

SHE CAME FROM THE WATER, A CREATURE AS BEAUTIFUL AND mysterious as the lake she called home. But for the love of a human, she set off on a journey from which she could never return. Rusalka (whose name means simply “water nymph” in Czech) appeared on the operatic stage in 1901, an ethereal being brought to life by the soaring melodies of Antonín Dvořák and the evocative poetry of Jaroslav Kvapil. But she and her fellow denizens of the water had been inspiring and beguiling storytellers for centuries. From the fjords of Denmark to the forests of Bohemia, the water nymph (most famously embodied in Hans Christian Andersen’s tale *The Little Mermaid*) was a celebrated member of the fairy-tale pantheon. But it was not magic that she desired, nor idolization—it was humanity, and love.

For the Prince she loved, Rusalka’s allure was in her mystique. But for us, it lies in her fortitude and vulnerability, courage and willingness to forgive. These qualities reveal in her a profound humanity that no potion could provide. In this stunning new production for the Metropolitan Opera, director Mary Zimmerman harnesses this duality: in Rusalka’s magical realm we recognize our own world, shimmering like a reflection on the surface of a pond. And although Rusalka’s fate is silence, Dvořák’s immortal music, Kvapil’s rich poetry and Mary Zimmerman’s vivid scenery endow her with an immortal voice that speaks to us all.

This guide introduces *Rusalka* as a musical fairy tale, an example of the interest in folk music and stories that lay at the heart of 19th-century culture. The materials on the following pages also contextualize the work in the changing political landscape of the 19th and 20th centuries. By connecting the opera to fairy tales with which students may already be familiar, these materials will help students broaden their historical horizons while engaging deeply and critically with the story, poetry, and music of *Rusalka*. The activities on the following pages are designed to provide context, deepen background knowledge, and enrich the overall experience of this *Live in HD* transmission. This guide will also align with key strands of the Common Core Standards.



OPOLAIS



BARTON



DALAYMAN



JOVANOVICH



OWENS

THE WORK: *RUSALKA*

An opera in three acts, sung in Czech

Music by Antonín Dvořák

Libretto by Jaroslav Kvapil, based on the novella *Undine* by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué and Hans Christian Andersen’s *The Little Mermaid*

First performed March 31, 1901 at the National Theater, Prague, Czech Republic

PRODUCTION

Sir Mark Elder, Conductor

Mary Zimmerman, Production

Daniel Ostling, Set Designer

Mara Blumenfeld, Costume Designer

T.J. Gerckens, Lighting Designer

Austin McCormick, Choreographer

STARRING

(In order of vocal appearance):

Eric Owens

WATER SPRITE (bass)

Kristine Opolais

RUSALKA (soprano)

Jamie Barton

JEŽIBABA (mezzo-soprano)

Brandon Jovanovich

PRINCE (tenor)

Katarina Dalayman

FOREIGN PRINCESS (soprano)

Production a gift of the Betsy and Ed Cohen/Areté Foundation

Additional funding from Mr. William R. Miller, in memory of Irene D. Miller

This guide includes five sections with two types of classroom activities.

- **THE SOURCE, THE STORY, WHO'S WHO IN *RUSALKA*, AND A TIMELINE**

- **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:**
Two activities designed to align with and support various Common Core Standard strands used in ELA, History/Social Studies, and Music curricula

- **PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES:**
Two activities to be used during *The Met: Live in HD* transmission, highlighting specific aspects of this production

- **POST-SHOW DISCUSSION:**
A wrap-up activity, integrating the *Live in HD* experience into the students' understanding of the performing arts and the humanities

- **STUDENT RESOURCE PAGES:**
Classroom-ready worksheets supporting the activities in the guide

The materials in this guide will focus on several aspects of *Rusalka*:

- The relationship between Dvořák's score, Kvapil's libretto, and the source stories *Undine* and *The Little Mermaid*
- The timeless quality of folk and fairy tales and their easy interpretation as allegories
- The musical style of Dvořák's work and its structural organization
- Creative choices made by the artists of the Metropolitan Opera for this production
- The opera as a unified work of art, involving the efforts of composer, librettist, and Met artists

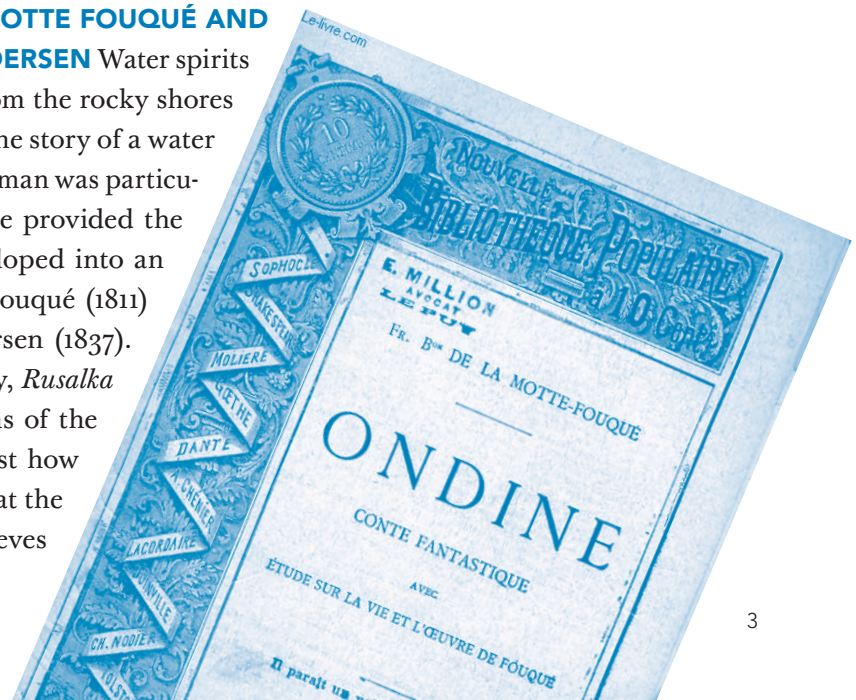
This guide is intended to cultivate students' interest in *Rusalka*, whether or not they have any prior acquaintance with opera. It includes materials for students with a wide range of musical backgrounds, and seeks to encourage them to think about opera—and the performing arts as a whole—as a medium of both entertainment and creative expression.

SUMMARY: Rusalka, a water nymph, has fallen in love with a human, a Prince who comes often to swim in the lake where she lives. There is just one problem: since she is made of water, he cannot see her. Rusalka's father, a Water Sprite, warns her that humans are evil. Ignoring his advice, Rusalka goes to the witch Ježibaba and begs for a potion that will make her human. Ježibaba can make such a potion, but the cost is high: in order to become human, Rusalka must give up her voice. No human will ever be able to hear her speak. Rusalka accepts, and Ježibaba brews the potion. As Rusalka emerges from Ježibaba's hut, the Prince comes to the lake. Seeing Rusalka, he instantly falls in love with her, but she cannot return his words. Despite her silence, the Prince takes Rusalka back to his palace.

A week later, the palace servants have begun to gossip. The Prince is growing tired of Rusalka, they say, because she never speaks. The Prince asks Rusalka why she is so silent, but she cannot respond. He leaves her alone in the garden and goes to dance with another woman, a beautiful Foreign Princess who has come to catch his eye. Rusalka's father, the Water Sprite, appears, and she begs him for help but he can do nothing. The Prince re-appears and as Rusalka watches, speechless, he declares his love for the Foreign Princess. Rusalka returns to the lake and begs Ježibaba to save her. Ježibaba says that there is only one way Rusalka can be saved: she must kill the Prince. Horrified, Rusalka refuses. The Prince emerges from the forest looking for Rusalka and pleads with her to return. She tells him that if she kisses him he will die. He accepts that fate. She kisses him and he falls lifeless into her arms.

