

6 | Enduring Portraits: The Arias

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The arias in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* are undoubtedly some of the most recognizable in the operatic repertoire. What factors influenced their creation? The same ones that shaped practically all opera arias in the eighteenth century: poetic structures, musical and dramatic conventions, as well as the abilities of the singers who originated the roles. Staging and other practical considerations also played a part. What, then, makes these arias so enduring and memorable? Mozart's ability to create vivid music that portrays the character and dramatic situation might be one answer. How the arias explore and stretch customary operatic practices and musical language could be another. The composer seems to have taken great care to make each aria distinctive. The arias' diversity of style, color, and affect is striking, especially when we hear and see them in the context of the drama. Moreover, most contain something unusual or extravagant – a musical element or moment that extends beyond the ordinary. As a result, the arias offer a compelling demonstration of one of the opera's main themes: the power of music.

What Shapes an Aria?

All arias involve multiple components – what some analysts refer to as “domains.”¹ Poetic structures and literary devices within the text often shape the vocal line's phrases as well as the aria's musical meter and overall musical form. The composer can opt to adhere closely to the text's poetic form (to set the text line by line, for example) or s/he can choose to repeat words, sentences, or entire stanzas. The vocal line can be primarily syllabic or melismatic (multiple notes present one syllable of text); it can be more declamatory in nature, lyrical and tuneful, or florid. As we shall see, how the orchestra interacts with the vocal line can vary a great deal. The instruments can double the voice, utter comments in between the vocal phrases, or be quite independent. The orchestral material itself may encompass interlocking rhythmic layers, and certain instruments may

carry semantic associations. In addition, the dramatic situation and a character's social status and gender can also influence an aria's musical content.² Finally, the strengths and proclivities of the initial cast actively shaped the music. Eighteenth-century composers knew the singing and acting abilities of the performers who would premiere their works and composed with those in mind. The original singer's range and technical prowess could influence an aria's tonality, orchestration, and, most importantly, the scope and nature of the vocal line, including such things as the size and number of the leaps or runs it contained. As Mozart himself wrote in February 1778, "I love it when an aria is so accurately measured for a singer's voice that it fits like a well-tailored suit of clothes."³

In other words, even though arias combine music and text and use standard musical forms, many additional factors influence the end result, which in turn affects how and what the number reveals about the character who sings it. While many writers focus primarily on musical form when analyzing arias,⁴ *The Magic Flute* contains examples in which overarching form is perhaps the least important and telling aspect. Frequently, other elements contribute more to the aria's expressivity and the dramaturgical role it plays. Our journey through *The Magic Flute's* arias will begin with three examples that share the same form, to demonstrate how these other musical and dramatic components shape a number. It will then examine arias for each character, to show how Mozart responds to poetic content and structures, adapts conventions, "tailors" arias to the singers who created the roles, and infuses each number with delightful, extravagant touches.

Strophic Numbers for the Bird-Catcher, the Moor, and the Ruler

"Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja," "Alles fühlt der Lieben Freuden," and "In diesen heil'gen Hallen" share the same form. All are strophic; in each case, two stanzas of text are set to the same music. Because the poetic stanzas share the same meter and number of lines, the same music can be repeated for each verse of text. In all three arias, the rhyme scheme remains the same for both verses.

In addition to matching stanzas, the text for the first aria sung by the bird-catcher Papageno, "Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja," contains other poetic features that influence the musical form (see Table 6.1). Both eight-line strophes commence with exactly the same four lines. Each poetic line ends

Table 6.1 “Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja”: text, translation, and rhyme scheme

Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja ,	a	The bird-catcher am I, yes,
Stets lustig, heißa! hopsasa!	a	Always merry, <i>heißa! hopsasa!</i>
Ich Vogelfänger bin bekannt	b	I the bird-catcher am well known
Bei Alt und Jung im ganzen Land .	b	By old and young throughout the land.
Weiß mit den Locken umzugeh'n,	c	I know how to handle snares,
Und mich aufs Pfeifen zu versteh'n.	c	And to make myself understood by piping.
Drum kann ich froh und lustig sein ;	d	Thus, can I be happy and merry;
Denn alle Vögel sind ja mein . (<i>Pfeift.</i>)	d	For all the birds are mine. (<i>Plays the pipe.</i>)
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Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja ,	a	The bird-catcher am I, yes,
Stets lustig, heißa! hopsasa!	a	Always merry, <i>heißa! hopsasa!</i>
Ich Vogelfänger bin bekannt	b	I the bird-catcher am well known
Bei Alt und Jung im ganzen Land .	b	By old and young throughout the land.
Ein Netz für Mädchen möchte ich ;	e	A net for maidens would I like;
Ich fing' sie dutzendweis für mich .	e	I would catch them for me by the dozens.
Dann sperrte ich sie bei mir ein ,	f	Then, I would lock them up at my place,
Und alle Mädchen wären mein .	f	And all the maidens would be mine.
(<i>Pfeift . . .</i>)		(<i>Plays the pipe . . .</i>)

[Center column of letters = rhyme scheme. Bold = accented syllable & line ending.]

with an accented syllable. The text's straightforward meter and simple rhyme scheme (rhyming couplets) prompt end-oriented phrases in the music: regular four-bar phrases that begin on upbeats and cadence on strong beats.

