure [t], the composer seeks to offer musical correspondences to the verbal image of Tamino's inflamed state of mind:

20 Batley, 'Textual Unity,' 84

EX. 6



(Cf. [x] with [y] of EX. 4.)

In setting this phrase, Mozart has employed musical meter and rhythm with expressive subtlety. A dotted rhythmic pattern (♪. 𝅘𝅥𝅯 – [x]) characterizes the solemnity of the Priest, emphasizes the important words, and underscores the poetic meter and rhythm.

Musical emphasis can be placed on a particular syllable, even word or phrase, in several ways, four of which are operative in this passage (EX. 6):

1) metrical (musical) emphasis by placing the stressed syllables of an important word on the first, hence accented beat of the measure – the *Ra-* of *Rache*;

2) emphasis by setting an important word at high pitch (or by lowering pitch) towards the extremes of the vocal range (sometimes this can cause a slurring of the consonants, having an opposite effect) – the *Tod*, to C, and *Ra-che*, to E♭ and D respectively;

3) rhythmic emphasis by giving a longer duration to stressed words or syllables;
   a) emphasizing the stressed syllable of a key word – *Tod* and *Ra-* of *Rache* set as dotted eights (♪.) – ,
   b) or emphasizing the metrics of the verse – in [x] unstressed syllables are set with sixteenth notes (𝅘𝅥𝅯) and stressed ones with dotted eighth notes, corresponding here with the iambic meter of the verse;

4) emphasis by word-coloring, that is the setting of a syllable, word or phrase with a melismatic figure [u] , discussed above.

Regardless of whether or not these are consciously used in all cases, they offer examples of poetical-musical modes of driving home the point.

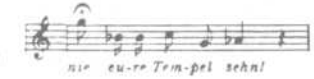
These modes, along with others, occur in the exchange that follows. From line 14 through 47, Mozart employs an extreme economy. First, he uses two means of accentuation not mentioned above:

5) emphasis of long syllables by setting them at a higher pitch than the short;

EX. 7

6) a *fermato* gives emphasis to a crucial word:[21]

EX. 8



Secondly, for the most part, Mozart sets this section of the dialogue in a highly declamatory recitative, which is designed to follow variations in speech patterns. On a simple level, this setting requires musical pitches to follow the verbal inflection and hence to convey, by the most direct means possible, the text of this rapid interchange between Tamino and his instructor. The following examples illustrate general patterns:

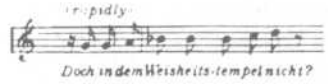
1) In the case of indicative sentences, the pitch tends to move upwards, then downwards:

EX. 9

(Cf. ⌜ x ⌝ with ⌜ x ⌝ of EX. 6.)

2) For interrogative sentences, the overall trend is upwards:

EX. 10



To be sure, these formulas of emphasis and inflection are not absolutes, nor are they all employed in every phrase, else monotony would be the result. And in spite of Mozart's obvious striving for a sparseness and closeness in his setting of this portion of the text, he did not forget musical considerations, such as the melodic repetition found in two

21 Cf. Friedrich, 63

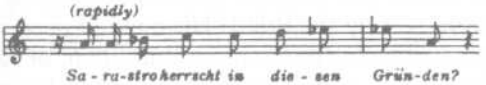
phrases, EX. 11 and EX. 12. The melody of the setting of the declarative phrase –

EX. 11

(Cf. ⌜ x ⌝ with ⌜ x ⌝ of EXS 6 and 9.)

– is mirrored by a close intervallic duplication in the setting of the succeeding interrogative phrase:

EX. 12



Yet, even here, pure or absolute musical considerations do not prevail, for the sole downward-moving interval (a diminished fifth) offers a musical equivalent of each of the feminine endings found in the two rhyme words, *finden* and *Gründen*. A rhythmic variation occurs in EX. 12, because the Priest retains his characteristic figure ⌜ x ⌝, which Tamino will not take on until his conversion.

