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CAROLE CUSACK

**Tortured Immortality Redeemed by Love:
Wagner's The Flying Dutchman and Parsifal**

A Wagner Society in NSW Inc event

2.00pm Sunday 20 July, 2025

Goethe Institut

90 Ocean Street (corner of Jersey Road), Woollahra

***Der Fliegende Holländer* Act 2 - the Dutchman (Robert Hayward) and Senta (Layla Claire) face off in Annabel Arden's production for Opera North (2025), designed by Joanna Parker.**



Wagner Society in NSW Inc.
established 1980



PROGRAMME

12.00 noon
DVD **PARSIFAL** Act 3
Salzburg Festival, Salzburg, 2013



2.00pm
CAROLE CUSACK
Tortured Immortality Redeemed by Love: Wagner's The Flying Dutchman and Parsifal

3.00pm (approx) **REFRESHMENTS**

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Elizabeth Campbell



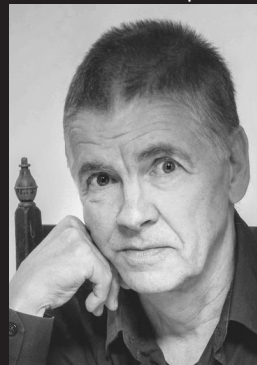
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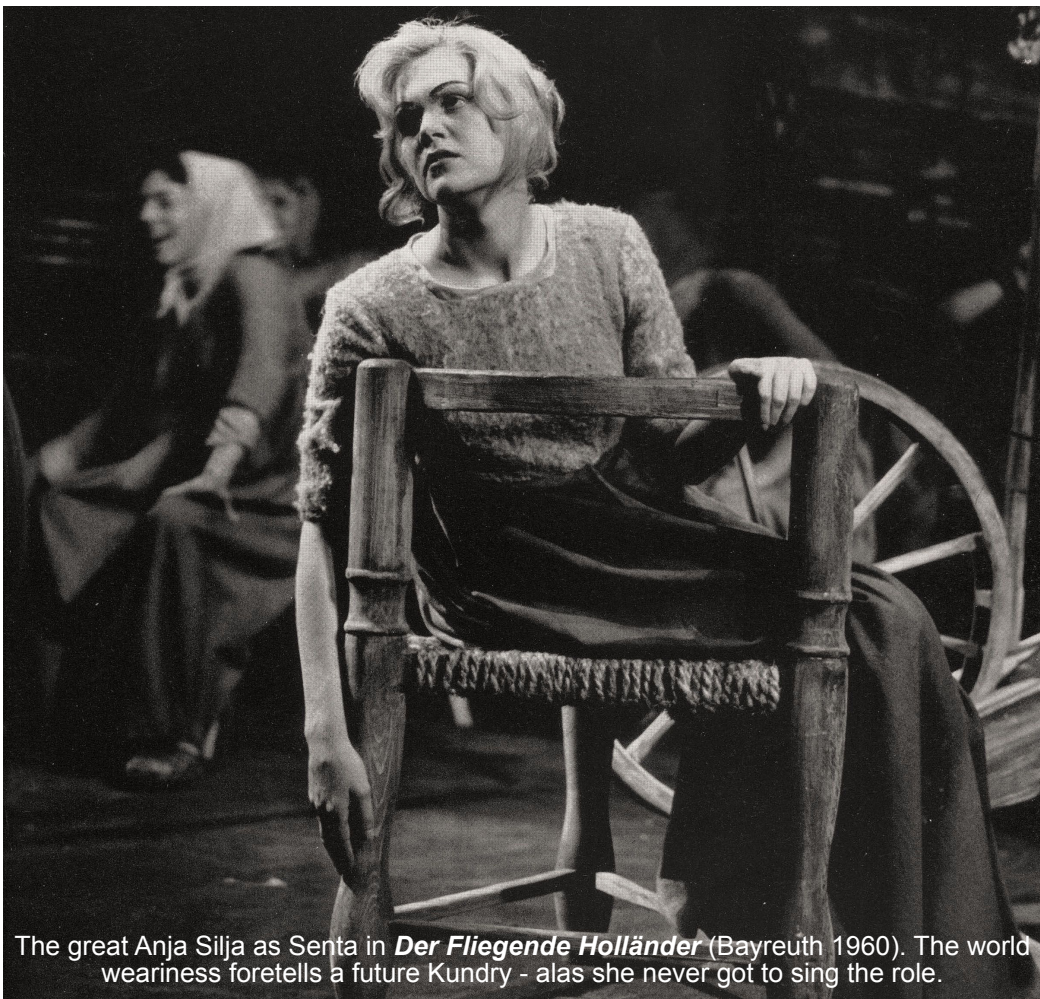


