

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE

Richard Wagner

Opera in three acts Sung in German with English supertitles

Synopsis

On board a ship bound from Ireland, Tristan is taking Isolde to Cornwall to be the bride of King Marke. Isolde describes to her attendant Brangäne how Tristan was wounded while killing her betrothed Morold, after which she healed him. She orders Brangäne to prepare a death potion for herself and Tristan, but they are given a love potion instead. They disclose their love for each other just as the sailors hail the arrival to Cornwall.

While Isolde's husband Marke is away hunting with one of his courtiers, Melot, Isolde meets Tristan outside the castle. The suspicious Melot arranges a surprise return of the hunting party, but the King is too saddened to show anger at Tristan's betrayal. Isolde tells Tristan she will follow him wherever he goes. He is attacked by Melot and allows himself to be wounded. Outside Tristan's castle in Brittany, his friend Kurwenal tries to cheer the wounded Tristan, who can think only of Isolde. When a shepherd's joyful pipe announces the arrival of Isolde's ship, Tristan tears off his bandages and dies in her arms. A second ship brings King Marke and Melot, and Kurwenal is killed while fighting Melot, unaware of the fact that they have come to forgive Tristan. Isolde tells of the transfiguring love which she can now achieve in the deep night of death at Tristan's side.