THE SOURCE: *UNDINE* BY FRIEDRICH DE LA MOTTE FOUQUÉ AND *THE LITTLE MERMAID* BY HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

Water spirits have long been a fixture in folk and fairy tales, from the rocky shores of Ireland to the thick forests of Eastern Europe. The story of a water nymph ("rusalka" in Czech) falling in love with a human was particularly popular, and two literary versions of the tale provided the backbone for the story that Jaroslav Kvapil developed into an opera libretto: *Undine* by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué (1811) and *The Little Mermaid* by Hans Christian Andersen (1837). While Kvapil's libretto follows these stories closely, *Rusalka* is also uniquely steeped in the fairy-tale traditions of the Czech lands. In fact, an anecdote makes clear just how deeply these characters permeated Bohemian life: at the mansion of Veltrusy, near the village of Nelahozeves



VOICE TYPE

Since the early 19th century, singing voices have usually been classified in six basic types, three male and three female, according to their range:

SOPRANO

the highest-pitched type of human voice, normally possessed only by women and boys

MEZZO-SOPRANO

the female voice whose range lies between the soprano and the contralto (Italian “mezzo” = middle, medium)

CONTRALTO

the lowest female voice, also called an alto

COUNTERTENOR

a male singing voice whose vocal range is equivalent to that of a contralto, mezzo-soprano, or (less frequently) a soprano, usually through use of falsetto

TENOR

the highest naturally occurring voice type in adult males

BARITONE

the male voice lying below the tenor and above the bass

BASS

the lowest male voice

where Dvořák spent his childhood, guests often attended masquerade balls dressed as fairies and water nymphs, and the local forester is even said to have gone disguised as a water sprite.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I: *A lake in the forest* The water nymph Rusalka has fallen in love with a human, a Prince who comes often to swim in the lake where she lives. But Rusalka is made of water, and the Prince cannot see her or feel her love. As the opera begins, Rusalka’s sister nymphs dance and sing under the light of the full moon, splashing in the lake where the Water Sprite, Rusalka’s father, reigns. The Water Sprite teases them and they run away. Soon Rusalka appears. She tells her father of her love, and confesses that she wishes to become human so that she may live on land with the Prince. The Water Sprite is horrified. He tells his daughter that humans are evil and are not to be trusted, and warns her that once she becomes mortal she will be lost to him forever. Realizing that he cannot dissuade her, the Water Sprite departs. Left alone, Rusalka asks the moon to tell the Prince of her love. Determined to pursue her love at all costs, Rusalka goes to the witch Ježibaba and begs for a potion that will make her human. This Ježibaba can do—but in order to become human, Rusalka must give up her voice. Ježibaba also warns that if Rusalka fails to win the Prince’s love both she and the Prince will be cursed forever. Convinced that her love can defeat all spells, Rusalka agrees, and Ježibaba brews the potion.

As dawn breaks, the Prince arrives with a hunting party at the lake. Just then Rusalka, now in human form, emerges from Ježibaba’s hut. Seeing her, the Prince is captivated by her beauty. Although he is surprised by her silence, he leads her away to his palace. From the lake, the voices of the Water Sprite and the other nymphs can be heard mourning the loss of Rusalka.

ACT II: *The Prince’s palace* A week has passed. At the palace, the Gamekeeper and a Kitchen Boy gossip about Rusalka, whom they deride as a strange creature that the Prince found in the woods. They suggest that the Prince’s eye is already wandering: a beautiful Foreign Princess has come to the palace. The Prince appears with Rusalka. He cannot understand why Rusalka

remains chilly and aloof in the face of his ardent expressions of love. The Foreign Princess, who wishes to claim the Prince for herself, cruelly 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, the Water Sprite expresses his sadness at his daughter's plight. Suddenly Rusalka, overwhelmed by her surroundings and intimidated by the taunts of the Princess, rushes from the castle in tears. Seeing her father, she begs him to help her—as a water spirit, he can hear her plaintive cries. But they both know that it is already too late. The Prince and the Princess come into the garden, and the Prince confesses his love for this exotic new woman. When Rusalka, once again mute in the presence of the Prince, rushes into his arms, the Prince rebuffs her. The Water Sprite warns the Prince of the curse that awaits him, then disappears with Rusalka. Terrified, the Prince turns to the Princess, but she ridicules him and tells him to follow his bride into the abyss.

ACT III: *The lake* Alone by the lake once again, Rusalka laments her fate. Ježibaba arrives. At first she taunts the betrayed nymph, but finally divulges the only way for Rusalka to save herself: she must kill the prince. Ježibaba gives Rusalka a knife. Horrified, Rusalka throws it into the water, preferring eternal suffering to shedding the Prince's blood. Turning toward the lake, Rusalka is rebuffed by the Water Nymphs as well. The Huntsman and the Kitchen Boy arrive in the meadow to ask Ježibaba for help. The Prince, they say, has been bewitched by a strange creature from the woods. Enraged, the Water Sprite rises from the lake, saying that it was the Prince who deceived Rusalka. Terrified by the supernatural sight, the Huntsman and Kitchen Boy run away. The Water Nymphs enter, singing and dancing, but when the Water Sprite explains to them what has happened to Rusalka, they fall silent and disappear.

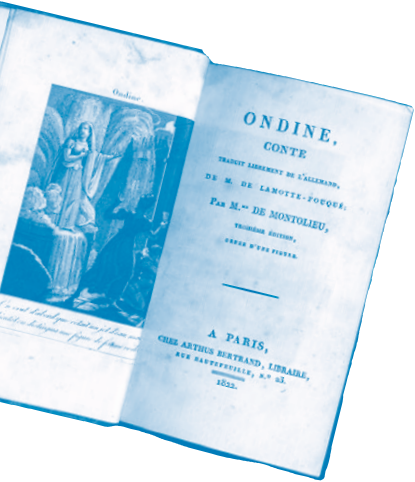
The Prince, desperate and half crazy with remorse, emerges from the forest, looking for Rusalka and calling out for her to return to him. Rusalka, spectral in the moonlight, appears and explains that, having once given the Prince her love, she now can only offer him death. The Prince accepts his fate. She kisses him, and he dies in her arms. Rusalka asks for mercy on his soul and disappears into the water.

WHO'S WHO IN RUSALKA

CHARACTER		PRONUNCIATION	VOICE TYPE	THE LOWDOWN
Rusalka	A water nymph, a female supernatural creature	roos-S AHL-kah	soprano	Rusalka, whose name means simply "water nymph" in Czech, is willing to sacrifice everything for the man she loves.
Ježibaba	An old witch	YEH-zhee-bah-bah	mezzo-soprano	Ježibaba will help Rusalka become human... for a price. Her name means "old witch."
The Water Sprite	Rusalka's father, a male supernatural creature of the water		bass	As Rusalka's father, the Water Sprite fears that she will give up her essential being for an impossible love.
The Prince	The young royal Rusalka falls in love with		tenor	The man Rusalka loves, but to whom she is invisible unless she can find a way to become human.
The Foreign Princess	Another member of the royalty, visiting the Prince's palace		soprano	Exotic, alluring, and merciless, this human princess wants Rusalka's prince for herself.
The Gamekeeper	A wise older peasant		tenor	The Gamekeeper has heard stories about the creatures that live in the woods and doesn't trust the woman the Prince found there.
The Kitchen Boy	A simple peasant		soprano	A lowly servant who knows all the palace gossip. The character is a "trouser role," in which a young boy is played by a woman.
Wood Nymphs	Supernatural creatures who, unlike water nymphs, have legs and can run and dance		sopranos and mezzo-soprano	This group of nymphs lives in the forest near Rusalka's lake

