

MAMMA MIA!!

Music and Lyrics by Bjorn Ulvaeus and Benny Anderson

Book by Catherine Johnson

Chrysler Hall

Oct. 17-21 8:00 PM; Matinees at 2:00PM (1:00 PM on Sunday)

For tickets call 757-671-8100

Hello, I'm Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large.

If some one could figure out how to use the energy from this fun-packed show as an alternative fuel source, all our problems would be solved. Fears of global warming would be displaced by this global hit that just keeps generating laughs and musical joy year after year all over the world.

Audiences in Hampton Roads who love for Broadway to come to Chrysler Hall were given a bum rap by the former presenter Bacci Inc. The company went bankrupt and folks lost ticket money. The Bacci botch-up is over. Now we have Broadway Across America. If the quality of this fabulous production is standard for this organization, Chrysler Hall will once again be a miniature Times Square.

This troupe of singers and dancers is a dynamo of talent from every aspect of theatrical endeavor. They are as fresh and invigorating as your first cup of morning coffee. I'll admit there is a weak link or two but one quickly forgets.. The top quality production values including very functional scenery, flashy costumes, dazzling lighting and superb sound design enhance every prancing moment.

I've said before that this is a musical where you check your mind, along with your coat if your wearing one, in the cloak room. This is not Sondheim. All you have to do is sit there and let the twenty two musical numbers do their magic.

Catherine Johnson has come up with a book that weaves them into a show and finds lots of laughs along the way. Choreographer Anthony Van Laast and director Phyllida Lloyd mine every possible potential nugget of mirthful delight.

The story, as you probably know, concerns a twenty year old girl, Sophie Sheridan, who is getting married on a remote Greek Island. She's a single parent kid who would like to know her father. He could be one of three men who were, shall we say, "close" to her mother two decades ago. Sophie invites them to the nuptials. If all weddings were as zany as this one turns out to be, one would never dread going to them.

Whitney Claire Kaufman is a winsome, touching Sophie. Mary Jane Raleigh, albeit a bit too uptight, has a big belting voice and spirit of fun as her mother, Donna. Her two best buddies from her wild youth, Allison Briner as Rosie and Christine Sherrill as Tanya regale us with great pleasure every moment they're

on stage. As two of the potential dads, Milo Shandell and Sean Allan Krill are highly amusing and vocally strong and believable.

This was the third time I've seen this show and I would rate it number one of the trio. Mamma Mia! has an exclamation point after Mia. Since we're talking numbers, I would add a few more for this red hot edition.

This is Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large and I'll see you at the next opening.