

PAPER MILL PLAYHOUSE

AUDIO DESCRIPTION NOTES

TAKE THE LEAD

These description notes were provided by Mel Primorac, audio describer, and will be shared in advance of scheduled audio-described performances.

Take the Lead features a book by Robert Cary and Jonathan Tolins; music and lyrics by Elliah Heifetz and Zeniba Now; orchestrations and arrangements by Bill Sherman and Geoffrey Ko; scenic design by Paul Tate DePoo III; costume design by Jen Caprio; lighting design by Justin Townsend and Nick Solyom; sound design by Walter Trarbach; hair, wig and makeup design by Earon Chew Nealey; stage managed Molly Meg Legal; music supervision by Bill Sherman; music direction by Geoffrey Ko; co-choreographed by Maria Torres and Jennifer Weber; and directed and choreographed by Christopher Gattelli.

Based on the New Line Cinema film written by Dianne Houston, *Take the Lead* is based on the true story of Pierre Dulaine, a professional dancer-turned-educator who brought ballroom dance into New York City public schools.

This production is recommended for ages 13 and up. Bright lights and theatrical haze are used throughout the performance. The show runs approximately 2 hours and 20 minutes with one intermission.

SCENERY

As you enter the theater, the show curtain is down. In the center, TAKE THE LEAD is written in all capital letters. As the show begins, the curtain rises to reveal dancers and Pierre Dulaine on an empty dance floor. There are midnight blue curtains at the very back of the dance floor. The archway of the dance floor is lit up with matching midnight blue LED lights. Three navy banners with gold fringe at the bottom (one on the left, one in the middle, one on the right) descend from the ceiling. Each banner reads “NEW YORK JUNIOR BALLROOM CHAMPIONSHIP” with a silhouette image of a ballroom dance couple

underneath the text. The image and the words “New York Junior Ballroom” are written in white thread, whereas the word “Championship” is written in gold thread.

Drake High School has four brick panels - two on the left, two on the right. There is olive green metal scaffolding towards the center between the brick paneling. In the very center of the scaffolding are two double doors with one window on each door.

The first time we visit Drake High School is for their **Valentine Dance**. There is a banner hung in the center above the double doors that reads “DRAKE HIGH SCHOOL VALENTINES DANCE 2002” in white lettering. There are three hearts on either side of the doors. There are posters on the windows of the double doors that read “DRAKE HIGH SCHOOL VALENTINES DANCE.” There are four magenta and red hearts towards the bottom of the doors - these hearts read “2002.”

The Drake High School Valentine Dance and the New York Junior Ballroom Championship occur simultaneously. As the action flips between the two locations, the ballroom dancers and high school students weave throughout the space together. The ballroom dancers are lithe and muscular; their dance costumes are color-coordinated, well-fitted, lots of sequins - even the women’s tights sparkle. Their movements are precise, athletic, with polish, control, and precision. Their centers are in their core and chests. The Drake High students are dressed casually; they dance with their centers lower down, in their hips and in the pelvis.

The Dulaine-Ford Academy dance studio has sheer beige curtains that are closed, lining the back of the room. Above the beige curtains is a golden metal strip with detailing. There is a barre on the left side of the room and a mahogany trophy case with four rows with eight golden trophies on each row on the right side of the room. In front of the trophy case, there is a mahogany counter. There is a black vase with a large bouquet of white flowers on the right side of the counter.

We visit a **pier along the east river**, which has the New York City skyline illuminated in the back. There are five circular lights on the wall of the pier.

The Principal's Office at Drake High School has two windows in the center of the room with beige blinds halfway drawn. On each side of the windows are boards with many sticky notes and other pieces of paper. Below the windows and boards is an olive-green furniture island. There are wooden sections of the island that contain outlets. A gray desk is in front of the windows; on the desk are, again, many papers and an early 2000's laptop. There is a full wastebasket to the left of the desk.

