

## **For Immediate Release**

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*For our most up to date policies relating to health and safety, please visit [www.mermagic-con.com](http://www.mermagic-con.com)*

## **THIS ONE'S FOR THE GUPPIES! FUN! Family Friendly Edu-tainment for the DC Metro like you've NEVER SEEN**



Photo credit: Ann Norment

**MerMagic Con**, the DC metro's very own international mermaid convention returns for 2021 with new and expanded children's programming.

### **Pros at a Con – Bona Fide Certifications and Professional Courses alongside Whimsical Opportunities for Children**

The tides have changed for the world's largest mermaid convention. While it remains the premiere convention for professional and hobbyist mermaids to participate in trending industry workshops and training opportunities, MerMagic Con is pleased to broaden its catalogue to reach younger enthusiasts.

Mermagic Con owners, creators, professional mermaids, and industry innovators Morgana Alba and Sienna Ackermann have appointed an experienced and renowned industry professional to curate and execute the upgraded experience they envisioned for this year's event. After observing the demographics of previous years, as attendance numbers climbed, a trend emerged: a normally adult-driven event was attracting younger attendees that needed something special just for them. Meet Shannon Rauch, who also answers to Mermaid Shannon—but only when she's feeling a little salty.



Rauch, known professionally as Mermaid Shannon, has performed her interactive dive show set to the books she has published in many venues worldwide. Her books, among others, will be shared with guests during mermaid story times throughout the weekend.

Rauch has been earning an income as an aquatic performer for over a decade. She is frequently dispatched by Make-A-Wish America via various chapters nationwide to grant the wishes of children who have requested a visit (and perhaps even a mermaid transformation or aquarium show) from a real live mermaid.



Over the last decade, Rauch has been featured by news outlets worldwide for her unusual career path. Her interactive dive shows are based on books that she has written and illustrated, and her objective is to inspire a calling to conservation to those she entertains. This mermaid wants to lure you in...and make you laugh!



*Mermaid Shannon (Rauch) performs in one of several silicone tail and shell sets she owns. Each one weighs over 50 pounds and “cost more than [her] first car.”*

Within the mermaid industry, Rauch has made a name for herself as being driven and determined, with an uncanny knack for achieving ambitious goals. She attributes her success to the ability to create a strong rapport with children, balancing sincerity and sharing in her audience’s childlike joy. This mermaid tells it like it is—sure, she has legs, and no, she can’t breathe underwater (she’s a mammal after all!). She also won’t dodge what some call “The Question.” “There’s always that one kid with ‘the question’ that the other kids can’t giggling about,” says Rauch. “It’s going to be asked and it’s a key moment in children’s interactions.”

### **The Answer to “The Question”**

What question? Well, here we invite you to back into your own childlike mind. Consider the most zany, immature question a five-year-old decides they just need answered. Go ahead, ask her, and her answer will surprise you and spur a follow-up question. And another...

### **If Miss Frizzle Was a Mermaid...**

Rauch makes an impact as an adult living her best life in the most childish way. She's an internationally recognized mermaid Rauch hits her mark as a quite childish adult living her best life. Take a room of toiled humor-obsessed six-year-olds and add in a mermaid who informs them that no, really, sea turtles breathe out of their butts. The room erupts in laughter and her next ten bookings are from the parents of children who spent the car ride home talking about the interesting respiratory system of a certain aquatic reptile. Rauch can masterfully navigate the niche profession of those who want to be a professional mermaid and the children who believe in them.

### **Turning Mermagic Con on its...Tail**

"The convention burst on the scene as already the largest of its kind worldwide, but over years it attracted more and more first-time mermaids, including a huge uptick in children, so a completely reworked children's track became necessary to welcome its younger attendees," said Shannon Rauch, aka Mermaid Shannon, the head of the convention's Children's Programming. "I have been performing my "Aquarioke" show during my aquarium residencies, and it fit in perfectly with our curriculum. The chance to reach a younger audience through a fun medium while also teaching the importance of aquatic safety, skills, and conservation is a new opportunity that we are excited to provide."