A model of Daniel Ostling's set design





- 1811** The German writer Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué publishes *Undine*, a tragic story of a water nymph who falls in love with a human.
- 1837** In Denmark, Hans Christian Andersen publishes his fairy tale *Den Lille Havfrue*, known in English as *The Little Mermaid*.
- 1841** Antonín Dvořák is born on September 8 in the Bohemian village of Nelahozeves, 15 miles from Prague in what is today the Czech Republic. Dvořák is the eldest of eight children; his father is a butcher, innkeeper, and amateur musician who sometimes plays the zither (a plucked string instrument) to entertain his guests.
- 1847** Young Dvořák receives his first musical training—violin and singing lessons—from a teacher in his village. Over the next decade, he will continue his musical studies in various small towns in Bohemia.
- 1857** Dvořák travels to Prague for lessons at the Organ School there. As an important city in the Habsburg Empire, Prague possesses a rich arts scene, and the young musician is exposed to many of the most important composers of the day. Dvořák excels in his studies, and in 1859 graduates second in his class.
- 1862** In November, the Provisional Theater opens in Prague. As the first Czech-language theater in the city, the Provisional Theater is an important venue for Czech writers and composers interested in exploring their linguistic and musical heritage. It also represents a major turning point in the history of Czech national arts: Bohemia (the Czech region of which Prague is the capital) is under Austro-Hungarian rule, and until 1860 Czech-language music and theater had been actively discouraged by a government eager to prevent overt displays of national sentiment. Dvořák serves as the theater's principal violist from its opening until 1871.
- 1871** Dvořák announces that he is composing a Czech-language opera, *The King and the Charcoal Burner*, based on local folk and fairy tales. Until this time, Dvořák (who will soon turn 30) has been known to the Prague musical world only as a performing musician. Thus, the opera is both his first public foray into composition and an important expression of his interest in national opera. *The King and the Charcoal Burner* enjoys a successful premiere at the Provisional Theater on November 24, 1874.

1877 In December, the German composer Johannes Brahms writes a letter recommending Dvořák to his publisher, Fritz Simrock, in Berlin. Simrock commissions Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances*, which are inspired by Eastern European folk music and considered exotic by Western audiences. The *Slavonic Dances* offer Dvořák his first taste of international acclaim. The collection is published in November 1878, and by early 1879 it has already been performed in Dresden, Hamburg, Berlin, London, Nice, and New York.

1891 Dvořák joins the faculty of composition at the Prague Conservatory.

1892 Dvořák travels to the United States to direct the National Conservatory of Music in New York City. In connection with his belief that music is intimately connected to national identity, he hopes to help his students in New York cultivate a distinctly "American" style of composition. He will remain in America for three years, residing at 327 East 17th Street in Manhattan. During this sojourn, he composes his Symphony No. 9, known as the symphony "From the New World."

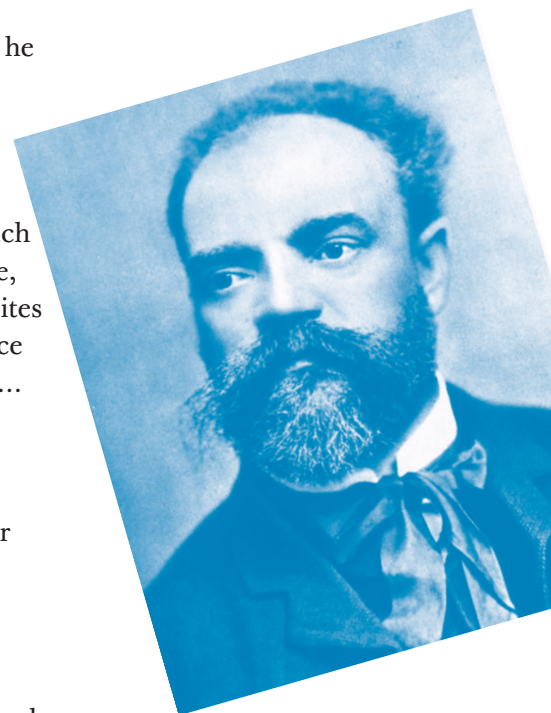
1897 On March 3, František Šubert, the director of Prague's National Theater, writes to the poet Jaroslav Kvapil, "Dvořák would very much like a libretto for an opera with a Czech fairy-tale plot." In response, Kvapil begins work on the libretto for *Rusalka*. In September he writes to a friend, "I have a libretto that I think is valuable as a poetic piece and as a stage work. It is an absolute fairy-tale, completely moonlit... there are elements (but only elements) drawing on Andersen's *Mermaid*, and on Fouqué's *Undine*."

1900 Between April 21 and November 27, Dvořák composes the music for *Rusalka*.

1901 On March 31, *Rusalka* premieres at the National Theater in Prague.

1904 On March 25, Dvořák's final opera, *Armida*, premieres at the National Theater. A few weeks later, on May 1, Dvořák dies; he is buried on May 5 in Prague's Vyšehrad cemetery, where his tomb can still be visited today.

1997 On September 13, a sculpture of Dvořák is installed at the northeast corner of Stuyvesant Park, near the Manhattan home where he once lived.



Beneath the Surface: Exploring the Fairy Tale as Allegory

English Language Arts

IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the reproducible resources available at the back of this guide entitled *Beneath the Surface*, as well as the audio selections from *Rusalka* available online or on the accompanying CD.

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

English/Language Arts, World Literature, Poetry, Creative Writing

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To recognize allegory as an interpretive device
- To practice close reading and listening in order to analyze literary and musical techniques
- To deepen interest in *Rusalka*'s sophisticated basis in fairy tale
- To prompt curiosity about the *Live in HD* transmission of *Rusalka*

Dvořák and Kvapil subtitled *Rusalka* a “Lyrical Fairy Tale.” Yet it is much more than a romantic bedtime story. Despite such typical components as curses, magical powers, and a strict dichotomy between the natural and the supernatural, *Rusalka*—like many other works of fantasy—has often been understood as an allegory. In this activity, students will explore key moments of the opera in order to become acquainted with the concept of allegory—what it means, how it works, and the relationships it proposes between works of art and their inherent meanings. Students will:

- consider allegorical interpretations of *Rusalka*'s plot
- examine the music and words of key scenes
- discuss meanings those scenes might hold outside the boundaries of the opera's plot
- draw conclusions about *Rusalka*'s status as an allegory
- develop their own allegorical interpretation of *Rusalka*

STEPS

Following a discussion of the opera's plot, students will learn about the literary category of the allegory. They will then engage in group work, closely analyzing two excerpts from *Rusalka* to find correspondences with everyday life or current events. Finally, they will extend their interpretive work to explore how the opera as a whole may be read as an allegory.

STEP 1: First, help students become familiar with *Rusalka*'s story as Kvapil and Dvořák present it. Distribute copies of the synopsis or the summary found in this guide for students to read, so that they understand the plot, the characters, and the fundamental relationships in *Rusalka*. Once your students have read this material, ask for volunteers to explain what the opera is about in their own words.



STEP 2: Then let students know that *Rusalka* has sometimes been interpreted as an allegory of:

- the situation of the Czecho-Slovak area within the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the years before World War I
- the lives of minorities and immigrants in foreign societies
- the treatment of young women from rural areas who migrate to big cities
- human emancipation and the painful path to personal freedom

Re-iterate to students that none of this, of course, is mentioned in the libretto. Allegorical interpretation explores a set of interpretive possibilities audiences may discover in a work of art, whether or not these possibilities were ever in the minds of its creators. Nevertheless, it's likely that students will find the above interpretations odd. Press them to imagine how the story they read could possibly have such a meaning. What if elements of the story were symbols—if they stood for something else?

You may find it helpful to mention one or two famous works that students might recognize, which are commonly recognized as allegories. Examples might include:

- *Lord of the Flies*, the novel by William Goldman—a story about life on a desert island intended as an allegory of power and injustice in society
- *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien—seen by some as an allegory of industrialization and the two World Wars (although the author expressly denied any such intention)
- *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller—a play about the Salem witch trials generally understood as an allegory of anti-Communist hysteria in 1950s America

Whether intended by creators or discovered by audiences, allegorical meanings depend on a correspondence between the characters, events, and emotions central to a story and certain facts or relations *outside* the story that are familiar to the audience.

STEP 3: Next, divide students into groups and let them know that they will be analyzing two key scenes in *Rusalka* and imagining ways that the action of the opera may correspond to familiar situations from everyday life or current events. Distribute the reproducible handouts found at the back of the guide, which provide the text and translation for the excerpt.

