

# MU 328/338: Opera Handouts

Boston University School of Music - Spring 2008

## Paper #1 Topics - Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*

Choose one of the following topics:

A) Compare the dramatic and musical characterizations of Tamino and Papageno. Describe in detail aspects of the libretto that reveal who these dramatis personae are, what makes them similar and what differentiates them. Then demonstrate which elements of the music either illustrate these qualities, conflict with them or create through musical means character qualities beyond that which the libretto indicates. You must cite specific text references and provide clear musical examples.

B) *Die Zauberflöte* is often called a fairy tale opera, but rarely in fairy tales do the good characters become evil and vice versa. Discuss in detail why you think this happens in this opera, referring specifically to the Queen of the Night, Sarastro and at least some of the minor characters. Your paper should take a stand on this issue, and should include specific musical and textual references (and musical examples). You should also make reference to the following articles:

1) "Die Zauberflöte Solved" by Brigid Brophy, on electronic library reserve for mu 328 (go to main library page, click on "reserves," enter course [mu328](#), click on the article and enter password [mu328](#)) [<http://library.bu.edu/articles/2759525.2220/1.PDF>]

2) "The Plot of *The Magic Flute*" by J.N.A. Armitage-Smith (on <http://courseinfo.bu.edu>, for [mu 338](#), under course documents.

For either choice A or B, do not retell the plot—assume that your reader already knows it—and do not include any information not clearly relevant to your topic (avoid Mozart's biography, etc.). Further articles that may be of help are: "Fairy-Tale Literature and *Die Zauberflöte*" by David J. Buch (on [courseinfo.bu.edu](http://courseinfo.bu.edu), under course documents) and "La Clemenza di Sarastro" by Daniel Hertz (on [courseinfo.bu.edu](http://courseinfo.bu.edu), under course documents, and on the library electronic reserve page for mu328.)

Length and style: Your paper should be 5-6 pages in length (double spaced and typed with a 12-point font) not counting footnotes, endnotes or musical examples. Your reference style should be consistent: either in-text citations with a "Works Cited" page, or footnotes/ endnotes—but not both. For all questions regarding bibliographic form, footnote citations, and other matters of writing and style, you should see Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). This book is available in the reference section of any library. Your paper should have a thesis: that is, an original, organizing idea. You should have an introductory paragraph that explains what your thesis is and a concluding paragraph that sums up your arguments.

Resources: On reserve at the Mugar library are CD, score, video (Bergman) and DVD of the opera. In addition, [courseinfo.bu.edu](http://courseinfo.bu.edu), under course documents/ Listening, Viewing and Reserves, has a link to stream the opera via Naxos. As mentioned in your syllabus, you can also refer to Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* libretto: [http://www.aria-database.com/translations/magic\\_flute.txt](http://www.aria-database.com/translations/magic_flute.txt) and Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* scores: <http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/loebmusic/collections/digital.html>.

Due on February 27th, in class: Grades are lowered 1/3 grade for each day the paper is late. For example, a B+ paper that is one day late will receive the grade of B. Since I am not on campus every day, you may leave late papers in my mailbox in the main music office on the second floor of CFA, writing on it the date you handed it in.

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Paper #2 Topics - Verdi's *Rigoletto*

Choose one of the following topics:

**A)** Explore the character of either the King/Duke or Blanche/Gilda as presented in both the “Le Roi s'amuse” by Victor Hugo, and the opera. For either choice, consider the many identities that character has — Gilda as beloved daughter, sexual conquest, self-sacrificer, etc., and the Duke as ruler, lover, betrayer, husband, etc. — and whether these multiple identities create conflicts. Be sure to include relevant illustrative musical examples, and show how the music reflects the characterizations.

**B)** Explore the idea of Rigoletto's “disability” as related to his characterization in the opera. You might consider the following: is Rigoletto's disability an advantage or disadvantage for him? Is it symbolic? If so, how? Is Rigoletto's music “deformed” in any way? How is his music different than the music of other characters? A useful article might be Joseph N. Straus. “Normalizing the abnormal: disability in music and music theory.” *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 59/1 (Spring 2006): 113-184, which is available on courseinfo.bu.edu.

