



## **Smash Hit ABBA Musical *Mamma Mia!* Brought Back by Popular Demand!**

*On stage at St. Jacobs Country Playhouse until November 20*

Wednesday, October 26, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Here we go again! Back by popular demand after a sold-out run this summer, *Mamma Mia!*, the hit musical featuring the chart-topping catalogue of Swedish super group ABBA, returns to the St. Jacobs Country Playhouse this fall for a strictly limited engagement. The production runs November 1 to November 20.

*“Mamma Mia!* is one of the most successful musicals of all time,” says **Alex Mustakas**, Artistic Director of Drayton Entertainment. “The production launched the 2022 Season at the St. Jacobs County Playhouse and was an immediate hit. All performances were sold out before the first curtain went up, so we added an additional week of performances and they sold out as well. We heard from so many patrons that they didn’t get the chance to see the show this summer, so we’re excited they have the opportunity to see this feel-good musical!”

Set on an idyllic Greek island, *Mamma Mia!* tells the story of Donna, an independent single mother preparing for her daughter Sophie’s wedding. The guest list includes two lifelong girlfriends from her one-time band, Donna and the Dynamos ... but Sophie has secretly invited three guests of her own.

On a quest to find the identity of her father to walk her down the aisle, Sophie has arranged for three men from Donna’s past to make a trip to paradise, where over the next 24 hectic hours, new love will bloom and old romances will rekindle on an island full of possibilities.

*Mamma Mia!* is a celebration of mothers and daughters, old friends and new family. In addition to the iconic title song, the show includes ABBA’s hits “Dancing Queen,” “The Winner Takes It All,” “Lay All Your Love on Me,” “Money, Money, Money,” “Knowing Me, Knowing You,” “SOS,” and “Take a Chance on Me.”

This smash-hit musical is brought to life on stage by Director and Choreographer **David Connolly**, whose impressive résumé includes work on major musicals like *First Wives Club* in Chicago and many Drayton Entertainment productions including Disney’s *Newsies*, *Priscilla*

*Queen of the Desert*, and the theatre's popular pantos. **Connolly** is joined by Music Director **Brigham Phillips**, Set Designer **Brandon Kleiman**, Costume Designer **Rachel Berchtold**, and Lighting Designer **Jeff Johnston Collins**. The team also includes Stage Manager **Dustyn Wales**, Assistant Stage Manager **Sadie Wannamaker** and Apprentice Stage Manager **Molly Mück**.

*Mamma Mia!* is packed with star power including **Jackie Mustakas** as Donna Sheridan, the role made famous by Meryl Streep in the film version. Mustakas has appeared in many Drayton Entertainment productions including *Jack and the Beanstalk: The Panto*, *The Rainmaker*, *Hairspray*, and *Cinderella: The Panto*, as well as the role of Tanya during the initial summer performances of *Mamma Mia!*.

**AJ Bridel** returns as Donna's plucky daughter and the bride-to-be, Sophie. Bridel has appeared on stages across the country including playing the title role in *Anne of Green Gables* at the Charlottetown Festival and Lauren in the Toronto production of *Kinky Boots*. She has also been in many Drayton Entertainment productions including *You'll Get Used To It ... The War Show*, and *The Wizard of Oz*.

Sheridan College graduate and Winnipeg raised **Vinnie Alberto** will return as Sophie's fiancé Sky. Alberto has previously appeared in *The Wizard of Oz* at Rainbow Stage and *Destination Wedding* at The Musical Stage Toronto.

**Vanessa Cobham** and **Nicola Dawn Brook** will play Donna's friends and fellow Dynamos Tanya and Rosie respectively. Vanessa has appeared in the Toronto production of *The Lion King*, in the *Hairspray* movie and at theatre across the country, including in the Drayton Entertainment productions of *South Pacific*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Rocky: The Musical*, and *ELF: The Musical*. Brook's expansive resume includes roles in London's West End, as well as with many theatre companies across Canada such as The Grand Theatre, Segal Centre Montreal, and Theatre Aquarius.

**Will Jeffs**, **Mark Harapiak**, and **Stephen Sparks** will play Donna's former beaux and Sophie's potential dads, Harry Bright, Bill Austin, and Sam Carmichael. Jeffs is an award-winning screenwriter and director who has performed in a variety of productions across the UK, including *The Insect Play* in London's West End. Harapiak has been in several Drayton Entertainment shows including *Rock of Ages*, *Footloose*, and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Sparks has appeared in many film and television projects and last appeared as Pulitzer in Disney's *Newsies* for Drayton Entertainment.

The stellar cast also includes **Hadley Mustakas** and **Natasha Strilchuck** as Sophie's best friends Ali and Lisa, and **Preston Vendramin** and **Caulin Moore** as Sky's buddies Eddie and Pepper. **George Absi**, **Hailey Balaz**, **Josh Doig**, **Kalie Hunter**, **Ashley St John**, **Lukas Vernon**, **Trayvon Ward**, and **Savanna Wright** round out the stellar cast.

The original West End production of *Mamma Mia!* opened 23 years ago. The show closed in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and reopened at the Novello Theatre in August of 2021 where it is still running. The Broadway production closed in September of 2015 after 5,773

performances, and the international tour has visited more than 74 cities in 35 countries. The feature film adaptation was a major blockbuster grossing over \$600 million worldwide and was followed by a successful sequel called *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again*.

*Mamma Mia!* has music & lyrics written by **Benny Andersson, Björn Ulvaeus**, with some songs with **Stig Anderson**. The book is by **Catherine Johnson**. Additional Material & Arrangements are by **Martin Koch**. The production was originally produced in London by **Judy Craymer, Richard East** and **Björn Ulvaeus** for Littlestar in association with Universal. Music is published by Universal Music Publishing Group and EMI Grove Park Music Inc. and EMI Waterford Music Inc.

*Mamma Mia!* is proudly sponsored by **Home Hardware**. Media Sponsors are **Bounce Radio 99.5, The Hamilton Spectator** and the **Guelph Today**. The 2022 Media Sponsor is **CTV**.

Audience members will have an extra jolt of excitement at the **Super Trouper Tuesday** performances, as they are encouraged to dress up in their best disco outfits. Prizes will be handed out for best costume at each Tuesday evening performance.

Regular performance tickets are \$53 for adults, \$32 for youth under 20 years of age and \$43 for groups of 20 or more and select Discount Dates. HST is applicable to all ticket prices. Tickets may be purchased by calling the Box Office at **519-747-7788** or toll free at **1-855-drayton (372-9866)**, or online at [www.draytonentertainment.com](http://www.draytonentertainment.com).

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