



GLYNDEBOURNE
EDUCATION

Opera Experience



The Magic Flute

Wolfgang
Amadeus Mozart

Opera in two acts
Libretto by Emanuel
Schikaneder

First performed at the
Theater auf der Wieden,
Vienna September 1791

Written by Glyndebourne Education
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The Magic Flute

Who's who

Tamino

A prince, who at the start of the opera finds himself lost and in the gardens of The Queen of the Night. He is honest and brave and it is his journey to Enlightenment that dominates the opera.

Tenor

Queen of the Night

Admired and feared by her people, she is rarely seen, but is known to possess many magical powers. She was married to the High Priest in the Temple of Wisdom, but is now a widow. She is arrogant and her music suggests from the start that she is not quite as virtuous as she would have us believe.

Soprano

Pamina

The daughter of The Queen of the Night has been kidnapped by Sarastro and his men, and is being imprisoned in his castle. She is pure of heart and brave.

Soprano

The Three Ladies

The Servants of The Queen of the Night. They follow her orders closely, and like the queen have magical powers. They are frivolous, vain and sensual.

Soprano, soprano, mezzo-soprano

The Three Boys

These three benevolent spirits, initially sent by the Queen of the Night, act as guides for Tamino and Papageno on their journey to Sarastro's Palace and will return to assist the characters throughout the piece.

Treble, treble, alto

Papageno

The Queen of the Night's bird catcher. A Man of Nature with simple tastes and ideas, he is the salt of the earth, and looking for a lady to become his wife.

Baritone

Papagena

Papageno's ideal partner.

Soprano

Sarastro

The High Priest of The Temple of Wisdom. He has Pamina as a captive in his Palace. His people greatly respect and admire him.

Bass

Monostasos

Sarastro's henchman. Like Papageno, he is looking for a woman and has his sights set on Pamina.

Tenor

The Speaker

An important figure in the Temple of Wisdom. He is sworn to a vow of secrecy and silence.

Bass

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Overview

Act 1

Three ladies of the Queen of the Night save Tamino, a prince, from a snake. They tell him that Pamina, the Queen's daughter, is being held against her will by Sarastro. Captivated by her picture, Tamino agrees to rescue her, and is promised her hand in marriage when he does. Papageno, the bird-catcher will accompany him on this journey and they will be guided by three enchanted boys. To help them on their journey, Tamino is given a magic flute, and Papageno is given magic bells for protection.

BUT on the way they are separated... Papageno stumbles across Pamina and they manage to escape from Sarastro's henchman, Monostasos, by using the magic bells. Tamino, meanwhile, meets an old priest who convinces him that Sarastro is in fact a good man.

Papageno and Pamina find themselves in a huge procession in Sarastro's honour. Pamina begs to be let free, but Sarastro refuses, telling her she needs a man to show her the path of virtue. Monostasos enters with Tamino, whom he has captured. Pamina and Tamino fall instantly in love.

Act 2

It is agreed that Tamino and Papageno should undergo a series of tests to join the Brotherhood of the Temple of Wisdom. The tests will judge virtue, abstinence and silence. If successful, both will be rewarded with long lasting love from their destined women.

As the trials begin, Monostasos is lurking in Pamina's bedroom when The Queen of the Night enters. She demands that Pamina kills Sarastro. Monostasos tells Pamina he will protect her in exchange for marriage. She fights him off and, banished by Sarastro, he joins forces with the Queen of the Night.

During the tests both men must remain silent. Pamina visits Tamino, and is devastated by his silence. Papageno meets and flirts with an ugly, old lady, thereby failing the tests. However, the gods take pity - the old woman reappears and when he agrees to love her she turns into the young Papagena, his perfect girlfriend. However he is told that he is not yet worthy of her love.

Pamina threatens to kill herself because she is so unhappy that Tamino has ignored her. The three boys convince her to be strong and lead her to Tamino.

The prince's final test is to travel through fire and water without fearing death. Pamina finds Tamino and because she fears neither the night nor death, they undertake the journey together, protected by the magic flute. Sarastro and his followers are overjoyed by their triumph.

