

OPERA AUSTRALIA'S

## Guide to *The Magic Flute*

*The Magic Flute*: A bedtime story

The story of a young prince who sets out on an adventure to find and rescue his princess.



**Opera Australia's  
production of Mozart's  
*The Magic Flute* is an  
enchanting experience  
for the whole family.**

We created our Guide to *The Magic Flute* to introduce the story and colourful characters before you see the show, so audience members of all ages know what - and who - to expect.

You'll feel like you're meeting old friends as they appear on stage!

This is a world where animals dance and children fly, where princes battle dragons and hope battles despair.

The director of this production, Julie Taymor, who also directed Disney's *The Lion King*, has taken Mozart's fairy tale and turned it into a show that, in the spirit of the original, speaks to the child in all of us.

Find out more at **[opera.org.au](http://opera.org.au)**.



Photos by Jeff Busby and Branco Gaica for Opera Australia  
Words and adaptation by Jennifer Williams, with Stephanie Zappala Bryant

*Listen to music,  
explore photos,  
video, interviews and  
more...*

**[opera.org.au](http://opera.org.au)**  
*[theoperablog.com](http://theoperablog.com)*



**The tale of  
a magic flute,  
a handsome prince  
and his feathered  
friend.**



# *Once upon a time...*

in a fantasy land somewhere between the moon and the sun,  
a handsome prince is running hard.

Hot in pursuit is a slithering serpent, nine metres long and quick as the wind, circling  
and twirling with dripping fangs and poisonous breath.



Prince Tamino is frightened.

“I cannot fight off this poisonous monster!” he cries in the darkness.

“O save me, save me, rescue me,” he whimpers,  
to no one in particular, and promptly faints from fear.



Lucky for our handsome prince, three mysterious ladies appear out of the darkness. With their ghostly faces and giant hands, it's obvious they must have some kind of magic. They speak as one in a high shrill voice and command the serpent to die.



Suddenly, the serpent can slither no more.

“What a handsome youth,” the ladies agree, each wishing they could keep him for themselves!

But the ladies serve a stern Queen, and deep down, they know they must go and tell her the news.

