TAKE A CHANCE ON MAMMA MIA!

You can dance! You can jive! You will also have the time of your life at Oak Park High School's production of MAMMA MIA!. Enjoy, as chaos ensues with its catchy songs, hilarious characters, and touching story between mother and daughter.

Mamma Mia, the wildly popular musical written by Catherine Johnson, is the story of a single mother Donna and her daughter Sophie. Sophie is in search of her dad so he can walk her down the aisle at her wedding. She sends out wedding invitations to three different men from her mother's past. Thinking that one of these strangers is her father, Sophie hopes she will be able to discover the truth in time for her wedding. When her three potential dads arrive, Sophie's plan slowly unravels and major miscommunications, flirting, and old feelings lead to a cascade of shenanigans.

A major highlight of this production is the talented vocals of their leading ladies. Both Sophie (Sierra Hermsen) and Donna (Francesca Young) bring a captivating presence throughout the entire show. They have bright voices and incredible characterization, too. Young reveals touching ballads in "The Winner Takes it All." She proceeds to stun the audience with her authentic and natural in her portrayal of a hard-working mother.

Another notable performer is, Danielle Blankenship, who plays the role of Tanya. She implements great characterization in her hilariously delivered lines and was complemented perfectly by Ellie Hermes, who played Rosie. Other strong presences onstage are the actors playing Sophie's three possible dads portrayed by Ashton Mychalczuk (Sam), Jacob Collier (Harry), and Zachary Scott (Bill Austin); they are hilarious and endearing. Scott brings superb energy as Bill Austin, truly embodying his carefree and free-spirited nature.

Everyone that steps onto the stage brings liveliness. Just about every actor on stage is always reacting. At times, they lack big facial expressions of emotion within what they are singing. Other than that, there is never a dull moment. The choreography is quite precise and is highly entertaining; everyone is interactive with their movements. Sometimes the chemistry between characters presents as awkward, but they are having fun on stage and it shows in their dancing, singing, and expressions.

While the actors create varying emotional atmospheres, the technical aspects of the production add to the ambiance and help set the mood for the audience. Immediately, the spectacular set and backdrop captivate the audience. The lighting and transitions throughout the whole show match the emotion of each scene. It enhances the set and musical numbers, hitting all the musical nuances. Oak Park's stage manager, Elania Shalabi, does a fantastic job at calling cues. They are all on time and play out seamlessly. The stage crew does a phenomenal job with the scene changes. They are quick, smooth and non-obstructive. There are a few noticeable mishaps with the sound but despite this, the crew does a fantastic job at keeping it steadily strong.

Oak Park High School's production of MAMMA MIA! is guaranteed to bring joy to the audience and remind people to embrace their inner dancing queen!

by Nora Cameron of Ruskin High School

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THE PHENOMENAL MAMMA MIA MUSICAL

Everyone has their own journey to follow in order to truly discover who they are and what they genuinely want. This is highlighted in the spectacular MAMMA MIA musical that is brought to life by some talented students from Oak Park High School. The energy that some of these students give does not go unnoticed and captures the attention of their audience.

Sophie Sheridan is a young woman on a journey to discover who her father is in time for a special event, but it becomes quite problematic when there are three individuals who could be that man. This journey also includes her mother, Donna Sheridan, when her three former lovers are back which forces her to handle this issue. Their journey gives us good laughs while also providing a meaningful story to think about deeply.

There are many students who portray the characters in such a remarkable way that so the show is full of life and excitement. Unforgettable performances includes Sierra Hermsen, who creates the spirit of Sophie Sheridan's character and is a great vocalist, and Francesa Young who brings the essence of Donna Sheridan to life.

The entire cast participates in creating the high-spirited energy and makes the show very entertaining to watch. The harmonies of the ensemble are in sync and flawlessly executed by the students. The ensemble also does an amazing job fitting in every scene with their body language and facial expressions.

