

Presented by The Blue Room Theatre & Patrick Gunasekera

The Little Mermaid

A small scale ballet



This project grew and is shared on Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar, an ancient place of song, dance, gathering and celebration, where sovereignty was never ceded.

As a team of many cultures we pay our respects to Noongar Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the strength and timelessness of this land that has held space for our healing, growth and wholeness as a room over the last year of rehearsals.

As a team of marginalised artists we also extend our solidarity and thanks to all First Nations artists and cultural leaders who have guided and supported us on our own advocacy journeys.

The Little Mermaid

A small scale ballet

For Sachi, Kyle & Georgia

*Choreographed by
Patrick Gunasekera*

*Composed by
Tiffany Ha & Ben Buchanan*

Producer / Scenographer
Patrick Gunasekera (he/him)

The Little Mermaid
Patrick Gunasekera (he/him)

Intimacy Director
Rhiannon Bryan (they/them)

The Middle Mermaid / Wine Store Assistant
Ez O'Keefe (they/them)

Production Manager
Emmett Aster (he/him)

The Sea Queen/ Wine Store Manager
Rayna Lamb (she/her)

Stage Manager
Anna Quercia-Thomas (she/they)

The Prince
Octavia Hall (she/her)

Lighting Designer
Jasmine Lifford (she/her & they/them)

The Theologian
Alison Evans (she/her)

Sound Designer
Rebecca Riggs-Bennett (she/they)

The Captain
Bella Scullard (they/them)

Blind Cultural Consultant
Grace King (she/her)

First Development Rehearsal Director
Jules Burton (she/her)

Cellist
Ben Buchanan (he/him)

First Development Stage Manager
Isobel Chard (they/them)

Pianist
Tiffany Ha (she/her)

First Development *The Sea Witch / The Ambassador*
Reese Horne (they/them)

Assistant Producer
Rachel Hull (they/them)

First Development *The Captain*
Ev Snook (they/them)

Design Associate
Ken Meyer (he/him)

First Development Understudy *The Captain*
Daisie Finch (every pronoun)

Dramaturg
Ari Rahim (it/its & they/them)

Audience Peer Support Workers
Adele Aria (they/them)
Anania Tagaro (she/her)
Ari Rahim (it/its & they/them)
Rachel Hull (they/them)

Online Film Videographer
Logan Ringshaw (he/him)

Set & Props Consultant
Charlotte Meagher (she/her)

4th – 22nd November 2025

Studio, The Blue Room Theatre
53 James St, Northbridge WA 6003
Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar

15th – 29th November 2025

Online

15th November 2025

Audio Described Show

Synopsis

Based on the Hans Christian Andersen's 1836 short story The Little Mermaid

Act One

Scene One ~ Mermaid Family Home, Mandurah

The ballet opens in a working-class family home in the underwater suburb of Mandurah, the day before The Little Mermaid's birthday. He and his sibling, The Middle Mermaid, tease each other about this excitedly until their single mother, The Sea Queen, unfairly punishes them after The Little Mermaid accidentally knocks over their breakfast.

When he is alone, The Little Mermaid indulges in a secret infatuation with a local human celebrity – a prolific young home-owner in the Western suburbs, dubbed "The Prince" by local newspapers. He is confused by his feelings, and wonders whether the surface is a more accepting place for queer love.

The Little Mermaid is excited to learn that he will be allowed to join his mother and sibling on land for the first time now that he is old enough. The Sea Queen gives him specific instructions on how to walk and what to wear in order for their family to look good in the city.

Scene Two ~ Surface, Elizabeth Quay

On the surface, The Little Mermaid wanders out alone and runs into a yacht belonging to the object of his affection, The Prince, and the two share an immediate connection.

The Prince is also celebrating his birthday with two friends, The Captain and The Theologian. He is disillusioned by the festivity and excited by the genuine connection he experiences with The Little Mermaid. The meeting is interrupted by a storm which damages the yacht and throws The Prince into the ocean.

The Little Mermaid is unbothered by the rough sea because he lives in the ocean. He carries the Prince safely to the shore where he notices his feelings again, and leaves two pearls for the Prince as an anonymous gift.

The Captain and Theologian find the Prince, and he and Theologian both discover one of the pearls and are confused about their origins.

