

This week I'm pleased to present Karl Goldmark's *Die Königen von Saba* (*The Queen of Sheba*) on the WCPE 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>.

This Saturday afternoon at 12:30, tune in to The Classical Station for the Metropolitan Opera's production of Giacomo Puccini's *Il Trittico*, a trio of operas that were commissioned by The Met and premiered there in 1918. *Il Tabarro* stars **Amber Wagner** (Giorgetta), **Marcello Álvarez** (Luigi), and **George Gagnidze** (Michele). **Kristine Opolais** sings the tragic title role in *Suor Angelica*, and **Plácido Domingo** celebrates his 50th anniversary as a Met artist as the scheming *Gianni Schicchi*. **Bertrand de Billy** conducts.

Please join me next Thursday, December 13th, for Hector Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini* with **Gregory Kunde** in the title role and **Patrizia Ciofi** as Teresa. Heard in other principal roles are **Laurent Naouri** (Balducci), **Jean-François Lapointe** (Fieramosca), **Joyce Di Donato** (Ascanio), and **Renaud Delaigue** (Pope Clement VII). **John Nelson** conducts the French National Orchestra and the Radio France Chorus in this 2004 Virgin Classics EM recording.

The 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 "live" online at <http://www.theclassicalstation.org>, or you can listen on WCPE's Android or iPhone apps.