

Queensland Ballet

2025



MY FIRST BALLET

The Little Mermaid

18 – 23 December 2025

Talbot Theatre, Thomas Dixon Centre



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From the Artistic Director

Queensland Ballet is proud to bring back *The Little Mermaid* — a production that proved a hit with audiences of all ages when it premiered in 2023. Created essentially for children, this production was a standout across the school holidays, and we're proud to present it again as part of our 'My First Ballet' series.

This season is a true showcase of our in-house creative talent. Resident Choreographer for the Academy of Queensland Ballet, Paul Boyd has reimagined Hans Christian Andersen's classic tale with fresh energy and clarity, supported by Zoe Griffiths' inventive costume designs that bring the underwater world to life.

Audiences will meet a cast of colourful characters, from the courageous Little Mermaid and charming Prince, to the wicked Sea Witch and her slippery sidekicks. These creatures add humour and drama to the story, keeping young audiences engaged from start to finish.

With narration by Sarah McIntosh and music by Jean Sibelius, this production was created to introduce children to the magic of ballet. It's a spellbinding story of love, courage, and transformation, told through movement, colour, and character.

We look forward to welcoming you back under the sea.



Ivan Gil-Ortega
Artistic Director



Queensland Ballet acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we train and perform. Long before we arrived on this land, it played host to the dance expression of our First Nations Peoples. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the valuable contribution they have made and continue to make to the cultural landscape of this country.

Credits

Choreographer	Paul Boyd
Music	Jean Sibelius
Costume Designer	Zoe Griffiths
Set Designer	Josh McIntosh
Video Designer	Craig Wilkinson
Lighting Designer	Ben Hughes
Narrator	Sarah McIntosh

Duration: Approximately 60 minutes, no interval.

Every effort was made to ensure program details were correct at the time of printing, however details are subject to change where necessary and without notice. Please check queenslandballet.com.au for updates.



From the Choreographer

I am absolutely thrilled to see my 2023 production of *The Little Mermaid* return for Queensland Ballet's 'My First Ballet' series. After deciding that I would base the story on the beloved Hans Christian Andersen tale, combined with what I felt could be delightful segments connected to new and adventurous characters, the music was the next vital element to discover. Wanting to pay homage to the Scandinavian origins of the story, I have chosen music from Finnish composer, Jean Sibelius. I decided to keep the old-world charm and set this version in a magical place in faraway Scandinavia.

Wanting to create a ballet where our heroine was of a strong nature, and to help promote the strength that we wish for in our young women of today, this *Little Mermaid* is determined, honest, feisty, compassionate, and fights for what she believes in. The Prince falls in love with her courageous nature and all that she strives for.

I felt that the support of narration during the ballet was an important element for our younger audience, and the character of the Spirit of the Sea will navigate you on this adventure. If this is your first entry into the world of ballet, then I hope the Spirit of the Sea, the *Little Mermaid* and all these wonderful characters lead you on a path that you may want to return to.

My gratitude goes to the Costume, Set Design, Production, Audio Visual and Lighting teams whose imagination and wonderful skills have assisted me to bring this magical production to the stage. A special thanks to narrator Sarah McIntosh and all the wonderful character voices that she has created!

And to the versatile dancers who developed these characters and gave them honesty, humility, humour, and charm, I thank you for your dedication and artistic integrity.



Paul Boyd
Choreographer

The Characters

About the Costumes

It's been truly delightful creating the under the sea characters for this production of *The Little Mermaid*. Paul Boyd is a wonderful collaborator, with a great vision for the story that encouraged me to realise vivid colours and strong silhouettes into my designs.