Scene Three ~ Mermaid Family Home, Mandurah

Back underwater, The Sea Queen is irate that The Little Mermaid has not come home. When he arrives, he tells his family about his adventures finding a group of people he felt connected to, but his mother decides that for making them wait, she and The Middle Mermaid will celebrate his birthday without him, much to The Middle Mermaid's dismay.

Scene Four ~ Near Surface, Perth Underwater Train Station

Feeling ignored, The Little Mermaid decides to run away from home and goes back to the surface to pursue his connection with The Prince. He finds the Prince's watch on the sea floor and picks it up, planning to return it. In an attempt to fit in with the humans and conform to the expectations of their world, he code-switches his rattier clothes, removes his gills, and leaves his walker at a streetlight.

Act Two

Scene One ~ Wine Store in Claremont & Prince's House, Western Suburbs

In the human world, The Little Mermaid comes across a Claremont wine store, which he enters thinking he might learn more about The Prince's world, but is shocked to learn how expensive everything is. The Prince, The Captain, and The Theologian unexpectedly enter the store and reminisce about their childhood together.

The Little Mermaid returns the Prince's watch, which endears him to the group and the Prince invites him to join them at the Prince's house. Following energetic dances shared by the Captain and Theologian, the Little Mermaid bravely shares a slower and more soulful dance, which strikes a vulnerable chord in the Prince. They then learn that the thunderstruck yacht has been repaired, decide to go back to it and the beach.

Scene Two ~ Sea Shore, Cottesloe Beach

While there, the Captain homophobically makes fun of the Prince's walk, and the Prince tells the Captain to leave him alone. The Prince then tells the Little Mermaid that he's struggling with thinking about the person who saved him from drowning and left the pearl - feeling a genuine connection with this person but not knowing who they are. The Little Mermaid tries to figure out how to share his feelings with the Prince - the two share a dance, but this is cut short when the Prince feels rejected and argues about the Little Mermaid's boundaries. The scene cuts back to when the Little Mermaid is thinking about what to do - the romantic then disrespectful event all having been an anxious daydream in the Little Mermaid's head.

The Theologian and the Captain re-enter with the Prince's birthday presents, and the Theologian gives the Prince a pair of pearl cufflinks, which remind the Prince of his pearl again. Hearing this, The Theologian shows him a matching pearl, revealing that she was the one who found him on the beach.

Believing her to be the one who saved him and to whom he feels so cared by, the Prince proposes - shocking and concerning the Little Mermaid. The humans celebrate on the yacht, when The Sea Queen arrives and asks The Little Mermaid to kill the Prince to bring his money back to his mother and family, and gives him a knife. The Little Mermaid refuses and tells her to leave.

The human friends fall asleep on the boat, but after waking up and seeing the Theologian and Prince sleeping close together, the Little Mermaid takes out the knife and feels confused about whether the Prince actually liked him or not. Wrestling with his feelings in an unfamiliar setting he chose to assimilate to, he realises what he needs most is to accept his differences, and throwing the knife into the sea before dancing in celebration of his queerness. In the process, he accidentally falls in too and cannot breathe underwater without his gills.

The humans wake up and see him struggling, but the Prince refuses to help - wanting to distance from his own feelings for The Little Mermaid so close to his engagement, and the Captain follows suit and turns his back while the Little Mermaid struggles to be heard. The Theologian feels conflicted between wanting to help and wanting to maintain the Prince's comfort and her own status quo with him. Eventually she decides to throw the Little Mermaid a rope, but he is already gone. Believing him to be dead, the Theologian gets angry at her friends for their immorality, then questions her own ties to a group of people who have never truly respected her. She sheds the conformity she has outgrown, and throws her engagement ring into the sea.

Scene Three ~ Near Surface, Perth Underwater Train Station

Back under water, the Middle Mermaid finds a knife on the sea floor and recognises it from their family home. They confront the Sea Queen about why it was there and learn that she has tried to get the Little Mermaid to murder someone with it. Upset by this, the Middle Mermaid finally asserts herself to their mother and decides to leave home.

On their way, the Middle Mermaid runs into the Little Mermaid who is exhausted and heartbroken after his ordeal on the surface. The two talk and the Middle Mermaid gives him a birthday present - a rainbow necklace, implying that they accept him for his sexuality and whoever he wants to be, on land or under water. Though the Little Mermaid rejects their kindness at first, the siblings connect over their shared experiences and the Little Mermaid gives the Middle Mermaid money he stole from the Prince to help them start their new life.

