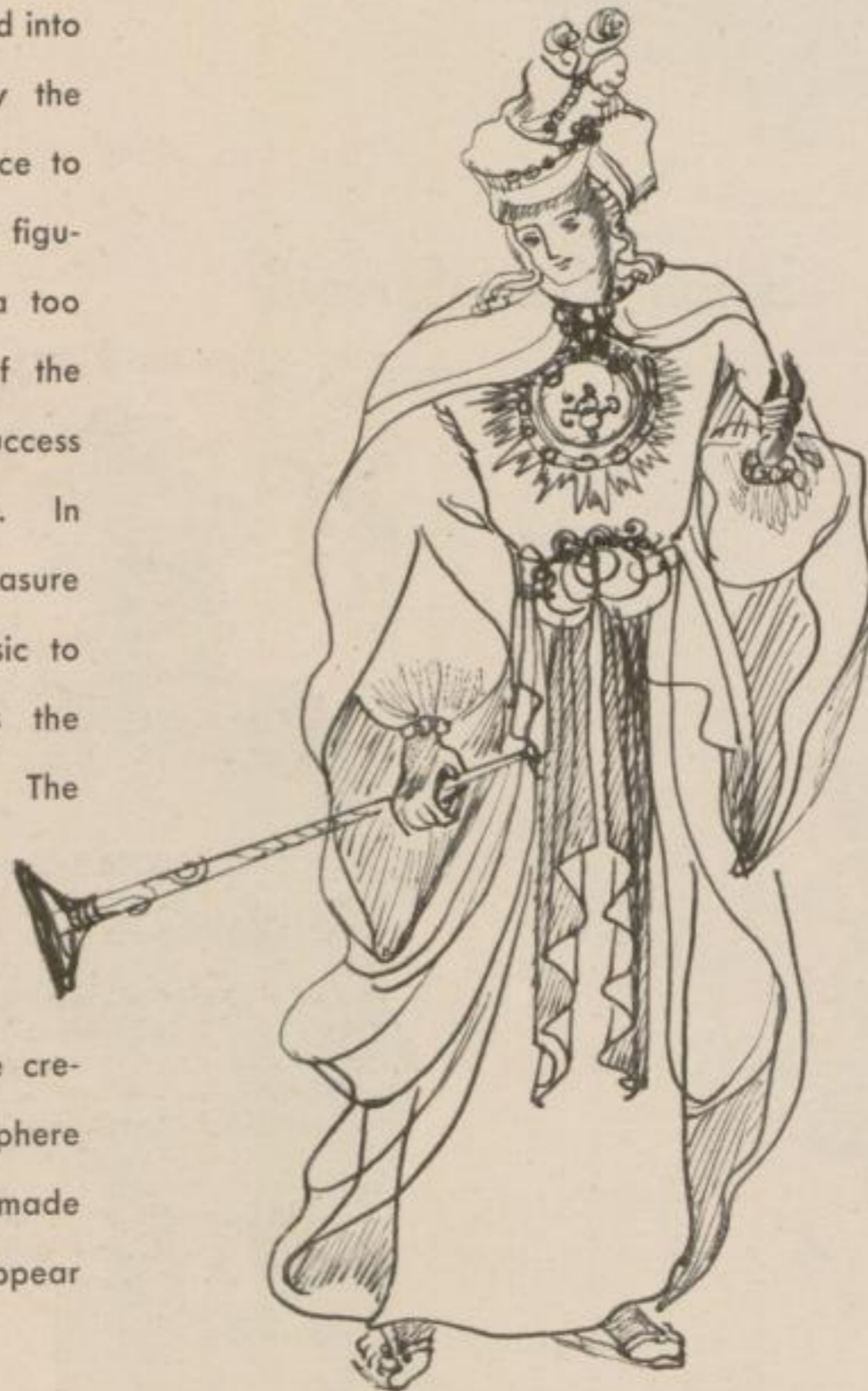


Stage Figurines by Anni Keim-Strauss

Karl Friedrich Schinkel's stage-setting for Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's "Magic Flute" combining as it does an immensity of conception with the spirit of romanticism could not with all due appreciation of its outstandingly unique character be only productive of good in the long run. On the contrary it unfortunately led at various times during the lapse of years to tacit imitation, it might even be said to plagiarism. Those responsible for the setting of this opera consequently forsook the ideal setting that Mozart probably had in mind and went off the right track altogether. Realization of this fact was probably the actual reason for striking out in a new direction on the occasion of arranging the new setting for the jubilee of the "Mozart City", Augsburg. True, it was somewhat difficult to avoid going from one extreme to the other. However, Anni Keim-Strauss, the stage-costume designer's solution of the problem proved entirely successful at the time and for later presentations also. She had rightly arrived at the conclusion that the most impressive setting would have to be in the garb of Mozart's own day, that is to say, the period when baroque merged into rococo. Accordingly the artist gave prominence to the latter style in her figurines and avoided a too powerful stressing of the Egyptian note. Success crowned her efforts. In addition to the pleasure afforded by the music to the ear, there was the delight to the eye. The unique design of the costumes, their buoyant grace and vivid colours at once created a Mozart atmosphere and at the same time made the "Magic Flute" appear



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a new work of art in the eyes of theatre-goers. Anni Keim-Strauss did not only devote special attention to the chief characters in this opera, she succeeded in giving a definitely artistic form to all the minor figures. There is not one that is not inspired by the spirit that set its mark on the town in which Mozart lived, namely, the spirit of baroque Salzburg. In this town too the artist herself grew to womanhood and perchance this is why its influence is so powerfully expressed in all her creative work.

Translated by Flora Salmond-Volkmann