



Mamma Mia – Stone Bridge High School

Mamma Mia, here we go again. My, my, I couldn't resist Stone Bridge High School's production of this classic ABBA musical.

First opening in 1999 on England's West End, the musical "Mamma Mia" was an instant hit, eventually becoming one of the longest-running musicals on Broadway. Mamma Mia is about a bride named Sophie, who yearns to learn her father's identity. Looking at her mother's diary, she narrows down the possible suspects to three different people. Sophie decides to invite them all to her wedding, with the hope of figuring out which one is her long-lost dad.

Lila LeCount (Sophie) was very engaging whenever she was on stage. Combined with her mother, Lydia Rouse (playing Donna), the show boasted a proficient set of female leads. Lydia's talent for acting and strong vocals led to some powerful performances, especially in the song "Winner Takes It All." Lydia's chemistry with one of the potential fathers, Sam (played by Ayden Brook), was apparent from the first time they both took center stage together, bouncing their theatrics off each other like they were playing a friendly game of ping pong. During the songs "SOS" and "Knowing Me, Knowing You," Ayden sang with impressive dignity, exhibiting fully his character's grandeur. This high standard of verbal acting applied to the entire cast, but Stone Bridge truly shined in its physicality.

Playing Bill, one of Sophie's possible fathers, Paul Finamore was always comedic, as he was constantly doing something to instigate a chuckle. No song exhibits this more than "Take A Chance On Me," where Paul shows off his slapstick prowess. Emma Kleinhans, playing Donna's friend Tanya, was another example of superb physical acting. While often using physicality for comedic effects, Emma flourished when showing off her enormous stage presence, especially in the song "Does Your Mother Know." The stars weren't the only ones great at physical acting, as the ensemble performed the show's dance numbers to a tee. The choreography, designed by Aakrithi Karthik, Abby White, and Lydia Rouse, was well planned, helping to keep the show upbeat and engaging while additionally using the absence of movement to bring out meaningful moments.

The show's lighting, led by Julia Quezada and Adyansh Das, also brought out important emotional moments by using different lighting effects during mood shifts. The lighting crew continued to notice small details, which were showcased when they flashed the

lights during Sophie's vocalization of an ellipsis. The set's design, led by Lila LeCount, Sophia Liebermann, and Valentina Smith, matched the lighting crew's attention to detail, adding small flowers and birds to the set, selling the illusion of the show's small-town setting, as well as making the set feel inviting and alive. They even used a process called paint spackling, giving the appearance that the set's Greek houses had been worn down. The special effects, led by Manu Mishima and Neharika Srinivasan, used the set's central fountain as a fog machine, tying essential machinery into the set while producing a visually stimulating effect.

Mamma Mia is a show about connection, which is why Stone Bridge High School's production resonated so well. I wish Stone Bridge could Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! another chance to watch this marvelous performance.

-Ethan King