

Come from Away (film)

Come from Away is a 2021 musical film comprising a live stage recording of Irene Sankoff and David Hein's 2017 musical of the same name, which tells the true story of 7,000 airline passengers who were stranded in a small town in Newfoundland, where they were housed and welcomed, after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The film, produced in response to the shutdown of Broadway caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020, was directed by Christopher Ashley and filmed in front of an audience that included frontline workers and 9/11 survivors in May 2021 at the Gerald Schoenfeld Theater in New York City, featuring members of the Broadway cast.^{[1][2]}

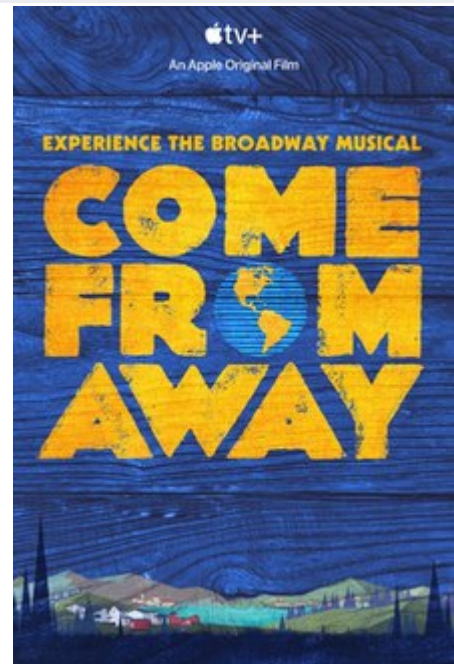
The film was released on Apple TV+ on September 10, 2021, a day before the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.^{[3][4]} It received highly positive reviews from critics.

Plot

On the morning of September 11, 2001, the townsfolk of Gander (including Claude the mayor, Oz the police constable, Beulah the teacher, Bonnie the SPCA worker, and others) describe life in Newfoundland and how they learn of the terrorist attacks taking place in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Shanksville, Pennsylvania ("Welcome to the Rock").

The attacks result in the closure of US airspace, diverting 38 international aircraft to Gander International Airport. The passengers on these aircraft doubled the population of the small Newfoundland town, which is unequipped for the influx of stranded travelers ("38 Planes"). The Gander townspeople spring to action and prepare to house, feed, clothe, and comfort the nearly 7,000 passengers, along with 19 animals in cargo ("Blankets and Bedding"). Meanwhile, the pilots, flight attendants, and passengers are initially forbidden from leaving the planes, forcing them to contend with confusing and conflicting information about what has happened and why they were suddenly grounded ("28 Hours / Wherever We Are").

Come from Away



Promotional release poster

Directed by	<u>Christopher Ashley</u>
Written by	<u>Irene Sankoff</u> <u>David Hein</u>
Based on	<i><u>Come from Away</u></i> by Irene Sankoff David Hein
Produced by	<u>Jennifer Todd</u> <u>Bill Condon</u> <u>Nick Meyer</u> <u>Mark Gordon</u>
Starring	<u>Petrina Bromley</u> <u>Jenn Colella</u> <u>De'Lon Grant</u> <u>Joel Hatch</u> <u>Tony LePage</u> <u>Caesar Samayoa</u> <u>Q. Smith</u> <u>Astrid Van Wieren</u> <u>Emily Walton</u> <u>Jim Walton</u>

Once allowed off the planes and transferred to nearby emergency shelters ("Darkness and Trees"), the passengers and crew watch replays of the attacks on the news and learn the true reason why they were grounded ("Lead Us Out of the Night"). The frightened and lonely passengers desperately try to contact their families and pray for their loved ones while the townsfolk work through the night to help them in any and every way they can ("Phoning Home / Costume Party"). The travelers are initially taken aback by their hosts' uncommon hospitality, but they slowly let their guards down and begin to bond with the quirky townsfolk and each other. The "islanders" in Gander and the surrounding towns open up their homes to the "plane people", regardless of their guests' race, nationality, or sexual orientation. Two women, Beulah (from Gander) and Hannah (from New York), bond over the fact that both of their sons are firefighters, but Hannah's son remains missing after the attacks ("I Am Here"). Hannah asks Beulah to take her to a Catholic church, and a number of characters make their way to other houses of worship around town ("Prayer").

