

Le Nozze di Figaro

MOZART | 1786

SUNG IN ITALIAN
APPROXIMATE RUNNING TIME: 180 minutes

This is one of the best known Mozart's operas. Da Ponte's libretto was based on Beaumarchais's *The Marriage of Figaro*, however, the playful atmosphere is preserved whilst the satirical elements and the criticism toward society are considerably reduced and toned down due to censorship. Nevertheless, the opera still shows the aristocracy as strongly clinging to their privileges and the third state as struggling to survive. Plus, this is the beginning of the collaboration between Mozart and Da Ponte.



MAIN CHARACTERS

Count Almaviva (baritone)

Countess Almaviva (soprano)

Figaro, Almaviva's valet, engaged to Susanna (baritone-basso)

Susanna, countess's maid, engaged to Figaro (Soprano)

Cherubino, page (mezzo-soprano)

Marcellina, Bartolo's housekeeper (mezzo-soprano)

THE PLOT

The opera is set in Almaviva's castle. While Figaro and Susanna are arranging the new room they are going to move in together after their marriage, Almaviva tries to claim the *ius primae noctis* and his wife, sick and tired of her husband continuous cheating will have to face her fierce jealousy. Despite all love intrigues connected to Cherubino and Marcellina and the Count continuously hitting on Susanna, the newly formed couple will manage to get married.

Act 1

Figaro and Susanna are arranging the new room they are going to move in together after their marriage. The room is just beside the Count's, which makes the couple suspicious of Almaviva possibly having a hidden agenda. The first hinder to the wedding, comes in the shape of Marcellina: aided by Don Bartolo, who is anxious to get back at Figaro, she claims the right to marry the former Seville barber, in virtue of a debt Figaro never paid off. Countess lover Cherubino steps into Susanna's room looking for advice but Almaviva finds him there, gets mad with jealousy and sends him to Seville where he is to join the army.

Act 2

Alone in her room, Countess is overwhelmed by melancholy. Susanna brings Cherubino in and the two ladies disguise him as a maid, in order to hide him from Almaviva and avoid him to join the army. Almaviva get suspicious of the noise coming from his wife's room and in he goes, however, Cherubino jumps off the window, managing to disappear before the Count comes in. Once inside the room, Almaviva accuses his wife of cheating on him but the only other person he finds in the room is Susanna and he therefore must apologise. The whole situation might be jeopardised by the gardener, who is the only one that saw the page getting out through the window but Figaro steps in and the appearances are saved. However the marriage is, once again, put in jeopardy by the arrival of Don Bartolo and Marcellina, who now has all the documents required to demand Figaro as her spouse.

Act 3

Aided by the countess, Susanna pretends to be interested in Almaviva, who is plotting to get rid of Figaro by marrying him off to Marcellina, who, however, eventually turns out to be Figaro's mother. The marriage cannot be sabotaged, so happy Susanna and the countess write a message for the count inviting him to secretly meet Susanna. The count is so happy he does not even realise Cherubino is still at the castle. At the end of this act the wedding takes place.

Act 4

Cherubino heads to the where the garden where Susanna and the Count are supposed to meet. Susanna and the Countess also go there, not before swapping their clothes though. All the characters are in the garden together. Following a series of funny misunderstandings all characters' faithfulness is tested and Almaviva is obliged to apologise to his wife.

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