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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Jodi Prosser- Muller

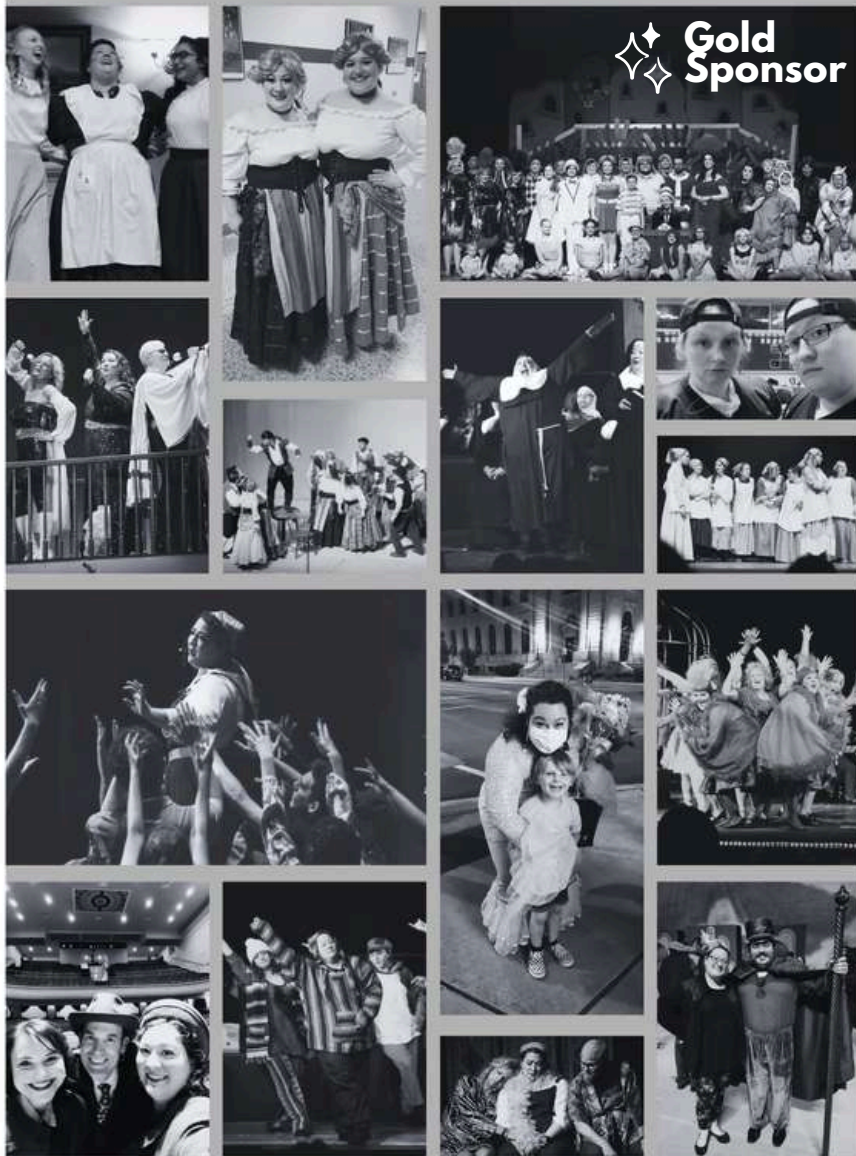
I have tried writing this several times. Much like Thomas Jefferson, I was having trouble getting started. I wasn't sure I could find the words to convey what this production has meant to me, not only as a director, but also as a person. This powerful script and score reminds us that we are to fight for the rights of all, to be committed to freedom for everyone, and to never forget where we've been and where we need to go. It is both amazing and sad that this is still so relevant today.



I first saw a live version of 1776 about 30 years ago. I remember walking out after the show ended in a daze, still feeling the "wow" effect of the entire experience. I know the script takes some poetic license, but I still felt as though I had stepped back in time to witness an important moment in our country's history. That feeling lasted for several days. Fast forward to this production. I feel so very privileged to have been asked to direct this collaboration, especially for our nation's 250th anniversary. Performing in this beautiful, historical auditorium has made the experience that much more special. Then there is the incredibly talented and dedicated cast and crew who have come together to create such an amazing theatrical experience! I am like a proud parent, and I can't wait for our audiences to be wowed by our version of this wonderful piece of theatre and history all rolled into one. This will stick with me for a long time to come.

