



Disney THE LITTLE
MERMAID

PRODUCTION HANDBOOK

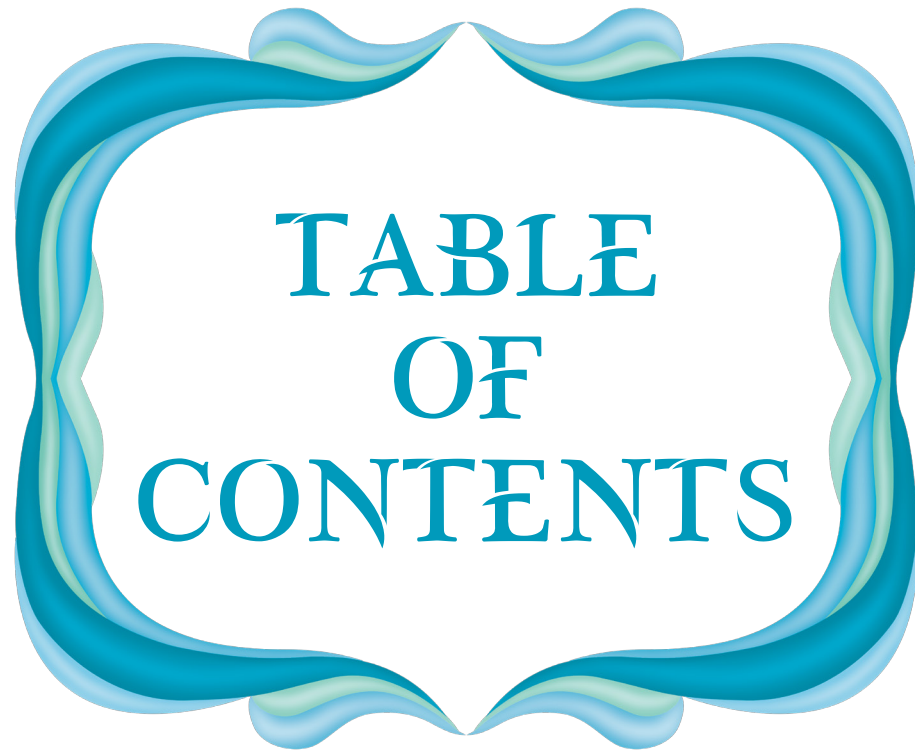
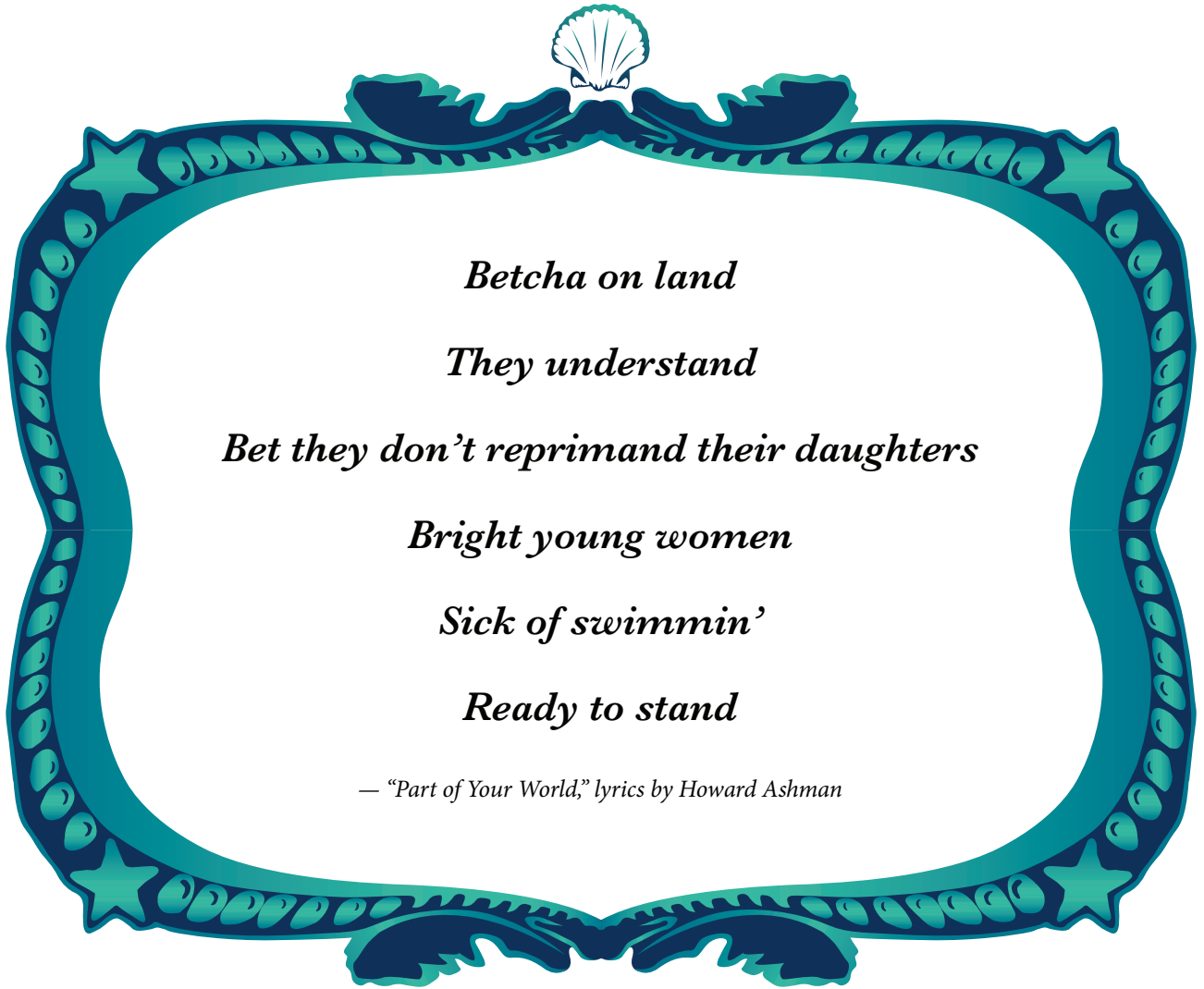


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Betcha on land

They understand

Bet they don't reprimand their daughters

Bright young women

Sick of swimmin'

Ready to stand

— "Part of Your World," lyrics by Howard Ashman



INTRODUCTION

Whether you first came to *The Little Mermaid* by way of the original Hans Christian Andersen tale, the classic Disney animated film, or the stage musical adaptation, the story resonates with the same emotional power. Strip the tale of its fantastical elements – mermaids and sea witches and talking crabs – and what’s left is the simple story of a young woman struggling to come into her own.

There’s a little bit of Ariel in all of us: headstrong, independent, insatiably curious, and longing to know the world in all of its glory, mystery, and diversity. A young woman who passionately pursues her dream, Ariel makes decisions that have serious consequences, all of which she faces with bravery and dignity. Her choice to live in the human world breaks down a fear of difference that is deeply imbedded in her undersea culture. By leaving home, she opens up the eyes of her fellow mermaids and human friends, who learn to accept and appreciate one another.

The Little Mermaid is also a tale of fathers and daughters. Though we do not have fins like our heroine, we do have parental figures who, perhaps at times, we feel have stood in the way of our happiness. Many can also sympathize with the widower King Triton who raises his daughter on his own in the best, and safest, way he can – even if Ariel is not always capable of recognizing that loving intention. The same is true of the relationship between Grimsby and Prince Eric, another strong-willed young person

searching for his place in the world. As Ariel and Eric learn to make decisions for themselves, King Triton and Grimsby learn the parental lesson of letting go.

The stage adaptation of *The Little Mermaid* – with music by Alan Menken, lyrics by Howard Ashman and Glenn Slater, and book by Doug Wright – retains the most beloved songs and moments from the original film while deepening the core relationships and themes, adding in layers, textures, and songs to form an even more moving and relevant story. This stage musical presents endless opportunities for creative design – from costuming the merfolk, to creating distinct underwater and on-land worlds, to staging the shipwreck and Ariel’s transformation.

Producing *The Little Mermaid* is an exciting, achievable challenge for any theater group, and also a wonderful opportunity to grow creatively, allowing your cast, crew, and artistic team’s imaginations to lead the way. Don’t be afraid to take chances – if you commit to a concept, within minutes your audience will accept it and become immersed in the vibrant and captivating worlds you’ve created. This Production Handbook is a toolkit of proven practices that will help you create your own special production. We hope it inspires you to make choices that serve the show in ways unique to your company and your creativity, because your audience wants to be a part of *your* world.



SYNOPSIS

ACT 1

Ariel, a beautiful young mermaid, crashes to the sea's surface, delighting in the expansive sky and the warm sun on her skin (**The World Above**). In the distance, a ship appears bearing a sea-loving Prince Eric and his guardian, Grimsby (**Fathoms Below**). As the ship sails into the horizon, Ariel, shadowed by her best friend, Flounder, recovers a sinking fork that Eric has tossed overboard. The seagull Scuttle swoops in and teaches them about this “dinglehopper” and other human stuff, reminding Ariel that she's late for an engagement below the surface.

On the ocean floor, Sebastian has arranged a concert in celebration of King Triton's anniversary as reigning monarch, featuring the King's seven daughters (**Daughters of Triton**), but Ariel arrives late and ruins the concert. King Triton wonders if his daughter would be better off if her mother was still alive to guide her (**If Only – Triton's Lament**), and he appoints Sebastian as her chaperone to keep her out of trouble.

In Ursula's lair, her flunkies Flotsam and Jetsam report back on the celebration, prompting the Sea Witch to reminisce bitterly about her childhood and her brother Triton's ascension to the throne (**Daddy's Little Angel**). Ursula vows to ruin King Triton by destroying what he loves most in the world – Ariel. Meanwhile, Ariel bemoans her dad's lack of understanding and wonders how he could hate a world that she finds so beautiful (**Part of Your World**). Sebastian barges in and begins taking charge, but Ariel becomes distracted by a ship passing overhead.

On the ship, Prince Eric and Grimsby argue. Eric has no interest in becoming King, but Grimsby insists that the Prince will be married by his next birthday. Suddenly, a violent storm overtakes the ship, throwing Eric overboard. Ariel, who had been admiring the Prince from afar, dives below the surface to rescue Eric, whom she returns safely to the shore (**Part of Your World – Reprise**). Back under the water, the Mersisters grill Flounder about Ariel's odd behavior (**She's in Love**), while on the beach an enamored Eric resolves to find his savior with the enchanting voice (**Her Voice**). In an effort both to please Eric and find him a bride, Grimsby arranges a singing contest in order to locate the owner of the mysterious voice.

Upon discovering her love for the world above, Sebastian extols the virtues of the ocean (**Under the Sea**). Undeterred, Ariel swims away to her secret grotto where King Triton, furious at his daughter for saving a human, destroys her human treasures, including a bust of Prince Eric. Sebastian tries to comfort her, but Ariel, still hurt by her father's actions (**If Only – Ariel's Lament**), is lured to Ursula's lair by Flotsam and Jetsam. The Sea Witch offers to transform Ariel into a human in exchange for her voice (**Poor Unfortunate Souls**). Ursula's contract states that Prince Eric must kiss Ariel within three days or she will turn back into a mermaid and become Ursula's slave forever. Overcome by her dreams of the world above, Ariel agrees to the bargain and trades her voice for human legs.



ACT 2

On the beach, Flounder and Sebastian fret about the three-day timeline. Ever optimistic, Scuttle is convinced that Ariel has what it takes (**Positovity**) to win over Prince Eric, who finds her and brings her home to the palace. Below the surface, King Triton worries about his daughter's safety, but up on land, Ariel is elated by the wonders of palace life (**Beyond My Wildest Dreams**). Sebastian, who has followed Ariel to the palace in order to protect her, finds himself in jeopardy in Chef Louis's kitchen (**Les Poissons**). Sebastian continues to elude the frustrated chef's grasp (**Les Poissons – Reprise**), while Ariel's silence prompts Prince Eric to find other ways to communicate, like dancing (**One Step Closer**) – but he is still haunted by the mysterious voice.

