

STAATSOPER STUTT GART

Press Release

10 May 2022

The power of transformation

Ukrainian conductor Oksana Lyniv and stage director Bastian Kraft work on Antonín Dvořák's *Rusalka* at the Staatsoper Stuttgart

Under the musical direction of Ukrainian conductor **Oksana Lyniv**, Antonín Dvořák's opera *Rusalka* will celebrate its premiere at the **Staatsoper Stuttgart** on **4 June at 6 pm**. Ensemble member **Esther Dierkes** debuts in the title role, **Goran Jurić** can be experienced as Merman. **David Junghoon Kim** makes a guest appearance as the Prince, **Allison Cook** as the Foreign Princess and **Katia Ledoux** as Ježibaba. Director **Bastian Kraft** brings the new production to the stage with nationally well-known **drag performers**: the roles of the forest and water creatures are simultaneously interpreted by drag artists such as **Reflektra**, **Alexander Cameltoe**, **Judy LaDivina** or the Stuttgart drag queen **Vava Vilde**.

The motif of the mermaid *Rusalka's* **longing for transformation**, taken from Dvořák's fairy tale opera, can be found in many narrative variations from the Middle Ages to the present. Many of these stories, such as H.C. Andersen's *Little Mermaid*, the myth of *Melusine* or Disney's *Arielle*, have been interpreted through **queer readings** as portrayals of secretive lives and the pain associated with it. Following this thought, director Bastian Kraft places **drag artists** alongside the singers who are cast as the hybrid forest and water creatures. Through their performance of gender, which relies on fantasy and fluidity, they counteract a world thoroughly obsessed with fixed role models thus enabling a **reflection** on how the world could look like if difference no longer meant incompatibility.

With *Rusalka*, **Bastian Kraft** makes his opera debut at the Staatsoper Stuttgart. After assisting as stage director at the Burgtheater in Vienna, he continued to work in Vienna, Stuttgart and Frankfurt, at the Schauspielhaus Zurich, the Deutsche Theater Berlin and Thalia Theater Hamburg, among others. In 2019, he already staged *Ugly Duckling*, based on texts by H. C. Andersen, with actors and drag queens at Deutsche Theater Berlin.

Oksana Lyniv is internationally sought-after concert and opera conductor. She was also the first female conductor at the Bayreuth Festival in 2021 with *Der fliegende Holländer*. In 2022, Lyniv was appointed general music director at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna.

STAATSOPER STUTT GART

PREMIERE

Antonín Dvořák

Rusalka

Saturday, 4 June 2022, 6 pm

Further performances

9, 11, 16, 19, 25 June 2022

2 July 2022

Conductor **Oksana Lyniv**

Director **Bastian Kraft**

Stage Director **Peter Baur**

Costume Director **Jelena Miletić**

Videodesign **Sophie Lux**

Light Director **Reinhard Traub**

Chorus **Manuel Pujol**

Dramaturg **Franz-Erdmann Meyer-Herder**

Prinz **David Junghoon Kim**

Fremde Fürstin **Allison Cook**

Rusalka **Esther Dierkes & Reflektra**

Wassermann **Goran Jurić & Alexander Cameltoe**

Ježibaba **Katia Ledoux & Judy LaDivina**

Heger **Torsten Hofmann**

Küchenjunge **Alexandra Urquiola**

1. Elfe **Natasha Te Rupe Wilson & Vava Vilde**

2. Elfe **Catriona Smith & Lola Rose**

3. Elfe **Leia Lensing & Purrja**

Jäger **Ángel Macías**

Staatsoperchor Stuttgart

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