Jodi Prosser-Muller

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Kathryn Randolph Theater
www.redmaskplayers.com

The SpongeBob Musical Youth Edition
DLO Musical Theatre: Kid Production
July 17-19, 2026
DACC Shaner Theater
www.dlomusicaltheatre.com

Sweeney Todd School Edition
DLO Musical Theatre: Teen Production
July 24-26
Danville High School Dick Van Dyke Auditorium
www.dlomusicaltheatre.com

Peter Pan Goes Wrong
September 18-19, 25-26
The Fisher Theatre
www.fischertheatre.com

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ROBERT LIVINGSTON: Jason Mierek
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JAMES WILSON: Paul Strain
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JOHN HART: Jerry Strain



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Peter Barrett (John Hancock) caps off 20+ years of community theatre involvement with this timely show, mostly in musicals. You may have seen him most recently as Atticus Finch in DACC's "To Kill a Mockingbird" and as Mr. Laurence in their production of "Little Women." He also had prominent roles in CUTC's "Guys and Dolls" (Big Julie), "Anything Goes" (as a sailor / TAP DANCER), and in "Memphis" (Mr. Simmons). Special thanks to Sheila for her eternal patience in running lines!

Geoff Brewster(Dr. Josiah Bartlett) is delighted to make his debut with DLO after returning to Urbana-Champaign following a decade away. Recent stage credits include Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* in the Chicago area. As a longtime fan of *The West Wing*, it is especially meaningful for Geoff to portray Josiah Bartlett—though this Bartlett never made it to the Oval Office. He is grateful for the opportunity to join DLO's talented cast and crew and to reconnect with the theatre communities of Danville and the Urbana-Champaign area. Geoff extends his heartfelt thanks to Angela and his loving family for their constant support, encouragement, and patience.

Jim Gilmour (Stephen Hopkins) is proud to be a part of this talented cast portraying our nation's Founding Fathers during the celebration of America's 250th anniversary. He is fortunate and thankful for the many roles and productions that community theater has brought into his life over the years and for the friendships and teamwork shared with the casts, directors, crews, and volunteers who make every production possible. He would especially like to thank the directors and production team for their hard work, patience, and dedication in bringing 1776 to life. A heartfelt thank you also goes to his wife for her constant love, encouragement, and support. He hopes you enjoy the performance as much as the cast and crew have enjoyed bringing it to the stage.

Craig Krukewitt (John Adams) Just over 225 years after July 4, 1776, Craig made his first appearance in this show as Secretary Charles Thomson, an experience he remembers with great fondness. Craig is a direct descendant of Matthew Lyon, a Vermont congressperson and extremely vocal critic of the Adams presidency. Recent roles include Skimbleshanks in *Cats* (Paris Community Theater); Professor Bhaer in *Little Women* (Jaguar Players); and the Royal Steward (DLO: his 30th appearance with the company).

1776

**MUSIC AND LYRICS BY SHERMAN EDWARDS
BOOK BY PETER STONE
BASED ON A CONCEPT BY SHERMAN EDWARDS**

MUSIC NUMBERS

ACT 1

For God's Sake, John, Sit Down.....Adams & The Congress
Piddle, Twiddle.....Adams
'Til ThenAdams & Abigail
The Lees of Old Virginia.....Lee, Franklin & Adams
But, Mr. Adams--.....Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, Sherman
& Livingston
Yours, Yours, Yours.....Adams & Abigail
He Plays The Violin.....Martha, Franklin & Adams
Cool, Cool Considerate Men.....Dickinson & The Conservatives
Momma Look Sharp.....Courier

***There will be a 15-minute intermission
between the acts.***

ACT 2

The Egg.....Franklin, Adams, Jefferson, & Congress
Molasses to Rum.....Rutledge
Compliments.....Abigail
Is Anybody There?.....Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, Thompson
.

1776 is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI.

Tom Fricke (Benjamin Franklin) is excited to be part of this 1776 production, since he watches the movie nearly every 4th of July. He's been involved with DLO since 2001, with almost every position: actor, director, producer, stage manager, lights, board member and supporter. Favorite productions include *The King and I*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *The Music Man*, *Gypsy*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *Beauty and the Beast*. Between this show, Danville Barbershop Chorus, Danville Dans and music at Immanuel Lutheran, it's a good thing he retired from his day job earlier this year.

John Tilford (Charles Thomson) John is a retired English and Drama teacher. He has been involved in almost all of the theatre companies in the area. Favorite roles include: Sancho (*Man of La Mancha*), Martini (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*), Brian (*The Shadow Box*), and Pseudolus (*Forum*). John's last stint with DLO was Tateh in *Ragtime*. John is currently president of Twin City Theatre Company. Love to his family - especially his grandkids Sterling and June.