Moreover, sparse though Mozart's setting may be in this section of the dialogue, there are several patches in which the composer, through his orchestral accompaniment or other musical means, adds color to the libretto. At one point, Schikaneder's text concisely evokes Tamino's confusion as to who are agents of Good and who, of Evil. In lines 16 through 20, this confusion causes him to conclude that all is hypocrisy (*Heucheley*) because the seemingly evil Sarastro reigns in the Temple of Wisdom (*Weisheitstempel*). This important moral crisis is embodied by the stage-setting of a temple dedicated to Wisdom and the stage direction of Tamino's starting to move away (*will gehen*), when he concludes that wisdom is a sham. For a brief instant the moral universe has lost its centering pivot for Tamino and, by extension, for the audience. Mozart departs from an otherwise economical accompaniment to underscore Tamino's despair and the crucial nature of the moment with a diminished seventh chord (this chord is often associated with tension and passion), further color is added by introducing this chord with a tremolo:

EX. 13

Moreover, according to the orchestra score (p. 82), the composer seeks to establish further the tenseness of Tamino's situation by having marked his excited questions *schnell* and the calm replies of the Priest *langsam*, signifying that the first has a fast tempo and the latter, a slow.

Now that he has his proselyte reeling in an ethical void, the Priest launches into what can only be compared to a Socratic dialogue, consisting of a series of carefully phrased questions of his own and of his avoiding direct answers to Tamino's questions. This exchange, beginning at line 21, will initiate Tamino's conversion to Sarastro's side. Indeed, a certain dramatic depth is added because an uninitiated audience would be of the same opinion as Tamino; ideally, after being confused, they, too, must be won over by the Priest. His method of so doing consists of making Tamino explain his motivations and, then, of casting aspersions on them. He hints that, in this way, Tamino will become aware of his misconceptions. It is an initiation rite, and the librettist emphasizes this aspect by rhetorical parallelisms (ll. 24-25):

PRIESTER: Erklär dich näher *mir, dich* täuschet ein *Betrug.*
TAMINO: Sarastro wohnet *hier, das* is mir schon *genug.*

In these lines, too, Schikaneder sustains the dramatic intensity of the moment: Tamino's conversion depends on his answering the Priest's questions, which he is now refusing to do because his hatred for Sarastro temporarily deafens him. Mozart gives musical expression to the gravity of the situation by a tremolo in the strings (orchestra score, p. 86) and by the harmony; for if one analyzes the initial chord with the pedal point, it is a $b\flat$ of the V (or F of the I) with a diminished seventh – altogether, an unsettling dissonance:

EX. 14

The Old Priest, in line 26, gives Tamino a double-edged command to remain there, which would sound to the latter like a threat on his life, but which should be taken rather as a disguised offer of earthly fulfillment through membership in the brotherhood:

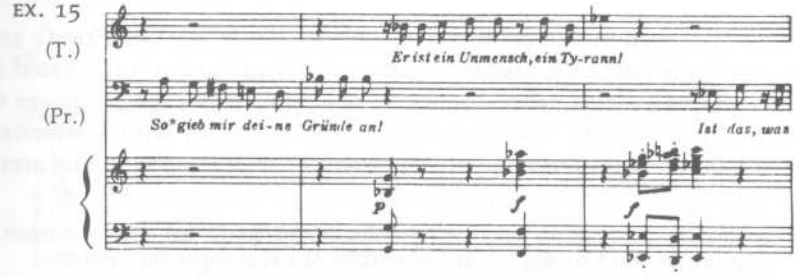
PRIESTER: *Wenn du dein Leben liebst*, so rede, bleibe da!
Sarastro *hassest* du?
TAMINO: Ich *haß* ihn ewig! Ja –

It should be noted that in the last of these lines (27), through his phrasing of the Priest's question and of Tamino's reply, Schikaneder has given terse emphasis to his protagonist's potentially fatal flaw – Tamino's misplaced hatred, indeed, his very impulse to hate at all. Mozart, as in EX. 14, draws upon a tremolo figure over a pedal point and employs it to underscore the two forms of *hassen*.

