

DIE ZAUBERMELODIKA (THE MAGIC MELODICA)

opera in two acts

With wit, humour and a hint of fun, renowned Finnish jazz pianist Iiro Rantala and Finnish bestselling author Minna Lindgren have written a sequel to The Magic Flute. The universally unpopular melodica serves as the magical instrument. Pamina is sick of cleaning up after Tamino's dragons. The Queen of the Night is a baritone with a beard, and Papageno and Papageno have been blessed with a horde of offspring that make up the Papa Kids Choir.



"Fun for the whole family! "

"Heartfelt shrieks of amusement echoed as the premiere drew to an end. At no point did the audience's interest flag, regardless of age, thanks to the smoothly-unfolding plot and quirky humour."

"The three tests in Act II are simply uproarious. Accompanied by colourful orchestral textures, they cause great hilarity in children and adults alike."

"Rantala's music is unfailingly fresh and sure to hit its target with its lively rhythms and entertaining stylistic allusions."

The libretto is available in English and in German. Die Zaubermeleodika was commissioned by the Komische Oper Berlin and premiered in October 2021.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Sarastro, *bass*

Pamina, *soprano*

Papageno, *baritone*

The (Drag)Queen of the Night, *baritone*

The Minister of Formal Things, *tenor*

Orchestra: 2222-222012-pf-str

Monostatos, *tenor*

Tamino, *tenor*

Papagena, *mezzosoprano*

Three gnomes, 2 *sopranos*, *alto*

Children's choir SA

Duration: ca 100'

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Scene 1

The opera starts with the same words as *Die Zauberflöte*. This time Sarastro needs help: he does not remember, who he is. Tamino is playing with his pet dragon. Pamina is fed up with both since the dragon makes it impossible to keep the home clean. She must also take care of Sarastro and remind once again, who he is (“a king, yes, you are the king”). Finally, Pamina decides: Sarastro must retire and there will be an election with trials for his replacement.

Scene 2

The Queen of the Night and Monostatos are in the dark woods. The Queen has heard about Sarastro's retirement and wants Monostatos to replace him. He, however, is afraid and sings: “Don't count on me”. The Queen tries to find a magic instrument for Monostatos, but the only thing she can find is a melodica. Together they sing about the “magic melodica!”. Finally, the Queen invites the three gnomes to join them.



Scene 3

Papageno, Papagena and their children, the “Papa Kids Choir”, enter with a lot of noise (“Papa guck, papa mal, Papageno guck mal”). The parents sing a duet about happiness (“Oh god, I’m tired – but this is what we wanted”). Papagena would like to live in a house, but Papageno and the children think that’s not necessary. Tamino enters, looking for his dragon. Pamina tells about Sarastro’s retirement and the forthcoming election, but Tamino reveals his secret: “I do not want to be a king”. Papageno feels that Tamino would be a great choice but Pamina gets annoyed: Why should a king be elected, why not a queen? The Papa Family is supporting both in a hilarious finale (“The Queen! The King!”).

Scene 4

The Queen and Monostatos quarrel in the woods – they are lost. The gnomes have disappeared. The Queen attempts to sing her brilliant staccatos, but Monostatos gets furious. When he plays the Zauber melodika, a huge dragon appears. Monostatos sings a lullaby for the dragon and continues with an aria about the tragedy of his life: being lonely and mocked.

The Papa Family enters. Papagena and the children urge Papageno to attack the dragon. During the fight Monostatos is about to kill Papageno, who begs for mercy. A duet follows about their instruments: Papageno’s Glockenspiel and the melodica. In the end Monostatos steals the Glockenspiel and leaves his instrument to Papageno. Papagena sings a tender solo to Papageno, and the family retreats to the safety of the castle.

Scene 5

The three gnomes are looking for Monostatos who thinks he is lost. The gnomes help Monostatos by turning him around – he is standing in front of the castle. They all enter the castle, and a big confusion ensues with the Papa Family. Monostatos announces that he has arrived for the trials. An even bigger confusion follows. (“Who is he? - Sarastro: Who am I?”).

ACT II

Scenes 6 -9

The trials are about to begin. The gnomes announce the rules to the candidates: Monostatos, Pamina and Tamino who seems reluctant. In the three trials they are tested whether they are brave, honest and responsible. Sarastro, the Papa Family and others are watching the trials, commenting and providing help to the candidates.

In the first test they must make fire, warm up and go to sauna. Then they have to jump into an avanto, a hole in a frozen lake. Finally, they must sit on an anthill. During the trials Pamina sings an aria about how a woman needs to do everything three times better than a man to win. In the end Monostatos wins by flying off the ant nest. Indeed, he can fly!

Scene 10

The winner is declared to everybody’s surprise. Monostatos, the bad guy, is not popular. He, however, sings about the end of being evil, the end of being shy. But he does not want to be the leader and nominates Pamina instead. Another confusion. A woman?

Gradually they all realize that this is a good solution. Pamina would be the best possible choice as the queen. Monostatos has other plans. He plays the melodica for the last time, which makes the dragon appear. Tamino is excited: now it is finally his turn to be the hero and tame the beast. But he fails. Monostatos helps him with the melodica and the dragon turns into the Queen. She is furious but Monostatos can tame even her.

Scene 11: Finale

The gnomes urge everybody to forgive the Queen. Was she ever bad, after all? Papageno promises Papagena that they will have a house and even running water – and no more kids. Sarastro does not remember what has happened, but he is as happy as the rest.



Photos: Iko Freese/KOB, Gregor Hohenberg/ACT



Iiro Rantala (b. 1970) is riding the crest of the comic-opera wave. His previous opera *Sanatorio Express* was a success and it was followed by *The Magic Melodica*, commissioned by the Komische Oper Berlin.

Crossing musical and generic borders comes naturally to composer Rantala who is also an internationally acclaimed jazz pianist. In his works he draws ideas from his box of magic tricks with catching enthusiasm. Iiro Rantala's works are represented by Fennica Gehrman.



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