Amanda France (Abigail Adams) has been an active member of the Vermilion County theater community since 1994, when she first discovered her love for the stage. Over the years, she has appeared in numerous productions, including *Chicago* and *Nunsense*, and is especially honored to portray Abigail Adams in 1776, a dream role she has hoped to perform since childhood. Amanda's greatest passion is youth theater, where she works as a director and mentor, encouraging young performers to discover their talents, build confidence, and pursue their dreams both on and off the stage. She also serves as Assistant Director of the North Ridge Redcoats Show Choir. Beyond the theater, Amanda is a proud mother of three talented children whose activities keep her cheering from the sidelines, applauding from the audience, and supporting them every step of the way.

Katie Walder (Martha Jefferson) is honored to be a part of this historical production! Past DLO credits include Narrator in *Joseph*, Rapunzel in *Into the Woods* and Cosette in *Les Miserables*. She was also a soloist in the recent 70th Anniversary Celebration! Katie spends her days running her online vintage shop, Miss Dorothy Vintage. Find her on Instagram (@missdorothyvintage) & missdorothyvintage.com.

Tony Kortas (Roger Sherman) is excited to be making his DLO debut in his 4th production of 1776, having previously played Lewis Morris, Reverend Witherspoon, and John Dickinson. Danville audiences may remember Tony as Judge Randolph in *A Few Good Men* and Vanya in *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* both with Red Mask Players. During the day, Tony is an English/Speech and Drama teacher at DHS and spends many Saturdays from November through March coaching the school's Speech Team. Tony dedicates his performance to his "lovely bride," Alex.

James Cowley (Lewis Morris) is a veteran of 1787, *We The People*, and 1787 *The Musical* from 2011 and 2017. He's also performed in CDW productions, Monticello Theatre plays, and *The Music Man* in 2023. He thanks Jodi, Lucinda, Heather, Suzzen, and all the staff and volunteers for bringing 1776 to the stage. Special thanks to my wonderful wife Susan for her love and forbearance. And great gratitude to our Founding Fathers for starting the remarkable United States of America.

Jason Mierek (Robert Livingston) is excited to join the cast of 1776 as Robert R. Livingston. A lifelong enthusiast of history, ideas, books, and spirited debate, Jason feels right at home among the argumentative Continental Congress. While this is his first major musical theatre production, it also marks his return to the stage more than 35 years after performing in high school theater. Outside the theater, Jason enjoys making and listening to music, reading, writing, gardening, and participating in Masonic Organizations. Jason thanks the cast, crew, and production team for their warmth and support, and sends special love to his wife Erica, who encouraged him to audition in the first place. He hopes audiences enjoy spending an evening with America's founders—brilliant, flawed, stubborn, funny, and surprisingly recognizable.

David Heckman (Rev. Jonathan Witherspoon) David comes from Champaign to perform in his second show with DLO. He was previously seen here as Bill in *Mamma Mia*. He has also performed with Red Mask Players as Louie in *Lost in Yonkers*, Bill in *August: Osage County* and Jonathan in *Arsenic and Old Lace*. David works part time as a radio announcer on Lite Rock 97.5 and Pure Classic Rock 105.5 in Champaign. He also works for the U of I.

Robert Gill (Dr. Lyman Hall) is excited to be part of the presentation of 1776 for his first show with DLO! Robert appreciates the opportunity to step on the stage with such an extremely talented and gifted group of people! During the day Robert is the Executive Secretary of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite Valley of Danville, located right here in the Masonic Center. He would like to give special thanks to his wife Marcia, son Michael, his wife Leslie, and son Ryan for all the love and support, that they have provided in his numerous endeavors. To his grandkids, Conner, Brooklin and Nicholas, remember never to let the fear of failure stand in the path of your dreams!

Jackson Lewis (A Courier) is excited to be a part of 1776. He has been involved in many DLO productions and was last seen in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Jackson has also performed in productions with Red Mask, Kottgrimm, Urbana Park District, and Westville High School. This is his first show sharing the stage with his dad, Josh Lewis. He hopes you enjoy the show!

Gideon V. Wright (William Pickett) Gideon is happy to come to his sister's rescue in her hour of need for his 20th theatrical performance. She now owes him 1,776 mozzarella sticks. Past stage credits include Crutchie (*Newsies*, UPD), Cogsworth (*Beauty and the Beast*, UPD), Fagan (*Oliver!*, UPD), and Vlad Popov.

Josh Lewis (Joseph Hewes) is making his debut with DLO. This is his first musical and his first theatrical performance in over 20 years. He can usually be found officiating a multitude of sports but is excited to share the stage with his son Jackson. Thanks to his wife, Jennifer, for voluntelling him to do this show.

