



GOING TO SEE *COME FROM AWAY*



The company of the 2026 Ford's Theatre production of *Come From Away*. Photo by Scott Suchman.

Ford's Theatre: Sensory-Friendly Performance Pre-Visit Story

Come From Away



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Come From Away is a musical about what happened in the town of Gander, Newfoundland, Canada, after the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States.

In the musical, we see how the local people from Gander and travelers from all over the world came together to help each other during an emergency.

This musical tells a story with actors talking, dancing and singing on the stage.

Based on a True Story



Diverted aircraft at Gander International Airport during Operation Yellow Ribbon, September 2001. Courtesy Gander Airport Historical Society.

On September 11, 2001, the United States was attacked by a terrorist group. Four airplanes were hijacked; two crashed into the World Trade Center in New York City; one plane crashed into the Pentagon in Washington, DC; and one plane crashed outside Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Nearly 3,000 people died.

This attack changed the course of world history.

The American airspace was closed and 38 airplanes, carrying about 7,000 passengers, emergency-landed at the airport in Gander, a town of approximately 9,000 people.

For the musical, the playwrights interviewed real people. Some of the characters are based on real individuals while others are a combination of several stories.

Stage



Photo by Andrew Buchsbaum.

There are many chairs and tables on the stage. The actors move them throughout the show to represent different places.

There is a double-revolving floor that can rotate in two directions at the same time. The stage will revolve throughout the show.

There are tall panels toward the back of the stage. They light up to represent buildings, trees and an air traffic control center.

Music & Musicians



The company of the 2026 Ford's Theatre production of *Come From Away*. Photo by Scott Suchman.

There is a band sitting on the stage behind the tall panels. The band plays music throughout the performance

The band will join the actors on stage for some songs.

The music can be both loud and soft at times. The actors onstage will sing and dance along with the music.

Many Characters



The company of the 2026 Ford's Theatre production of *Come From Away*. Photo by Scott Suchman.

The 12 actors in this show portray many characters. They play bus drivers, air traffic controllers, a pilot, a town mayor, passengers from the planes, people from Gander and more.

Each time they change characters, the actors put on or take off a costume piece, change their voice or change their body language.

These changes help identify which character the actor is pretending to be.

Heightened Emotions



The company of the 2026 Ford's Theatre production of *Come From Away*. Photo by Scott Suchman.

Since this musical is about how a community responded to an emergency, there are sudden and dramatic shifts in how people feel. The actors quickly change between laughter, arguing with raised voices, sadness and comfort. The music may get suddenly louder or softer; or it may change from slow to fast. The lights quickly change from bright to dark.

All of these changes help tell the story of what it was like for the people in Gander on September 11, 2001 and in the days that followed.

Global Community



Photo of Houssou Sémon and Jonathan Atkinson by Scott Suchman.

The people that landed in Gander were from all over the world. They spoke different languages, practiced different religions, had different dietary restrictions and cultural values.

Some people discriminated against others because of their different identities.

Everyone had to work together.

Response



Photo of Sarah Corey and Kelli Blackwell by Scott Suchman.

People react in many different ways in an emergency.

The people of Gander did not know what or who to expect from the planes. The plane people did not know where they were, or what was happening at first. No one knew how long the emergency would last.

The people of Gander came together to take care of the plane people who were displaced because the attacks of 9/11. They provided food, clothing, homes and friendship. The plane people also found ways to support each other and thank the people of Gander.

GOING TO SEE *COME FROM AWAY* – CREDITS

All stage photos are from the 2026 Ford's Theatre production of *Come From Away*.

The pre-visit materials were developed by:

Ford's Theatre Access Committee