Bolstered by each other's support, the siblings go their separate ways. The Little Mermaid discovers a wheelchair which he uses to replace his walker, eventually untying his long hair and setting out on a new path.

Written by Anna Quercia-Thomas & Patirck Gunasekera

"With this project I was able to reconcile with my masculinity and reflect how far I've grown and changed during my transition over the last few years, learning not to look upon the boy I was with disdain but instead sympathy. I hope others take the Prince as a cautionary tale that happiness is only attainable once you allow yourself to live as authentically as possible in spite of the fear that external or internal factors may inflict upon you."



Octavia Hall, *The Prince*





"This project is a combination of some of my favourite things: dance, fairy tales, and disability representation.

I love that we are telling stories that aren't often told in dance. This is one of the stories I needed growing up as a young disabled person.

It has been a joy and privilege to work with these incredibly talented young performers and creators. I hope that people watch this ballet and see that ballet and dance doesn't have to just be for perfect, 'acceptable' bodies, that dance is for disabled, fat, older bodies as well."

Rayna Lamb,
The Sea Queen / Wine Store Manager



"I'll always remember our first rehearsal working on the first couple of Mermaid Family scenes – following our first intimacy call together, the room was joyful and open as we shaped an image of FDV on our own terms. The neuroplasticity of bodies working socially with movement and storytelling together did something powerful for me, and I remember waking up the next day and not feeling this trauma in my body anymore.

This show has taught me how, in a theatre, anything is possible when we're surrounded by people who believe in and want the best for each other. The safety and ease of our room healed me really deeply, and showed me the power of trusting what feels right with my own voice, ideas and body. That we could gather as a group of survivors, outsiders, and misfits to create this world is a testament to our collective and individual strengths.

Without this room, I wouldn't have been able to articulate as much of how ableism, sexism, racism and classism impact our personal understandings of love, and how we stumble toward growth as we understand love more. Whilst this project was an enormous commitment and I often had very little spare time across all of my roles, I will always be grateful for what we've gained and achieved together, and how we approached each challenge collaboratively and creatively despite having never done anything like this before."



Patrick Gunasekera,
Choreographer
/ Producer
/ Scenographer
/ *The Little Mermaid*



"I took over as Stage Manager for this show quite late in the process, and I was immediately struck by the amazing energy Patrick and the rest of the team had cultivated in the space. This has been such a kind, inclusive, and powerful show and I'm so grateful to get to be a part of it!"

Anna Quercia-Thomas, Stage Manager



"Joining a show at the last minute has been a very new experience. Having a background in dance I had a basic idea of what to expect but it was incredible to be a part of a work from a more theatrical lens. I have gained so many new skills, not only around self-expression through concepts such as body language and facial movements, but also through integrating myself into a cast and crew that had already been working together for so long.

I absolutely loved being able to work with a disabled-led team. This was my first time being able to do so and it was the most incredible experience. It created such a supportive and safe environment for everyone to be able to express themselves freely and always be met with a positive attitude."



Bella Scullard, *The Captain*



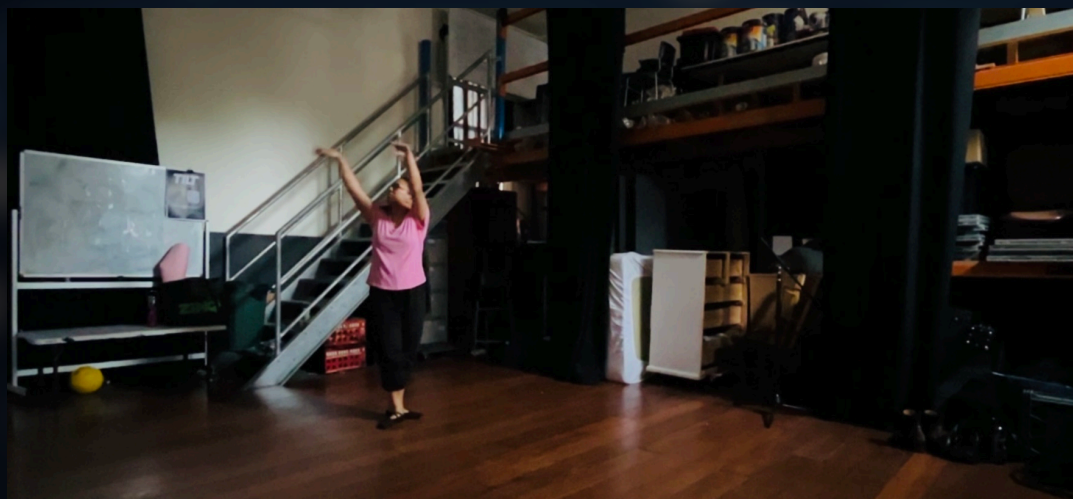
"I've loved every minute of working with this incredible team to create a radically safe space for vulnerability and story-telling in each rehearsal room and I can't wait for that collective joy to shine through on stage."

