

PALACE THEATER

# SHOW INTEL

Season 2024–2025 | Issue 4: Come From Away

# COME FROM AWAY

TRUE STORY. HIT MUSICAL.

**WINNER!**  
**BEST MUSICAL**  
ALL ACROSS  
NORTH AMERICA



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**COME FROM AWAY**



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**COME FROM AWAY**  
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## ABOUT THE SHOW

*Come From Away* tells the remarkable true story of nearly 7,000 stranded passengers and the small town in Newfoundland that welcomed them. As the “islanders” in Gander open up their homes and hearts to the “plane people” from different countries and cultures, uneasiness turns into trust, music soars into the night, and gratitude grows into enduring friendships.

The show’s unique musical style incorporates Newfoundland folk music with Irish, Celtic, and rock influences to tell the story. Cast members each portray multiple roles, switching between locals and passengers throughout the show.

## CREATING COME FROM AWAY

The musical takes its title from the phrase “come-from-aways,” a nickname given by Newfoundlanders to non-locals.

The show was written by Canadian husband and wife writing team David Hein and Irene Sankoff, based on a concept by producer Michael Rubinoff.

Hein and Sankoff traveled to Newfoundland on the 10th anniversary of 9/11 for a reunion event with passengers, pilots, and local residents. There, they conducted hundreds of interviews, which provided the inspiration for the musical’s storyline and characters, all based on real individuals or amalgamations of people’s stories and experiences.

The show was workshopped at Sheridan College (Ontario) in 2012 and included in Goodspeed Musicals’ Festival of New Musicals (East Haddam, CT) in 2013. After successful runs in San Diego, Seattle, Washington D.C. and Toronto from 2015–2016, *Come From Away* opened on Broadway in 2017 and ran until 2022.

The show was nominated for 7 Tony Awards and won for Best Direction in 2017. It also won 3 Drama Desk Awards and 4 Outer Circle Critics Awards that year, and 3 Olivier Awards when the show opened in London in 2019.



National Touring Production of *COME FROM AWAY* 2024–25. Photo Credit: Evan Zimmerman for MurphyMade

# FUN FACTS

- Gander is located in the northeast of the island of Newfoundland. It was founded in 1935 as a site for an air base.
- Originally called Newfoundland Airport, it was completed in 1938. At the time, it was the largest airfield in the world.
- The area was a strategic post for the Royal Air Force Ferry Command in the Second World War.
- After WW2, the present town was built, and the airport was referred to as the “crossroads of the world” as it became a refueling stop for transatlantic flights.
- Its motto is “Volet Gander” (may Gander soar).
- On September 11, 2001, about 6,600 passengers from 95 nationalities arrived on planes from around the world, nearly doubling Gander’s 2001 population of 10,000.
- 19 pets and exotic animals were also on board the planes and needed care.
- Many passengers stayed for up to five days, waiting for their flights to be cleared to resume.
- The “Screech In” scene and song is based on an actual welcoming ceremony that gives visitors the title of Honorary Newfoundlander — it includes drinking Newfoundland Screech, reciting a creed, and kissing a cod.



Gander Airport, 9/12/2001. Photo provided by the show.

## OPERATION YELLOW RIBBON

**Operation Yellow Ribbon (Opération Ruban Jaune) was the Canadian government and air agencies’ response to the emergency closure of North American airspace on 9/11.**

With around 500 flights headed to the U.S. on the morning of September 11, Transport Canada grounded all non-emergency flights out of Canadian airports and arranged for all incoming flights that were past the half-way point of their journey to land at 17 civilian and military airports across the country. By the end of the day, 238 diverted planes had landed in Canada. **Gander International Airport took 38 aircraft, with about 6,600 passengers.** The only airport that accepted more aircraft than Gander was Halifax International Airport, with 47 planes. Most pilots did not inform their passengers of the terrorist attacks or the reason for their diversion — and in some cases, did not know themselves — until their planes had landed safely.

In Gander and other communities across the country, Operation Yellow Ribbon extended to gathering supplies, clothing, food, and arranging sleeping accommodations for the tens of thousands of stranded visitors, many of whom had sat in uncertainty on the planes for hours before being allowed to disembark.



Real life come-from-away Kevin Tuerff participating in a Screech In. Photo provided by the show.



Writing team Irene Sankoff and David Hein outside Gander airport during a cast & crew trip to Newfoundland in 2016. Photo provided by the show.



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