



BROADWAY
AT MUSIC CIRCUS

2025

SEASON PERFORMANCE GUIDE





WELCOME TO THE 2025 SEASON

Collaboration is essential in theatre making.

The Oxford dictionary defines collaboration as “the action of working with someone to produce or create something.”

What you will witness in today’s performance is the creative vision of dozens of artists. Artists who range in experience, background and perspective. You’ll see them under the bright lights of our stage, glimpse some quietly working in the dark and hear others making music from the orchestra pit. There are many more who are sewing, sawing, welding and painting the visual world of the play. And there are those who run the business of theatre making: Programming the ticketing software, creating enticing advertisements and balancing complicated budgets in order to make this magic possible. Most of these artists have studied and practiced their craft for years and yet they execute it selflessly so that their contribution isn’t singled out over another’s.

You are the last, essential participant in this collaboration. Your presence, laughter, applause and audible reactions energize this theatre and fuel this performance. Your contribution will make this performance unique: None before it or following will be identical because your attendance today had an impact.

I hope you leave this theatre today feeling better than you did when you arrived. I hope that the exquisitely detailed work of our artists has made an impression. I hope you were able to discuss your observations of the show with the person sitting next to you and that their insights enriched your own experience. I hope the story spoke to your soul, the performers reminded you of your potential, the show triggered your best memories and its story inspired you to journey outside your comfort zone.

Thank you for taking part in this theatrical collaboration and encouraging others to do the same!

SCOTT KLIER

PRESIDENT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

- **1949** Actor St. John Terrell sets up a summer stock theatre under a giant round tent in Lambertville, New Jersey. Drawing inspiration from the layout of greek amphitheatres and summer fun of the circus, Terrell's idea is a success and more than 40 others pop up across the country in the next decade.
- **1951** With the support of arts patron and newspaper owner Eleanor McClatchy, producers Russell Lewis and Howard Young establish the Sacramento Music Circus by setting up a tent in the parking lot of the Sacramento Civic Repertory Theatre. It is the first professional theatre-in-the-round located west of the Mississippi River and the fourth in the country.
- **1953** Lewis and Young found the Sacramento Light Opera Association to continue producing shows in the area. Sacramento Music Circus continues to be a successful summer tradition, gaining a notable reputation in the theatre community.
- **1989** The Broadway Series is introduced as a winter companion to the summer shows, bringing National Tours of Broadway musicals and plays to Sacramento every year.
- **2003** The Wells Fargo Pavilion (now called the UC Davis Health Pavilion) opens on the site of the original Sacramento Music Circus tent, providing a state-of-the-art, permanent, facility for all future shows.
- **2018** The company name changes to Broadway Sacramento, with the respective touring and summer seasons being named Broadway On Tour and Broadway At Music Circus.
- **2022** Broadway At Music Circus returns after two summers off due to the COVID-19 pandemic, at the renamed UC Davis Health Pavilion.
- **2023** Richard Lewis, son of co-founder Russell Lewis, retires as President and CEO of Broadway Sacramento after 21 years in that position. He is succeeded by Scott Klier, who has been with the company for over 20 years.
- **2025** Broadway At Music Circus expands its programming for the 73rd season, transforming Sacramento's summer tradition into an all-year experience!

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

BEFORE THE SHOW BEGINS, A FEW QUICK REMINDERS:

- ▶ Make sure you find your seat before the show starts. Actors will enter through the aisles, so staying seated when the lights go down helps keep everyone safe. If you need to leave, the ushers in the hall will let you know when it's okay to enter again.
- ▶ Please keep your phone silenced and put it away during the show. You are welcome to use it before or after, but the bright screen is distracting for everyone else at the theatre. Using your phone to take pictures or video during the performance is not allowed.
- ▶ If you're enjoying the show, make sure to laugh, cheer and applaud! The actors love hearing you have a good time. Please save singing and side conversations until after the show. This can be distracting for the actors and the people around you.



