



FILM: **COME FROM AWAY**

FDG RATING: 4.5 😊😊😊😊😊

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Musical by David Hein and Irene Sankoff

DATE: OCTOBER 23, 2022

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **COME FROM AWAY**

Come From Away absolutely deserved the 7 Tony award nominations it received and arguably deserved to win the 2017 Tony for best musical (but lost to another outstanding musical, Dear Evan Hansen.) Watching the filmed version of the live theater production was like having a front row seat without paying the pricey ticket cost.

The story is based on true events that happened during the Sept. 11 terrorist attack, so you might instinctively be put-off and ask how could such a horrific event be turned into a musical? But it is completely uplifting, focusing on the small town of Gander in Newfoundland, Canada and how its community of 9,000 rural folk opened their hearts and homes to welcome 7,000 stranded passengers. 38 flights had been diverted and forced to land at Gander international airport when the airspace above the United States was restricted after 2 commercial planes were commandeered and purposely crashed into the Twin Towers in New York and a third plane crashed into the Pentagon.

A cast of 12 actors seamlessly played multiple roles both as the passengers and also the folk of Gander, all extremely interesting characters with a back story that we learn as the production unfolds. We marveled at how a simple addition of a hat or scarf transformed the actor into his/her other character. Kudos to the costume designer, who said, "Costume pieces had to be hidden onstage, draped over chairs, put on, removed, and handed off easily, and disappear when they were not in use."

The minimal set was a brilliant use of 12 chairs and 2 tables, "chair choreography" to create places and vehicles, the seats on a plane, on a bus, in a bar, in the community room. "Extremely well-choreographed" was a comment from one film discussion participant who said he was pulled in "hook, line, and sinker."

The songs didn't stick in your memory but rather had deeply meaningful lyrics that perfectly underscored what was happening at the moment. They served a purpose. What we saw was the heartwarming humanity of people coming together in the face of tragedy. And there was even some humor carefully sprinkled in.

A favorite brief part was when the group of doctors who were passengers immediately responded to a desperate call for volunteers to clean the bathrooms in the crowded community room. We also liked seeing the English woman and man from Texas "find love". Other issues were touched on such as the ethnic man who was singled out, and the gay guy who was prejudice against the "hicks" in Gander. The female pilot made a strong impression especially when she said she had trouble believing how something she loved caused such tragedy.

Judging a filmed play/musical was a little different from our normal approach to films but we agreed we were glad we got to see the production and unanimously enjoyed Come From Away. Many discussion participants gave this heartwarming film our highest score of 5 and other scores were 4.5 or 4 resulting in a resounding 4.5 on our scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best.)



See you at the movies!

Adriane Dedic, adedic@pacbell.net
www.filmdiscussiongroup.com