Much else in the aria remains within a narrow scope. The vocal line spans a ninth, but many of its gestures move within a fifth or even a third. The upper strings largely double the voice. The limited range and doubling of the voice line may be due to the abilities and reputation of the singer who premiered the role. The first Papageno, Emanuel Schikaneder, was the opera's librettist and the star of the troupe. He was primarily an actor and impresario, not an opera singer, and had performed in a wide variety of roles; in Vienna, he had made a name for himself by playing comic, not too bright, peasant characters such as the gardener Anton (another role he wrote for himself).

Yet the aria's harmonic vocabulary is also limited, inordinately so. Most chords are in root position; tonic-dominant-tonic progressions dominate; many dominant chords lack a seventh. Mi-re-do (3–2–1) figures permeate the melody. In other words, the music is about as diatonic as it could possibly be. The key – G major – is simple, too.

Together, the limited verbal, melodic, and harmonic content gives the impression that Papageno is the unsophisticated “Naturmensch” (natural man) he later claims to be. What you hear is what you get. The strophic form, straightforward syllabic melody, and nonsense syllables in the text also give the aria what some commentators call a *Volkston* or folk tone.⁵

Monostatos’s aria, “Alles fühlt der Liebe Freuden,” also uses strophic form, but the aria’s poetic and grammatical structures, irregular phrases, and musical conventions for portraying Otherness result in a very different-sounding aria. Like “Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja,” the text consists of two eight-line stanzas that share the same meter and rhyme scheme, but in this case the rhyme scheme and metrical pattern are more complicated. Each poetic line begins with an accented syllable; thus, practically every vocal phrase starts on a strong beat. The ends of lines, however, alternate between accented and unaccented syllables. Some poetic lines, particularly in the second verse, contain incises or shorter phrases within the longer line, as in the stanza’s opening lines:

Drum so will ich, weil ich lebe,	Thus, I wish, because I am alive,
Schnäbeln, küssen, zärtlich sein! –	To coo, kiss, to be tender! –
Lieber, guter Mond – vergebe	Dear, good moon – forgive [me]

In the 1791 libretto, Monostatos is described in the *dramatis personae* as “ein Mohr” (a Moor). Pamina calls him “Der böse Mohr” (the wicked Moor) during the Act 1 finale (scene 18). Monostatos refers to himself as “Ein Schwarzer” (a black man) during his aria, as does Papageno in Act 1, scene 14.⁶ “Exotic,” lecherous men were a specialty of singer-actor Johann Nouseul, who premiered the role. The poetry and the character depicted prompted Mozart to employ many of the musical devices associated with “Turkish” music in the 1700s, including duple meter, a fast tempo, and phrases that begin on a strong beat with a longer note followed by sixteenths or eighths and are uneven in length.⁷ The aria opens with a lopsided nine-measure introduction (five measures plus four measures) rather than the customary four, eight, or two bars. Irregular phrase lengths continue throughout the aria. In fact, just as five-measure phrases seem to become the norm, two-measure or three-measure insertions interrupt the pattern (see mm. 25–34, for example).

The instrumentation also signifies Otherness. The piccolo (an unusual instrument for the time), flute, and first violin double one another, while the lower strings reiterate a single pitch for the first five bars. As Mary Hunter has argued, the *alla turca* style “represents Turkish music as a deficient or messy version of European music.”⁸ In this case, the sparse

orchestration supports an equally sparse or “deficient” tune. The melody circles around a single pitch, the tonic. In fact, one could apply the epithet “too many notes” to this number – it has too many of the *same* notes, because so many pitches are reiterated. Even the aria’s home key, C major, can be considered a sign of Otherness, as that tonality was commonly used to portray these types of characters. In short, much about “Alles fühlt der Liebe Freuden” is irregular, despite the regular rhythms of the text and the repetitive strophic form. Arguably, Monostatos’s Otherness and the resultant musical irregularities have to be contained within a repetitive, predictable form.

Sarastro’s “In diesen heil’gen Hallen” is also strophic, but differences in multiple domains distinguish it from the opera’s other strophic numbers. The aria’s text consists of two six-line stanzas whose scansion is more complex than the above examples. Lines 1–4 alternate rhymes and unaccented line endings with accented ones. Two lines that conclude with accented syllables close each stanza, forming a rhyming couplet. The stanzas themselves are linked by anaphora – beginning with the same word or phrase – in this case the words “In diesen heil’gen.” This poetic device implies strophic form.

While the overall musical form of the aria is strophic, the strophe itself is through-composed. The vocal line does not conclude any of its phrases on the tonic until the strophe’s final bars; instead, Mozart has the vocal phrases end on scale degrees 3 or 5. Both of these musical choices create a sense of forward momentum and continuity of thought. The shape of the vocal line does as well. In accordance with the prosody of the text and in contrast with Monostatos’s aria, Sarastro’s vocal lines all commence on an upbeat; most conclude on a downbeat on a more stable harmony. While the vocal line in all three strophic arias is largely syllabic, Sarastro’s vocal line is more conjunct and thus sounds more lyrical. Appoggiaturas abound.