Eric France (Samuel Chase) Eric has been involved with DLO for over 25 years. He has also been a part of a handful of events with the Masonic Temple. 1776 marks Eric's return to the stage from the Tech side of the curtains. He is thrilled to get back to trodding the boards.

Drew Mertens (Thomas Jefferson) is a delivery driver for FedEx and is not too shabby at darts. You may have seen him recently in RENT the musical or another show in the area. He has no life apparently so he just does a bunch of shows back to back in a tireless effort to quiet the ever beckoning siren song of despair. He enjoys going on walks and watching animal voiceover videos on YouTube.

Ron McDaniel (Caesar Rodney) has appeared in 57 community theatre shows, 47 of which have been for DLO. Of the six shows he has directed, three were for DLO. Ron joined the group in 1961 at age 20, is a past president, was an elected board member for 57 years, and is still an active participant at age 85. No stranger to playing historical characters, Ron has portrayed Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. A former member of the Theatre Advisory Panel of the Illinois Arts Council, he received the Artist of the Year Award from the former Danville Area Arts Council and the Robert E. Gard Award from the American Association of Community Theatre. Ron is most proud of finding the building at 141 N. Walnut St. that has been transformed into DLO Backstage. He treasures all the friends he has made throughout his years in community theatre and sadly misses the many who are gone.

David Barkley (John Dickinson) David has performed in great places, and in places from Alabama to Alaska, including a summer in Williamsburg, Virginia. At the Virginia Theatre in Champaign, he first appeared with the Champaign-Urbana Theatre Company in "1776" as Edward Rutledge, reprising the role eleven years later with Parkland College Theatre. Now, as his Danville debut, with friends old and new, he essays "the Penman of the Revolution", John Dickinson.

Robert McIntire (Colonel Thomas McKean) Robert last appeared for DLO as Cinderella's Father in last year's "Into The Woods" and has previously appeared in "A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum," "The Butler Did It (Singing)," "Fiddler On The Roof" and numerous other productions for DLO and other community theater groups. Bob is a retired attorney and judge living in Danville.

Paul Strain (James Wilson) has been active in the performing arts for over 40 years in just about every capacity and is the current President of DLO Musical Theatre. He is thrilled to be a part of this show and have the chance to bring a little history to life. To work alongside this group of amazingly talented men has been an intimidating experience and a great pleasure. He'd like to thank Jodi for voluntelling him to be in the show! Thanks to Jerry for filling in and, as always, thanks to his lovely bride Lisa for being his constant collaborator and supporter.

Reno Torres (George Reed) As a daytime accountant, Reno is navigating financial spreadsheets and financial reports with a stage charisma by night. Reno delivered memorable roles in acclaimed productions including *Les Miserables*, *Guys and Dolls*, *La Cage aux Folles*, and *Mary Poppins*. Currently taking on the historical role in 1776 as George Read, Reno finds the perfect harmony between the structured world of finance and the creative freedom of the theater. Reno credits his success to the unwavering support of his family, whose encouragement makes this demanding double-life possible. He thanks the DLO Board and the 1776 Production Team for the confidence.

Delaney L. Wright (A Mother, Rendezvous)

Delaney is so excited to return to the Danville stage! With over ten years of theatre experience, Delaney has found a home in DLO, working with so many of the people she loves dearly. She has a BFA in Scenic Technology from UIUC and is currently working as a Stagehand and Event Host at Parkland College Theatre. Much love to her brother Gideon for stepping in to play her dead son. Past stage credits include *Wife Ensemble (Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, DLO)*, *Patty (A Charlie Brown Christmas, DLO)*, *Lucinda (Into the Woods, DLO)*, *Celisse (Godspell, DLO)*, *Tina (Goosebumps, SPA)*.

Matt Hummel (Edward Rutledge) is...not from 'round here! He's no stranger to the stage though. Matt lives in Evansville, IN with his wife Caitlyn, Jodi's daughter, and their own two stage veterans, Maddie and Cora. When Jodi proposed to have Matt play an antagonistic delegate and tell John to "Sit down!", how could he say no?! Matt has played the "bad guy" in numerous shows, most recently as Richard III with the Evansville Shakespeare Players. He has also "bared" his all in a community production of "The Full Monty." He thanks DLO for the long-distance invitation to earn BIG points with the mother-in-law! Now, enjoy the show and "Vote yes!"

