

# MAMMA MIA!



## STUDY GUIDE

PREPARED BY: MEGHAN O'HARA

EDUCATION & OUTREACH COORDINATOR

SEASON SPONSOR



TITLE SPONSOR



## WHO'S WHO?

## CAST

BRITTANY BANKS

EVAN BENYACAR

NICOLA DAWN BROOK

STEPHEN GUY-MCGRATH

AARON HASTELOW

KATIE KERR

MELISSA KRAMER

HAILEY LEWIS

CONNOR LUCAS

CAMERON MACDUFFEE

ANTHONY MACPHERSON

GRAY MONCZKA

TEDDY MOYNIHAN

JAMIE MURRAY

NICOLE NORSWORTHY

REBECCA POFF

EMMA RUDY

JAN ALEXANDRA SMITH

MICHAEL TORONTOW

KIMBERLY-ANN TRUONG

ENSEMBLE

ENSEMBLE

ROSIE/U.S. DONNA

BILL AUSTIN

SKY

SOPHIE SHERIDAN

MINISTER

ALI

EDDIE

HARRY BRIGHT

PEPPER/DANCE CAPTAIN

ENSEMBLE

ENSEMBLE/ U.S. SKY

ENSEMBLE/ U.S. SOPHIE

ENSEMBLE

DONNA SHERIDAN

ENSEMBLE

TANYA

SAM CARMICHAEL

LISA

CREATIVE TEAM

DIRECTOR

MUSICAL DIRECTOR

CHOREOGRAPHER

SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

LIGHTING DESIGNER

SOUND DESIGNER

ASSOCIATE SOUND DESIGNER

STAGE MANAGER

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

APPRENTICE STAGE MANAGER

ADAM BRAZIER

CRAIG FAIR

LISA STEVENS

CORY SINCENNES

RENEE BRODE

PETER MCBOYLE

WILLIAM FALLON

MATTHEW MACINNIS

AL GADOWSKY

CHANTAL HAYMAN

LORE GREEN

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

IN 1999 MY AGENT SENT ME A SCRIPT TO A NEW MUSICAL THAT USED THE EXISTING MUSIC OF ABBA TO TELL THE STORY. I RELUCTANTLY READ ACT ONE, CLOSED THE SCRIPT, AND TOLD MY AGENT "THE SHOW WILL CLOSE AT INTERMISSION". TWENTY YEARS LATER I AM STILL BLISSFULLY EATING MY WORDS.

I WENT ON TO BE CAST AS "SKY" IN THE ORIGINAL TORONTO PRODUCTION AND HAVE NOW DIRECTED MY SECOND PRODUCTION OF *MAMMA MIA!* TO SAY THAT THIS SHOW HAS BEEN A BLESSING IN MY LIFE WOULD BE AN ENORMOUS UNDERSTATEMENT. I HAVE WITNESSED THE POWER OF THIS SHOW FIRSTHAND. THE ABUNDANT JOY AND THE BRAZEN ESCAPE THAT *MAMMA MIA!* OFFERS HAS CONNECTED WITH AUDIENCES AROUND WORLD.

AS I LEARNED WHILE PERFORMING IN THIS SHOW FOR EIGHTEEN MONTHS, THE POWER AND VALUE OF ESCAPE IS NEVER TO BE JUDGED OR BELITTLED. SHOWS LIKE *MAMMA MIA!* CAN BE HEALING TO THE SOUL AND OFFER REPRIEVE FROM THE DAILY GRIND. THEY REMIND US THAT THERE IS ABUNDANT JOY IN THE WORLD AND ALLOW US TO SHARE IN THE EXPERIENCE TOGETHER.

WHAT BRINGS EACH INDIVIDUAL TO THE THEATRE IS PERSONAL. WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR FROM THE THEATRE IS PERSONAL. BUT THERE IS AN UNDENIABLE HUMAN EXPERIENCE WHEN COMPLETE STRANGERS SIT IN A LARGE THEATRE, THE LIGHTS DIM, AND SOMEBODY STARTS PLAYING ABBA.