The relationship between the accompaniment and the vocal line also differs. Even a cursory glance at the score reveals more counterpoint between the voice and the orchestra than in the other strophic numbers, perhaps due to the skill of the original performer. The first Sarastro, Franz Xaver Gerl, was an accomplished musician, a composer and performer, who had studied under Mozart’s father, Leopold, as a choirboy in Salzburg.

What does the use of strophic form for “In diesen heil’gen Hallen” imply? Perhaps that the character Sarastro and the values he espouses (friendship, forgiveness, love) are constant and unchanging. Together, the vocal line’s low range, the stately tempo, and the aria’s straightforward form depict Sarastro as a calm, reasonable person, particularly since the

number contrasts starkly with the aria that immediately precedes it, the Queen's "Der Hölle Rache."

The Queen's Arias: Displays of Power and Rage

The Queen of the Night's numbers, "Der Hölle Rache" and "O zittre nicht . . . Zum Leiden," exemplify how Mozart "tailors" numbers to a particular singer and adapts a variety of musical traditions to create two of the most celebrated arias ever written. The soprano who originated the role, Josepha Hofer, Mozart's sister-in-law, certainly had special capabilities. Judging from these arias and other music written for her, she must have had an agile voice and an impressive high register.⁹ Both of the Queen's arias require the singer to ascend to an *f'''*, the highest note on the Viennese piano at the time. Additionally, the character's status, musical conventions, and perhaps Mozart's desire to show off his compositional prowess converge in the Queen's music.

To take the second aria first, "Der Hölle Rache" is undeniably music fit for a Queen. The marchlike rhythms, full orchestration (strings, double winds, timpani, and trumpets), and extended coloratura passages that require exceptional vocal virtuosity signal that the character is a powerful person of high rank. Here, Mozart adapts a conventional aria type from *opera seria*. "Der Hölle Rache" has many of the hallmarks of a "rage aria." Its minor key, large leaps in the vocal line, bustling accompaniment, use of tremolo and sforzandi, and chromatic ascents and descents customarily conveyed great anger during the eighteenth century. But Mozart draws on a local Viennese tradition as well: that of spectacular arias for powerful supernatural characters. Other magical *Singspiele* written for the company that premiered *The Magic Flute* contain flashy, vocally demanding arias.¹⁰ Paul Wranitzky's *Oberon* (1789), which also starred Hofer in a similar role, for example, includes numbers with elaborate coloratura that require the soprano to ascend to a *d'''*. Did competitiveness prompt Mozart to write an even higher and flashier aria?

The Queen's first aria, "O zittre nicht . . . Zum Leiden," also presents extreme vocal demands and synthesizes several operatic traditions. Practical considerations shape the scene as well. Written for a theater that was celebrated for its spectacular staging, extravagant music complements extraordinary stage effects.¹¹ A lengthy and majestic orchestral prelude ushers the Queen onstage. Rising arpeggios over a B-flat pedal gradually increase the volume and tonal expanse. The orchestral introduction clearly portrays the Queen as

a grand personage (mm. 1–10). It also allows time for the scenic transformation described in the original libretto to unfold:

The mountains part and the theater transforms into a magnificent chamber. The Queen sits on a throne which is decorated with transparent stars.

Mozart draws on several other noble idioms to portray this character. An orchestral accompanied recitative precedes the aria (mm. 11–20). *Accompagnato* in this repertoire, like *coloratura* and the grand prelude, also signified noble or supernatural characters. Motives from the orchestral introduction continue to frame the Queen's utterances as she reassures Tamino.

Recitativ

O zittre nicht, mein lieber Sohn!
Du bist unschuldig, weise, fromm;
Ein Jüngling, so wie du, vermag am besten
[Das] tief betrübte Mutterherz zu trösten.

Recitative

Do not tremble, my dear son!
You are innocent, wise, pious;
A youth, such as you, can best
Console this deeply saddened
mother's heart.

“O zittre nicht . . . Zum Leiden” is perhaps an instance where the text's structure suggests one musical form and Mozart opted to employ another. The metered poetry of the aria commences with three quatrains, the second of which has shorter lines and a different rhyme scheme. A fourth stanza is marked *Allegro*. This combination of poetic structures suggests a two-tempo *rondò* (ABAC in form, with C being in a faster tempo), an aria type associated with upper-class heroines. While Mozart alludes to this conventional aria type, he fashions a number that is looser in form. The *Andante* section in particular (mm. 21–64) has an *arioso*-like character and is more formally ambiguous.

Arie

Zum Leiden bin ich auserkoren;
Denn meine Tochter fehlet mir,
Durch sie ging all mein Glück verloren –
Ein Bösewicht entfloh mit ihr.

Noch seh' ich ihr Zittern
Mit bangem Erschüttern,
Ihr ängstliches Beben
Ihr schüchternes Streben.

Ich mußte sie mir rauben sehen,
Ach helft! war alles was sie sprach;
Allein vergebens war ihr Flehen,
Denn meine Hülfe war zu schwach.

