

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

DIE ENTFÜHRUNG AUS DEM SERAIL

CONDUCTOR
James Levine

PRODUCTION
John Dexter

SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER
Jocelyn Herbert

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Gil Wechsler

STAGE DIRECTOR
Stephen Pickover

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR
James Levine

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR
Fabio Luisi

Opera in three acts

Libretto by Christoph Friedrich Bretzner,
adapted by Gottlieb Stephanie the Younger

Saturday, April 30, 2016
8:00–11:20PM

The production of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*
was made possible by a generous gift from the
Edith C. Blum Foundation

The Metropolitan Opera
2015–16 SEASON

The 71st Metropolitan Opera performance of
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART'S

**DIE ENTFÜHRUNG
AUS DEM SERAIL**

CONDUCTOR
James Levine

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

BELMONTE
Ben Bliss*

OSMIN
Hans-Peter König

PEDRILLO
Brenton Ryan

PASHA SELIM
Matthias von Stegmann

KONSTANZE
Albina Shagimuratova

BLONDCHEN
Kathleen Kim

Saturday, April 30, 2016, 8:00–11:20PM



A scene from Mozart's
*Die Entführung aus
dem Serail*

Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
Musical Preparation **Vlad Iftinca, Jonathan C. Kelly,
Bryan Wagorn, and Nimrod David Pfeffer**
Assistant Stage Directors **Phebe Berkowitz and Yefim Maizel**
German Coach **Marianne Barrett**
Prompter **Vlad Iftinca**
Met Titles **Christopher Bergen**
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Costume Department**
Wigs and Makeup executed by **Metropolitan Opera
Wig and Makeup Department**
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Synopsis

Turkey, 1700s

Act I

Outside Pasha Selim's palace

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:40 PM)

Act II

Pasha Selim's garden

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 10:15 PM)

Act III

SCENE 1 Pasha Selim's garden

SCENE 2 A square outside the palace

Act I

Pasha Selim has bought as slaves three Europeans taken prisoner by pirates: Konstanze, a young Spanish lady; Blondchen, her English maid; and Pedrillo, who is the servant of Konstanze's fiancé, Belmonte, and in love with Blondchen. Belmonte has traced the trio to the pasha's seaside palace, where Konstanze has become her new master's favorite. The pasha has made Pedrillo his gardener and has given Blondchen to Osmin, his palace overseer.

At the palace gate, Belmonte encounters Osmin, who treats him coolly and flies into a rage when Belmonte asks about Pedrillo, Osmin's rival. Osmin drives Belmonte away and then rails at Pedrillo when he suggests that they should finally make peace. Belmonte returns and learns from Pedrillo that the pasha has fallen in love with Konstanze but will not force himself on her. Pedrillo will try to arrange a meeting between Konstanze and Belmonte and an escape by boat with Blondchen.

Konstanze returns from a pleasure trip with the pasha. He treats her with respect but she cannot forget Belmonte and rejects his advances. Pedrillo introduces Belmonte to the pasha as a promising young architect and Selim welcomes him. Osmin tries to bar the way as Belmonte and Pedrillo enter the palace, but they force their way past him.

Act II

In the palace garden, Blondchen explains to Osmin how a European woman should be treated. Konstanze finds Blondchen and laments her sad situation. When the pasha again asks her to marry him, she tells him she would prefer torture, even death, to betraying her fiancé. Blondchen and Pedrillo discuss the escape plan: they will get Osmin drunk, and all four will leave on Belmonte's ship. Even though Osmin's religion forbids him to drink wine, Pedrillo has no difficulty in getting him drunk, leaving the coast clear for the two couples to meet.

Act III

Just before midnight, Belmonte and Pedrillo come to the ladies' window with a ladder. Pedrillo sings a serenade as the signal for escape, but this wakes Osmin, who is not too hungover to realize what is going on. The four are locked up. When brought before the angry pasha, Belmonte tries to pacify him by suggesting he collect a ransom from his wealthy family, the Lostados. At the mention of this name, the pasha realizes that Belmonte is the son of an old enemy, the man who exiled him from his own country. He decides to repay evil with good, freeing Konstanze and Belmonte, and even Blondchen and Pedrillo. The grateful couples praise their benefactor as they prepare to set sail.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Die Entführung aus dem Serail

