

Mamma from page B1

Andersson and Ulvaeus are the composers for the music used in Mamma Mia! and also wrote the music for the Tim Rice musical, "Chess." The musical Mamma Mia! opened in London's West End April 6, 1999.

Dee Hoty, a Broadway phenomenon, said ABBA music wasn't on her radio dial back in the '70s, but now she loves the music.

Hoty plays the role of Donna, the feisty 40-something single mom, in Mamma Mia!. The story revolves around her and her innocent idealistic daughter, Sophie Sheridan, portrayed by Michelle Araveno.

Hoty is one of a handful of Americans in the touring cast. The touring cast comes from the Toronto show which opened May 23, 2000 at the Royal Alexandra Theatre.

Little Whorehouse Goes Public" and "Footloose," said she auditioned for the role of Mamma last January in London.

'A great company'
"This group is a great company," she said. "They are mostly Canadian. Since I am one of six Americans, I got to tease them for the way they talk."

Hoty is from Cleveland. Her family is close enough for them to come see her at the Masonic Temple Theatre in Detroit. The cast has a few days off for Christmas before the Detroit opening, so Hoty is going home to be with her family.

She's got company on the tour, though. Single, she's been dating Mark Zimmerman who plays one of the dads in the show.

And is the audience reaction to Mamma Mia! really as enthusiastic as Jensen-Miller and television commercials state?

"Almost every night people are on their feet. I've never been in a show where people in the audience go so nuts," Hoty added.

Year's end cause to rewind for local music scene



STEPHANIE A. CASOLA

STREET SCENE
What is it about the end of the year that leaves us feeling so reflective? From New Year's resolutions to video music countdowns and "Best of" lists in magazines, it seems pop culture must reward to move forward. I've asked a few local music-types to play their personal 2001 soundtracks and see where the needle hits the record.

Bill Keith runs WSPD Radio for Plymouth-Canton schools and books performers at Trinity House Theatre in Livonia. Phil Skarich plays bass for The Witches and just returned from a show in New York City where he verified that Detroit is still Rock City. Richard S. Hanson is a local music guru whose alter-ego DJ Lemmy Caution can be seen on the first Thursday of every month at the Buddha Lounge, 8 Mile and Inkster in Detroit. And Mark A. Dawson performs as a solo artist and as a drummer for Redford-based trio The Climax Divine. The band hits the stage Thursday, Dec. 27 at the Magic Stick in Detroit. Here's what they all had to say about the state of pop music:

Richard S. Hanson
— local music guru
"There is always great music being made, often in strange places, now is no different," said Hanson. "A lot of amazing stuff is getting made right under everyone's noses right here in Detroit. It just takes a bit of looking."

In his search Bill Keith has found the genre has taken a decidedly dark, sexually explicit turn. "I see it especially in the music that is marketed to teens," he noted. "Add to that the music that is rage- and anger-filled and it can become quite disheartening."

Meanwhile Phil Skarich doesn't see much change at all. "The overriding mentality of pop music has been firmly established over the years and has become just another institution controlled by a very small group of industry people," he said. "Which is fine with me. I wouldn't change a thing because it serves a purpose. But I could care less about most popular music and if I have to hear another song by that band Creed I'm gonna chuck my Cheerios."

Perhaps overexposure is the most identifiable component of pop music today, and a reason for all the new faces. Mark Dawson mentioned that "everyone's always looking for 'the next big thing.'"

And what might that be in 2002? Here are some predictions.

"Rap, R&B and the rhythmically-based dance music will continue to grow by leaps and bounds," said Keith. "I can especially see it when I work at a high school dance. I'm encouraged by the growth of Americana forms of music. Oh Brother Where Art Thou, exposed so many more people to bluegrass."

Who to watch
As always, the sounds of the future in pop music will be marked by artists on the rise. For Keith, Ryan Adams is one to watch. "His CD Gold is wonderful. On the more rock-oriented side, I'm encouraged by the success of P.O.D. Their music is so powerful and it keeps a very positive vibe."

Hanson prepared a grocery list of goodies to check out. In the rock category, he mentioned The Rock Cats, Vibe, Pleasure Forever and The Hives. "Aesop Rock and Cannibal Ox will hopefully be big in the hip hop world," he said, adding "those and probably half the bands from Detroit."

Like the others, Dawson agrees it's a good time to be a musician here. "Detroit is definitely turning out to be a focal point on the music map," he said. "Perhaps if things continue to progress in our direction, people will look a little deeper than Bob Ritechie or Marshall Mathers, to see one of the most musically diverse cities in the country, maybe the world," he said.

Music, as always, comes down to personal taste. "Go watch the bands that give you that same special feeling that you got from going too high on the swing set in the 3rd grade," recommended Skarich.

What more can you really say? Stephanie Angelyn Casola wishes everyone a happy 2002. She writes about popular music for The Observer & Eccentric! Newspapers and can be reached at (248) 625-1900, ext. 12 or by mail scasola@ec.homecom.net.

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