The set is incredible and definitely eye-catching to the audience, matching the Greek culture essence. Ashton Mychalczuk, who is the set designer and construction manager, does an amazing job creating the vision for the show. Costumes, designed by Brenden Blue and Emily Morrison, are absolutely amazing. The choreography matches the time period the story is in and is the other reason why this show is brought to life. Although there were moments the mics would go off, the actors and actresses continue the show smoothly and do their best to project their voices. The orchestra is small but does an amazing job.

The entire production is beautifully executed by the skilled and passionate students of Oak Park High School.The MAMMA MIA production is visually appealing, and it captured the attention of the audience for every second.

by Brittany Susano of Ruskin High School

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HAVING THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE

Three dads. A dancing dolphin. Women empowerment. What do those three things have in common? Well, they are all a part of Oak Park High School's beautiful rendition of MAMMA MIA. This show will have you dancing in your seat and tapping your feet to the beat. With high energy from the top of the show to the final curtain call, you will be turned into a "Dancing Queen."

MAMMA MIA is a show based on the disco hits from Sweden's international band, ABBA. This story follows the journey of a single mother, Donna and her daughter Sophie. Sophie (Sierra Hermsen) is about to get married to her fiancï¿½, Sky (Colby Johnson), but she comes across a dilemma. She wants her dad to walk her down the aisle, but she never knew who he was, so she goes looking in her mother Donna's (Francesca Young) diary to find the answers she seeks. She discovers that the year she was born her mother had flings with three different men, Sam, Bill, and Harry (Ashton Mychalczuk, Zachary Scott, and Jacob Collier). Knowing that one of these men has to be her dad, she secretly invites all three of them to her wedding, with the hopes that she will discover who her true father is.

Hermsen and Young blow the audience away with their amazing and effortless vocal talent. With great chemistry between the two, they accurately portray a realistic mother-daughter relationship. Young plays the role of a mother with ease, fitting the role perfectly with her mature-sounding voice and powerful stage presence. Despite this show being very playful, there are times when the tone shifts to something more serious, and the cast deals with these transitions with ease. To relieve some of the seriousness, characters like Pepper (Sammy AbuNamous) and Tanya (Danielle Blankenship) provide the audience with just the right amount of comedic relief.

The ensemble brings this show to life each time they appear on stage. Performing various fun and creative dance numbers, even some with gymnastic aspects. Although at most times it is hard to understand their words, the energy level never fades. As a whole the ensemble is sensational, but a few dancers in particular stood out. Reese Hill (Young Woman) has amazing facial expressions and high energy, and it is hard to take your eyes off her. Brenden Blue (Young Harry) and Kylie McLane (Young Donna) perform a lovely interpretive dance in the song "Our Last Summer" that leaves the audience in awe.

One of the most memorable parts of this show is the costumes. From the bright colors to the "Super Trooper" costumes with light-up belts, the costume crew does a phenomenal job. Another aspect that contributes to the show is the Pit. Although being a small group, they do an amazing job of filling the room with sound.

The cast does a spectacular job of keeping the energy high and the atmosphere fun. Although the majority of the show is hard to hear which distracts from the plot, the actors do a great job of continuing to perform through their mic troubles. Singing and dancing their way into our hearts, Oak Park High School leaves us wanting more.

by Lauren Taylor of Ruskin High School

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MAMMA MIA OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL REVIEW

Glitz, glamour, and Greece! OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL presents MAMMA MIA. As you enter this theatrical environment you are at first exposed to a closed curtain and two simple wall structures that alone embody the greek culture.

MAMMA MIA tells the story of Sophie who is preparing to get married to her fiancï¿½e, Sky. During preparation for this event, she discovers through reading her mother's diary that there is a possibility of getting the chance to meet her biological father for the first time ever. However, there is one minor conflict -- there are three men mentioned in her mother's diary which creates an uncertainty of which one is actually her dad. So, she invites all three! This, not longer afterwards, creates distress for her mother who did not expect what is happening to occur.

Sierra Hermsen, who plays the role of Sophie, delivers spectacular vocals. You can hear the story being told through her voice, all of the emotions, and so much more.

