



Performance Preview Guide

The Prom

Patrons have different ideas of what material or themes are appropriate for themselves, their families, and their students. For this reason, we provide the following information. Please note that the following contains plot spoilers. For more information about the show you can visit [Theatrical Right Worldwide's page on *The Prom* here.](#)

Age Recommendation

Wheelock Family Theatre's production of *The Prom* may not be suitable for children under the age of 8.

Versions available to preview

A script is available at the Wheelock Family Theatre box office for you to read. Please email wfttix@bu.edu to arrange a time.

Production length

The show is estimated to run 2 hours and 25 minutes with a 15-minute intermission.

Accessibility

Wheelock Family Theatre was founded on a mission that is dedicated to providing accessible theatre for all. Wheelock Family Theatre is wheelchair accessible, and all performances are open captioned. Additionally, select performances will be interpreted in American Sign Language, and Audio Described. For more information on Wheelock Family Theatre's access programs, [please visit our accessibility web page](#) or contact Audience Services Manager, Jamie Aznive at jaznive@bu.edu (617) 353 – 1451.

Educational Content Overview

Courtesy of Theatrical Rights Worldwide

Four eccentric Broadway stars are in desperate need of a new stage. So when they hear that trouble is brewing around a small-town prom, they know that it's time to put a spotlight on the issue...and themselves. The town's parents want to keep the high school dance on the straight and narrow—but when one student just wants to bring her girlfriend to prom, the entire town has a date with destiny. On a mission to transform lives, Broadway's brassiest join forces with a courageous girl and the town's citizens and the result is love that brings them all together. Winner of the Drama Desk Award for Best Musical, *The Prom* expertly captures all the humor and heart of a classic musical comedy with a message that resonates with audiences now more than ever.

Content Advisories

The Prom deals with the struggle surrounding self-expression and staying true to oneself even in the face of outright hatred, bullying, and intolerance. With that in mind, please find listed below scenes from throughout the show that explicitly depict homophobia and other forms of hatred.

- Students bully the LGBTQIA+ main character by calling her names like “jerk” and “moron” throughout
- A diorama left in the locker of the LGBTQIA+ main character depicts a teddy bear hanging by a noose with the word “lezbo” scrawled next to it
- The word “lesbo” is used repeatedly in a derogatory manner
- Parents use the word “homosexual” in an aggressive manner in order to demean individuals and events
- It is revealed a character's parents expelled their child from the home and no longer care for them as a result of their sexual orientation
- In a cruel coordinated bullying effort, students from the school move to exclude one LGBTQIA+ individual from an event by deliberately lying to her regarding its whereabouts
- Characters justify their homophobic beliefs through religion

Additionally, *The Prom* contains certain adult themes, suggestive language, and vulgar terms, which may be considered inappropriate for younger viewers. Please find below instances that may be of note to potential audience members.

- A character tells another to “bet their sweet ass” they can do something
- In reference to people of the Midwest, a song contains the lyrics “Bible-thumping, spam eating, cousin loving, cow tipping, finger-wagging, Hoosier jumping, losers”
- A character references taking Xanax in a non-prescriptive manner in order to calm themselves
- The high school principal references drug problems at neighboring schools
- Townspeople are referred to as “hicks”
- Describing the conditions of a hotel room, one character tells another that they will be “murdered and stuffed” there. And, one character tells another that if there is a doctor present they would be in the “basement sewing the guests together into a giant bug”
- One character describes a part he played on a TV show in which he dealt with “cocaine addiction”
- In one song, referencing their looks, one character attests that they would “do” themselves
- One character tells another to get their “ass in the car”
- One character jokes that the theme of a deserted prom ought to be “death row”
- Referencing her ex-husband, a character calls him a “bastard”
- In a reference to the director Bob Fosse, one character calls him a “real ball-buster”

FULL SYNOPSIS

Act One

"The Prom" follows the story of Emma Nolan, a high school student in Indiana who faces intense backlash from her community for wanting to attend the prom with her girlfriend, Alyssa Greene.

Emma Nolan is a bright, determined teenager with a bit of a tomboyish quality. She wishes to attend the prom with her girlfriend, Alyssa Greene, who is a top student and a cheerleader. Alyssa, however, is forced to keep her relationship with Emma a secret due to her conservative mother, Mrs. Greene, who is the head of the PTA. Mrs. Greene, an intimidating figure in the community, cancels the prom to prevent Emma from attending.

Meanwhile, in New York City, four Broadway actors—Barry Glickman, Dee Dee Allen, Trent Oliver, and Angie Dickinson—find themselves in a career slump. Barry Glickman, a flamboyant and outspoken actor, and Dee Dee Allen, a self-centered Broadway diva, are reeling from a critical failure of their latest show. Trent Oliver, a pretentious Juilliard graduate, and Angie Dickinson, a seasoned ensemble member from "Chicago," also seek a cause to boost their public images. They stumble upon Emma's story online and decide to champion her cause as a way to rejuvenate their careers.

The actors travel to Indiana and meet Principal Tom Hawkins, a supportive ally of Emma who has long admired Dee Dee Allen. They organize a rally at the school, perform "The Acceptance Song" at a monster truck show, all to raise awareness and support for Emma. However, their well-intentioned but over-the-top performance backfires, creating more tension and division in the community.

Despite the initial setback, the Broadway actors persist. Barry and Dee Dee take Emma shopping for a prom dress, providing her with a glimpse of the acceptance and support she longs for. The PTA, under pressure, agrees to hold another prom. However, it turns out to be a ruse—Emma is the only one who shows up at the event. Heartbroken and humiliated, she returns home.

Act Two

As tensions escalate, Trent Oliver, who is currently on a non-Equity tour of "Godspell," uses his platform to educate the students about tolerance through the song "Love Thy Neighbor." This effort begins to change the hearts and minds of the students, who start to reconsider their prejudices. During this time, Dee Dee sings "The Lady's Improving," showcasing her own journey towards selflessness.

Barry and Dee Dee comfort Emma; she eventually finds the courage to share her feelings with the world through a viral video, singing "Unruly Heart." Her heartfelt message resonates widely, gaining her national support and bringing more attention to her plight.

Moved by Emma's courage, the community rallies to organize an inclusive prom. Alyssa, encouraged by Emma's bravery, comes out to her mother and stands by Emma's side. Mrs. Greene initially struggles to accept her daughter's identity but ultimately reconciles with Alyssa.

The story culminates in a joyous, inclusive prom where Emma and Alyssa attend together, surrounded by supportive friends and community members. The show concludes with the celebratory song "It's Time to Dance," emphasizing a hopeful and triumphant resolution for Emma, Alyssa, and their community, highlighting the power of acceptance, love, and unity.