Aaron Polk (Richard Henry Lee) is making his debut at DLO, but he is no stranger to the Central Illinois theatre scene. He has been active in the area as an actor, a producer, a director, and a playwright for more than thirty years. He was a regular for many years at the Station Theatre in Urbana, where he appeared as Woyzek in *Woyzek*, Woody Guthrie in *Woody Guthrie's American Song*, and the title role in *Ug: The Caveman Musical*. He would like to thank his wife, Rebecca. Beyond breath, beyond reason . . .



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Roger Mertens (Andrew McNair) is proud to be making his DLO debut after 30+ years of community theater. He has a dog.

Emma France (A Leather Apron) Emma welcomes you to 1776! Emma plays The Leather Apron, and you'll see her scampering on and off stage getting things for congress members and a few extra things. Both her mom, Amanda France, and dad, Eric France, are sharing the stage with her and she is very grateful for our amazing director Jodi for giving her this opportunity. She hopes you enjoy the show!

Lucinda Lawrence (Music Director) Supporting Lucinda's passion for the goodness of community theatre, DLO is a favored vehicle for her participation behind the scenes, on and off stage, and in the audience. Composer/lyricist/playwright for musical theatre (including 1787 We the People), she adores, admires, and appreciates the people of DLO and the power of choices they make throughout the process of making theatre together.

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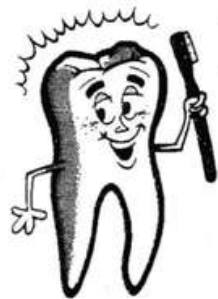
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Music Director: Lucinda Lawrence

Pit Director: Rebecca Overton-Polk

Stage Manager: Heather Miyagi

Set: Drew Mertens, Geoff Brewster, Tom Fricke, Eric France, Emma France, Heather Miyagi, Lee Bridgman

Costumes/Wigs: Jodi Prosser-Muller, Jerry Strain, Alex Kortas

Producer: Suzzen Rose

Sound Tech: Cassidy Helferich

Sound Setup/Engineering: Paul Strain, Eric France

Lighting Tech: Ron Gustafson

Lighting Design: Tom Fricke, Eric France

Projections/Special Effects: Ashley Pascual

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\$7 (for 7 decades)

Or, donate whatever amount supports your
love for the arts!

DID YOU KNOW?

- Both Thomas Jefferson and John Adams died on the 50th anniversary of the drafting of the Declaration of Independence.
- During his tenure as the third President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson kept a pair of grizzly bears in a cage on the White House lawn.
- The term “gerrymandering” is a combination of the word “salamander” and the name of Elbridge Gerry, one of the signers of the Declaration. .
- Martha Jefferson was particularly proficient at brewing beer.
- Caesar Rodney rode 80 miles on horseback through a severe thunderstorm on the night of July 1, 1776, allowing him to reach Philadelphia, break a deadlocked vote in his delegation, and cast Delaware’s decisive vote in favor of the Declaration of Independence.
- It took six months for all the signatures to be compiled on the Declaration of Independence. Thomas McKean of Delaware was the last person to sign, possibly as late as 1777 (the actual date is disputed), though some copies of the declaration do not have McKean’s name on them.



AASR, Valley of Danville, 32nd Degree Masons

The Valley of Danville is a brotherhood of Master Masons seeking to improve ourselves, our communities and all of humankind. The bonds of brotherhood serve to strengthen each other and the greater world.

Through a series of degrees (4th-32nd), our lessons are presented in an allegorical manner that has as a goal to impart upon the brethren a moral lesson they can use in their everyday lives. 32° Scottish Rite Freemasonry is a fraternity of Brothers committed to going deeper into the highest principles, teachings, and ideals of the Masonic craft. It is open to all Master Masons looking to continue the journey of self-discovery and finding a deeper sense of purpose.

As Freemasons, we believe in something greater than ourselves, and strive to be good men who want to be better. Become the best version of you. Our core values are Reverence for God, Justice, Integrity, Tolerance, Devotion to County and Service to Humanity. If you are interested in becoming a member or renting our beautiful historic building, please visit our website, aasrdanville.org or call the Valley Office at 217-446-7620.



George and Martha Washington - C. James Hegg and Barbara Hegg - Jim is the Commander in Chief of the Valley of Danville Scottish Rite, a member of the Fountain county Art Council and an Active Participant in the City of Covington. He welcomes you to this repeat performance of the Broadway show in our building together with DLO Musical Theatre, a continued relationship that started fifty years ago. Please enjoy the performance and our building.



Director Emeritus - James D. Beebe - Jim taught for thirty years in local schools and is an active member of the Valley of Danville Scottish Rite. He is active in community theater, a past member in the municipal band and is involved in area arts. He was the director of the 1976 performance and is happy to be part of the recreation of this performance.