

The Little Mermaid: a small scale ballet

Content Warnings Guide

Links to sections by heading:

[Context](#)

[Broad content warnings](#)

[A note on the performance style](#)

[Detailed content warnings](#)

[For more information](#)

[Resources for support](#)

Context

Thank you for your interest in our independent production. *The Little Mermaid* is created by early career underrepresented artists, and is the lead artist's first full-length work.

The Little Mermaid uses magical realism to explore themes of non-physical domestic violence, marginalised survival, how physical appearance and class differences across Noongar Boodjar affect different communities' understandings of love, and the life experiences that impact what we think is and is not okay. Audiences may feel our show is heavy, cathartic, affirming, insightful, creatively modern, or powerful. We have created our own access plan to help these responses be held comfortably by the foyer and theatre space before, during and after the show. You can read this show's detailed access information on The Blue Room Theatre's [Additional Show Information page](#).

From the beginning of making this work, we worked collaboratively with an intimacy director with a consent advocacy background to explore the lived experiences represented in the show. All of the scenes that include icky interactions were created slowly and collaboratively with all performers across this year. We enjoy performing these scenes knowing how much care we've put into them toward ourselves and each other, and would not perform anything we aren't fully comfortable and confident sharing with you.

Whilst representing some stigmatised and difficult stories from our communities, *The Little Mermaid* is also about young people – there is humour, joy, and beautifully big emotions that will also paint a multifaceted picture of these characters. We hope you will enjoy the strength, humanity and tenderness of this ballet, while also holding space for its uncomfortable truths and reflections of our world today.

Broad content warnings

This list is written in order of more frequent to less frequent, and also in a general order of most to least intense representation in this ballet.

Themes of family domestic violence and co-dependency; toxic masculinity and homophobia; ableism; contemplated murder; presence of a weapon; brief non-consensual touch; near-drownings; alcohol; real food onstage.

A note on the performance style

This work is an interdisciplinary ballet. This means it combines movement styles from different “disciplines” of performance – realist acting, contemporary dance, everyday colloquial dances, and beginner ballet vocabulary – whilst still maintaining the general format of a narrative ballet.

There will be no talking in the show, and characters have conversations with each other using everyday hand gestures inspired by traditional ballet pantomime. The scenes described below are all depicted through real life-looking body language and choreographic interpretations.

Pre-recorded contemporary classical music will be played whenever characters are onstage, and will convey emotional tone and different environments while also being grounding to listen to.

Detailed content warnings

Please note that the dot points below contain some spoilers.

This list is written in order of more frequent to less frequent, and also in a general order of most to least intense representation in this ballet.

Themes of family domestic violence (emotionally manipulative parenting; unfair punishments of young adult child; classed pressure to change appearance)

- **There is no physical violence in this show, and family domestic violence is represented more as a power imbalanced dynamic between characters in a family.**
- A senior mother is emotionally turbulent and controlling toward the two adult children they live with. Across the show, they unfairly punish these two characters with ten minutes of silence, celebrating a character’s birthday without them, and making them wear classier clothing when they go out. This parent character has been developed as a three-dimensional person, and is also a kind and hard-working single parent navigating housing insecurity.
- One of the adult children is treated more favourably, and sometimes acts as an emotional mediator for the parent.
- This show does not offer a victim narrative – the struggles with family are only one part of the young character’s lives, and they are represented as full people journeying through multiple parts of themselves and their world.

Themes of co-dependency (characters have porous boundaries in romantic contexts)

- Two characters often compromise their own boundaries, needs and identities unknowingly, with the intention of being accepted by their love interest.

Toxic masculinity and homophobia (misogyny; homophobic teasing of a closeted character; internalised homophobia)

- Two different young men discount a young woman’s opinions. One of these instances is in the context of a romantic relationship.
- A young man tells another young man that they must be single because of their feminine walk.
- A character experiences shame when connecting with their queerness.