The creation of this highly dramatic confrontation, so crucial to the entire opera, is the culmination achieved by the combined forces of two artistic modes of expression. The librettist has embodied the abstract notions in powerful symbols, tautly phrased lines, and dramatically viable actions – psychological 'actions' or developments, as well as physical ones. The composer has admirably underscored the suspense of the situations and states of mind of each character by means of tempo markings, tremolo figures, dissonant chords, and pedal points. Yet it must be remembered that without the verse and the scenario, these musical effects, especially that of the tremolo, would sound hollow and meaningless.

In the interchange that follows (ll. 28-35), the Priest confronts Tamino, whose premature departure he has managed to prevent with a series of leading questions concerning the young man's motives; at the same time, Mozart sharpens the words of the interrogation by cutting back drastically on the accompaniment. As can be seen from the following example, the harmony is passing, indeed downright protean in its rapid changes, and the orchestra strikes chords during the rests between vocal phrases, creating an effect very close to the *recitativo secco* of Mozart's Italian operas:

EX. 15



(* *sic* – *Nur* in libretto)

There are several striking exceptions to this sparse, quasi-*secco* accompaniment. One such exception occurs when Tamino is finally led to tell of his encounter with the Queen of Night as bereaved mother; both librettist and composer make it clear that the dulcet tones of her 'Zum Leiden' aria have completely won him over. In the course of two lines (31-2) Schikaneder creates by evocative adjectives and verbs Tamino's mental-image of the Queen: a sorrowing woman, not a powerful goddess, and indicates that the young prince has an inherent, if misplaced, humanity, which makes him conceive of her on a totally human plane:

Durch *ein unglücklich Weib* bewiesen,
Das *Gram* und *Jammer nieder*drückt!

Mozart accompanies this image of human sorrow with a sustained diminished seventh chord, which might be interpreted as a sigh and which is resolved by a g-minor triad – a possible reference to the 'Zum Leiden' aria, written in the same key:

EX. 16

The sentiments of the Priest's reply are also on a human level, comic this time rather than pathetic, and appropriately delivered in the form of the folklike aphorism, so common to the *Singspiel* (II. 33.-5). The word *Zungenspiel* (chatter) adds a further comic touch:

Ein Weib hat also dich berückt?
Ein Weib thut wenig, plaudert viel.
Du Jüngling glaubst dem *Zungenspiel?*

This aphorism makes an effective contribution to the Old Priest's argument by deflating the vision of pathos that Tamino has just created and by offering a satiric generalization to the young man's specific image of a sorrowing woman. The music colors the aphorism with a temporary modulation from the minor to the brighter major mode.[22] The accom-

22 Chailley also finds the tonal setting of this line important, but offers a different explanation. For him, this is a pronouncement of a very important concept in Freemasonry – misogyny. The priest, 'in a peremptory "arpeggio of majesty" supported on a fine C-major chord (tonality of affirmation and certainty), pronounces in the name of Wisdom the sentence against which there is no appeal' (p. 218).

paniment resembles EX. 16, except that the chord is now the C-major triad.

It is Tamino who takes over the questioning, in the next section, from line 36 to line 45. By now doubt, confusion, and despair, as well as awe for the profound secrecy of the Priest and for the great mysteries it seems to hide, are all getting the better of Tamino. This incipient change in the attitude of the protagonist is apparent in the librettist's images of understanding, sacred duty, and enlightenment, contained in the following three lines (46-8):

TAMINO: *Erklär dieß Räthsel,* täusch mich nicht.
PRIESTER: *Die Zunge bindet Eid und Pflicht.*
TAMINO: Wann also *wird die Decke schwinden?*

The music amplifies or, to use Kerman's apt term, 'clarifies' the text in at least two ways. First, it suggests a change in Tamino's attitude by shifting from a very taut *secco* to a more *arioso* setting, especially for Tamino's last question:

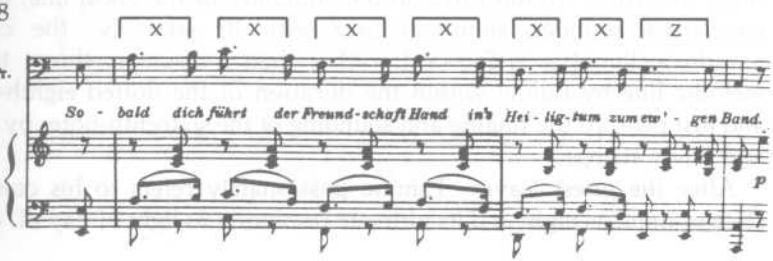
EX. 17

(Cf. [x] with that of EXS. 11, 9, and 6.)

