

THE BIRD-CATCHER'S SONG

from *The Magic Flute* (1791)

Text: Emanuel Schikaneder

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Mozart's last opera is a sublime allegory on universal themes, at once comic and serious. In its fairy-tale-like story, Papageno represents the simple ordinary man—the child of nature. His job is catching birds for the Queen of the Night, but what he really wants to catch is a wife. Soon after the opening of Act I, he makes his entrance with this song.

1.
The bird-catcher am I,
and always merry!
As bird-catcher I'm known
by young and old throughout the land.
I know how to lure them,
and make them understand my pipes.
So I'm happy and gay,
for all the birds are mine.

2.
The bird-catcher am I,
and always merry!
As bird catcher I'm known
by young and old throughout the land.
I'd like to have a net for girls
and catch them by the dozen.
Then I'd lock them up with me,
and all the girls would be mine.

3.
If all the girls were mine,
I'd fetch a fine lump of sugar;
I'd chose the girl I like the best
and give the sugar lump to her.
She'd kiss me then most tenderly,
she'd be my wife and I her man.
She'd fall asleep beside me then,
I'd rock her like a child to sleep.

The music, in popular style and composed of the simplest chords, non-chord tones, and modulations, is unusual for its use of Pan-pipes, which Papageno plays between phrases. How is this composition subtle—how saved from monotony? (Omitted here is the orchestral introduction, which is identical with the song.)

Andante

Papageno

Orchestra (reduction)

vi. *p*

Hrn.

1. Der Vo - gel - fän - ger bin ich ja, stets
2. Der Vo - gel - fän - ger bin ich ja, stets
3. Wenn al - le Mäd - chen wä - ren mein, so

3

lu - stig hei - ßa hop - sa - sa! Ich Vo - gel - fän - ger bin be - kannt bei
lu - stig hei - ßa hop - sa - sa! Ich Vo - gel - fän - ger bin be - kannt bei
tausch - te ich brav Zu - cker ein: die, wel - che mir am lieb - sten wär, der

7

Alt und Jung im gan-zen Land.
 Alt und Jung im gan-zen Land.
 gäb ich gleich den Zu-cker her.

Weiß
 Ein
 Und

G.Orch.

f

p Str.

11

mit dem Lo-cken um-zu-gehn, und mich aufs Pfei-fen zu-ver-stehn.
 Netz für Mädchen möch-te ich, ich fing sie dut-zend-weis für mich!
 küß-te sie mich zärt-lich dann, wär sie mein Weib und ich ihr Mann.

(pfeift)

Ob.

Hrn.

16

8

D'rum kann ich froh und lu-stig sein, denn al-le Vö-gel
 Dann sperr-te ich sie bei mir ein, und al-le Mäd-chen
 Sie schlief an mei-ner Sei-te ein, ich wieg-te wie ein

Vi.

20

8

sind ja mein. (pfeift)
 wä-ren mein.
 Kind sie ein.

Ob.

G.Orch.

Hrn.

f