

HAMPSTEAD GARDEN OPERA TRUST LIMITED - Charity No. 1168484

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JACKSONS LANE THEATRE, HIGHGATE, LONDON N6 5AA



## ***THE MAGIC FLUTE* by W.A.Mozart**

**Libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder**

**Translation by Jeremy Sams**

**November 11<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**Stage Director: Toria Banks • Music Director: Christopher Stark • With the HGO Orchestra**

**November 11<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>, at Jacksons Lane Theatre in Highgate, Hampstead Garden Opera will present Mozart's enchanting and final opera *The Magic Flute*, in an exciting new production developed by Toria Banks. This will be the first production Toria has directed for HGO. Her recent credits include Revival Director for the acclaimed ROH production of Cavalli's 'L'Ormindo' at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse. Also making his HGO debut is Music Director Christopher Stark, who is the Conductor and co-Artistic Director of the RPS Award Winning Multi-Story Orchestra, based in a Peckham Car Park, with whom he made his debut at the BBC Proms in September.**

Premiered three months before the composer's death, in his final opera Mozart brings to life the quest of Prince Tamino, and the bird-catcher Papageno, to rescue the Princess Pamina. Caught up in a struggle between her mother, the volatile Queen of the Night and the powerful High Priest, Sarastro, the adventure leads them to wisdom as well as love. *The Magic Flute* is an ideal demonstration of Mozart's unsurpassed ability to blend layers that are seemingly contradictory into a profound whole. In this Singspiel, Mozart combines both spoken dialogue and sung drama to tell a story that, moving backwards and forward from popular and learned musical styles, ends up hovering between the sublime and the comic. Toria Banks, the director of 'The Magic Flute' observes: "It's an opera about Enlightenment, but it can be pretty baffling. I've loved spending as much time as possible with the score and the libretto, finding my way to the heart of it.

It's easy to see it as staggeringly sexist, and therefore really not very enlightened at all. In it, a man presides over a Temple of Wisdom, and the thing he seems to care most about is stopping women from getting inside. He also kidnaps a young woman and exposes her to repeated attempted sexual assault. If we are asked to see Sarastro as the great wise leader it is a real problem. I'm also not keen on saying, 'it doesn't matter, it's just a story', because that really diminishes an amazing piece of art. The answer is Mozart's extraordinary heroine, Pamina, who is much wiser than her captor. It's Pamina who decides to take the trials together with Tamino. She refuses to be the prize in a test of manliness, and insists on participating in life as an equal. Then she enters the Temple of Wisdom and throws open the doors for good.

It's a comedy, and in Mozart's work that doesn't just mean that it's funny, or that it has a happy ending, but that it expresses a generous, optimistic vision of humanity. It's been a tonic in political hard times, to be honest. The story starts with the arrival, out of nowhere, of a hero from another realm, in our production he's a sort of Saint George, who faints fighting the dragon. He wakes up in a sort of England, sort of now, where power and learning are kept for the few. In the end though, it's not heroism, but grace and love which throw open the doors of the Temple to everyone. For me, it's not about imposing a concept, but rather how the story resonates with us as a company, in a way I hope we can share with our audience. It's uplifting to work on, particularly with brilliant collaborators, like Chris and Emma [Bailey, Linbury Prize winning designer], and a cast full of youth and energy."

**Toria Banks** has been a theatre director for over a decade, since moving into professional opera she has been staff director for ETO (where she met then staff conductor, Chris Stark), and Revival Director for the acclaimed ROH production of Cavalli's 'L'Ormindo' at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, at Shakespeare's Globe. She has also directed new operas at the Grimeborn and Tête à Tête festivals. She taught acting at Arts Educational Schools for five years, and has been working with singers as Resident Director at Trinity Laban since 2009. This is the first time she's worked with HGO.

**Christopher Stark**, is the Conductor and co-Artistic Director of the RPS Award Winning Multi-Story Orchestra, based in a Peckham Car Park, with whom he made his debut at the BBC Proms in September. The Orchestra has appeared at the Aldeburgh and Brighton Festivals along with a yearly orchestral programme in Peckham. He has worked as Assistant Conductor for the BBC Proms, Glyndebourne Festival and Glyndebourne on Tour who awarded him the Lefever Award in 2014 for work on The Turn of the Screw, and for English Touring Opera. He studied at Trinity College, Cambridge.

**Hampstead Garden Opera**, in being since 1990, is a company committed to the development of young singers, and stages two productions each year. Its consistently high musical, vocal and productions standards make HGO an important part of the artistic life of north London.



**Hampstead Garden Opera won the Off West End (Offies) Opera Production Award 2013 for its 2012 staging of *Così fan tutte*, and were finalists for the same award in the 2014, 2015, and 2016 Offies.**

*"What do you go to the opera for? The question has a thousand answers, but if you're going to Mozart's Marriage of Figaro, the chances are that you're expecting some frothy romantic comedy, some elegant music and a bunch of tunes that will stay in your head when the show is over. But on a good day, it can be so much more than that, and Bruno Ravella's production for Hampstead Garden Opera pulls out all the stops.."* David Karlin's review of 'The Marriage of Figaro for **Bachtrack**.

**Performances of *The Magic Flute*:**

**Evenings at 7.30 pm – November 11, 12, & 15-19**

**Matinées at 4.00pm: Sundays November 13 & 20**

**Matinée at 2.30pm: Saturday November 19**

Jacksons Lane Theatre, Highgate, London N6 5AA

Tickets: (unreserved) £27 (Premium Seats) £22 (General Admission) (Concessions £20 – Nov 11, 12)

Box Office: 0800 411 8881

Online: [www.hgo.org.uk/tickets](http://www.hgo.org.uk/tickets)

For further information, please contact Martin Musgrave (Deputy Chairman and Publicity):

[martin.musgrave@hgo.org.uk](mailto:martin.musgrave@hgo.org.uk) Phone: 07590 56 77 90

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