Now it's Papageno's turn to entertain suicidal thoughts. Once more, the three boys come to the rescue and convince him to use his magic bells to summon Papagena. It works and the lovers are united.

In a final bid to regain power, the Queen of the Night and her cronies attempt to break into the temple, but are defeated by the gods. In a joyous finale, Pamina and Tamino, with Sarastro preside over the Temple of Wisdom.

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Synopsis

Act 1

The Garden of the Queen of The Night (Scenes 1 - 8)



Prince Tamino is saved from the clutches of death after the Queen of the Night's servants, the Three Ladies, kill the vicious snake that attacking him. Having saved his life, they all notice that he is rather handsome and bicker over which one will stay and look after him. Unable to decide they all return to the palace.

When he comes to, Tamino hears Papageno, the Queen's bird catcher, singing about his trouble finding women. He assumes that it was Papageno that saved him, and, seizing the opportunity presented to him, Papageno boasts about his bravery. To punish him for lying, the Queen of the Night sends the Three Ladies to padlock Papageno's mouth shut.

The Queen of the Night sends Tamino a picture of her daughter, Pamina. Tamino falls instantly in love with the image and when the three ladies tell Tamino how Sarastro has kidnapped the beautiful Pamina, he agrees at once to go and rescue her.

In a crash of thunder, The Queen of the Night appears and tells Tamino how her heart is breaking because she misses her daughter so much. She tells him that if he succeeds in rescuing her, that she will allow him to marry her. As suddenly as she arrived, she disappears, leaving Tamino wondering if he has imagined the whole thing.

To help him on his journey, Tamino is given a magic flute, which the Three Ladies insist will protect him and which will ultimately bring peace on earth. Papageno's mouth is still locked up and he can't speak. The ladies unlock him, but remind him what a terrible thing it is to lie. They then reveal that he is to accompany Tamino on his quest. Papageno is completely opposed to the idea, but as a bribe, the ladies offer him a set of magic bells, which they promise will keep him safe. Accepting the gift, Papageno asks how they will find Sarastro's Palace. To his amazement, he's told that three boys in a flying chariot will guide them.

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Sarastro's Palace (Scenes 9-14)

Pamina has tried to escape from Sarastro, but in her attempt to flee, Sarastro's henchman, Monostasos, has recaptured her. She shouts and screams and insults him, but he isn't interested in her pleas. He brings her to a small chamber, chains her up and leaves her all alone.

Meanwhile, Papageno has managed to lose Tamino and the three boys, and is finding his way through the palace alone. He stumbles across the sleeping Pamina. As he wonders what to do, he is interrupted by Monostasos. They are both so terrified by the strange appearance of the other that they run and hide. Papageno recovers first and returns to find Pamina awake. He asks Pamina about herself and tells her all about Tamino and how they have been sent to rescue her. After a brief moment of doubt she accepts Papageno's story. He releases her, and they escape together.

Tamino's Journey (Scenes 15-18)

It seems to Tamino that he and the Three Boys will never arrive at the palace, but the boys assure him they are going the right way. Leaving him at a wall with several doors, the boys tell him that he must be a man if he wants to rescue Pamina. He realises that he has arrived at Sarastro's palace and tries the first door but voices tell him to go back. He tries a second with the same result. Finally, he tries a third and is permitted to enter.

Inside, he meets an old priest, who questions him. Tamino explains his mission and asks if Sarastro lives there. The old man tells him that he does, but that Sarastro is not the wicked man that the Queen of the Night has told him about - Tamino will find no bad men in 'The Temple of Wisdom'. Tamino asks if it is true that Sarastro is keeping Pamina prisoner. The old man tells him yes, it is true, but that he cannot tell him any more as he has taken a vow of secrecy. The only way Tamino can find out about Pamina's well being is to join the brotherhood of The Temple of Wisdom.

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Alone again, Tamino is confused, but determined to find out the truth. The same mysterious voices that warned him about entering the first two doors sing to



him again, assuring him that Pamina is safe and well. He is so relieved that he plays his magic flute, and is soon surrounded by animals drawn by his music. Tamino wonders about the power of the magic flute, and hopes that it will help him find Pamina. He plays on and soon hears Papageno answering his call on his bird catching pipes.

