Music & Lyrics by Björn Ulvaeus & Benny Andersson
Book by Catherine Johnson
Directed by Keith White

July 19-21
July 25-28

Performance showtimes:
Thursday, Fridays, Saturdays 7:30 pm
Saturday, July 27 at 3:30 pm
Sunday matinees 2:30 pm

Recommended for patrons of all ages.

Philip Lynch Theatre Box Office:
Mon.– Fri., 1– 4:30 p.m.
Phone: (815) 836-5500
Email: boxoffice@lewisu.edu
Website: www.lewisu.edu/plt
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TOP 10 DID YOU KNOW?

10. Mamma Mia! has been seen by over 65 million people worldwide in 50 professional productions in 16 different languages.
9. Mamma Mia! has grossed over $4 billion at the box offices worldwide.
8. Mamma Mia! has premiered in more than 440 major cities worldwide - faster than any other musical in history.
7. Mamma Mia! is currently in its 21st year since the first production opened in London’s West End on April 6, 1999.
6. Mamma Mia! is the ninth longest running show in Broadway history; it ran from 2001 – 2015.
5. Though Mamma Mia! wasn’t the first, it did spark a sort of craze for jukebox musicals—when a band’s catalogue is repurposed to create a musical theater experience. With the success of Mamma Mia! came an influx of other jukebox musicals like Queen’s We Will Rock You, Green Day’s American Idiot, and Elvis’ All Shook Up.
4. If the plot of Mamma Mia! seems familiar, that’s probably because it is. The main storyline has been used before in the 1968 film Buona Sera, Mrs. Campbell starring Gina Lollobrigida.
3. ABBA is a bit of a curious name for a band. Some people have mistakenly claimed that the name ABBA is derived from the first initials of each member of the group—Agnetha Fältskog, Björn Ulvaeus, Benny Andersson, and Anni-Frid Lyngstad. Though this makes perfect sense, the truth isn’t so neatly packaged—well, only sort of. The band began referring to themselves as ABBA as a joke. It’s actually the name of a Swedish fish canning company. The performers liked it so much that it stuck.
2. The name ABBA is a palindrome, meaning it’s spelled the same backward and forward. Their hit song “SOS” is also a palindrome. In 1975, when the song was released, ABBA became the first band with a palindromic name and song to reach the charts. The song lyrics were also written as a palindrome, and the length of the song is two minutes and 22 seconds. You’ve got to respect the way they stick to a theme.
1. Mamma Mia! is an English musical featuring the music of a Swedish band, that is set in Greece and has an Italian title. Defying borders and melding cultures, it can’t get much more multicultural than that!
THE PLOT

On a small Greek island, we meet Sophie as she sends off three envelopes in the mail. She announces the names of the men they’re addressed to - Sam Carmichael, Bill Austin, Harry Bright. Lisa and Ali, Sophie’s friends, arrive and reveal that Sophie’s wedding is tomorrow. Sophie confesses to her friends Lisa and Ali that she’s invited her father to the wedding…or at least the three men who could possibly be her father. Sophie has determined that Sam, Bill, and Harry are the candidates to walk her down the aisle.

Donna, Sophie’s mother, greets her lifelong friends Tanya and Rosie, who have arrived for the Sophie’s wedding. The trio used to perform as the group, Donna and The Dynamos. Running the Taverna, an inn on the island, Donna laments her constant working responsibilities.

Sam, Harry, and Bill arrive at the Taverna. Sophie greets them, shocked to see them all there. Sophie admits to them that she was the one who sent the invitations. Sam is clearly distressed by this. Just as Sophie is about to take them to their rooms, Donna comes out and sees them all there. Once she sees Sam, she is overcome with mixed emotions.

Rosie and Tanya try to console Donna. Donna tells them that although she always told them that Sam was Sophie’s father, she wasn’t really sure. She also tells them that Sam and the two other men who might be the father are at the Taverna. Rosie and Tanya rouse Donna’s spirits, telling her that the Donna who used to be the life of the party is still inside her.

Meanwhile, Sophie asks Sky, her fiancé, to promise her he will never leave her like her father left Donna. Sky promises his constant love to her before his friends lead him off for his stag night.

At Sophie’s “hen night” (bachelorette party), Donna, Tanya, and Rosie perform in their old costumes as Donna and The Dynamos. Sam, Bill, and Harry show up, and Sophie lets them join the fun. Bill and Sophie share a moment alone. Bill tells Sophie to come clean to Donna about trying to find her father. She asks him to give her away at the wedding and to let it be a surprise for Donna. Bill agrees.

Sam takes Sophie aside and declares that he will give her away, clearly convinced he’s her father. Before Sophie can object, they are swept up in the dancing. Harry then takes Sophie aside and claims that he will be the one to give her away. Overwhelmed, Sophie breaks away from the dance in a state of overwhelmed shock.

