

LOCAL MEDIA PERSONALITY CAST IN SMASH HIT MAMMA MIA!

Matt Ward Entertainment has today revealed that media personality, local sweetheart and host of the Gold Coast's 1029 Hot Tomato's Breakfast Show, Emily Jade O'Keeffe, has been cast as the leading role of the vivacious 'Tanya' in the upcoming Gold Coast p

From a 'drama nerd' in her early years to a well-known radio star, Emily Jade has pursued a wide-ranging career to-date with over 24 years in radio and television, notably as the Queensland correspondent for Mornings with Kerri-Ann.

Growing up bopping to ABBA's top hit 'Dancing Queen' and watching MAMMA MIA! on repeat with her 9-year-old daughter, Millie, Emily Jade "couldn't say no" to playing 'Tanya' – a rich, three-time-divorcee and one of the three best friends who shape the story on stage with frivolity and flair. Emily Jade said it was a dream come true to take to the stage once again and she was tickled pink when Producer Matt Ward approached her for the role.

"I'm so excited to join Matt Ward Entertainment's dream team for the MAMMA MIA! production here on the Gold Coast this June to July. It's a dream come true! I've always been inspired by ABBA and can't wait to bring this magical and uplifting musical to life," she said.

With a Performing Arts degree from the University of Tasmania, Emily Jade's career in radio and television is a natural extension of that skillset, as the talented entertainer grew up performing in musicals, including Oliver, Annie, Wizard of Oz, Summer of the 17th Doll, and most recently, played 'Elphaba' in a promotional rework of WICKED for Hot Tomato at HOTA in 2019.

Following in her grandfather and father's footsteps, who both played the lead in several musicals and were involved in local theatre scenes, Emily Jade was often called upon to step in and play the child parts, so it's no surprise the talented blonde bombshell caught Matt Ward's eye for his 'Tanya'. "I started working with Emily Jade as her vocal coach and knew from day dot she was perfect for the role of 'Tanya'. She ticks all of the boxes - talent, experience and dedication - and her on-stage energy is going to be magnetic," said Matt.

"We are so thrilled to have her join us on stage alongside a brilliant calibre of cast and crew for MAMMA MIA! next month, so watch out Gold Coast."

Returning to fulfill the dreams of her youth will mean rehearsals and learning the toe-tapping lyrics of ABBA, while still co-presenting 1029 Hot Tomato's Breakfast Show – Gale, Emily Jade & Christo.

"It's pushing me to use my creative side and I'm really enjoying immersing myself in a character who is all about living it up," said Emily Jade.

O'Keeffe will take to the stage alongside Gold Coast local, Madeline Grice, who was crowned by Emily Jade herself as the lead role of 'Sophie Sheridan' during MAMMA MIA!'s Star Search, in collaboration with Hot Tomato earlier this year.

Actor, director and choreographer – Leah Howard – was today also announced as one of the principal leads to play 'Rosie', in addition to Alex Watson who joins the ensemble as 'Eddie'.

Leah will join Emily Jade and UK superstar Jayde Westaby, (who was last month cast as 'Donna Sheridan'), as the three main female characters, shaping Sophie's journey throughout the musical.

Having worked extensively across the entertainment industry, most recently appearing in the new ABC drama series Wakefield, Leah has also choreographed Australia's first live streamed musical, Who's Your Baghdaddy and How I Started the Iraq War.

The full cast of 21 performers will tell the much-loved story of a young bride-to-be whose quest to discover the identity of her father draws three men from her mother's past back to a Greek Island on the eve of her wedding, this beloved musical is set to the toe-tapping songs of ABBA and be on-stage at The Star Gold Coast for a strictly limited season: June 19 – July 11, 2021.

Tickets for the show are on sale now via www.ticketek.com.au or www.thestargoldcoast.com.au.

For more information on Matt Ward Entertainment or MAMMA MIA! the musical, head to the website: www.mammamiamusical.com.au

MORE ABOUT MAMMA MIA!

Over 60 million people all around the globe have fallen in love with the story and the music that makes MAMMA MIA! the ultimate feel-good musical. In a stunning new production, Matt Ward Entertainment invites audiences to fall in love all over again!

The musical featuring over 22 of ABBA'S greatest hits is coming to The Star Gold Coast for a strictly limited season: June 19 – July 11, 2021. Voulez Vous, S.O.S, Take a Chance On Me, Dancing Queen and so many more beloved ABBA hits make this worldwide phenomenon a fabulous night out for audiences of all ages.

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ALL MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

Amy Stalinescu | M10 Collective | Ph: 0411 789 195 | Email: amy@m10.com.au

Contacts

Amy Stalinescu

0411 789 195

mailto: amy@m10.com.au

Emma Bain

0438 264 355

mailto: emma@m10.com.au