Premiere: Vienna, Burgtheater, 1782

Created in a spirit of fun and enjoyment, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* appeals to a broad variety of tastes with its diverse musical and dramatic facets. The opera was written at the order of the Habsburg Emperor Joseph II. For source material, Mozart turned to a popular farce of his day about two pairs of European lovers, one couple noble and the other their servants. This foursome is trying to escape from the harem of a Turkish pasha and his amusingly sleazy overseer. The work uses spoken dialogue and separate musical numbers in the form of a Singspiel, or “sung play.” Comic solos and ensembles, sublime love music, moving laments, a tint of exoticism, and one of the most astounding soprano arias ever composed are all featured in this delightful opera. It was a great success with the public when it premiered but failed to give Mozart the recognition and stability in the imperial capital that he sought (and that would continue to elude him for the remainder of his short life).

The Creators

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) was the son of a Salzburg court musician and composer, Leopold, who was also his principal teacher and exhibited him as a musical prodigy throughout Europe. His works continue to enthrall audiences around the world, and his achievements in opera, in terms of beauty, vocal challenge, and dramatic insight, remain unsurpassed. Christoph Friedrich Bretzner (1748–1807) was a businessman and successful librettist of farces and musical comedies, among them the 1781 *Belmont und Constanze, oder Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, the source for Mozart’s opera. Bretzner’s text was adapted by Johann Gottlieb Stephanie (called Stephanie the Younger, 1741–1800), head of the Vienna Nationalsingspiel, the German opera company established by Joseph II.

The Setting

The story is set in the Ottoman Empire in the 1700s, at a time when the centuries-old Turkish military threat to Christian Europe was waning, and comedy on the subject of the clash of these two cultures became viable. While there is some humor at the expense of the Turks, just as much is aimed at the foibles

of the Europeans. The clemency of the pasha in the final scene of the opera can be seen as a gentle rebuke to the original audience's own culture, an idea characteristic of the Enlightenment.

The Music

The exotic hue of the score of *Entführung* is not an authentic representation of Turkish music but rather a European imagining of foreign and exotic sounds. (The tenor's Act III serenade, "Im Mohrenland," for example, makes reference to one of the pre-modern modes associated with early Western church music.) Mozart uses some authentic Turkish instruments, however, including the bass drum, triangle, and cymbals, which would eventually become standard for European orchestras. He creates contrasting musical personalities for each of the lead characters, which heightens the effect of their individual solos. "Im Mohrenland," for example, comes just after a solo of superb Mozartean elegance for the other tenor, "Ich baue ganz auf deine Stärke." Similarly, in Act II, three vastly different soprano arias are juxtaposed, including "Märtern aller Arten," an extended and astonishingly challenging vocal set piece that both references and parodies the old opera seria tradition. The bass role of the overseer (a part that includes some of the most exposed low notes ever written for an opera singer) is one of opera's great comic characters. His Act III aria, "Ha, wie will ich triumphieren," contrasts these low notes with high piccolo accompaniment to create a delightfully dastardly showstopper.

Met History

The Abduction from the Seraglio premiered at the Met in English in 1946, featuring Eleanor Steber as Konstanze. After five performances, the opera fell out of the repertory until 1979, when James Levine conducted a new production by John Dexter with a cast including Edda Moser, Nicolai Gedda, and Kurt Moll, who would sing the role of Osmin 21 times at the Met through 2003. Film, stage, and television star Werner Klemperer took the non-singing role of Pasha Selim in those first performances. Other notable singers to have appeared in this staging include Kathleen Battle, Judith Blegen, Catherine Malfitano, Francisco Araiza, Gösta Winbergh, Martti Talvela, Matti Salminen, and Nico Castel (in 33 performances as Selim). The production was most recently revived in 2008 with Diana Damrau as Konstanze and Matthew Polenzani as Belmonte leading the cast.

Program Note

As a well-traveled child prodigy, Mozart acquired unique firsthand exposure to all of Europe's musical styles and fashions in the 1760s and 1770s. What is more, he could easily compose in any of these styles—a facility that was much in demand, both by connoisseurs and the merely curious. As a result, before his 20th birthday, Mozart had already composed (among many other things) some 11 substantial dramatic works, in three languages and a variety of genres: comic, serious, festal, sacred.