CREDITS

MUSIC BY
TOM SNOW

LYRICS BY
DEAN PITCHFORD

STAGE ADAPTATION BY
DEAN PITCHFORD
& WALTER BOBBIE

DIRECTOR AND CHOREOGRAPHER
ROBBIE ROBY

MUSIC DIRECTOR
DARRYL ARCHIBALD



SCAN FOR MORE INFO

STORY

Young Ren McCormack spends his days dancing his troubles away in Chicago, but his life is flipped upside down when he and his mother move to the small town of Bomont, Oklahoma, after his father abandons them. Bomont is a tight-knit, conservative town heavily influenced by the Reverend Shaw Moore, whose response to a local tragedy was to persuade the town council to outlaw dancing. Ren struggles to fit into the town's restrictive culture, but he soon makes friends with a young cowboy named Willard and Rev. Moore's rebellious daughter Ariel. Ignoring his friends' and family's advice to lie low and fit in, Ren decides that the town needs a school dance in order to let the students unwind and show the town council that dancing is not all bad.

At a country bar in the neighboring town, Willard learns how to dance to impress his girlfriend Rusty and Ariel and Ren start to grow closer. As Ren prepares to make his case at the upcoming council meeting, Rev. Moore begins to question the effectiveness of his methods and realizes that he cannot process his sadness alone. Both men are wrestling with loss and want their community to thrive, but Ren must stand up for his values and Rev. Moore must be open to change if the people of Bomont want to be free to dance.

CHARACTERS

REN MCCORMACK: A fun-loving, defiant young man struggling to adapt to change.

ARIEL MOORE: The smart, strong-willed, adventurous preacher's daughter.

REVEREND SHAW MOORE: A strict, passionate church leader with some hidden grief.

WILLARD HEWITT: A kind, loyal young cowboy who puts up a tough-guy front.

VI MOORE: A strong, supportive woman who is wife to Rev. Moore and mother to Ariel.

ETHEL MCCORMACK: Ren's devoted, resilient mother.

RUSTY: Ariel's sassy, confident best friend.

CHUCK CRANSTON: Ariel's jealous, controlling, "bad boy" boyfriend.

MAKING THE SHOW

FROM SMALL TOWN TO SCREEN TO STAGE

In 1980, the small town of Elmore City, Oklahoma, made national headlines. Because of a law that dated back to before the town's incorporation in 1898, public dancing was restricted in Elmore City. The law had been enacted in an attempt to limit excessive drinking and sexual behavior but remained intact as part of the town's conservative tradition. Nearly a century later, teens from the local high school sought to change the law so they could have a prom. Their successful protest attracted the attention of several prominent journalists and publications.



Elmore City Sign by Jimmie Trammel for Tulsa World, 2024

One of the articles covering Elmore City's dancing revolution caught the eye of screenwriter/songwriter Dean Pitchford. Pitchford, who had just co-written the smash title song for the movie musical "Fame," was looking for inspiration for his next project and was drawn to the story of small-town tradition being challenged by outspoken teens. Over the next couple of years, Pitchford developed a screenplay based on the events in Elmore City and co-wrote a number of original songs to accompany the film. The film, "Footloose," was a smash hit upon its release in February 1984 and the soundtrack sold over seven million copies.

Ten years later, Pitchford returned to "Footloose" with the idea of adapting it for the stage, bringing on his collaborator Tom Snow. The songs from the film were written with a variety of partners and had minimal connection to the plot, so the duo aimed to compose more numbers that explored

the inner lives of the characters. Within two years they had written enough new music to host a workshop presentation, at which point producers and director Walter Bobbie came on board.

Following another successful workshop in the summer of 1997, the stage adaptation of **FOOTLOOSE** premiered at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, in August of 1998. Later that fall, **FOOTLOOSE** opened on Broadway at the Richard Rodgers Theatre. A national tour launched at the end of the year and **FOOTLOOSE** continued to run on Broadway for 709 performances, receiving four Tony Award® nominations and breaking several box office records.



FOOTLOOSE Original Broadway Cast, 1998

Between 2004 and 2007, **FOOTLOOSE** toured the UK three times and had a limited run on London's West End. During this time Pitchford and Snow also revised the show, introducing a new opening song for Act II and cutting or editing several other songs to streamline the plot. The show has remained a popular choice for regional theatres both stateside and internationally, including once before at Broadway At Music Circus in 2004. **FOOTLOOSE** may tell the story of a small town in the US, but the story of acceptance, community and freedom through dance continues to resonate worldwide.