As he leaves to find the bird catcher, Papageno and Pamina arrive, hoping to see Tamino. Unfortunately, Papageno's playing has also attracted Monostasos and his slaves, who arrive to capture them. The pair are convinced that this is the end, but at the last minute, Papageno remembers his magic bells. The music he plays is so beguiling that it puts Monostasos and his slaves in a trance, and they all dance off into the forest.

As Pamina and Papageno wonder what to do next, they hear the sound of voices singing in praise of Sarastro. They are terrified, but Pamina vows to confront him.

Sarastro's Procession (Scenes 18 - 19)

Sarastro enters in a huge procession held in his honour. Pamina approaches him, and, true to her vow, speaks honestly about her wish to return to her mother. Sarastro listens carefully to what she says, praising her for her integrity, but he tells her that he will not set her free. He makes it plain that he does not greatly respect The Queen of the Night, and tells Pamina that she needs a man to guide her away from the path of pride and into the path of virtue.

Monostasos enters with a captive, Tamino. The young prince and Pamina immediately recognise each other and despite their fear, they race towards each other and embrace passionately. Monostasos is disgusted: in his eyes, Tamino has stolen Pamina from Sarastro and he makes his feelings clear. He expects a reward for his loyalty, but instead receives a beating for his cruelty towards the favoured young couple. The people praise the High Priest for being so fair.

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Act 2

The Temple of Wisdom (Scene 1)

Sarastro has called a meeting of the Brotherhood of the Temple of Wisdom. He asks for the brothers to meet Tamino, saying that the prince wishes to "tear the veil of darkness and enter the light". The men say that he must be virtuous, charitable and above all able to keep silent. Sarastro assures the brothers that Tamino will not fail, and it is agreed that he and Papageno will undergo the initiation ceremony.

Sarastro reveals that he believes that the gods Isis and Osiris have chosen Pamina as a wife for Tamino, and says that this is why he kidnapped her. Together, Pamina and Tamino will herald in a new dawn for the world.

Within the Temple (Scenes 2 - 6)

The priests explain that before they are accepted into the temple, Tamino and Papageno will have to take a series of tests. Tamino determined to join, knowing that his reward will be Pamina. However Papageno is not so keen, despite the fact that his reward will be his perfect partner, Papagena. He tells the brothers that he would rather stay single than put himself in danger, but finally concedes.

The first test is to show strength against the wiles of women. They are told to keep silent. The three ladies appear to them, and tease them. Tamino is able to ignore their games, but Papageno is weak and finds it impossible to stay silent. The ladies disappear and the priests return to introduce the second test.

Pamina's Chamber (Scenes 7- 13)

Whilst Pamina sleeps Monstasos enters her room and tries to kiss her. He is frightened off by the appearance of the three ladies and The Queen of the Night and hides. Pamina's mother is horrified to learn that Tamino will join the brotherhood. She tells Pamina that when her husband died he gave the powerful Circle of the Sun to the Brotherhood. She gives Pamina a dagger and tells her that she must kill Sarastro and bring her the Circle of the Sun or she will disown Pamina.

The Queen of the Night disappears, and Monstasos comes out from his hiding place, telling Pamina that he has heard everything. He tells her that if she will love him, he will protect her. When her refusals turn to screams, he is enraged and

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attacks her. Sarastro sees everything and demands that Monostasos leaves the temple. Sarastro tells Pamina that in his kingdom vengeance is unknown and that the only way forward is to love your enemies.

Tamino's Tests (Scenes 14 - 19)

The priests bring Papageno and Tamino to another place. They are still under their vow of silence, but Papageno is still struggling with this and is bored and thirsty. An old woman enters with some water, and whilst Tamino ignores her, Papageno happily takes a drink and laughs and jokes with the woman. They are flirting, and the woman says that she has a boyfriend called Papageno. He asks the woman her name, but before she tells him, she disappears, and he reverts to his vow of silence.