With time, the boy's experience of life and perception of humanity came to equal his sheer musical gifts. Frustratingly, the same passing years diminished his novelty value as a Wunderkind, drying up the springs of commissions just at the time when Mozart felt able at last to realize his full potential as an operatic composer. From 1775 until 1780, he hoped for a firm assignment, which finally came from the Bavarian court, for *Idomeneo*, an ambitious opera seria introduced in January 1781.

After its success, Mozart felt less desire than ever to rejoin the rigid, provincial court of the Archbishop of Salzburg, where he served as court organist (his father Leopold was Kapellmeister). The Archbishop treated him as a servant, and actively resented the servant's successes abroad. In May 1781, after repeated humiliations, Mozart resigned and, to the consternation of his father, resolved to make his living independently in Vienna. Clearly, he counted on the buzz created by *Idomeneo* to stimulate further operatic commissions—the most lucrative form of composition.

At that time, the principal operatic activity in Vienna was the company established a few years earlier by Emperor Joseph II at the Burgtheater, to perform opera in German—the so-called Nationalsingspiel, the local equivalent of England's ballad opera and France's opera comique, genres in which spoken dialogue alternated with musical numbers sung in the native language of the country (as opposed to the universal operatic Italian). The form was familiar to Mozart; he had composed the one-act *Bastien und Bastienne* at the age of 12. More recently, in 1779 at Salzburg, he had set 15 numbers of a now-lost Singspiel libretto about the rescue of a European prisoner from a Turkish seraglio; this is the fragment now known as *Zaide*, after its heroine.

In 1781, Mozart apparently showed his unfinished Turkish opera to Gottlieb Stephanie, a playwright and producer for the Burgtheater, who promised to write him a better libretto, which he delivered at the end of July. Originality was not excessively valued in the 18th century, nor was plagiarism equated with mortal sin. Stephanie helped himself freely to a year-old libretto by one Christoph Friedrich Bretzner, also involving rescue from a seraglio. Such plots were common enough at the time. Less than a century after the Ottoman Turks had been repulsed from the very gates of Vienna, they had become popular dramatic stuff, exotic and amusing rather than threatening—indeed, as in

Stephanie's tale, sometimes presented as more magnanimous than Europeans. There was even a well-defined convention for "Turkish music": an instrumentation of piccolo, triangle, cymbals, and bass drum, along with a predilection for static harmonic alternations such as we hear in Mozart's janissary choruses. Stephanie and Mozart made some changes in their source material. Bretzner's *deus ex machina* was the revelation that the Pasha was actually Belmonte's father, converted to Islam; this may have seemed too touchy for Catholic Vienna. After having written Act I and part of Act II within a month of receiving the libretto, Mozart decided that some juggling of events was necessary, but Stephanie was committed to other matters, and the opera was delayed, eventually reaching completion in May 1782.

Other changes arose from considerations of casting. Like most operas of the 18th century (and many of the 19th), *Die Entführung* was written for specific singers with specific abilities. Thus, the role of Osmin was much enlarged, for it was to be sung by Ludwig Fischer, accounted by a contemporary source to be "the foremost bass in Germany." Trained in the old Italian tradition, Fischer excelled at wide skips (as exemplified in his own composition, the once-popular basso showpiece *Im Tiefen Keller*—"In Cellar Deep") and at low notes (Mozart takes him down to low D). He was also a fine actor. Osmin turned out to be such a vivid figure that he became the vocal prototype for a long German tradition of comic bass roles, including Nicolai's Falstaff and Wagner's Daland.

Much of the Singspiel repertoire was musically primitive and not much to the taste of the Viennese, so the company's seasons were filled out with Italian operas in translation. Hence, the resident singers had to be uncommonly proficient, and Mozart could deploy his musical cosmopolitanism and sophistication quite freely. Konstanze, though she may sing German words, speaks another musical language. Of her first aria, Mozart wrote: "I have sacrificed Konstanze's aria a little to the flexible throat of Mlle Cavalieri ... I have tried to express her feelings, as far as an Italian bravura aria will allow it." Despite her name, Caterina Cavalieri was an Austrian, a pupil of Salieri. To judge from the back-to-back arias that Mozart gave her in Act II, she must have commanded more than mere bravura (though plenty of that, as well). Often criticized as dramatically otiose, the sequence of the expressive "Traurigkeit ward mir zum Lose" (in Mozart's especially poignant key of G minor) and the defiant "Martern aller Arten" (a veritable concerto for voice and four instrumental soloists) is a challenge—and an opportunity—without parallel in the operatic soprano literature.