To alleviate rising fear and mounting tensions ("On The Edge"), the townspeople invite the passengers to be initiated as honorary Newfoundlanders at the local bar ("Heave Away / Screech In"). The gravity of the attacks nevertheless continues to set in as US airspace is eventually reopened. One trailblazing pilot, [Beverley Bass](#), comments on how her once optimistic view of the world has suddenly changed ("[Me and the Sky](#)"). While one pair of passengers develops a romance despite the terrible circumstances ("The Dover Fault/Stop the World"), another couple's long-term relationship falls apart under the stress of the event.

As the passengers and crew fly away to their homes, they joyously exchange stories of the immense kindness and generosity that the Newfoundland strangers showed the strangers in their time of need ("Somewhere in the Middle of Nowhere"), but not before a Muslim traveler, faced with increasing prejudice from his fellow passengers, undergoes a humiliating [strip search](#) prior to boarding. The townsfolk in Gander return to normalcy but comment on how empty their town now seems and how different the world now feels. The passengers and airline staff who return to the United States are faced with the horror of the attacks' aftermath — including Hannah, who learns that her firefighter son died during the rescue efforts ("Something's Missing").

Ten years later, the crew and passengers of the once stranded planes — the "come from aways" — reunite in Gander, this time by choice, to celebrate the lifelong friendships and strong connections they formed in spite of the terrorist attacks ("Finale"), as Claude the mayor professes, "Tonight we honor what was lost, but we also commemorate what we found."

	Sharon Wheatley Paul Whitty
Cinematography	Tobias A. Schliessler
Edited by	Leslie Jones Virginia Katz
Music by	Irene Sankoff David Hein
Production companies	Apple Studios Entertainment One Junkyard Dog Productions RadicalMedia Alchemy Production Group
Distributed by	Apple TV+
Release date	September 10, 2021
Running time	106 minutes
Countries	United States Canada
Language	English

Cast

- [Petrina Bromley](#) as [Bonnie Harris](#) and others

- Jenn Colella as Annette, Beverley Bass and others
- De'Lon Grant as Bob and others
- Joel Hatch as Claude Elliott and others
- Tony LePage as Garth, Kevin Tuerff and others
- Caesar Samayoa as Ali, Kevin Jung and others
- Q. Smith as Hannah O'Rourke and others
- Astrid Van Wieren as Beulah Davis and others
- Emily Walton as Janice Mosher and others
- Jim Walton as Doug, Nick Marson and others
- Sharon Wheatley as Diane Gray and others
- Paul Whitty as Oz Fudge and others

Production

In November 2017, it was announced that The Mark Gordon Company would produce a feature film adaptation of the musical, with Sankoff and Hein writing the screenplay and Christopher Ashley as director.^[5] In an April 2019 interview, Sankoff and Hein stated that the intention was to film in Gander and cast lesser-known actors, with residents of Gander as film extras.^[6]

On February 2, 2021, it was announced that due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on the film industry and the performing arts, the plans for the film adaptation were cancelled in favor of producing a live film recording of the stage production with the members of the Broadway cast reprising their roles, to be released in September 2021 on the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. It was produced and financed by Entertainment One and RadicalMedia and filmed in May 2021 at the Gerald Schoenfeld Theater with Ashley directing and Gordon still attached as producer. Joining the producing team are Jennifer Todd, Bill Condon and one of the stage production's producers, Junkyard Dog Productions. Sankoff, Hein, Jon Kamen, Dave Sirulnick and Meredith Bennett executive produce. The film employed 222 people including the members of the New York cast, crew, staff and creative and film teams.^{[1][7]} On April 30, 2021, Apple TV+ acquired the film's distribution rights.^[8]

Reception

Critical response

According to review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 98% of 42 critics have given the film a positive review, with an average rating of 8.3/10. The critics consensus reads: "*Come from Away* sifts through the wreckage of tragedy to find hope -- and the healing power of human connection."^[9] On Metacritic, the film received a score of 83 out of 100 based on 9 critics, indicating "universal acclaim".^[10]

References

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10. "Come From Away" (<https://www.metacritic.com/movie/come-from-away>). *Metacritic*. Retrieved September 22, 2021.

External links

- *Come from Away* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7638556/>) at *IMDb*
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