

Footloose

reviewed by [Steve A. Vineberg](#) in the [December 13, 2011](#) issue

Craig Brewer, the extraordinary young director of *Hustle & Flow* and *Black Snake Moan*, brings his sharp ear for southern culture's tone and rhythms to this remake of a 1998 pop musical (itself a remake of a 1984 film) set in a small Georgia town. The problem is that the material is still *Footloose*.

Kenny Wormald plays the Boston kid who goes to live with his uncle and aunt and challenges the town ordinance against dancing. In this version, the prohibition was instituted after five teenagers were killed in a car crash following a dance. That story suggests the rule was an authentic response to the grief of the community. What doesn't make sense is the town elders' claim that dancing is lewd and lascivious. It's as if they are in a rock-'n'-roll musical from the Elvis Presley era.

Brewer may be trying to mute the modern-day setting: none of the teenagers seems to own a computer or a cell phone, which makes their contemporary slang sound weirdly dissociated.

Wormald can dance, but he's a dud as an actor. Luckily he shares most of his scenes with the phenomenal young actor Miles Teller, who plays a grinning juvenile version of a good ol' boy who befriends the hero and, in the movie's best number, "Let's Hear It for the Boy," learns how to dance.