Second during the course of the dialogue Tamino's vocal line has taken on more and more figures in dotted rhythm [x], suggesting that he is gradually coming under the influence of the Priest.

Mozart gives the Priest's final reply (II. 49-50), that Tamino will understand everything when he joins the brotherhood beyond the portal, an *arioso* setting, which is beautiful musically without blurring the words and prosody:

EX. 18



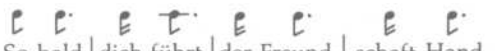
(Cf. [x] of EXS. 6, 9, 11, and 17; [z] of EX. 3.)

These words, foreshadowing Tamino's initiation into the brotherhood, are emphasized by the music tonally, rhymically, and instrumentally. They are set in the solemn key of a (the relative minor of C, which is the tonal center of the entire finale). Further solemnity is added by the march-like dotted figure allotted to the priest [x]. It is also important to consider that this dotted rhythm, along with the syllabic setting, underscores the iambic metrics of the verse, which scans as follows:

So – bald | dich führt | der Freund-|-schaft Hand,

Ins Hei-|-lig- thum | zum ew'-|-gen Band.

This meter is emphasized, not smoothed out, by the setting, and, at least in this instance, Mozart does not seem ashamed of his librettist's 'dog-gerel.' The stressed syllables have a greater time value (usually, dotted eighth-notes) and the unstressed syllables a lesser time value (usually, sixteenth notes):



It should be observed that the voice line is doubled by an accompaniment of cellos and double basses (orchestra score, p. 85), which is so thinly textured that it does not detract from the words, but rather aids in conveying them.[23] The a-minor triads, played by the violas and violins, fall between the phrases and strike just prior to each iambic foot. Although this chordal accompaniment comes off-rhythm to the melodic line, it does not destroy the latter's effect, rather it drives it home for two reasons. First, the thickly textured chords, played as they are by the main body of strings, would threaten the audibility of the vocal line, if they were first sounded simultaneously with it; secondly, the chords paradoxically offer a forward, rather than a counter, thrust to the melodic line by falling within the duration of the dotted eighth-notes and just prior to the singing and sounding of the sixteenth-notes by voice and lower strings.

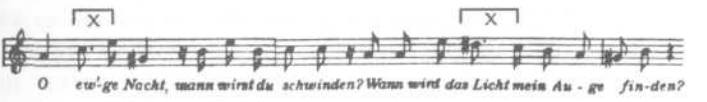
After the priest leaves, Tamino passionately refers to his confused state of mind as night and its ultimate resolution as light of day (ll. 51-2):

23 Cf. Chailley, 219

O ewige *Nacht*! wann wirst du schwinden?
Wann wird das *Licht* mein Auge finden?

Concerning these lines, Batley writes, 'Night as the symbol of ignorance and superstition is a theme which transcends the merely metaphorical use which is placed upon it here.'[24] The entire night and day symbolism of the opera's two conflicting forces is implied in these lines. By this point, Tamino has clearly rejected the image of the Queen of Night in favor of the High Priest of the Sun, Sarastro: being able to ask the right questions is more than half-way toward understanding. Mozart honors these lines and the symbols which they contain with a dignified *arioso* setting:

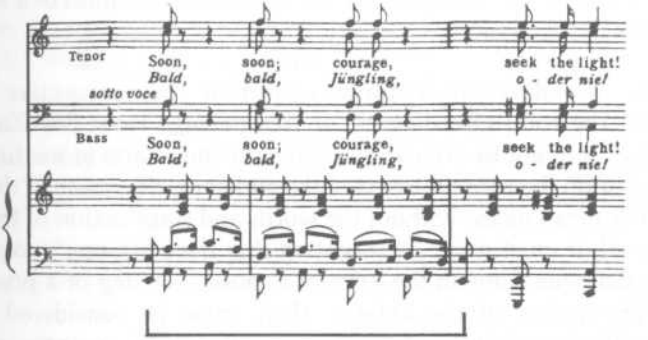
EX. 19



(Cf. [x] in EXS. 18, etc.)

