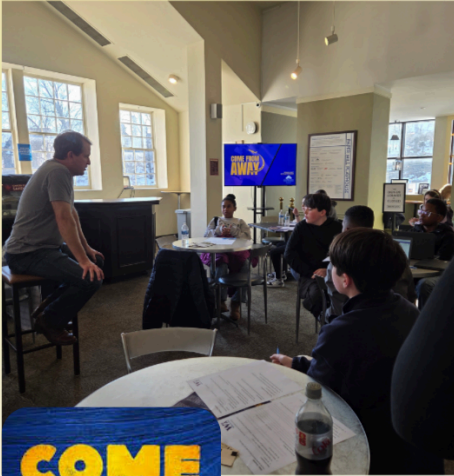


# Write on Arts Workshop

Paper Mill Playhouse | February 28, 2026



Special Guest James Moye  
cast member COME FROM AWAY



On Saturday, February 28th, Write on Arts hosted a workshop at the Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn. The workshop focused on a performance of *Come From Away*, a musical related to the people and events that took place in the town of Gander, Newfoundland in Canada during the days after September 11, 2001.

Students began the day by meeting as a group to learn about the show and the plan for the workshop. The teachers offered historical context for *Come From Away* and ideas to consider as audience members when watching a theatrical performance. They then headed to their seats to watch the show.

After the show, the students participated in a post-performance interview with actor James Moye. The students asked insightful questions about the performance and what he enjoyed about being an actor in this particular musical. James Moye shared his unique perspective which helped the students to think more deeply about the show.

The students spent the remaining time writing or recording stories about the content of the show, the acting, and their overall experience. You can check out the students' work below.

## **Aria Glazer and Lyla Beutel**

[Video Link](#)

## **Kennedy Marcoux-Tully, Emilee Danser, Sloane Kessler, & Sophie Kessler**

On Saturday, February 28th, the Paper Mill Playhouse in New Jersey featured a performance of *Come From Away*. The story followed a group of passengers that landed in Gander International Airport in Canada. This story shows us the kindness of the people in Gander and the people on the plane. The story brought an interesting take on the lives of people after 9/11. The most interesting part of this story was the changes of the scenes. Throughout the play they had many delicate scenes that they had to transition into from harsh and exciting scenes. It was interesting how the actors had to change their accents and their dialects, and how they had to change their personalities. Seeing all these transitions in the people, the sets, and the sounds brought a new sense of complexity to the story. Another interesting part of the show is how the actors were double cast, and had to consistently switch between characters. Though this was very impressive on the actors' ends, it could make it difficult for the viewer to distinguish between characters, therefore making it harder to follow the plot of the story. In the show there was no applause in between scenes because the people who worked in and on the show wanted to express the intensity of the events that took place during this time of mourning and sadness. The changes between the scenes with no intermissions showed us the pressure and tension of the situation. In conclusion, the show was very impactful and showed the hardship of all people in this small town and all around the world.

## **Lucas Schmitt**

On Saturday, February 28, 2026 the Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, New Jersey, featured a performance called *Come From Away*. I really liked this show because the topic was interesting. The most interesting part of this show was when all of the characters were watching the news and seeing what happened on 9/11. This was important because it shows what was happening on that day when people were figuring out what was happening in the country. Everyone was surprised and scared. It's obvious that this show is very interesting and worth watching. The acting and characters were very good in how they took the personality of their character. The background fit the show and was overall well made.

## **Morgan Payne**

On February 28th, a Saturday, the Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, New Jersey featured a musical called *Come From Away*. This musical was about what happened after 9/11 started. The most interesting part in the musical was the characters' development and stories. The scene where Kevin and his secretary are arguing about their relationship, also in the bar scene where Diane kissed Nick instead of a fish. These stories continue, leaving viewers wondering what happens with that bond the characters have. The music reflects the trust, situations, and events after 9/11. The people on the plane bond, later on gaining trust. The situations with wanting to be with their family, and the arguments including the panic, each character has a struggle throughout the show. In the end it still lingers, but the story is resolved. What happens with the characters? What emotions leave the world with that? Another thing is the chemistry between the actors. How deep they were into it, at the end it marked me, it was emotional to the end, and what questions I had in mind. This musical drove deep and had me wanting more shows like this, ones that hold memories, bonds, the chemistry between actors, and the symbolism in this story. That's what is important for a musical, to leave the person fully processed of what had just ended, something to withhold as you have these experiences. The work they put into this to get an intense reaction out of the audience, the determination and grit they fused. Unbelievably heartwarming but a bit saddening. It's like you never want to leave that experience you just witnessed. You want to know more. You want to process all of that, accept the truth of the story they tell.