Aria

For suffering I am destined;
For my daughter is missing from me,
With her all my happiness was lost –
An evil creature fled with her.

Still I see her trembling
With anxious shuddering,
Her fearful tremors,
Her timid straggles.

I had to see her robbed from me,
“O help!” was all that she spoke;
Only in vain was her pleading,
For my help was too weak.

Allegro

Du wirst sie zu befreien gehen,
 Du wirst der Tochter Retter sein.
 Und werd ich dich als Sieger sehen,
 So sei sie dann auf ewig dein.

Allegro

You will go to free her,
 You will my daughter's rescuer be.
 And if I see you as the victor,
 Then shall she be yours forever.

The aria proper commences at measure 21 with a triple-meter section in G minor in the middle range of the voice. Mozart carefully crafts the opening paragraph to highlight the character's plight and the reason for it. Lightly orchestrated three-measure phrases underscore the Queen's sorrowful opening lines. In keeping with the accents of the poetry, most of the vocal phrases begin and end on weak beats, until the Queen's revelation that "an evil creature" took her daughter. Here, dotted rhythms and militaristic flourishes in the orchestra lead to the aria's first strong cadence (both the voice and bass land on the tonic) and a change of key to B-flat major (mm. 32–35).

Word painting permeates the next segment, as the Queen describes how her daughter was taken from her. Fluttering sixteenth notes in the violins depict Pamina's "trembling," "fearful tremors," and "timid struggles" (mm. 38–44). A chromatic countermelody in the bassoons and violas, which perhaps can be heard as representing Pamina, accompanies the Queen's narrative (mm. 36–44).

The aria's third verse returns to the soft dynamics, delicate scoring, and the key of G minor as the Queen describes Pamina's cries for help and her own inability to rescue her (mm. 45–61).¹² A lengthy series of minor and diminished harmonies, a deceptive cadence (m. 56), and a prolonged descent in the vocal line conclude her tale and lead into the Allegro moderato that follows.

Once the Queen completes her story, her speech shifts from past to future tense. She issues commands and promises rewards ("You will go to free her"). Mozart reflects the change to the imperative by composing it into the music. The meter, tonality, and tempo all shift – from triple to duple meter, G minor to B-flat major, Andante to Allegro moderato. Mozart also employs contrasting melodic contours. Decisive scalar figures and arpeggios in the vocal line replace the sighing figures and descending phrases that dominated the previous section. Most phrases now commence and conclude on strong beats. In fact, the composer sometimes ignores the prosody in order to do so.

The vocal line soars into the stratosphere (B-flat'' to f''') as we approach the aria's conclusion. Extensive roulades (m. 79ff.) and the medium

tessitura of the accompaniment highlight the power of the singer's (and the character's) voice. While Mozart has been criticized for setting the word "dann" (then) on a melisma lasting thirteen measures, such complaints ignore how the word contains a felicitous vowel for singing in the upper register.¹³ The composer's choice also stresses the conditional nature of the Queen's promise. Melodically, the line becomes the equivalent of saying, "And if I see you as the victor, *then* she shall be forever yours." The vocal line's extensive sixteenth- and eighth-note runs broaden to half-notes to drive home the aria's final words "auf ewig dein" (forever yours). A harmonically decisive postlude that recalls the opening of the Allegro closes the entire scene.

The grand entrance music, the accompagnato, and the vocal pyrotechnics give the impression of a forceful being. The scene as a whole displays the breadth of the Queen's rhetorical arsenal as she uses three, very different musical styles to persuade Tamino to rescue her daughter. During the accompagnato she reassures and flatters; in the triple-meter Andante section she laments, narrates, and seeks empathy; during the melismatic Allegro she dispenses orders and makes promises. After such a compelling musical and rhetorical display, it is no wonder that Tamino believes she is telling the truth and undertakes his quest.

A Man of Feeling: "Dies Bildnis"

While the Queen's arias draw on traditional methods of depicting nobility, Tamino's aria "Dies Bildnis" draws on another prominent eighteenth-century dramatic convention: the portrayal of sensibility. The text's content and its punctuation indicate passionate emotions. Tamino's monologue contains repeated words, exclamation points, and dashes, particularly during its second half. The use of first person in eighteenth-century sentimental novels is often interrupted by similar pauses, exclamations, and heavily emphasized or repeated words, as in this excerpt from the quintessential sentimental novel, Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*:

This is indeed too much, too much for your poor Pamela! And as I hoped all the worst was over, and that I had the pleasure of beholding a reclaimed gentleman, and not an abandoned libertine. What now must your poor daughter do! O the wretched, wretched Pamela!¹⁴

And this selection from J. W. von Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*:

Why I have not written to you?—You, who are a learned man too, ask a question like that. You might guess that things are well with me, and indeed—In a word, I have made an acquaintance who has touched my heart very closely. I have—I know not what. . . . I am unable to tell you how, and why, she is perfection itself; suffice it to say that she has captivated me utterly.