Ariel's progress with Eric on the first day makes Ursula nervous, but she vows to take revenge on Triton through his daughter (**Daddy's Little Angel – Reprise**). On the second day, Sebastian calls on lagoon animals to serenade the couple (**Kiss the Girl**), but Flotsam and Jetsam cause a commotion that blocks their kiss. In desperation, Sebastian informs King Triton of Ariel's contract, and the King swears to settle things with Ursula once and for all.

As night falls on the second day, Ariel wishes she could tell Eric how she truly feels while Eric longs for the mysterious voice, Sebastian wishes he could solve this predicament, and King Triton regrets pushing Ariel away (**If Only – Quartet**).

At the singing contest the next day (**The Contest**), Ariel bursts through the crowd of opportunistic princesses and rather than singing, she dances, prompting Prince Eric to realize how much he truly loves her. But the sun has set, breaking the spell, and Ursula drags Ariel, a mermaid once again, back into the sea.

King Triton confronts Ursula, who agrees to free Ariel if he hands over his trident and becomes Ursula's slave (**Poor Unfortunate Souls – Reprise**). Just as Ursula attempts to harness the power of the seas now in her control, Ariel swims past her and grabs her magic shell, regaining her voice. Unable to control her pride, Ursula reveals that she was the one who murdered Ariel's mother, prompting Ariel to destroy the shell and, with it, the Sea Witch.

With order restored, Ariel returns the trident to her father. Realizing that Ariel has grown up and that she cares deeply for Prince Eric, King Triton decides to restore her human form. Together, father and daughter swim to the surface, where Prince Eric proposes to Ariel, then learns that it has been her voice he has been seeking all along (**Finale Ultimo**).



CASTING

Although widely known and beloved for its iconic score, *The Little Mermaid* requires a cast of strong actors who not only can sing, but also are comfortable creating characters through physicality and movement. Below is a description of each character along with recommended audition material from the show and vocal ranges.

LEADING ROLES

in order of appearance

ARIEL

Ariel is a strong-willed teenaged mermaid who longs to be human. She possesses a keen curiosity for the world both under and above the sea – much to the chagrin of her father, King Triton. Big-hearted, she’s more accepting of and delighted by others’ differences than most of her fellow merfolk, but she also has a rebellious streak that can get her into trouble. A mezzo soprano with strong top notes, your actress must be able move well in order to clearly convey meaning once Ariel loses her voice.



Vocal Audition: “The World Above,”
“Part of Your World”

Acting Audition: p. 22 through “Part of Your World,”
p. 49 through “If Only (Ariel’s Lament)”

PRINCE ERIC

Prince Eric is the adventurous human monarch who captures Ariel’s heart. Charming and sensitive in nature, he has a warm voice and demeanor that evoke his flair for romance. There is also a stubborn

side to the Prince, who is determined to do whatever it takes to get what he wants – including the girl with the mysterious voice. Tenor.



Vocal Audition: “One Step Closer”

Acting Audition: pp. 3-4, 75 through
“One Step Closer”

GRIMSBY

Grimsby is Prince Eric’s prim and proper valet. Rigid in bearing and personality, he is constantly trying to guide Prince Eric toward the throne and a suitable bride fit for a royal marriage. Under his stern demeanor, Grimsby truly is fond of Eric, whom he worries about and attends to as though his own son. Though he has a few small solos, Grimsby needn’t be a strong singer – your actor should feel free to speaking his part.





Vocal Audition: “The Contest”

Acting Audition: pp. 26, 85, 91-92

FLOUNDER

Flounder is Ariel’s sincere and sensitive best friend who rarely leaves her side. A spunky fish with a sweet sense of humor, he can be awkward and anxious around his unrequited crush. Tenor.



Vocal Audition: “She’s in Love”

Acting Audition: pp. 5-6, 22

SCUTTLE

Scuttle is the know-it-all seagull who serves as Ariel’s expert on all things human. Garrulous and off-beat, Scuttle’s eccentricities are more endearing than aggravating. Even as he makes up ridiculous names and functions for common human objects, his intentions are friendly and his enthusiasm is infectious. Tenor.



Vocal Audition: “Positooovity”

Acting Audition: pp. 6-8, 60 through “Positooovity”

KING TRITON

King Triton, King of the Sea and a harried single father to seven girls, struggles to balance his political and paternal powers. A widower, Triton is as fond of his daughters as he is frustrated with their teenage angst. Even when unsure of his parenting technique, he is a tender patriarch who becomes a royal force to be reckoned with when Ariel’s safety and happiness is threatened by his sister, the Sea Witch Ursula. Baritone.



Vocal Audition: “If Only (Triton’s Lament)”

Acting Audition: pp. 14-15, 84

SEBASTIAN

Sebastian is the choirmaster of King Triton’s court who has a flair for the dramatic. A meticulous and uptight crab, Sebastian is ever-anxious, whether he’s conducting a concert premiere or protecting Ariel from Ursula. When he’s performing – which is almost always – he’s undeniably charismatic. His movement should be more fidgety than fluid, and he should be able to perform a broad send-up of a Caribbean accent (rather than an authentic Jamaican one). Tenor.



Vocal Audition: “Under the Sea,” “Kiss the Girl”

Acting Audition: p. 41 through “Under the Sea,” p. 77

MERSISTERS

Aquata, Andrina, Arista, Atina, Adella, and Allana are the daughters of King Triton and sisters to Ariel. Full of personality and sass, each should be distinct in character.

Vocal Audition: “She’s in Love”

FLOTSAM & JETSAM

Flotsam and Jetsam are Ursula’s sinister lackeys. With devious charm, these electric eels convince Ariel to visit the Sea Witch. Tricky and menacing, they are always lurking about, ready to take advantage of sea inhabitants at their most vulnerable moments. Altos or tenors.



Vocal Audition: “Sweet Child”

Acting Audition: p. 17

URSULA

Ursula is the tentacled and manipulative Sea Witch who is sister to King Triton. Cunning and calculating, she will stop at nothing to get what she wants – and what she wants is Triton’s throne. To gain the upper-hand, she utilizes her slick sense of humor, a flash of glamour, and larger-than-life confidence. Ursula can be played by a low alto, but a contralto is ideal.



Vocal Audition: “Daddy’s Little Angel,”
“Poor Unfortunate Souls”

Acting Audition: p. 54 through “Poor Unfortunate Souls,” pp. 96-97

CHEF LOUIS

Chef Louis is the melodramatic head chef in the palace. Wild and frenetic, he becomes physically and vocally flustered by Sebastian, who always manages to escape his grasp. A tenor, he should be highly comedic with exaggerated movement and an over-the-top French accent.



Vocal Audition: “*Les Poissons*”

USING ACCENTS IN *THE LITTLE MERMAID*

While not written into the script, Sebastian and Chef Louis should speak and sing with broad accents. To accomplish this, for Sebastian, replace TH with D, and for Chef Louis, replace TH with Z, and you’re mostly there! For an idea of how these accents should sound, refer to Sebastian and Louis’s songs on the Guide Vocal CD.



ENSEMBLE ROLES

in order of appearance

PILOT

The Pilot, the uniformed helmsman of Prince Eric's ship, is a nautical expert who entertains the sailors with wild tales of the sea. A little too superstitious for Grimsby's taste, the Pilot nevertheless maintains strict control of his ship and crew even as he sings with a jolly cadence. Baritone.

Vocal Audition: "Fathoms Below"

SAILORS

The Sailors are the competent crew of Prince Eric's ship. Hardy and eager for adventure, they are vigorous, efficient, and attentive to the Pilot's orders, always prepared for rough seas and stormy weather.

Vocal Audition: "Fathoms Below"

SEA CREATURES

Sea Creatures of various shapes, sizes, and species comprise the underwater ensemble of King Triton's court. "Under the Sea" presents opportunities to showcase both talented singers and dancers.

WINDWARD & LEEWARD

Windward and Leeward, trumpet fish, are heralds in King Triton's court.

GULLS

The Gulls comprise Scuttle's zany back-up flock in "Positovity." These feathered friends of Scuttle's are equally as off-beat, though they present an opportunity to showcase the talented – and very on-beat – dancers in your cast.

Vocal Audition: "Positovity"

MAIDS

The Maids are four palace servants who report to Grimsby. They haughtily assist Ariel in preparation for dinner with Prince Eric and are a bit jealous of this pretty stranger in their midst.

Vocal Audition: "Beyond My Wildest Dreams"

CHEFS

The Chefs comprise the sous staff of the eccentric Chef Louis. Their equally overblown movement adds to the comedic chaos of dinner as they chase Louis around the dining room.

Vocal Audition: "*Les Poissons* (Reprise)"

PRINCESSES

The Princesses try everything they can to win the heart of Prince Eric. As none possesses the voice he is searching for, each should have an exaggerated and comedic personality that is revealed through song.

Vocal Audition: "The Contest"



OVERVIEW

Alan Menken and Howard Ashman are considered Disney legends, having created the scores for *Beauty and the Beast* and *Aladdin*, but it was the 1989 animated feature *The Little Mermaid* that began what was later called the “Disney Renaissance.” After the success of the Off-Broadway musical *Little Shop of Horrors*, Disney approached Howard Ashman and asked if he’d be interested in writing for animation. Ashman suggested the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale *The Little Mermaid* as his first project both to write lyrics for and to produce. Menken and Ashman applied the concepts of musical theater to the film, letting their songs define character and advance the action.

While the setting of *The Little Mermaid* is a mythical kingdom under the sea, Ashman’s lyrics ground the characters with deeply human emotions. As beautiful (and as fun to sing) as Menken’s music is, always be sure to put the story first. The more truthful the characters are portrayed, the more moving the show will be for your audience.

SINGING FAMILIAR SONGS

As much of this score is well known, it’s very easy for your cast to slide into a “sing-a-long” mode. Spend extra time on these songs, ensuring that your performers are singing exactly what is on the page, as opposed to what their memories tell them is there. Some of these songs serve different functions in the theatrical version than they did in previous iterations. Paying attention to the dynamics and phrasing written into the score will help achieve this.

PERFORMING WITH AN ORCHESTRA

Danny Troob’s orchestrations for *The Little Mermaid* are lush, intricate, and romantic. Give your instrumentalists plenty of time to acquaint themselves with the score. Every instrument is crucial and every part has its own moment. There are also a lot of character-driven motifs that recur throughout the score, which will be fun to explore with your musicians, especially in an educational setting. Ariel’s “flowing water theme” (the intro to “Part of Your World”) is an ascending *arpeggio* to show her desire to live on land. Ursula’s theme points downward and reveals her sinister intentions. Find these moments together and discover ways in which they can influence the action onstage.

Almost all of the big, dramatic actions in the play are underscored, often with specific timings. Walk through the score with your director to point out any shifts that may affect staging. The most crucial of these moments are outlined on pp. 11-16 of this handbook.



Schedule enough time during final rehearsals to work on the balance of sound between orchestra and cast. Surrounding the orchestra pit with some sort of masking will help muffle the sound. Ensure that the cast can hear what they need from the orchestra in order to make their vocal entrances and find the correct keys, while the audience can still make out all dialogue and lyrics.

There are two orchestral options available for your production of *The Little Mermaid*. The standard orchestration requires **14 players, plus conductor** (if needed). The breakdown is as follows:

STANDARD (OPTION A)

- **Reed 1** (Piccolo, Flute, Alto Flute, Clarinet)
- **Reed 2** (Oboe, English Horn)
- **Reed 3** (Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Soprano Saxophone, Alto Saxophone)
- **Horn**
- **Trumpet** (Flugelhorn)
- **Drums**
- **Percussion**
- **Keyboard 1** (may alternatively be covered by a Piano-Conductor, if necessary)
- **Keyboard 2**
- **Keyboard 3**
- **Violin 1**
- **Violin 2**
- **Cello**
- **Bass** (Acoustic, Electric)



*“Under the Sea”
Flower Mound High School; Flower Mound, TX*

If you wish to reduce the orchestra size, the string parts may be eliminated by adding a Keyboard 4 player (for the string reduction) as a substitute. This reduced configuration requires **12 players, plus conductor** (if needed), as follows.

