

# DANCING QUEEN

*Paly Theatre sells out for their rendition of Mamma Mia.*  
 Design & Stories by Hope Van Riesen  
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(left) **IN THE DARKNESS** with only individual stand lights to read the music, Isaac Moore, other students, and music teacher Jeff Willner play the backing track for the performers. "I felt a rush of happiness throughout the entire thing," Moore said, who played the electric bass.



(right) **LOOKING OVER EVERYTHING**, Noah Boyarsky applies finishing touches before a performance along with the rest of the costume crew. "I've finally really streamlined the process so it was stressless as possible," He said. "[I worked] 1-4 hours each weeknight and 8-14 hours of work each weekend."

**THANK YOU for the music**



(right) **SINGING WITH PASSION**, Arielle Blumenfeld ('23) poses right after a song with the ensemble. "My favorite part of the show was getting to know everyone," Blumenfeld said. "I am truly thankful to have been able to collaborate with so many individuals and learn from their acting styles."



*take a*  
**CHANCE**  
*on me*

*In a free show for friends and family, the understudies took the stage.*

**P**eople often overlook the importance of understudies – members of the ensemble who dedicate the same amount of time and energy into learning a character as the actors who play them in the case of needing to replace the main cast members. When junior Trevor Axelrod, the understudy for Skye Rymand, heard about the opportunity to perform the show as if the understudies

Senior Sofia Vincent, who understudied for Donna Sheridan, had similar thoughts. "I think we did an incredible job in making a version of this show that is both our own and something we can be proud of," Vincent said.

During the production, Vincent was focused solely on the show.

"When I was on stage, I wasn't thinking about the fact that I was an understudy, I was just focused on my performance," Vincent said. "In that way, it was like every other performance I've done."

*"It really did turn out as a spectacular show."*  
**TREVOR AXELROD ('24')**

were the leads, he jumped at the chance. "It felt very nice to show the difference in characteristics between my Skye and Gavin Thomas's Skye," Axelrod said.

Axelrod loved how he and Thomas had a very different interpretation of each character while still having a similar story line.

Both actors emphasized the connections they made while rehearsing.

"Being able to see all of the understudies come together and put on this performance was truly fantastic," Axelrod said. "Everyone worked so hard, put in a lot of time, and it really did turn out as a spectacular show."

*Behind the scenes, students are in-action, making the production possible.*

**M**amma Mia! is a romantic comedy that follows a young woman who is getting married and invites three men who could all be her father to her wedding, so her dad to walk her down the aisle. Put together by over 70 teen leaders, actors, directors, stagehands, tech, and musicians, this record-breaking production was one of the largest musical shows performed in the theater.

planning and research to make sure we were on track," senior Noah Boyarsky said, who both worked on costume design and starred as Pepper. "Each of the leads had at least one costume change, which meant designing multiple for them." Sitting in the pit below the stage, sophomore Isaac Moore, along with others, helped provide the music for the actors and actresses on stage to sing with. "We first met late January and didn't start

playing until February," he said. "We only had two rehearsals with the cast before we were on stage." Even with the rushed time frame, Boyarsky was still content with the way everything turned out. "Seeing [the costumes] on stage was amazing, the actors totally pulled them off," Boyarsky said. "I'm so proud of how they came out and I feel so lucky that I got to work with such an incredible cast of actors!"



(cutout) **DANCING THEIR HEARTS** out, Trevor Axelrod and freshman Ana Cristina Ramirez, dance together. "It felt really nice to interact with a bunch of different people because you get to know them better," Axelrod said, referencing working with a wide variety of students. "You get to know their story, how they became an actor, what they like about acting." (above) **BURSTING INTO SONG**, Seniors Evie Kramer and Sofia Vincent, and junior Eloise Dumas perform as Tanya, Donna, and Rosie. "Performance art in general hinges on your connection with other people," Vincent said. "This cast has formed really strong connections and I think that was a really big contributor to the strength of our performance, understudy and regular."