Points of interest:

* The development of musical culture in Vienna
* The development of Singspiel Opera
* The development of Opera Buffa
* Masonic culture in Vienna.
* The collaboration with Schikaneder.



The Magic Flute

‘O Zittre Nicht, Mein Lieber Sohn’ & ‘Hmm, Hmm, Hmm’

W. A. Mozart 1791

**Most commonly used time signatures**

**4/4 - 4 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**3/4 - 3 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**2/4 - 2 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**6/8 – 6 quaver beats in a bar.**

Vocal Music

Set Work 2

**Harmony & Tonality**

* The harmony used is functional throughout.
* Modulations are made to related keys via perfect cadences.
* Chromaticism (diminished 7th/ augmented 6th) is used to express sorrow.
* The Neapolitan 6th is used.
* ‘*O Zittre Nicht’* modulates from G minor to Bb major as the mood changes.
* Appoggiaturas blur the harmony.
* ‘*Hmm, Hmm, Hmm’* passes through a wide range of related keys.

**Melody**

* Melodic vocal lines are virtuosic and cover the whole tessitura.
* Melody lines are diatonic with occasional chromaticism.
* Melodic lines are mainly conjunct although leaps are used at dramatic moments.
* Most word setting is syllabic but melisma is used on important words.
* Melodies follow periodic phrasing.

**Structure**

* The Magic Flute follows the structure and conventions of traditional opera.
* ‘*O Zittre Nicht’* is divided into two main sections – recitative (sung speech) and aria (sung by the Queen of the Night).
* *Hmm, Hmm, Hmm* is through-composed with each section based on a different facet of the plot.

**Social & Historical Context**

**Sonority**

**Texture**

**Rhythm, Metre & Tempo**

* Emperor Joseph II tried to develop a musical renaissance in Vienna in the late 18th Century.
* Singspiel became popular with Vienna’s lower classes.
* Nationalist feelings dictated that operas should be sung in German. (Opera Seria was still performed in Italian.)
* Mozart collaborated with musical entrepreneur Schikaneder.
* The story of the *Magic Flute* is linked to the traditions of freemasonry.
* Instruments often double voices.
* Solo vocal lines cover a wide tessitura.
* The soprano solo flies to an F above top C!
* A typical Classical orchestra of Strings, Woodwind, Trumpets and Timpani is used.
* The high vocal lines are often contrasted with low pitched accompanimental instruments.
* The three ladies often sing in homophony.
* Melody dominated homophony is used in *‘O Zittre Nicht’.*
* *Hmm, Hmm, Hmm* is more polyphonic in nature.
* Homophonic singing is used to emphasise important parts of the plot.
* Accompaniments tend to be based on chord progressions and often take the form of triadic and arpeggio shapes.
* 3 part textures are heard in *Hmm, Hmm, Hmm.*
* Simple rhythms are used – especially when Papgeno is singing as he is a ‘simple character’.
* Semiquavers are used in the more virtuosic passages.
* The recitative section of *‘O Zittre Nicht’* is larghetto, with the tempo accelerating to allegro in the aria.
* *Hmm, Hmm, Hmm* is moderato.
* Syncopation is used to create rhythmic interest – especially near cadence points.

Wider listening: *Dido & Aneas* – Purcell, *Rinaldo –* Handel, *The Ring Cycle –* Wagner, *Rigoletto* – Verdi.