

**Die Zauberflöte, Fidelio, Parsifal-  
Masonic Operas? Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.**

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I began my quest with many questions regarding these three operas. On an intuitive level I believed them to be Masonic. Was this just a feeling on my part? Or were there facts to support this idea? *Die Zauberflöte* or let us refer to it as its English equivalent *The Magic Flute* is often cited as a Masonic opera. Rumour has been recorded that when Mozart's brothers found out he was writing a 'Masonic' opera they asked him to desist fearing that he would violate his obligations by revealing secrets of the order. Did He? What in *The Magic Flute* can be considered Masonic? Was Beethoven, the composer of *Fidelio*, a Freemason? Was Wagner, the composer of *Parsifal* a Freemason? Could *Fidelio* and *Parsifal* still be considered 'Masonic opera' even if their composers were not found to be Freemasons? The answers to these questions seem to lay in the study of the operas text (words, stage action) music, and research into the Masonic membership of the composers and their librettists (their text writers).

Let us begin with *The Magic Flute* and Mozart. Mozart is probably of all composers the most commonly referred to as being a Freemason. Mozart's Masonic membership is well documented. We find that he was member of the Viennese Lodge 'Zur Wohltätigkeit' (Beneficence) which was amalgamated in 1786 with two other Lodges to become the principal Lodge 'Zur neugekrönten Hoffnung' (New Crowned Hope). His librettist for *The Magic Flute* Emanuel Schikaneder was also a Freemason. Schikaneder recorded that he and Mozart formulated the story as a joint effort. Unlike most of Mozart's operas that contain recitative (sung dialogue) between the set pieces (arias, duets, trios etc.) this is a singspiel that means that it contains song and speech. Why a singspiel? Perhaps because the text was regarded as being important and they wished to set it apart from the music to stress this fact.

The story of *The Magic Flute* deals with a Prince named Tamino who falls in the love with the daughter of the Queen of the Night Pamina. After seeing a picture of her, the Queen of the Night informs the Prince that an evil man named Sarastro has taken her daughter away from her. If Tamino can bring Pamina back to her, she will give him Pamina's hand in marriage. Together with one of the Queen's servants Papageno, a bird catcher by trade, and armed with a magic flute for himself, and magic bells for Papageno, they set off. Tamino learns that Sarastro is in fact a High Priest of the Egyptian Mythical Deities Isis and Osiris. He also learns that Sarastro took Pamina away from her mother because of her mother's evil influence on her (this he learns through Masonic style question and answer sessions).

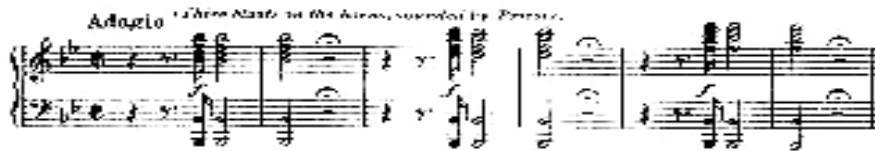
I would now like to show you an excerpt from a video of *The Magic Flute*. The excerpt is from the beginning of the second act. Sarastro is taking a ballot on Tamino's acceptance for initiation into the Temple of Light. You will note that in the production we are examining the member's sit in three groups. I am told the in the Lodges of Chile the members sit in three groups- EA, FC and MM respectively. Note the horn blasts and there rhythm, is this the Master Masons knocks? This also occurs in the overture at the beginning of the work. The script rendered here is an English translation of the text you will hear in the video clip.

Script from *The Magic Flute*-

Sar: Consecrated servants of the great gods Osiris and Isis  
In the Temple of Wisdom, with pure heart I declare that today's  
Assembly is one of the most important of our time. Tamino, a  
Prince, waits at the northern portal of our temple, longing with  
a virtuous soul for the enlightenment towards which all of us  
have been striving with energy and zeal. To watch over this  
high-minded youth, and to extend to him the hand of friendship,  
will be one of our foremost duties of this day.  
First Priest: He is virtuous?

Sar: Virtuous.  
 Second Priest: Can he keep silence?  
 Sar: He can.  
 Third Priest: Is he benevolent?  
 Sar: Benevolent. If you consider him worthy, follow my example.  
 (They blow three times on their horns.) Moved by the unanimity  
 of your hearts, Sarastro thanks you in the name of all mankind.  
 Pamina, the gentle, virtuous maiden, has been designated by  
 the gods for this noble youth; therefore I have torn her from the  
 side of her proud mother. This woman considers herself great,  
 and hopes through delusion and superstition to beguile the  
 populace and to destroy the firm foundations of our temples.  
 However, in that she shall not succeed. Tamino herself shall  
 become one of us, and aid us to strengthen the power of virtue  
 And wisdom. (The three blasts on the horns are repeated.)  
 Speaker: Great Sarastro, we admire your wise discourse.  
 However, will Tamino be able to contend against the hard  
 ordeals that await him? He is a Prince.  
 Sar: More than that, - he is a man.  
 Speaker: What if now, in his early youth, he pales in death?  
 Sar: Then he would experience the celestial joys of Osiris and  
 Isis sooner than we. (The three blasts on the horns are repeated.)  
 Let Tamino and his companions be led into the court of the temple,  
 (to the Speaker, who kneels before him) and you, friend, fulfil  
 your holy office and teach to both what duty to humanity is;  
 teach them to perceive the might of the gods. (Exeunt Speaker  
 and Second Priest.)