The three boys enter with food and wine, which they say is from Sarastro. Tamino abstains, but Papageno eats well. Tamino takes out his magic flute and plays. Pamina is drawn to him by the music, but Tamino ignores her because of the trial. Even Papageno sticks to his vow of silence. She is distressed by Tamino's treatment and leaves in despair.

Tamino is ready to leave, but Papageno wants to stay to finish his feast. He enjoys his meal alone, but is suddenly terrified to find himself surrounded by a group of lions. They look like they're going to eat him, but Tamino returns to charm them with his magic flute. Papageno swears that he will always follow Tamino in the future.

The Temple of Wisdom (Scene 20)

The Brotherhood enter, all impressed by Tamino's virtue and strength. He is informed that there are two more dangerous tests, but that he will soon find love. Pamina is brought in to say goodbye to Tamino. She is scared that he will die, but the Brothers tell her not to fear. The lovers say their farewells.

Papageno's Journey (Scenes 21-25)

Papageno, lost and alone again, is searching for Tamino. The Speaker, one of the Brothers, enters and tells him that he has failed all the tests and that he will never be enlightened. Papageno replies that he's not bothered about enlightenment but just wants a glass of wine, and a lady to share it with.

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The gods take pity on Papageno, and the old woman that he met before enters and offers him her love. He is a little taken aback, but she tells him that unless he takes her hand, he will be imprisoned forever. He decides that an old woman is better than no woman at all, and agrees. At that moment she is miraculously transformed into a beautiful young Papagena, Papageno's perfect love. He is delighted, but the speaker says that Papageno is not yet worthy of his new love.

Pamina's Despair (Scenes 26-27)

Pamina is upset about Tamino and cannot understand what is happening. In despair, she contemplates using the dagger given to her by her mother to kill herself.

The Three Boys enter and dissuade her from suicide. They say that cannot tell her why Tamino has treated her so badly, but promise that she will soon know the truth, assure her know that Tamino cares deeply for her and lead her to him.

The Final Test (Scene 28)

Tamino is faced by two terrifying armed men. In order to return to the Temple, he must face trials by fire and water. Just as he is about to begin, Pamina appears. Because she fears neither night nor death, Pamina will join Tamino on this final and most perilous quest. Using the magic flute, they pass through the trial unharmed and are welcomed by the Brothers.

Papageno Finds Love (Scene 29)

Papageno is depressed. His chance of finding love has been taken from him. He feels that life is no longer worth living and considers suicide. Once more the Three Boys appear suggest that his magic bells will help him find his lady. Sure enough, the music of the bells attracts his Papagena. At last they are united.

The Temple (Scene 30)

Monstasos has joined forces with the Queen of the Night and together, they make a final attempt to seize the Temple but are violently struck down by the gods. Tamino and Pamina join Sarastro to rule the Temple of Wisdom. They celebrate the demise of sin, and the victory of truth and light over darkness in a new world order.

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

b. Salzburg, Austria, 1756

d. Vienna December 1791

Perhaps more than any other composer in history, Mozart's life is surrounded by mythology. From his infancy, stories about his abilities were exaggerated and fabricated and his death has provided material for a hugely successful Hollywood thriller. He is perhaps the first composer in Western classical music to have attracted this kind of biographical interest, and it is no coincidence that he is essentially the first freelance composer, writing what he wanted to write, rather than what he was told to write by a royal or religious patron. With this romantic approach to composition comes a natural interest in the personality behind the music and Mozart's life certainly does not disappoint in this respect.

All the best die young...

Mozart confirms (or perhaps even helped to create?) many myths that we have in our society about genius. He was prodigy - his talent seems to have been innate and present from a very early age. We would like to believe that he didn't ever have to work at his compositions, but rather they were handed down to him from somewhere celestial. He was a passionate individual - he left the service of the Archbishop of Salzburg in a storm after refusing to be treated like a servant. He was a hedonist; interested in the pleasures that life has to offer. And of course he died extremely young at only 36 - and don't "All the best die young"? (James Dean, Bruce Lee, Jeff Buckley, Eva Cassidy, Kurt Cobain etc)

The Prodigy

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg, Austria, in 1756. His father, Leopold, was a violinist, music theorist, composer and teacher. Wolfgang and his sister, Nannerl, both showed astonishing musical talent from an early age. Wolfgang would pick out chords at the keyboard when he was only three years old and, at the age of six, he was discovered writing notes in a mess of blots and smudges, which was revealed to be a concerto!