So much simplicity with so much understanding, so much goodness and so much resolve, and tranquility of soul together with true life and vitality.¹⁵

As James Webster points out, “Dies Bildnis” as a whole depicts how Tamino’s feelings “progress . . . from [the character’s] initial undifferentiated reaction to the portrait, through the realization that he has fallen in love, and the confusion engendered by awakened but unfulfilled passion, to conviction.”¹⁶ Mozart’s music enhances the arc of Tamino’s emotional journey in a number of ways. The composer matches Tamino’s fragmented ruminations with irregular phrases, harmonic interruptions, rests, and pauses. For example, an unexpected harmony (an augmented sixth chord) on the downbeat of measure 12 underscores the “new emotion” Tamino feels. The musical setting increases the text repetition even more. To give but one instance, the prince asks himself, “Could this sensation be love?” twice (mm. 22–25), before responding, “It is love alone. Love, love, love alone” (mm. 27–34).

Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön, Wie noch kein Auge je geseh'n! Ich fühl' es, wie dies Götterbild Mein Herz mit neuer Regung füllt.	This image is enchantingly beautiful, As no eye has ever seen! I feel it, how this godly portrait My heart with new emotion fills.
Dieß Etwas kann ich zwar nicht nennen; Doch fühl' ichs hier wie Feuer brennen. Soll die Empfindung Liebe sein? Ja, ja! die Liebe ist's allein. –	This “something” to be certain I cannot name; Yet I feel it here like fire burning. Could this sensation be love? Yes, yes! It is love alone. –
O wenn ich sie nur finden könnte! O wenn sie doch schon vor mir stände! Ich würde – würde – warm und rein –	O if only I could find her! O if she already stood before me! I would – would – warmly and purely –
Was würde ich? – Sie voll Entzücken An diesen heißen Busen drücken, Und ewig wäre sie dann mein.	What would I do? – Full of delight, [I would] press her to this scorching breast, And then for eternity would she be mine.

Harmonic arrivals and departures promote the sensation of emotional transformation. This surface variety is grounded in a clear tonal structure. A paragraph in the tonic (mm. 1–15) is followed by one in the dominant key (mm. 16–34). The aria’s third paragraph prolongs the harmonic tension through extended dominant pedals (mm. 35–43) that lead to a grand

pause. A full bar of silence precedes the tonic's unequivocal return at a crucial dramatic moment (discussed below).

The aria's melodic variety, complex orchestration, and through-composed form suggest that Tamino is a refined, more complicated person. Not surprisingly, the number was written for a sophisticated, multitalented musician, Benedikt Schack, who was praised by Mozart's father for his elegant singing.¹⁷ In contrast to the arias written for Schikaneder, the orchestra here rarely doubles the voice; when it does, it presents embellished versions of the vocal line. At times, the orchestra paints the text; sixteenth- and thirty-second-note figures during the third paragraph, for example, portray Tamino's growing ardor and pounding heart. Simon P. Keefe suggests that the clarinets, bassoons, and horns included in the ensemble underscore (literally and figuratively) the character's aristocratic status and were chosen to enhance Schack's beautiful tenor voice.¹⁸

In addition to being an illustration of growing sentiment, "Dies Bildnis" can also be understood as a shift from ignorance to awareness – what Aristotelian poetics calls a scene of recognition. Musically, the aria meets Jessica Waldoff's criteria for recognition scenes. Her study of these pivotal dramatic moments shows that musical shifts prompt shifts in action or thought, which are then followed by an explanatory narrative. Musical recollections (references to prior material) also frequently occur.¹⁹ "Dies Bildnis" encompasses all of these, albeit in miniature. A musical shift precedes Tamino's realization that he is in love. Winds and horns *sans* strings lead into his ecstatic "Ja, ja" (Yes! Yes! mm. 24–26). The modulation to the dominant is confirmed decisively in both the vocal and orchestral material shortly thereafter (m. 34). That in turn ushers in an extended dominant pedal as Tamino expounds upon his desires. The character then begins to fashion his own explanatory, self-predictive narrative, a narrative he later seeks to fulfill: "What would I do? I would press her to this scorching bosom, and then for eternity would she be mine." An entire measure of silence – comparable to the dashes in sentimental fiction – precedes his final declaration. The aria concludes with the richest accompaniment pattern yet (three interlocking gestures) and a musical recollection. The aria's closing figures repeat, decorate, and extend material that originally accompanied the words "my heart with new emotion fills" (compare mm. 10–15 to mm. 52–61).

Tamino repeats his final declaration five times. Regardless of whether we view this monologue as a sentimental statement or a scene of recognition, "Dies Bildnis" is an extremely end-oriented aria tonally, formally, and

dramatically. More importantly, the sense of emotional discovery it conveys arises more from the music Mozart creates than the aria's text.

The Princess Laments: "Ach ich fühl's"

While Tamino's aria depicts blossoming love, Pamina's sole aria laments its loss. Arguably, this number is the most poignant and the most complex aria of the opera. The character sings "Ach ich fühl's" in response to Tamino's refusal to speak to her, mistakenly believing that he has rejected her.