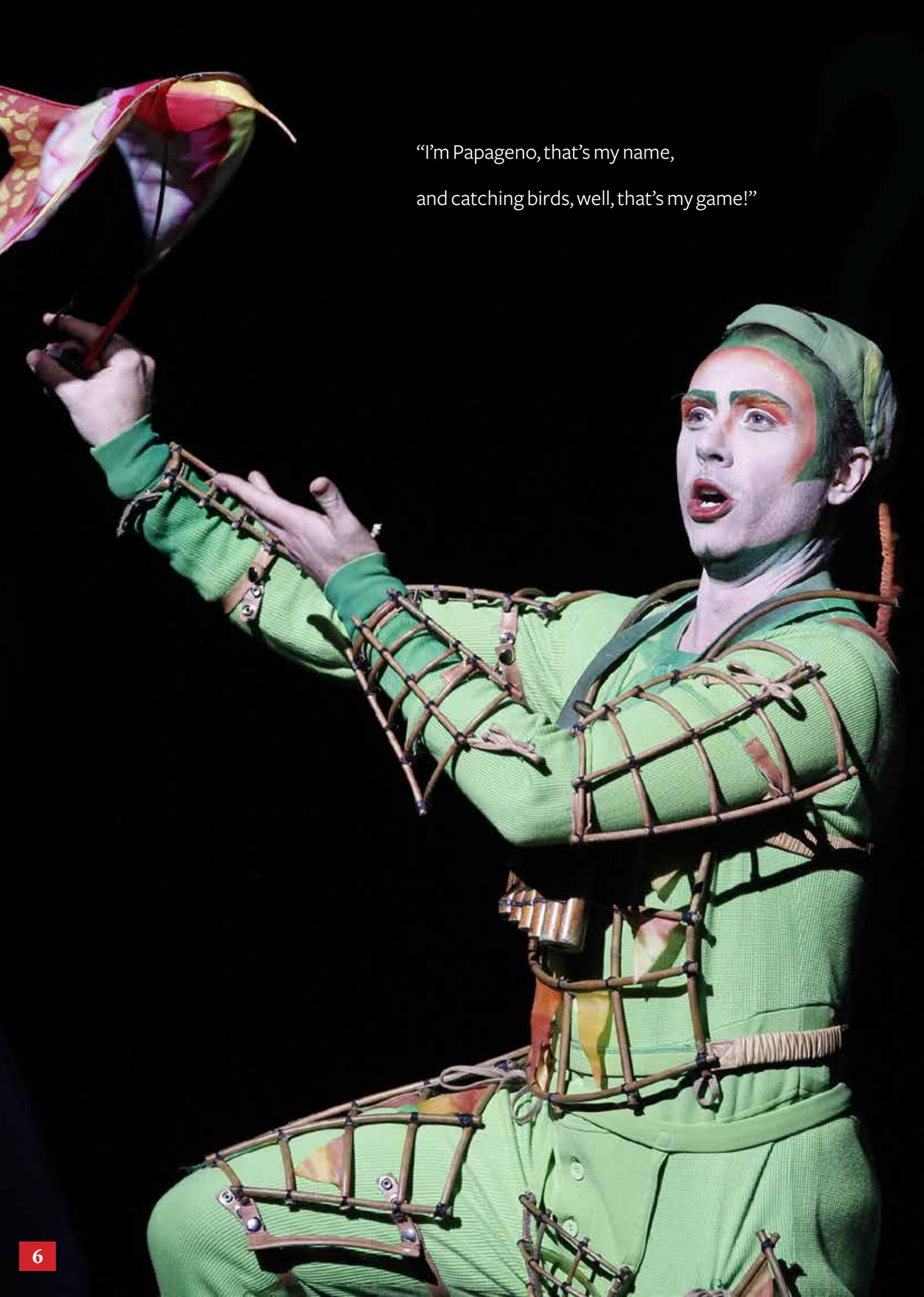


They leave the Prince in the woods  
alone to wake and  
wonder,

“Where am I? Am I alive?”

He’s not alone for long! Out of the darkness a strange feathered figure appears,  
lugging a big bird cage and singing cheerily to himself.



A photograph of a performer in a green outfit and bamboo cage costume, holding a colorful parasol. The performer is wearing a green long-sleeved shirt and pants, with a bamboo cage structure over their torso and arms. They have green and red makeup on their face and are looking upwards. The background is dark.

“I’m Papageno, that’s my name,  
and catching birds, well, that’s my game!”

Tamino is curious. “Hey! You there! Tell me, friend, what are you ... a bird?”

“No!” Papageno replies. “I’m a bird catcher.”

Our feathered friend is not very brave, but likes to pretend that he is big and strong. When he spies the dead serpent, he sees his chance! He wants the credit for killing the beast.

But just as Papageno begins to boast, the ladies reappear. They punish Papageno for his silly lies by padlocking his mouth shut! Ouch!



But the ladies have a more important mission. They show Prince Tamino a portrait of a maiden. It is the prettiest maiden the Prince had ever seen!

He is instantly charmed. “Is it love I feel?”



“Prince Tamino!” the first lady cries, interrupting his daydreams.

“You have to know that the beautiful Pamina was kidnapped by the evil wizard Sarastro. Destiny commands that you must save her.”



Prince Tamino doesn't exactly need convincing, but before he can set out on his quest, there is a flurry of glittering stars and a rumble of thunder.

Out of the darkness flies the Queen of the Night, the beautiful, powerful boss of the three ladies we've already met.

She sings a sad tale, of her beautiful daughter and her daughter's evil captor Sarastro.

She begs Prince Tamino to set out on a quest to save her daughter.





# *The Quest*

Tamino sets off with the reluctant Papageno, determined to save Pamina from Sarastro's clutches. But before they have gone very far, the ladies reappear, bearing gifts from the grateful Queen of the Night.

For Prince Tamino, they bring a magic flute, and promise its secret powers will protect him in dark hours.



For Papageno, they bring silver bells and promise that when played, they'll cast enchanting spells.



“But how are we to find our way?” asks Papageno nervously.

The ladies have thought of that too.

They ask three spirit boys, all dressed in white,  
to guide them on their journey.



The unlikely pair set off through the forest,  
each going their separate ways to search for Pamina.



