



The Magic Flute

A young boy finds an abandoned flute with magical powers. When he plays it, the beauty of the flute's music transforms his surroundings. His drab clothes brighten, beautiful flowers grow, butterflies, jesters, and starbursts appear. He generously shares the powerful gift with his friends. The flute passes from one child to another, creating an imaginary universe where children can travel on stars and slide along rainbows. But the happy series of events soon ends.

A jealous intruder steals the flute and changes its magical power. When he plays the flute, the music produces scenes where bats, monsters, and chaos flourish.

As an animated fantasy, the film inspires children to dance, to draw, to delight in music and daydreams. Its application to discussion topics, written excursions, and literary interpretation is boundless.

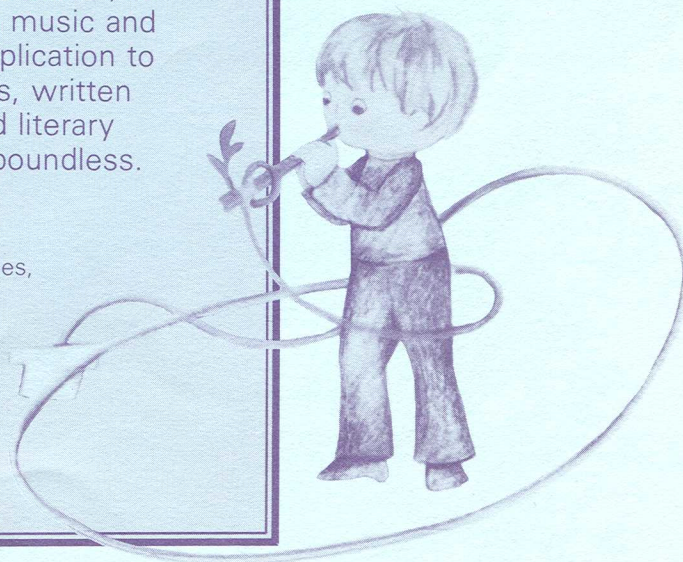
Subject Areas:

Language Arts, Social Studies,
Drama, Art, Music

Suggested Audience:

Primary to adult

(8 min. color) 16mm \$120
rental \$20 Video \$120



ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION

Subject Areas: Language Arts, Social Studies, Drama, Art, Music **Suggested Audience:** Primary to adult

1.

Imagine that you have just picked up the magic flute and that it has taken you someplace you can actually go. Go there. For five minutes (longer for older students) write down everything you see, hear, and smell—using the first words that come to you and recording everything possible. Share your observations with small groups of your classmates. Take this paper and re-write it in any way you think will make it more interesting and understandable to other people. Feel free to add, subtract, re-arrange, and re-word.

Students who have concrete sensory observations to work from usually have an easier time approaching a writing assignment. The pre-composition experience is essential to good writing.

This assignment should be repeated often.

2.

The film has no dialogue. Turn the story into play form and write the dialogue. (Teach the use of quotation marks). You may want to act out the scenes.

3.

The film continuously contrasts good and evil through the animation style, the flute's music and the action of the children. Try these activities to interpret good and evil through movement and a follow-up writing exercise:

a Floating in a bubble—floating and flying was part of the magic of the flute. Practice moving like a bubble. Pretend you are in a bubble and you can go anywhere you like (maybe your favorite place)

Write out the description of your journey in your bubble. Remember a bubble is transparent.



b Take an imaginary magic carpet ride—gliding, flying, moving, through space. Go as far as your imagination will take you. **Describe your journey.**

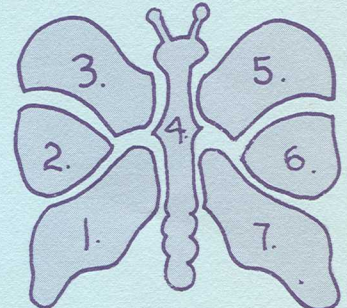
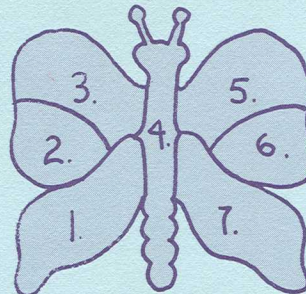
(Your magic carpet can take you anywhere—into the past, into the future, out in space. Create a whole new universe if you want.)