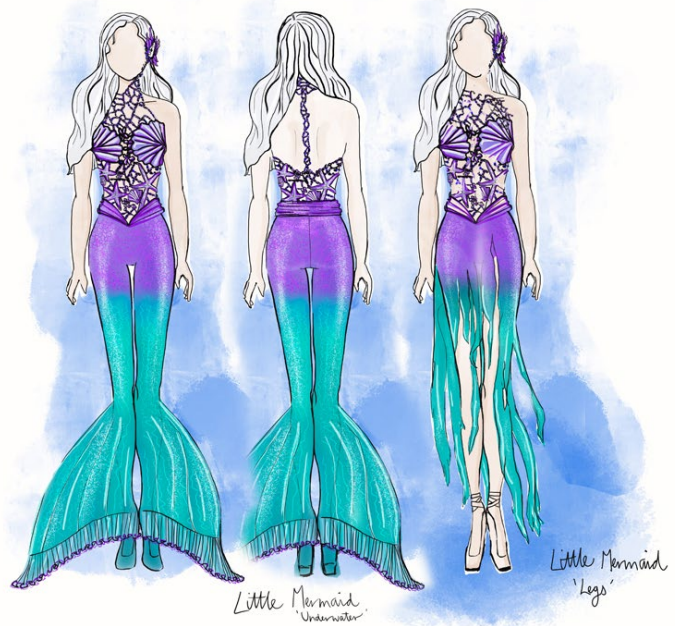
The team worked ocean-inspired textures into each costume through their clever fabric manipulations and detailed hand work that can be seen in every moment of the ballet.

It's been a great achievement watching the dancers fulfil all Paul's choreography uninhibited by the complicated structural costumes and seeing the designs come to life. It will be beautiful to see the incredible set, lighting and animation come together again with the costumes and choreography to create a captivating, fantasy, underwater world to be enjoyed by all.

– Zoe Griffiths, Costume Designer

The Little Mermaid

The Little Mermaid is a determined, feisty, and free-spirited mermaid who dreams of exploring the world beyond her underwater kingdom.



Spirit of the Sea

The narrator for this special story. The Spirit of the Sea accompanies the Little Mermaid on her journey and helps her in times of need.

The Little Mermaid's Sister

As the Little Mermaid's sister, she supports the Little Mermaid and warns her that the human world above the waves is dangerous.





The Prince

The handsome Prince is the Little Mermaid's love interest. He is a kind-hearted human who falls in love with the Little Mermaid's courageous nature.

Sea Witch

The Sea Witch is a cunning and villainous sorceress who does not have the Little Mermaid's best interests at heart. She convinces the Little Mermaid to trade her voice for legs.



Eels

The Eels are the Sea Witch's assistants who serve as her eyes and ears throughout the kingdom. They lead the Little Mermaid to the Sea Witch.

Temptress

The Sea Witch drinks a love potion and transforms into the Temptress to lure the Prince away from the Little Mermaid.



The Story

BY PAUL BOYD AFTER HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

The Spirit of the Sea observes the Little Mermaid in her underwater garden playing with her collection of treasures. The Little Mermaid is fascinated by a statue of a handsome Prince that is the centre piece of her garden. She longs to seek adventures above the waves with the human folk, but her mermaid sister and merman friend explain that it is dangerous above the waves.

The Little Mermaid sees the shadow of a boat overhead and decides to follow it, accompanied by the Spirit of the Sea. Upon her arrival above the waves, she sees a handsome Prince in his boat and is immediately captivated by him.

A storm starts to take shape in the sky, the sea becomes rough, and a huge wave tosses the Prince into the deep waters. The Spirit of the Sea assists the Little Mermaid to save a drowning and injured Prince, and she brings him to dry land in an unconscious state. The Little Mermaid kisses his forehead and for a moment he awakens. She spontaneously places her necklace around his neck but is suddenly startled and leaves his side only to return to the sea and the safety of her garden.

The Little Mermaid reminisces about meeting the Prince and is once again fascinated by the statue, yearning to be with the Prince who she had just rescued. In the background, two slippery, slimy, sinister eels are lurking around her garden.

The eels invite the Little Mermaid on a journey where she must seek help from the Sea Witch who will have the powers to assist and advise her on how to see her Prince again. And so, she sets out on a journey through the dark and gloomy depths of the sea, accompanied by the two eels who lead her to the cave of the Sea Witch.