Danielle Blankenship, who portrays the character Tanya, and Emily Hermes, who plays the role of Rosie, bring flares of comedy to the scenes and make the audience laughs on several ocassions. Brendon Blue, Reese Hill, and Kylie McLane all bring heat to the stage with emotional, fun, and tremendous dance numbers -- no step is missed. Sammy AbuNamous also makes several appearances as his character Pepper. He does a swell job in playing his character and gives up a creepy yet comedic and satisfying relief.

There are several technical aspects designed with creativity and precision. Specifically, what stands out is the "Super Trouper" costumes that bring the show all together. Sophie (Sierra Hermsen) demands the attention of the audience with her magnificent vocals, and that's before even considering how wonderful she portrays her character. She shines through the ENTIRE performance.

There are times where mics fail to operate correctly making it slightly difficult to hear performers, however this minor conflict does not prevent them from performing with with 100% stage presence and energy.

The lighting in this show is impressive from the deep blues to the white lights and even though there were

Overall, OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL's production is truly a masterpiece from the greek architectural embodiment of the set design, the glamours costumes, and the memorable comedy contribution.

by DaVante Hudson  of Ruskin High School

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MAMMA MIA? HERE WE GO AGAIN

A Greek island, a big white wedding, and ABBA songs. With all of this, the audience is in the mood for a dance. The production of MAMMA MIA by Oak Park High School is a wonderful take on the popular musical that would have you saying gimme, gimme, gimme more of what Oak Park High has to give.

MAMMA MIA is a about a vivacious young woman named Sophie who is planning to marry her boyfriend, Sky, with the help of her single mother Donna and her two old friends. However, Sophie secretly invites three men, in hopes of finding her father to walk her down the aisle on her big day. MAMMA MIA premiered on Broadway in 1999 and has since then flourished, gaining attention for the famous songs by ABBA, a Swedish pop group from the 1970's. The musical has even been nominated numerous times for a Tony Award. MAMMA MIA was also turned into a musical film in 2008 which was been nominated for a grammy.

Francesca Young, playing Donna, is a naturally talented actor and singer who has an undeniable stage presence throughout the show with big alluring numbers such as "The Winner Takes It All." With the serious talk of major life decisions about marriage, the comedic relief of Zachary Scott and Emily Hermes, who play Bill Austin and Rosie, respectively, has the audience roaring with laughter with their hilarious facial expressions and reactions. Sierra Hermsen plays Sophie Sheridan and perfectly executes the role with her seamless talent of singing.

Creativity runs deep in Oak Park High School with extremely passionate students, such as Emily Morrison, who make the stunning costumes for the production. Emily's creation of the "Super Trooper" and Nightmare Chorus outfits from scratch is exceptionally executed like a professional. Not only are the outfits done by scratch, so is the set. The set, done by Ashton Mychalczuk and Hayden Greary, is a beautiful ocean backdrop, rustic resort hotel, and stairs cascading to a bridge with carefully placed floral decorations that accomplish the goal of making the Greek island scenery. Another thing that distinguishes the creativity and talent of Oak Park High School from any other school production is the touch of detail in the wedding invitations and the originally drawn poster by Brenden Blue and McKenzie Day. All while the stage manager Elaina Shalabi perfectly executes every cue with ease.

There are moments where the audio had a few hiccups or completely cut out, but the actors continue on and project their voice as much as possible. The orchestra momentarily overpowers the actors in certain scenes, nonetheless, the orchestra still sounds incredible and really made the audience have the time of their life. The chemistry between certain actors were slightly off, however, other characters make it up by creating a realistically undeniable chemistry that is electric on stage. There were moments where the energy seems to slightly fluctuate, but after performing for three days with incredibly hard numbers and dances, the cast members regain their energy in the second act showing how they really jive.

There is no doubt about the undeniable talent soaring through Oak Park High that shows throughout their production of MAMMA MIA. If you're ever feeling blue just watch this show and ask yourself, MAMMA MIA, how can I resist you?

by Joanna Rodelo of Ruskin High School