Ableism (internalised ableism; ableist pressure to change appearance)

- A wheelchair-using parent tells their adult walker-using child to walk straighter, so they don't have to use a wheelchair like the parent when they're older.
- A mobility aid-using character decides to pass as non-disabled in order to be accepted by their love interest. This character later pushes themselves beyond their physical limits dancing at a party.

Contemplated murder (family pressure to perpetrate harm; character considers perpetrating harm to another character)

- A character holds a weapon and considers whether or not to kill another character while they are sleeping.
- A parent advises their young adult child to kill another character.

Presence of a weapon (presentation and use of a small vegetable knife in contemplated murder)

- A small vegetable knife is onstage earlier in the show in a non-violent food preparation setting. Later, the same knife is seen in a context of discussing and contemplating physical harm to another character. This is a prop that is not sharp.

Brief non-consensual touch (non-consensual intimate touch; disrespect for another character's boundaries)

- A character tries to rush a new relationship by speeding up non-sexual physical intimacy. The physical blocking looks like close touch, mimicking an intimate hug and intention to kiss another character's neck.
- A character is challenged, put down and rejected after asserting their physical boundaries. This action passes very quickly.

Near-drownings (boating accident during thunderstorm; bystanderism)

- A thunderstorm causes a sailing yacht to break down, leading to two characters evacuating and one intoxicated character falling into the ocean and later being surfaced unaffected.
- A character accidentally falls off a boat and asks for help, and the people who see them do not help.
- A character is submerged underwater after a boating accident and presumed missing.

Alcohol (presence of alcohol; alcohol consumption; drunk characters)

- A character is gifted expensive wine at their birthday, and characters drink alcohol on a boat. These are props that do not contain liquid.
- One long scene is set in a wine shop, with bottles of wine on display.

Real food onstage (gluten-free bread; gluten-free vegemite; gluten-free chocolate cake; unopened lollies; unopened Fanta; unopened chips)

- A character brings bread slices with vegemite onstage, which is not eaten (gluten-free bread; gluten-free vegemite).
- A set piece in one long scene is a table of party food, and the food is handled onstage but not eaten (gluten-free chocolate cake; lollies; Fanta; chips).
- In one scene, empty ice-cream cups appear as an uncomplicated prop.
- After the show, the gluten-free chocolate cake will be in the bar and audience members are welcome to have a piece.

For more information

If you have a specific question about what will or won't be in the show, feel free to reach out to The Blue Room Theatre's Front of House & Ticketing Coordinator by emailing pete@blueroom.org.au or calling 9227 7005, 10am - 5pm Tuesdays - Fridays.

Resources for support

1800 Respect

1800 737 732 (24/7)

<https://www.1800respect.org.au/>

For survivors of (F)DV, (C)SA, SH, and supporters of survivors.

QLife

1800 184 527 (3pm - 12am AEDT)

<https://qlife.org.au/>

(Peer run) For LGBTQIA+ and questioning folks, and supporters and allies.

Blue Knot

1300 657 380 (9am – 5pm AEDT)

<https://blueknot.org.au/>

For adult survivors of childhood trauma, and supporters of survivors.

SARC

(08) 6458 1828 (8:30am – 4:30pm AWST)

<https://www.kemh.health.wa.gov.au/other-services/sarc>

For survivors of recent and historical SA.

13 Yarn

13 92 76 (24/7)

<https://www.13yarn.org.au/>

(Peer run) For First Nations peoples.

MensLine

1300 78 99 78 (24/7)

<https://mensline.org.au/>

For men, and loved ones of men.

Beyond Blue

1300 22 4636 (24/7)

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/about/contact-us>

For depression and anxiety.

Kids Helpline

1800 55 1800 (24/7)

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/>

For 13- to 25-year-olds.

Dance Care Australia

<https://www.dancecareaustralia.com/>

For past and current dancers with professional training and/or work experience.