

## In the sauna with Sarastro

World premiere at the Komische Oper: With the "Magic Melodica", Iiro Rantala and Minna Lindgren present a turbulent sequel to Mozart's "Magic Flute" - fun for the whole family. VON [CHRISTIANE PEITZ](#)



Brrrr. For the second test everyone has to go into the icy water. Pamina (Alma Sadé, right) is there, as is the aging Sarastro ... PHOTO: IKO FREESE / DRAMA-BERLIN / KOMISCHE OPER

And if they haven't died, what happens after the end of the fairy tale? When the princess is free and the couples have found each other?

Honestly, who really wants to know that? It could be, for example, that the marriage of Pamina and Tamino after Mozart's "Magic Flute", the most popular fairy tale opera of all time, is by no means heavenly. That Tamino (Johannes Dunz) degenerates into a slacker after all his heroic deeds and Pamina (Alma Sadé) has to clean up her husband and all his tame pet dragons all day long because the critters never use a toilet (aria text: "Ka- Ka-Kakaka, Ka-Ka-Kakaka ..."). And that she also has the kind Sarastro on her neck, who in his old days no longer knows his name and what governing means. "To help, to help": So that the care work does not get stuck with women forever, a new king is urgently needed. Or a queen.

Mozart's contemporaries had already come up with sequels after the super successful premiere of the "Magic Flute" in 1791. The best known comes from the librettist Emanuel Schikaneder himself, the music was contributed by the Mannheim conductor Peter von Winter. In "The Magic Flute Second Part", Pamina is kidnapped a second time during the wedding, exams have to be passed again, and in the end everything is fine again. Because of the confusing plot and the overly pleasing music, the "heroic-comic opera", which premiered in Vienna in 1798, was less celebrated than the original. Then Goethe tried a sequel; here Pamina's son is kidnapped. Iffland and Zelter continued to work on it; Most recently, the opera annals record a "Sarastro" drama penned by Liszt's pupil Karl Goepfert.

None of this caught on. So it's high time the Finns took matters into their own hands, these experts in bold humor. Enlightenment, Freemasons, Humanism, Mystery Culture? Everything half as serious, the author Minna Lindgren (who most recently wrote the text for Mozart's pandemic opera "[Covid fan tutte](#)" for the Finnish National Opera ) and the composer Iiro Rantala thought and Mozart's joy in singing Word taken. The result, "The Magic Melodica", has now been premiered at the Komische Oper. The commissioned work for children from 6 is on the program during the Christmas season, [as was the last 2019 singspiel "Jim Button and Lukas, the Engine Driver"](#).

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**DER TAGESSPIEGEL**OPINARY 

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Melodica? **Jazz pianist Rantala, who personally sat at the grand piano at the premiere**, played such a plastic instrument himself as a child. Blow in, press keys, comfort! Not exactly the epitome of high musical art. The queen of the night equips her servant Monostatos with such a melodica, but the instrument always bewitches the wrong ones. With the result that soon a drag queen from Drache is standing around in the forest, a forest of XXL notes, sometimes darkly shaded, sometimes grassy green (stage: Friedrich Eggert).

Rantala and Lindgren simply push aside the big, unsolved question of who is good and who is bad in Mozart's "Magic Flute". It is well known that humans are complex and fickle. So the grim Monostatos does not appear as a *bad guy* , but as a discriminated outsider, an unloved, homeless looser in a trekking outfit. Beam man Tamino turns out to be a hesitant wimp and the Queen of the Night as an aging diva who looks back wistfully at the time when she was still in the coloratura voice. She has long since turned into a bearded drag queen who has run out of glue. She only manages the baritone range.

Even the happy-go-lucky Papageno (Nikita Voronchenko) with permanently pregnant Papagena (Sylvia Rena Ziegler) and a group of 20 children suffer from attacks of excessive demands. "Pa, pa, pa, pa, pa..." , the kids are constantly babbling and chatting (fabulous: the children's choir under the direction of Dagmar Fiebach). Even a Buffo can get depressed.

### Revue stairs, big band sound with stuffed bleach: this opera has the swing

Men in crisis, women with energy or with beards, forest spooks and castle intrigues: the plot is also quite involved in the "Magic Melodica". In addition to the family, three gnomes are involved instead of Mozart's women and boys trios. The stage turns lively in a circle, on top of that the orchestra , led by the **clever musical conductor Koen Schoots and** enriched with a lot of percussion , ensures incessant momentum.

Or better, for swing. Whether gnomes and kids cavort on a veritable show staircase, dance Charleston or Monostatos has the blues: Iiro Rantala is a master of the impure mixture. As soon as you think of Mozart or Rossini, he turns to orientalisms, highlights jazz and revue elements, big band sound with stuffed brass, 1920s hits and (presumably) Finnish folk tone.

***[The children's opera "Die Zauber melodika" is suitable for viewers from 6 years of age. It lasts two hours, with a break. Further performances on October 30th; November 8th and 11th; December 10, 13, 16, 21, 26 and 27]***

Not to mention Finnish national sports. The three tests that the throne applicants Tamino, Pamina and Monostatos have to pass should arouse happy, incredulous amazement in Berlin children. First it's about who can last the longest in the sauna, then about endurance in the icy lake, and finally about sitting on an anthill with a bare bottom. Which gives the audience amusing sweat, shivering and itching songs. Onomatopoeia are also among Rantala's specialties

Neben der Situationskomik im Libretto („Nieder mit den Schiedsrichtern“, brüllt der Kinderchor von der Showtreppe, als die Gnome ihr finales Urteil fällen) trägt auch Regisseurin Nicole C. Weber zur Kurzweil bei, wenn sie die Charaktere mit dem Mut zur Karikatur ausstattet, ohne sie lächerlich zu machen. Für die fantastisch bunten Kostüme schöpft Alfred Mayerhofer aus dem Mystery-, Mythen- und Märchenfundus

Und vor allem sind sämtliche Solisten mit großer Hingabe bei der Sache, gesanglich wie darstellerisch. Wobei **Philipp Meierhöfer als** dementer König, Christoph Späth als Monostatos und Stefan Sevenich als Königin der Nacht bei den jungen Zuschauern und Zuschauerinnen den größten Jubel ernten. Zu Recht, rehabilitieren sie doch Mozarts Finstermänner und deren allzu menschliche Schwächen mit Leidenschaft und Selbstironie.

Why is the dragon still there when the queen has turned back? Asks the seven-year-old in the final applause. One of the inconsistencies of the "Magic Melodica" is that the instrument of the title is used disappointingly little, although it is effectively fought over. What the hell. "Life is a game," it says in the final. There is a magic inherent in every hustle and bustle, even without melodic.

more on the subject



**"Jim Button" at the Komische Oper**  
**Good morning ocean!**

Von Christiane Tewinkel

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And what will become of Sarastro? So much can be revealed: The old king stays in the sauna. And his followers can not only sing excellently, but also damn high. Up to the two-prime e, if the ears are not deceiving.

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