Begin the class's study by playing **Track 1**, in which Rusalka confides in the Water Sprite. A text and translation are provided under the next two tracks in the handouts. Students should follow along to the text and use the space provided on the handout to note their responses to the feelings and relationships in the scene as expressed by the poetry and music.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND *RUSALKA*

This activity directly supports the following ELA-Literacy Common Core Strands:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2

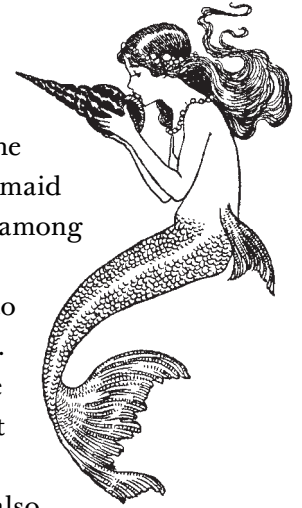
Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.6

Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.



Dance and the Divisions between Human and Supernatural For all the variations in detail, *Rusalka* shares one major aspect with other versions of the Little Mermaid story—fish can't dance. In Dvořák's opera, dance represents society, both in nature and among humans. And while its heroine moves between worlds, she never dances herself.

As the curtain rises, playful forest nymphs dance alongside the Water Sprite's pond. "Try to catch us," they tease. Then, as the legless water creature ruefully looks on, they run away. In Act III, the forest nymphs return to celebrate the pleasures of their life. One praises the feet with which she runs barefoot across the dew-dappled glade, then all three sing, "Let us dance!"

Ježibaba, a land-dwelling witch, casts her spell accompanied by an eerie waltz. Dance is also used in *Rusalka* to draw social and class distinctions between humans. In Act III, after Rusalka's shameful return to the pond, even her sister water nymphs, themselves legless, sing metaphorically, "She whom man has embraced is banned from our dance."

Rusalka herself doesn't seem to notice. Singing to her beloved moon, she prays she might hold the Prince in her arms. Begging Ježibaba to turn her human, she doesn't mention legs—even when Ježibaba drops a broad hint, singing "Look how her little feet already know to walk." She only yearns to hold, to hug, to embrace. Her yearning adds subtle pathos as she sings parting words to her ill-fated Prince: "I must take you into my arms."

Dance enlivens the worlds of *Rusalka*, both the supernatural and the human. Yet dance is denied Rusalka herself—a fact that never seems to cross her lovesick mind. In an opera filled with references to dancing, this denial becomes an important aspect of its title character.

Next, allow groups a few minutes to discuss their opinions and begin to come to a consensus on what the excerpt is portraying. Afterwards, play the audio track once more so that students have another chance to confirm or revise their opinions.

STEP 4: After listening to the example, give groups three minutes to list as many real-life situations as possible that could be understood as corresponding to the scene. There are no right or wrong answers, no matter how surprising, but students should be able to defend their choices by drawing on evidence from the text.

When the time is up, have each group report one corresponding situation, team by team. List the situations on the blackboard and continue until each team has exhausted its list.

For your convenience, a listening guide to the first example is provided on the following page.

Example #1: Rusalka confides in the Water Sprite (Act I)

The scene is heard without interruption on **Track 1**. Tracks 2 and 3 break it down for focused study.

In the music heard in **Track 2**, Rusalka tells the Water Sprite of her love for a human and her wish to leave the water and become human herself. Her sorrow is audible from the first languid notes she sings. As she recalls her repeated encounters with the Prince as he dove into the pond, her longing and impatience is expressed in a lyrical melody in straightforward 3/4 rhythm. Impatience turns to frustration as she reflects, in a line she repeats twice, on her invisibility to her beloved. The melody rises higher and higher, conveying Rusalka's yearning to change her situation, to become human. Then it gracefully descends, gathering the warmth and comfort she imagines she would feel in embracing the Prince. In the last line of the passage, she takes her time with the word "*zůlíbal*," meaning "would kiss." She holds on to that thought before assertively, but with a brevity that might express embarrassment, adding "*prudce*," meaning "sharp," "passionate," or "powerful." A forceful, expanding string figure at the end of the track introduces the anguished reaction of the Water Sprite, contrasting with Rusalka's wishful attitude.

Track 3 displays the Water Sprite's fatherly distress. Rather than contradict Rusalka, he points out how much pain her leaving would cause those she loves. Then, with a melody that winds up and down chromatically, he warns her about her own destiny.

The emotions expressed in this scene will have resonance for many students, offering a good opportunity to think of corresponding experiences in other situations. Rusalka here might stand for anyone about to engage in a behavior he or she knows to be dangerous. Rusalka's relationship with the Water Sprite is strong enough for her to feel she can tell him her plans, perhaps seeking approval, perhaps seeking advice. Possible correspondences in your students' life experience may include:

- a young adult deciding to quit college or a job
- a teen planning a weekend trip with a group of risk-taking friends
- a woman with an unplanned pregnancy, announcing her plan to keep the baby—or to have an abortion
- on a global scale, Rusalka might represent a political figure contemplating a monumental decision, seeking advice (or affirmation) from a trusted diplomatic counselor

There is, of course, no "right" or "wrong" when it comes to discussing the correspondences students imagine for each of these scenes—as long as they can point to aspects of music and text that support their ideas.



FUN FACT: Although *Rusalka* was not staged at the Met until 1993, the great Czech soprano Emmy Destinn (pictured), an eager promoter of her nation's cultural heritage, sang the "Song to the Moon" at a gala concert in 1912.

STEP 5: If time allows, repeat this exercise with a second excerpt from *Rusalka*; the text and translation are found in the reproducible handouts. A guide is provided below.

Example #2: The Princess and Prince speak as Rusalka stands silently by

The scene is heard without interruption on **Track 4**. Tracks 5 through 12 break it down for focused study.

Track 5 opens with an angry Princess expressing herself with sarcasm and in an emotionally charged melodic line in the upper range. It is important to keep in mind that she and the Prince are not alone on stage. Rusalka is present, but cannot speak. By directing her remarks at the Prince alone, the Princess is insulting her adversary.

The Prince's reply addresses the Princess's concern, but he is careful not to match her in attitude. His melody is lyrical, his words ingratiating. Notice his emphasis when he repeats the phrase "*knežno krásná*" ("beautiful princess") and the almost self-deprecatory way Dvořák has him rush off the rest of the line, which refers to himself. Above all, note that the Prince, too, sings as if unaware of Rusalka's presence.

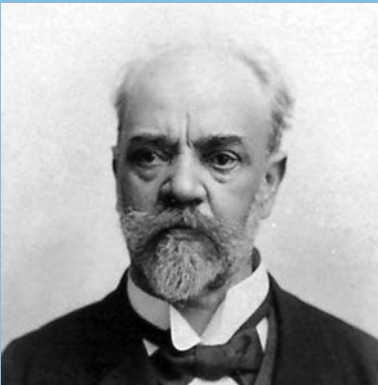
The Princess does not let up (**Track 6**). Having won a small victory in claiming the Prince's attention, she turns her wit and jagged melodic line on her rival—though still singing to the Prince, as if Rusalka were not standing there. The sorrowful woodwind phrase heard in **Track 7** seems to represent Rusalka, watching helplessly as this inter-loper tears her dream to shreds. As the Princess forges ahead in **Track 8**, her words continue to refer to Rusalka, but the music that carries them is a bold challenge to the Prince.

The orchestra's sudden shift from a harsh to a wistful tone in **Track 9** leaves room for interpretation. Is the music giving voice to sad Rusalka? Or is it only describing the effect the Princess's barbs have on the Prince? He continues along the same melodic line in **Track 10**—now insulting Rusalka in one more apology to the Princess, then pursuing his lyric flirtation.

Track 10 ends with another emotional turn in the orchestra: a sudden sound of crisis. In **Track 11**, we learn why. The Prince has turned on Rusalka. No longer the tender beau, he attacks her with a breathless, fractured line sounding more like the Princess's melodies than the gracious style he's been using until now.

The final blow comes in **Track 12** with a remarkable moment of musical contrast. The Prince completes his derogation of Rusalka, sending her away in a harsh tone. With Rusalka gone, the music becomes formal, aristocratic, martial and decidedly human. This is music for a prince and princess—it holds no place for an ethereal creature like Rusalka.

