

## *Footloose* Director's Note

"People aren't supposed to look back. I'm certainly not going to do it anymore."

*Slaughterhouse Five*, Kurt Vonnegut

My introduction to *Footloose* came through the famous 1984 film starring Kevin Bacon. Not the most critically acclaimed film, it was commercially popular and is considered one of those 80's films that helped define a generation. A collection of foot-tapping music, high energy dance numbers and a story that captured the nostalgia and drama inherent in the lives of high school seniors, *Footloose* is a coming-of-age tale that can speak to anyone due to its inherent accessibility and relatability.

When we began to prepare for this play, I expected to be taken in by the music and dance. And I was. The music of Kenny Loggins and Dean Pitchford is as catchy today as it was in the 80's. In fact, I still can't say the title of this show in my head without hearing the music underneath the word from the title number.

What surprised me was how touching of a story this was. I went back and re-watched the film and was taken aback at the complexity and drama in the plot. Those same elements are present in this staged version. While on the surface, this is the story of a town with a draconian ban on dancing, and one brave outsider's stand against the established power of the town, personified in its misguided preacher, there is so much more here.

This is a story of loss. This is a story about people who lost their way after a tragedy and are trying to find their way back. We see two similar figures struggling with similar tragedies and taking very different tacks to deal with their grief. Those struggles come to a head through their opposition, and the result is the story that will play out before you tonight.

While the tragedies of this story happen before the show begins, and the focus is on the characters moving forward, there is no doubt that their impact has thrown a shadow of their lives. In a literal sense for our town and more metaphorically for our protagonist.

But, in a fashion befitting a summer musical, this is a tale of overcoming those tragedies. This is a story about challenging an Orwellian decree banning dancing, embracing the inherent revolutionary tendencies of high school seniors who are about to begin their lives and seeing one young man teach a town how to move on as he attempts to grow and progress past his own personal tragedy. He teaches a town to find their freedom and embrace the joy of life through dance.

I want to take a quick moment to thank some people. First, our design team who made this show come to life, through their incredible work on the costumes, set, lights and in the sound

design. Additionally, our band and music director for their work capturing the soundtrack of this show and our choreographer for her work in the visual aspects of the play. A thank you to our stage management and run crews for their tireless efforts each night to bring this play to life. To our incredible cast who give completely of themselves each and every performance to bring these characters to life and share their prodigious talents with you. To our producers and the staff at the Prescott Park Arts Festival especially our artistic director Courtney Perkins for her work in making this production a reality.

And, finally, thanks to all of you. Theatre is not possible without an audience, and we are so thankful you decided to spend an evening with us.

I hope you enjoy the Prescott Park Arts Festival's production of *Footloose*.