

Legally Blonde Director's Note

Legally Blonde premiered on Broadway in 2007. Based on the 2001 film starring Reese Witherspoon, the show was as big of a hit as the movie, due to its positive message, fun song and dance numbers, and iconic characters. The show features music by Laurence O'Keefe and Nell Benjamin and a book by Heather Hach. It was nominated for 7 Tony Awards and was the most commercially successful show of the year, with a special live performance recorded for MTV. I was lucky enough to be in the audience that night, as any college student wearing pink was admitted for free.

I loved this show the moment I saw it. I can't recall ever having more fun sitting watching a show in a Broadway theater. The colors, the energy, the comedy, the music, and dance -all of it combines for a fun night that leaves you feeling re-invigorated and excited about what live theatre can do for the soul.

Despite source material that is over twenty years old, Elle Woods and her story still resonate today. This is a show about being true to yourself, no matter what, with a healthy dose of girl power mixed in. We meet Elle, who is on top of the world as a senior at UCLA: the homecoming queen who is awaiting an inevitable proposal by her king so they can have the storybook ending everyone envisions for them.

But, instead of a proposal, her life is turned on its end when her boyfriend breaks up with her and moves across the country to attend Harvard Law School, pursuing his own fairytale life that doesn't include Elle.

With the support of her sorority sisters, Elle moves east, gains admittance to Harvard Law and is focused on winning him back. Upon her arrival in Cambridge, she learns that this is not the world she has known and realizes she has a lot to learn to achieve what she wants. Along the way, she befriends a TA (Emmett Forrest) and hair stylist (Paulette) who both help her see that perhaps her journey should be about more than just finding a man, instead maybe finding herself and exploring the full measure of what she can be and letting that be her story.

I love this show. I don't know many people who do not. It's fun, energetic and has a message that is so important. Perhaps it's disappointing that this message still needs to be spread today, as maybe it means we have not lived up to the aspirations of a movie from almost twenty-five years ago. But that does not detract from the import of that message and its need to be repeated.

Speaking for myself, I thought the movie was fun and the show fantastic. I always supported the ideas of this movie, as I was blessed to spend my life around strong women (my mother, a schoolteacher, my two sisters, both doctors, and my wife, a performer,

entrepreneur and mother, chief among them). So, I always loved that this tale was about female empowerment and finding your way in a manner that was true to yourself, no matter what others thought. But, as a father to a three-year-old daughter, this show has new significance to me. I cannot fathom the idea that we live in a world where my daughter, who is smart, funny, resourceful, and full of joy, could ever lack the prospects and advancement opportunities of men in the same school or profession as her. It doesn't even compute as something that could be possible, much less a sad reality of what IS, all too often, in this world.

While it's true that this show's message is perhaps not treading on new ground, the fact is, sometimes it takes hearing an idea multiple times, or hearing it at different moments in your life for the concept to truly take hold. While I was always on board with what *Legally Blonde* had to say, the show has greater meaning to me now than it did in 2007. And I can only hope that our production helps others connect with the show's greater message, whether for the first time or in a new way.

I am so thankful to all the amazing people who work hard to make the summer musical happen here at Prescott Park. This organization's mission to bring free, professional theater to the community, is vital to the growth of the arts, and as a professor of musical theatre, this is something that is near and dear to my heart. I am so thankful to Courtney, Jill, Casey, and everyone at the park for all the work they do in bringing theater to the Seacoast. And, to the sponsors whose generosity supports the Park and their mission. Without those people, and all the other countless hard workers here at the Prescott Park Arts Festival, none of this would be possible.

I am also thankful to all the wonderful individuals I get to collaborate with on productions like this. There is a staggering number of people who work hard to create the things you see on stage, run the things you don't see backstage and do a million other vital tasks to make this show happen. We could not do this without any of them and I am so thankful for their hard work.

Finally, I'm especially thankful to this wonderful cast, the individuals with whom I get to spend most of my time. Each year I get to work with a mix of returning performers, new friends, and college students from the area. I get to work with students I have taught, performers I have directed before, and individuals I have just met. And I'm always blown away by their hard work and professionalism. The six weeks I get to spend in rehearsal with this group re-invigorates me as an artist and introduces me to people I hope to be able to call lifelong friends. I am so thankful to this cast for trusting me to direct this show and cannot wait for you to get to see how incredible they are.

Thank you for your patronage. I hope you enjoy the show.

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I loved this show the moment I saw it. The colors, the energy, the comedy, the music, and dance -all of it combines for a fun night that leaves you feeling re-invigorated and excited about what live theatre can do for the soul. And, to top it all off, it's got a great message for people everywhere, but especially for young women.

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