

UBC Opera



ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

RUSALKA

UBC Opera 2022/2023 SEASON



GIACOMO PUCCINI

TOSCA

NOVEMBER 26, 2022 — 7:30 P.M.



ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK

HANSEL AND GRETEL

DECEMBER 8, 9, 10, 2022 — 7:30 P.M.

DECEMBER 11, 2022 — 2:00 P.M.



NINO ROTA

THE FLORENTINE STRAW HAT

FEBRUARY 2, 3, 4, 2023 — 7:30 P.M.

FEBRUARY 5, 2023 — 2:00 P.M.



OTTO NICOLAI

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

MARCH 24, 25, 2023 — 7:30 P.M.

MARCH 26, APRIL 1, 2023 — 2:00 P.M.

Additional information on our full season can found at ubcopera.com

UBC Opera

presents

Rusalka

Lyric Fairy Tale in Three Acts

Sung in Czech with English surtitles

Music by **Antonín Dvořák** | Libretto by **Jaroslav Kvapil**

June 23, 24, 25 — 7:30PM | June 26 — 2:00PM

Performed at The Old Auditorium

Director – **Nancy Hermiston**

Conductor – **Norbert Baxa**

Lighting Design – **Jeremy Baxter**

Costume Design – **Parvin Mirhady**

Set Design – **Alessia Carpoca**

UBC Opera Ensemble

with members of the Vancouver Opera Orchestra

There will be one intermission after Act 2

**This production is made possible by the
David Spencer Endowment Encouragement Fund**

*We acknowledge that the University of British Columbia is situated
on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam
(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm) people.*



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
School of Music



A Message from the Director



Rusalka is Dvořák's finest and most enduringly popular opera. For the past 25 years, the UBC Opera Ensemble has travelled to the Czech Republic, where they have performed one or two operas each summer with their Czech colleagues, including the Usti Nad Labem Opera House, Plzen opera house, Teplice Philharmonic Orchestra, and our partners in all of these adventures – The European Music Academy under the direction of Norbert Baxa. We are delighted to present this Czech classic here at UBC, once again led by Maestro Baxa.

Rusalka was first presented at UBC under the direction of my predecessor Prof. French Tickner in 1977, with a young UBC student taking the role of the Prince. His name was Ben Heppner. Ben, of course, went on to have a major international career, and the role of the Prince in *Rusalka* became a major part of his repertoire, leading to a very famous recording in 1998 with his Metropolitan Opera colleague, soprano Renée Fleming. French Tickner passed away last year, but I can only imagine how proud he was of Ben.

We presented *Rusalka* in 2012 after having several performances of the opera in the Czech Republic in the summer of 2011. The opera is a musical, theatrical, and orchestral feast for the singers, orchestra and audience.

I am delighted to be able to present this opera to you once again. I wish to say a very special thank you to our incredible artistic, technical, and production team for all the beauty and magic they make for us, our wonderful Vancouver Opera Orchestra and UBC Opera Ensemble, and of course, you, our donors and loyal audience members for making this magic happen!

Enjoy, and all the very best for what I hope will be a wonderful summer for you all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Hermiston". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nancy" written in a larger, more prominent hand than the last name "Hermiston".

Nancy Hermiston, O.C.

The Cast*

Role	June 23 & 25	June 24 & 26
<i>Rusalka</i>	Catherine Thornsley	Sarah Anderson-Caulfield
<i>Vodník</i>	Philip Wing	Liam Robertson
<i>Ježibaba</i>	Alyssa Nicole Samson	Katie Fraser
<i>The Prince</i>	Ian McCloy	Wanshuai Yu
<i>The Foreign Princess</i>	Leila Kirves	Mara Ayque
<i>First Wood Sprite</i>	Brittany St. Clair Gamble	Kathryn Rose Johnston (June 24) Magdalena How (June 26)
<i>Second Wood Sprite</i>	Emma Jang	Carly King
<i>Third Wood Sprite</i>	Holly Duerichen	Kathleen Isaza
<i>Kitchen Boy</i>	Kenda McDermott	Olivia Rapos
<i>Gamekeeper</i>	Kevin (Kiho) Sohn	Kevin Liu (June 24) Ming-Xuan Chung (June 26)
<i>The Hunter</i>	Pablo Romero Moreira	Josh Levesque

