

## “Take a Chance on” *Mamma Mia!*

BY MELANIE BAKER



Tracy Victoria, Altomare, and Halle Morse strike a pose in *Mamma Mia!*

It's Sophie Sheridan's big day—her wedding. There's just one snag: who will walk her down the aisle? In Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus' musical *Mamma Mia!*, one girl's search for her father brings chaos, questions, and a hefty repertoire of classic ABBA tunes to the Winter Garden Theatre.

Now in its 12th year on Broadway, *Mamma Mia!* has played over 4,500 performances so far to ABBA fans and theatergoers primed for conversion. What began with a London premiere in 1999 has since spawned an enviable theatrical empire, with the musical branching out to include productions in Moscow, Japan, France, Korea, and a slew of other diverse countries and cities around the world. As a result, over 50 million people have now seen the production worldwide, creating a virtual ABBA epidemic.

So what makes *Mamma Mia!* so darn addictive? Sure, the thirtysomething guy in the seat next to you, the bachelorette party in the balcony, and even the seemingly too-young teenagers in the audience can all be seen mouthing along to the entire score (okay, you know *you* are, too). Aside from the worldwide game of “Name that Tune” that we're all playing, Andersson and Ulvaeus have created a witty,

well-developed context for their gold-record tracks that tells a genuine story about who we are, where we come from, and what matters most in the end—love.

Judy McLane, after seven years in the supporting role of ditzzy gold-digger/loveable pal Tanya, has settled into her transition playing the role of leading woman Donna Sheridan. Donna is every bit the independent woman, having run a taverna on a remote Greek island and raised a 20-year-old daughter Sophie, now on the cusp of her wedding day. McLane seems perfectly suited for the role, which calls for a myriad of emotions ranging from frazzled to warm-hearted, and determined not to be underestimated, she's fully capable of unleashing her inner-diva in a various spandex get-ups throughout the evening. With acting chops in the bag,

A singalong story about who we are, where we come from, and what ultimately matters most: love...

McLane's killer pipes resonate with emotion and fervor on “The Winner Takes It All,” one of several moments that make the ticket worth buying.

Donna remains strong throughout the turmoil of planning a wedding—thanks to her cheeky cohorts, Rosie (Lauren Cohn) and Tanya (Felicia Finley)—but it's daughter Sophie, played by Christy Altomare in her Broadway debut, who stirs the pot in the days leading up to her marriage to the dark and handsome Sky (Zak Resnick, also on Broadway for the first time). Sophie's determination to find the father her mother never mentioned brings three unassuming men, each of whom have a past tied to Donna and the taverna: Harry Bright (Graham Rowat), an easygoing British charmer; Bill Austin (Daniel Cooney), a boastful writer who has enjoyed his freedom; and Sam Carmichael

(Aaron Lazar), an architect who dives into giving Sophie fatherly advice. As all three men embrace potential fatherhood, Sophie tumbles further into confusion and is forced to learn where her heart lies.

It's certainly not all sap, though. *Mamma Mia!* is flush with bright lights, neon bellbottoms, and disco flair that embodies the soul of ABBA's greatest hits, including “Dancing Queen,” “Honey, Honey,” “S.O.S.,” and “Take a Chance on Me,” just to sweep over the short list.

By the end of the second act, the cast and catchy score has thrown a fastball of energy out into the audience.

Fair warning: during the post-show concert, be prepared to join your fellow theatergoers in throwing on some imaginary spandex and dancing like it's 1980 all over again. In short, embrace your inner “Dancing Queen”!

*Mamma Mia!* is playing at the Winter Garden Theatre, 1634 Broadway (50th St.). For tickets, call 212-239-6200 or visit [mammianorthamerica.com](http://mammianorthamerica.com).

New York City's Most Complete Wireless Store  
Serving the wireless community for over 10 years

Lowest Prices / Best Selection / Great Service

Accessories for iPhone, iPad, HTC, Samsung, BlackBerry and other mobile devices

Batteries • Bluetooth Gadgets  
Chargers • Memory Cards  
Headphones • Pre-Paid SIM Cards  
Mobile Phone Cases

Unlocked GSM Phones

FREE GIFT With a purchase of \$50 or more.  
32GB MicroSD Memory Card

Scan this code from your Smartphone to Map us Now!

Canal St. Stop

BROADWAY

**mobilecityonline.com**  
47 Walker Street, NYC 10013  
One block south of Canal St.  
Between Broadway and Church St.  
**212.964.4444**  
Mon-Thur: 9:30am - 6:00pm  
Fri: 9:00am - 2 hours before sundown  
Sat, Sun: Closed

\*Must present this ad. One gift per customer. Offer cannot be combined with any other promotions and valid in store only.