

# School Matinee Series Study Guide

2019/20



## The Magic Flute

*Impempe Yomlingo*  
Isango Ensemble

Wed, Oct 23, 10 am

**Hopkins Center  
for the Arts**  
at Dartmouth



# Welcome to the Hop

A performance needs an audience, so be prepared to play your part!

## Theater Etiquette

When entering the Hopkins Center, show consideration for all those sharing the building by remaining quiet and respectful in common areas.

Be aware and use quiet voices. Remember that live theater differs greatly from watching television or movies or attending a sporting event. Live performers can hear and see you and are easily distracted by any talking or moving around in the audience. Since even the smallest sounds can be heard throughout the theater, it's best to be quiet so that everyone can enjoy the performance. Applause is the best way to show your enthusiasm and appreciation!

Important to remember: Backpacks, food, drink, and gum are not allowed in the theater. Please turn off all cell phones and note that recording the performance or taking any photos is strictly prohibited. Hats off! It is respectful to remove hats during your time in the theater.

## Information for Teachers

**Prepare**—review this study guide for context that will help your students engage with the performance. Check in with the Hop if you have any questions or concerns about content. Read the email that accompanies this guide—Hop staff often request details about your visit including how many buses you'll be bringing and what accommodations you need.

**Arrive**—arrive 30 minutes prior to start time to allow time for Hop staff to check you in and escort the students to their seats. Hop staff will ask you for a headcount of students. Please review our bus policy before arrival: [hop.dartmouth.edu/online/plan\\_a\\_successful\\_visit](http://hop.dartmouth.edu/online/plan_a_successful_visit)

**Lunch**—sometimes we are able to offer a space for schools to eat bag lunches following the show. Check the email that accompanies this guide to confirm. If staying for lunch, please confirm with Hop staff one week prior to show. The day of the show, please bring lunches in boxes or tubs labeled with the school's name. Hop staff will take lunches to the lunch space and escort school group there following the show. **Schools are responsible for calling their own bus back to the Hop when they are ready to leave.**

**Ticketing Policy**—no tickets are issued for school matinee performances. Seating placement for each school group is determined by Hop staff. Please let them know if you have a seating request or accommodation; we do our best to keep each school group seated together. Payment is required 30 days before the performance regardless of whether all students are able to attend on the day of the show—please feel free to bring extra chaperones or school staff to fill any empty seats.

**Photography**—though photography by the audience is prohibited, the Hopkins Center may take photographs during the performance for use on our website or other promotional materials. If you or your students do not wish to be photographed, please let Hop staff know.

**The Show Must Go On!**—we do not cancel events due to school closings for inclement weather. Performances will only be cancelled if the artist is unable to reach the theater. Schools will be notified by phone if this occurs. We do not issue refunds for performances missed due to school closure. Please contact Hop staff if you find your school unable to attend for this reason.

This study guide was created by Kate Adams. To download copies of this and other guides, visit [hop.dartmouth.edu/study-guides](http://hop.dartmouth.edu/study-guides)

## Enjoy the Show!

The Hopkins Center's mission is to ignite and sustain a passion for the arts within Dartmouth and its greater community and to provide the core educational environment for the study, creation and presentation of the arts.

## Did You Know?

- The Hopkins Center opened in 1962.
- The Hopkins Center was designed by Wallace Harrison, architect of Lincoln Center and the United Nations Building in New York City.
- Spaulding Auditorium houses one of the largest pipe organs in New Hampshire. Can you find it?



# About the Show

*The Magic Flute – Impempe Yomlingo* combines utmost simplicity and directness with the greatest seriousness of purpose. The **opera's** message of tolerance, enlightenment, human brotherhood, and the celebration of joy is surely the substance that Mozart wanted to communicate, and this truly charming and exquisite production from South Africa is one he'd surely have loved.