CAN'T STAND STILL

DANCE AS A FORM OF PROTEST

Dancing can take on many meanings. To some, it may be a fun but frivolous activity at parties with no real importance. Others, like the adults in **FOOTLOOSE**, may see it as a sinful act that leads to other risky behaviors. Even still, there are many people and cultures that see dancing as an important form of artistic expression and use it to tell stories, express emotions, or even push back against oppression. Ren's efforts to hold a school dance in opposition to Bomont's restrictive policies are a small-scale example of this, but there are many real-life instances of marginalized people using music and movement to fight against their circumstances.



IRISH DANCE

Irish dance is not as inherently rebellious or subversive as some protest dances, as it was originally just a cultural tradition. After British forces colonized Ireland in the 17th century, many expressions of Irish culture were outlawed. Dance masters secretly shared their art through private lessons, keeping Irish dance alive even as many other elements of the culture were lost to time. It is still practiced today both in Ireland and worldwide, serving as a symbol of Irish people's resilience.



SWING DANCE

Swing dancing developed in the United States during the Jazz Age of the 1920s and 30s, creating styles like the Charleston and the Lindy Hop. It soon spread internationally, reaching Germany in the mid-1930s during the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party. German teens who resisted joining the Hitler Youth were drawn to the high energy and loose structure of swing dancing and jazz music, leading to the development of an American-inspired counterculture movement. The military began to crack down on social gatherings and non-German media, but swing culture persisted in underground clubs and secret meetings. Although the movement was more about escapism than resistance, it provided teens with an outlet for self-expression through music, fashion and dancing that starkly contrasted the rigidity and conformity of the Nazi regime.



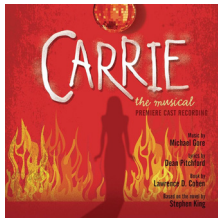
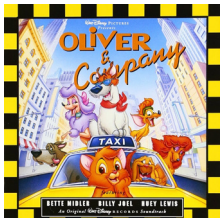
TOYI-TOYI

Toyi-toyi is a South African protest dance consisting of high-kneed steps, foot-stomping and chanting that evolved out of military call-and-response routines from liberation armies in the 1960s. It gained traction as a form of expression during anti-apartheid protests in the 1970s and is still used today in various protests against government policies, with protestors using it both to intimidate oppressors and express communal joy.

SONGWRITER SPOTLIGHT:

DEAN PITCHFORD

Since the mid-1970s, **FOOTLOOSE** lyricist and book writer Dean Pitchford has contributed lyrics to many popular songs, as well as several other stage and movie musicals. Check out some of the standouts below— which ones have you heard before?



SINGLES

“I Could Really Love You”

performed by Eric Carmen

“Don’t Call It Love”

performed by Dolly Parton

“All the Man That I Need”

performed by Whitney Houston

“After All”

performed by Cher and Peter Cetera

SCREEN

“Fame” (1980)

“Fame,” “Red Light,” and “I Sing the Body Electric”

“Oliver & Company” (1988)

“Streets of Gold”

“The Lizzie McGuire Movie” (2003)

“What Dreams Are Made Of”

STAGE

CARRIE (1988)

lyrics to all songs

THE BOY FROM OZ (2003)

lyrics to various songs by Peter Allen

THINK ABOUT IT

- ▶ A key conflict in **FOOTLOOSE** is the push-and-pull between freedom and responsibility, with the teens and adults often on opposing sides. Before seeing the show, whose side would you have been on? How did your perspective change after?
- ▶ **FOOTLOOSE**'s score is heavily influenced by pop music from the 1980s. If **FOOTLOOSE** took place today, what do you think the score would sound like? How would the dancing be different?
- ▶ Ren decides to stand up to Reverend Moore and the Bomont town council because of how important dancing is to him. How would you decide if something you cared about was worth fighting for? Have you ever had to do something like this before?
- ▶ Many of the characters in **FOOTLOOSE** are working through complicated emotions and they find different outlets for them. What hobbies or activities help you work through your feelings? Why do you think some things may be more helpful than others?

FOOTLOOSE

MARCH 21-27

**BE SURE TO CHECK BACK IN DECEMBER
FOR OUR WHITE CHRISTMAS GUIDE!**



**BROADWAY
AT MUSIC CIRCUS**

UC DAVIS HEALTH PAVILION

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Commerce **Printing** 
SERVICES

This guide was developed by Mason Diab, Caleb Larrosa-Colombo and Jackie Vanderbeck.
Special thanks to Griff Field, Matt Hessburg, Scott Klier, Dejan Zivkovic and YOU,
audience members, for joining us at **Broadway At Music Circus!**