While it's possible to view the events of this scene from the point of view of three different characters, each with its own motivations and emotional reaction, students



FUN FACT: Of Dvořák's ten operas, only *Rusalka* has found a permanent place in the international repertoire. His Symphony No. 9, better known by its subtitle "From the New World," on the other hand, is one of the most popular symphonic works of the Romantic era. It was written in 1893 in New York during Dvořák's tenure as director of the short-lived National Conservatory of Music of America.

are most likely to see it from Rusalka's perspective. In that sense, the scene depicts a moment of looking on powerlessly as plans, hopes, or dreams are crushed by an unexpected event or the actions of another person. But either of the other perspectives, the Princess's or the Prince's, can be just as fruitful in suggesting real-life scenes with emotional correspondence.

STEP 6: After exploring these two excerpts and listing as many correspondences as possible, bring the class back together to discuss their findings. Prompt students to explain what led them to point out a particular correspondence, citing evidence from the text or music. (Feel free to replay tracks to help them illustrate their evidence.)

Next, look for patterns that have emerged from the correspondences students have identified. Such patterns might include references to situations like dating, moving out of your parents' home, moving among unfamiliar social groups, and more. Point out that, to the extent that the text supports such interpretations, *Rusalka* could be interpreted as an allegory of any of these situations. This is the nature of allegory: it only needs to make sense in the mind of the observer.

From this perspective, students may enjoy returning to the allegorical interpretations of *Rusalka* discussed in Step 2 above. Do any of them sound more convincing now?

FOLLOW-UP: The concept of allegory can be explored in many different ways. Students may pursue research projects to assess the relevance of the allegorical interpretations of *Rusalka* mentioned in Step 2, or you might assign take-home activities for students to flesh out an interpretation of the opera as an allegory of one of the situations mentioned in Step 4 or 5 above. Alternatively, students might want to choose another familiar story—a film, a TV show, or even another fairy tale—and propose their own allegorical interpretation.

Dvořák's Watersprite Music: Formal Structure and Folk Influences in *Rusalka*

Music

IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the reproducible resources available at the back of this guide entitled *Dvořák's Watersprite Music*, as well as the synopsis and the audio selections from *Rusalka* available online or on the accompanying CD.

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

General Music, Band, Orchestra, Chorus, Humanities, Art

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To introduce and/or reinforce knowledge of musical terminology
- To develop students' understanding of musical form
- To become familiar with some of the music of *Rusalka* in advance of the *Live in HD* transmission

The contrast between humans, their nature and society, and the world of the supernatural is one of the central themes of *Rusalka*. Dvořák's music for these two spheres maintains the divide between their essential natures: while in both cases it may draw on folk idioms, the natural or supernatural status of the respective characters is never in question. The following activity is designed to provide students with an introduction to Dvořák's music, in both its folk-inspired roots and in the carefully crafted art of the composer as seen in musical forms. In the following lesson, students will:

- study two excerpts from *Rusalka* and respond to their musical characteristics
- learn new musical terminology to describe what they hear
- engage in formal analysis and learn about the structure of strophic songs

STEPS

Students will read a description of the plot, listen to musical examples, and then use musical vocabulary and descriptive language to describe their interpretation of each excerpt. Through their listening, students will also investigate the formal structure of operatic numbers and develop an ear for their recurring musical material.

STEP 1: At the start of class, spend some time discussing the overall story of *Rusalka*. You may choose to pass out the summary, synopsis, or *Who's Who in Rusalka* chart found in this guide and give students some time to read them over; alternatively, you may assign them as homework reading before your class session. Students will likely be familiar with the story of *The Little Mermaid* as seen in the Disney movie; you may frame your discussion by pointing out the ways in which Dvořák's *Rusalka* differs from the version they know.



STEP 2: Next, distribute copies of the *Ten Essential Musical Terms* sidebar and discuss the concepts included there. Students may have little prior understanding of musical structure or form, and you will likely need to devote some time to explaining the concept. Let students know that form is the underlying organizational principle that drives music and makes it comprehensible. Much of Western music written before the beginning of the 20th century had been organized by notions of repetition, variation, and contrast, and the form of a specific composition can often be determined in part by recognizing when a section of music is based on something that has been heard before. Let students know that in the listening exercises to come, they will be developing the ability to recognize both recurring musical material and music that is based on contrasting material.

STEP 3: As your first exploration of musical form in Dvořák’s opera, turn to one of the opera’s most famous arias, Rusalka’s “*Měsíčku na nebi hlubokém*” (“Little moon in the deep sky”), commonly known as the “Song to the Moon.” Explain that in this excerpt, Rusalka has just admitted to her father, the Water Sprite, that she is in love with a human prince. Her father warns her not to attempt to join the world of the humans: it is too great a sacrifice. When he has left, Rusalka turns to the moon, asking it to tell the Prince of her love.

Distribute the first portion of the reproducible handouts for the activity, which provides the text and translation for the aria, and ask students to follow along to the words as you play **Track 13**. In their initial experience of the aria, students should merely listen for the emotional effect of the music and prepare to listen again in a more analytical vein.

STEP 4: Now have students turn to the next section of their handout, which divides the text and music into more manageable excerpts—each section with its own audio example, provided here in **Tracks 14** through **18**. In the chart in the handouts, have students make notes in the space provided on their impressions of the music, as well as any musical characteristics they hear. As you cycle through the audio tracks—it will be necessary to play through them a few times—students should begin to recognize which tracks present music that is based on previously heard themes. After students are comfortable with their understanding of the music, you should have them use the final column on the chart to give each track a formal designation: they should indicate whether the music contained is an “A” section, or instead a “B” section. If necessary, remind students of the discussion from the beginning of class on the *Ten Essential Musical Terms* and the variety of musical structures that composers have drawn from.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND RUSALKA

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

FUN FACT: In 1816, E.T.A. Hoffmann, a German author, composer, and lawyer, wrote an opera based on Fouqué's *Undine*. Although he considered himself to be first and foremost a composer, Hoffmann is best remembered today for his many stories. These include *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, which later became the basis for Pyotr Tchaikovsky's ballet *The Nutcracker*.

The eventual goal of this process is to have students form a hypothesis on what the aria's formal structure is, based on their listening. You may need to prompt them with the following questions:

- Can you hum (or play on your instrument) a memorable tune from this aria?
- In general, where does this tune occur (beginning/middle/end)?
- Does it come back at any point?
- Is there other musical material that you recognize as being played more than once?
- Is there any musical material that is unique? When does it occur?
- Does the text provide any clues as to which sections might be set to similar music?

As an aid to teachers, a sample completed chart is provided on the following page.

STEP 5: Following your discussion, students should be ready to voice their conclusions on the aria's form. As you name each track (or "the music that begins at 'Little moon in the deep sky,'" etc.), have students respond together with their formal designation (e.g., A section, B section, etc.). If some students reply with different opinions, prompt them to give the reasons for their conclusions. The section that will likely prompt the most discussion is the final one, a coda.

Let students know that the formal structure they have uncovered, ABAB, is a type of strophic song. In this aria, two contrasting sections make up a single stanza, which is then repeated. Students may find it interesting that when this opera was written, repeating musical stanzas were associated with folk songs, which were generally thought of as simple and repetitive.

FOLLOW UP: As a take-home assignment, you can have students choose a popular song that they like and develop a plan for its formal structure. Encourage them to think about the musical material they hear that repeats, whether there is a repeated text, and whether there is any new music at the close that they haven't heard before.