THE CHORUS

Soprano: Elissa Matthew, Kenda McDermott, Olivia Rapos, Holly Ten-Haaf

Mezzo: Rachel Buttress, Trinity Collie, Mariana Iguavita

Tenor: Jonathon Chan, Jing Jiang, Xiang Li, Kevin Liu, Kevin Kiho Sohn, Ezekiel Wang

Baritone: Ming-Xuan Chung, Matthew Gorlitz, Josh Levesque, Pablo Romero Moreira

Water Sprites: Rachel Buttress, Holly Duerichen, Katie Fraser, Brittany St. Clair Gamble, Magdalena How, Kathleen Isaza, Emma Jang, Kathryn Rose Johnston, Carly King, Alyssa Nicole Samson

**All cast is subject to change*

Synopsis

ACT ONE

By a lake, the three Wood Sprites gather to rejoice in the beautiful moonlit evening, soon accompanied by a group of Water Sprites. When the Water Gnome Vodník arrives, the Wood Sprites tease him from land, knowing that he cannot leave the water. Vodník, who is the wise ruler of the underwater realm, laughs at their youthful exuberance. Rusalka, Vodník's daughter, arrives, telling him that her heart aches to be human, for she has fallen in love with a mortal Prince who often visits the lake to swim. Invisible to all mortals, Rusalka has embraced the Prince as a wave, but now desires to be human so the Prince can see and embrace her in return. Despite her father's warnings that humans are full of evil, the desperate Rusalka seeks out the forest witch, Ježibaba, to fulfill her wish. Vodník sinks into the lake with anguish, as Rusalka addresses the moon, asking it to tell the Prince of her love. Rusalka calls for Ježibaba who agrees to the transformation. She tells the water nymph that if she becomes human and is scorned by her lover, both she and the Prince will be eternally damned. Rusalka is undeterred; if the Prince truly loves her, she will remain human forever. Ježibaba also warns that by becoming mortal, she will lose her power of speech. Driven by her love, Rusalka agrees, so Ježibaba brews a magic potion. The Wood Sprites arrive, bewildered by her departure from the lake.

At the break of dawn, the Hunter sings a warning of the entrapments of love as he leads the Prince and the Gamekeeper in their hunt. The Prince has been pursuing a white doe which has inexplicably disappeared. He senses something strange about this place and requests to be left alone. At the appearance of Rusalka, he suddenly becomes captivated, and praises her ethereal beauty. Although she is mute, the Prince says that her lips will answer to his kisses. Rusalka happily lets him lead her away, despite the pleas of sorrow heard from Vodník and her sisters from the lake.

ACT TWO

Near the Prince's castle, the Gamekeeper and his nephew, the kitchen boy, gossip about the approaching wedding of the Prince to a peculiar new love. They suspect witchcraft, but mention that the Prince is infamously fickle. They think that he has already lost interest in his mute, nameless bride since his attention has strayed to one of the wedding guests: a striking and ambitious foreign Princess. The Prince enters with Rusalka. He wonders why she is so cold, and why she trembles in his embrace. The Foreign Princess secretly observes the couple and then comes forward to scold the Prince for ignoring his guests. Envious, she ridicules Rusalka's muteness. The Prince sends Rusalka to go dress for the ball; the moment she leaves, he begins courting the Princess. All the guests arrive, as

does Rusalka, dressed for what was supposed to be her wedding. Vodník's voice is heard expressing his despair for his daughter's inevitable fate. Rusalka seeks comfort from the Prince who again pushes her away. Becoming overwhelmed by her surroundings, Rusalka collapses in tears. Only able to speak to non-mortals, she tells her father that the Prince no longer loves her and begs him to forgive her desire to become human. Interrupting a passionate exchange between the Prince and the foreign Princess, Rusalka rushes to the Prince but he rejects her. Vodník reappears, warning the Prince of his fate. He then leads Rusalka back to the lake as the Prince throws himself at the feet of the Princess, asking her to save him from this supernatural force. Scornfully, the Princess laughs and tells him to suffer with Rusalka in hell.