The Sea Witch explains to the Little Mermaid that in order for her to get closer to the Prince, she must forfeit her mermaid's tail for human legs so that she can walk on land. This can be arranged but there is a price to pay, and the price is that the Little Mermaid sacrifices her voice for her land legs — a painful transformation that means she will never be able to return to the sea again. Should the Prince want to kiss her, he has until sunset on the day she arrives, otherwise the Little Mermaid's voice will remain the property of the Sea Witch!

The Little Mermaid agrees to this and so the Sea Witch creates a potion which is given to her, but she can only drink it upon the dry land where she will be granted her land legs. The Little Mermaid bids farewell to her sister and the underwater life she has known, making her way to dry land where she drinks the potion, falling asleep.

The Prince in his castle garden, fascinated by the necklace, remembers the beautiful girl that gave it to him.

The Little Mermaid awakens with the land legs that she so desired, but she has indeed sacrificed her voice and so she begins the uncomfortable experience of discovering how to walk. The Prince happens upon her and is fascinated by her, yet confused that she has no voice.

He invites her to his garden in the castle where they are greeted by the Prince's two attendants. There is a majestic fountain and a statue of a man and his son. The Prince explains to the Little Mermaid that the man is his deceased father and the little boy is himself. She ponders as the statue of the man looks very familiar.

Back under the sea, the Sea Witch is watching the Little Mermaid's every move through a magic crystal ball, and is observing the fascination that the Prince has for the Little Mermaid.

Raging with anger, the Sea Witch decides that the love that is developing between the Prince and Little Mermaid must stop, and so with a magic potion transforms into the Temptress to lure the Prince away from Little Mermaid.

Back at the castle garden, the Prince bestows upon the Little Mermaid a regal dress fit for a princess, and together they dance — falling more in love.

The Temptress and her two valets magically arrive at the castle garden to put the Prince under her spell, distracting him so he will not kiss the Little Mermaid. The Little Mermaid sees the Prince becoming more entranced by the Temptress, but without her voice she cannot tell him that she is falling more in love with him.

The Prince, although enchanted by the Temptress, witnesses her and the two mischievous valets manipulating and taunting the Little Mermaid, and confronts her about her actions and insists that she leave the castle at once. The Temptress is sent into a rage, and suddenly in a whirlwind of fury, turns back into the Sea Witch after witnessing the Prince kiss the Little Mermaid. The plan is destroyed, and the Sea Witch and the two eels dissolve into oblivion.

After having been kissed by the Prince, the Little Mermaid discovers that her voice has returned. The Prince returns the necklace that she gave him on the beach and he swears of his devotion to her. A celebration is danced by the Prince and his new-found love, along with his attendants in the garden.

