



THE DALLAS OPERA

MEDIA RELEASE

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**THE DALLAS OPERA PRESENTS
MOZART'S MAGNIFICENT MASTERPIECE!**

THE MAGIC FLUTE

**Starring Jane Jennings, Roberto Saccà,
And Wolfgang Holzmair as Papageno**

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**Opens Friday, February 17, 2006, 7:30 p.m.  
The Music Hall at Fair Park**

DALLAS, FEBRUARY 9, 2006 — **The Dallas Opera** continues its celebration of the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday year of **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** with four performances of his last and most unforgettable opera, **THE MAGIC FLUTE**, **February 17, 19 (2:00 pm matinee), 22 & 25, 2006 at 7:30 pm** in the Music Hall at Fair Park.

This enormously popular opera stars acclaimed soprano **Jane Jennings** as Pamina, and three international artists making their Dallas Opera debuts: Chinese soprano **Yan-Guang Cui** as the Queen of the Night, leading German lyric tenor **Roberto Saccà** as Tamino, and Austrian baritone **Wolfgang Holzmair** in his Dallas Opera debut as Papageno.

This superb international cast, conducted by **Music Director Graeme Jenkins**, will also feature the considerable talents of American bass **Kevin Langan** as Sarastro, bass **Arthur Woodley** as The Speaker, character tenor **Jonathan Green** as Monostatos, and lyric-coloratura soprano **Amanda Pabyan** as Papagena. The piece will be sung in

German with **easy-to-read English translations projected above the stage** at every performance.

Audiences will experience a feast for the eyes – as well as the ears – with charming sets designed by **Stage Director/Scenic Designer Michael Hampe**, a legendary figure on the European opera scene; and eye-popping costumes by fashion icon and **Costume Designer Zandra Rhodes**, who has dressed the likes of Diana, Princess of Wales; Elizabeth Taylor and the late Freddie Mercury of Queen.

Lighting design is by **Marie Barrett**, the Chorus Master is **Alexander Rom** and the children singing in this production have been prepared by **Melinda Cotten**.

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The Temple of Isis, which stands nearly 300 miles south of Cairo, Egypt, is the setting for Mozart's final – and most mysterious – opera, *The Magic Flute*. This 1791 masterpiece, which may reveal some of the deepest secrets of Masonic ritual, shows that Mozart is deeply aware of the importance of gods and goddesses to ancient Egyptians. It was the god of the dead, Osiris, who is credited with inventing the flute and using it to conquer nations through the power of music rather than having to employ the use of military arms.

Many of the characters and events in *The Magic Flute* appear to be based on a popular novel of 1731, *Sethos*, falsely presented as a work from Roman times by its author, a French philosophy professor. *Sethos* was translated into several languages and paints a fascinating portrait of the life and education of an Egyptian Prince living thousands of years before. However, the novel doesn't explain the wide variety of symbols and rituals scattered throughout Mozart's final opera; for that, we probably have to look to Mozart's well-known connection to the Masonic Brotherhood.

In fact, it was the liberal use of Masonic symbols and rites that sparked public outcry when the opera premiered at Emanuel Schikaneder's Theatre auf der Wieden.

Although Freemasonry had been condemned by both Church and State, Mozart joined "The Lodge of Benevolence" in Vienna in 1784 and eventually attained the status of "master." However, by 1790, the political landscape had changed: Mozart's great benefactor, Emperor Joseph II was dead and his successor, Leopold II had little interest in Mozart and zero tolerance for Masons. Mozart may have presumed Freemasonry was finished, at least in Austria, and he may have felt free to put the secrets he learned to commercial use.

Following a lackluster opening, the opera played to curious and enthusiastic audiences for a hundred consecutive performances and then spread to houses all across

Europe. The acclaim came too late for the composer, who took to his bed less than two months after the premiere and died at the age of 35.

Some say Mozart was poisoned by Freemasons for breaking his oath of silence, although contemporary medical analysis points to a series of illnesses and conditions, including a strep infection, renal failure, and cerebral hemorrhage that probably combined to prematurely end the life of the Western World's greatest musical mind. No conspiracy perhaps, but then – as now – it makes for compelling speculation.

Production underwriters are **Mr. and Mrs. W. Eric Brauss** and the **Kimberly-Clark Corporation**, with additional support from Bank of America Foundation, McKinsey & Company, Roxanne and Gene Phillips and TACA, Inc.

Tickets begin at just \$19 and The Dallas Opera also is offering a **Valentine's Night at the Opera – two tickets to any performance of *The Magic Flute* and an exclusive Champagne reception at intermission for you and your special guest! – starting at just \$100! Contact The Dallas Opera Ticket Services Office, 214-443-1000 or visit dallasopera.org for additional information.**

–*The Magic Flute* by W.A. Mozart

February 17, 19, 22 & 25, 2006 (New production from San Diego Opera)

Text by Emanuel Schikaneder

Premiered in Vienna, September 1791

Sung in German with English translation projected above the stage

Time: Legendary **Place:** The Ancient Egypt of our Imagination

Starring: Roberto Sacca * (*Tamino*); Jane Jennings (*Pamina*); Wolfgang Holzmair * (*Papageno*); Yan-Guang Cui * (*The Queen of the Night*); Jonathan Green (*Monostatos*); Kevin Langan (*Sarastro*); Arthur Woodley (*The Speaker*); Amanda Pabyan (*Papagena*); Joseph Hu (*Second Priest and First Armored Man*); Dana Beth Miller, Elizabeth Batton and Laura Vlasak Nolen * (*Three Ladies in Attendance*); Mark McCrory (*Second Armored Man*) Cami Welch * Lyndsey Jones * and Kelly Nelms* as the Three Spirits.

Conducted by: Graeme Jenkins

Directed by: Michael Hampe

Scenic Design: Michael Hampe

Costume Design: Zandra Rhodes *

Lighting Designer: Marie Barrett

Chorus Master: Alexander Rom

* Dallas Opera debut

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