Although she’s been raised by her loving mother, Sophie’s never met her father. In Mamma Mia! Sophie longs to find out the truth about who she is with three letters in the mailbox. She hopes to create what she’s never had: a traditional family. With help of her friends, fiancée, and mother, she discovers that families come in many different shapes and sizes, and that love doesn’t always need to follow the rules.

The show ends with Sky and Sophie leaving the island to go on a new adventure together. The company takes their bows along to some audience-rousing ABBA hits.

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REAL LIFE MOTHER/DAUGHTER DUO PERFORM TOGETHER

There are plenty of sub-plots that swirl and weave around the crowd-pleasing ABBA musical *Mamma Mia!* Who's Sophie's real father? Will Donna reunite with one of her old boyfriends? And just who is the “Dancing Queen”?

OK, that’s not really a mystery, but one of the things that makes this musical resonant with fans, beyond the Swedish group’s iconic ‘70s pop tunes, is the mother-daughter bond that is displayed by characters, Donna and her daughter, Sophie. It’s the emotional core of the story.

Olivia Gerk and daughter Elena Gerk enjoy spending time together. They also share a love for performing, particularly shows at the PLT. Elena performed in last summer’s production of *The Little Mermaid*, and Olivia was last seen on the PLT in *Chicago* performing the role of Velma Kelly.

They love the music, and the infectious energy of this wildly popular hit musical based on the songs of ABBA. But they also connect to the sometimes strained, but always close, relationship between the mother and daughter characters. “It’s the closeness of the relationship I really love and can really relate to,” said Olivia, who is an English teacher and Speech team coach at Minooka Community High School.

Her daughter, Elena, who will be starting esthetician school in September, agrees. “My mom and I are both free spirits like the characters in the show. We make each other laugh more than anyone else, much like the characters in the show,” Elena said.

The show remains irresistible for mothers and daughters who see a little bit of themselves come to life onstage. For the Gerk mother daughter duo as adults, their relationship has deepened and sweetened. They are not only mother and daughter. They are also the best of friends.

IN THE BEGINNING...THERE WAS ABBA!

In 1966, two Swedish pop stars, Björn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson met, and later began to record together. On their second single, the backing vocals were sung by their fiancées, Agnetha Faltskog and Anni-Frid Lyngstad, marking the first time the group sang together. Saddled with an awkward name, “Bjorn & Benny, Agnetha & Anni-Frid”, they recorded the single “People Need Love,” which reached the top 20 in Sweden.

In April, 1974 the group, now renamed ABBA, entered the Eurovision Song Contest, a yearly variety presentation show casting acts from all over Europe. The catchy lyrics and infectious sound of their song “Waterloo” charmed the judges and they won first prize. With this recognition, ABBA became the most popular and successful act of the 1970s. ABBA’s win in the Eurovision Song Contest propelled them to world stardom. The song that won them the contest, “Waterloo” rose to the top of the charts in Europe, and eventually hit the No. 6 spot on the Billboard Charts in the United States.

Soon the entire world was listening to ABBA. Nelson Mandela, who later became the first democratically elected president of South Africa, once declared that ABBA was his favorite pop group! And all this only a year after they began recording in English! From there, hit singles, sold-out concerts and platinum albums followed. Although ABBA stopped recording together in 1982, their songs are still popular. In the 1990s, their album ABBA Gold topped charts all around the world. To date, ABBA has sold over 350 million recordings worldwide.
Joe Heaton ‘01 is a freelance AEA Stage Manager from New York. He is currently on the National Tour of *Les Miserables*. He is the former Sub Assistant Stage Manager for *A Bronx Tale The Musical*, and former Assistant Stage Manager at Signature Theatre Company.

Rob Kornaus ‘16 was the light board operator for Mokena’s Curtain Call production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Performing the role of Meips Gies was Jill Jeffrey ‘16.

Taylore Cephas ‘17 is performing every other Thursday with the improv troupe *Moses Supposes* at 8 pm at Chicago’s Comedy Clubhouse!

Kate O’Neil ‘16 and Kevin Bukauski ‘17 celebrated a new addition to their family on Thursday, May 30! Their second son, Oliver Shane was born weighing in at 8 lbs. 6 oz. and 21” in length. Two year old big brother, Isaac is thrilled to welcome another player to the team!
Celebration of Life for Dr. Michael Cunningham

The family of Dr. Michael Cunningham invited the Lewis University community to a memorial service for our beloved Professor Emeritus of English Studies, Mike Cunningham, who passed away on March 28. The memorial service began at 3 p.m. on May 10 in the Sancta Alberta Chapel. Mike’s family members, his wife Linda Cunningham, former Director of the Lewis University Oakbrook site, was in attendance.

Mike devotedly served Lewis University for more than 45 years. In 1971, he began as English Instructor and was promoted to Professor before becoming Professor Emeritus in 2015. While he worked in the Department of English he also had several administrative roles including, Department Chair, Director of the University Writing Center, Coordinator of Faculty Development and Director of the Scholars Academy. After 2009 retirement from full-time teaching, Mike continued to serve as Director of Arts & Ideas until 2016. After resigning from his administrative role, he continued to teach as an adjunct professor and blogger on the Lewis University Faculty Forum.