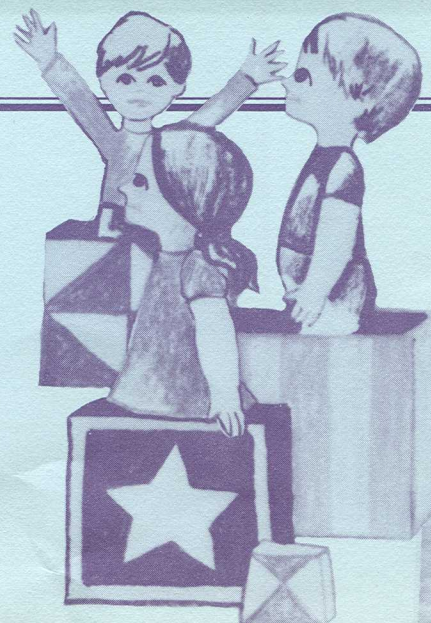
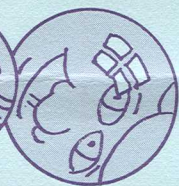
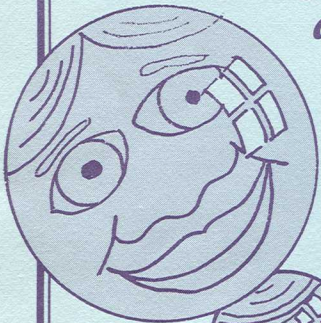
c For the other side of the coin (evil, fierce movement) have the children find a space. Allow them to “grow” into giant monsters which stalk about the territory, roaring, lunging in a space, eating rocks and toads.

4.

Tissue butterfly: Butterflies make us happy just as they do the children in the film. Students work individually and then collectively in this project. Take a large piece of butcher paper and draw the outline of a butterfly on it. Section off parts of the wings and body and number each part. (See diagram)



Cut apart the sections of the butterfly. Give each student one section and a pile of tissue paper scraps. The students tear off squares of the tissue paper, twist them, and dip them in glue. Then, they stick each piece onto their section of the butterfly,



filling the space completely. When the sections are complete, fit the pieces back together again and glue them onto another sheet of butcher paper.

Note: This activity provides the same sense of community sharing that the film does.

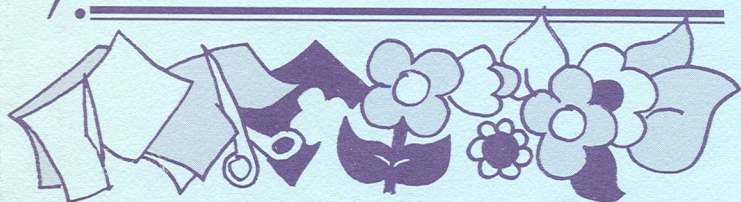
5.

The film does not have an expressed moral; yet, there is a clear message. Write a one-sentence statement which explains what the film means to you. Share your statement with your classmates.

6.

The boy who first finds the flute is bored when we first see him. What do you do to cure your boredom? Imagine the ideal day you would spend if you were given a magic flute to help you on your way. What would you create to make you happy?

7.



Torn paper flowers: Flowers were produced by the magic of the flute. Have your students create their own magic flowers. Each student is given several sheets of different colored construction paper. They create their flowers by tearing and glueing only. Make a garden of their flowers on the bulletin board.

8.