The aria's home key and instrumentation set this number apart and lend it a "special intensity."²⁰ As Christoph Wolff notes, "Ach ich fühl's" is the only aria in the opera with three soli winds (flute, oboe, bassoon).²¹ The home key of G minor is one Mozart used sparingly in his later operas. The other instances also involve distraught heroines (Ilia in *Idomeneo* and Konstanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, for example) and, as we have just discussed, the account Pamina's mother gives of her daughter's abduction ("Zum Leiden").²²

"Ach ich fühl's" is replete with harmonic and rhythmic tension. The predictable and the unexpected rub against one another in almost every measure. The aria is notated in 6/8. An unrelenting, repeating rhythm in the strings (a march? a heartbeat?) underpins practically every bar. Yet, as William Braun points out, the characteristic 6/8 rhythm of "long-short-long . . ." is nowhere to be found. In fact, it is about the only possible rhythm in 6/8 that Mozart does not use in the aria, and Pamina, almost unbelievably, sings a new rhythm in just about every bar.²³ Even though each line of the aria's text begins with an accented syllable, the vocal line never begins its phrases on the downbeat. Again, Mozart works against, ignores even, the scansion of the text.

Ach ich fühl's, es ist verschwunden –	Ah, I feel it, it has vanished –
Ewig hin der Liebe Glück!	Forever gone, the happiness of love!
Nimmer kommt ihr Wonnestunden,	Nevermore will come, hours of bliss,
Meinem Herzen mehr zurück.	Back to my heart.
Sieh Tamino, diese Thränen	See, Tamino, these tears [that]
Fließen Trauter, dir allein.	Flow, beloved, for you alone.
Fühlst du nicht der Liebe Sehnen,	If you do not feel love's longing,
So wird Ruh im Tode sein.	Then I must find tranquility in death.

What does occur on numerous downbeats is dissonance. Tritones and diminished sevenths abound within the vocal line and between it and the bass. Chromatic motion saturates the voice leading as well.

The vocal line begins with three descents in bars 1–4 (from 5 down to 1, from 1 down to 5, and then 6 down to sharp-7), setting up a pattern that

permeates the aria. Extended descents and incomplete ascents pull against one another throughout the number. In measures 16–19, for example, the flute and oboe attempt, but cannot even manage, to scale the octave. Instead, they rise through the seventh and fall; their leap downward creates a tritone with their counterpart, the bassoon, whose half-step sighs belatedly resolve the dissonances two beats too late (mm. 17–18 and 19–20).

As Thomas Bauman writes, Mozart uses “silence . . . as expressively as the notes themselves” throughout Pamina’s lament, but particularly near the end.²⁴ The aria’s final measures contain small, but telling, details. The persistent rhythm subsides (mm. 36–37). The strings sound an eighth note while the voice sustains a quarter (m. 38). Pamina, it seems, is truly on her own, unsupported musically and dramatically. The voice utters its final phrase largely unaccompanied. It hovers on a flat-6 (E-flat, an implied ninth over the dominant) before tumbling down to the tonic again (mm. 37–38). A moment of silence precedes the postlude, whose melodic contours echo Pamina’s earlier pleas but whose rhythms do not.²⁵ Syncopated descents laced with pungent dissonances cascade into the strings’ lower ranges. The aria’s final sonority barely whispers a third above the tonic G.

How are we to interpret the aria’s postlude? Bauman points out that all previous postludes in the opera have a close rhythmic connection to important phrases in the numbers they close. This one does not.²⁶ Some authors have suggested that the postlude, and other passages that feature the flute in the opera, might represent the mute Tamino’s inner thoughts. Braun and Webster, on the other hand, believe it depicts a devastated Pamina, her pleas unanswered, staggering away.²⁷ Another possibility exists. The postlude pairs instruments that have not partnered one another earlier in the aria – the bassoon and flute, oboe and second violin, viola and cello – which implies that the passage portrays the anguish both characters feel.

Papageno Improvises: “Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen”

The Magic Flute’s final aria, “Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen,” juxtaposes simplicity with opulence, as poetic structures, standard musical forms, and the skills of the original creators intertwine. Sung by Papageno, the number again inhabits the realm of the *Volkston*. Formwise, however, “Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen” is more complex than “Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja,” the character’s first aria. The number features two soloists, not one – the baritone and the magic bells – whose interplay captures both Mozart’s and the original Papageno’s gifts for improvisation.

“Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen” alternates between two contrasting sections: a refrain in 2/4 (labeled in Table 6.2 below as A) and verses in 6/8 (labeled B). The poetry, with its built-in refrain, clearly prompts the form: different line lengths and accentuations in the poetry inspire the meter changes. The iambs of the refrain fit neatly into 2/4; the verses, on the other hand, incorporate dactyls (an accented syllable followed by two unaccented ones), a pattern that suggests 6/8. The verses also incorporate two different types of line endings. The first couplet ends with an unaccented syllable, the second couplet with an accented one.