At about the same time he taught himself to play the violin, and was soon able to play chamber music perfectly, although his father had given him no lessons.

European Freak Show

Leopold Mozart - realising that he was sitting on a gold mine took his two 'prodigies of nature' on several gruelling tours to show them off to the nobility and paying public of Europe. Whilst travelling, the young Mozart would spend the time writing music, which he retained in his head until he could write it down at the end of the day. A letter from this time reminds us just how young the performer was - in 1762, Leopold refers to Mozart "cutting a new tooth".

A budding composer

After excursions to Munich and Vienna the family undertook a long journey culminating in triumphal receptions in Paris and London (1763-4). Both children came down with smallpox, but, undaunted, Leopold took them off round Europe again. In 1768 Mozart

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began his operatic career with, *La Finta Semplice*, aged only twelve. Later that year, he wrote his singspiel, *Bastien und Bastienne* (a form of opera written in German with spoken dialogue rather than recitative - see glossary). By this time, he was also writing instrumental music; symphonies, wind ensemble pieces and, inspired by Joseph Haydn, string quartets.

A truth stranger than fiction?

In 1770, Leopold took his son on a tour of Italy. During the trip, two particular incidents are of note. Firstly, to prove that it was not his father but Mozart writing such advanced music, the young Wolfgang agreed to undertake a trial in which he (successfully) wrote an orchestral aria in complete isolation. Also during this trip, the Mozarts visited the Sistine Chapel in Rome. After only one hearing of Allegri's *Miserere* (a 20 minute 8-part choral work), it is alleged that Mozart was able to write down the whole piece note for note having never seen the score (which had in fact never left the chapel).

Time to earn your way...

At 15, Mozart started his first full-time paid job as music master for the Archbishop of Salzburg. His relationship with the Archbishop was incredibly fiery and after a youth spent rubbing shoulders with European aristocrats and royals, the young Mozart did not take kindly to being treated as a common servant.

Truly operatic existence

His first real operatic masterpiece *Idomeneo* (1781), written in German was finished towards the end of this tempestuous employment. Also at this time, Mozart found himself drawn to Mannheim, where the main attractions were the three daughters of Mozart's landlord, Fridolin Weber. He fell in love with the second daughter, Aloysia (a singer), but when she married someone else Mozart turned his attentions to the third daughter, Constanze. They were married in 1782 although by this time, Mozart was virtually penniless, having been sacked by the Archbishop following a serious (and scandalous) dispute. In the same year Mozart completed his first mature singspiel, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Escape from the Harem).

The da Ponte years

Perhaps Mozart's finest operas were written in the last five years of his short life. *Le Nozze di Figaro* (The Marriage of Figaro) was written in 1786. The librettist was Lorenzo da Ponte with whom Mozart produced two other successful operas; *Don Giovanni* (1787) and *Così fan tutte* (1790).

The final countdown

1791, Mozart's final year, was one of frantic activity. As well as numerous instrumental works, he composed the (unfinished) *Requiem*. This had been commissioned by an unknown messenger on behalf of an anonymous patron, but Mozart interrupted his work on it to write another opera, *La Clemenza di Tito*, for the head of the Austrian Empire. When he resumed work on the *Requiem* he became increasingly ill and he saw the visits of the

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unknown messenger as omens of doom. At the same time, Mozart was also busily working on his final operatic project (another singspiel) with the impresario, Emanuel Schikaneder....

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Schikaneder was an actor-singer-impresario (producer) who knew Mozart through their membership of the same Masonic lodge. Schikaneder managed the *Theater auf der Wieden*, a Viennese playhouse which catered for the people and cast himself as the librettist of the opera. It was written specifically to suit the talents of the theatre's company, which specialised in musical comedy and also exploited the resources of the theatre itself, which was equipped with elaborate stage machinery and was capable of creating spectacular special effects. Schikaneder and his troupe were in some way akin to the British Christmas Pantomime tradition. The impresario played the role of the bird-catcher, Papageno, and the script he wrote for himself was full of jokes (good and bad) and opportunities for comic business.

