

PITTSBURGH OPERA

July 28, 2022

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Pittsburgh Opera begins its 84th Season with Dvořák's *Rusalka*, "Opera's Little Mermaid", Sept. 17-25

What:	Rusalka Music by Antonín Dvořák ; Libretto by Jaroslav Kvapil
Where:	Benedum Center, downtown Pittsburgh
When:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sat., September 17, 2022 * 8:00 PM • Tues., September 20, 2022 * 7:00 PM • Fri., September 23, 2022 * 7:30 PM • Sun., September 25, 2022 * 2:00 PM
Run Time:	2 hours and 50 minutes with two intermissions
Language:	Sung in Czech with English supertitles projected above the stage
Tickets:	<p>Single tickets go on sale August 15th. Tickets for adults start at \$15; tickets for kids and teens ages 6-18 are half-price. For tickets call 412-456-6666, visit the Box Office at Theater Square, or online at pittsburghopera.org/tickets or CulturalDistrict.org.</p> <p>Tickets as part of a subscription package are available at pittsburghopera.org/subscribe.</p> <p>Group discounts, including student discounts, are available.</p>
Media Events	<p>Photo Call (Tuesday, Sept. 6, 12:30 PM) - location TBA</p> <p>Full Dress Rehearsal (Thursday, Sept. 15, 7:00 PM) - Benedum Center</p>
Related Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WQED Preview (9/10 & 9/16) • Opera Up Close (9/11) • New Guard Opening Night Happy Hour (9/17) • Audio Commentary (9/20) • Meet the Artists (9/20)

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*Rusalka the water sprite gives the witch Ježibaba her voice in exchange for being made human.
Photo by Dan Norman.*

Pittsburgh Opera's first production of its 2022–23 season is Dvořák's [Rusalka](#), "Opera's Little Mermaid", September 17-25 at the Benedum Center.

Rusalka is the Czech version of the popular fairy tale **The Little Mermaid**. While it has many similarities to the familiar animated movie, they are not exactly the same. First of all, her name is not Ariel, it's Rusalka. Secondly, Rusalka is not a mermaid per se, but a water sprite, also called a water nymph. However, like the Little Mermaid, Rusalka falls in love with a human Prince. She has a witch turn her into a human in exchange for her voice. Rusalka must win and keep the Prince's love, or else there will be disastrous consequences for them both.

Will a jealous Princess ruin Rusalka's plan? Will Rusalka's father be able to bail her out if things go awry? Will true love triumph?

Rusalka premiered in 1901 and has become one of the most beloved lyric fairy tales of all time. These are the first-ever performances of **Rusalka** in Pittsburgh Opera's 84-year history.

Music Director [Antony Walker](#) conducts; [Kristine McIntyre](#) directs.

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Fun facts about *Rusalka*

1. This is not just the first time that Pittsburgh Opera will perform *Rusalka*, but also the first time Pittsburgh Opera will sing an opera entirely in Czech. As always, English supertitles will be projected above the stage.
2. Jaroslav Kvapil wrote *Rusalka*'s libretto based on the Czech folktale written by [Karel Jaromír Erben](#) and [Božena Němcová](#); it is similar-to-but-not-the-same-as Danish author Hans Christian Andersen's 1837 story [The Little Mermaid](#).
3. *Rusalka* contains the beautiful and famous '[Song to the Moon](#)', where Rusalka asks the Moon to tell the Prince of her love.

The story, in brief

ACT 1

The water sprite Rusalka has fallen in love with a human—the Prince—when he came to swim in her lake. Now she wants to become human herself and live on land to be with him. Rusalka's father, Vodník the water goblin, is horrified and tells her that humans are evil and full of sin. When Rusalka insists, claiming they are full of love, he says she will have to get help from the witch Ježibaba.

Rusalka calls on the moon to tell the Prince of her love. Ježibaba arrives and agrees to turn Rusalka into a human—but warns her that if she doesn't find love she will be damned and the man she loves will die. Also, by becoming mortal, she will lose her power of speech. Convinced that her feelings for the Prince can overcome all spells, Rusalka agrees and Ježibaba gives her a potion to drink.

As dawn breaks, the Prince appears with a hunting party and finds Rusalka by the lake. Even though she won't speak to him, he is captivated by her beauty and leads her away to his castle. From the lake, the voices of Vodník and the other water sprites are heard, mourning the loss of Rusalka.

ACT 2

The Prince enters his castle with Rusalka. He wonders why she is so cold toward him but remains determined to win her. A Foreign Princess, who has come for the wedding, mocks Rusalka's silence and reproaches the Prince for ignoring his guests. The Prince sends Rusalka away to dress for the ball and escorts the Princess into the castle for the beginning of the festivities.