Tell the students you want them to watch very carefully and remember everything they can about the film. Tell them you are going to describe a scene from the film and then ask them questions about it rather rapidly. They are to write down words or very short phrases as quickly as possible in response to your

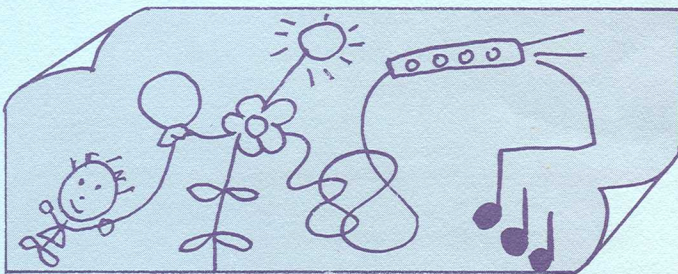
questions. Don't allow them to ask, "What did you say?" Keep moving so that the responses are immediate.

Sample questions:

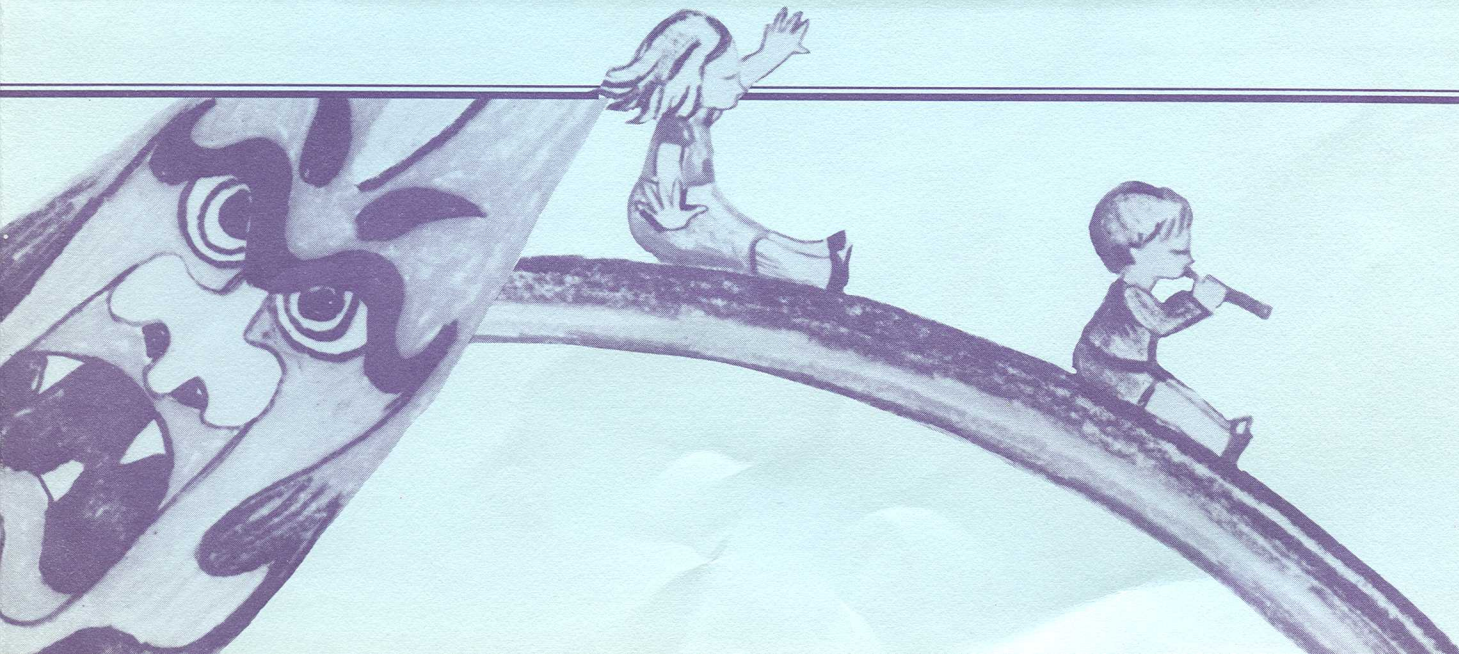
- How does the boy look when the film opens?*
- What does he do?*
- What does he hear? see? feel?*
- What happens when he picks up the flute?*
- What does he hear? see?*

Go through the entire film. The class should now have many descriptive words and phrases. Ask them to circle ten key words or phrases. Tell them that they are to choose the words and phrases that they have written that they like the most and arrange them so that they have a poem. The key words are to be repeated several times to give the poem unity. Let the class write freely reminding them only of the form for a poem—first word of each line is capitalized; key words should be emphasized by their placement and repetition. Remind them that present tense verbs are more exciting.