Nearby, a beautiful maiden is running through the darkness, away from the ugliest creature you or I have ever seen.

Pamina is fleeing from Sarastro's mean and miserable slave, Monostatos.



She is brave and defiant, but Monostatos has slaves of his own, and with heavy chains they bind the beautiful Pamina.



With his uncanny knack to be in the right place at the right time, it is at just this moment that Papageno shows up. He frightens the cowardly Monostatos right out of his skin!



But the slave's hooked nose and spiked shoulders scare our feathered friend, too, and they both cry out: "Boo! It's the devil! Don't hurt me! Don't look at me!"

Monostatos runs away, and Pamina wakes to find Papageno looking at her rather closely.

“You look an awful lot like the girl in the picture. Let me see ... Dark hair, check!  
Brown eyes, check! Red lips. Very red! Everything fits.”



Pamina looks at the picture. “Yes, that’s me!” she says, thoroughly confused. “Where did you get it?”

Only too happy to have an audience, Papageno settles into his tale of the handsome Prince Tamino who loves the girl in the picture, and the starry Queen of the Night who commanded him to rescue her.

Pamina is pretty smitten when she hears  
of the brave prince on his way to rescue her...



...and the two run away as Monostatos comes skulking back.



# *The Temple*

Meanwhile, our hero Prince Tamino has found his way to the temple of Sarastro.

He's determined to find and kill the evil Sarastro. "All villains deserve to die!"

"What are you so upset about?" comes a voice through the gate.

Prince Tamino tells the speaker all about the Queen of the Night, her kidnapped daughter and the evil Sarastro.

But the speaker is horrified! "The vengeful queen has made you blind!" he exclaims.



He tells Tamino the real story: the Queen is bent on revenge after Sarastro foiled her plans to plunge the world into darkness, by stealing the magical disk of the sun.

Tamino is stuck. It is now obvious the Queen was lying, but what about the kidnapped Pamina?

He still loves the pretty girl from the portrait, and he has sworn to save her.

There's only one thing to be done. He must join Sarastro's brotherhood if he has any hope of finding his princess.



Meanwhile in the forest, Papageno and Pamina are hiding from Monostatos, tip-toeing and whispering in the dark.

“If they catch us, we’re doomed!”



“So!” comes a voice through the dark. “You thought you could escape!” Monostatos has caught them up, bringing slaves and chains and ropes.

Pamina despairs, but Papageno decides to try out his silver bells.



As they tinkle through the air, Monostatos feels a strange sensation.

It's music of joy and laughter and he is filled with a sudden urge to dance. "Tra-la-la, tra-la-la, I'm whirling, I'm twirling!"



He looks pretty silly, but things are about to get worse for the miserable Monostatos.

In a hail of trumpets the great priest Sarastro arrives with Prince Tamino.

Monostatos snivels at his master's feet, fawning and accusing Papageno and Tamino of all kinds of crimes. But the wise Sarastro isn't fooled, and promises Monostatos a beating he'll remember. "One hundred lashes, smack on your feet!"



The story isn't over yet. Our lovers are yet to be united and Papageno still wants a wife... but it's not going to be easy.

Sarastro tells Tamino and Papageno they must go through trials if they want to find true love.



“The trial by fire will test your courage. The trial by water will test your endurance. If you pass these tests, you will then be worthy to join us,” he intones in a deep voice.

The pair are thrust into deep darkness, and Papageno is afraid.

“Shame on you, Papageno, be a man!” says the brave prince.

“Forget it!” Papageno replies. “I’m a chicken!”



Our fearful feathered friend is about to be put to the test. A priest tells Papageno that he must be silent if he wants to meet a pretty wife – a maiden just like him, down to the very last feather.

It's very tricky for the chatterbox, but it's worse for Prince Tamino. When Pamina finally finds him in the temple, she declares her love – but Prince Tamino has to be silent. How torturous for the Prince – and for poor Pamina, who doesn't understand!



Sarastro calms her fears – the lovers will be united, but first, they must be proved worthy. Prince Tamino and Pamina go hand-in-hand through blazing fire and raging waves, but miraculously, they emerge unharmed.





The secret powers of the Magic Flute have kept them safe!