Length and style: Your paper should be 5-6 pages in length (typed, double-spaced) not counting footnotes, endnotes or musical examples. Your paper should include annotated musical examples, showing the points your text is making. For example, if a particular chord or rhythm is referenced in your text, then indicate it on the musical example as well. The reference style should be consistent: either in-text citations with a "Works Cited" page, or footnotes/ endnotes - but not both. Do not retell the plot, assume that your reader already knows it; and do not waste space by including biographies of the authors, or other general information.

Resources:

Due on Wednesday, April 1st, in class: Grades are lowered 1/3 grade for each day the paper is late. For example, an A paper that is one day late will receive the grade of A-. You may leave late papers in my mailbox in the music office, and write on it the date you handed it in.

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Paper #3 Topics - Wagner's *Die Walküre*

Choose one of the following topics:

**A)** Discuss Brünnhilde as the protagonist of *Die Walküre*, indeed the figure for whom the music drama is named. What makes her the central figure? You might explore how she relates to the other characters, in which parts of the work is she most fully presented, in which scenes is her character most revealed, or other aspects. Include a discussion of the main dramatic and musical segments that bring her conflict with Wotan.

**B)** Explore the concept of Leitmotives and what they bring to the operatic experience. Issues you might want to consider: do Leitmotives make the music more or less important to total work? what about inconsistency in labeling them? does it make a difference that the Leitmotive titles are not Wagner's? How does a Leitmotive get altered to reflect the dramatic situation? If some Leitmotives are similar to each other, how and why do you think this might be? how do Leitmotives use traditional harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic patterns to signal different sorts of emotions?

For either choice A or B, do not retell the plot—assume that your reader already knows it—and do not include any information not clearly relevant to your topic (avoid Wagner's biography, etc.).

Length and style: Your paper should have a thesis (that is, an original, organizing idea) stated clearly in the first paragraph, and a title that reflects that. Your point of view should be backed up with evidence in the body of the paper, and affirmed in the conclusion. Your paper should be 5-6 pages in length (double spaced and typed with a 12-point font) not counting footnotes, endnotes or musical examples. Your reference style should be consistent: either in-text citations with a "Works Cited" page, or footnotes/ endnotes—but not both. For all questions regarding bibliographic form, footnote citations, and other matters of writing and style, you should see Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). This book is available in the reference section of any library.

Resources: On reserve at the Mugar library are CDs, a score and a DVD of the opera. In addition, [courseinfo.bu.edu](http://courseinfo.bu.edu), under course documents/ Listening, Viewing and Reserves, has a link to stream the opera via Naxos.

Due on Friday, May 2nd, 12:00 noon in my mailbox: Grades are lowered 1/3 grade for each day the paper is late. For example, a B+ paper that is one day late will receive the grade of B. Since I am not on campus every day, you may leave late papers in my mailbox in the main music office on the second floor of CFA, writing on it the date you handed it in.

Wagner *Die Walküre* - Leitmotifs

“Storm”

49  
*Tempestoso*

*f* *p*

This musical score for the 'Storm' leitmotif is written in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) and a fermata over a group of five notes. The tempo is marked *Tempestoso*. The piece concludes with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano).

“Siegmund”

50

*pp* *p* *p*

This musical score for the 'Siegmund' leitmotif is presented in grand staff notation (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. It starts with a dynamic marking of *pp* (pianissimo) and features a fermata over a long note in the bass line. The tempo is *Andante*. The score ends with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano).

“Sieglinde’s Pity”

51  
*Poco animato*

*p* *rit.* *p*

This musical score for 'Sieglinde's Pity' is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) and a fermata over a group of notes. The tempo is marked *Poco animato*. The piece concludes with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) and a *rit.* (ritardando) marking.

“Love”

*Lento*

*p* A B

This musical score for the 'Love' leitmotif is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. It starts with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The score is divided into two sections, A and B, each enclosed in a bracket. The tempo is marked *Lento*.

“Volsungs’ Woe”

*Lento*

*P* con l'8<sup>va</sup> bassa

This musical score for 'Volsungs' Woe' is written in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a dynamic marking of *P* (piano) and a fermata over a long note. The tempo is marked *Lento*. The instruction *con l'8<sup>va</sup> bassa* (with 8th octave bass) is written below the staff.