Magic-Mysticism

The plot developed by Mozart and Schikaneder drew on two main influences. Almost certainly inspired by the fact that at least three other Viennese theatres were then making a killing out of fairy-tale operas, one source was a popular collection of fairy tales called "Dschinnistan". In stark contrast, the two Masons combined this fantastical tale with a lofty moral allegory called "The Life of Sethos", a Masonic novel set in Ancient Egypt and describing how a young Prince graduates into a college of Priests whose temples lie within pyramids and who worship the real gods Isis and Osiris.

Freemasonry

The Freemasons were (and are) a society of enlightened thinkers who met together for the purposes of promoting the ideals of equality, liberty and fraternity. The progressive nature of their thinking meant that these societies were secret and before hopeful candidates were allowed to join, they had to go through all sorts of complicated initiation rituals based on the mysteries of Ancient Egypt - rather like those experienced by Tamino and Papageno in the opera.

Comic truth and a tragic ending

As far as we can tell, Mozart seems to have enjoyed crude jokes and pantomime fun. But deep down he was a very serious composer and at this late period in his life, much of his music has a religious intensity. Indeed, some have seen *Die Zauberflöte* as a comic counter-part to the *Requiem*, exploring, as it does, similar themes of mortality, truth and virtue. Whilst desperately working on these two compositions, Mozart became convinced that he had been poisoned in a conspiracy against him (although this was never proved). He died in Vienna in December 1791, two months after the opening night of *Die Zauberflöte*, aged only 35. He left no money for a proper funeral and was buried in an unmarked grave.

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Opera Glossary

aria A song for solo voice reflecting how the character feels (usually miserable) about what has just or is about to happen.

auditorium Space within the theatre occupied by the audience.

baritone Middle-range man's voice, lurking somewhere between bass and tenor.

bass Lowest male voice. Often plays characters with dubious moral fibre.

chorus A body of singers who (mostly) sing and act as a group to make the crowd scenes a bit more plausible. Also the term used for any musical number sung by this group.

conductor Hand-waving-head-honcho, positioned to obscure the view of the lady sitting in the centre of the front row. Makes sure everyone is performing the same piece.

contralto (or alto) Low-pitched woman's voice. Not to be confused with... counter tenor High-pitched man's voice. Nearest we have nowadays to a castrato (from the verb to castrate...ouch...)

ensemble From the French word for "together". When two or more soloists try to have their say at the same time (can get rather messy...). Ensemble for two is a duet, three is a trio, four a quartet and so on.

finale The final number of an act - sung by an ensemble (see above).

intermezzo A piece of music played between the acts of an opera (usually just long enough for the prima donna to put on her sixth frock of the show).

interval A (welcome) break between the acts of an opera. The lights go on and the audience is free to move around, catch up on what's been happening, join the chorus at the bar...

libretto The text of an opera. Written by a librettist.

mezzo-soprano Female singer who can't quite reach those top notes. Not much glass-shattering action here.

orchestra Group of musicians found in the pit.

overture Music at the start of the show. Sets the scene, warms up the orchestra and reminds the audience that the performance is about to begin.

prima donna The leading woman singer in an operatic cast. Not to be confused with Guy Ritchie's wife...

props Mobile pieces of the set which help to make it all a bit more believable.

proscenium arch Wall in front of the curtain, dividing the stage from the auditorium.

recitative The bits which aren't the songs. Closer to the rhythm of speech and often accompanied by just a harpsichord or piano. Used to further the action of the story (we'd never get home if the plot was told through the arias...).

repetiteur from the French for to repeat. This tortured soul sits in on rehearsals and pretends to be an orchestra at the piano.

score The full score contains all the sung and orchestral parts in the opera. The vocal score has the voice parts and a piano reduction of the orchestra (for rehearsals - see repetiteur).

soprano High female voice. Watch out for those delicate window panes...

synopsis Outline of the plot. Especially useful during the interval when it is once more light enough to find out what on earth is happening.

tenor A high male voice. The good guy, pure of heart and all that.