— *Intermission* —

ACT THREE

The doomed Rusalka comes to the lake, longing for death, but knows that her fate will be far worse. Ježibaba hears this and mocks Rusalka for her short stay on land, and laughs, "Love was short, grief will be long." Ježibaba's severity weakens, and gives Rusalka the opportunity to save herself by spilling the blood of the human who betrayed her. Handing Rusalka a dagger, she beckons – "Kill the Prince." Wishing the Prince to be happy despite her own suffering, Rusalka refuses. She now becomes a bludika, a "will-o-the-wisp", condemned to exist in the lowest depths of the lake, emerging only at night to lure humans to their death. Rusalka sinks back into the icy depths as her sisters, the Water Sprites, bitterly cast her away. Afflicted with woe, Rusalka vanishes into the lake.

The Gamekeeper and the Kitchen Boy come into the woods, hoping to consult with Ježibaba about the Prince, whom they are convinced has been bewitched. Although frightened, the two manage to stammer out that Rusalka has deceived the Prince. Suddenly Vodník surfaces, bellowing that it was in fact the Prince that betrayed Rusalka. Terrified at the supernatural happenings, the Gamekeeper and the Kitchen Boy flee. The Wood Sprites meet by the lake for their habitual teasing of Vodník. Each Sprite reflects on their best feature whilst basking in the glow of the moonlight. Unusually sad, Vodník tells them of Rusalka's plight which grieves them considerably.

The Prince emerges, distraught and searching for his "white doe." He senses Rusalka's presence and calls for her to appear. Bitterly, Rusalka reproaches him for his betrayal. Begging for forgiveness, the Prince asks for a kiss. She tells him that her kiss now causes for death and damnation, but the Prince is resolved. Only her kiss can grant him respite from his living torment. Their lips meet and he dies peacefully in her arms. Beneath the water, Vodník's voice cries out that their sacrifices are futile. Rusalka sadly thanks the Prince for letting her experience human love and, asking for mercy on his soul, and all human souls, she descends into the lake, down to the realm of the demons and death.

Adapted from The Metropolitan Opera Synopsis and notes by Martha Kate Lind

Nancy Hermiston, O.C., Director



Canadian-born lyric coloratura soprano Nancy Hermiston has performed throughout Europe and North America. Parallel to her extensive singing career, Ms. Hermiston worked as a voice teacher, stage director, and Co-coordinator with the University of Toronto's Opera and Performance Divisions. In 1995, she joined the University of British Columbia's School of Music as the Head of the Voice and Opera Divisions, where she established the UBC Opera Ensemble.

Professor Hermiston is also a favourite guest for master classes throughout Canada, the United States, China, and Germany. Her UBC Opera Ensemble tours regularly to the Czech Republic, Germany, Ontario, and throughout British Columbia. The Opera Ensemble gave their first performances in Beijing and Chengdu in May of 2009 and Shanghai in 2010 and 2011. Ms. Hermiston appeared as Stage Director with the Regina Opera for *The Barber of Seville* and *La Cenerentola* and with the Vancouver Opera twice for *Die Fledermaus*. *La Traviata*, *La Bohème* and in 2016, directed their production of Verdi's *Rigoletto*, starring UBC Alumna and her former student, Simone Osborne.

In 2004, Professor Hermiston was named the UBC University Marshal, and in 2008, UBC awarded her the Dorothy Somerset Award for Performance and Development in the Visual and Performing Arts. She was also honoured with a Killam Teaching prize in 2010. In October 2011, she received an Opera Canada Rubie Award for her contributions to opera in Canada. Ms. Hermiston was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in December 2013. In 2017, she was awarded the Canadian Music Centre's BC Award of Excellence, and in November 2017, Alumni UBC recognized Professor Hermiston with the Honorary Alumnus Award. In 2018, she received the Faculty of Arts 2017/18 Dean of Arts Award for her outstanding contributions to UBC's creative research, teaching, and service to the scholarly and broader community. In 2018 Ms. Hermiston was inducted into the BC Entertainment Hall of Fame.