REDUCED (OPTION B)

- **Reed 1** (Piccolo, Flute, Alto Flute, Clarinet)
- **Reed 2** (Oboe, English Horn)
- **Reed 3** (Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Soprano Saxophone, Alto Saxophone)
- **Horn**
- **Trumpet** (Flugelhorn)
- **Drums**
- **Percussion**
- **Keyboard 1** (alternatively may be covered by a Piano-Conductor, if necessary)
- **Keyboard 2**
- **Keyboard 3**
- **Keyboard 4** (string reduction)
- **Bass** (Acoustic, Electric)

USING THE ACCOMPANIMENT & GUIDE VOCAL CDS

If you decide to use the performance tracks provided on the Accompaniment CD, remember to approach the music as if the singer is leading the orchestra rather than following a recording. There are also several helpful cues in the orchestration pointing to when a singer should enter. As always, allow ample rehearsal time with the tracks so actors are completely comfortable with them by opening night. In rehearsals, utilize the Guide Vocal CD a few times with your cast to get a sense of tempo and tone. Then, once notes and rhythms have been taught, move toward using the Accompaniment CD so your cast can begin creating their own approach to the characters. Both CDs are available from Music Theatre International.

TRANSITIONAL MUSIC

Many cues were included in the score to accompany onstage transitions for the Broadway and subsequent Disney stage productions. You may find that you have more music than needed for your physical production. If there are specific moments you'd like to address, you can contact your MTI representatives for suggestions on approved cuts. Avoid extending transitional cues beyond what is written in the score. The show is designed to flow smoothly from location to location – extended scene changes can bog down the pacing of the performance.



NOTES ON *THE LITTLE MERMAID'S* SCORE

Now on to the specifics of *The Little Mermaid's* score. The annotations below are broken down by song and then measure numbers.

#1 – OVERTURE

Allow your instrumentalists to play this enthusiastically. The overture sets the tone for the rest of the show, and there will be many themes familiar to your audience. The strings are the stars for the majority of the cue, so make sure they can be heard.

#2 – THE WORLD ABOVE

m. 5 – Many of Ariel's songs sit in a high-mezzo range. Encourage your actress to mix whenever possible, as solely belting or singing in head voice will be tiring on her voice.

m. 27 – Keep the tempo moving. It may have a tendency to lag here, and Ariel's big introduction to the audience should be light and buoyant.

#3 – FATHOMS BELOW

This sea shanty helps establish the setting and draws the distinction between the world above and the world below the water. Keep the lyrics crisp and clear.

m. 3 – Chances are, you will have a few female sailors onstage. They should sing in the same octave as the men so as not to stand out.

m. 62 – Ariel's vocalise is heard several times throughout the show. It can be pre-recorded if you have the capability to do so, or your actress can stand directly offstage. However you produce this part, it should have the haunting beauty of a siren's song.

m. 66-81D – Bring the orchestra way down in volume so that the dialogue can be heard over the underscoring. Lines are always more important than underscoring.

m. 81G – This is Eric's first "I want" moment and is set to the same melody as Ariel's song, "The World Above." The audience should immediately connect these two "fish out of water" and know they are destined to be together.

#4 – DAUGHTERS OF TRITON

Encourage the Mersisters to sing *staccato* – it should feel light and frothy. The harpsichord in the orchestrations will help convey the proper tone.

m. 21-24, 28 – If this is too high for your actresses, sing down the octave.

m. 37-38 – The Mersisters should be genuinely shocked that Ariel is not backstage. They should be visibly (and vocally) unsure of what will happen next.

#5 – IF ONLY (TRITON’S LAMENT)

As with some other songs in *The Little Mermaid*, this is a smaller, more pensive moment. Don’t over-sing it. Direct your actor to practice delivering the lyrics as a monologue and then add in the music.

#5A – URSULA’S LAIR

This transitional cue sends the audience to the murky depths even before they see a single set piece. Continue to think of the orchestrations as an element of design and point out moments to your instrumentalists where they can illuminate character, setting, or dramatic action.

#6 – DADDY’S LITTLE ANGEL

Diction is incredibly important in this song. Ursula has a lot of backstory to deliver and it’s not a song that will likely be familiar to your audience – they’re hearing this part of the story for the first time. Work with your actress to ensure that the lyrics (and Ursula’s disdain for her family) can be easily understood.

m. 16 – If these notes are too low, have your actress speak-sing the verses.

m. 136 – Most of Flotsam and Jetsam’s parts are written high in the voice. If need be, drop the octave.

#7 – PART OF YOUR WORLD

This beautiful song is Ariel’s most well known. As your actress may have been singing this song since childhood, you may need to spend more time un-teaching this song than teaching it. Approach the lyrics as a monologue and guide your actress to work her way through Ariel’s discoveries. The lyricist Howard Ashman encouraged the original Ariel, Jodi Benson, not to give away too much too soon. You can find a link to the video of his coaching session on page 44.

m. 5 – Breath support is essential throughout this song. Ariel should have a tone that is crystal clear. Encourage your actress to do breathing exercises so that every phrase is completely supported.

m. 36 – Ariel really has forgotten the word “feet” as it’s not one she would have grown up with. Part of the charm of this song will stem from your ability to make sure these discoveries feel fresh every single performance.

m. 83 – This measure needs to be a huge contrast to the section directly before it. Ariel realizes she has gotten carried away. Reality sets in and so does the dynamic.



#8 – THE STORM

This song should be treated like a ballet where most of the dramatic action is told through music and movement. Help your director feel where the big changes happen and let the music influence blocking. At the same time, the orchestra should never be so loud that you cannot hear the actors' dialogue. The fun challenge in this song will be the constant balance between raising the volume of your actors and lowering the orchestra.

m. 72 – There is a ton of dialogue that needs to happen before the storm hits. If your actors get behind, hold at the *fermata* until you hear Eric's cue, "it'll hit me like lightning." Conversely, inform your orchestra that you may need to jump ahead to m. 73 if the actors speak too quickly. It is very important that the downbeat of m. 73 happens directly after Eric's line.

m. 98 – The audience's perspective should transition under water at this point. There should be a sudden peaceful feeling after the tumultuous winds of the storm.

m. 106 – Make these "Ahs" as ethereal as possible. If they are being sung by the actresses playing the Mersisters, keep them offstage so as not to confuse the storytelling.

m. 120 – Eric should not make it out of the water until this moment.

#9 – PART OF YOUR WORLD (REPRISE)

While Ariel might not have figured out the "how" just yet, this reprise has all of the resolve the first "Part of Your World" lacks. Acknowledge the enormous change Ariel has just experienced and let your actress go to town.

m. 57 – Many performers will try belting this or using their head voices – try mixing.

#10 – SHE'S IN LOVE

m. 8 – Rhythm is very important here. Play the intro for your performers so they get the groove in their bodies. You will see many "pushes" (the end of m. 4) into different measures. This adds to the style of the song.

m. 37 – Use the same part division that you used in "Daughters of Triton" – soprano Mersisters on the top and alto Mersisters on the bottom. It doesn't matter which characters are on which part. Keep it all about where your singers are most comfortable.

m. 51 – The actor playing Flounder may have a voice that is changing. Play with the octaves of his melody to make sure he is comfortable. By the time he gets to m. 76, make sure he's in a place where he can really wail.

#11 – HER VOICE

m. 33 – After the complexity of the verse, make the chorus sound grounded and secure. Encourage your actor to firmly plant his feet and ensure the sound is completely supported from the diaphragm.

#12 – UNDER THE SEA

While this song will be familiar to your cast, the Caribbean rhythms may be more complex than your singers and instrumentalists remember them to be. It's important for them not to rush but rather focus on the groove of each section.

m. 9 – At the top of the song, Sebastian should be trying every tactic he can think of to convince Ariel to stay – his job depends on it. As the song progresses, he gets caught up in the joy of the moment and completely forgets Ariel is even there. Work with your actor to determine when the shift happens.

m. 108 – If this section is too high for Sebastian, instruct your actor to sing the melody instead.

m. 171 – Work in tandem with your choreographer so that (at least part of) your cast has ample breath support left to sing with after the dance break. Enlist singers offstage to make this a real showstopper.

#14 – SWEET CHILD

m. 12 – Flotsam and Jetsam's lines should almost overlap as if one person was singing them. Encourage your actors to be as unctuous and creepy as possible. They say the right things to bait Ariel, and she goes along despite her better judgment.

m. 24, 48 – Flotsam can sing in falsetto throughout most of the song. Both eels should feel free to scoop up to notes in a way you wouldn't normally encourage.

#15 – POOR UNFORTUNATE SOULS

m. 4 – If the verses of the song are too low, your actress should speak-sing. Keep it conversational as Ursula is setting her trap.

m. 6 – This line is best understood by your audience if Ursula puts a tiny lift between “well” and “a witch.” Otherwise it can get jumbled into sounding like one unintelligible word.

m. 20 – Ursula should be very good at convincing Ariel. She shouldn't be truly scary until m. 88.

m. 88 – Push the tempo here. The stakes have gotten higher and the forward momentum shouldn't let up until the end of the song.

#15A – ACT ONE FINALE

m. 18 – If you are using microphones, play with the effects on Ariel's “Ahs.” Perhaps they can come from a different speaker or feel far away as her voice is trapped in Ursula's shell. You also may want to pre-record these and have your actress lip-sync onstage.

m. 48 – Ariel should not arrive above the water until this measure.



#16 – POSITOOVITY

Make sure Scuttle’s diction is super-clear. The audience should be aware that he is singing nonsense words rather than feel that they can’t hear properly.

#17 – BEYOND MY WILDEST DREAMS

The melody frequently jumps back and forth between chest and head voice. Help your actress find a nice, healthy mix to bridge the two. The lyrics have a lot of patter and should sound like a gushing teenage girl. Encourage Ariel to have fun experiencing all of these new sights.

#18 – *LES POISSONS*

This song is all about character, so make it as over-the-top as possible. Don’t feel restricted to the exact melody on the page.

m. 99 – Whether this is in full voice or falsetto, make it big.

#18B – *LES POISSONS* (REPRISE)

m. 22 – If you add female chefs, have the men sing m. 50-53 and the women sing m. 54-57.

#19 – ONE STEP CLOSER

The audience should see Prince Eric and Ariel fall in love before their eyes. Keep it playful and fun.

m. 92 – Work with your choreographer to ensure Eric isn’t completely out of breath when he has to sing again.

#19A – GOOD NIGHT

Since these “Ahs” happen while Ariel is onstage, consider pre-recording them. If this isn’t possible, have another actress (who can mimic her sound) sing from offstage. Whichever solution you choose, Ariel’s “voice” should be recognizable to the audience.

#21 – KISS THE GIRL

Enjoy the calypso groove. Don’t rush!

m. 24 – The ensemble is here to add atmosphere. They should always play back-up to Sebastian’s melody.

m. 86-88 – If this is too high for Sebastian, have your actor sing melody.



#23 – IF ONLY (QUARTET)

Think of this song as an operatic quartet. It works best when each singer is firmly planted and lets the music do the work. Make sure each actor knows when it's his or her turn to be featured and when to recede back to harmony.

#24 – THE CONTEST

m. 2 – If Grimsby is not a strong singer, have him speak this section in rhythm.

m. 20 – Encourage each princess to find her own distinct personality. None of these contestants should be overly talented. Go with character over *bel canto*.

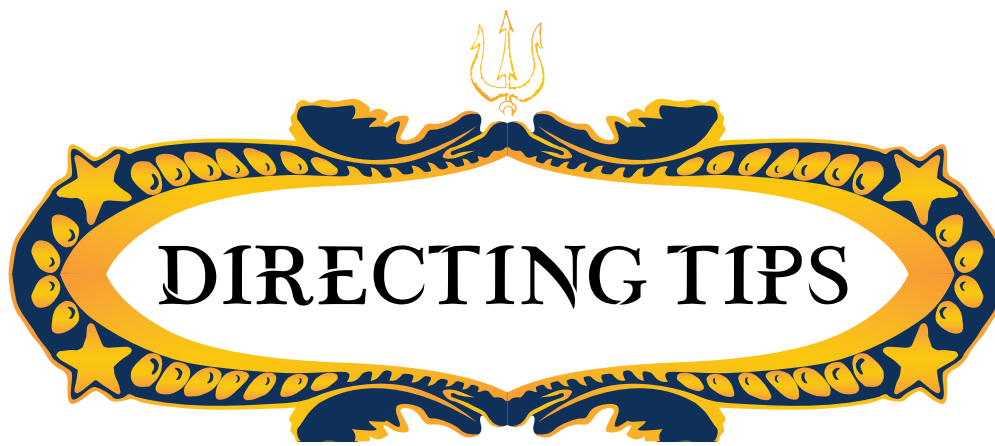
#25 – ARIEL STEPS FORWARD

From this point to the end of the show, the action is almost completely underscored. This helps the storytelling, but be sure to pay close attention to details like volume control and pacing. Let the underscoring help instead of hinder, and encourage your actors to listen to the music and be inspired by the drama. With a good amount of rehearsal, it will become seamless.

