

January 20, 2022 – Richard 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, Latvia 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 **Theo Adam**), 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 only once every seven years in order to search for 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 **Anja Silja**). Senta, who is loved by the simple huntsman Erik (tenor **Gerhard Unger**), has long been obsessed with the legend of the Dutchman and immediately falls in love with him. Overhearing Senta beg Erik to understand her feelings, the Dutchman mistakenly thinks her unfaithful and, distraught, immediately sails away. Heartbroken, Senta throws herself off a cliff, calling to the Dutchman that she HAS been faithful to him until death. Her death is his redemption: The Dutchman's ship sinks, and he and Senta are seen ascending to Heaven.

Otto Klemperer conducts the New Philharmonia Orchestra and the BBC Chorus in this 1968 EMI Classics recording.

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