## *The End*

It's time to leave this strange fantasy world, but before we depart, we must know what happened to Papageno, Monostatos and the Queen of the Night!

Papageno meets an old lady and learns a thing or two about truth.

(And yes, he finds a cuddly lovebird to be his wife!)





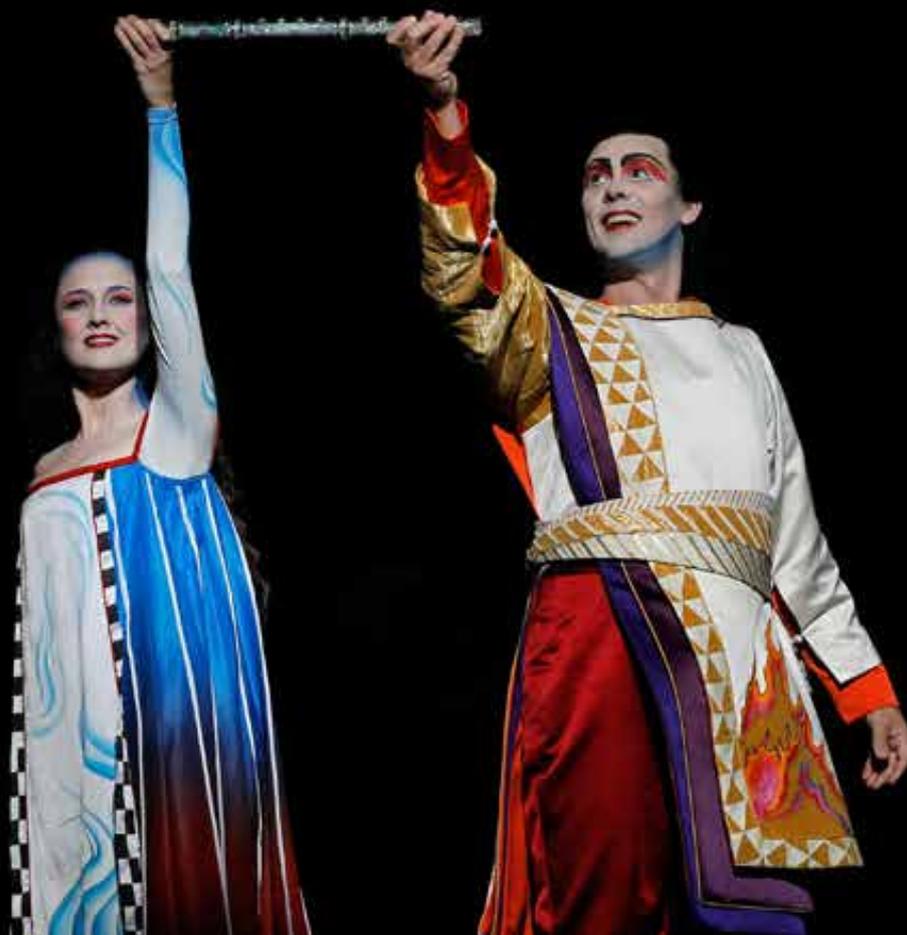
The beastly Monostatos joins forces with the Queen of the Night, but their attack on the temple is driven back by Sarastro's light.



We'll leave you with these words now our story is at an end:

*“So courage has triumphed  
and true love is crowned.*

*The world will now  
brighten, let wisdom  
resound!”*



Listen to music,  
explore photos, video,  
interviews and more...

[opera.org.au](http://opera.org.au)  
[theoperablog.com](http://theoperablog.com)



*‘Parents wanting to give their kids a first taste of the Sydney Opera House should head straight to*

## ***The Magic Flute*** SMH



*‘A brave new world for children of all ages...’* **CRIKEY**

*‘One of the world’s favourite operas, and this version will be loved by everybody.’* **TIME OUT**

*‘The audience gasped when a flock of tropical birds fluttered over their heads...’* **SYDNEY MORNING HERALD**

*‘A rich, fantastic feast of colour’* **SUNDAY HERALD SUN**

*‘The audience is enchanted by gigantic animal puppets and bedazzled by spectacularly colourful sets and costumes.’* **THE AUSTRALIAN**

