

A Hull Truck Theatre Production



The Little Mermaid

Written & Directed by Tom Saunders.

Music by Joe Roper.

Show Experience Guide

This show experience guide is designed for anyone who may want to familiarise themselves with the show *The Little Mermaid* before their visit.

The guide includes a social story, images of the cast, and information about light/sound effects and show content.

We also have a venue experience guide which includes photos and information about the theatre itself and what to expect when you arrive and during your visit.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW OUR VENUE EXPERIENCE GUIDE.](#)

Show Running Time: Approx. 50-60mins (no break)

Recommended Age: 3-6

Content Guidance: There are moments when some characters experience mild threat.

Guide Content

- Social Story
- About the show
- The stage and set
- Cast and characters
- The story
- Light/sound effects and content guidance
- Sensory items & Pre-show visit

Social Story

Many people enjoy seeing stories told by actors at the theatre. This is often called a production. The production of *The Little Mermaid* tells the story of Coral; a curious and kind young mermaid who loves talking to her family and fish friend, Finn. She is shy around strangers but dreams of singing in front of others.

To make the production more interesting the stage production team use items called props. These include puppet fish, a Christmas present and mince pies!

The actors often enter and exit from the back of the stage. These exits lead to the backstage area where actors can get changed. The stage and these areas are only for the actors to use.

Sometimes the actors may pass by you closely, as they move up and down the stairs, but will not touch you.

Special effects are also used to create an interesting production. These may be music, sound effects, changing lights and smoke effects (using water based haze).

Many people enjoy these effects. Some people like to bring their ear defenders, sunglasses or a favourite smell sprayed on a tissue, to help them manage these moments and enjoy the production more.

The production team like to sometimes include words or phrases that are not true or may seem unkind to one of the other actors. This is to help tell the story and is not real. The actors are pretending.

The actors use puppets when they are pretending to be under water. There is a shark, a mermaid, a boy and some fish. The shark may seem a little scary but is quite small and won't come out into the audience.

The people watching the production are called the audience. At the end of the show, the audience will clap to show that they enjoyed the production.

Many people enjoy the production of *The Little Mermaid*.
We hope you do too!

About the show

Coral is a little mermaid Princess... but she has a problem. Whilst she loves nothing more than talking to her family and closest pal, Fin the fish, when it comes to talking to new people she doesn't know what to say!

Will meeting Charlie, a human from above the waves, bring Coral out of her shell? Or will she fall hook, line and sinker for the Sea Witch's trickery and never find her voice?

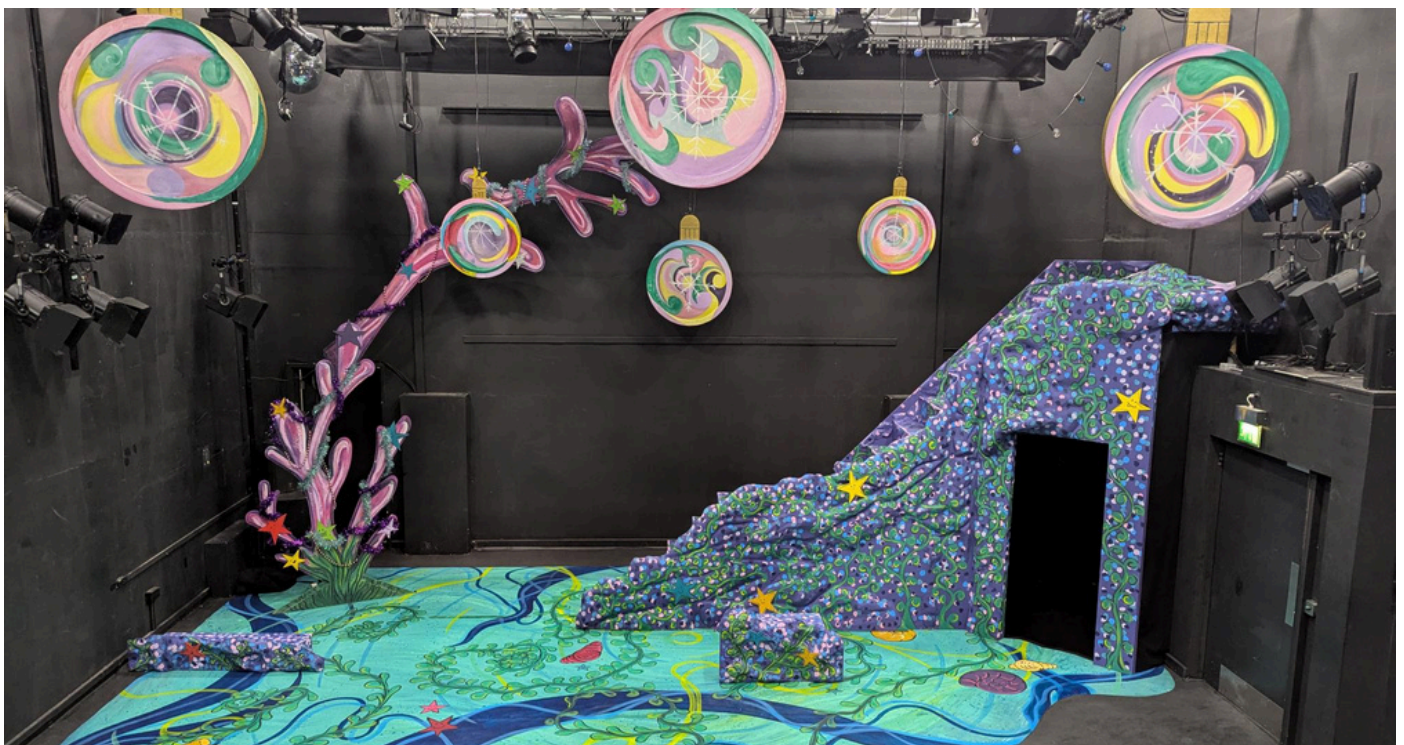
The show explores themes of friendship, courage and confidence.