BON SPECTACLE,

ADAM BRAZIER



## SYNOPSIS

The story takes place on a mythical Greek island in the present day, and centers around a young girl named Sophie who dreams of a white wedding, with her father giving her away at the altar (I HAVE A DREAM). Problem is, she doesn't know who her dad is - and she's getting married the next day. As the show begins, she explains to her chums that her mum, Donna, fell into the arms of three men within a short space of time. So she's got three possible dads, and has invited them all to the wedding (HONEY, HONEY).



2018 London, U.K. cast. Photo by: Brinkhoff/Mögenburg.

Sophie's mum, a tavern hostess, used to front a rock chick band called "Donna and the Dynamos." Her former bandmates - the tomboyish Rosie and the glamorous Tanya - show up for the wedding, and talk over how life has turned out for them (MONEY, MONEY, MONEY). They're not the only ones who turn up though - so do the three possible dads, whom Sophie convinces not to tell Donna that she invited them (THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC). Donna is

surprised, to say the least, at the sight of the new arrivals (MAMMA MIA).

Convinced that this new twist will ruin everything, she escapes to her room, where Rosie and Tanya do their best to cheer her up (CHIQUITITA). They discover momentos of their old rock band days, and try to see if they've still got it (DANCING QUEEN). Sophie is not much happier - she'd been sure she'd be able to tell at first sight which one was her father, but she has no clue. Sky (her fiance) tries to cheer her up, while his friends try to steal him away for the traditional bachelor party, beginning with a deep-sea dive (LAY ALL YOUR LOVE ON ME).

At Sophie's own party, Donna, Rosie and Tanya make their triumphant return to the stage (SUPER TROUPER). The three "dad"s, Sam, Bill and Harry, are also present, and as the only men there are subjected to the attention of the girls (GIMME! GIMME! GIMME!). Sophie talks to each of the men, and all of them become convinced that the reason he has been invited is because he is Sophie's father (THE NAME OF THE GAME). Sophie returns hopelessly confused, while the party carries on (VOULEZ-VOUS).

The second act begins with Sophie in bed having nightmares about her wedding, and about the events that have led up to three men fighting to give away the bride, who isn't what she seems (UNDER ATTACK). Sam is the first to try to speak to Donna about his suspicions, but all she can think of is the past (ONE OF US). It turns out Sam, who may have been the love of her life, left her. They both wish they could go back to the time when they were open with one another (S.O.S.).



*Mamma Mia!* cast at Music Theatre Wichita, photo by Christopher

Meanwhile, Tanya has been fighting off advances from one of the boys that works for Donna, and finally manages to put him down once and for all (DOES YOUR MOTHER KNOW?). Sam tells Sophie something about his failed marriage, trying to ensure she knows what she's getting into with Sky (KNOWING ME, KNOWING YOU). Harry has also decided to speak to Donna, and they begin to reminisce about the time they spent together (OUR LAST SUMMER). Sophie herself arrives and Donna helps her finish getting ready for the wedding, hardly able to believe her little girl is getting married (SLIPPING THROUGH MY FINGERS). Sam returns again, emboldened by his talk with Sophie, but Donna still doesn't want to have anything to do with him, and asks him to leave (THE WINNER TAKES IT ALL).

An attraction has been growing between Rosie and Bill, who find themselves alone in the church before the wedding. She decides to take matters into her own hands (TAKE A CHANCE ON ME). The wedding begins, with Donna giving the bride away. However, Sophie's been doing some thinking, and puts an end to the



Jan Alexandra Smith, Eliza-Jane Scott and Nicola Dawn Brook, *Mamma Mia!*  
The 2016 Charlottetown Festival  
Photo Credit: Louise Vessey

proceedings, saying she's just not ready. But someone else is - Sam explains his desertion of 20 years ago and asks Donna to marry him. Shocked, but happy, she agrees (I DO, I DO, I DO). Content with having three dads rather than just one, Sophie leaves with Sky to find their future (I HAVE A DREAM).