Seen Below: the three blasts on the horns, sounded by Priests.



Sarastro offers Tamino a place in the priesthood in the Temple of Light. He also offers Pamina's hand in marriage. Tamino must however pass through certain trials to attain these benefits. Tamino agrees to do so and he and Papageno begin the trials together. Papageno is found unfit for the Temple of Light, but he receives the concession of the common man, a wife. Tamino passes to the end of his trials and interestingly enough goes through the final trials of fire, air, earth and water together with Pamina (Co-Masonry?). The opera ends with a chorus extolling 'Starke, Schonheit und Weisheit' (strength, beauty and wisdom).

I would now like to show you a finale of the opera. This according to H. C. Robbins Landon relates not only to the JW's lecture in the EA degree but also to the thirty-third degree of the Scottish Rite. I have not seen anything in print as yet stating that either Mozart or Schikaneder were members of the Scottish Rite.

What have Mozart and Schikaneder revealed? In the current Canadian rituals we use in most of our Lodges we speak of an Egyptian connection in the JW's Lecture in the EA degree. Who is Sarastro but the High Priest of Isis and Osiris. The trials in particular, the final trial of fire, air, earth and water I am told by a Brother from Chile these have a place in the first degree practised there. Was this perhaps part of the ritual that either Mozart or Schikaneder went through? Fire, earth, air and water occur in one of the higher degrees of the Scottish Rite. The opera ends with strength beauty and wisdom, do we not have here the three great

pillars of the Lodge? Is there more? In the overture we have five knocks, historically it is noted that five knocks were used in the female adoption Lodges. Mozart also makes extensive use of the number three. The Queen of the Night has three lady attendants; Three boys assist Tamino and Papageno in their journeys; When Tamino arrives at the Temple he is met with three doors. Symbolic of the Temple the opera begins and closes in the key of three flats. Tamino's principle aria is also in three flats. Tamino is set against the Queen of the Night whose principle aria is in two flats.

*Fidelio* the title of the opera in its final revision is the name adopted by the main character and is suggestive of the word fidelity, and the character who uses this name is a woman pretending to be a man. The woman, Leonora, is seeking her husband who has been unjustly imprisoned. She finds her husband, Florestan, in prison and is instrumental in saving his life. For the Governor of the prison, Don Pizarro, was going to kill him. The Minister of State Don Fernando comes to inspect the prison to undercover the night of crime and assist in having his friend Florestan who has fought for the cause of truth along with others released.

I would like you now to listen to the final chorus from *Fidelio*. The great chorus of rejoicing. To those of you familiar with the final movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony you will find it similar in style and tone. This opera like *The Magic Flute* is done in the singspiel style of set pieces and spoken dialogue. Interestingly enough this opera was commissioned by none other than Emanuel Schikaneder.

*Fidelio* was commissioned by Schikaneder for his new theatre which was under the joint ownership of himself and a fellow Freemason. Beethoven is felt to be a Freemason although hard documentary evidence is still lacking. Beethoven had many friends that history has recorded as being Freemasons. The yardstick that I used in judging this a 'Masonic' opera was the usesage of the characteristics of brotherly love, relief and truth. Are these three principals represented? I would answer yes. Don Fernando comes to the prison uncovers the crimes being committed there and brings *relief* to his friend and others who were fighting for the truth. We also have Leonora posing as a man *Fidelio (fidelity)* who brings *relief* to the prisoners showing them *brotherly love and relief*.

