

Setting sail with Wagner to the Opera in the Quarry

***The Flying Dutchman* by Richard Wagner 9. Juli – 23. August 2025**

The **Opera in the Quarry (Oper im Steinbruch)** in **St. Margarethen**, Austria, is one of **the most spectacular open-air theaters in Europe** and will present **its first Wagner opera**, "The Flying Dutchman," in 2025. The production is led by a distinguished and expert team, including director Philipp M. Krenn, set designer Momme Hinrichs, and conductor Patrick Lange, as well as a spectacular cast of internationally renowned singers.

The Opera in the St. Margarethen Quarry, which won the Austrian Music Theater Prize for Best Festival in 2016, is one of the top three European open-air opera festivals alongside Bregenz and Verona and counts among the most impressive open-air stages in the classical music industry. The unique rocky backdrop of the quarry in St. Margarethen, Burgenland – dating back to the Stone Age and adapted for use as a concert stage by the Esterházy Private Foundation – has been a sought-after venue for major operas by Verdi, Puccini, and Mozart in recent years. In 2025, a Wagner opera, "The Flying Dutchman," will be on the program for the first time. The shared enthusiasm of the team of experts working on this project, including Philipp M. Krenn (director), Momme Hinrichs (set designer) and Patrick Lange (conductor), has been palpable since the very first day of planning: *"I am convinced that we will succeed in captivating the audience with this gruesomely romantic fairytale,"* says **artistic director Daniel Serafin**.

The popular myth of the captain's daughter Senta and the eponymous sailor condemned to eternal life, who is only allowed to go ashore every seven years to win the love of a woman and thus be released from his curse, undoubtedly found its most popular expression through Richard Wagner: *"Wagner's music is like a drug: this dense harmony, these incomprehensible sound mixtures, these seemingly endless lines, this intense instrumentation, this almost cinematic technique of cross-fading – all of this has a hypnotic effect and creates a pull that is difficult to escape. You practically become addicted to it,"* says **Patrick Lange**, this year's musical director at St. Margarethen. The former Abbado assistant is considered a seasoned Wagner interpreter and has enjoyed great success this season as the conductor of the "Dutchman" in the Bavarian capital (**Der Opernfreund**: *"With a brisk tempo and great expressiveness, he guided the Bavarian State Orchestra through Wagner's multi-layered score, which he admirably explored"*).

The stage design is the work of **Momme Hinrichs**, a sought-after artist throughout Europe and co-founder of the fettFilm duo, whose trademark is, among other things, the symbiosis of stage spaces and (video) projection into a comprehensive work of art. Incidentally, in 2012 he was honored with the Taras Shevchenko Prize, Ukraine's highest cultural award, for his production of "The Dutchman" at the Dombass Opera Donetsk: *"It has long been my dream to be able to create a stage design in St. Margarethen. We want to transform the quarry into a Norwegian coastal landscape, in all its ruggedness, with large waves crashing against the shore. There will also be an ever-changing stage set, spectacular stunts, of course, and – last but not least, to put it poetically – 'A ship arrives'..."*

The director is **Philipp M. Krenn**, a former member of the Vienna Boys' Choir, who has long left his mark on the international music theatre landscape ("Poignantly contemporary music theatre", was the headline on bachtrack.com in 2024 about his production of Péter Eötvös' "Schlaflos" in Graz) and who will be bringing "Parsifal" with Jonas Kaufmann to the stage at the Erl Festival at Easter 2025. The Viennese native gained his first location experience in Burgenland in 2015 as Robert Dornhelm's assistant director on "Tosca": *"St. Margarethen is a total work of art that must be understood as such. The quarry is a perfect setting for the 'Flying Dutchman' – I'm surprised we didn't do it sooner?! The work contains power, anger, and despair, as well as longing, romance, and love, peppered with a bit of humor. We will experience **a gripping two and a half hours of musical theater in the best sense**, paired with the forces of nature and outstanding technology. A great love story with romantic music in a unique setting."*

The cast of singers for this year's Opera in the Quarry is a perfect blend of experienced Wagner performers and young talent. The Norwegian singer **Elisabeth Teige** is the female lead (bachtrack.com: "sensational" as Senta at the 2024 Bayreuth Festival), along with South Africa's **Johanni van Oostrum** (bachtrack.com: "...an Elsa not just as a role, but as an identity. Her warm-toned soprano voice was the perfect expression of her acting" in Wagner's "Lohengrin" in Munich in 2022), and Munich-born **Johanna Will**, who will also make her debut at the Stuttgart State Opera with Wagner in 2025 (in "Parsifal").

The role of the Dutchman is also cast in three roles: the world-renowned Georgian baritone **George Gagnidze** began his career with the "Flying Dutchman" in Osnabrück. Following his victory at the 2006 Seattle International Wagner Competition, Briton **James Rutherford** has successfully performed virtually all of Wagner's major roles on stages around the world. The Finn **Tommi Hakkala** recently took on the role of the cursed Sailor at the Hessisches Staatstheater Wiesbaden.

The ensemble also includes Liang Li and Jens Erik Aasbø (Daland), AJ Glueckert and Dominick Chenes (Erik), Roxana Constantinescu and Lora Grigorieva (Mary), and Jinxu Xiahou and Brian Michael Moore (Helmsman). The Vienna Philharmonia Chorus and the Piedra Festival Orchestra, comprised of virtuosos from Hungary's most renowned professional orchestras, complete the cast.

This summer, the Opera in the St. Margarethen Quarry promises audiences **a spectacular experience** for both musical theater newcomers and those curious about music, as well as long-time Wagner enthusiasts. Or, to put it in the words of artistic director Daniel Serafin: "*Set sail with us in 2025 and be inspired by the fresh winds of 'The Dutchman'.*"

DATES & INFORMATION

Premier: 9. July 2025, 8pm

Further dates:

10., 11., 12., 17., 18., 19., 23., 24., 25., 26. and 31. July 2025

1., 2., 6., 7., 8., 9., 14., 15., 16., 21., 22. and 23. August 2025

Start time July: 8.30pm, Entrance from 6.30pm

Start time August: 8pm, Entrance from 6pm

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TICKET RESERVATION

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Information at www.operimsteinbruch.at.

DIRECTOR: Philipp M. Krenn

MUSICAL DIRECTOR: Patrick Lange

STAGE DESIGN: Momme Hinrichs

COSTUME: Eva Dessecker

VIDEO: Roland Horvath

LIGHT: Michael Grundner

SOUND DESIGN: Volker Werner

LIVE ACTION DIRECTOR: Ran Arthur Brown

SENTA: Elisabeth Teige / Johanni van Oostrum / Johanna Will

DALAND: Liang Li / Jens-Erik Aasbø

ERIK: AJ Glueckert / Dominik Chenes / Nenad Čiča

MARY: Roxana Constantinescu

DALAND'S STEERMAN: Jinxu Xiahou / Brian Michael Moore

PIEDRA FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

VIENNA PHILHARMONIA CHORUS (Rehearsal: Walter Zeh)

DER HOLLÄNDER: George Gagnidze / James Rutherford / Tommi Hakala