Synopsis source: Theatre By the Sea

## HERE WE GO AGAIN - MAMMA MIA AROUND THE WORLD



*Mamma Mia!* film cast. Source: USAToday.com

*Mamma Mia!* was the brainchild of producer Judy Craymer—in 1983, she met with Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus, who were working on another musical, *Chess*. Their ABBA hit “Winner Takes All” inspired Craymer to think about the theatrical nature of ABBA’s music. Several years later, Craymer commissioned the book writer, Catherine Johnson, to join what would become *Mamma Mia!*, along with director Phyllida Lloyd. Together they created this “jukebox musical”—so named because it compiles existing songs to create a story.

The musical premiered in London’s West End at the Prince Edward Theatre in April 1999, and transferred to the Prince of Wales Theatre in 2004, where it played until 2012, before moving to its current U.K. home at the Novello Theatre. The show had its North American premiere at Toronto’s Royal Alexandra Theatre in May 2000, where it played for five years. The original Toronto cast included Louise Pitre and Adam Brazier, director of this production. In 2001, *Mamma Mia!* opened on Broadway at the Winter Garden Theatre, where it ran until its transfer to the Broadhurst Theatre in 2013. The show ran on Broadway until 2015—to date, it is the ninth longest-running Broadway musical, and the longest running jukebox musical in Broadway history.

The musical’s global scope has been nearly unprecedented, premiering in more cities faster than any other musical in history. In fact, the show sets records everywhere: it was Moscow’s best-selling musical ever; in Shanghai, it became the first production of a Western musical to be performed in Mandarin; and it was the first foreign language production to play concurrently in three different German cities. In 2005, the musical travelled to ABBA’s home for a production translated into Swedish, and performed in Stockholm.

This worldwide phenomenon brings audiences together in celebration of love, life, and music. *Mamma Mia!* has circled the globe, reaching across languages and cultures to share in its optimism and joy—feelings that endure as this musical sensation continues its journey around the world.

## MAMMA MIA! IN NUMBERS

**5,773** PERFORMANCES ON BROADWAY



*Mamma Mia!* in Beijing. Source: chinadaily.com

PERFORMED IN OVER  
**440** MAJOR CITIES,  
IN **40** COUNTRIES,  
ON **5** CONTINENTS

SEEN BY OVER 60 MILLION PEOPLE

**TRANSLATED INTO OVER 14 LANGUAGES**

AT LEAST 7 PERFORMANCES  
ARE HAPPENING ON ANY  
GIVEN DAY



World record attempt for largest disco dance. Source: guinnessworldrecords.com

**HAS GROSSED \$2 BILLION WORLDWIDE SINCE ITS PREMIERE**



## ABBA

Sweden—Summer, 1966. Björn Ulvaeus—a member in popular folk music group, the Hootenany Singers—meets Benny Andersson, keyboardist for Sweden’s the Hep Stars, for the first time. A few short weeks later, the pair had written their first song together, and the composers embarked on musical partnership that would last for years to come.



Source: variety.com

In 1969, Björn and Benny met Agnetha Fältskog and Anni-Frid Lyngstad. Agnetha was a successful solo singer in her own right, and she married Björn in 1971. Anni-Frid had also embarked on her own recording career—she and Benny married in 1978. Soon, the four began making music together, beginning with “People Need Love”, recorded in 1972 under the

band name Björn & Benny, Agnetha & Anni-Frid. The next year, the group entered Sweden’s Melodifestivalen and won third with their song “Ring, Ring”—it was one of the biggest hits of the year in Sweden.

