



Trestleboard

Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Oregon

The Masonic Opera

by Bob Casey, Worshipful Master

The Magic Flute, possibly Mozart's most famous opera, is often said to be the "Masonic" opera. But people tend to be mystified, wondering what makes it so Masonic. Having studied this topic a bit, I'll give my own view. If you're interested, keep reading....

The Magic Flute's music was composed by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Its lyrics were written by Emanuel Schikaneder. Both men were active Freemasons in the same Masonic lodge in Salzburg, Austria. The underlying story reminded them enough of Freemasonry, that they included many Masonic symbols in the opera's music, lyrics, and general artistry.

At the heart of Freemasonry is the concept of taking 3 steps toward a better path. In an actual Masonic lodge, these are 3 ceremonies known as "degrees." Their purpose is to initiate a candidate into this higher path.

But how is that reflected in The Magic Flute's music? I would recommend going on youtube, and listening to the first 30 seconds of the opera's overture. You will hear three notes, blasted in supremely confident style. Musically, the opera progresses in 3 steps, much like a brother of the Craft.

Philosophy is also part of this picture. Freemasonry's early days occurred, while a philosophy known as The Enlightenment was spreading across Europe. Enlightenment ideals included rational thought, study of science, freedom of conscience, and opposition to tyrants.

But how is that reflected in The Magic Flute's plot? Well, the story involves a lost prince being pursued by various forces of tyranny. He finds refuge in a temple - the stronghold of a mysterious and honorable order that promotes freedom of conscience, rational thought, and scientific study.

Eventually the prince passes through 3 ceremonies (known in the opera as "trials" or "ordeals"), and is initiated into the order. In essence, he becomes a Freemason. It should be noted, that there's an anomaly to this initiation - one which might be startling. But I'll leave the details to your own discovery!

Artists designing sets for The Magic Flute often include a giant blue sky adorned with astronomical symbols. The connection with Freemasonry would be another of its tenets - that life is to be understood through studying natural science - especially astronomy, geometry, and physics.

All this is rather abstract and philosophical. But so is Freemasonry. Only a certain kind of person would be interested. Are you?

WB Bob Casey, Worshipful Master 2016



From the West

Harmony being the strength and support of every Lodge, it has been gratifying to spend so much quality time with Worshipful Brother Bob, and Brother JW Walter, over the past two months. Pausing to reflect on this, I went seeking some wisdom on the subject of "harmony", and found the following:

"Wandering re-establishes the original harmony which once existed between man and the universe."

- Anatole France

"Opposition brings concord. Out of discord comes the fairest harmony."

- Heraclitus of Ephesus

"You don't get harmony when everybody sings the same note."

- Doug Floyd

We have a steady cadence of Masonic fellowship and education to anticipate during the year ahead. I look forward to hearing the harmony we develop together, in brotherhood.

Bro. Leo Schuman

From the South

Greetings Brethren,

It gave me such delight to see so many of you last month; your enjoyment of our meal, our focused attention for Brother Roy Ball's lecture, and the conversation and fellowship after the close of our meeting all sparked such a bright light for me – as I hope it did for you.

Indeed I have seen in practice that work, dining, and refreshment are the key venues for collaboration and open exchange. So it is that this February, I am happy to have organized a variety of Italian dishes for our dinner and dessert; provided by one of Portland's more popular restaurants. Furthermore, a selection from the lectures of Dr. Kenneth G. Brown on the mastery of influence has been chosen to further our education in being a Modern Gentleman.

Whilst reviewing Dr. Brown's work, I came to notice the prominence of *fortitude* in his practice. Today we take this word to mean a mental strength, and the moral courage to confront danger or pain. This merging of the mental and physical is fascinating to me. A grand compromise of Plato and Cicero, whose definitions combined, cover both territories – though separated by some 300 years. For Plato saw fortitude as the chief virtue of a protector – a sentry poised to protect the public good through their bodily might. Whilst the Romans came to see *fortitude* as being much more akin to our modern notion of *temperance* – living life according to reason, not giving in to base desires.

Some many more years removed from both these gentlemen, we still live in a world with threats. We still see challenges to overcome. And men may still wish to give into the base desire to avoid both for the sake of physical or emotional comfort. But it is the virtuous man who is reasonable, brave and

From the South Cond't

temperate: he does not rage at the world nor abstain from disputes in favor of mere comfort. I for one am delighted by the opportunities our gentle craft offers to practice *fortitude* – to meet my brothers on the level and lovingly exchange our ideas so that we can build friendships whereas otherwise we (and indeed our thoughts) might remain at a perpetual distance.

Be well, Brethren, and be bright. I look forward to seeing you again in February.

Fraternally,

Walter Lee, Junior Warden

March

Masonic Birthdays

Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason

02 Carson Bailey II (49)
19 Rob Chapman (36)
20 Chris Lassen (42)
20 Monty Glover (14)
26 Verne Rohrbach (36)
26 Bob Casey (19)
27 Chris Chase (03)
28 Douglas Neville (26)

March

Natural Birthdays

02 Russell Wilson
02 Jack Allen
03 Keith Moon
05 John Bromley
10 George Nelson

16 Bryan Tranel
18 Rob Chapman
23 Cole Magbanua
27 John Trueb
30 Richard Taggesell
31 John Say
31 Brian Gardes

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

1 2 3 4 5

Friendship160
Dinner 6:30
Stated 7:30 PM Minerva 104
Meeting 5pm

6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Bethel 4
7:00 pm Kenton145
Dinner 6:30 PM
Stated 7:30 PM Mizpah-Rose 12
Amaranth
7:30 PM Prince Hall
Meeting
10:00 AM

13 14 15 16 17 18 19

20 21 22 23 24 25 26

Bethel 4
7:00 pm

27 28 29 30 31

Rosicrucians
Social Hour
3:15 PM

To the Brother who stands plumb to his principles, yet is level to his Brethren.

FriendshipMasonicLodge¹⁶⁰

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