The secondary lovers stand more directly in the Singspiel tradition, though Blondchen (written for Therese Teyber, considered the best actress in the company) is called upon for a few flights even more altitudinous than Konstanze's. The original Pedrillo, Johann Ernst Dauer, evidently boasted less fluency, but his music is exceptionally characterful, the hesitant heroics of

"Frisch zum Kampfe" balanced by the wistful, harmonically ambiguous serenade, "Im Mohrenland." The malicious Count Zinzendorf thought the first Belmonte, Johann Valentin Adamberger, "a statue," but Mozart must have found him a singer both expressive and fluent, to judge from his music; his last-act aria, "Ich baue ganz," represents a formidable bravura challenge.

From yet another tradition stems the opera's final number, described as a vaudeville—a French verse-and-chorus form in which each of the characters takes up the verse in turn. In Mozart's example, Osmin, unwilling to join the otherwise universal forgiveness, bends his verse in a new direction and storms off to a crackling reprise of his first-act rage. Another rewarding formal twist finds the overture interrupted by the curtain's rise before the customary formal symmetry has been fully achieved—to reveal Belmonte singing a major-mode version of the melody that, in minor, had formed the overture's central contrast.

Unfortunately, Mozart's letter to his father about the opera's first night, July 16, 1782, has been lost; he later spoke of its "good reception" despite some organized opposition. According to Franz Xaver Niemetschek's 1808 Mozart biography, the Emperor—presumably acknowledging the opera's transcendence of the Singspiel's customary simplicity—said to the composer, "Very many notes, my dear Mozart!" Despite that ambiguous verdict, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* was soon played widely and became one of Mozart's greatest stage successes during his lifetime.

—David Hamilton

The Cast



James Levine

MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR (CINCINNATI, OHIO)

MET HISTORY Since his 1971 company debut leading *Tosca*, he has conducted more than 2,500 performances at the Met—more than any other conductor in the company's history. Of the 86 operas he has led at the Met, 13 were company premieres (including *Stiffelio*, *I Lombardi*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, *La Cenerentola*, *Benvenuto Cellini*, *Porgy and Bess*, *Erwartung*, *Moses und Aron*, *Idomeneo*, and *La Clemenza di Tito*). He also led the world premieres of Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles* and Harbison's *The Great Gatsby*.

THIS SEASON In his 45th season at the Met, he conducts revivals of *Tannhäuser* (which will be transmitted live in HD), *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *Simon Boccanegra*; two concerts of the Met Orchestra's annual subscription series at Carnegie Hall, with soloists Christine Goerke, Johan Botha, and Evgeny Kissin; and two concerts by the Met Chamber Ensemble at Carnegie's Zankel Hall and Weill Recital Hall.



Kathleen Kim

SOPRANO (SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA)

THIS SEASON Blondchen in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at the Met, Tytania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Glyndebourne Festival, and Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with the Palm Beach Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Oscar in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Tytania, Chiang Ch'ing in John Adams's *Nixon in China*, Olympia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Zerbinetta, Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Barbarina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (debut, 2007).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Bavarian State Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago, Olympia at the Bavarian State Opera and Barcelona's Liceu, Oscar with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Melissa in Handel's *Amadigi di Gaula* with Central City Opera, and Poppea in *Agrippina* with Boston Lyric Opera. She has also sung the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Sarasota Opera, the Fairy in Massenet's *Cendrillon* with Opéra de Lille, and Fire, Princess, and the Nightingale in Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* at the Glyndebourne Festival and the Rome Opera.



Albina Shagimuratova

SOPRANO (MOSCOW, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON Konstanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at the Met and the Bavarian State Opera; the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* at the San Francisco Opera, the Bavarian State Opera, and Vienna State Opera; the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* at St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre, and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* in Munich.

MET APPEARANCES Lucia and the Queen of the Night (debut, 2010).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She has recently sung Konstanze at the Paris Opera, Lucia at La Scala and with the Los Angeles Opera, Donna Anna at Covent Garden, and Violetta in *La Traviata* with Moscow's Bolshoi Opera. Additional performances include the Queen of the Night at the Los Angeles Opera, Salzburg Festival, Berlin's Deutsche Oper, and Bolshoi Opera; Lyudmila in *Ruslan and Lyudmila* at the Bolshoi Opera; Violetta with the Houston Grand Opera; Gilda in *Rigoletto* at the San Francisco Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago; and Lucia with the Houston Grand Opera, Deutsche Oper, and Bolshoi Opera. She is a graduate of the Houston Grand Opera Studio and in 2007 received a gold medal at Moscow's Tchaikovsky Competition.



