

Performance Notes for Sarastro's Aria

Mozart wrote his opera, the **Magic Flute** in 1791 during the last year of life. It was his last complete work and one of his greatest musical achievements. This charming opera can be enjoyed at a number of levels. Children through to musical scholars find great stores of joy in this work's many levels of genius.

The opera was written just after the French Revolution and is filled with many rituals of Freemasonry (Haydn introduced Mozart to the Masons) such as: the autonomy of the individual, self-determination, the ideals of power, wisdom, beauty and symbols such as; aprons, hammers, compasses and a pyramid with an all-seeing eye.

Some interesting themes of the opera are:

- Ancient Egypt is evoked with the pyramids, the gods Isis and Osiris are invoked and Egyptian images and architecture appear.
- Sarastro's name is most likely derived from the ancient Persian prophet Zoroaster.
- The number "3", a big part of Freemasonry is omnipresent; we find three strongly emphasized chords in the overture, three Ladies in the service of the Queen of the Night, three Boys who lead Tamino and Papageno on their quest, in the original cast three slaves and three priests, three temples, three knocks on the doors of the temple, three flats in the key signature of E flat, the home key of the opera, **three trombones** and the time signature of Sarastro's aria itself is in 3/4.

This movement is an aria from the beginning of Act II. Sarastro (a basso), is the High Priest of the "Secret Society". Tamino and Papageno are attempting to gain entrance into this Secret Society. Sarastro informs the other priests that Tamino and Papageno must go through severe tests to be worthy of entering the Temple of Light. Sarastro prays to Isis and Osiris (Gods of the Secret Society) that the two may be worthy of their goal. They are warned not to fail in their vow of silence (a very difficult thing for either of the characters to do). Is Mozart poking fun at the Freemasons? That is possibly the biggest secret.

Below is an English translation from the German text of Sarastro's prayer to the gods:

*O Isis and Osiris, give
The spirit of wisdom to the new pair.
She who links to her the wanderer's steps,
Strengthens them with patience in danger.*

*Let them see the fruits of the test;
But, if they should go to the grave,
Then, the valiant course of virtue rewarded,
Receive them in your abode.*

Mot of this aria features the Bass Trombone as soloist. In a performance setting the soloist may wish to stand or be slightly apart from the ensemble. More than one performer can play at the same time as a way to feature the Bass Trombone section of a large Trombone Choir. The soloist's tone should be full and warm yet focused, majestic and noble, never harsh or forced. The solo part in bar 36 may be performed with the lower notes down to the low "C", however the original part is in the upper octave. Although the accompaniment is marked soft for the most part, the breath should never be held back and the tone should always sound comfortable.

Notes by Gordon Cherry

Sarastro's Aria from the "Magic Flute"

W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)
transcribed by Russ Schultz

Adagio $\text{♩} = 63$

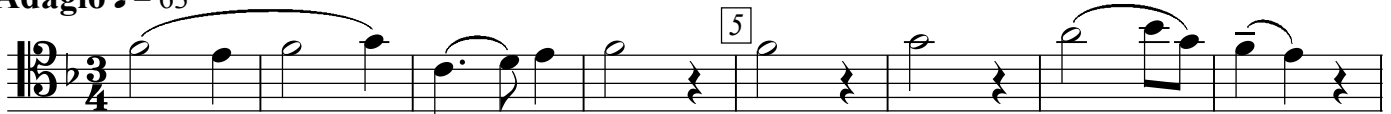
The musical score is arranged in four staves. The top staff is Trombone 1, the second is Trombone 2, the third is Trombone 3, and the bottom is Solo Bass Trombone. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is Adagio with a quarter note equal to 63 beats per minute. The score is divided into systems of five measures each, with measure numbers 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and 35 marked at the beginning of their respective systems. Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano), *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *mf tutti*. A 'solo' marking is present above the Solo Bass Trombone staff in measures 15 and 30. The Solo Bass Trombone part features a melodic line with various articulations and dynamics, while the other trombones provide harmonic support with sustained notes and rhythmic patterns.

Sarastro's Aria from the "Magic Flute"

Trombone 1

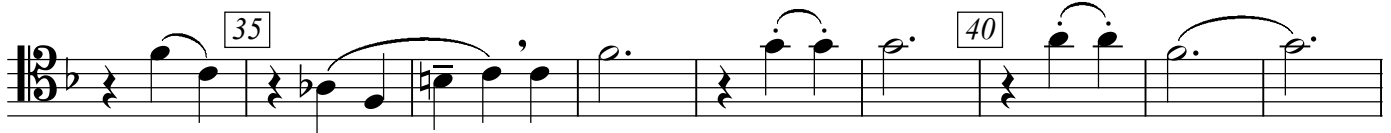
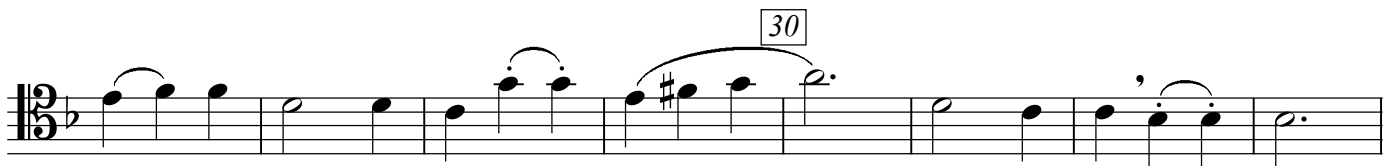
W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)
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Adagio ♩ = 63



mp

p



Sarastro's Aria from the "Magic Flute"

Solo Bass Trombone

W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)
transcribed by Russ Schultz

Adagio ♩ = 63

The musical score is written for Solo Bass Trombone in 3/4 time, with a tempo of Adagio (♩ = 63). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into four systems of music, each with measure numbers in boxes above the staff.

- System 1:** Measures 1-5. Starts with a *mp* dynamic. A *solo* marking is placed above measure 5.
- System 2:** Measures 6-15. Measure 10 is boxed. Measure 15 is boxed.
- System 3:** Measures 16-25. Measure 20 is boxed.
- System 4:** Measures 26-35. Measure 25 is boxed and labeled *tutti*. Measure 30 is boxed and labeled *solo*.

Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The score features various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and rests.