Norbert Baxa, Conductor



Norbert Baxa graduated with honours from the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague in 1998 after studying conducting under the instruction of professor František Vajnar. During his studies he took part in the international Bartók Courses in Szombathely, Hungary and in 1994, he won a scholarship in Murzzuschlag (Austria). In 1996, in cooperation with other young artists, he established a chamber ensemble called "Club 20", which focused primarily on twentieth-century music. In cooperation with the "Alfred ve Dvoře" theatre, the group regularly performed Igor

Stravinsky's, *A Soldier's Tale* in Prague, Brno, and Vienna. In 1998 Norbert received the position of conductor of the North Bohemian opera and ballet in Usti nad Labem and was promoted to the head of the opera division for the 1999 season. At the age of 24, he was the youngest ever to be appointed the head of an opera company, in the history of the Czech Republic. Since 2002 Norbert has worked closely with the Prague Chamber Opera Ensemble and Czech Opera Prague with which he has travelled and performed internationally many works including G.F. Händel (*Xerxes*) and R. Wagner (*Der fliegende Holländer*). Since 2003 Norbert has been working with the Opera Ensemble of the University of British Columbia in co-operation with the UBC Symphony Orchestra and the Vancouver Opera Orchestra. During this period he performed in Vancouver many works including B. Smetana (*The Bartered Bride*), A. Dvořák (*Rusalka*), P.I. Tchaikovsky (*Eugene Onegin*), W.A. Mozart (*Così fan tutte*), and J. Massenet (*Manon*).

As guest conductor, he has been conducting in the National Theatre Prague, in the Theatre F.X. Šaldy Liberec, in the Staatstheater Cottbus (Germany). He regularly works with the North Czech Symphony orchestra with which he gives many concerts on tours mostly in Germany. He has been also working with the Symphony Orchestra in Kuopio (Finland) and the Symphony Orchestra Villingen-Schwenningen (Germany). In 2007, in cooperation with the prestigious universities, Norbert established the European music academy in Teplice, which creates the program of international workshops for young conductors and opera singers. Norbert is currently international guest professor at the University of Fine Arts in Zürich and at the Music Academy of Art in Prague. Since the season 2015/2016 Norbert Baxa was appointed to the position Chief Conductor of the Orchestra Theatre J.K. Tyl in Plzen.

UBC Opera Ensemble

The University of British Columbia Opera Ensemble was founded by Canadian lyric coloratura, Nancy Hermiston, in 1995. Beginning with a core of seven performers, Ms. Hermiston has built the program to a 90-member company. The Ensemble performs three main productions at UBC every season, several Opera Tea Concerts, and a series of *Singer Behind the Song* events featuring international stars who work with Ensemble students. As well, the Ensemble has several engagements with local community partners such as the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Vancouver Opera, and Bard on the Beach. In addition, the Ensemble travels each year to the Czech Republic to gain valuable European performance experience. Frequently they appear in concert with the Plzen Opera Orchestra, and they are regular guests at the Nürnberg Opera House for their Musikalischen Damen Teas (founded by Prof Hermiston in 1985). They have also given several concerts in Beijing, Shanghai, and Chengdu, China. The Ensemble has also toured throughout B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario.

The Ensemble's mission is to provide an outstanding performance and academic education for young, gifted opera singers, preparing them for international careers. Past main-stage productions have included *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Die Gärtnerin aus Liebe*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Suor Angelica*, *La Bohème*, *Dido and Aeneas*, *The Bartered Bride*, *Manon*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Florence: the Lady with the Lamp*, *Dreamhealer*, *Falstaff*, *Don Giovanni*, *Cendrillon*, *Albert Herring*, the Western Canadian Premiere of Harry Somer's *Louis Riel*, *The Crucible*, *Die Lustige Witwe (The Merry Widow)*, *Rusalka*, *Così fan tutte*, *Dialogues des Carmélites*, *Carmen*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *The Florentine Straw Hat*, *La Traviata*, *A Night in Venice (Eine Nacht in Venedig)*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Consul*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *La Cenerentola*, *Il Tabarro* and *Gianni Schicchi*, *Silent Night*, *Pasazerka*, and *Il Viaggio a Reims*, *Mansfield Park*, and *The Gondoliers*.