This year's returning signature event for kids is The Merlympics— a child-friendly underwater agility course meant to be completed in a tail (which participants can bring from home or are available for purchase from Fin Fun on-site), with prizes awarded to the champions!



*Awards for future mermaid champions wait snugly in display cases.*

Children can explore lifeguard-supervised “swim like a mermaid” classes, with tails provided, all-ages crafting workshops, and story time mermaid encounters set around a huge shell throne. Meet and greets feature diverse mermaids of various ages and cultural backgrounds—after all, mermaiding is for everyone!

Additional interactive opportunities for young attendees holding “merling” ticket passes include:

“Dancing in an Octopus’ Garden” experience led by instructor Leah Targaryen. Young dancers will be led through an undersea adventure using movement, music, games, and storytelling. This program can get pretty wiggly! Octopi can really move, so make sure your “merling” is comfortably dressed to go with their dancing shoes!



Once a cast member who toured with “the Greatest Show on Earth,” magician pirate James McGrath promises the excitement and mystery of illusion and irresistible laughs that can only come from someone used to clowning around. This funny pirate hails from Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus’ acclaimed clown college, so he’s got a trick or two up his sleeve.



Aquarioke logo courtesy of M. Jones.

Belt it out at the Aquarioke karaoke and dance show! This all-ages program will be held at Addy's Lounge (located inside the Best Western Battlefield Inn host hotel) from 6 to 8 p.m. on Saturday, August 7. Arrive dressed in your best aquatic costuming by 5:45 p.m. for a parade and red carpet walk before the show opens. Produced and hosted by Rauch, this program is free with first-come, first-serve seating and food and drinks available for purchase! Please note: for the safety and comfort of singers, microphones will have disposable covers changed between songs.





Mermaid Shannon serenades a shy little “merling” to help him out of his shell during Aquarioke.





Shannon Rauch, Head of Children's Programming, and General Press Liaison

Tickets for children ages 4-12 are available on the MerMagic Con website under the “merling” category. All children's programming for both convention days are included with ticket purchase. Children must be escorted by an adult at all times but if they are not interested in engaging in the mermaid magic themselves, they can opt for the “observer pass” which allows them to escort their Merling to the children's programming and in the pool. Please see the Tickets page of the website for details and to purchase tickets.

Note: Adults must purchase a convention participant pass to swim unless they are actively assisting their minor child.

MerMagic Con is thrilled to welcome merfolk of all backgrounds, experience levels, and ages, as well as mermaids-at-heart and those new to the community. MerMagic Con is equally committed to the health and wellness of venue and convention staff, volunteers, and attendees. Please see the COVID-19 policies page for frequently asked questions related to the convention in the wake of the coronavirus.

###



Mermaid Shannon's

# Aquarioke

dance party



Saturday

August 7 2021

MER MAGIC CON 6-8pm

A family friendly  
interactive karaoke  
& dance party

aquatic themed  
costume parade

Costume parade  
participants  
invited to meet  
at 5:45 to  
assemble



Addy's Lounge  
(Located inside  
best Western  
Battlefield)

No ticket  
necessary , first  
come first  
served on  
seating

Food and drinks  
for purchase

*Aquarioke*

Presented by  
MerMagic Con

Everyone welcome!



Media Note: Shannon can be reached at 704.412.0105 at any time by text (please no phone calls unless urgent). She can coordinate an interview with the convention owners, staff, and panelists. Onsite Media Coverage: For a press pass to cover the convention, please contact [mermagicconpress@gmail.com](mailto:mermagicconpress@gmail.com) with credentials and which days of the convention will be covered.

Influencers: MerMagic Con has limited press passes available to influencers and bloggers covering family/parenting/child education-oriented platforms. Please contact the press email address with attention to Shannon Rauch with links to social media platforms and relevant work.