## **Abigail Humala**

On February 28th, I went to see a show called *Come From Away*, which was about a couple of passengers on a flight, going to different destinations, on the date of 9/11/2001. The flight made an emergency landing in a city in Canada. A while after they landed they were all worried about what was going on in America, what happened to their family in New York, and all kinds of other incidents. A couple hours later they found out what was happening in New York, worried about it. A couple of days later, they arrived home.

What I found interesting about this show was when all of the passengers were at the bar, partying like nothing was wrong and being happy and having pride. This scene was important to me because this was a good experience to watch and learn from this scene to not be worried about every little thing, because eventually something will go well. I also love that at one point, the Canadians were praying for the Americans during the incident and showing respect for them. Another reason why I liked the show was because of the confidence. These actors did a great job on acting and showing their emotions on the stage.

## **Nathaniel Montebianco**

The show *Come From Away* was a fantastic show standing out with its actors, music, and set. During the show the expressions being expressed by the actors on stage was unique, with mostly anger, frustration, and sadness being expressed, especially when considering the difficulty of switching in between different characters with different personalities and emotions. The music was also another main element which added to the ambience, since all the musicians were not only moving around, but also adjusting their playing to represent different key moments in the show. The set was the one aspect of the show that mainly stood out to me, since everyone and everything is changing, often and very fast, which could be trying to give the audience an insight in what it was like for the people during that time, having to adjust their time for their jobs and time for their families, especially those with people who knew people involved in the accident or who were helping those in the accident. There were many details that made the show spectacular and helped give it different meanings and perspectives which made it a very a really great show to watch.

## **Charlie Schmitt**

On Saturday, February 28th, at the Paper Mill Playhouse in New Jersey, they performed the play *Come From Away*. The most interesting part of the show was when all of the people were running around and trying to find out what to do and buy for all of the people on board the planes. This was important because it showed how all of the people stopped what they were doing to try and help all of the people who were on the planes. Also all of the set pieces looked great with all of the lights and how they made the walls look like the twin towers at the end. I also think it was cool how they had tables come out of the walls for some of the scenes like the scene when all of the people were at a party and they had a table with lights that came out the wall but then went back in when the scene was over. One more thing I thought was cool was how all of the actors could change their characters so quickly and how they could change their voices to match the characters. The actors were also very good at acting and It was really cool how they could do all of the accents and how they were dancing around and didn't look tired at all. Overall, this is a great show and I recommend it for everyone who likes shows and plays.

## **James Howard**

*Come from Away* is a famous Broadway musical first released on March 12th, 2017 to glowing reviews. The play follows the aftermath of the September 11th Attacks, specifically the effects on the passengers of following planes that were diverted to a small town in Canada called Gander, Newfoundland. Lives were changed while in Newfoundland, and after a while, planes were being let back to the USA.

The show has gotten gleaming reviews from many. TheModestReader.com rated it 4.5 stars, saying “After the curtain came down (metaphorically) and after I dried my tears, I couldn’t get over how smart the book and the staging were[...]” showing a positive review of the play. Some compliments go to the humor, the characters and the overall message. The humor is smart and well timed, consistently giving a chuckle to a full on laugh from the audience. The characters are also pretty good, such as the mayor, the gay person, and Ali, always being a joy to see on the stage without ever overstaying their welcome. Most characters are fleshed out and get good character arcs. Finally, the overall message is something all ages can accept and relate to. Never losing hope, even when times are tough are still valid messages, even 25 years later. Wrapping up the positives, the sets were nice, the music was (mostly) good, and there were very few problems.

Although, the play is not perfect. A glaring issue is that some character storylines really go nowhere. The most obvious example is Ali. He is discriminated against because he is Muslim, what people understood the terrorists to be. However, there are only two instances (of what I remember) of which anything is done with it. The “arc” wraps up with no real conclusion, and we don’t even hear of his struggles again afterwards. Another thing wrong with the play was the music. While every one of the songs were catchy and moved the story along, it was hard to know when they stopped, and it felt like they had to cram fifteen songs into a hundred-minute play. The tone was also a problem, as jokes were common to see in the performance, which really dampers the seriousness of the issues. While laughter can help with sadness, the audience shouldn’t be laughing when a mother is unsure about the fate of her son. Another problem was pacing. When watching, the film can feel like the runtime should’ve been increased or decreased, and a hundred minutes never feels right. Having fifteen songs in the play doesn’t help.

In conclusion, *Come from Away* is a solid performance with very few issues. However, those issues bring down the performance for some. All in all, the performance is a solid 8.9/10, and enjoyment for casual viewers won’t be less than exceptional.