Tired of their unwieldy band name, the group’s manager Stig Anderson started to refer to them as ABBA, an acronym of their names. The name caught on quickly, and thus, ABBA was officially born: **A**gnetha, **B**jörn, **B**enny, and **A**nni-Frid.

In 1974, they entered the Melodifestivalen again, this time winning with their hit, “Waterloo”, and moving them into the Eurovision Song Contest finals. “Waterloo” won, and the song became their breakthrough moment, topping the charts across Europe. The song was so popular that it even landed in the top ten in U.S. charts.



ABBA performs “Waterloo” at Eurovision.

Source: Getty Images/metro.co.uk

Despite this early success, ABBA faced difficulties being taken seriously after their

Eurovision win, and several of their subsequent singles received little to no air play, and often failed to chart. Over a year after “Waterloo”, ABBA finally hit it big again with “SOS,” a single from their third album, *ABBA*. A second song from that album, “Mamma Mia,” rocketed them back to the number one spot on the charts.



Source: Wall Street Journal, wsj.com

By 1976, the group had been firmly established as a global sensation. That year, the band released *Arrival*, which featured hits like “Money, Money, Money” and “Knowing Me, Knowing You.” This was followed by a highly successful concert tour of Europe and Australia—in fact, the band had found an unexpectedly huge audience in Australia, and the tour’s visit to that country was documented in a feature film, *Abba: The Movie*.

While their musical success continued, the band’s “happy couple” image ultimately didn’t last: in 1979, Björn and Agnetha announced their divorce, followed by Benny and Anni-Frid’s divorce in 1981. However, the group kept producing new music and in 1981 released their eighth album, *The Visitors*. By 1982, that energy was slowing down, and band members were pursuing other projects—the year ended with them deciding to take a break from ABBA.

In the end, ABBA is known as one of the most commercially successful musical acts in the history of pop music. They are the first group from a non-English speaking country to achieve the success they did on the charts in English-speaking countries. They have released countless compilation and greatest hits albums, and their music continues to be wildly popular today. ABBA is so popular, in fact, that in 2018 they announced they



ABBA in 2016. Photo: Anders Westin/Westin Promotion/TT

were working on new music, and a virtual tour, with holograms showing the band members just as they were in the 1970s. The tour was met with uproarious excitement, signalling the band’s enduring legacy and popularity.

## MAMMA MIA!: WHERE AND WHEN?

### GREECE

The play takes place at Donna's taverna in Greece, where Sophie grew up.



### ACTIVITY:

Working in pairs, have students discuss their impressions of Greece. What do they imagine life is like there? How is it different from or the same as living in Canada?

After their discussion, have students research Greece, focusing on everyday life there, rather than facts and figures. Look for photos, stories, and interviews with Greek citizens. What are their lives like? How does this information compare to your initial assumptions? What is similar to or different than what you'd expected?

---

## 1970 vs. 1990

The play gives us a mother and daughter pairing who grew up in two different decades.

### ACTIVITY:

Create groups of four, each group made up of two pairs of students. Assign each group one specific subject to research, such as: politics, geography, history, science, demographics, health, art, music, popular culture, etc.

Pair #1 will research their assigned subject as it applies to 1970. Pair #2 will research their assigned subject as it applies to 1990. Once each pair has completed their research, they'll present what they've learned to each other. Then, each group should discuss what differences they noticed between the two time periods, and what similarities they found.

## DISCO ERA

From the late 1960s to early 1970s, a new style of music, dance, and fashion emerged: disco.



Activity:

Work in small groups. Each group should be assigned one category of disco culture:

MUSIC

DANCE

FASHION

In your groups, research your aspect of disco. Identify its main features, and provide examples using videos, sound recordings, and photographs. Who were the main influential figures?

## POP MUSIC

“Pop” or “popular music” is a genre that originated in the 1950s in the U.S. and the U.K. The genre’s most basic features are:

short to medium-length; written in a basic format, such as verse-chorus; repeated choruses; melodic tunes; hooks

The artists and musical styles that fall into the “pop” category have changed over the decades. In the 1970s, ABBA were the pop musicians topping the charts.