*Parsifal* is the story of about a young man of that name. He was brought up in the forest by his widowed mother and he possesses almost no knowledge, this young fool stumbles upon the Temple of the Grail. In this story the Grail refers to the cup Christ drank from at the last supper and the Spear that pierced his side at the Crucifixion. This "stage consecrational festival" play as Wagner called it requires knowledge of what occurred before it begins. To help one make sense of the drama. Prior to the beginning of the music drama the following have occurred: Klingsor, a magician who sought to become a Grail Knight was judged unfit, for reasons not given. In anger he conjured up a garden before the Temple full of beautiful young women. This he did to weigh lay candidate's for the Grail Knighthood on there way to the Temple. Amfortas, the leader of the Grail Knights, in order to stop this practise took the holy spear to Klingsor's garden. Amfortas however fell under the spell of Klingsor's chief seductress Kundry. While under her spell Klingsor robbed him of the holy spear and inflicted a wound in Amfortas' side. The wound from the spear cannot be healed by any other means than it being touched again by the holy spear. Here the music drama begins. Parsifal is taken by the Keeper of the Temple grounds, Gurnemanz, into the Grail Temple there he watches a communion service being presided over by Amfortas. Amfortas is in much pain because of the spear wound. Parsifal is able to feel the wound on his own body but when asked by Gurnemanz to explain what he understood of the communion service Parsifal is unable to say anything, he just feels Amfortas' wound. This Gurnemanz was asking in respect to Parsifal becoming a Knight trainee. Because Parsifal is unable to answer Gurnemanz believes him un-teachable and ejects him from the Temple. At this point a voice is heard in the Temple prophesying that Amfortas' healing will come (through pity, knowing the holy fool). Parsifal leaving the temple comes upon Klingsor's garden and Kundry is dispatched to seduce him. Parsifal however through Kundry's kiss is brought to knowledge of Amfortas' down fall. Parsifal does not allow himself to be seduced by Kundry. Klingsor still attempts to wound Parsifal with the holy spear but because Parsifal did not give into Kundry's advances he is able to take possession of the spear unharmed. Both Klingsor and the garden vanish. However with the garden gone Parsifal does not know which way he came. He

wanders for a long time fighting many battles all the while never using the holy spear. During this time he acquires much knowledge of life. He eventually find his way back to the Temple of the Grail. Kundry washes Parsifal's feet and Gurnemanz anoints him as leader of the Grail Knights. Parsifal then baptises Kundry. Parsifal then heals the wounded Amfortas with the holy spear and presides at the Communion of the Knights to close the drama.

Brotherly love Parsifal feels for the wounded Amfortas relief and truth comes to knowledge of how to heal Amfortas obtains the holy spear guards it and brings it back to heal Amfortas. I would now like you to listen to the Communion scene from Parsifal. It is of interest to note that Wagner here uses a key of three flats for the Temple music prior to Parsifal's ejection. The key then changes to the key of C major which contains no sharps or flats and is referred to as the 'common key.' In other words the key of the unknowing or un-initiated. You will remember that Mozart in *The Magic Flute* also used the key of three flats in connection with the Temple of Light.

This music drama like all the others written by Richard Wagner had both music and libretto written by the composer. There appears to be no documentation available regarding Wagner's membership as a Freemason. The existing evidence suggests that he had intended to petition a Lodge for membership but that on the advice of Freemasons, friends and associates did not do so. This information seems questionable in light of things contained in his music dramas and events in his personal life. Many events within Wagner's life seem littered with strange interventions. We find him escaping creditors quite easily, or having homes made available to him in which to stay, we find a political revolt in which he was involved in Dresden where Wagner escaped with a price on his head. These suggest that he was either a Freemason or that his friends, family and associates divulged much of what Freemasonry was to him. Or in view of his life that Wagner was treated by his Masonic associates as if he were a Brother.

In terms of what Wagner believed he once said: "I believe in God, Bach, Beethoven and Mozart." Bach to our knowledge was not a Mason though his belief system could be considered as one. One of Bach's many children was a Freemason. We know that Mozart was a Freemason and in all likelihood Beethoven was as well. Would this not be a statement that one would expect to hear from a Brother Mason?

In conclusion then, *The Magic Flute* is a Masonic opera. It was written by two Freemasons Mozart and Schikaneder. It contains elements taken from Craft ritual. Beethoven's *Fidelio* is a Masonic opera using the yardstick of brotherly love, relief and truth. Some books and Internet sites state Beethoven was a Freemason but do not indicate to which Lodge he belonged. Wagner's *Parsifal* is also a Masonic opera again using the yardstick of brotherly love, relief and truth. Regarding Wagner's Masonic membership Worshipful Brother G. C. Love of the Victoria Lodge of Research in Australia in his paper "*Wagner-an Enigma Answered*" comes up with some interesting leads, one, that Wagner joined the same Lodge in the same year 1841 as Franz Liszt (his Father-in-Law). This seems possible especially since Liszt and Wagner were such close friends. Another possible lead says, "that Wagner visited German Lodges several times and studied the Craft deeply." I am not certain that I fully understand this statement. What kind of Lodges could he visit if he were not a member? I think we need to take into consideration in regard to Wagner's Masonic membership that Wagner was Hitler's favourite composer. I believe if Hitler became aware that Wagner was a Freemason he would have destroyed such evidence.

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