

# National Press Release

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Teatro Kismet in association with Warwick Arts Centre presents

## ***The Mermaid Princess***

**Written and directed by Teresa Ludovico**

**Inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid***

Italy's Teatro Kismet returns to the UK in 2010 with another enchanting adaptation of a Hans Christian Andersen classic. *The Mermaid Princess* tours nationally from March – July following the critical success of their internationally acclaimed production *The Snow Queen*, as well as celebrating the company's sixteenth year of showcasing these unique productions in the UK.

Teatro Kismet's signature physical and visual style has consistently appealed to both children and adults and their award winning adaptations have captivated audiences world-wide for almost thirty years.

This brand new English speaking production of *The Mermaid Princess* utilises evocative imagery, magical drama and poetic text with depth and sophistication allowing all ages to experience this atmospheric piece.

*The Mermaid Princess* tells the moving story of a mermaid living deep in the ocean with a spellbindingly beautiful voice. She rescues a shipwrecked prince and falls in love with him, requesting a mortal transformation from a sea witch who demands her sublime singing voice in return. As well, she is warned that she will turn into sea foam should she fail to marry the prince. After accepting, Mermaid becomes mute and her prince fails to recognize her and marries another. Heartbroken, Mermaid is compelled to kill her prince, escaping her destiny, but finally her true love for the prince renders her unable to complete the act. Mermaid makes the ultimate sacrifice: she dies and becomes transformed into sea foam which in turn becomes a cloud of mist and takes off into the sky, in an emotional but ultimately uplifting finale. This mesmerizing tale reflects the constantly fluctuating nature of existence, a continuing metamorphosis where there is no 'Happy ever after' but an eventuality which is as unique as everything in nature. It is a tribute to the power of love and the unceasing flow of life.

Following *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Snow Queen*, *The Mermaid Princess* completes a trilogy dedicated to both children and adults, enabling them to share together the powerful narrative and the magical dimensions fairy tales, exploring their darker undercurrents as well as their wonder. In a lofty and suspended universe the characters light up with colour, iridescent figures stolen from eighteenth century painting, who travel between earth, sea and sky. Diverse music ranging from pop to opera, traditional Italian band to lullaby, is combined harmoniously with dance, masks and physical storytelling to create a lucid, visionary and intimate production.

Teresa Ludovico's adaptation was originally commissioned and produced by Setagaya Public Theatre, Tokyo where it premiered to great acclaim in 2007, and has toured Japan three times since. On returning to Bari, Italy, Ludovico created a new version of the show, re-worked for a European cast and produced by Teatro Kismet which premiered in October 2009.



*The Mermaid Princess* is written and directed by Teresa Ludovico, design is by the Rome based architect and set designer Luca Ruzza (set design for *Beauty and the Beast*), and lighting design is by French designer and long time collaborator with Teatro Kismet Vincent Longuemare (lighting design for *Beauty and the Beast*, set and lighting design for *The Snow Queen*). Costume designs are by Luigi Spezzacatene, movement direction by Giorgio Rossi, and English translation by Stuart Rogers. The ensemble of 5 energetic and multiskilled actors play multiple roles in this pacy yet delicate production. They are: Eugenia Amisano, Raffaella Gardon, Daria Menichetti, Paolo Summaria, Valerio Tambone.

Previous UK tours include *Little Red Riding Hood* (1994), *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (1996, a co-production with Nottingham Playhouse directed by Martin Duncan), *Beauty and the Beast* (2002), *Little Mysteries* (2004) and *The Snow Queen* (2007 & 2009). Teatro Kismet featured at the Brighton Festival with a new production of *Gilgamesh* (2004) and co-produced original new work for children with Birmingham REP and the Comedie de Valence: *Through the Woods* (2004). They also created the first full theatrical production of Nino Rota's opera for children *The Swineherd Prince* with the Fondazione Lirico Sinfonica Petruzzelli in Bari. This production was presented at Birmingham REP in a collaboration with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (2007). They have just premiered a new adaptation of Moliere's *The Hypochondriac* which will tour in Italy in early 2010.

This UK tour follows acclaimed performances in Italy and France and is produced by Warwick Arts Centre, confirming the centre's commitment to bringing the best international theatre to audiences across the UK. The tour has been made possible thanks to support from Arts Council England.

*The Mermaid Princess* is suitable for everyone aged 8 and upwards

"Far too good just to leave to the children"

**The Guardian on Teatro Kismet's *Beauty and the Beast***

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