#27 – FINALE ULTIMO

m. 72 – The relationship between King Triton and Ariel is the heart of *The Little Mermaid*. Don't rush his big chance to say goodbye. This section should be tender and authentic, creating one of the most moving moments of the evening.

m. 103, 120 – Eric should sing at pitch for both of these lines.



The *Little Mermaid* is a complex musical incorporating numerous sets, myriads of costumes, and a few magical moments. Staging the show will be a fun and spectacular trick that is sure to impress your audience. Just remember that plenty of rehearsal is the key to a flawless execution. The following are some tips to help you along the way to a successful production.

TRANSITIONS

The action of *The Little Mermaid* occurs across multiple locations. Because there are quick transitions between these settings, you must make it clear to your audience where the action is occurring. Much of this will depend upon ease and flexibility of your set design (see pp. 20-23 for design tips). The urge to create beautifully detailed sets for this fantasy world will be strong, but avoid designs that are unnecessarily complex and difficult to move. Be especially aware of this in the “human world” (such as the banquet scene), which is more materialistic and easily bogged down with set pieces. More detail can equate to more clutter – simplicity of design and movement will help streamline your transitions and allow your audience to focus on the dramatic action rather than the set change.

MOVEMENT

One of the most important elements of directing *The Little Mermaid* is creating a distinct movement for the underwater characters. Costuming and set design will assist, but it is vital that your performers develop their characters with movement in mind. Work with your actors – or have your choreographer work with them – on a sea-based gestural vocabulary, while also ensuring that costumes allow for movement and that each actor maintains her pre-determined character gesture throughout the show’s ocean scenes. It’s important to bring costumes (or rehearsal versions) into the process early on, as they affect not only the general movement of the actors, but also the special effects. On Broadway, the actors wore Heelys to create the effect of floating through water, while in subsequent productions, flying and other special effects were employed to create underwater illusions. You certainly don’t need fancy footwear or complicated devices to tell your story effectively. However you choose to create your oceanic world on stage, put safety at the top of your list of priorities. Consult with trained professionals – be they skaters, flying effects companies, or other special effects professionals. Never insist an actor perform an effect she is uncomfortable with, and never try to create homemade rigs. Your audiences will accept whatever conventions you set up at the beginning of your show, however literal or suggestive.

While each character should master an underwater movement, be mindful of distractions during ensemble-heavy scenes. Musical numbers like “Under the Sea” can become cluttered and confusing if each performer is moving in a completely different way. Discuss the large choral numbers with your choreographer before rehearsals begin and agree on a specific concept for each so that your audience’s attention is focused where you

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Below are some suggestions to assist you as you tackle *The Little Mermaid's* special effects. Let your imagination guide you as you develop theatrical solutions to serve the story in your production.

GROTTO DESTRUCTION

See p. 22 for tips on building a grotto that is easily destructible. As an alternative to building hinged shelves, attach fishing line to some lightweight props so that they can be pulled off the unit. In addition, you can rig the Sea King's trident with lights (see p. 26 for tips), layer in laser-like sound effects and flashing lights, and use a confetti cannon and fog machine to generate an explosive effect. If your production is employing aerial techniques, performers can stand on either side of the grotto, wrapped and hidden in aerial silks. When Triton strikes the grotto, they can spin around to create a whirlpool-like effect.



The Grotto Destruction
Roosevelt High School; Seattle, WA

ARIEL'S TRANSFORMATION

There are multiple ways to stage this, depending on your cast and budget. You can opt to use projections for Ariel's transformation, or, if your budget allows and you have a game performer, there are a number of professional companies you can hire, including Flying By Foy and ZFX, to "fly" Ariel – or a body double – to the surface as she sheds her mermaid tail (see p. 27 for tips on creating a easily transformable costume). Similarly, you can work with an aerial arts company and utilize Spanish web, which Ariel can "climb" to the surface. (These techniques can also be employed for Eric's drowning in "The Storm.") Do a little research to see which company and aerial or flying option might be right for your production (see p. 44). Do not attempt to make any of your actors fly in homemade rigs or without the help of trained professionals. Keep in mind that this kind of effect will require a good amount of rehearsal time to master and make seamless. No matter how you choose to handle Ariel's transformation, always keep safety your number one priority.



A projection of Ariel's transformation
Marian High School; Omaha, NE



Flying systems are very expensive and are not required to create Ariel's transformation. Other options include experimenting with lighting tricks, fog, scrim, or using a projection of Ariel's silhouette. Keep in mind that the dramatic underscoring helps a great deal in selling the action. Whatever method you choose, be sure to consider costume design in tandem with your staging concept, as one will affect the other.

AERIAL PERFORMANCE

The two safest optional aerial options that can enhance your production magically are Spanish web and aerial silk. With **Spanish web**, the aerialist climbs to a small loop in a rope hanging from the ceiling through which she threads a wrist or ankle for security. Then, another performer on the ground quickly spins the rope in circles. With **aerial silk**, an aerialist performs acrobatics, such as climbs, wraps, and drops, while hanging from multiple strong, flexible fabrics. These brightly colored fabrics – low-stretch are best for beginners – can come past the ground, allowing actors to perform wraps at a lower, safer level.

Whatever you decide, remember that safety comes first and each performer must be professionally trained and comfortable with the movement required. Contact your local aerial arts or trapeze school for training and rigging options.



*Ariel Transforms using Spanish web.
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI*

URSULA'S DEMISE

Staging Ursula's death will depend on your costuming concept. If the Sea Witch is positioned on a movable unit with actors controlling her tentacles, those performers can simply spin her off stage when Ariel smashes the magic shell. If your stage has a trapdoor, and your actress has full mobility, have her "melt" into the floor à la the Wicked Witch of the West in *The Wizard of Oz*. Alternatively, flashing lights, fog effects, and thunder can help hide her as she exits the stage with a scream.



*Aerial silk and Spanish web help create an undersea world.
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI*

DESIGN

SETS

There are many ways to approach the scenic design of *The Little Mermaid*. Be sure that the set pieces are designed to move quickly into position – nothing drains the energy and stagnates the flow of a show faster than clunky, complicated, and noisy scene transitions. Use painted drops to change locations, or columns that can rotate with different scenes painted on each side. Consider building smaller units that can roll on and off to create a new location. To economize, construct units that serve as two locations. For example, King Triton’s throne can be wheeled around to reveal Ursula’s lair. However you differentiate locations, ensure transitions are thoughtful and seamless so you can keep your audience engaged with the story.

SEA, SURFACE, & SHORE

The action of *The Little Mermaid* occurs across multiple locations, but each specific location belongs to one of three larger settings: undersea, the water’s surface, and land. These three settings are in communion with one another, so begin with a base design, using backdrops or a cyc that changes with the help of lighting (see p. 33 for tips) from the cool blues of the ocean to the warm tones of a sunrise depending on the underwater or land location. While you can add details by projecting digital images onto your backdrop, be careful not to overwhelm your audience with too much imagery. Instead, keep your design as simple and clean as possible – this will help theatergoers situate themselves quickly and easily in each setting.



*Flounder and Scuttle observe Ariel and Prince Eric on shore.
Flower Mound High School; Flower Mound, TX*

For the ocean, create a large wave that stretches across the stage to help delineate location. This can be a length of blue fabric (China silk, inexpensive and found at most fabric stores, is a soft but durable material that looks good under theatrical lighting), a painted wave-shaped piece, or a few LED waves. Whatever material you choose can represent the surface when touching the stage floor, the undersea world when flown to the top of the proscenium, or the beach when placed up or center stage at floor level. When flown out, or removed from the audience’s line of sight, you can easily create the palace scenes.



If your theater has an orchestra pit that you don't intend to use for musicians, you can use the apron as your surface locale. Simply screen off the pit with a blue fabric curtain (use the "waves" you created, if possible). Ariel can hoist herself upon the "land" of the stage floor, or "float" in the pit as Prince Eric's ship emerges in the sea behind her.

Now that you have your base set design, add additional set pieces to represent the various specific locations undersea and on land. To create more levels and depth on land and in the ocean, construct one or two climbable ground rows that can be painted as sandbars for Ariel to perch on while she sings underwater and that can also double as sand dunes on land for beach scenes. These pieces should be on casters so that they are easy to move on and off stage.

PRINCE ERIC'S SHIP

The ship can be as complex or simple as you wish. Build a boat with levels (allowing for more dynamic stage pictures of your sailors) on a unit with casters. Stagehands or ensemble members (perhaps dressed like the ocean in shades of blue) can wheel it on and off stage. For added effect, construct the ship to be split in half and spun about during the storm. For a simpler alternative, use a large, round, wheeled platform with a painted ship-like façade on each side that joins together at the front of the platform.

Another option is simply to suggest a ship to your audience. Position your sailors on a moveable platform with a ship's wheel and mast. To hide the mechanics of the platform and give the feel of sailing the high seas, place your "wave" downstage of the platform at floor level. Similarly, if employing a smaller stage like a black box, you can construct a catwalk across the top of the stage for your sailors, with a ship's wheel mounted on an axel at front. This will keep the stage from appearing too crowded, while allowing for Ariel's scene to occur simultaneously below.



Prince Eric's Ship
Green Valley High School; Henderson, NV

KING TRITON'S COURT

While your waves fly to the top of the proscenium, move your sandbars – perhaps dressed in coral, seaweed, and other ocean plant life – onstage to support the underwater setting. To set this royal scene, position the Sea King on a shell-shaped throne elevated on a platform.



King Triton's Court
Lancaster High School; Lancaster, NY

URSULA'S LAIR

Ursula's domain should be the antithesis of King Triton's court. The dark and ominous atmosphere can be created largely via a change in lighting to deep blues, purples, and greens. If your Sea Witch costume doesn't include a moveable unit, give her a throne of her own. Instead of, or in addition to, a shell, take inspiration from her octopod shape with a more primitive design and a tentacle-like backing.

ARIEL'S GROTTO

For Ariel's underwater sanctuary, build a simple unit – or adapt one of your sandbar pieces – with a series of hinged shelves displaying human trinkets that can fall when King Triton destroys the grotto. Dress the grotto with some marine life such as coral and algae in addition to her human trinkets and the bust of Prince Eric (for prop tips, see p. 25).

THE PALACE

We never see the palace itself, only specific rooms within, so there's no need to construct an elaborate edifice. Keep it simple, continuing to utilize your warm-toned cyc (or use a generic palace backdrop), and differentiate the rooms with one or two units that can be moved easily on and off stage.

ARIEL'S CHAMBERS

In her chambers, Ariel is scrubbed clean by the maids. Rather than constructing or purchasing an old-fashioned claw-foot bathtub, create a simple façade that Ariel can sit behind. For added effect, create bubbles from bubble wrap or iridescent basket filler (which shines like real soap bubbles) with fake pearls or clear ornaments scattered throughout. You will also need a bed for Ariel during "If Only."



Ursula's Lair
Green Valley High School; Henderson, NV



Ariel's Grotto
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI



Ariel's Chambers
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI



KITCHEN

Chef Louis needs a simple counter unit to act as his butcher block during “*Les Poissons*.”

BALLROOM

Nothing additional is necessary for “One Step Closer” or “The Contest” besides a general palace backdrop, but feel free to drop in chandeliers for a little sparkle.

BANQUET HALL

A banquet table with seating for Ariel, Eric, and Grimsby is all that is needed for the dinner scene. To stage the “whack-a-mole” action during “*Les Poissons Mayhem*” – when Chef Louis attempts to smash Sebastian with his mallet – cut a hole in the table large enough for your actor’s head to be revealed when Chef Louis raises a silver dome from a serving platter on the table. Alternatively, the table can be a simple façade that Sebastian can kneel behind, popping his head up when necessary.

