

# *Help! A Monster Ate My Story*

## Show Information – April School Holidays 2026

### Location:

- Circa Theatre, on the corner of Cable and Taranaki Streets (next to Te Papa)
- Inside the theatre, there are two performance spaces. Our show is in Circa Two.

### Accessibility:

- The performance space doors will be closed once the show starts, but you may come and go during the performance as needed.
- The ushers will be sitting by these doors during the show. Please ask them for help if you need it.
- The café outside the performance is a good place to take a break and relax. It is a public space but should be fairly quiet and empty.
- Feel free to use comfort, fidget items and headphones while you are watching the show. If you need to use devices for accessibility, please put them on silent.
- The whole building, including Circa Two, is wheelchair accessible.
- There are no handrails on the stairs in the seating block, except as you enter to access the front or second row.
- For more information, please go to <https://www.circa.co.nz/your-visit/accessibility/>
- The actors will welcome you into the theatre and remind everyone that it's ok for the audience to be themselves during the show. We hope that you feel comfortable in this space.

### Duration:

- 45 minutes long
- For more information about dates and show times, please go to <https://www.circa.co.nz/package/help-a-monster-ate-my-story/>

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## Pre-show Demonstration (Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April):

- 11am onstage in Circa Two
- 15 minutes long
- We will introduce the actors and the characters they play in the show in their costumes. We will also show you some of the key lighting, sound, and special effects in the show.
- There will be a short break of 15 minutes between the demonstration and the start of the show at 11.30am.

## Audience Interaction:

- The actors will talk directly to the audience and ask you questions during the show. It is ok to answer these questions, either by putting up your hand or calling out. The audience may get noisy when this happens.
- The actors may ask you to put down your hand at some points and not to call out.
- They will also ask the audience to participate by holding up pictures of the jellyfish (on their programmes).
- The actors will move into the aisles of the audience area during the show.

## Lighting:

- The audience lights will remain on dimly, but they will change colour and intensity.
- There will be moments where the stage lights flash and change colour.
- You are welcome to wear sunglasses or a hat during the show to be more comfortable.

## Sound:

- There are songs sung by the actors to a backing track, some in the style of rock and rap. Other songs are gentler.
- There are also lots of sound effects throughout the show, some of which will be loud.
- You are welcome to wear headphones or earplugs during the show to be more comfortable.

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## Special Effects:

- Some smoke effects are used during the show.
- At a point in the show, there will be the sound of a phone ringing. The lights will come up on the audience at this point as the actors ask who in the audience has left their phone on. The lights will then dim again when the scene ends.
- Torches are used onstage by the actors during the show but do not shine into the audience's eyes.

## Actors and Characters:



This is Ruth Paul. She is an author and illustrator. That means that she writes and draws stories for children. Ruth plays herself in the show. She is creative, smart and funny. She gets stressed sometimes, but with help from her friends, she can solve problems.

Ruth also plays Jellyfish (from the book *I Am Jellyfish*). Jellyfish speaks in rhyme. She is small, gentle and quiet but can stand up for herself and her friends when she needs to!



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Jellyfish also sometimes appears as a puppet above the whiteboard on stage. (operated by our stage manager, Rachel or by our stagehand Anna). A bubble sound is heard when she appears.

This is Tadhg Mackay. He is an actor and singer in the show. You will meet him at the beginning of the show as you find your seats



Tadhg also plays Lion (from the book *Lion Guards The Cake*). Lion is proud and very confident but gets upset when he loses things or things don't go his way.

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Tadhg also plays the Mish-Mash Monster. It has been created by AI using different parts of Ruth's characters. It is greedy, demanding to be fed more and more as the show goes on.

The Mish-Mash Monster also appears as a shadow puppet (operated by our stage manager Rachel).



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This is Te Kura Huia Henare Stewart. She is an actor and singer in the show. You will meet her at the beginning of the show as you find your seats



Te Kura Huia also plays T-Rex (from the book *Stomp!*). T-Rex is playful, but not very smart. He doesn't like the dark as can't see very well. He loves to get into arguments with Lion but secretly enjoys being his friend.

