

## July 16, 2020 – Wagner’s *Der Fliegende Holländer*

On this week’s **Thursday Night Opera House**, we’re presenting an encore broadcast of Richard Wagner’s *Der Fliegende Holländer* (“*The Flying Dutchman*”), hosted by the late **Al Ruocchio** (1937-2007). Premiered in 1843 at the Königliches Hoftheater in Dresden (nowadays known as the Semper Opera House), its central theme is redemption through love. Wagner claimed in his 1870 autobiography that he had been inspired to write the opera following a stormy sea crossing he made from Riga to London in 1839. In his 1843 *Autobiographic Sketch*, Wagner acknowledged he had taken the story from Heinrich Heine’s retelling of the Dutchman’s legend in his 1833 satirical novel *The Memoirs of Mister von Schnabelewopski*.

In nineteenth-century Norway, the Dutchman (bass-baritone **Norman Bailey**), as punishment for having uttered a blasphemy, has been condemned to sail the seas forever, unless redeemed by the love of a woman faithful unto death. Allowed to come ashore once every seven years in search of such a woman, he lands in Norway and meets Daland (bass **Martti Talvela**), an old sea captain who, seduced by the Dutchman’s wealth, suggests marriage to his daughter Senta (soprano **Janis Martin**). Senta, loved by the simple huntsman Erik (tenor **René Kollo**), has long been obsessed with the legend of the Dutchman, and falls in love with him immediately. The Dutchman overhears her begging Erik to understand her feelings, mistakenly thinks her unfaithful and, distraught, immediately sails away. Senta throws herself off a cliff, calling to the Dutchman that she has been faithful to death. Her death is his redemption: the Dutchman’s ship sinks, and he and Senta are seen ascending to heaven.

**Sir Georg Solti** conducts the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in this 1976 Decca/London recording.

From the 1959 Bayreuth Festival, **George London** sings the Dutchman’s monologue “Die Frist ist um”: <https://youtu.be/FZUKbeBGfHc>.

Join me next Thursday, July 23rd, for George Frideric Handel’s *Ariodante*, which is loosely based on Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*. Polinesso (**Ewa Podles**) falsely accuses Ginervra (**Lynne Dawson**) out of envy for Ariodante (**Anne Sofie Von Otter**). **Marc Minkowski** conducts Les Musiciens du Louvre in this 1997 recording.

The **Thursday Night Opera House** is heard every Thursday evening at 7 o’clock in the Eastern time zone on 89.7 FM in central North Carolina. We’re streamed online world-wide at <http://www.theclassicalstation.org>, and you can listen on WCPE’s Android or iPhone apps.

*Bob Chapman*

**W. Robert Chapman, Host of the Thursday Night Opera House**