Table 6.2 “Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen”: text, translation, rhyme scheme, and scansion

Music	REFRAIN [<i>Iambs</i>]		
A 2/4	Ein M ädchen oder W eibchen Wünscht P apageno s ich! O s o ein s anftes T äubchen Wär S eligkeit für m ich! —	a b a b	A maiden or a little wife Papageno wishes for himself! O such a tender little dove Would be bliss for me! —
B 6/8	VERSE 1 [<i>Dactyls</i>] Dann s chmeckte mir T rinken und E ssen Dann k önn t ' ich mit F ürsten mich m essen, Des L ebens als W eiser mich f reu'n, Und w ie im Elysium s ein.	c c d d	VERSE 1 Then food and drink would taste good to me Then I could compare myself with princes, Enjoy life as a wise man, And as if in Elysium be.
A'	REFRAIN Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen . . .		REFRAIN A maiden or a little wife . . .
B'	VERSE 2 Ach k ann ich denn k einer von a llen Den r eizenden M ädchen g efallen? Helf' e ine mir n ur aus der N oth, Sonst g räm ich mich w ahrlich zu T od'.	e e f f	VERSE 2 Ah, can't I then be pleasing to any of all The charming maidens? If one Could only help me out of my need, Otherwise, I will really worry myself to death.
A''	REFRAIN Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen . . .		REFRAIN A maiden or a little wife . . .
B''	VERSE 3 Wird k eine mir L iebe g ewähren, So m uß mich die F lamme v erzehren! Doch k üßt mich ein w eiblicher M und, So b in ich schon w ieder g esund.	g g h h	VERSE 3 Will none grant me love, Then the flames must consume me! But if a feminine mouth should kiss me, Then I would again be healthy.

[Bold = accented syllable. Center column of letters = rhyme scheme. Underlined letters = accented syllable at end of the poetic line.]

It is perhaps a bit unusual that the aria begins with a refrain. From the outset we hear an unexpected and distinctive tone color. Papageno's magic bells introduce the simple but catchy tune and then alternate with the voice during both the A and B sections. Like the character's first aria, the simple but memorable diatonic melody moves within a limited range. Root-position chords and tonic–dominant–tonic progressions dominate the harmony. As the aria progresses, however, the music for the bells becomes more and more florid. During the third repetition of the refrain, for instance, the bells play triplet sixteenths and thirty-second notes while the winds take over the tune; the bell part features continuous sixteenths during the aria's third and final verse (see Table 6.3).

Therefore, the aria melds strophic form with techniques commonly found in keyboard variations on popular tunes, one of Mozart's specialties. On one level, "Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen" can be analyzed as a strophic song with a refrain. On another, it can be viewed as a double or alternating variation, with variants that may have grown out of improvisations. Like Mozart, Schikaneder, the original Papageno, was known for his ability for extemporization, including adding strophes to popular arias.²⁸ A letter by Mozart from October 1791 indicates how one performance involved a bit more improvisation than Schikaneder anticipated:

[W]hen Papageno's aria with the Glockenspiel came on, at that moment I went backstage because today I had a kind of urge to play the Glockenspiel myself. – So I played this joke: just when Schikaneder came to a pause, I played an arpeggio – he was startled – looked into the scenery and saw me – the 2nd time he came to that spot, I didn't play – and this time he stopped as well and did not go on singing – I guessed what he was thinking and played another chord – at that he gave his Glockenspiel a slap and shouted "shut up!" – everybody laughed. – I think through this joke many in the audience became aware for the first time that Papageno doesn't play the Glockenspiel himself.²⁹

The aria's significantly more complex form and the increasingly complicated accompaniment patterns suggest that the character Papageno has grown as a person. His simple rhetoric has been enriched.

Conclusion

The Magic Flute reveals Mozart's ability to tailor arias not only to singers, but also to the character portrayed and the dramatic situation. As stated earlier, the composer seems to have taken great care to make each of the opera's arias

Table 6.3 “Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen”: overview of text and music

Form	A	B	A'	B'	A''	B''	B'''
<i>Text</i>	Lines 1–4 ABAB Iambus 2/4	Lines 5–8 CCDD Dactyls 6/8	Lines 1–4 ABAB Iambus 2/4	Lines 9–12 EEFF Dactyls 6/8	Lines 1–4 ABAB Iambus 2/4	Lines 13–16 GGHH Dactyls 6/8	
<i>Meter</i>	Andante	Allegro	Andante	Allegro	Andante	Allegro	6/8
<i>Tempo</i>	Refrain 1	Verse 1	Refrain 2	Verse 2	Refrain 3	Verse 3	Coda (orchestra alone)
<i>Role of magic bells</i>	Bells intro melody A (mm. 1–8) + flourishes in between vocal phrases (mm. 9–20)	Bells intro melody B (mm. 21–24) + flourishes in between vocal phrases (mm. 32–43)	Bells vary melody A + flourishes	Bells vary melody B + flourishes	Bells = 16th-note triplets & 32nd-note figurations + flourishes	Bells = constant 16th notes & wider range + flourishes	Bells vary melody B: 16th notes (mm. 43–47) <i>Bells absent</i> (mm. 48–51) Winds and horns double the melody (mm. 43–51) + Strings join in forte at the end (mm. 47–51)

distinctive. All of the arias contain something unusual and/or extravagant. From the extreme high notes of the Queen's numbers, to the increasingly florid flourishes of the bells in "Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen," to the panoply of rhythms in "Ach ich fühl's," and the full measure of silence in "Dies Bildnis," each aria stretches the limits of eighteenth-century music in some fashion. As a result, Mozart's skill and creativity as a composer was and is on display, particularly his ability to compose in diverse styles and create nuanced timbres. Ironically, these arias, so deftly tailored to particular singers' strengths and to specific dramatic situations, have become some of the most well-known pieces of European art music. Therefore, the arias manifest the power of music on multiple levels, including its ability to endure and speak beyond its original context.