THE BAY

For “Kiss the Girl,” utilize your blue-toned backdrop or cyc to create an evening look. Ariel and Eric will need a small wooden rowboat, which you can construct on casters so it can be rolled across the stage. For a dreamy, romantic feel, experiment with darker lighting permeated with beams of moonlight, and employ a light fog effect (for more lighting tips, see pages 33). If you’re using silks or Spanish web for your production, this is a fine opportunity for your performers to add to the atmosphere.



Chef Louis’s Kitchen
Lancaster High School; Lancaster, NY



The Palace Ballroom
Flower Mound High School; Flower Mound, TX



The Bay, showcasing aerial silk work
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI

PROPS

The props for *The Little Mermaid* needn't be complicated. Besides a few key items that are necessary to the storytelling, everything else is icing on the cake. All human props should look realistic, while those found under the sea can be more fantastical. Below is a list of essential props along with the page number(s) on which they appear in the script.

- Silver Chalice: 3
- Candelabra: 3
- Fork: 4-7, 22, 72
- Old-Fashioned Tobacco Pipe: 8, 72
- Trident: 9, 13, 48-49, 95-98
- Human Artifacts: 22, 47-49
- Spyglass: 29, 47-49
- Contract: 56-58, 94
- Ursula's Shell: 56-59, 78, 98
- Hand Bell: 73
- Serving Platters with Silver Domes: 73-74
- Staff: 89-90
- Cake: 102



*Chef Louis presents the wedding cake.
Marian High School, Omaha, NE*

If available to you, you may want to consider adding the following props to increase the authenticity of your production:

- Conductor's Baton: 10
- Underwater Flower (with removable petals): 41
- Garland of Red Sea Anemones: 22, 49
- Teacup Fragment: 49
- Broken Telescope: 49
- Butcher Knife: 70
- Big Copper Pot: 71
- Faux Food (under platter domes): 73



*Chef Louis wields his knife in "Les Poissons."
Levels at the Great Neck Library; Great Neck, NY*



Below are some design tips that will come in handy as you acquire, build, or otherwise source the more intricate and fantastical props in your production.

HUMAN ARTIFACTS

Most of the human items used in the show are from Prince Eric’s ship or the palace itself, so they should be high-quality, ornate, antique-looking pieces (no digital clocks, for example). Use glossy gold paint, which will reflect light spectacularly, to adorn commonplace items. Add detailing with paint, beads, tassles, lace, and other texture-rich materials to create an antique look for modern items. Also, it’s wise to substitute oversized items for many of the human artifacts in order to help the audience see them better. For example, Eric’s fork becomes Ariel’s “dinglehopper” and can be a serving fork rather than a table fork, and Chef Louis’s knife collection can be as exaggerated as his personality.



*Ariel examines her human artifacts.
Green Valley High School; Henderson, NV*

BUST OF PRINCE ERIC

Depending on your design team, this may be more of a scenic element than a prop. In any case, you can construct a life-like *papier-mâché* bust or even carve a bust out of a block of Styrofoam. Consider breaking the bust apart and reassembling the pieces to create a prop that can break apart safely during each performance. Much of the destruction of this piece can be done with lights, fog, and other special effects. You may discover you do not need to see the “destroyed” version of the bust at all, if King Triton’s anger makes the bust disappear in a cloud of pulverized human artifacts. A carefully-placed smoke effect and a quick crew member’s hand may be the simple solution.



*Bust of Prince Eric
Flower Mound High School; Flower Mound, TX*

TRIDENT

Purchase Triton’s trident at a costume shop or build your own using PVC tubing and a mold for the tines, which can be spray-painted a glittery silver. Be sure to measure the trident so that it is approximately the same height as the performer playing King Triton – it should be light enough to handle easily but have enough weight to signify its power. You can also consider adding LED lights, which can be used when the trident’s “magic” is activated, like in the grotto destruction scene and in Ursula’s lair.



*King Triton prepares to destroy Ariel’s Grotto.
Green Valley High School; Henderson, NV*

MAGICAL SHELL

This prop may be hard to locate, but you can start at a craft store, home décor shop, or even a pool or beach store (an inflatable pool toy could be painted to look real). If need be, any round, clear acrylic container can be modified to look like a shell with some *papier-mâché* and hot glue. Also consider wrapping bubble wrap or cellophane around a wooden or cardboard frame holding “magical” LED lights inside. This prop is the source of Ursula’s power, so the shell should be large enough to convey the weight of its power, but still easy enough for one performer to handle.



*Ariel makes a deal with the Sea Witch.
Marian High School; Omaha, NE*

PIPE

Look for an old-fashioned, wooden tobacco pipe with a large bowl. A black or toy pipe can also be painted to look wooden. Alternatively, make your own pipe with *papier-mâché*, a soda bottle, and some vinyl tubing. Ideally, you’ll want your pipe to have a hole in both ends to blow through. To create an ash effect when Ariel blows into it, place a bit of powdered makeup into the bowl. Grimsby’s pipe can double as Scuttle’s “snarfblatt.” Simply attach strips of coiled green fabric to the inside of the bowl, which will unravel and pop out when blown through.



*Ariel plays the snarfblatt.
Flower Mound High School; Flower Mound, TX*



COSTUMES

The *Little Mermaid*'s vibrant land and ocean environments provide limitless costuming possibilities. By keeping your designs simple, you'll inspire your audience's imagination and transport them into this beloved fairy tale. Many of the sea characters are anthropomorphic, so your costumes should reflect the human traits of these characters as well as their animal forms. Just as the sets should distinguish the worlds above and below the sea, so too should the costumes, through color and texture.

ARIEL

- Long blue or green mermaid skirt
- Colorful top
- Wedding dress and veil
- Ballet flats
- Simple, elegant gown

Feisty and independent, Ariel's costuming should reflect her vivid personality even as it provides the more practical function of changing her from mermaid to human. Her top and skirt can be shiny to suggest fish scales, and the latter should flair out at the feet, in the same material or tulle, suggesting a mermaid tail. Accessorize with a shell necklace or bracelets for some added sea-inspired flair. For her transformation, dress your actress in a skirt or shorts that expose her new legs underneath her mermaid tail. Using a second tail for the transformation scene will make the transition easier for your actress. The second skirt should wrap around and fasten with snaps or Velcro at the back. Onstage, Ariel will be able to pull off the top skirt easily to reveal her legs underneath. Though iconically Ariel has been portrayed as a redhead, the script does not specify this. Feel free to use your actor's natural hair.



Ariel
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI



Ariel and Friends
Roosevelt High School; Seattle, WA

PRINCE ERIC

- Billowy white shirt
- Long jacket
- Black pants
- Vest
- Sturdy black boots
- Sash

Prince Eric's attire should be looser and more casual when he's sailing the high seas than when he's holding court at the palace. For the latter, more formal setting, add some royal accessories like a detailed vest and sash.



Prince Eric and Ariel
Flower Mound High School; Flower Mound, TX

KING TRITON

- Dark structured top or sash
- Dark blue or green sheath skirt
- Crown

Give this ruler of the merfolk a royal and masculine Grecian-robe look. Start with dark, structured top and dark green or blue sheath from the waist-down. This bottom half of the costume can be cut of the same cloth as his daughters' to similarly suggest a merman tail. A silver belt, armbands, and crown will complete his sovereign look, while, optionally, a long wig or beard will give him an older, wiser presence.



King Triton with Windward and Leeward
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI

URSULA

- Dramatic wig and makeup
- Waistband of tentacles (optional)
- Long, black dress

The Sea Witch is powerful, feminine, and evil. Begin with an elegant, long, black dress accented with shades of purple or green that drapes in layers, suggesting tentacles. This voluminous skirt will give Ursula the intimidating presence she desires. Alternatively, craft a waistband with eight huge tentacles that can be manipulated by ensemble members dressed in black Morphsuits or spandex. To create an even more threatening look, position the Sea Witch on a unit with casters that allows her greater height to look down on Ariel. Always be sure that your actress feels



Ursula with Flotsam and Jetsam
Greece Arcadia High School; Rochester, NY



safe and is secured properly. Also, don't forget to have fun with Ursula's makeup and hair – give her a sinister eye with a dramatic, arching eyebrow; dark purple lips; and a strikingly styled wig.

SEBASTIAN

- Red shirt and jacket
- Red bowler hat
- Red pants
- Red mittens or gloves
- Red tights
- Red or black shoes

Give this maestro a nice suit that he can conduct in. Layer a red jacket over a tuxedo shirt and cropped red pants over tights. Complete his professional look with a bowler cap and claw-like gloves. (When costuming his hands, consider whether you wish Sebastian to hold a baton while conducting. "Claws" could make this optional prop tricky to hold.) Add a dash of red eye makeup to give him some flair.



*Sebastian with Windward and Leeward
Green Valley High School; Henderson, NV*

SCUTTLE & GULLS

- Cropped white or gray pants
- Orange or black shoes
- Orange tights
- Vest
- Feathered headpiece

To give Ariel's flighty friend the full fowl treatment, add white and gray feathers to Scuttle's sleeves, chest, and cap. The bill of a baseball cap can become an orange beak, or the same effect can be created with orange and white makeup. The gulls should complement Scuttle with similar pants and orange tights, but set them apart with a different style or color of vest.



*Scuttle and Gulls with Ariel
Marian High School; Omaha, NE*

FLOUNDER

- Yellow shirt and shorts with blue accents
- Yellow headpiece with blue fin
- Yellow or blue sneakers



*Flounder and Mersisters
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI*

Flounder may not be a guppy, but he should have a youthful look. Dress him in yellow basketball shorts held up with blue suspenders and add fin-like blue accents across his torso and back. To complete the fishy effect, attach a blue “fin” to a yellow baseball cap (cut off the brim) or swim cap and add a few touches of yellow and blue makeup to his face.

FLOTSAM & JETSAM

- Green dance pants
- Green gloves
- Green top
- Black shoes
- Green wig or hat

These slippery eels need to move as smoothly as possible. Start with electric-green dance pants and add a green shirt or jacket. Add gloves and a green wig or bowler hat, as well as some fin-like accents to finish off their slick look. Alternatively, you can create hand puppets out of translucent-green material that run the length of your actors’ arms and are easy to manipulate. Whichever design you choose, Flotsam and Jetsam’s costumes should look identical and complement Ursula’s. To give these sinister spies an even more electrifying look, add some strips of green LED lights using double-sided tape, Velcro, and a battery pack.



*Flounder and Scuttle
Lancaster High School; Lancaster, NY*



*Ariel with Flotsam and Jetsam
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI*

CHEF LOUIS & CHEFS

- Black pants
- Red neckerchief
- White jacket
- Black shoes
- White cap

Dress this frantic French chef in black pants, a white chef coat, black shoes, and a colored neck scarf for some culinary flair. For extra comedic effect, add an exaggerated mustache.

Costume the Chefs similarly to Louis, but use different colored neckerchiefs or pants to set them apart from the head chef.



*Chef Louis and Chefs
Flower Mound High School; Flower Mound, TX*



GRIMSBY

- White shirt
- Vest and long coat
- Dark knickers
- Buckle shoes
- White tights
- Cravat

This high-ranking valet should have a very stuffy costume to reflect his buttoned-up personality and older generation. Add a vest and long coat, adorned with stately trim and buttons, to his base costume of white shirt and dark pants. Complete the look with buckled shoes and a frilly cravat (attach strips of lace to the front of white cotton fabric and add Velcro to the back so the performer can easily and comfortably attach it behind his neck).



The Maids and Grimsby
Lancaster High School; Lancaster, NY

MERSISTERS

Create a similar look to Ariel's while individualizing each sister with her own color, accessories, and hairstyle.

PILOT & SAILORS

- White billowy shirt
- Black boots
- Black pants
- Captain's cap (for Pilot)

The Sailors' costumes should be similar to Prince Eric's sailing costume, though their shirts can be distinguished with stripes, and the Pilot can sport a captain's cap to signal his higher rank.



Mersisters
Flower Mound High School; Flower Mound, TX

SEA CREATURES

There's an ocean of possibilities to choose from when creating life under the sea. Iridescent fabric along performers' arms can represent fins, while a green leotard and a shell-patterned jacket can be a sea turtle. An umbrella with streamers can be a jellyfish, and inflatable sharks and clownfish kites on sticks controlled by performers can swim above everyone's heads. Remember, your designs need not be literal – using a variety of colors and textures in creative ways can be enough to suggest a diversity of sea life. (For oceanic inspiration, see p. 47.)