“Hunding”

Two staves of music in bass clef, 3/4 time. The upper staff features chords and triplets, with a dynamic marking of *ss* (fortississimo) and a *p* (piano) marking later. The lower staff contains a melodic line with triplets and a *p* marking. The piece concludes with the instruction *p* etc.

“Wotan/spear/treaty”

A single staff of music in bass clef, 3/4 time. It begins with a *p* (piano) dynamic marking and features a long, sweeping melodic line.

“Valhalla”

Two staves of music. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower in bass clef, both in 3/4 time. The piece is marked *p* *dolcissimo* (pianissimo) and includes the instruction *Reb* (ritardando).

“Volsungs”

Two staves of music in treble clef, 3/4 time. The upper staff starts with a *p* (piano) dynamic marking. The lower staff begins with *pp* (pianissimo) and includes a *p* marking later. The piece concludes with the instruction *etc.*

“Sword”

A single staff of music in treble clef, 3/4 time. The tempo is marked *Moderato*. The piece is marked *pp* (pianissimo) and includes the instruction *do.* (ritardando). The instrument is identified as *Oboe* and *Corno* (Horn).

“Spring song”

Win - ter - stür - me wi - chen dem Won - ne - mond, in  
mil - dem Lich - te leuch - tet der Lenz,

The musical score for "Spring song" consists of two staves of music in a treble clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/8. The melody is written with eighth and quarter notes, featuring a long slur over the first two staves. The lyrics are printed below the notes.

“Renunciation of Love”

Nur wer der Min - ne Macht ver - sagt, nur wer der  
Basso: Sol \_\_\_\_\_ Do \_\_\_\_\_ Fa \_\_\_\_\_ Sol \_\_\_\_\_  
Lie - be Lust ver - jagt,

The musical score for "Renunciation of Love" consists of two staves of music in a treble clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written with quarter and eighth notes. Below the first staff, there are four blank lines for a basso continuo line, labeled with the notes Sol, Do, Fa, and Sol. The lyrics are printed below the notes.

“Fate”

Otoni

The musical score for "Fate" is a piano accompaniment in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some chords. The word "Otoni" is written above the first staff.

“Annunciation of Death”

pp

The musical score for "Annunciation of Death" is a piano accompaniment in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some chords. The dynamic marking "pp" (pianissimo) is written below the first staff. There is also a fermata over the final measure of the piece.

“Valkyries A”



“Valkyries B”



“Love of the Volsungs”



“God’s displeasure/Dejection”



“Siegfried”



“Last greeting”





“Magic Slumber A”

Musical score for "Magic Slumber A" in G major, 3/4 time. The piece begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a complex texture of chords and moving lines, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' and a slur. The score concludes with the text "etc.".

“Magic Slumber B”

Musical score for "Magic Slumber B" in G major, 3/4 time. The piece is written for a single melodic line in the right hand, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. It features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with several phrases connected by long, sweeping slurs.

“Magic Fire”

Musical score for "Magic Fire" in G major, 3/4 time. The piece is written for piano and features a complex, rhythmic texture. The right hand has a rapid, sixteenth-note melody, while the left hand plays a series of chords. The piece begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes the instruction *sempre slacc* (always slurred). The left hand has several notes marked with a plus sign (+).

## Final Exam study sheet [2011]

### I. Identifications (2 points each, 30 points total)

Briefly identify and cite a specific operatic example (where appropriate) for the terms listed below. Write your answers in the blue book. [Note: on the real exam only 15 of these terms will appear]

Daniel Auber

*The Beggar's Opera*

bel canto

Vincenzo Bellini

cavatina/ cabaletta

the Cold Genius/Frost King

commedia dell'arte

Florentine Camerata

Lorenzo Da Ponte

*Der Freischütz*

French overture

Gesamtkunstwerk

Giuseppe Giacomini

Christoph Willibald Gluck

intermedio

intermezzo

*Leonore or conjugal love*

John Luther Long

Prosper Mérimée

Jacob Liebmann Meyer Beer

Claudio Monteverdi

music drama

Nothing

opera buffa / opera seria

Giovanni Paisiello

*The Perfect Wagnerite*

Giovanni Battista Pergolesi

Jacopo Peri

Querelle des Bouffons

Eugene Scribe

recitativo secco/recitativo accompagnato

Sharpless

Singspiel

Sprechstimme

Stabreim

“Va pensiero”

Viva V.E.R.D.I.

verismo

Wälse

Yamadori

### II. Listening Exam (35 points)

The listening exam will be from Act II of *Die Walküre*. Questions: what is the dramatic situation at this point? which leitmotifs do you recognize? what is desired dramatic function of these leitmotifs?

