

“Mozart’s Magic Flute: In His Time and Ours”



MSA Session at Mostly Mozart Festival, Lincoln Center

Saturday, 20 July 2019, 3:00-4:30 p.m.

“...but what pleased me the most was the *silent approval* —
one truly sees how this opera is becoming more and more popular...”
(Mozart, letter of 7-8 October 1791)

In writing to his wife Constanze (in the spa town of Baden) of the latest performance of his new opera *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*), Mozart mentioned the audience’s demand for encores of some of the more folk-like musical numbers (such as “Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen”), but expressed his satisfaction especially at “der Stille beifall” – the “silent approval” with which spectators had taken in other parts of the opera. Though Masonic interpretations of the opera have proliferated for the better part of a century, it is far from clear that Mozart’s above-quoted words had anything to do with the craft. Rather, they may point to larger issues of enlightenment, and to the coexistence of the lofty and the humble, both musically and socially.

Prompted by the 2019 Mostly Mozart Festival’s presentation of *The Magic Flute* in an innovative staging by Barrie Kosky, Suzanne Andrade, and Paul Barritt, this year’s panel at MMF will address the theme “Mozart’s Magic Flute: In His Time and Ours.” The panel will include three papers and there will be time at the end for questions from the audience.

- **Catherine Coppola** (Hunter College): “In Defense of the Text for *The Magic Flute*”
- **Thomas Bauman** (Northwestern University, emeritus): “*The Magic Flute* as Parable: A Triple Alliance”
- **Martin Nedbal** (University of Kansas): “From the Court to the Suburbs: *Die Zauberflöte*’s Links to Viennese Court Theater and to German Enlightenment Theater Reform”
- **Bruce Alan Brown** (University of Southern California), moderator