Prince Eric, the Pilot, and Grimsby
Lancaster High School; Lancaster, NY

WINDWARD & LEEWARD

- Black leotard
- Yellow tunic with a hood
- Black tights

Long-bodied with an upturned mouth, these skinny trumpetfish often swim vertically. The most colorful of the species, the Chinese trumpetfish, is a vivid yellow. Drape your actors in straight, sleeveless, colorful tunics with black long-sleeved leotards and tights underneath. Create hoodie-like headpieces that extend at the top to form their mouths.



*Windward and Leeward with King Triton
Flower Mound High School, Flower Mound, TX*

MAIDS

- Long, black dress
- Black flats or character shoes
- Apron

These palace servants should wear simple, ankle-length dresses that they can work in. Add aprons to set them apart from the royalty.



*Grimsby and Maids
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI*

PRINCESSES

- Ball gown
- Black character shoes

These dresses should be very colorful and flamboyant. Add beads and trim to embellish these extravagant royals, and don't forget the dramatic up-dos and tiaras. Each princess should be distinct as she tries to impress Prince Eric with over-the-top fashion that reflects her personality.



*Princesses with Prince Eric
Marian High School; Omaha, NE*



LIGHTING

The vibrant underwater environment has a constant flow and vivacity compared to life on land, which is generally more reserved and structured. *The Little Mermaid* presents a myriad of opportunities to use dynamic lighting that can enrich storytelling while creating smooth transitions and establishing location. Don't be afraid to think big when it comes to lighting your production.

Sunlight has difficulty penetrating to the depths of the ocean floor. Use fractured lighting to evoke the flashes of color that find their way through layers of murky waves and plant life. A similar underwater effect can be accomplished by utilizing revolving gobos. Shadows play a big role, too – think of the darkness cast by Prince Eric's ship passing overhead – and Ursula's lair should be dark and moody, with more texture. Generally, though, cooler, saturated tones in blues and aquas created by LEDs and spotlights will be what sets sea scenes apart from those on the shore. Be sure, though, not to saturate your actors' skin tones in green and blue. Use neutral-colored front and sidelights to keep your actors from blending into the background. To establish scenes on the water's surface and on land, employ warmer tones along with white side lighting to suggest bright sunlight.

Lighting can also help you create Ariel's transformation from mermaid to human. If you choose to utilize aerial silk or Spanish web to achieve Ariel's struggle to the surface, you can use lighting to pull focus from – or hide – any wire rigging (a dark background can also help with this).



"If Only (Quartet)"
Flower Mound High School; Flower Mound, TX



SOUND

While strong lighting choices will create distinctions between your sea and landscapes, your sound design will help fill in the details of those locations. Sound should be as environmental and naturalistic as possible. A complete soundscape of waves crashing on the shore, bubbling and splashing water, seagulls, crackling electricity of eels, etc., can play intermittently throughout appropriate scenes. Work with your designer to create an atmospheric quality that gently supplements the music and dialogue of the show. Use sound to enhance scene transitions and to punctuate key dramatic moments, such as the storm that causes Prince Eric’s shipwreck and King Triton’s destruction of Ariel’s grotto.

Decide early on if you will use body microphones for your production. Take into account the acoustics of your space and the vocal projection of your actors. It is important that audience members are able to properly hear and understand the song lyrics, particularly for “Daddy’s Little Angel,” which reveals Ursula’s entire backstory in patter. If you choose to outfit your actors with body mics, do some research before renting. Ensure the rental package you choose can fit into your budget while giving you the quality you need. No one wants audible cracking and popping sounds to spoil the performances of the actors. Also, consider putting a monitor – a standard feature of most sound rental packages – onstage so actors can hear themselves.

Take care when choosing where the orchestra will be in relationship to the stage. Ask the orchestra members to join you for an early rehearsal with your actors to inform your decision. If you decide to use the Accompaniment CD instead of musicians, try putting the speakers at the back of the stage so the actors can hear the music clearly.



*Ariel observes Eric from afar.
Flower Mound High School; Flower Mound, TX*



CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Staging *The Little Mermaid* will provide your cast and crew with a valuable education in the art of theater-making. Your production is an excellent arts education in and of itself – young performers, designers, musicians, and stage crew are bound to grow and learn throughout the rehearsal and performance process. But *The Little Mermaid* can also be a springboard for learning beyond the rehearsal room.

With its literary and mythological source material, as well as its oceanic setting and environmental effects, *The Little Mermaid* presents a unique opportunity to engage your cast across academic disciplines. Arts integration is the technique of teaching through the arts, allowing students to explore varied subjects through an engaging and accessible forum.

The following lessons are just a few suggestions to help get you started. You might hand them off to science, English, or social studies teachers. Alternatively, you can use them in your theater class or during rehearsals as a method for developing vivid characters and for encouraging academic transfer. Take what works, adapt freely, and encourage your colleagues to embrace the arts as a teaching tool.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

The Art of Adaptation

Use this activity in the ELA classroom to explore the process of adapting a short story – in this case, a fairy tale – for the stage or use it in rehearsal to cultivate a deeper awareness of source material in the theatrical process. Provide students with an excerpt from Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Little Mermaid.” Try choosing a section that was not adapted for the Disney musical.

Examine the different methods that short stories and dramatic literature employ to shape a narrative. What techniques do they utilize to address character, plot, setting, and conflict? What qualities does a fairy tale possess that a stage musical does not and vice versa? What are the limitations of each? Discuss various storytelling elements like narration (omniscient narrator vs. a sung soliloquy, for example), dialogue (realistic vs. sung or choreographed), and setting (visual description vs. set design) when exploring how to adapt a written story for the stage.

Ask each student to write a stage adaptation of “The Little Mermaid” excerpt, taking into consideration the freedoms and limitations of theatrical conventions. Which parts of the fairy tale excerpt are essential? Which can be streamlined or cut? In what ways is character conveyed and how must that be altered for the stage? Encourage students to include songs or choreography as desired.

Next, have students work in small groups to choose one scene to stage and present to the rest of the class. After each group's presentation, analyze the differences between the source material and the students' stage adaptations as a class. Ask the class to identify the similarities and differences between the scenes presented. Which parts of the scenes engaged them the most and why? Allow time for each group to explain the choices they made in adapting the scene. Is there anything they would change now that they have seen their scenes performed?

JOURNAL ACTIVITY

Ask students to reflect on adaptations they have encountered across media (books, movies, television, stage shows, etc.). Which were successful, which were not, and why? Is it necessary for an adaptation to be largely faithful to its source? Why or why not?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Speaking Through Swimming

Whether swimming under the sea or bounding across the beach, each movement reveals a character's personality, highlights the mood and setting of the scene, and develops the story. In *The Little Mermaid*, character movement merges with choreography and is vital to the storytelling of the musical. This is especially true when Ariel trades her beautiful voice for human legs, thus forcing her to find non-verbal methods of communicating.

Select a few dialogue-heavy scenes, such as Scene Six after "She's in Love" or Scene Twelve: Ursula's Lair from Act One. After breaking your class into groups, ask each group to rewrite the scene using only stage directions while considering the following:

- What is the most important information relayed in this scene?
- What is the tone or atmosphere like? Does it remain consistent or change throughout the scene?
- What is the setting? How can location be relayed without dialogue or a set?
- How does choreography create character and tell the story of the scene?

Afterward, ask each group to perform its scene for the class. After each performs, have the students guess which scene was performed. What movement was most helpful in recognizing a scene? Were any moments unclear? How could the scenes be developed further in order to more clearly tell the story?

JOURNAL ACTIVITY

Ask each student to reflect on the movement of the character she has been cast to play. Does the character have a signature movement or gesture? What does that gesture reveal about the character? How does it appear as the character moves through water? On land? Direct the students to select a scene or song in which their character appears and to describe that character's movement over the course of that scene.



SOCIAL STUDIES

Myth and (Mer)man

Use this activity in social studies or world history classes to examine the dramaturgical background of *The Little Mermaid*. Alternatively, use this activity in the rehearsal process so that students more fully understand the world of the musical.

Much of *The Little Mermaid* takes place under the sea and many of its aquatic characters are based in Greek mythology and European folklore. Understanding where these characters come from will illuminate the culture of Ariel's ocean home as well as those of the believers living on the land above.

Working in small groups, charge your students with researching mythology, specifically Greek mythology. What role did mythology play in ancient cultures? How did mythology relate to religion, environment, education, and natural phenomena like the passing of time? How were myths passed on from one generation to another?

Using this base knowledge of how myths operated in ancient societies, ask the groups to investigate mythological figures that appear in *The Little Mermaid*: Triton, mermaids, the Sea Witch. Where and how did these figures originate? What are their key characteristics? What would they have symbolized culturally or religiously to Prince Eric and his sailors?

Now have each group write its own folktale or myth inspired by a local or international cultural or environmental phenomenon. What kinds of characters populate their tale? What does each character symbolize? When the stories are complete, have each group present its idea to the class.

SCIENCE

The Movement of Marine Life

Use this activity in a biology or ecology class or in early rehearsals when students are beginning to develop character movement and work on choreography. *The Little Mermaid* takes place in several ecosystems: Pelagic zone, or open sea; Aphotic zone, just above the sea bed; the Benthic zone, or the sea bed itself; and the surface of the ocean, including the beach and coast. Set both on land and sea, *The Little Mermaid* hosts a myriad of animals and plants.

Break the class into four groups, assigning a different ecosystem to each. Ask each group to research the following:

- The region of land or ocean that the ecosystem comprises.
- The defining characteristics of the ecosystem: depth, shape, temperature, oxygen levels, type of water (fresh water, brackish, salt water) or land, etc.
- The types of animals and plant life inhabiting the ecosystem. Describe three examples, with photos, considering: Where do they dwell or grow? What does their diet consist of? Do they inhabit one or multiple ecosystems? What are their noted physical features? Life expectancies? Predators? Etc.?

Now discuss with your class how these defining factors – especially temperature, tides, winds – can affect the movement of creatures both on land and in the sea. Ask each group to select one of the animals or plants that they researched and create stylized movement for it. For example, ask them to consider the differences between the movement of plants under the sea versus on the beach. Have each group present its choreographed movement to the class.

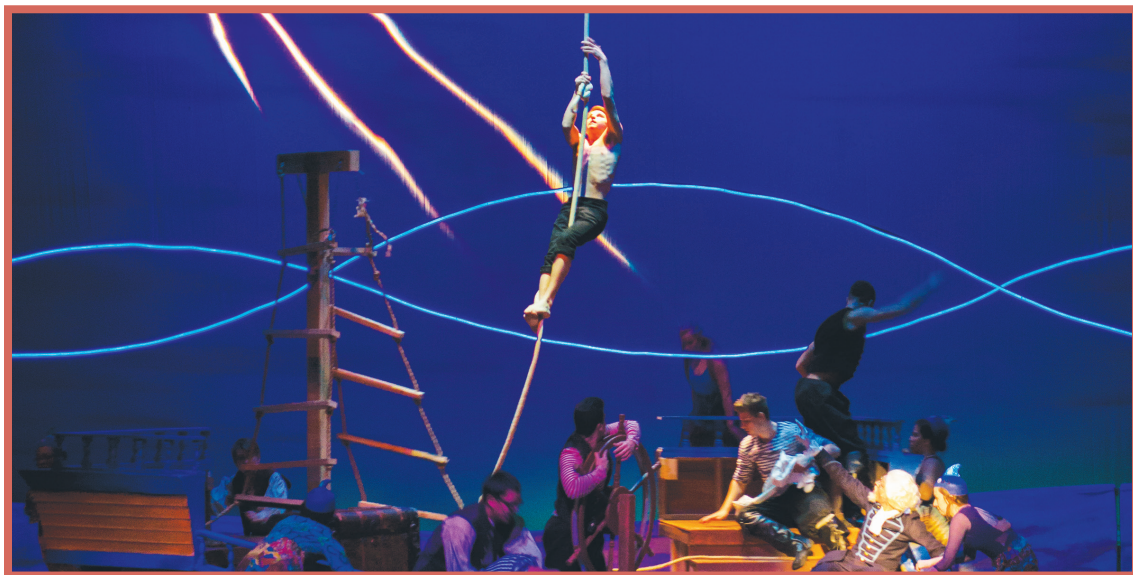
Finally, ask your students to reflect on how they could incorporate these types of creatures and movement into *The Little Mermaid*. How would Ariel show, with the movement of her body, that she’s underwater? How might Sebastian’s movement change from “Under the Sea” to “*Les Poissons*”? What kind of plant life would line the ocean floor in “Under the Sea”?