9.



Pass-a-long Magic: In the film, the flute was passed from child to child, creating new magic with each child. Use the soundtrack of the film as background. Have the child at the end of the row begin a picture by drawing to the music without stopping. At a designated moment, have the student pass the paper to the classmate in front of him who then adds to the drawing. The idea is to collectively add on to what has been given you and to work your lines into those that are already there. Again, this assignment coincides with the theme of sharing that is presented in the film.



10.



What is your favorite musical instrument? Bring in a recording or tape of music that features that instrument. Describe to the class why it is your favorite. Research the instrument and find out about its origin, its place in musical history, its use in orchestras, bands, etc. Pretend you are a salesperson trying to sell this instrument to a group of music teachers who only have enough money to buy *one* new instrument this year. Note: This is a good way to introduce communication skills and use of persuasive language.

11.

Define "magic." Describe the most magical time in your life—real or imagined.

12.

The following flute compositions are particularly whimsical and enjoyable for students to listen to and/or to perform art work or creative movement to:

- Charles Griffes' "Poem for Flute and Orchestra"
- Debussy's "Syrnic-Unaccompanied Flute"
- Prokofiev's "Sonata for Flute and Piano, Op 94"

13.

When the MAGIC FLUTE is played, flowers grow, colors appear and everything seems to blossom. Suddenly it's springtime. Give the children a Magic Flute to bring on their favorite season.

How do you know when its coming?

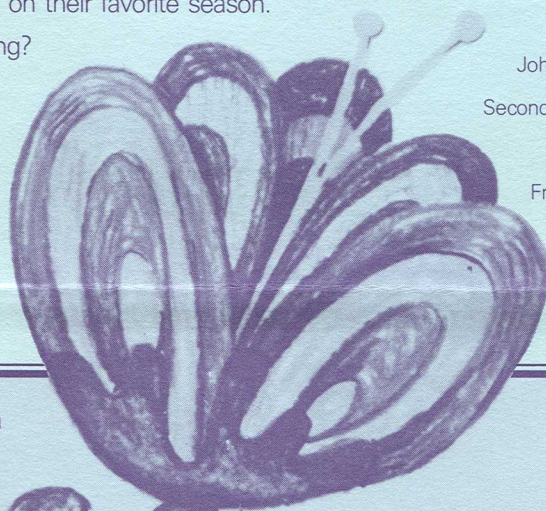
Why do you like it?

Weather?

What do you smell? Hear? See?

What do you do?

Describe it.



14.

Related reading:

- Pandora's Box of Forbidden Evils*
- The Pied Piper of Hamelin*
- The Magical Drawings of Moony B. Finch*
- Cinderella*
- Pinocchio*
- Sleeping Beauty*
- The Red Shoes*
- The Snow Queen*
- The Princess and the Toad*
- Athena (wisdom)*
- "Alladin and His Wonderful Lamp."
- "The Tinder Box"

15.

Related films:

(Distribution sources for NFBC productions are in parenthesis)

WIND (Learning Corporation of America)
A child's first discovery of wind and its basic properties.

THE SAND CASTLE (National Film Board of Canada)
Enchanting sand creatures play in the sand castle they build to protect them from a storm. *Academy Award Winner.*

ANIMAL MOVIE (National Film Board of Canada)
A little boy meets animals for the first time and discovers why they move the way they do.

PADDLE TO THE SEA (National Film Board of Canada)
In this children's odyssey (based on the story by Holling C Holling) a young Indian boy launches his hand-carved canoe on a fantastic journey down Canadian waterways.

Guide prepared by:
John Matoian, MA English Education
Stanford University
Secondary Teacher, Fresno County, California
and
Jan Hewitt
Drama Consultant
Fresno City Unified School District

National Film Board of Canada
16th Floor
1251 Avenue of the Americas
New York, N.Y. 10020

