



ROYAL  
OPERA  
HOUSE

THE ROYAL OPERA

Music Director  
SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO

Director of Opera  
OLIVER MEARS

# RUSALKA

LYRIC FAIRY TALE IN THREE ACTS

Music ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

Libretto JAROSLAV KVAPIL

Performance materials for Rusalka edited by Robert Simon and Jonas Hájek, published by Bärenreiter Praha. Performed by arrangement with Faber Music Ltd, London.

Conductor SEMYON BYCHKOV

Created by NATALIE ABRAHAMI and ANN YEE

Directors ANN YEE and NATALIE ABRAHAMI

Set Designer CHLOE LAMFORD

Costume Designer ANNEMARIE WOODS

Lighting Designer PAULE CONSTABLE

Choreographer ANN YEE

ROYAL OPERA CHORUS

Chorus Director WILLIAM SPAULDING

ORCHESTRA OF THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

Principal Guest Concert Master by Arrangement with  
Trittico VASKO VASSILEV

Generous philanthropic support from JULIA AND HANS RAUSING, SIMON AND VIRGINIA ROBERTSON and ROH YOUNG PHILANTHROPISTS

Directed for screen by BRIDGET CALDWELL

*This production is dedicated to Maxie, who loved the Moon.*

*Maxine Cooke*

13.03.2020 – 12.02.2023

Recorded live at the Royal Opera House on  
TUESDAY 7 MARCH 2023

## APPROXIMATE TIMINGS

PRE-SHOW 15 minutes

ACT I 60 minutes

INTERVAL 25 minutes

ACT II 50 minutes

INTERVAL 25 minutes

ACT III 60 minutes

CURTAIN CALL 5 minutes

## LANGUAGE

Sung in Czech with English subtitles

## CAST

Rusalka ASMIK GRIGORIAN

Prince DAVID BUTT PHILIP

Vodník ALEKSEI ISAEV

Ježibaba SARAH CONNOLLY

Duchess EMMA BELL

Kuchtik HONGNI WU

Hajný ROSS RAMGOBIN

First Wood Spirit VUVU MPOFU

Second Wood Spirit GABRIELÉ KUPŠYTĚ\*

Third Wood Spirit ANNE MARIE STANLEY

Lovec JOSEF JEONGMEEN AHN\*

\*Gabrielé Kupšytě and Josef Jeongmeen Ahn are Jette Parker Artists

Extra Chorus

Sopranos KATHRYN JENKIN, ELEANOR PENNELL-BRIGGS,  
VANESSA WOODFINE

Mezzo-sopranos JEANETTE AGER, MARIA JONES,  
JENNIFER WESTWOOD

Dancers ELENI EDIPIDI, JAMIE HIGGINS,  
BENJAMIN KNAPPER, MICHELA MEAZZA, PAOLO PISARRA,  
DOMINIC ROCCA, BELINDA ROY, BECKY SCARROTT

## PRODUCTION

Music preparation GEOFFREY PATERSON, SUSANNA STRANDERS, BEN-SAN LAU, EDO FRENKEL

Assistant Directors LUCY BRADLEY, SIMON IORIO

Language Coach LADA VALESOVA, LUCIE SPICKOVA

Associate Set Designer ANNA YATES

Associate Choreographer MICHELA MEAZZA

Assistant to the Choreographer DOMINIC ROCCA



Supported using public funding by  
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ENGLAND**

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## SYNOPSIS

### ACT I – THE LAKE

In the moonlight, the forest is alive with wood spirits. Vodník, a water spirit, wakes, and the Wood Spirits tease him, stealing water lilies from his lake. Rusalka, Vodník's daughter, confesses to her father that she no longer finds joy with her sisters in the deep waters. She longs to be united with the Prince, with whom she fell in love when he swam in the lake.

Vodník warns Rusalka against being seduced by humanity and its supposed riches. She reveals that she wants to become human and to be loved by the Prince in return. Realising that Rusalka is determined to leave their underwater world, Vodník sends her to Ježibaba, a wise, eternal spirit who lives between the water and the land.

Ježibaba says she can make Rusalka human, but at an immense cost: Rusalka must give up both her immortality (symbolised by her watery array) and her voice, which will be silenced in the human realm. With Rusalka's agreement, Ježibaba shears away her watery array, exploiting its riches to make her oil lamp burn brighter.

Alone after the painful transformation, Rusalka hears Lovec, a hunter in the forest, singing a folk song about about a white doe. The wood spirits appear and comfort Rusalka with the lilies from the lake. The Prince arrives at the lakeside in search of the doe. He finds the voiceless, traumatised Rusalka. Drawn irresistibly towards her and the water, he takes her back to his palace.

### INTERVAL

### ACT II – THE PRINCE'S PALACE

While preparing for the Prince and Rusalka's party, Hajný, the Prince's forester, quizzes his nephew, Kuchtík, about what is going on between the Prince and the mysterious Rusalka.

Rusalka, mute, still in pain from her transformation and out of her element, accompanies the Prince. The Prince cannot understand why she is so distant, and confesses that despite her coldness, he passionately desires to marry her. The Duchess arrives and berates the Prince for his lack of courtesy towards his guests. The Prince abandons Rusalka and walks around the grounds with the Duchess. The wedding guests arrive and revel in the decadence of the celebrations.

Vodník senses Rusalka's distress. He emerges from the lake and escorts Rusalka back to the watery depths, where she must serve out the rest of her sacrifice, alone. The Prince professes his love for the Duchess, and she rejects him for his fickleness.

### INTERVAL

### ACT III – THE LAKE

The polluted lake and demolished palace reflect Rusalka's destroyed dreams and doomed fate.

Ježibaba informs Rusalka that the only way to end her suffering is to kill her Prince with the knife she used to cut off her array. Rusalka refuses. Rusalka laments that she is forever barred from rejoining her sisters in the watery depths, and the lilies that once comforted her are now decayed and discarded. Concerned for the Prince's welfare, Hajný and Kuchtík have been sent to the woods to seek Ježibaba's help. They are met by Vodník, furious at humanity's betrayal of his daughter, and

they flee. The Wood Spirits appear with the detritus from the wedding party. Vodník chides them for being seduced by the very items that have polluted the lake.

The Prince is tormented by his betrayal of Rusalka. Arriving at the polluted lake, he realises the damage he has done. The Prince asks Rusalka's forgiveness and begs to be kissed, knowing that it means his death. In his redemption and Rusalka's forgiveness, hope is born.

– Ann Yee and Natalie Abrahami

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## THE ROYAL OPERA

Patron THE FORMER PRINCE OF WALES

Music Director SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO

Director of Opera OLIVER MEARS

Director of Casting PETER MARIO KATONA

Administrative Director CORMAC SIMMS

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