

Come From Away

Author: Kate Marshall

Date: 18th October 2025

Society: Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society (YAOS)

Venue: Westlands Entertainment Venue, Yeovil

Type of Production: Musical

Director: Naomi Rose - Mock

Musical Director: Matt Holman - Holmes

Written By: Irene Sankoff & David Hein

Come From Away tells the incredible real-life story of how the small town of Gander, Newfoundland, suddenly became host to thousands of stranded travellers after the events of September 11, 2001. When 38 planes were diverted to its airport, the residents came together to provide shelter, food, and comfort to over 7,000 passengers from around the world. This heartwarming and powerful musical celebrates the compassion, generosity, and unity that can emerge in the face of tragedy.

When I arrived, the front of house team and the chairman greeted me warmly, which immediately put me at ease. We were offered refreshments, adding a considerate touch to the start of the visit. The overall atmosphere felt pleasant and professional, setting a lovely tone for the rest of the evening.

The set, simple yet striking, made a lasting impact. A worn wooden backdrop paired with a few carefully placed chairs suggested a range of settings, and the transitions between scenes were smooth and natural. Its subtle design enhanced the narrative beautifully, keeping the audience fully absorbed throughout the performance.

The costumes were carefully designed to reflect the characters' everyday lives with authenticity. Contemporary clothing made each character feel genuine and relatable, while small details such as a scarf or jacket indicated changes in role or location. These thoughtful choices added depth to the story and enhanced clarity without distracting from the narrative.

The on-stage band gave an exceptional performance, playing with precision, vibrancy, and evident passion. Their lively rhythms and rich harmonies enhanced the cast of 14 throughout, creating a vibrant and uplifting atmosphere. Their presence added an extra layer of excitement to the stage, sustaining a dynamic and compelling energy from beginning to end.

Diane shone on stage with a refreshingly authentic and effortless poise. Her fantastic Texas accent and wonderful facial expressions added texture and spark to her role. Her interactions with Nick stood out, their chemistry creating charming and memorable moments. Their evolving relationship was full of tender, relatable gestures that felt genuine, while her singing and playful charisma brought vibrancy to every scene, making her stage persona truly captivating.

Hannah delivered a performance that was both strong and relatable, effortlessly conveying the ups and downs of her journey. Her expressive vocals and nuanced acting brought each moment to life with clarity and feeling. She moved smoothly between quiet, reflective moments and scenes of intense emotion, creating a performance full of heart and soul. I absolutely loved her rendition of 'I Am Here.'

Janice came to life on stage as a relatable and engaging individual, bringing the rookie reporter to the audience with warmth and integrity. Her mix of nervous tension and quiet determination made her character feel real from the start. Subtle humour and natural vulnerability added warmth, while her growth from an uncertain newcomer to a confident presence unfolded smoothly and convincingly.

Beulah brought a captivating magnetism to the stage, making her role feel lively and approachable. Her fantastic accent, combined with her mix of humour and sincere emotion, made every scene engaging and memorable, whether she was providing comfort, sharing a laugh, or fully committing to the moment. Her impeccable timing, along with her ability to blend light-heartedness and sincere feeling, added richness to the performance.

I absolutely loved Bonnie's portrayal, bringing the part to life as a calm and caring aura, radiating kindness and quiet strength. Whether tending to stranded animals or sharing tender, reassuring moments, she infused each scene with sincerity and warmth. Her thoughtful gestures and natural delivery made Bonnie feel genuine and approachable, while her steady poise and subtle emotional depth created a comforting and uplifting energy.

Beverley was convincingly depicted, capturing her compassionate and determined nature with clarity. Her embodiment as the first female captain for American Airlines was shown with a strong sense of presence and authority, highlighting both her professional achievements and personal strength. Her vocals were expressive and conveyed real emotion in the songs, reflecting her perseverance and resolve.

Mickey exuded sincerity and warmth, reflecting the generosity and spirit of Newfoundland hospitality. The same actor also played the flight attendant, providing reassurance and comfort to passengers, demonstrating remarkable versatility and a natural command of the stage.

Delores came alive as a nervous, quirky passenger, full of anxious intensity, who could also belt out a powerful rendition of 'My Heart Will Go On.' The actor also portrayed the overwhelmed Customs Officer, skilfully moving between characters to offer both wit and human connection.

Oz was calm, composed, and genuinely engaging. He readily offered help wherever it was needed, demonstrating warmth and attentiveness to both the townspeople and the stranded passengers. Through his thoughtful actions and steady demeanor, he showed a consistent commitment to supporting others, reinforcing the strong sense of community at the heart of the story.

Claude was portrayed with a natural warmth and quiet confidence that made him both believable and engaging. From his first entrance, he brought a calm, steady energy to the stage, using gentle humour and an easy sincerity to connect with the audience. His performance showed care and consistency, providing a strong anchor for the production.

Nick was played with an easy charm and quiet wit that captured the essence of an Englishman caught in unfamiliar territory. His composed manner and understated delivery made the character both relatable and engaging. The connection with Diane was particularly effective, marked by gentle awkwardness and believable warmth that developed naturally throughout.

Bob was delivered with a calm, steady confidence that made him immediately engaging. The performance balanced humour with moments of quiet thought, creating a portrayal that felt authentic and layered. There was a subtle charm in the way he navigated both light-hearted and reflective moments, which helped the persona feel fully rounded and relatable throughout the show.

Kevin T captured the quiet complexity of the role, balancing tenderness and apprehension with a compelling realism. His interactions with Kevin J were convincingly nuanced, capturing both warmth and tension in their

relationship. Kevin T delivered a steady, controlled performance with clear vocals that supported the emotional journey shared with Kevin J.

Kevin J was portrayed with a steady presence, conveying determination and quiet strength in a believable way. His interactions with Kevin T showed a mix of support and tension, giving their relationship a sense of realism and nuance. Vocally confident and attentive on stage, Kevin J delivered a solid and consistent performance, with moments of subtle expression that added depth to the character.

The direction was precise and well thought out, with movement and staging that served the story effectively. Each transition and gesture felt intentional, maintaining a natural flow without drawing unnecessary attention. The cast's coordination reflected clear guidance and careful rehearsal, while the detailed stage movement and smooth interaction between actors and crew ensured the production moved with clarity and purpose.

The sound and lighting design enhanced the production with subtle precision, immersing the audience in the performance while remaining unobtrusive. The lighting transitions were carefully timed to reflect shifts in mood, and the sound was consistently clear and balanced, enriching the atmosphere without overwhelming the actors.

The show was filled with many memorable moments, including the hilarious 'Kiss the Fish' scene, which had the audience laughing, the powerful and energetic opening number 'Welcome to the Rock' that immediately set the tone, and the tender development of Nick and Diane's blossoming romance. Beyond these highlights, there were numerous other scenes that balanced humour, emotion, and music, creating a performance that was both engaging and heartfelt from start to finish.

Well done to the entire cast and crew – the production clearly reflected careful planning, rehearsal, and attention to detail. Thank you for inviting me and allowing me to be part of the evening.

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