The Arts Appreciation classroom has an olive-green door on the left with three steps that lead down into the classroom. There are desks scattered about the classroom. On the wall to the right side of the classroom is a world map. To the right and above the world map is a small window and a ladder propped against the wall. There are scaffolding and pipes lining the back of the classroom.

The East 149th Street train station has the New York City skyline in the background. There is a metal structure with lights and a sign that reads E 149th Street on top of the structure. There are faded posters with graffiti throughout the structure, and a bench on the right of the station.

The 2002 Manhattan Ballroom Dance Competition takes place on a fancy stage. There is an LED archway as well as 6 chandeliers - 3 on the left, 3 on the right.

CAST & CHARACTERS

PIERRE DULAINÉ, played by Tam Mutu, is 5' 11" with an athletic/slim build. He is white, has dark brown hair parted on the left with a widow's peak hairline and a short back and sides. He has a strong brow, green almond shaped eyes, big smile, and strong jawline with a dimple chin. Pierre is refined, well-dressed with staunch posture, and a nondescript European accent.

ARIANNA, played by Adrienne Bailon-Houghton, is 5'2". She has light brown skin. She is slender with a sharp chin and defined face. Her eyes are light brown, and she has long, brown hair. She often wears pantsuits. Her clothing is well-tailored and professional.

ROCK, played by Vincent Jamal Hooper, is a tall Black man, about 6'1", with a slim athletic build. His face is round with high cheekbones, groomed eyebrows, and a rounded nose. His hair is short, black, and cut into a low fade.

LA RHETTE, played by Savy Jackson, is 5'3". She is Black and slim, has dark brown eyes, and her long, black hair is pulled back into thin braids.

ALAN FORD, played by Matthew Risch, is 6'0" with olive-toned skin, salt and pepper hair, almond shaped hazel eyes and a well-trimmed beard.

MIGUEL, played by Kevin Trinio Perdido, is a 5'" Filipino man. His black hair is buzzed short, nearly entirely shaved. He has short facial hair and brown eyes and wears a NY Giants hat and baggy clothes in style with the hip hop culture of the early 2000's.

LOLA, played by Megan Elyse Fulmer, is 5'5" with olive skin and a slender build. Her face is slim with thin eyebrows, and light brown eyes. Her hair is long, curly, and auburn brown.

GUCCI, played by Salome Smith, is a short woman of 5'3" with brown skin and curvy figure. She has a round face with baby cheeks, thick eyebrows, and a small nose. Her black hair is in thick braided locs, pulled into two buns.

EDDIE, played by Brandon O'Neal Bomer, is a Black man of 5'8" with a medium build. He has a round face and a black Afro.

KURD, played by Christian Whan, is a slim, white man of about 5'7". He has a sharp chin and dirty blonde hair.

EGYPT, played by Natalia Nieves-Melchor, is a 5'5" woman with beige skin and an athletic build. She has long, black hair.

MONSTER, played by SeQuoiia, is a heavier Black man and stands 6'0". He has a round face and black hair.

CAITLIN, played by Grace Slear, is 5'5". She has a square head, big blue eyes, a smaller mouth, strong eyebrows, an athletic build and white skin. Caitlin wears preppy clothing but finds her style as the show progresses.

MRS. BUFORD, Caitlin's mother, is played by Gaelen Gilliland, is a white woman with a medium build, oval face, high cheekbones, and big blue eyes. She wears Chanel suits and silk blouses with expensive jewelry. Her hair is dark strawberry blonde styled into a bob.

DANIEL, played by Deon Releford-Lee, is 5'9". He is a Black man with a medium athletic build. He has deep brown almond shaped eyes and a stubble-specked face with full dual-toned lips. He has an Afro.

MORGAN, played by Jonalyn Saxer, is a slender white woman of 5'7". Her long blonde hair is pulled back, kept out of her face as she dances in her various ballroom competition outfits.

MR. O'HARA, played by David Jennings, is a Black man, 6'1, mid 40s, with a mustache and goatee. He dresses in well-made suits and his short black hair brushed down.