The voices which we heard before the Old Priest made his entrance answer this desperate plea for enlightenment. The voice-lines are accompanied by the melody of the Old Priest's last pronouncement, played as before by the cellos and double basses (orchestra score, p. 86). This seems to be Mozart's way of pointing up that this choral pronouncement is a continuation of that made by the Priest; here the music is able to contribute a form of allusion not possible in the libretto:

EX. 20



(Cf. EX. 18.)

24 Batley, 'Textual Unity,' 85

This oracular, offstage pronouncement and the one which follows it, considered with the two which precede the Old Priest's entrance (EXS. 1 and 2), form a frame enclosing the entire dialogue.

On the basis of this musico-literary analysis of the dialogue between Tamino and the Old Priest, I am prepared to make the following generalizations on the relation between its text and musical setting:

1) The vocal line closely follows the metrics, the actions, the emotions, and the sentiments inherent in the libretto. The near declamatory setting seems designed to convey the text to the audience by the most direct musical means possible. Yet this does not make the music superfluous. On the contrary, through a heightening of the inflection, an emphasis upon key words and phrases, as well as a deepening of characterization and emotions, this setting offers in permanent form a stage-worthy interpretation of the dialogue. Even in the *arioso* passages, in which musical considerations might have been thought to dominate, Mozart refrains from excessive melisma and retains the metrics of the text. Indeed, the choice of *arioso* instead of declamatory recitative seems determined by its appropriateness to the situation and to the sentiments already in the libretto.
2) Throughout the dialogue, the accompaniment has been employed sparingly, in order, it would seem, to avoid interfering with the audibility and the pacing of the text. Moreover, no orchestral touch has been employed that was not called for by the words and the stage-action set forth in the libretto. The accompaniment serves to heighten, color, even clarify what is already inherent in the text. A new light is thereby shed on the words and actions by the addition of a non-verbal means of expression.

Thus, two different art-forms contribute their respective means to enhance the total effectiveness of this passage from *Die Zauberflöte*. Although it might be argued that often the music acts more directly than the text upon the consciousness of the audience, the music of this passage would be meaningless without the words and stage-action of the libretto. Above all, it must never be forgotten that the composer's contributions to this dialogue come in the form of a musical setting of a precomposed text. The author of the libretto, then, must be considered as partly responsible for whatever dramatic effectiveness this passage might contain. Since this dialogue, of key importance to the plot development of the opera, must be considered when any generalizations concerning the dramatic effectiveness of the entire opera are made, the librettist must also be taken into consideration.

Beyond establishing the pertinence of this recitative passage to any commentary on *Die Zauberflöte*, I have rigidly confined my paper to one small, but key, passage. Although I have suggested its relationship with the rest of scene 15, with the Act 1 finale, and with the entire opera, I make no claim that the sparse and close setting of the text found in this passage is representative of *Die Zauberflöte* as a whole. With further analysis of the rest of the opera, one might be able to substantiate a larger claim like that made by Charles Rosen, who detects such a sparseness in the text-setting throughout:

> The morality of *Die Zauberflöte* is sententious, and the music often assumes a squareness rare in Mozart, along with a narrowness of range and an emphasis on a few notes very close together that beautifully illuminate the middle-class philosophy of the text...[25]

These are very convincing words from a critical authority; nevertheless, as I demonstrated at the outset of this article, too many unsubstantiated theories have clouded the fortune of this operatic masterpiece, making extreme caution all the more essential for a student of the work. One would need to delineate the unique nature of each of the sub-forms operative in this *Singspiel*, including spoken dialogues, arias, ensembles, and even instrumental interludes; and in doing so, one would have to determine the interworkings of music and libretto in each of these components. Only then could one generalize with any certainty concerning this opera as drama. I will merely venture this one conjecture based on the dialogue at the temples' portals: such a study would probably indicate that, whereas the composer deserves sole credit for making *Die Zauberflöte* into a masterpiece, the librettist deserves no small share of the credit for making it into a drama.

Indiana University

25 Rosen, 319