Do You Take?

In April, a group of recent PLT alumni wrote, directed and performed an original one-act comedy, Do You Take? at Donny’s Skybox in Chicago’s Second City. It’s Roxie’s big wedding day, and she’s surrounded by her friends and family. She’s ready to walk down the aisle. Then anxiety sets in and the big day moments begin going wrong.

Performing were Sylmarie Soto ‘15 as Roxie, Faith Berry ’15 as Diane, Jake Dorencz ‘16 as James, Connor Ford ‘17 as Dan. The play was written by Tyler Senjanin ‘17 and Connor Ford and directed by Jonathan M. Boehle ’16.

Raise a glass to Rob Howell who won the Tony Award for Best Scenic Design and Costume Design of a Play for The Ferryman. Bravo! goes out to our PLT friend and Broadway scenic designer, Mike Carnahan as part of the set design team. The Ferryman won two more Tonys for Best Play and Best Direction.
Thank you to the following patrons for their support of the Philip Lynch Theatre during the Lewis University Day of Giving! Because of them, we will be able to enhance the technology in the theatre and ensure the PLT legacy lives on for many generations to come. We truly appreciate their investment!

Jillian Bollow
Tracy Bradley
Matthew Dutton
Lauren Finnegan
Mike Frale
Sarah Gibbons
James Grogan
Christopher Hueg
Ray and Karen Klump
Stephanie Lipinski
Marianne and Brian Nelsen
Kathleen O’Neil and Kevin Bukauski
Carli Reinholtz
Jo and Ted Slowik
Karen Van Etten
Marvin Volk
Jamie Voustros
Kathleen Walsh
Walter Whaling
Keith White
Jack Wenger

Gregory Booker received his BA from Drury University in 1987 and his MFA from the University of Oklahoma in 1993. He’s worked for a major oil company as an in-house photographer, in the pre-press industry and later at the Kansas City Star as a photo editor. He’s currently an associate professor at Drury University where he teaches photojournalism in the communications department.

Gallery Hours Daily:
9 am – 9 pm

For more information or to purchase artwork contact Gallery Coordinator Natalie Swain, swainna@lewisu.edu
To quote a popular line of dialogue from the 24 Hr. Theatre Festival this year, “wait a minute!” The 2019-2020 PLT season brochure states that HTC is producing Gruesome Playground Injuries at the end of August. Now, HTC is producing A Night in the Theatre. Why the production change?

A rare occurrence in the world of producing happened, and HTC lost the performance rights to Gruesome Playground Injuries. HTC applied for the performance rights in May and received the contract agreement. In preparations to send the royalty check payment, the play’s publisher was contacted. This was their response:

“Unfortunately, we cannot grant you permission for production. There is active interest in the play from a professional theater company in your surrounding area, which means that the nonprofessional rights are completely restricted at this time. We know this will be disappointing, and we are very sorry that we will not be able to allow you to produce the play.”

HTC believes everything happens for a reason. We took a hot minute to process the news and then thought “what’s next?” What’s Plan B? Is there a Plan B? As Will in Big Fish says: “we say hello to the collision, just do our job and do it well.” Production director, Mike Frale ’17 set about choosing another play. He discovered the quirky and fascinating comedy A Night in the Theatre by Lawrence Casler.

The play has been performed worldwide for more than 25 years, reminding theatre-goers of behavior during performances...as well as the sometimes surprising conversations that create their own tragedies and comedies between the sexes. Show dates and times: Friday & Saturday, August 30 & 31, 7:30 pm in the Studio Theatre.

The PLT summer staff began on Monday, May 20. The first order of business was the reconfiguration of the Studio Theatre designed by theatre professor, Andrew Nelsen ’04. All hands were on deck to move the seating into a proscenium stage set-up. Then a stage was built and hauled up from the scene shop.

The newly reconfigured Studio Theatre was unveiled in time for Mamma Mia! vocal rehearsals to begin. The first event hosted in the proscenium stage space was the high school juniors and seniors summer theology journey on Thursday, June 27.
2019-2020

New 7:30 pm Showtimes
Buy 3 Tickets Get the 4th Ticket FREE!
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The Wolves
Sept. 27-29 & Oct. 3-6
by Sarah DeLappe
directed by Jo Slowik
Recommended for patrons 13 and up.

Born Yesterday
Nov. 15-17 & Nov. 21-24
by Garson Kanin
directed by Keith White
Recommended for patrons 13 and up.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time
Feb. 14-16 & Feb. 20-23
by Mark Haddon and Simon Stephens
directed by Kevin Trudeau
Recommended for patrons 13 and up.

Return to the Forbidden Planet
April 17-19 & April 23-26
by Bob Carlton
directed by Keith White
Recommended for patrons 13 and up.