The stage and set

When you enter the theatre you will see the stage and set. The actors will come out onto the stage to perform. All the items of scenery, furniture and the objects on the stage are called the set.

There is a brightly coloured painted floor, and brightly coloured coral shapes. On the right of the stage there is a large painted rock, with a doorway into the cave.

Hung from the ceiling are brightly coloured Christmas baubles, which also look a bit like bubbles.



The Cast



This is Alex Fairweather who plays Fin, Charlie, and the Sea Witch.



This is Elizabeth Green who plays Coral.

Both actors play the shark.

When the characters of Charlie and Coral are underwater, the actors use small puppets of themselves.

This is the puppet for Coral.



Fin, the shark, and other underwater creatures, will also be shown with handheld puppets, like the ones shown below.

Fin



The shark



Key Characters

Coral

A little mermaid Princess who loves singing but is extremely shy.



Fin

A fish and Coral's best friend.

Charlie

A human boy who Coral meets during her adventure.



The Sea Witch

A sneaky Sea Witch who lives in an under water cave and forces Coral to give up her voice.

Shark & Sea Creatures (Puppets)

There are also other sea creatures, including a shark, who appear throughout the show



The Story

At the beginning of the story Coral, a little mermaid, swims up to the surface. We see lots of fish to set the scene as under-water.

A shark appears and is curious about the dark under water cave. Coral's friend, Fin the fish, warns him to be careful as a Sea Witch lives in the cave. Fin describes the witch, which scares the shark off. Fin goes up to the surface looking for his friend, Coral.



Coral is now at the surface and greets the audience. She tells us that she is a Princess and that she loves singing but is very very shy. She has been asked to sing in front of a crowd of people at the Palace party but she is scared.



Coral hears Fin coming and hides. Fin eventually finds her and tells her she must come back to the Palace to sing at the party. Coral gets out of the water and realises her tail turns into legs!

Fin warns her that it's dangerous to be on land and tries to get Coral to come back into the water. When Coral realises that fish don't grow legs on land, she runs away from Fin.

Coral hears someone singing and wrapping presents on the shore - it's a human boy called Charlie. Coral has always been told not to talk to land dwellers but she's worried that he might get caught in the storm that's coming. Coral finds the courage to warn Charlie but it's too late and he falls in to the water. Coral dives in to help him.



Under the water Coral catches Charlie and puts him down on the sea floor. Coral remembers that land dwellers need air so she finds an air bubble to help Charlie keep breathing. Charlie doesn't wake up.

The shark comes after them. Coral tries to be brave and protect Charlie. Suddenly there's a noise from the Sea Witch's cave and the shark is scared away.