Notes

1. See Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker, "Dismembering Mozart," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 2 (1990): 187–95; James Webster, "The Analysis of Mozart's Arias," in *Mozart Studies*, ed. Cliff Eisen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 101–99.
2. Webster, "Mozart's Arias"; Mary Hunter, *The Culture of Opera Buffa: A Poetics of Entertainment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 95–155.
3. Letter of February 28, 1778. MBA, II:304. As translated in Robert Spaethling, *Mozart's Letters, Mozart's Life: Selected Letters* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), 135.
4. To give just two examples: Malcolm S. Cole, "The Magic Flute and the Quatrain," *Journal of Musicology* 3 (1984): 157–76; Nathan J. Martin, "Mozart's Sonata-Form Arias," in *Formal Functions in Perspective: Essays on Musical Form from Haydn to Adorno*, ed. Steven V. Moortele, Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers, and Nathan J. Martin (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015), 37–74.
5. Joseph Kerman, *Opera as Drama*, rev. edn. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 107; Erik Smith, "The Music," in COH, 128.
6. For discussions that place this character in a broader context, see Malcolm S. Cole, "Monostatos and His 'Sister': Racial Stereotype in *Die Zauberflöte* and Its Sequel," *Opera Quarterly* 21 (2005): 2–26; Jessica Waldoff, "Zauberflöte, Die," in *The Cambridge Mozart Encyclopedia*, ed. Cliff Eisen and Simon P. Keefe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 540–53.
7. For a concise list of musical techniques eighteenth-century composers used to portray "Turkish" characters and settings, see Thomas Bauman, *W. A. Mozart: "Die Entführung aus dem Serail"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 62–65.

8. Mary Hunter, "The *Alla Turca* Style in the Late Eighteenth Century: Race and Gender in the Symphony and the Seraglio," in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), esp. 43–71, 51, 60–61.
9. Paul Corneilson, "Josepha Hofer: First Queen of the Night," *Mozart Studien* 25 (2018): 477–88.
10. David J. Buch, *Magic Flutes & Enchanted Forests: The Supernatural in Eighteenth-Century Musical Theater* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 293–94, 302–07, 336, 343, 349.
11. Konrad Küster, *Mozart: A Musical Biography*, trans. Mary Whittall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 358; Waldoff, "Zauberflöte."
12. This portion of the aria includes some references to earlier material. Compare mm. 28–31 with mm. 45–47, for example.
13. See, for example, Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 10–11, 68.
14. Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; Or, Virtue Rewarded*, ed. Peter Sober (London: Penguin Books, 1980), 262.
15. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, trans. Michael Hulse (London: Penguin Books, 1989), 36.
16. Webster, "Mozart's Arias," 192.
17. May 26, 1786, letter to Nannerl. MBA, III:549. For an English translation, see Daniel Hertz, *Mozart, Haydn and Early Beethoven 1781–1802* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), 272.
18. *Mozart in Vienna: The Final Decade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 573–74. Webster states that the instrumentation is typical for sentimental arias. Webster, "Mozart's Arias," 109, 187–96.
19. Jessica Waldoff, *Recognition in Mozart's Operas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), esp. 44–45, 61–64.
20. Christoph Wolff, *Mozart at the Gateway to His Fortune: Serving the Emperor, 1788–1791* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012), 127.
21. Christoph Wolff, "Musicological Introduction," in FACS, 23, 28.
22. Gretchen A. Wheelock, "Schwarze Gredel and the Engendered Minor Mode in Mozart's Operas," in *Musicology and Difference*, ed. Ruth A. Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), esp. 201–21, 210–14, 218.
23. William R. Braun, "Measures of Greatness," *Opera News* 78/6 (December 2013): 20.
24. Thomas Bauman, "At the North Gate: Instrumental Music in *Die Zauberflöte*," in *Mozart's Operas*, ed. Daniel Hertz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 283.
25. Compare mm. 17–20 ("Sieh Tamino!") with mm. 38–41.
26. Bauman, "At the North Gate," 279–84.

27. Braun, "Measures of Greatness," 21; Webster, "Mozart's Arias," 196. It also should be noted that the postlude serves a practical purpose: it gives Pamina time to exit.
28. David Buch, "On the Context of Mozart's Variations on the Aria 'Ein Weib ist das herrlichste Ding auf der Welt,' K. 613," *Mozart-Jahrbuch* 1999, 79–80.
29. Letter of October 8–9, 1791, to Constanze. MBA, IV:160. As translated in Spaethling, *Mozart's Letters*, 441.