The Design of the Storm

Use this activity in general science classes to explore the cause and effect of weather, or during the design process to develop imaginative ways to depict the storm in Scene Four.

The Little Mermaid offers a myriad of opportunities to explore environment and creative design in both underwater and above-water kingdoms. One phenomenon that affects both realms of the musical is the storm that throws Prince Eric overboard from his ship. In groups, tell your students to research tropical cyclones. What designates a cyclone as a hurricane? How are these storms formed? What elements do they consist of and how are they categorized?

Next, inform your students that it is now their opportunity to create a storm design for their production of *The Little Mermaid*. Ask them to consider the following: What type or category of storm capsizes Prince Eric’s ship? Providing a variety of materials – fabrics, paper, lights, etc. – direct each group to come up with its own design. Encourage students by reminding them that an effective spectacle doesn’t always equate to a high-tech design, but sometimes to the creative use of found objects and body movement as well. Each group should present its design to the class.



After the shipwreck, Eric struggles to the surface using Spanish web.
Bradford High School, Kenosha, WI



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

THE HALL OF OCEANS: CONNECT TO YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Producing *The Little Mermaid* is a great way to give back to your school community – you can do something as simple as scheduling a student matinee and inviting local elementary and middle schools. To generate even more excitement, consider having your performers mentor the younger students prior to the matinee. Assign pairs of cast members to small groups of younger students. Have your performers share facts about the characters they play in *The Little Mermaid* and work with the younger students to create artwork based on what they’ve learned. Each piece of sea-art should be accompanied by a written description of the animal’s traits and habitat. Alternatively, schedule a “family night” with special activities – like a “sea station” for creating and coloring ocean artwork.

DON’T TRASH WHERE YOU SPLASH: CONNECT TO YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

The ocean contains rich and vital ecosystems. Around the world, entire communities live off the bounty of the sea, and close to one billion people depend on the ocean for nutrition. Yet the oceans are not an inexhaustible resource, and despite their importance to us, marine resources are being abused. But you can help – even if you don’t live near an ocean, your cast of *The Little Mermaid* can raise awareness about keeping our waterways clean and healthy.

Create an information sheet to insert into your programs – and distribute to parents and the broader community – regarding steps individuals can take to keep our oceans safe. If your school or community has a recycling program, your students can create a 3D-informational board in the lobby that details what can be recycled – using samples of actual materials – and how. Even if you are landlocked, inform your community that pollutants put down the drain, poured into the earth, or let loose in the air eventually reach the open sea and can harm marine life, sea birds, and human beings. Plastic waste such as empty bottles or grocery bags that are not properly recycled will also make their way to the sea and cause damage.

If you are near an open waterway, consider arranging a visit to a water purification plant or wildlife rescue where your students can learn more about the dangers of pollutants and what they can do to help the local ecosystems first-hand. Empower your cast to spread the word. We are the stewards of our national resources and it’s up to us to protect the ocean and its inhabitants.

BACKGROUND OF *THE LITTLE MERMAID*

MERMAID MYTHOLOGY

Some 4,000 years ago, Ea, the Babylonian god of the sea, possessed the lower body of a fish and upper body of a human. Atargatis, the Syrian goddess of fertility, boasted a similar form. Considered the first merman and mermaid, these two deities inspired a long line of mythological merfolk. Ancient Romans wrote of nereids – half-human, half-fish nymphs – and sea-men who, at nightfall, were said to climb into ships, sinking them. In Greek culture, mermaids were beautiful sirens who lured men to their deaths with their seductive singing. Christopher Columbus claimed to spot a mermaid in 1493 in what is now the Dominican Republic, and John Smith had his own sighting off of Newfoundland in 1614.



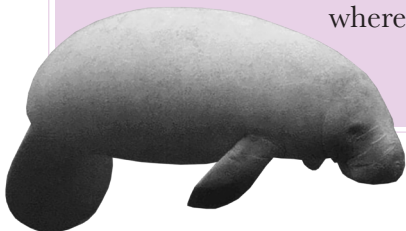
“The Mermaid,” 1901
by John William Waterhouse

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

In 1835, the Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen published his first collection of short stories: *Fairy Tales, Told for Children*. Two years later, the second edition featured a new story about a little mermaid. As the youngest daughter of the Sea King, the mermaid witnesses a terrible storm and saves a young prince from drowning. She falls in love with the prince and trades her voice to the evil Sea Witch for a chance to be human. Like most fairy tales, though, Andersen’s weaves dark and dangerous elements into its love story: to give up her voice is to have the Sea Witch cut out the mermaid’s tongue, and to save herself when the prince chooses another bride, the mermaid must stab him and bathe in his blood. But unable to kill the man she loves, she leaps into the ocean and dissolves into sea foam. This story became one of Andersen’s most popular tales and went on to be published in almost 150 languages. Today, the little mermaid is a Danish cultural icon and has been commemorated with a statue overlooking the Copenhagen harbor.

SIRENIANS

Manatees and dugongs – of the scientific order *Sirenia* – are named after the sirens of ancient Greek mythology. What early European explorers imagined as mermaids were probably manatees and other *Sirenia* – large aquatic, herbivorous mammals with pectoral breasts, agile forelimbs, and fish-like tails. This might explain Christopher Columbus’s remark that the mermaids’ faces “had some masculine traits” and were not as beautiful as he expected. Some say that *Sirenia* came from human ancestors who were transformed into the creatures by a curse for living near the water. These legends might have contributed to the idea of the mermaid as a bad omen for sailors, which likely came from ships sailing too closely to shore – where *Sirenians* gather – and running aground.

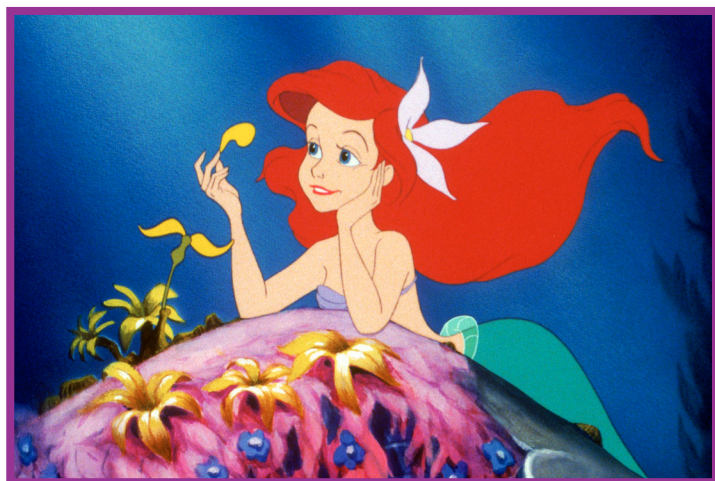


West Indian Manatee



DISNEY'S ANIMATED FILM

As a great admirer of classic fairy tales, Walt Disney looked to bring “The Little Mermaid” to the screen in 1940. Unfortunately, the timing and concept were not quite right and the project was abandoned. Almost 50 years later, Disney animators Ron Clements and John Musker decided to try again. They hired Howard Ashman and Alan Menken, authors of the recent off-Broadway hit *Little Shop of Horrors*, to create a musical theater score for the film. *The Little Mermaid*, an uplifting adaptation of Andersen’s famed tale, became Disney’s 28th animated feature and opened to rave reviews on November 17, 1989. Menken and Ashman were awarded the Oscar®, Golden Globe, and GRAMMY® for their score and for the song “Under the Sea.” *The Little Mermaid* marked the beginning of a renaissance in Disney animation and paved the way for such films as *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, and *The Lion King*.



1989 Disney animated film
Photo © Disney

DISNEY'S STAGE MUSICAL

Originally structured like a Broadway musical, the film was a solid candidate for stage adaptation, especially in the wake of the enormous success of *Beauty and the Beast*. Disney Theatrical Group brought book writer Doug Wright together with director Francesca Zambello, set designer George Tsypin, costume designer Tatiana Noginova, and lighting designer Natasha Katz to create an undersea world onstage. Alan Menken reprised his role as composer and worked with lyricist Glenn Slater to add new songs to the film’s score. The Broadway production opened on January 10, 2008, running for 685 performances before closing on August 30, 2009. The stage musical was adapted for middle school children as *The Little Mermaid JR.* in 2012. The full-length show was then revised and enjoyed sold-out productions in Holland, Moscow, and Tokyo. *The Little Mermaid* continues to charm audiences around the globe.

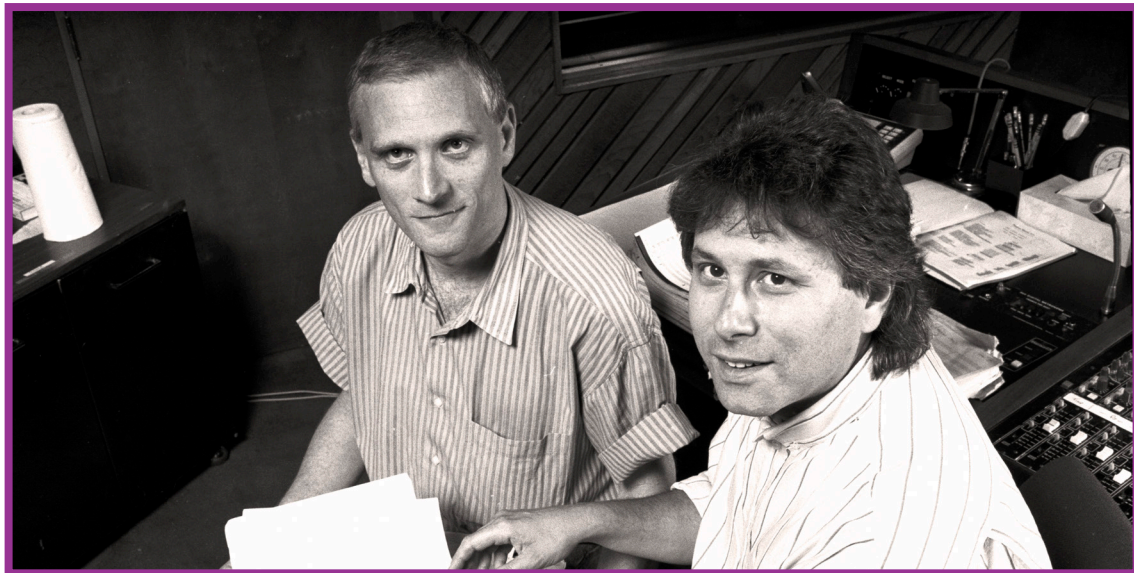


Sierra Boggess as Ariel
Original Broadway Production of *The Little Mermaid*

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Alan Menken (Music) Theater scores: *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*; *Real Life Funnies*; *Atina: Evil Queen of the Galaxy*; *Little Shop of Horrors*; *Kicks*; *Patch, Patch, Patch*; *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*; *Beauty and the Beast*; *A Christmas Carol*; *King David*; *Weird Romance*; *Der Glöckner von Notre Dame*; *The Little Mermaid*; *Leap of Faith*; *Sister Act*; *Newsies*; *Aladdin*; and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Film scores: *Little Shop of Horrors*; *The Little Mermaid*; *Beauty and the Beast*; *Aladdin*; *Newsies*; *Pocahontas*; *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*; *Life with Mikey*; *Hercules*; *Home on the Range*; *The Shaggy Dog*; *Noel*; *Enchanted*; *Tangled*; and *Mirror, Mirror*. TV: *Lincoln*, *Galavant*. Honors: Eight Academy Awards® (19 nominations), seven Golden Globe Awards, eleven GRAMMY® Awards, two Outer Critics Circle Awards, New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, Drama Desk Award, Tony Award®, Olivier Award, London's Evening Standard Award, membership in the Songwriters Hall of Fame, a doctorate in fine arts from New York University, and a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Howard Ashman (Lyrics) wrote the lyrics for the Disney animated films *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Aladdin* (three songs). He was a producer on *The Little Mermaid* and executive producer on *Beauty and the Beast*. With Alan Menken, he received two Oscars® and two Golden Globes® for Best Song (“Beauty and the Beast” and “Under the Sea”) and four GRAMMY® Awards. He received an Oscar® nomination with Mr. Menken for “Friend Like Me” from *Aladdin*. As author, lyricist, and director for the record-breaking stage musical *Little Shop of Horrors*, he received two Outer Critics Circle Awards, a New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, a London Evening Standard Award, and a Drama Desk Award. For the film version of *Little Shop of Horrors*, he received a Best Screenplay nomination from the Writers Guild and, with Mr. Menken, an Oscar® nomination for Best Song. He was author, lyricist, and director of *Smile* for which he received a Tony Award® nomination for Best Book. His other credits include *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*; *The Confirmation*; and artistic director, WPA Theatre (1976-1982). Born in Baltimore, Mr. Ashman died at age 40 of complications due to AIDS.