**Expansion exercise:** have your students research pop across the ages. Who were the key players in the 1950s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, and 00s? Have the genre’s core features changed much? What has changed? How has technology influenced the development of pop?



Aaron Hastelow and Katie Kerr in rehearsals for *Mamma Mia*.

## “MAMMA MIA”: A MUSICAL ANALYSIS

Daniel Ross refers to “Mamma Mia” as “surely one of the most overtly ingenious pop songs” created by ABBA. Listen to the song with your class, and then discuss Ross’s observations:



“Let’s kick off right at the beginning ... It’s an iconic motif, one that defines the song completely thanks to its boldness ... consider how the accent is on the off-beat, how it prefigures the whole song’s playful use of syncopation”

Instrumentation: Ross identifies the marimba, piano, oboe, electric guitar, and synthesizer as instruments used in this song. Look up these instruments—have any students played them before? What do they sound like?

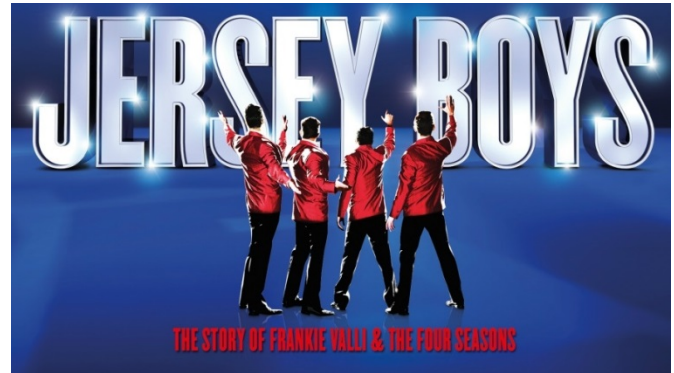
Chorus: Ross asks, “How many songs can you name where the chorus is the quietest bit of the whole song?” What is the effect of the song’s chorus? Why do you think they choose to make it quiet?

Ross says that the song is “Thoughtfully composed with lyrics that actually match the music.” Have your students identify points in the song where the music and the lyrics reflect or complement each other. This may take a few listens and some study of the lyrics. Do you and your students agree with Ross’s assessment?

Source and for more: <https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/music-theory/abba-mamma-mia-analysis/>

## JUKEBOX MUSICAL

A jukebox musical is a musical film or stage production that creates a story from songs and music that have already been released, typically by popular or well-known musical acts, such as ABBA. Other examples of jukebox musicals include:



Can your class name any other jukebox musicals? Whose songs and music do they use?

## PEEK INTO REHEARSALS

Watch as choreographer Lisa Stevens rehearses with the cast:

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=WOG5DCSO-CI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOG5DCSO-CI)



## START A CONVERSATION!

Use these questions to discuss the performance with your students.

What was a moment in the performance that stuck out to you? What interested you most, made you the most happy, made you sad, made you wonder, or made you sit up a bit in your seat?

What was it that struck you in that moment?

What did you think about the use of ABBA's music in the play? Did you think it was effective? Did it help tell the story? Why or why not?

What music do you like that you think could be turned into a musical? What would the story be?

If someone were to make a jukebox musical about your life, what music do you think they would pick? Why?

How does Donna's view of her daughter, Sophie, change over the course of the play? Why do you think this happens? Is it a positive change? How might this change of heart affect each character's future?

After seeing the play, discuss who you think is Sophie's biological father with your classmates. Think of yourselves as detectives, collecting clues from the play to try to find the correct answer. Provide evidence for your opinion. Do any of your peers make compelling cases for their choice that you had not considered? Did your group reach a consensus?

Do you think Sophie made the right choice inviting the three potential fathers to her wedding? Would you have done the same? Why or why not? What are some of the factors you'd consider before making your decision?