In the deserted garden, Vodník appears from the pool. Rusalka, who has become more and more intimidated by her surroundings, rushes from the castle in tears. Suddenly recovering her voice, she begs her father to help her, telling him that the Prince no longer loves her. The Prince and the Princess come into the garden, and the Prince confesses his love for the Princess. When Rusalka intervenes, rushing into his arms, he rejects Rusalka. Vodník warns the Prince of the fate that awaits him, then disappears into the pool with Rusalka. The Prince asks the Princess for help but she ridicules him and tells him to follow his bride into hell.

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ACT 3

Rusalka waits by the lake once again, lamenting her fate. Ježibaba appears and mocks her, then hands her a knife and explains that there is a way to save herself: she must kill the Prince. Rusalka refuses, throwing the weapon into the water. When her sisters reject her as well, she sinks into the lake in despair.

The wood sprites enter, singing and dancing, but when Vodník explains to them what has happened to Rusalka, they fall silent and disappear.

The Prince, desperate and half crazy with remorse, emerges from the forest, looking for Rusalka and calling out for her to return to him. She appears from the water, reproaching him for his infidelity, and explains that now a kiss from her would kill him. Accepting his destiny, he asks her to kiss him to give him peace. She does, and he dies in her arms. Rusalka asks for mercy on his soul and disappears into the water.

- [Adapted from The Metropolitan Opera](#)

Cast and Artistic Team

Rusalka, a water nymph	<u>Ekaterina Siurina</u>
Ježibaba, a witch	<u>Marianne Cornetti</u> **
Vodník, the water goblin	<u>Hao Jiang Tian</u>
The Prince	<u>Jonathan Burton</u> ⁺
Foreign Princess	<u>Leah Hawkins</u> ⁺
First Wood Sprite	<u>Julia Swan Laird</u> ^{*+}
Second Wood Sprite	<u>Emily Richter</u> ^{*+}
Third Wood Sprite	<u>Jazmine Olwalia</u> ^{*+}
Hunter	<u>Brandon Bell</u> ^{*+}
Conductor	<u>Antony Walker</u>
Stage Director	<u>Kristine McIntyre</u>
Set Designer	Erhard Rom
Costume Designer	Kärin Kopischke
Projection Designer	Wendall K. Harrington
Lighting Designer	Marcus Dilliard
Wig & Make-up Designer	James Geier
Stage Manager	Cindy Knight
Assistant Conductor	<u>Glenn Lewis</u>
Chorus Master	<u>Mark Trawka</u>
Associate Coach/Pianist	<u>James Lesniak</u>
Assistant Stage Director	Haley Stamats ^{*+}

Original Production & Staging by Eric Simonson

+ Pittsburgh Opera debut

* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist

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** Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist alumni

Ticketing Information

Single tickets go on sale August 15th. As part of Pittsburgh Opera's continued efforts to make opera accessible to all members of the community, [single tickets](#) for the 2022–23 season start at just \$15. In addition, tickets for kids and teens ages 6–18 are half price.

For tickets call 412-456-6666, visit the Box Office at Theater Square, or online at pittsburghopera.org/tickets or CulturalDistrict.org.

Tickets as part of a subscription package are available at pittsburghopera.org/subscribe.

Pittsburgh Opera patrons can purchase their tickets with confidence, even with continuing uncertainty over the direction of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pittsburgh Opera is continuing its no-hassle refund policy for all 2022–23 operas. Pittsburgh Opera will offer full refunds for any patrons who notify us that they need to cancel their tickets at least one hour prior to their performance start time.

Pittsburgh Opera is committed to making opera accessible to all groups by providing great discounts and special benefits to group ticketholders. A group at Pittsburgh Opera can be as few as 6 people! In addition, college and university students, faculty, and staff are eligible for our [Cheap Seats program](#) – see pittsburghopera.org/CheapSeats for details. For more information about [group ticket services and discounts](#), contact Wendy Parkulo at (412) 281-0912, ext. 213 or groups@pittsburghopera.org.

Sponsors

- [PNC](#) is the 2022-23 Pittsburgh Opera Season Sponsor.
- [WQED-FM](#) is Pittsburgh Opera's Media Sponsor.
- [Ambridge Regional Distribution and Manufacturing Center](#) is the Tuesday performance and 'Meet the Artists' post-show event sponsor.
- These performances are sponsored in part by The Gailliot Fund for Classical Opera.