

October 7, 2021 - Karl Goldmark's *Die Königen von Saba*

This week I'm pleased to present Karl Goldmark's *Die Königen von Saba* (*The Queen of Sheba*) on the Thursday Night Opera House. The first of seven operas by the son of a Hungarian Jewish cantor, it remains his most enduring work. Loosely based on the First Book of Kings in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), its libretto was written by Salomon Hermann Mosenthal, with modifications by the composer. The work premiered at the Vienna Court Opera on March 10, 1875.

Although engaged to Sulamith (soprano **Veronika Kincses**), daughter of the Israeli High Priest (bass **József Gregor**), King Solomon's (baritone **Sándor Sólyom-Nagy**) emissary Assad (tenor **Siegfried Jerusalem**) confesses to the king that he has fallen in love with the Queen of Sheba (mezzo-soprano **Klára Takács**). Nevertheless, Solomon insists that the wedding must take place. Although the Queen publicly ignores him, Assad commits a sacrilege by referring to her as "my God," and is imprisoned. Solomon banishes Assad to the desert, where the Queen tries to seduce him. Assad rejects her advances and reveals his own death wish. Caught in a violent sandstorm, he is nearly dead when Sulamith finds him. Assad begs for Sulamith's forgiveness, which she grants just before he dies in her arms.

Ádám Fischer conducts the Hungarian State Opera Orchestra and Chorus in this 1980 Hungaroton recording.

Tenor **Peter Seiffert**, accompanied by the Munich Radio Orchestra under the baton of **Jiří Kout**, sings Assad's act 2 aria "Magische Töne": <https://youtu.be/JLrtvLHP7os>.