The Isango Ensemble's *The Magic Flute – Impempe Yomlingo*, like a mythical mountain, is lit by flashes of brilliance. Many of these can be traced directly to Mandisi Dyantyi's reorchestration of Mozart's orchestral score for an ensemble of marimbas. Under his direction, the transposition is no gimmick. Dyantyi stands with his back to the audience, a live feed of his face and gestures visible on a sheet hung upstage. With their wooden resonance, marimbas furnish Mozart's construction with dovetailed corners, the fuzzy mallets blurring the musical lines into softer than usual chords.

Sung in English and South African dialects by an ensemble of more than two dozen vibrant voices, classic arias are enlivened with exhilarating arrangements of merry marimbas and powerful percussion. A fusion of fairy tale and African myth, the show shines especially bright when the majestic Queen of the Night performs her acclaimed **aria**. Winner of an Olivier Award for Best Musical Revival (Young Vic, London) and a Globes de Cristal for Best Opera (Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris), this fresh, fearless and fantastical production, co-produced by Eric Abraham and the Young Vic, brims with dazzling drama, crisp comedy and the sublime joy of finding true love.

# About the Artists



Isango Ensemble performing *The Magic Flute*

Director Mark Dornford-May and Music Director Pauline Malefane formed what is now the core of the Isango Ensemble in Cape Town in 2000. From the beginning the company has drawn its performers from the previously disadvantaged townships surrounding the city. Isango Ensemble creates performances with a strong South African flavor by re-imagining Western theater classics within a South African or township setting, and by creating new work reflecting South African heritage.

Isango Ensemble is known for their clever adaptations of classic tales. To create theatrical experiences that will resonate with audiences, they transform beloved masterpieces, including, previously, *A Christmas Carol* and *La Bohème*, to incorporate art forms native to South Africa.



# Contextual Background

## The History of *The Magic Flute*

The original German **opera** was composed by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in 1791 when he was thirty-five. This was the last opera he worked on in his lifetime. Isango Ensemble is known for their clever adaptations of beloved masterpieces. When the show starts, you're in for a surprise: in this production of *The Magic Flute*, the **orchestra** includes a number of instruments commonly played in South Africa, such as marimbas and djembes.



Theater in which an opera is being performed

## Opera

Dating back to the 16th century, opera is a theatrical art form that uses music to tell a story. Historically, a composer and a **librettist** worked together to set text to classical music. Often the performances are quite spectacular, involving large set pieces and elaborate costumes. Older operas were written in Italian or French but thanks to Mozart, the German language became quite popular. In modern times, opera has expanded to include music styles other than classical. Opera also inspired a whole new art form: musical theater.

## African Dance

African dance is rooted in physical expression of ritual experience. Many African cultures strongly uphold tradition and use dance as a participatory social custom. There are dances for marriage, maturity, funerals, praise and many other community-based events. The dance technique is very rhythmic and relies on repetition so that spectators can quickly catch on and join in. The music is rich with drumbeats and other distinctive percussion. Isango Ensemble incorporates South African instruments into *The Magic Flute*'s traditional score to craft music that embodies the sound of their country.



Isango Ensemble performing *The Magic Flute*

## Fun Fact

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart wrote his first symphony at 8 years old, and his first opera at 14.



# Pre-Performance Learning Activities

## Pictures into Story:

In small groups, choose five images or moments to examine from the video from the Isango Ensemble's production of *The Magic Flute* at [hop.dartmouth.edu/events/magic-flute](http://hop.dartmouth.edu/events/magic-flute)

Look at each image or moment in the video closely. What do you imagine might be the relationship between the people in the picture? Where do you think the scene takes place? What do you imagine is happening? Take turns looking at the photos and write your responses down by each picture. You can also respond to comments made by other members of your group. Using the photo gallery of characters, discuss which characters might be represented in your selected photos.

### Guiding Questions:

- Did any of your classmates write something that helped you to make your own connection?
- How might these moments be connected in a story? Why does one picture or moment come before another?
- What evidence did you use in the “imagery” of the photo or moment to make predictions about which characters are represented?

## Opera or Not?:

### After/Beyond

Use this activity to gauge your students' preconceived notions of opera and perhaps to change their perceptions of what opera can be. Play the YouTube clips provided and see if your students can accurately guess which clips are opera and which are not, asking the questions given below.