Samuel Sakker

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The great Anja Silja as Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer* (Bayreuth 1960). The world weariness foretells a future Kundry - alas she never got to sing the role.

WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT?

Showing of **SYBERBERG'S PARSIFAL** on **Sunday 17 August** at **The Goethe Institut** starting at **11.00 am**.

WSNSW'S 45TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION CONCERT on **Sunday 14 September** at **St Columba** starting at **2.00 pm**.

Talk by **ESTEBAN INSAUSTI** on *Traditional versus Iconoclastic stagings of Die Meistersinger* on **Sunday 12 October** at **The Goethe Institut** at **2.00 pm**.
Preceded by DVD of Act 1 of *Die Meistersinger* starting at **12.30 noon**.

SIEGFRIED SYMPOSIUM on **Saturday 15 November** at **The Goethe Institut** (TBC) starting at **10.30 am**.

WSNSW'S CHRISTMAS CONCERT on **Sunday 30 November** at **St Columba** starting at **2.00 pm**.

CAROLE CUSACK

Carole M. Cusack is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Sydney. She trained as a medievalist & her doctorate was published as *Conversion Among the Germanic Peoples* (Cassell, 1998). She now researches primarily in contemporary religious trends & Western esotericism. Her books include (with Katharine Buljan) *Anime, Religion and Spirituality: Profane & Sacred Worlds in Contemporary Japan* (Equinox, 2015), *Invented Religions: Imagination, Fiction & Faith* (Ashgate, 2010), & *The Sacred Tree: Ancient & Medieval Manifestations* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011). She edited (with John W. Morehead & Venetia Laura Delano Robertson) *The Sacred in Fantastic Fandom: Essays on the Intersection of Religion & Pop Culture* (McFarland, 2019) & (with M. Afzal Upal), *Handbook of Islamic Sects & Movements* (Brill, 2021). She edits the journals *Alternative Spirituality & Religion Review* (PDC, USA), *Literature & Aesthetics* (journal of the Sydney Society of Literature & Aesthetics), & *Journal of Daesoon Thought & the Religions of East Asia* (Daejin University, South Korea).



ABSTRACT *The Flying Dutchman* (1843) & *Parsifal* (1882) are united by characters who are doomed to wander the earth as penance for unexpurgated sin (a blasphemous oath by the Dutchman, and Kundry's laughter at Christ on the cross). Both are identified with the Wandering Jew of Christian folklore, who mocked the crucified Jesus & was doomed to deathless wandering. Both are saved by Christ figures; Senta sacrifices herself to break the curse that binds the Dutchman, & Parsifal baptises Kundry, who dies a saved Christian, on Good Friday, the commemoration of Christ's atonement. The Jewish identity of the Dutchman & Kundry is a serious impediment; that Richard Wagner held antisemitic views is well-known. Yet what is more interesting is that over almost 40 years there is an explicit shift towards more conventional Christian imagery evident in *Parsifal*. Wagner thought his era was one in which religion had lost power and art was needed to replace it. Wagner is thoroughly modern for he, to quote David Huron, creates a "music of hunger, rather than of fulfilment" (2006). *The Flying Dutchman* is a symbolic opera; but *Parsifal* is a *Bühnenweihfestspiel* ("festival work for the initiation of a stage") intended to redeem its audience.



Parsifal, Act 2, The Met, 2018 revival of the 2013 production, directed by François Girard and designed by Michael Levine. Evelyn Herltzius as Kundry and Klaus Florian Vogt as Parsifal.