The Sea Witch appears and tells Coral she wants to keep Charlie. Coral tries to stop this happening even though she is scared. The Sea Witch forces Coral to give up her singing voice in exchange for Charlie.

The Sea Witch now has Coral's singing voice and Coral can't speak at all. She swims away, taking Charlie back to the surface.



Back on land Charlie wakes up. He tries to talk to Coral but she can't talk back. He guesses her name and thanks her for saving him. He quickly realises he's lost the Christmas present he was wrapping for his Nan. Coral doesn't know what Christmas is, so Charlie explains it to her and gives her a mince pie!



Coral decides to be brave and offers to get Charlie's present back.

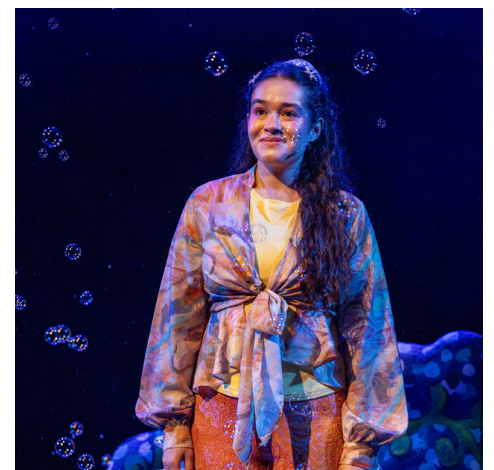
Back under the sea, the Sea Witch is preparing to take over the sea! She has Charlie's Nan's present (a snow globe in a box) and refuses to give it back to Coral. The Sea Witch teases Coral about not being able to speak and tries to leave the cave. Coral stops her. The Sea Witch is surprised!

Coral and the Sea Witch grab the box and struggle with it. The Sea Witch is strong and pushes Coral away. At this moment, something magical happens, and Coral gets her voice back. She swims off to the surface.

The Sea Witch thinks she has won and opens the box. She finds the snow globe has gone and there's a mince pie in its place. The hungry shark smells the mince pie and gobbles it up, Sea Witch and all.

Coral makes her way back to the surface and gives Charlie his Nan's present back. Charlie thanks her and invites her to spend Christmas with his family. Coral wants to but she's also feeling brave enough to go back to the Palace party and sing for people.

Coral sings her song to Charlie and heads back to the Palace with her best friend, Fin the fish.



Lighting, sound effects, and other content

Throughout the show there is -

- Music
- Singing
- Water-based haze which looks like smoke
- Pulsing fairy lights above the stage and giant coloured baubles that also light up and change colour.

Some times the entrance to the cave will light up red and green, and fill with haze. At these moments we will either hear or see the Sea Witch.

All performances will have a laid-back attitude to noise and movement in the theatre, and there will be low level lighting over the audience throughout.

There is audience interaction which means the noise from the audience can sometimes get quite loud.

<u>Effect / Content</u>	<u>Approx. Timing</u>
Actors move fish puppets up and down the two side staircases, next to the audience.	Between 2-4 mins into the show
The shark comes on stage	Approx. 4 mins in
A storm begins and we hear the sound of waves and thunder. There is a short lightening flash.	Approx 19 mins in
Charlie (as a puppet) sinks to the bottom of the ocean. He isn't breathing and is under water for quite a long time - but he's ok, air bubbles are on the way!	Between 20-23 mins in
Three clear beach balls ("air bubbles") are thrown into the audience from the back of the theatre. The audience are asked to pass them to the stage.	Between 23-25 mins in

Lighting, sound effects, and other content continued

<u>Effect / Content</u>	<u>Approx. Timing</u>
The shark appears on stage, hiding from Coral. Coral plays a game with the audience, asking them to shout out.	Between 26-28 mins in
Shark appears on stage, follows the Sea Witch into the cave and eats them. We do not see this, we just hear them shout from inside the cave.	Approx 49 mins in

Sensory Items & Pre Show Visit

We have a small number of ear defenders available to loan (suitable for baby, toddler and adult) which can be useful for patrons with auditory sensitivities.

We also have a small number of wobble cushions and weighted lap blankets available for loan, along with a range of sensory toys.

Please feel free to bring with you any items that usually assist in coping with busy or noisy environments.

If you would like to arrange a pre-show visit to the theatre, to familiarise yourself with the space, please contact paul.bennett@hulltruck.co.uk or call 01482 488208.

We hope that you enjoy the show, and your visit to
Hull Truck Theatre.