TRACK NUMBER	TEXT	MUSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND INTERPRETATION	FORMAL SECTION
14	Little moon in the deep sky, your light goes far and wide, you travel the world, looking into humans' homes.	A harp sets the atmosphere, and gently flowing music in the strings creates a sense of stillness and calm while also evoking the shimmering waters of the lake in the moonlight. Rusalka's song floats above the music of the orchestra. Her rhythmic style is simple, her range is narrow, and the text is set syllabically. The last two lines of text are repeated.	A
15	Little moon, stay for a while! Tell me where my love is!	In this contrasting section, Rusalka's melody is more ornate, soaring to the upper reaches of her register. The section is less syllabic and includes a few melismas (the setting of a single syllable to more than one note). The two lines of text are repeated. At the end of the section, a melody in the strings suddenly interrupts the calm, foreshadowing the tragedy to come.	B
16	Tell him, little silver moon, that my arms are wrapped around him, so for at least a short time, he will dream of me.	The gently flowing music in the strings returns, as does the simple style and narrow range of the beginning.	A
17	Shine down on him from afar, shine down on him, and let him know who waits for him here!	The more expansive, ornate music of the contrasting section returns, again ending with incisive and chromatic string gestures.	B
18	If he dreams of me, may he wake remembering me; Little moon, don't dim your light! Little moon, don't dim your light!	A new, minor-mode melody in the English horn introduces a recitative-like line in the lower range of the voice. As Rusalka again calls to the moon, her vocal line rises to the upper range, ending the aria on a fervent and dramatic note.	Coda

Ten Essential Musical Terms

Chorus A group of performers singing together with multiple voices per part. In opera, a composer may use a chorus to represent larger groups of characters, such as townspeople, soldiers, or guests at a party. Some operas involve a great deal of singing for the chorus, others require very little. The chorus's music can range from simple unison melodies to complex, multi-part singing with a high degree of rhythmic independence.

Coda A concluding section following the end of the main structure of a musical composition. Codas often do not include melodies from the main body of the work but present new material as a closing gesture. They take on heightened importance in the sonata form movements of Beethoven and later Romantic composers. In strophic songs, a coda consists of new musical material following the final verse.

Folksong Music derived from an oral tradition, usually in a simple style and understood to represent the history or "essence" of a nation or cultural group. Folksong formed a rich resource for many composers as they sought to broaden the classical idiom and evoke rustic settings, traditional cultures, or the distant past. In opera, composers often use folksong or folk-like styles to indicate a character's heritage or social standing, or traits such as innocence and artlessness.

Form As in literature or fine arts, form in music describes the organizational structure of a work, both in terms of harmonic organization and melodic material. Most musical forms are based on various combinations of repetition, variation, and contrast. Examples include fugue, sonata movement, rondo, or theme and variations. In describing musical forms, letters are typically used to designate individual sections—resulting in terms such as ABA, ABACABA, etc.

Refrain The portion of a song that repeats at the end of each stanza. Refrains may be based on a phrase or just a verse, and include both repeating text and music.

Strophe A term borrowed from literature, strophe describes a group of verses in a poem or lyric that shares characteristics of meter and rhyme with subsequent groups of verses. It is often used interchangeably with "stanza."

Strophic song A musical form in which the individual strophes of the text are set to the same music. Strophic song has been an important form in opera since its very beginnings, and has persisted—with greater degrees of variation—throughout operatic history. It can be represented by the schemes AAA etc., ABAB, and more.

Ternary form A three-part musical structure comprised of an initial section, followed by a contrasting section and the return of the initial section. Ternary form can be represented using the letters ABA.

Through-composed A style of seamless musical composition without obvious repetitions or breaks. The concept may be applied to works as a whole, as in entire operas, or to individual pieces. In an aria, for example, it is understood in contrast to the various types of strophic song, all of which include some variety of internal repetition (such as the da capo aria and rondo form). Through-composed songs, even when they are based on strophic texts, include new music for each stanza. The technique of through-composition allows a composer greater invention and flexibility, as the music may change to reflect the dramatic situation and develop organically, rather than be restricted by repetition or other formal limitations.

Variation A musical concept with ancient origins, variation refers to the practice of repeating a musical idea, but with modifications that can apply to rhythm, mode, tempo, key, gesture, and more. Variation has also comprised an important part of musical forms, most notably in the concept of "theme and variations."

FOLK TALES, FOLK MUSIC, AND THE POLITICS OF THE NATION

In 1812 German brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm published a collection of folk tales that took Europe by storm. The Grimms' re-telling of these traditional stories, which they had gathered from across the German-speaking lands, was fresh and engaging. But this literary quality was only a small part of the book's allure: in the previous decades, folk tales had come to play an important role in the social and political consciousness of Europe. In the late 18th century, philosophers posited that all people on earth were part of large communities called "nations," defined by a common language and shared cultural heritage. Johann Gottfried Herder, a German preacher, believed that folk tales and folk music were the communal core of these nations. In fact, it was Herder himself who coined the term *Volkslied*, or "folk song." Almost overnight, folk songs and tales—which had previously been associated with the peasantry and thus considered unworthy of artistic and scholarly attention—became a source of national pride and a font of inspiration across the spectrum of the arts.

For centuries, the European landscape had been parceled into empires and city-states according to the whims of the nobility, with scant concern for the local identities of their subjects. But by the middle of the 19th century the citizens of Europe, armed with this new concept of "nationality," wanted governments and borders that represented their cultural-linguistic communities. In this context, artistic expressions of nationalism (including compositions inspired by folk music and literature inspired by folk tales, as well as any literature written in the local language) were often suppressed by monarchs fearing the unrest that displays of national sentiment might provoke. Prague's Provisional Theater, which opened in 1862 and specialized in showing Czech-language works, exemplifies this: Prague was part of the sprawling Austro-Hungarian Empire, which strongly discouraged theater performances in languages other than German. Thus, the mere existence of the Provisional Theater was an assertive political statement—and Dvořák, who worked at the theater from its opening until 1871, was profoundly influenced by his experiences there.

As people across Europe began to embrace their national music as an expression of their communal heritage, composers began to bring the musical idioms of their native lands into the concert hall. The Norwegian Edvard Grieg, the Hungarian Franz Liszt, and the Pole Frédéric Chopin are among the most famous composers of this folk-infused concert music. Yet there remained a difference between the song of the humble peasant and the high-art works of these composers. "National music... is not created out of nothing," Dvořák wrote. "It is discovered and clothed in new beauty, just as the myths and the legends of a people are brought to light and crystallized in undying verse by the master poets." In *Rusalka*, it is just so: the legend of the water nymph is expressed in Jaroslav Kvapil's timeless poetry, and the folk-inspired music is elevated by the aching beauty of Dvořák's composition.

Supporting the Student Experience during *The Met: Live in HD* Transmission

IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the Performance Activity reproducible handouts found in the back of this guide.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND RUSALKA

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3

Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

Watching and listening to a performance is a unique experience that takes students beyond the printed page to an immersion in images, sound, interpretation, technology, drama, skill, and craft. Performance activities help students analyze different aspects of the experience and engage critically with the performance. They will consider the creative choices that have been made for the particular production they are watching and examine different aspects of the performance.

Each Performance Activity incorporates a reproducible sheet. Students should bring this activity sheet to the *Live in HD* transmission and fill it out during intermission and/or after the final curtain. The activities direct attention to details of the production that might otherwise go unnoticed.

For *Rusalka*, the first activity sheet, *From Woods to Palace*, directs students' attention to the work involved in creating distinct settings on stage and the design elements that help bring a story to life on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera.

The second, basic activity sheet is called *My Highs & Lows*. It is meant to be collected, opera by opera, over the course of the season. This sheet serves to guide students toward a consistent set of objective observations, as well as to help them articulate their own opinions. It is designed to enrich the students' understanding of the art form as a whole. The ratings system encourages students to express their critique: use these ratings to spark discussions that require careful, critical thinking.

The Performance Activity reproducible handouts can be found in the back of this guide. On the next page, you'll find an activity created specifically for follow-up after the *Live in HD* transmission.

Rusalka, Fairy Tales, and Operatic Storytelling

Students will enjoy starting the class with an open discussion of the Met performance. What did they like? What bothered them? Did anything surprise them? What would they like to see or hear again? What would they have done differently? This discussion will offer students an opportunity to review the notes on their *My Highs & Lows* sheet, as well as their thoughts about this Met production—in short, to see themselves as *Rusalka* experts.

To continue your discussion of *Rusalka*, you may wish to ask your students if the opera reminds them of any other stories they know. Then invite them to consider how the many elements of the production—including the music, the costumes, the stage design, the lights, etc.—affect their experience of the performance. Below are some questions that will help to spark your discussion:

- What do you think of the magical characters like the Water Sprite and Ježibaba? Are they scary? Funny? Exciting? Why do you say so? Which do you like more, the magical or human characters?