Dancers

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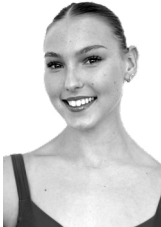
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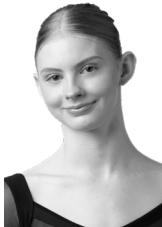
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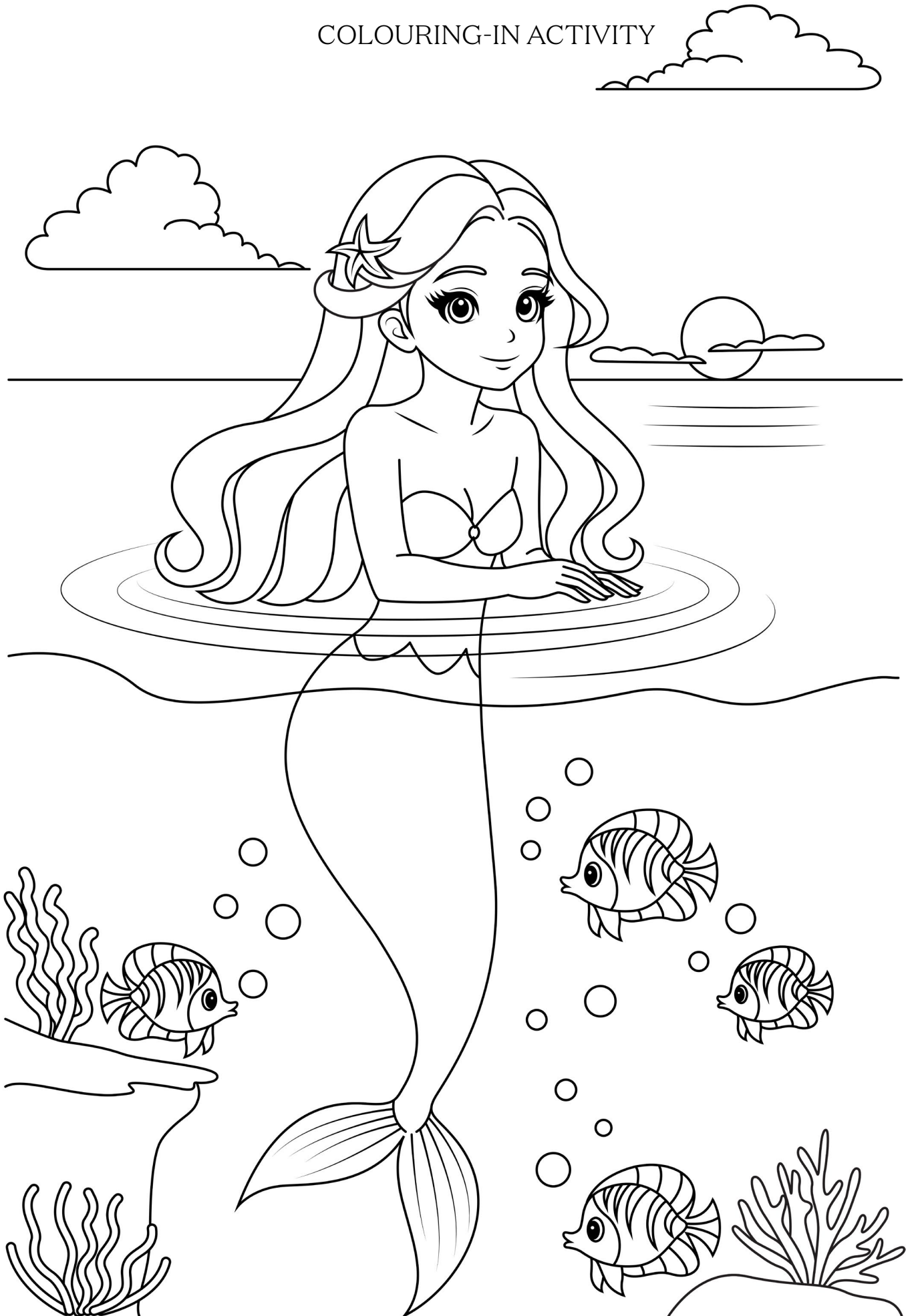
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The Little Mermaid

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Red Riding Hood

and the Wolf



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On Yuggera and Turrbal Country

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The revitalisation of the Thomas Dixon Centre is an incredible story of passion, tenacity, and altruism. Queensland Ballet, a not-for-profit arts company, refurbished its heritage home, not only to house its own artists and arts workers for years to come, but to create a vibrant space for its neighbours, sector and wider community.

The Thomas Dixon Centre is an extraordinary space, where stories are shared, creativity flourishes, and connections between artists and audiences are forged.

Discover more about the Thomas Dixon Centre at thomasdixoncentre.com.au and see stories unfold.



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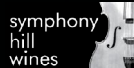
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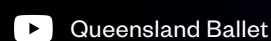
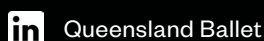
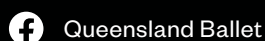
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