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Premiere on Friday: The costumes of the opera Rusalka were inspired by fashion from the early 20th century

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Photo: Croatian National Theatre

Costume designer Alessandra Garanzini created costumes that connect the characters to their psychological worlds, thus fostering a deep connection between actors and audience.

The premiere of the opera Rusalka will take place this Friday at the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb, with the costume design inspired by early 20th century clothing by Italian Alessandra Garanzini. This opera is one of the most famous works of the Czech romantic Antonín Dvořák, and it is a touching story about the water nymph Rusalka who longs to become a human being in order to win the heart of the young Prince. Based on a fairy-tale libretto by Jaroslav Kvapil, the opera is based on Slavic legends about rusalkas, authentic water spirits.

The costuming in this work is of great importance, as the costumes serve as a visual expression of the characters' inner states and their emotional journeys.

Alessandra Garanzini designed costumes that connect the characters to their psychological worlds, thus fostering a deep connection between actors and audience, she emphasized in the premiere announcement. Costumes are not just decoration; they are essential for character development, as they allow actors to fully immerse themselves in their roles.

Dresses from the early 20th century featured long skirts, layered construction, and a closed silhouette with high collars. This retro element in the new costume design evokes the clothing of the period, creating a contrast between vintage and modern approaches.

The use of pastel shades, along with rich textiles such as silk, satin and tulle, gives the costumes a touch of vintage elegance, while details such as beads and appliqués guarantee a touch of luxury and splendor. Although the costumes look lavish, their historical context and style provide a sense of authenticity and connection to the time in which the action is set.

Costume design is characterized by months of manual creation, where every detail – from decorations to cuts – is made with special care.

These costumes not only make the scene visually rich, but also serve as emotional vehicles, as they convey to the viewer the deep inner dynamics of the characters. At the same time, the actors enter their roles through physical contact with the clothes, almost as if the costumes become an extension of their emotions.