



Jonathan Dove

The Magic Flute Dances Concerto for flute and orchestra

What happens to the magic flute at the end of Mozart's opera? Does Tamino give it back to the three ladies? Does it lie in a box, forgotten, at the back of a cupboard? Or does it, perhaps, when no-one's looking, come out and dance, singing to itself about Tamino's adventures? When Emily Beynon asked me for a concerto that had some connection with Mozart, I thought this could be an opportunity to let the flute out of its box, not to play the music it plays in the opera, but to play the music it has heard other people sing.

The concerto begins with music from the moment before Tamino and Pamina walk through fire and water, while the flute plays fragments of ideas it will explore later. The opening chords of the overture open a door into the flute's imaginary world, and usher in its first reminiscence: the Queen of the Night, a character with whom it seems particularly fascinated. In the next section the flute dances around ideas from the overture; a short cadenza (a recollection of Tamino fleeing from the serpent) leads to the moment Tamino sees Pamina's portrait. The next memories are a little confused –Papageno left alone, no-one answering his pipes. His isolation is echoed by Pamina's, bewildered by Tamino's silence. The vibraphone announces the three helpful boys; their music becomes a kind of passacaglia. First a scherzo, made out of Pamina and Papageno's duet, and then, with the flute once again entranced by the Queen of the Night, the opening chords of the overture return, closing the memory door.

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