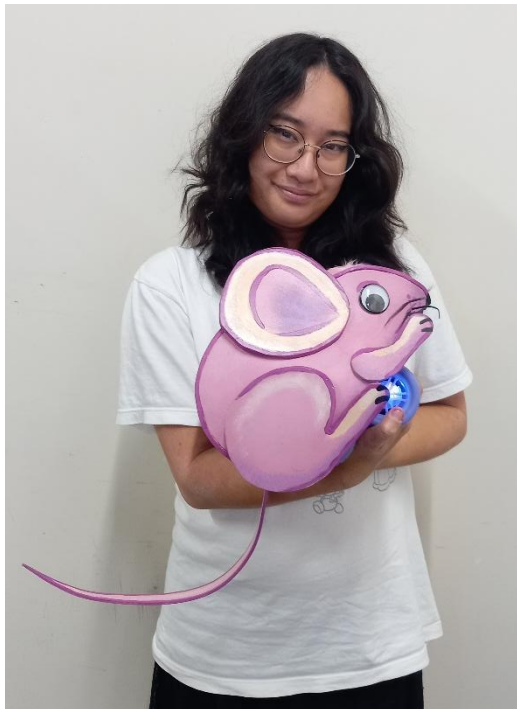
Te Kura Huia also plays Kiwi. Kiwi is wise and strong. Kiwi remains hidden for a lot of the story, but watches what is happening from her burrow in the garden. She reminds us all that its ok to be ourselves and the we are all strong in our own ways.



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This is Mouse. Mouse is brave, especially when it comes to helping her friends. Mouse 'talks' by squeaking.

Mouse is a puppet and has a 'squeaker' inside her body. She is sometimes held by the actors on stage. At other times she is animated by our stage manager Rachel using a remote control.



This is Rachel, our stage manager, holding Mouse. Rachel animates the Jellyfish puppet, the Mish-Mash Monster shadow puppet and the Mouse.

Anna is our backstage assistant. She helps with costume changes, and also sometimes animates the Jellyfish puppet.



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## Synopsis (warning - contains spoilers!):

The show begins with Ruth Paul, author and illustrator of children's picture books sketching characters on a whiteboard. Ruth is worried. She needs to create a story with a new character, but she can't think of what to write.

Jellyfish, T-Rex, and Lion (characters from previously published books) come to life on stage, silently at first. All want to star in the new story, but Ruth instead asks AI to make a new character

AI creates a Mish-Mash Monster, made up of different parts of Ruth's characters. Some smoke appears around the whiteboard, and the lights change colour and flash in a sequence. There are mechanical building sound effects followed by a loud burp as the Monster appears on stage.

The Monster starts to gobble up all Ruth's books, farting out foul-smelling screwed up paper as it does. It's hungry and wants more and more. Ruth, Lion, Jellyfish and Lion sing a song about the Monster eating their stories.

Jellyfish, T-Rex, and Lion are horrified when the books with their stories get eaten. They no longer have homes to go to. Jellyfish suggested they ask the wise Kiwi for help, but T-Rex and Lion don't believe that kiwi are real and start to fight amongst themselves. Jellyfish sings a song to calm them all down.

Ruth decides that the Mish-Mash Monster will be the star of her new book. She creates another new character, Mouse, to beat the Monster. The Mouse 'speaks' by making a high-pitched squeaking sound. Ruth, T-Rex and Lion sing a song as they try to understand what Mouse is saying.

Mouse believes she can scare the Monster (as lots of creatures are scared of mice!). Jellyfish, T-Rex, and Lion reluctantly agree to Mouse's plan.

Night falls as the lights onstage will dim and go blue. The scene changes to the garden. Kiwi appears and sings, reminding everyone that each one of us is unique and has our own strengths.

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Mouse bravely faces off against the Mish-Mash Monster. Unfortunately, the Monster is not scared – he just wants to eat Mouse. Jellyfish swoops in to save Mouse, 'zapping the Monster. There will be a flash of light and a loud sound when this happens. Mouse also does a lot of high-pitched repetitive squeaking because she is frightened. The Monster staggers away.

Ruth, T-Rex, Lion and Jellyfish meet in the garden to try to find a solution. They all convince Mouse to be brave and to face the Monster again by singing a song. At this point, the audience is asked to hold up their programmes to show the jellyfish that is printed on one side. The lights will change at this point so that the jellyfish pictures (and anything else coloured white in the theatre) will glow.

Mouse acts as bait to trick it into swallowing its own tail. In the final showdown, the trick works and the Mish-Mash Monster consumes itself, falling apart. There are flashing lights as this happens and a sequence of loud sounds. Some smoke appears onstage, and around the whiteboard.

Jellyfish, T-Rex, and Lion all get the books and parts of themselves back, and a new story is created with Mouse as the hero. Ruth, T-Rex, Lion, Jellyfish and Mouse join together in the final song.