

# COME FROM AWAY

**DATE:** Friday 10th of January 2025, 8:30 pm

**DURATION:** Approximately 1h 40', no intermissions

**GENRE:** Musical Drama

**PLOT:**

*Come From Away* tells the true story of 7,000 airline passengers who found themselves stranded in the small town of Gander, Newfoundland, after the tragic events of September 11, 2001. The musical introduces various characters, both passengers and locals, whose lives intersect in unexpected ways like:



- Claude Elliott: The Mayor of Gander, who coordinates the town's efforts to support the passengers.
- Beulah Davis: A teacher who works tirelessly to care for the guests.
- Beverley Bass: An American Airlines pilot and one of the stranded passengers.
- Hannah O'Rourke: A mother who desperately tries to contact her firefighter son in New York.

Through music and storytelling, the show explores their experiences, fears, and connections as they navigate this sudden crisis. The townspeople and passengers alike discover resilience, humanity, and unexpected friendships.

**THE EVENTS BEHIND THE SHOW:** 9/11 and the Gander Effect

On September 11, 2001, a series of four coordinated terrorist attacks were carried out by the extremist group al-Qaeda against the United States. Hijackers took control of four commercial planes, crashing two into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and another into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. The fourth plane, United Airlines Flight 93, crashed into a field in Pennsylvania after passengers bravely fought the hijackers. Nearly 3,000 people died due to these attacks.

In response to the attacks, the United States closed its airspace for the first time in history. Over 200 planes headed to the U.S. were forced to land elsewhere. Among these, 38 planes were diverted to Gander International Airport in Newfoundland, Canada. Gander, a town of just over 10,000 residents, suddenly needed to accommodate 7,000 unexpected guests.





The passengers came from over 100 countries and spoke many different languages. Despite the overwhelming situation, the people of Gander and surrounding communities quickly organized to provide food, shelter, clothing, and support. Schools, churches, and community centres were transformed into temporary shelters, while locals opened their homes to complete strangers.

The passengers, initially anxious and confused, began to connect with their hosts

and each other. Friendships were formed, stories were shared, and some passengers even left behind letters of gratitude, as the bonds created during this time left a lasting impact on everyone involved.

This extraordinary act of kindness became known as the "Gander Effect," symbolized the power of compassion and solidarity during a global crisis. The interviews and accounts of the passengers and townspeople served as the foundation for the musical *Come From Away*, which celebrates the humanity and generosity of Gander's response.

