



## PRESS RELEASE

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# The Fairy Tale Continues as Inland Pacific Ballet Takes *The Little Mermaid* to The Redlands Bowl

With another successful year and Southern California tour behind them, Inland Pacific Ballet (IPB) is taking its spectacular original production of *The Little Mermaid* into the summer with the two final performances of their season at the Redlands Bowl on Friday, August 13 and Saturday, August 14 at 8:15 p.m. This will be one of the largest productions staged at the Bowl and both performances are part of the free Redlands Bowl Summer Music Festival.

Acclaimed as “an underwater *Lion King*,” *The Little Mermaid* integrates life size puppetry with dance and aerial trapeze flying to create a magical undersea world. "It's always a pleasure to perform at the Bowl," states IPB Artistic Director Victoria Koenig. "Dancing outdoors with the openness of the space and dome of the sky brings a special, inspired quality to the performance."

The unique Bowl setting does not normally accommodate scenery, so Koenig adds that many adaptations will have to be made for the venue. "Because scenic elements are so integral to our *Little Mermaid* production, we are bringing in a full trussing system for the aerial elements and underwater lighting effects."

*The Little Mermaid* will feature Principal Dancers: **Jennifer Friel**, as the *Little Mermaid*; **Jonathan Sharp**, as the *Prince*; and **Stephanie Orza**, as the *Sea Witch*. Friel danced for the first time with IPB in their last Redlands Bowl performance and is excited to return, now in her signature role as the *Little Mermaid*. "I love performing at an outdoor venue during the warm summer months; it gives the evening a romantic feeling." She adds there are always a few obstacles when working on the aerial equipment in unique theaters, but she is up for the challenge. "It's different from performing on an indoor stage, but that makes it exciting. That's what keeps live performances fresh."

This will be one of the largest productions staged at this year's Redlands Bowl Summer Music Festival, and like all Redlands Bowl concerts, admission for this performance is free though there is a freewill offering collected at intermission. Friel notes that a free show should bring in a whole new audience that may have previously been intimidated by ballet. "It's an amazing opportunity to present such a familiar story and be able to reach out to people who have never experienced a ballet. It will touch a lot of hearts."



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Adapted from Hans Christian Anderson's original story made popular by Disney animation, *The Little Mermaid* tells the story of a young princess and prince from two very different worlds. The mermaid princess leaves her underwater paradise and meets a handsome prince on the surface. As the story continues she has to decide how much she is willing to sacrifice for her new found love. Unlike the dark ending of the original story, IPB has created a surprise ending that adds to the enjoyment of the traditional tale.

Together with a creative dream-team, IPB brings *The Little Mermaid* to the stage. Portland-based choreographers Daniel Kirk and Eric Skinner utilize innovative cirque du Soleil style aerial technology to create the feeling of a real underwater environment, with lighting design by Greta Stockwell adding to the illusion.

Internationally-acclaimed designer Nancy Seruto's sets include a live shipwreck and a glittering coral reef. Costume designers Craig Sheppard and Jeanne Nolden have created a spectacular blend of ornate costumes and delightful puppet sea creatures. And, IPB artistic director Victoria Koenig conceived a lush, sweeping sound collage of great composers, more like a cinematic score than traditional ballet music, and including Ravel, Debussy, and Dvorak, among others.

The Redlands Bowl Summer Music Festival has been providing free, high-quality performances to the public since 1923 through generous financial support from individuals, businesses, foundations, organizations and service clubs. IPB has not performed at the venue since presenting a Balanchine program in 2002, and the Company is thrilled to be back on this summer's schedule.

Founded in 1994 by Southern California natives Victoria Koenig and Kevin Myers, Inland Pacific Ballet has quickly become one of Southern California's cultural jewels. Its mission is to build and sustain a professional ballet company of national stature in the Inland Empire of Southern California. IPB is committed to producing exquisitely staged productions of full-length classic story ballets as well as presenting the best in contemporary choreography.

For more information about *The Little Mermaid* and Inland Pacific Ballet, visit [www.ipballet.org](http://www.ipballet.org).

For information about the Redlands Bowl Summer Music Festival, visit [www.redlandsbowl.org](http://www.redlandsbowl.org) or call (909) 793-7316.

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