



**SALZBURG FESTIVAL**  
**18 July – 31 August 2022**

**Press Text: Terrace Talk *Die Zauberflöte***

**“What is still reality, what already a dream?”**



**Joana Mallwitz, Conductor, and Director Lydia Steier (left to right)**

(SF, 6 July 2022) No, it is anything but the same, says director Lydia Steier about the relationship between this year's new staging and the 2018 production. One indication is that only one or two of the many 2018 photos can be reused. “We are very grateful to Markus Hinterhäuser for this opportunity to stage the opera under new conditions. The Haus für Mozart, the new venue, allows us to adopt a more intimate perspective on the story.”

The core remaining element is the starting point: a family story told by a grandfather, which becomes reality through the eyes of the children. Two revolving stage elements make it possible to delve deeper and deeper into the tale – “it's comparable with *Alice in Wonderland*, who discovers ever new, completely different worlds and perspectives by passing through various doors,” Steier explains.

The principle of total re-examination also applies on the musical level. “*Die Zauberflöte* must be the most frequently interpreted, but also most questioned opera,” says Joana Mallwitz. “I must confess that I too had to liberate myself from certain traditions which dominated my view,” even though she has previously conducted the work at several opera houses. “I don't mean going against the work's grain, but looking very carefully at the score – that is the only place to find answers,” she continues.

Asked about the narrative perspective and the question what we can learn about our own world by looking through the eyes of children, Lydia Steier says: “Of course on the one hand, *Die Zauberflöte* is a fairy-tale, but on the other it is almost a meditation on issues which are



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very adult.” The challenge, she adds, is to convey major notions, such as wisdom and virtue, as embodied by Sarastro, to the audience in a charming and playful manner.



Joana Mallwitz, conductor, and director Lydia Steier (left to right)

Joana Mallwitz, who made her outstanding Festival debut in 2020 in *Così fan tutte*, describes the music: “With Mozart, it is not enough simply to look at the printed score. The art lies in seeing how he shapes accents and tempo transitions, for example, so that the result is like a perfect paper dart: it just flies. That is what Mozart’s music is to me.”

In terms of staging, of course the changes worldwide since 2018 have taken their toll, says Lydia Steier: “Even then we were looking at a world that includes war and other miseries. The new year of 1912/1913 was the point where we stood then; in the meantime, we have assumed another perspective, we have all lost something – in the best case, only time or money, in the worst case a person or our health. Our eyes, and the eyes of the singers, see things differently. What was only a prognosis earlier has now become fact. Yet we have the good fortune of having a young team, eager to actively explore current topics – not just the subject of war, but also the question, for example, whether Pamina’s role is misogynist?” This also includes explaining to the new generation what the world holds in store for it – not only in the main conflict of the piece, that between Sarastro and the Queen of the Night, but also with a view to external conflicts.

Joana Mallwitz characterizes the special genre of the *singspiel* in Mozart’s oeuvre: “This form is one that Mozart already prepared in his *Entführung aus dem Serail*. Too often, the focus of attention is not on the dialogue between Mozart and Schikaneder. Apart from the staging, two things are important, and these are reflected in Lydia’s concept in a wonderful way: on the one hand, the focus on telling the story, including the aspect of working in depth on the fluid borderline between spoken and sung text. And on the other hand, emphasizing all the subjects that are just touched upon in passing. *Die Zauberflöte* is full of riddles which have no answers. And still, it is important to portray the breadth of subjects from a perspective that asks: what is still reality, and what is already a dream?”



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Joana Mallwitz also comments on the invented narrator figure of the grandfather, embodied by Roland Koch: “His role is intriguing – especially given what we want to achieve. The story is told, the listener is drawn in,” and Lydia Steier adds: “The grandfather is not just any figure, perhaps he is the central figure, viewing Tamino as a younger version of himself. The dining room features a large-scale portrait of Pamina as the late grandmother, and the children see in her the princess, while the grandfather looks upon the woman he loved with passionate nostalgia. In the tale, Tamino encounters joy and pain; issues such as loss and personal fears form an undercurrent of the story.”

The question whether shared, clear goals are the key to good work on an opera is answered succinctly by Lydia Steier: “Yes! We both have strong ideas and a clear view of the opera as a whole. The staging must form the backbone of the music.” With regard to artistic collaboration, she emphasizes: “Working with someone has rarely been so much fun!” Joana Mallwitz concurs: “Both must go hand in hand, but even more so when it’s Mozart: the moment a phrase is sung, everything must be right. Every listener immediately knows whether the impulse is right or not.”

Joana Mallwitz also reveals that there is a moment particularly close to her musical heart: “It’s No. 19, the trio. It is one of the most underrated numbers, not so well-known to audiences. It is like a magnifying glass.” Regarding the key signatures, she declares: “The keys with flat signatures represent emotions and compassion; Sarastro’s entire world is located on the other side of the circle of fifths.” The yearning for calm is invoked here as a kind of leitmotif or motif of fate.

Lydia Steier states that they would like the production to have the effect of an echo: to have the audience remember, to “undertake the journey with us, gradually acquiring a new perspective.”

Asked about the artistic effort and intensity, Joana Mallwitz says: “It does not mean fewer rehearsals. To me, it is, and it must be, a new production. I must find out how the team fits together, how we can agree and collaborate. That is hard work, and there is no difference between this and *Così*. Presumably there are no definite answers, but that does not keep me from searching for them.” Ultimately, she adds, the point is a fresh gaze that leaves the printed score behind and instead questions every note, as if to say: “Why are you there?”

Photographs can be found here:

<https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/en/press/photos>

The podcast can be found here:

<https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/en/press/podcasts>



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**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)**

***Die Zauberflöte***

**A German Opera in Two Acts K. 620 (1791)**

Libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder

New Staging

In German, with German and English Surtitles

**Joana Mallwitz** Conductor

**Lydia Steier** Director

**Katharina Schlipf** Sets

**Ursula Kudrna** Costumes

**Olaf Freese** Lighting

**Momme Hinrichs** Video

**Ina Karr, Maurice Lenhard** Dramaturgy

**Tareq Nazmi** Sarastro

**Mauro Peter** Tamino

**Brenda Rae** Queen of the Night

**Jasmin Delfs\*** Queen of the Night (10 August)

**Regula Mühlemann** Pamina

**Ilse Eerens** First Lady

**Sophie Rennert** Second Lady

**Noa Beinart** Third Lady

**Michael Nagl** Papageno

**Maria Nazarova** Papagena

**Peter Tantsits** Monostatos

**Henning von Schulman** Speaker/First Priest/Second Man in Armour

**Simon Bode** Second Priest/First Man in Armour

**Roland Koch** Grandfather

**Vienna Boys' Choir** Three Boys

**Concert Association of the Vienna State Opera Chorus**

**Jörn Hinnerk Andresen** Chorusmaster

**Angelika Prokopp** Summer Academy of the Vienna Philharmonic Stage Music

**Vienna Philharmonic**

\*Participant of the Young Singers Project



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**Premiere: 30 July, 6:30 pm, Haus für Mozart**

Further performances:

**03, 06, 10, 17, 20, 24 and 27 August, Haus für Mozart**

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**Live in Cinemas on 30 July:** [www.salzburgimkino.de](http://www.salzburgimkino.de)

**TV Broadcasts:**

**ServusTV on 11 August at 8:15 pm**

**Medici.TV on 20 August at 7 pm**

<https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/uebertragungen>

The programme will also be shown in selected Korean cinemas throughout the summer.

Kind regards,

Press Office of the Salzburg Festival

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