### III. Essay (35 points)

There will be a choice of two essay questions covering all three operas we have studied in depth (Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Wagner's *Die Walküre* and Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*).

## Final Exam [2008]

### WRITE ALL ANSWERS IN YOUR BLUE BOOK!

#### I. Identifications (2 points each, 30 points total)

Briefly identify and cite a specific operatic example (where appropriate) for terms listed below.

bel canto

Arrigo Boito

cavatina/ cabaletta

French overture

Gesamtkunstwerk

Christoph Willibald Gluck

intermedio

Jacob Liebmann Meyer Beer

opera seria

Giovanni Paisiello

Jacopo Peri

Querelle des Bouffons

recitativo secco/recitativo accompagnato

Singspiel

Stabreim

#### II. Listening Exam (35 points)

Listen to the musical example from Act III of *Die Walküre*, which will be played twice.

- what is the dramatic situation at this point?
- which leitmotives do you recognize?
- what do you think is desired dramatic function of these leitmotives?

#### III. Essay (35 points) Choose ONE of the following essays:

A. In each of the operas we have studied in depth, Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Verdi's *Otello* and Wagner's *Die Walküre*, an object has had a great deal of significance to the organization of the work. Choose an object with special significance from each opera, discuss its role in the plot and character development, and how the music supports this.

B. Choose a pair of characters from each of the operas we have studied in depth, Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Verdi's *Otello* and Wagner's *Die Walküre*, one of whom has power over the other, and discuss the issue of obedience vs. disobedience and/ or submission vs. resistance. You could choose, for example: Queen of the Night/Pamina, Queen of the Night/Papageno, Sarastro/Monostatos, Otello/ Desdemona, Otello/ Iago, Iago/ Emilia, Cassio/ Iago, Hunding/ Sieglinde, Wotan/ Hunding, Wotan/ Fricka, or others. Then discuss how the music supports this.

- **Extra Credit Listening Example:** for 5 points extra credit, identify this selection.

## Final Exam [2009]

### **WRITE ALL ANSWERS IN YOUR BLUE BOOK, NOT HERE!**

#### **I. Identifications (2 points each, 30 points total)**

Identify and cite a specific example (where appropriate) for the terms listed below. [*Fuller answers will be given more credit than briefer ones.*]

*The Beggar's Opera*

Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais

commedia dell'arte

Fanchette

*Der Freischütz*

French overture

Christoph Willibald Gluck

intermedio

Claudio Monteverdi

*The Perfect Wagnerite*

Jacopo Peri

Querelle des Bouffons

Singspiel

Stabreim

“Va pensiero”

#### **II. Listening Exam (35 points)**

Listen to the musical example from Act III of *Die Walküre*, which will be played twice, and answer the following questions:

- what is the dramatic situation at this point?
- which leitmotives do you recognize?
- what do you think is desired dramatic function of these leitmotives?

#### **III. Essay (35 points)** Choose ONE of the following essays:

**A.** Discuss the issue of marital infidelity as explored in each of the three operas we have studied (Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, Verdi's *Rigoletto* and Wagner's *Die Walküre*). Give specific examples from each opera (focusing on the Count, the Duke, and Wotan) and discuss the motives each character feels and the consequences of his actions. and how that is shown both dramatically and musically. (Describe at least one musical moment from each opera.)

**B.** Choose a female character from each of the three operas we have studied (Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, Verdi's *Rigoletto* and Wagner's *Die Walküre*), and discuss the following: what is her place in the social hierarchy? does she challenge it? does she break the rules and, if so, what are the consequences? how is this shown in the music? (Describe at least one musical moment from each opera.)

- **Extra Credit Listening Example:** for 5 points, identify this selection.