IN PREPARATION

This activity requires no preparation other than attendance at the *Live in HD* transmission of *Rusalka*.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To review and synthesize what students have observed about the characters and music of *Rusalka*
- To think critically about the operatic medium as a vehicle for storytelling
- To think about how artistic choices are made

COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND RUSALKA

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1d

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

A model of Daniel Ostling's set design



- The opera takes place in two very different locations: Rusalka's lake, and the Prince's palace. How have the director Mary Zimmerman and her team of designers used the stage to express the unique qualities of these two spaces? How do the costumes, the scenery, and even the colors reflect the world of the nymphs versus the world of the humans? Is there anything you would add or change if you were in charge?
- Rusalka's father, the Water Sprite, warns his daughter not to give up her essential identity for love. Can you think of any other stories that attempt to convey this message?
- Ježibaba can make Rusalka human, but only if she gives up her voice. Is opera a particularly good medium for conveying this aspect of the story? Why or why not? How did the singer Kristine Opolais communicate Rusalka's emotions when she couldn't sing?

As a follow-up to your discussion of *Rusalka*, your students may enjoy considering the way stories are told in other media, including (but not limited to) paintings, plays, movies, television, comic books, and video games. Which media do they find to be most successful for presenting stories, and why? If they were to tell Rusalka's story in a different medium, how might they do it? Finally, ask your students how the experience of seeing *Rusalka* live might differ from the experience of watching stories told on a two-dimensional screen. Ask them for any final thoughts and impressions. What did they find most memorable?

- 1 Rusalka confides in the Water Sprite (full scene)
- 2 "Often he comes here"
- 3 "My child, my child"
- 4 The Foreign Princess and Prince speak as Rusalka stands silently by (full scene)
- 5 "Must a guest stand"
- 6 "And this little beauty, the lady of your heart""
- 7 Instrumental
- 8 "Or is her mere glance so full of tenderness"
- 9 Instrumental
- 10 "Her eyes have not told"
- 11 "What's wrong?"
- 12 "Go up to your room"
- 13 Rusalka's aria "*Měsíčku na nebi hlubokém*" ("Song to the Moon")
- 14 "Little moon in the deep sky"
- 15 "Little moon, stay for a while"
- 16 "Tell him, little silver moon"
- 17 "Shine down on him from afar"
- 18 "If he dreams of me"

Excerpts taken from the Metropolitan Opera broadcast of December 11, 1993

RUSALKA

Gabriela Benacková

PRINCE

Ben Heppner

FOREIGN PRINCESS

Janis Martin

JEŽIBABA

Stefania Toczyska

WATER SPRITE

Sergei Koptchak

Conducted by
John Fiore

Metropolitan Opera Orchestra
and Chorus

RUSALKA

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Beneath the Surface: Exploring the Fairy Tale as Allegory

TRACK 1

includes Tracks 2 and 3 without interruption.

TRACK 2

RUSALKA: Sem často přichází
a v objetí mé stoupá,
šat shodí na hrázi
a v loktech mých se koupá.
Leč pouhou vlnou jsem,
mou bytost nesmí zřít.
Ó vím, že člověkem
dřív musila bych býti,
jak já jej objímám,
a vinu já jej v ruce,
by on mne objal sám
a zulíbal mne prudce,
by on mne objal sám,
on sám, on sám, a zulíbal mne prudce!

Often he comes here
and accepts my embrace.
He leaves his clothes on the shore
and plunges into my arms.
But I'm only a wave,
so he doesn't know I even exist.
I know that I have to
become human
for him to take me
in his arms,
and kiss me passionately,
just as I embrace him,
and kiss me passionately,
just as I, just as I embrace him.

TRACK 3

THE WATER SPRITE: Dítě, dítě, z noci do noci
tvoje sestry budou pro tě plakat,
už ti není, už ti není pomoci,
člověk-li tě v svou moc doved' zlákat!

My child, my child, night after night
your sisters will cry for you.
Nothing can be done for you
once you've given yourself to a human!

Notes on the emotions and relationships expressed in Dvořák's music:

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Beneath the Surface: Exploring the Fairy Tale as Allegory (CONTINUED)

TRACK 4

includes Tracks 5–12 without interruption.

TRACK 5

FOREIGN PRINCESS: Má na to štěstí,
jímž vás blaží svět,
též cizí host
jen němě pohlížet?

PRINCE: Ach, výčitka to věru včasná
a s vašich rtíků rád ji, rád ji snáším:
i ženich věru, kněžno krásná,
je především jen sluhou vaším!

Must a guest stand
on the side, silently observing
the happiness
you're enjoying?

Ah, a timely reproach!
And I am glad it comes from your lips.
Even a bridegroom, beautiful princess,
is above all but your servant!

TRACK 6

FOREIGN PRINCESS: A vaše kráska, citů vašich paní,
vás nepokárá za to slovem ani?

And this little beauty, the lady of your heart,
does she put up with it all, not a word of reproach?

TRACK 7

Instrumental

TRACK 8

FOREIGN PRINCESS: Či v pohledu svém tolik něhy má,
že mluví s vámi pouze očima?

Or is her mere glance so full of tenderness
that her eyes say more than words?

TRACK 9

Instrumental

TRACK 10

PRINCE: Leč oči její říci zapomněly,
že hostitel se nepozorným stal.
Necht' nahradí ted' rychle, svolíte-li,
co roztržit jen chvíli zanedbal.

Her eyes have not told how negligent
I've been as a host.
So may I now make up for what
I temporarily neglected?

TRACK 11

PRINCE: Nač rozpaky tvoje, a proč se tolik chvěješ?

What's wrong? Why are you trembling?

TRACK 12

PRINCE: V svou komnatu pospěš a stroj se k plesu již!

Go up to your room and get ready for the ball!

THE MET: LIVE IN HD

RUSALKA

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Beneath the Surface: Exploring the Fairy Tale as Allegory (CONTINUED)

Notes on the emotions and relationships expressed in Dvořák's music:

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Dvořák's Watersprite Music

TRACK 13

RUSALKA: Měsíčku na nebi hlubokém,
světlo tvé daleko vidí,
po světě bloudíš širokém,
díváš se v příbytky lidí.
Měsíčku, postůj chvíli,
řekni mi, kde je můj milý!

Řekni mu, stříbrny měsíčku,
mé že jej objímá rámě,
aby se alespoň chvíličku
vzpomenul ve snění na mně.
Zasvět' mu do daleka, zasvět' mu
řekni mu, řekni, kdo tu naň čeká!

O mně-li duše lidská sní,
at' se tou vzpomínkou vzbudí!
Měsíčku, nezhasni, nezhasni!
Měsíčku, nezhasni!

Little moon in the deep sky,
your light goes far and wide,
you travel the world,
looking into humans' homes.
Little moon, stay for a while!
Tell me where my love is!

Tell him, little silver moon, that my arms
are wrapped around him,
so for at least a short time,
he will dream of me.
Shine down on him from afar,
and let him know who waits for him here!

If he dreams of me,
may he wake remembering me;
Little moon, don't dim your light!
Little moon, don't dim your light!

TRACK 14

RUSALKA: Měsíčku na nebi hlubokém,
světlo tvé daleko vidí,
po světě bloudíš širokém,
díváš se v příbytky lidí.

Little moon in the deep sky,
your light goes far and wide,
you travel the world,
looking into humans' homes.

TRACK 15

Měsíčku, postůj chvíli,
řekni mi, kde je můj milý!

Little moon, stay for a while!
Tell me where my love is!

TRACK 16

Řekni mu, stříbrny měsíčku,
mé že jej objímá rámě,
aby se alespoň chvíličku
vzpomenul ve snění na mně.

Tell him, little silver moon, that my arms
are wrapped around him,
so for at least a short time,
he will dream of me.

TRACK 17

Zasvět' mu do daleka, zasvět' mu
řekni mu, řekni, kdo tu naň čeká!

