

The 1790 *Così fan tutte* explodes the conventions of “unfaithful love,” submitting the conceits to a cascade of irony and masquerade. The Overture confers the ebullient wit abounding throughout the opera, accompanied by a mock sentimental tune played by the oboe after the opening chords. The phrase “*così fan tutte*,” as sung by the men in Act II, is then stated in the low strings, and the Overture whirls to an effervescent presto conclusion with sparkling woodwinds and strings. The 1791 opera *The Magic Flute*, with its Masonic themes of striving for human perfection through brotherhood, realizes much of Bruno Walter’s innate humanism. The great Mozart scholar Alfred Einstein once wrote that Mozart had compressed into this Overture all the struggle and victory of mankind. Yet, despite its symbolism and spirituality, the music preserves a delicate fairytale atmosphere. There is always a quicksilver in Mozart’s counterpoint and in his unflinching charm, which blesses the listener like an outward manifestation of the composer’s inward grace.

The Masonic Funeral Music (1785) in C Minor, K. 477 presents us with an entirely transformed musical persona in Mozart, close to the dark spirit of Don Giovanni but no less colored by the mortality of the Requiem Mass.

*EINE KLEINE
NACHTMUSIK*
BRUNO WALTER
Columbia Symphony Orchestra

*MOZART: Eine Kleine Nachtmusik
The Impresario Overture
Così Fan Tutte Overture
The Marriage of Figaro Overture
The Magic Flute Overture
The Masonic Funeral Music*



Bruno Walter (1876–1962) carried on Mahler's tradition of conducting Mozart as a mature, substantial composer. This was not always the case at the start of the 20th Century; and along with Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer and Karl Bohm, Walter helped bring Mozart into the modern era untouched and untarnished, performances that exude warmth, intelligence, and a robust assertiveness that belies anything like a "rococo" or "effeminate" vision of Mozart. Walter puts into each downbeat the sinew of his sixty years of experience into every bar, the result of which we can still marvel at fifty years later. Beauty, depth, precision, rhythmic flexibility, and even Mozart's humor knit together flawlessly by Walter's gifted hands and the responsive playing of the best recording studio band ever -- the Columbia Symphony Orchestra. Those studio orchestra strings, incisive and piercing, dispel the dry acoustic that could sometimes plague American Legion Hall. If Walter could claim to have earned his epithet, "the conductor of humanity," it remains his Mozart, even beyond his mastery of Mahler, Bruckner, and the Great German Tradition, that confirms his enduring image.

Mozart's eternally popular 1787 G Major Serenade, "Eine kleine

Nachtmusik" bears a German title rather than one in Italian, as most of Mozart's other cassations and divertimenti. Alfred Einstein came up with the ingenious suggestion that Mozart might have composed it as a corrective to his A Musical Joke, K. 522, written shortly before. In A Musical Joke, Mozart gleefully thumbed his nose at all the hallowed rules of musical composition of his day, while the refined and charming Eine kleine Nachtmusik follows those rules meticulously. Mozart gives us a miniature four-movement symphony for string orchestra, with a sonata-allegro first movement, a slow movement in rondo form, the surviving minuet, and a sonata-rondo finale. The second movement Romance introduces a few nocturnal shadows in its C-minor middle section to a work that is otherwise an ideal music expression of the relaxed pleasures of a balmy summer evening.

Besides the brilliant overtures to various operas: the 1786 Le Nozze di Figaro does not make use of any thematic material from the opera itself, but its vivaciously colorful energy--witness the CBS bassoon part--captures the essence of the work superbly. Mozart's music for Der Schauspieldirektor (1786) coincides with his work on Le Nozze di Figaro and bears the same capacity for humor and athletic verve.

MOZART

Eine Kleine Nachtmusik

Bruno Walter - The Columbia Symphony Orchestra

Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, K. 525

1 Allegro 4:33

2 Andante 5:27

3 Allegretto 2:15

4 Allegro 3:16

5 The Impresario Overture, K. 486 3:58

6 Cosi Fan Tutte Overture, K. 588 4:50

7 The Marriage Of Figaro Overture, K. 492 4:39

8 The Magic Flute Overture, K. 620 7:30

9 Masonic Funeral Music, K. 477 7:40

Total Time: 44:08

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