### Materials: YouTube clips

Magic Flute: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2ODfuMMys](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2ODfuMMys)

Sweeney Todd: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=I96RZh8108o&list=RDisfiejaAnL8&index=3](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I96RZh8108o&list=RDisfiejaAnL8&index=3)

Wagner's Ring Cycle: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=xeRwBiu4wfQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xeRwBiu4wfQ)

Dear Evan Hansen: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1Evnzkez7o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1Evnzkez7o)

1. Ask your students what they know about opera. How many different operas can they list?
2. Based on student responses, create a running list of descriptive attributes that operas have in common.
3. Play the first YouTube clip from *The Magic Flute*. Let your students listen for at least a minute.
4. Discuss whether or not the clip could be considered an opera. Add to or adjust your working list accordingly.
5. Repeat Steps 3 and 4 with the four other clips.
6. Reveal to your students that all four clips are considered opera. As a class, consider the list you created. Make revisions to encompass elements from the entire art form.
7. Craft a specific definition of opera with your students based on what you have discovered through this activity.

### Reflection Questions

- What did this variety of video clips teach you about opera?
- Do you feel like opera has changed over time?
- Do you feel like opera is a relevant art form today?

# Post-Performance Learning Activities

## Movie Poster:

Students create a movie poster illustrating the highlights of the opera. Determine a theme of the opera, thinking about the drama and other details including how characters respond to challenges.

## Reader's Theater:

Have students read the synopsis of *The Magic Flute*. After reading, discuss the characters and the plot. Discuss the dilemmas and their resolutions. Which characters are good; which are bad? How do you know? As an extension activity, have students rewrite the synopsis in a way that is more appealing to peers their age. Have them prepare the reading of the opera synopsis for another class.

## Vocabulary

**Opera:** an art form that combines elements of theater, music, language, history and scenic design.

### Behind the Scenes

**Librettist:** the person who writes the words to each song.

**Composer:** the person who writes the musical score.

### The Performers

**Orchestra:** a group of instrumentalists who play the music to accompany the singers.

**Soprano:** a higher-range female voice (often the heroine character of an opera who in many operas falls in love).

**Alto:** a lower female voice

**Tenor:** a higher-range male voice (often the love interest).

**Baritone:** an intermediary-range male voice.

**Bass:** the lowest-range male voice (often used for an older man or a funny character).

### Building Blocks of Opera

**Recitative:** words that are sung to dramatize or narrate action in the story.

**Aria:** a piece of music sung by one person (a solo usually sung by one character directly to the audience to give information about who he or she is).

**Duet:** a piece of music written for two singers that can be used for dialogue in a scene.

**Quartet:** a piece of music for four singers with different vocal types who harmonize.

**Finale:** the final musical number of an opera, often the most extravagant, dramatic and emotionally and stirring part of the performance.

# Resources

## **For more information and study guide information:**

[www.performingartsnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Magic-Flute-Study-Guide-2015.pdf](http://www.performingartsnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Magic-Flute-Study-Guide-2015.pdf)

# References

[newvictory.org/schools/partner-resources](http://newvictory.org/schools/partner-resources)

[newvictory.imgix.net/Images/Schools/1415\\_SchoolTool/MagicFlute/MagicFlute\\_SchoolTool.pdf](http://newvictory.imgix.net/Images/Schools/1415_SchoolTool/MagicFlute/MagicFlute_SchoolTool.pdf)

[www.chicagoshakes.com/education/teaching\\_resources/teacher\\_handbooks/magic\\_flute/preparing](http://www.chicagoshakes.com/education/teaching_resources/teacher_handbooks/magic_flute/preparing)

# Image Credits

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opera#/media/File:Armide\\_Lully\\_by\\_Saint-Aubin.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opera#/media/File:Armide_Lully_by_Saint-Aubin.jpg)

[www.britannica.com/biography/Wolfgang-Amadeus-Mozart/media/1/395455/173015](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Wolfgang-Amadeus-Mozart/media/1/395455/173015)