Ev Snook, First Development *The Captain*



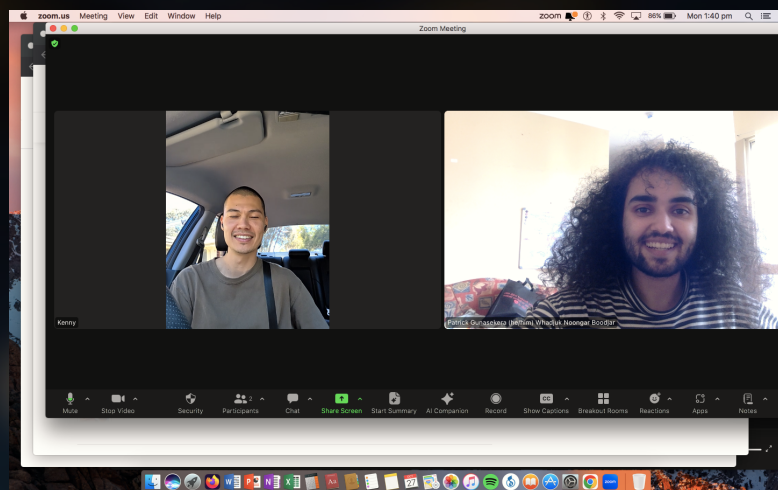
“My experience working on *The Little Mermaid* project has been a great experience for an amateur performer and dancer. Everyone in the team has been so kind and open, and it’s been a beautiful process to work with them. A big thank you to everyone on the team for making it a safe space and working environment to talk about feelings, thoughts and emotions in particular.”

Alison Evans, *The Theologian*



“Working with Patrick on this project was a truly uplifting way to begin my week. He brings such gentleness, openness and care to his work, and it’s clear how much love he’s poured into the show. My experience with *The Little Mermaid* has deepened my understanding of how accessibility can be meaningfully integrated and celebrated in art. It’s a perspective I’ll carry forward and embed in every future project I take on.”

Ken Meyer, Design Associate



"The Little Mermaid has changed how I carry myself through the world. I've also gained a new appreciation for the arts, more specifically story telling. I've gained more community in all the kind and committed people that have made this a reality.

I hope audiences will take pride away from this show. Pride in making hard choices to live our life how you want to and learning the power of saying no!

As this is my debut, I have no idea what is out there or what else is possible for me, but I am so grateful to have been able to do this, for myself and my community.

It's hard to pinpoint a singular part that was my favourite in the process, but I really appreciated learning how honesty and dedication in story telling is a core component of creating something compelling for an audience to experience.

This show is important to me because my community of both queer and disabled folk are represented in this show, along with all the intersections of identities within it. Although this isn't my story, it has parts of all of us in it, woven gently together with love, care and compassion."



Ez O'Keefe,
The Middle Mermaid
/ Wine Store Assistant

“Helping out with the show has been really fulfilling and I’ve felt so creatively motivated from it.

As a mobility aid user, it has been awesome seeing mobility aid users on stage and central to the story. So often we have to hide and mask this part of ourselves, and it is really affecting to see that reflected in the story instead of being hidden to serve a non-disabled story.

It’s also been strengthening to see how the team has worked so hard to make this show as accessible as possible, not only for the audience but for the cast and crew from the very start.”

Ari Rahim, Dramaturg / Audience Peer Support Worker





"The Little Mermaid is about finding agency on your own terms. What a privilege to work with a group of artists with such a determination to trust, respect and care for each other. Patrick's working style is so incredibly detailed, and embedded with a care for informed artistic choice.

Rhiannon Bryan, Intimacy Director



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.

Cover Image: Taje Singh | Rehearsal Images: Cast & Crew of The Little Mermaid | Ocean Image: Arusfly

**The
Blue Room
Theatre**



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which supported the access costs of this project.*