Ben Bliss

TENOR (PRAIRIE VILLAGE, KANSAS)

THIS SEASON Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at the Met and with the Glyndebourne Festival on tour for his European debut, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* at Los Angeles Opera, Flamand in *Capriccio* in Santa Fe, Cassio in *Otello* at the Cincinnati May Festival, Handel's *Israel in Egypt* at Carnegie Hall, and concerts with the New York Philharmonic and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

MET APPEARANCES Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Kunz Vogelgesang in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (debut, 2014).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has sung Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic conducted by Gustavo Dudamel, and appeared with Los Angeles Opera's Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program as Benvolio in *Roméo et Juliette*, Barbarigo in *I Due Foscari*, and the Male Chorus in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, conducted by James Conlon. He has also sung Bach's Magnificat with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and the *St. Matthew Passion* with the La Jolla Symphony. He is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.



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Kristine Opolais as Rusalka

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Hans-Peter König

BASS (DÜSSELDORF, GERMANY)

THIS SEASON Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at the Met; Daland in *Der Fliegende Holländer* at the Vienna State Opera; Heinrich der Vogler in *Lohengrin*, Osmin, and Daland at Düsseldorf's Deutsche Oper am Rhein; and Hunding in *Die Walküre* and Hagen in *Götterdämmerung* at the Bavarian State Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Pogner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* (debut, 2010), Daland, and Fafner, Hunding, and Hagen in the *Ring* cycle.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS A member of Deutsche Oper am Rhein, he was awarded the title of Kammersänger there for his outstanding contributions to music. His repertoire encompasses leading bass roles of Wagner, Verdi, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, and Strauss, among others, which he has sung with many of the world's leading opera companies. He has appeared as a guest artist at Covent Garden, Paris's Bastille Opera, La Scala, Barcelona's Liceu, and Florence's Maggio Musicale, as well as in Dresden, Tokyo, Hamburg, and São Paulo and at the festivals of Bayreuth and Baden-Baden.



Brenton Ryan

TENOR (SEDALIA, MISSOURI)

THIS SEASON Pedrillo in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at the Met, Beppe in *Pagliacci* and Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte* at the LA Opera, and the Fool in *Wozzeck* at Chicago Lyric Opera.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He is a member of the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program at the LA Opera, where his roles have included Gastone in *La Traviata*, the Spirit and the Sailor in *Dido and Aeneas*, Léon in *The Ghosts of Versailles*, and Kyros in Patrick Morganelli's *Hercules vs. Vampires*. He has also sung Henrik in *A Little Night Music* at Houston Grand Opera, Belfiore in *Il viaggio a Reims* and Bardolfo in *Falstaff* with Wolf Trap Opera, and Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Wichita Grand Opera.



Matthias von Stegmann

ACTOR (MUNICH, GERMANY)

THIS SEASON Pasha Selim in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at the Met, and stage director for *Carmen* at Oper Kiel.

MET APPEARANCES Pasha Selim (debut, 2003).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS From 1989 to 2008, he was an assistant and staff stage director at the Bayreuth Festival, Covent Garden, and Tokyo's New National Theatre. His own productions as stage director include *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Der Freischütz*, and *Lohengrin* at the New National Theatre; a children's version (which he conceived and wrote) of Wagner's *Ring* cycle at the Vienna State Opera and the Zurich Opera; *I Vespri Siciliani* at the Hungarian State Opera; *Die Hochzeit des Figaro* for Oper Klosterneuburg; *Tristan und Isolde* in Minden; *Madama Butterfly* and Toshio Hosokawa's *Matsukaze* at Oper Kiel; and *Rienzi* in Bayreuth. He also writes and directs German dialogue for the dubbing of TV and feature films, including *The Sixth Sense*, *Still Alice*, *Cheers*, *The Nanny*, *Home Improvement*, *Boston Legal*, *Futurama*, *2 Broke Girls*, *The Odd Couple*, and *Family Guy*. Since 2006, he has been solely responsible for the writing and directing of the German dialogue for *The Simpsons* TV series.