Vancouver Opera Orchestra

The Vancouver Opera Orchestra was established in 1977, replacing an orchestra made up of members of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. Comprised of the region's leading freelance players, the VO Orchestra has developed into a fine ensemble that has taken the specialized and demanding art of pit performance to a very high level. Several of the current roster of musicians were in the pit for the orchestra's inaugural performances, in 1977, of Massenet's *Le Roi de Lahore*, starring Joan Sutherland and conducted by founding Music Director Richard Bonyngue. There have since been two music directors: David Agler (1992–1999) and Jonathan Darlington (2002–2019).

VIOLIN 1

Mark Ferris

(Concertmaster)

Ellen Farrugia

(Acting Assistant Concertmaster)

Lawrie Hill

Evelyn Creaser

VIOLIN 2

Angela Cavadas

(Acting Principal)

Yun Jung

(Acting Assistant Principal)

Heilwig von Koenigsloew

VIOLA

Isabelle Roland

(Acting Principal)

Marie-Claude Brunet

(Acting Assistant Principal)

CELLO

Jonathan Lo

(Acting Principal)

Ashton Lim

(Acting Assistant Principal)

BASS

Michael Vaughan

(Acting Principal)

Meaghan Williams

(Acting Assistant Principal)

FLUTE & PICCOLO

Brenda Fedoruk

(Principal)

OBOE & ENGLISH HORN

Emma Ringrose

(Acting Principal)

CLARINET

Mary Backun

(Principal)

BASSOON

Ingrid Chiang

(Principal)

HORN

Laurel Spencer

(Principal)

TRUMPET

Tom Shorthouse

(Principal)

TROMBONE

Jeremy Berkman

(Principal)

PERCUSSION

Phil Crewe

(Acting Principal)

HARP

Elizabeth Volpé Bligh

(Acting Principal)

ORCHESTRA MANAGER

Jim Littleford

Special Thanks

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Production Team

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Nancy Hermiston

CONDUCTOR

Norbert Baxa

LIGHTING DESIGN

Jeremy Baxter

SET DESIGN

Alessia Carpoca

COSTUME DESIGN/ HEAD OF COSTUMES

Parvin Mirhady

COSTUME ASSISTANT

Foroozan Talei Fard

OPERA COACHES

Wenwen Du

Richard Epp

Derek Stanyer

Lucas Wong

CZECH DICTION COACHES

Carol Isaac

Mark Morash

STAGE MANAGER

Cat Hartt-Towle

HAIRDRESSING & WIGS

Elke Englicht

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Hoin Cho

Leila Kirves

PROPS

Liam Robertson

STUDENT COSTUME TECHNICIAN

Hannah Ernst

ASSISTANT STUDENT COSTUME TECHNICIAN

Neusha Amir Rahmani

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Magdalena How

Leila Kirves

PROGRAMME PRINTING

Ancan Marketing

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Miles Linklater

EVENTS MANAGER

Francesca Corrado

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Mariana Iguavita

OFFICE ASSISTANTS

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Leila Kirves

SURTITLES

Milena Janda

SURTITLES OPERATORS

Magdalena How

Emma Petersen Melland

OPERA LIBRARIAN

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STUDENT BOX OFFICE DIRECTOR

Katie Fraser

STUDENT BOX OFFICE WORKERS

Rachel Buttress

Emma Jang

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ASSISTANT CARPENTER

Philip Piper

STUDENT TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

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ASSISTANT TECHNICAL DIRECTORS

Neil Craighead

Pablo Romero Moreira

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