Howard Ashman and Alan Menken



Glenn Slater (Lyrics) Broadway: *School of Rock*, *Leap of Faith*, *Sister Act* (2011 Tony Award® nomination – Best Score, Drama Desk Award nomination – Outstanding Lyrics, Outer Critics Circle Award Nomination – Outstanding New Score); Disney’s *The Little Mermaid* (2008 Tony Award® nomination – Best Score, GRAMMY® nomination – Best Cast Album). West End: *Sister Act* (2009), Andrew Lloyd Webber’s *Love Never Dies* (2010, Olivier Nomination – Best Musical). Regional: *Leap of Faith* (Ahmanson Theatre, Los Angeles, 2010). Off-Broadway: *New Yorkers* (Manhattan Theatre Club, 2001, Lucille Lortel, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle nominations). Film: Disney’s *Home On The Range* (2004), Disney’s *Tangled* (2010, Oscar® and Golden Globe Nominations – Best Song). Other musicals: *Beatsville*, with composer/lyricist/wife Wendy Leigh Wilf. TV: *Galavant* with composer Alan Menken. Awards: The Kleban Award for Lyrics, the ASCAP/Richard Rogers New Horizons Award, and the Jonathan Larson Award. Upcoming: *Happy Trails* with composer Alan Menken and *The Hudsucker Proxy* with composer Stephen Weiner. Glenn lives in New York City and has two sons, Benjamin and Daniel.

Doug Wright (Book) received Tony® and Drama Desk Award nominations for his book for the Broadway musical *Grey Gardens*. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, a Tony Award®, the Drama Desk Award, a GLAAD Media Award, an OCC Award, a Drama League Award, and a Lucille Lortel Award for *I Am My Own Wife*, which premiered at Playwrights Horizons in 2003. In 1995, Doug won an Obie Award for his play *Quills*. His screen adaptation was named Best Picture by the National Board of Review and nominated for three Academy Awards®. Plays include *The Stonewater Rapture*, *Interrogating the Nude*, *Watbanaland*, and *Unwrap Your Candy*. For career achievement, Doug was cited by the American Academy of Arts and Letters and awarded the Tolerance Prize from the Kulturforum Europa. Currently, he serves on the board of the New York Theatre Workshop and the Dramatists Guild Council. He is married to singer/songwriter David Clement.



THE LITTLE MERMAID ONSTAGE

Jodi Benson Recording “Part of Your World”: [youtube.com/watch?v=DbHe1wOEt64](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DbHe1wOEt64)
Howard Ashman coaches the original Ariel on how to sing one of the musical’s most memorable songs.

Two well-respected theatrical flying services that can help you fly Ariel to the surface as she transforms into a human:

Flying by Foy: flybyfoy.com

ZFX: zxflying.com

MTI PRODUCTION RESOURCES

Music Theatre International: mtishows.com

Any questions regarding your license can be directed here, where you can also find information on licensing *The Little Mermaid JR.*, a 60-minute adaptation for middle school students, and a variety of resources, including those listed below and on the following pages.

Keyboard Patch Solutions™: Play those hard-to-find keyboard/synthesizer sounds with specially created patches integral to the orchestration. Keyboard Patch Solutions™ are designed specifically to meet the needs of productions that want convenient, cost-effective access to the special sounds unique to *The Little Mermaid* (like “Ursula’s Sound” in the Piano/Vocal Score), which may be difficult to reproduce on your own. All of the patches required are packaged as one easy-to-use program. Available for Windows or Macintosh computers with a MIDI Keyboard.

Logo Pack: Promote your production with the officially licensed logo. Maximize your marketing efforts by using *The Little Mermaid’s* official logo on your website, social media, posters, programs, handbills, fliers, and commercials. Our logo was designed by professional artists based on the original Broadway production art. Each Logo Pack includes logos in color and black-and-white with multiple digital format files (JPG, TIFF, PNG), which are available on CD or as digital files.

Logo T-Shirts: Show your pride with t-shirts featuring *The Little Mermaid’s* official logo. MTI’s official logo t-shirts are licensed to your school or theater and make for a great fundraising item to sell to cast, crew, parents, and audience members before the show and during intermission. Logos are printed on black t-shirts, making them perfect for actors and backstage crew. Available in packs of six in sizes that range from a child’s small to an adult XXL.



Performance Accompaniment and Guide Vocal CDs: Perform the entire musical with a pre-recorded score created by a full orchestra of professional musicians. When you don't have enough musicians to play the show's score, there's nothing more useful than having accompaniment tracks to facilitate a performance. Every single song, underscore, and note of the orchestration is available on CD, making for easy cueing and a seamless production backed by professional musicians! Also included is a Guide Vocal CD featuring a cast of actors performing the licensed version of the score and any underscored dialogue, so you can easily decipher the detailed nuances of the score.

Reference Recording: Listen to the cast recording before licensing the show. This recording may not completely mirror the final licensed version of the score, but it is an excellent representation of the material.

ShowTix4U: Manage ticket sales online and maximize your box office. Your patrons want to select their own seats and purchase tickets online and you want an inexpensive, safe, and flexible way to manage your box office and deepen your marketing efforts. Featuring online ticket sales, a fully-staffed national call center, versatile pricing for custom seating configurations, box office management, and more, ShowTix4U is the complete box office system for you!

Stage Manager Script: Facilitate cueing, blocking, and all of your production needs with a customizable copy of the libretto. Stage Manager Scripts are authorized, production-friendly, legal copies of the show's libretto that you can personalize for your production. You can write in pen, ink, or highlighter and not have to worry about erasing the books before returning them to MTI. Featuring enlarged printing and single-sided pages, this script allows triple the amount of space for writing cues, blocking notes, and complicated choreography charts. Three-hole punched and bound in a standard black binder, it's the perfect tool for a stage manager to call cues from backstage.

Transpositions-On-Demand: Change the key of any song to optimize your performer's vocal range. It happens all the time: You get the right actor for the role, but the right actor has the wrong vocal range for the character's songs. With Transpositions-On-Demand, get almost any song in virtually any key. Establish your performer's key early during the rehearsal process and MTI will send you transposed parts in three to four weeks.

Video License: Legally capture your production on video with this special license. Preserve and commemorate your production the right way after all the hard work your cast and creative team have put into the show. MTI's Video Licenses allow you to make non-commercial (home-use only) video recordings of your production for your archives. Video Licenses also allow you to authorize other participants in your production (cast, crew, families) to make recordings for their personal non-commercial use. Please note that your normal stage production license does not include the video rights due to copyright law. Video Licenses are the only legal way to video record your production.

Virtual Stage Management: Manage every detail of your production by sending instant updates to your cast and crew. Virtual Stage Management combines show management, artist accessibility, and social networking into one powerful and user-friendly online application. By eliminating a majority of the time spent managing scheduling conflicts and communicating changes, stage managers can focus on more critical aspects of the production.

SOURCE MATERIAL

Annotations for *The Little Mermaid*: surlalunefairytales.com/littlemermaid/index.html

An annotated translation of Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tale points out themes of Christianity, symbolic elements and their meanings, and parts of the story that are possibly autobiographical.

The Hans Christian Andersen Center: andersen.sdu.dk

Offers a complete index of Andersen’s work, many of which, including *The Little Mermaid*, can be found in their entirety on the site; scholarly articles on his work; a chronology of his life; and more.

***The Little Mermaid*:** The 2014 edition of Andersen’s fairy tale, published by Hythloday Press, combines H. B. Paull’s famous translation with two sets of classic illustrations – the engravings of Vilhelm Pedersen from the original Danish edition and Helen Stratton’s illustrations from the first English edition of *The Fairy Tales of Hans Christian Andersen*.

***The Little Mermaid: From the Deep Blue Sea to the Great White Way*:** Michael Lassell’s lushly illustrated coffee-table book, published by Disney Editions in 2009, explores the genesis of the stage adaptation and introduces the characters and the creative team behind the Disney musical.

MYTHOLOGY & FOLKLORE

11 Famous Mermaids and Their Creators:

mentalfloss.com/article/52673/11-famous-mermaids-and-their-creators

A descriptive list of mermaids across literature and popular culture.

***Brevertton’s Phantasmagoria: A Compendium of Monsters, Myths and Legends*:** Divided into eight sections, Terry Breveron’s 2011 book – which, published by Lyons Press, covers everything from “Weird People” to “Flying Monsters” to “Tales of Secret Treasures” – includes tales of the first merman (Ea, the Babylonian god of the sea) and mermaid (the Syrian goddess Atargatis).

***Mermaids: The Myths Legends, and Lore*:** Skye Alexander’s 2012 collection, published by Adams Media, explores the origins of mermaids from ancient Babylonia to the New World.

Theoi Greek Mythology: Exploring Mythology in Classical Literature & Art: theoi.com

Includes a page dedicated to Triton, the fish-tailed sea god, with a description and a list of references to him across literature.

18TH CENTURY EUROPE

The Disney film and stage adaptations of *The Little Mermaid* depict Prince Eric’s home and staff in 18th century attire. Fairy tales, however, are considered timeless, and so can take place in any period or location of your choosing. If you wish to maintain the traditionally depicted style for your production, the following resources can help guide you.

18th-Century Fashion: vam.ac.uk/page/0-9/18th-century-fashion/



Dedicated to London's Victoria and Albert Museum's collection of 18th century clothing, this page contains photos and detailed descriptions of the fashionable silhouette and style of the men and women of the time.

European Castles: vam.ac.uk/page/0-9/18th-century-fashion/

This site offers photos and histories of European castles across the centuries.

SEA LIFE

Citizens of the Sea: Wondrous Creatures from the Census of Marine Life: Marine scientist Nancy Knowlton annotates National Geographic photos, capturing the astonishing diversity of the ocean, with facts about sea creatures' defenses, migration, mating habits, and more in this 2010 publication.

The Ocean: ocean.nationalgeographic.com/ocean/

Information on ocean life, conservation, and underwater exploration, as well a colorful photo gallery from National Geographic.

Planet Ocean: Voyage to the Heart of the Marine Realm: Authors Laurent Ballesta and Pierre Descamp collect more than 25 essays from leading scientists highlighting topics spanning aquaculture to global warming, as well as more than 400 photos of marine life in this 2007 National Geographic publication.

Disney THE LITTLE MERMAID

Music by

ALAN MENKEN

Lyrics by

HOWARD ASHMAN & GLENN SLATER

Book by

DOUG WRIGHT

Based on the Hans Christian Andersen story
and the Disney film produced by Howard Ashman & John Musker
and written & directed by John Musker & Ron Clements

Originally produced on Broadway by Disney Theatrical Productions

PRODUCTION HANDBOOK CREDITS

WRITERS

Julie Haverkate & Colleen McCormack

ADDITIONAL CONTENT

Ken Cerniglia, Lauren Chapman, Matt Hagmeier Curtis, Sarah Kenny,
Timothy Maynes, Lisa Mitchell, David Redman Scott

DESIGNER

Chad Hornberger

PRODUCTION PHOTOS

Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI
Flower Mound High School; Flower Mound, TX
Greece Arcadia High School; Rochester, NY
Green Valley High School; Henderson, NV
Lancaster High School; Lancaster, NY
Levels at the Great Neck Library; Great Neck, NY
Marian High School; Omaha, NE
Roosevelt High School; Seattle, WA
Joan Marcus – Original Broadway Production

Find a complete listing of Disney stage titles at DisneyTheatricalLicensing.com



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