

# Drama – Musical Theatre



## What is Mamma Mia about?

Mamma Mia is a jukebox musical, that uses the songs of ABBA. The musical tells the fictional story of Donna and her daughter Sophie who live on a Greek island. Sophie has never known who her Dad is but as her wedding to boyfriend Sky approaches, she is desperate to find out and have her Dad walk her down the aisle. She knows that it's one of three people; Sam, Bill, or Harry. Sophie decides to invite them all to her wedding, without telling her Mum!

All three men arrive on the island for Sophie and Sky's wedding. Sam, Bill and Harry are under the impression that Donna has invited them and chaos ensues as Sophie tries to work out who her Dad is whilst her Mum tries to work out how and why her three ex's are all on the island!

## Different types of Musicals

**Book Musical** – The most traditional form of Musical Theatre. The songs, dances, and story all work together to tell one full story. The 'book' means the script. (*Matilda*, *Hairspray*)

**Jukebox Musical** – Pop music is used from one group/ artist or several of the same genre. It sometimes tells their story, or is used in conjunction with a made up story. (*Mamma Mia*, *Beautiful*, *Jersey Boys*)

**Rock Musical** – This sometimes overlaps with Jukebox musicals. A musical that uses Rock music. (*We Will Rock You*, *Rock of Ages*)

**Dance Musical** – A Musical with a large amount of a specific kind of dance e.g. Tap, Hip Hop, Ballet (*An American in Paris*, *42<sup>nd</sup> Street*)

**Sung through Musical** – A musical with no spoken dialogue. The story is told entirely through song (*Les Miserables*, *Hamilton*, *Phantom of the Opera*)

**Concept Musical** – A musical based around a specific theme, rather than a narrative or plot. (*Chorus Line*, *Avenue Q*, *Cabaret*)



## Key Vocabulary and Drama Techniques



### Counts of 8

- Refers to breaking down music into groups of eight beats, which is a common way to structure dance choreography. Counting in 8s help dancers stay synchronised with the music, learn routines more easily and perform with precision.

### Choreography

- The sequence of steps and movements in a dance

### Choreographer

- Creates the dances and teaches them to the cast. They must ensure all of the cast know their movement and are confident performing it.

### Understudies

- Covers for lead roles when they are poorly, on holiday or need a rest.

### Swings

- They cover all the ensemble parts, learning all lines and dances.

### Dynamics

- Dynamics in dance means how you perform a movement-the energy and quality behind it. It includes things like speed (fast or slow), force (strong or gentle) and flow (smooth or sharp).

### Unison

- Unison is when two or more dancers are performing the same movement at the exact same time.

### Formation

- Formation is the way dancers are arranged or positioned on stage or in the performance space.

### Cue

- A cue in dance is a signal or sign that tells a dancer when to start, change, or stop a movement. It can come from the music, another dancers movement or a lighting/stage effect.

### Refine

- To make your movements better and cleaner by practicing and fixing small details. Improving things like timing, shape, technique, expression and control.