Shine down on him from afar,
and let him know who waits for him here!

TRACK 18

O mně-li duše lidská sní,
at' se tou vzpomínkou vzbudí!
Měsíčku, nezhasni, nezhasni!
Měsíčku, nezhasni!

If he dreams of me,
may he wake remembering me;
Little moon, don't dim your light!
Little moon, don't dim your light!

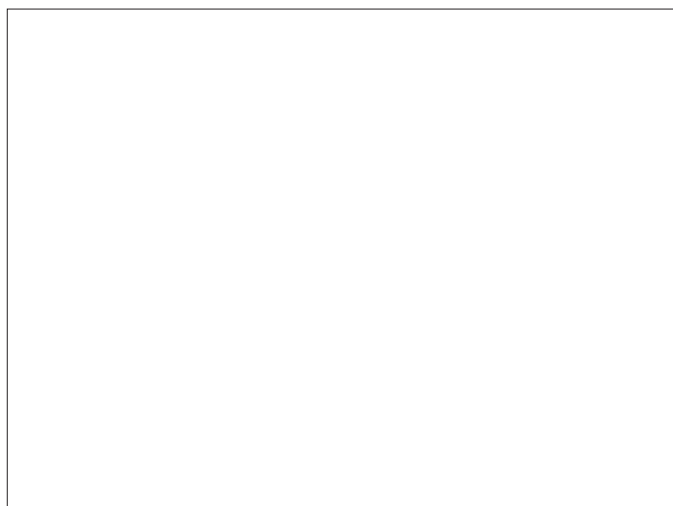
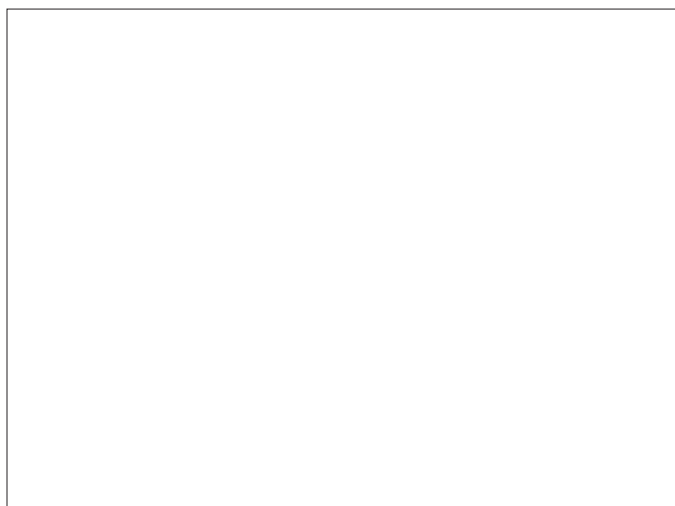
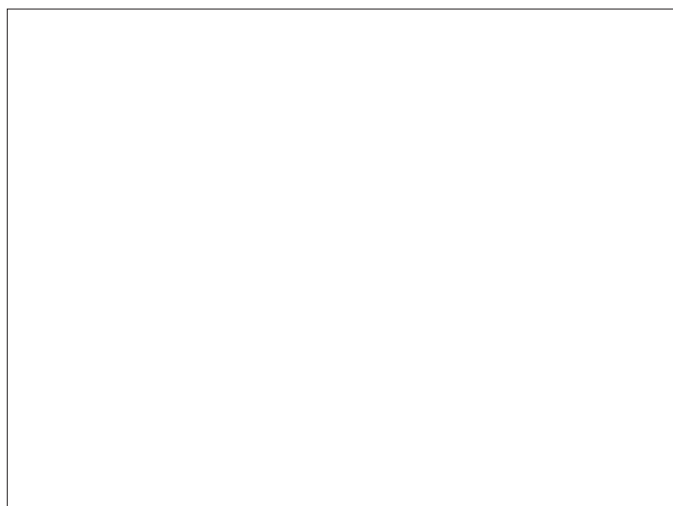
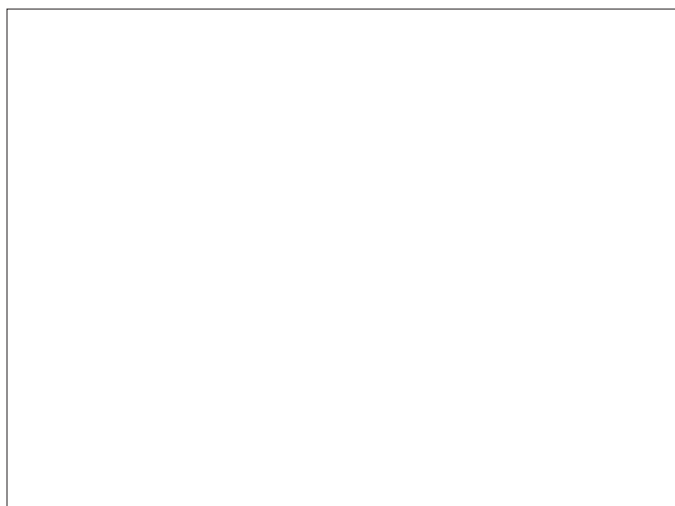
RUSALKA

TRACK NUMBER	TEXT	MUSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND INTERPRETATION	FORMAL SECTION
14	Little moon in the deep sky, your light goes far and wide, you travel the world, looking into humans' homes.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	
15	Little moon, stay for a while! Tell me where my love is!	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	
16	Tell him, little silver moon, that my arms are wrapped around him, so for at least a short time, he will dream of me.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	
17	Shine down on him from afar, shine down on him, and let him know who waits for him here!	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	
18	If he dreams of me, may he wake remembering me; Little moon, don't dim your light! Little moon, don't dim your light!	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	

At the Met: From Woods to Palace

There are two very distinct settings in *Rusalka*: the supernatural realm of the woods, and the very human world of the palace. It is essential to the story that the audience can easily recognize the difference between these two places.

What were some of the tricks that the Met's make-up artists, costume, set, and lighting designers used to make the feeling of the woods different from the feeling of the palace? Would you have done anything differently? How would you design the sets, costumes, and lights to make the difference between Rusalka's world and the Prince's world as clear as possible? Sketch some of your ideas below.



Rusalka: My Highs & Lows

THE MET: LIVE IN HD

FEBRUARY 25, 2017

CONDUCTED BY SIR MARK ELDER

REVIEWED BY _____

THE STARS	STAR POWER	MY COMMENTS
KRISTINE OPOLAIS AS RUSALKA	*****	
JAMIE BARTON AS JEŽIBABA	*****	
ERIC OWENS AS THE WATER SPRITE	*****	
BRANDON JOVANOVIČ AS THE PRINCE	*****	
KATARINA DALAYMAN AS THE FOREIGN PRINCESS	*****	

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN/STAGING
WATER NYMPHS DANCE AND THE WATER SPRITE APPEARS MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
RUSALKA EXPLAINS WHY SHE IS SO SAD MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
RUSALKA SINGS TO THE MOON MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
RUSALKA GOES TO JEŽIBABA FOR HELP MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
THE PRINCE COMES TO THE LAKE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
THE PRINCE SEES RUSALKA—BUT SHE CANNOT SPEAK! MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
THE KITCHEN BOY AND HUNTSMAN GOSSIP ABOUT RUSALKA MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
THE PRINCE ASKS RUSALKA WHY SHE WON'T SPEAK MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
THE FOREIGN PRINCESS APPEARS MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
THE ROYAL BALL MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
THE WATER SPRITE APPEARS IN THE GARDEN MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
RUSALKA ASKS HER FATHER FOR HELP MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
THE PRINCE DECLARES HIS LOVE FOR THE FOREIGN PRINCESS MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5

RUSALKA RETURNS TO THE LAKE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
RUSALKA BEGS JEŽIBABA FOR MERCY MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
RUSALKA LAMENTS HER FATE AND THE NYMPHS REJECT HER MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
THE WATER SPRITE APPEARS IN THE LAKE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
THE PRINCE ARRIVES, SEARCHING FOR RUSALKA MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
THE FINAL LOVE DUET MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5