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The Little Mermaid

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f you're looking for some stage magic in Lower Austria, Bühne Baden has just brought Disney’s The Little Mermaid (Arielle, die Meerjungfrau) to the Stadttheater. It’s a big milestone for the venue, as this production marks the musical's German-language premiere. The show brings the classic animated movie right to the stage. While it is loosely based on Hans Christian Andersen's original fairy tale.

This version keeps the beloved, happier Disney ending. It follows Ariel, King Triton’s youngest daughter, who is endlessly curious about life up on land. After saving Prince Eric from a shipwreck, she’s so determined to join the human world that she makes a dangerous bargain with the diabolical sea witch, Ursula. Ariel trades her unique voice for legs and is given just three days to win the prince's heart. Alongside her fish best friend Flounder (known as Fabius in the German version), she dives into an adventure about figuring out who she really is and following her own path.

The cast is packed with fantastic talent. Anna Rosa Döller takes on the title role of Ariel, delivering a vocally stunning performance. Timotheus Hollweg plays Prince Eric, bringing a distinctive voice to the character. Andreas Lichtenberger takes the throne as the strict but loving King Triton.

One major highlight is the legendary musical theatre star Maya Hakvoort, who brings the villainous Ursula to life and creates spooky moments using her impressive tentacles.

A scene-stealing addition to the production are the 10-year-old Thamos Hollweg and Benjamin Ruzek, who play the doctor fish Fabius and zip across the stage on roller skates.

Behind the scenes, artistic director Andreas Gergen has built an enchanting underwater world. Rather than relying entirely on modern high-tech screens, the production utilizes clever, old-school theatrical tricks to fill the stage with colorful fish, glowing jellyfish, and sea snakes, making the experience feel incredibly immersive.

Of course, the heart of the show is the unforgettable score by Alan Menken, with lyrics by Howard Ashman and Glenn Slater. Fans will be thrilled to hear German versions of the classics they know and love, backed beautifully by the house orchestra.

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The fantastic costumes added another layer of beauty to the performance. Rich colours, elegant silhouettes and carefully considered details gave each character a distinctive presence while complementing the atmosphere of the production. Particularly striking was the way the costumes moved with the performers, lending grace and dramatic emphasis to their gestures. More than a visual embellishment, the costume design became an expressive part of the storytelling, making the stage picture all the more memorable.

The production, which earned standing ovations at its premiere, will run through April 30, 2027—making it a perfect night out for both hardcore Disney fans and musical theatre lovers alike.

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