

The Aerospace Players

Present



Music and Lyrics by Sherman Edwards

Book by Peter Stone

Based on a concept by SHERMAN EDWARDS

James Armstrong Theatre

Torrance, California

January 27, 28, 29,

and February 2, 3, 4, 2023

1776

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

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The Aerospace Players on the web: www.aeaclubs.org/theater

Like us on Facebook:



@TheAerospacePlayers

Concessions

Snacks and beverages are
available in the lobby at intermission.

50/50 Drawing

The winner receives 50% of the money collected at each
performance. The winning number will be posted in the
lobby at the end of each performance.

Actor/Orchestra-Grams: \$1 each

“Wish them Luck for only a Buck”

Flowers: \$2 single & \$5 for three

**All proceeds support The Aerospace Players’
production costs – Enjoy the Show!**

The Aerospace Players

present

1776

America’s Prize-Winning Musical

Music and Lyrics by
SHERMAN EDWARDS

Book by **PETER STONE**

Based on a concept by SHERMAN EDWARDS

Original Production Directed by PETER HUNT

Originally Produced on the Broadway Stage by
STUART OSTROW

James Armstrong Theatre
Torrance, California
January 27-February 4, 2023

Congratulations to
The Aerospace Players,
cast, crew, and orchestra
on
1776

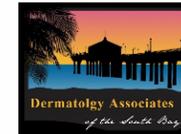


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Director's Note

Welcome to The Aerospace Players production of 1776! We are thrilled to have you in the audience and eager for you to see our show.

About the show: 1776 is a classic American musical, debuting on Broadway in 1969, winning three Tony awards, including Best Musical. The original production was followed by a popular movie, two successful Broadway revivals and many regional productions. It tells the story of the creation and signing of the Declaration of Independence, notable for its portrayal of the people involved as human beings, and not as idealized historical figures. Its drama, humor and memorable music make it a compelling story, one with surprising relevance even 250 years later.

One unique aspect of this show is the wealth of historical information available on the people and the events of the time. This not only enables deep portrayals of the complexities of those people, but also of those events, by creating sets, props, costumes that help recall them. We have done our best to put versions of these before you that do justice to them, to the show, and to the history.

(Aside: elsewhere in this program you'll find an essay with details on the historical ties of some of our sets, props and costumes. We hope you enjoy reading about them!)

As ever, we are grateful to the Torrance Performing Arts Consortium, the Armstrong Theatre and its staff for their help and support in staging this show. We are now in our 30th year of performing in the Armstrong — the theater is our home and part of the lifeblood of our group. We are also grateful to the Aerospace Employees Association for their aid and support.

Lastly, I'd like to thank the cast, crew and orchestra — and their families — for their dedication, good humor and hard work. This show is the result of a massive effort on their part; it's been a joy to work with them!

So, now, please sit back, relax and enjoy the show!

Chuck Gustafson

Please save the date for our summer production

Spamalot

July 21-29, 2023

Check our website for more announcements

www.aeclubs.org/theater

Special thanks to
**Aerospace
Business Imaging Center
and
Graphics and Design Dept.**

for printing
this program

A glossary of terms for 1776
can be found at

[tfmcq.altervista.org/theater/1776/
1776_gloss.html](http://tfmcq.altervista.org/theater/1776/1776_gloss.html)



Production Crew

Director Chuck Gustafson
 Assistant Directors John Woodcock, Andrew Dawdy
 Producer Chuck Gustafson
 Assistant Producers Ariel Swift, Monica Gustafson
 Musical Director Rick Heckman
 Assistant Musical Director Debbie Minnichelli
 Choreographer Jeannine Barba
 Head Costumer Kim Wilkinson
 Properties Andrew Dawdy, Kelly Dawdy
 Programs Jason Stout, Tony McQuilkin
 Publicity Lead Monica Gustafson
 Online Media Chuck Gustafson, Jason Stout
 Art & Graphic Design Robin Wohlman
 Dance Captain Larry Moreno
 Printed Props Julia Kopischke
 Technical Directors Tammy Choy, Andrew Dawdy, John Woodcock
 Hair & Make-Up Susane Button, Jessica Hair
 Rehearsal Pianists Rick Heckman, Debbie Minnichelli
 Photography John Nolan
 Videographer Jim Monte
 Tickets Susan Tabak
 House Coordinator Monica Gustafson
 House Staff Diana Francisco, Courtney Hughes, Mary Kay
 Carol LeDoux, Itsuko Miyoshi, Susan Norris, Graciela Saffon
 Ariel Swift, Victoria Swift, Alanna Wheaton, Marilee Wheaton
 Lighting Design Steve Norris, Brianna Catlin
 Projections Jeff Caldwell
 Stage Manager Jack Myles
 Lighting Technician Brianna Catlin
 Sound Technician Tim Edmondson, Nova Novobiliski
 Rail Operator Ryan Manikowski
 Follow Spot Operator Two Laurio
 Armstrong Technical Director Devon Ausman
 Back-Stage Crew Lead Michael Heidner
 Back-Stage Crew Bailey Furumoto, Greg Furumoto, Chuck Gustafson
 Robin Wohlman, Mika Yamada
 AEA Liaison Rochelle Herod
 TAP President Robert Minnichelli
 TAP Vice President Anastasia Muszynski
 TAP Secretary Susan Tabak
 TAP Treasurer Ariel Swift

Orchestra

Conductor Rick Heckman
 Orchestra Management Debbie Minnichelli
 Violin Karen Lawrence, Joe Derthick
 Jeanne McGraw, Colleen Okida, Ellen Woodyard
 Viola Allyson Bates, Eve Ahlers
 Cello Morgan Pugh, Akiko Tanaka
 Bass Steve Fry
 Reeds Andy Meyer, Dave Champagne
 Richard Babcock, Bill Malcom
 Trumpet Daniel Plaster, Dave Ploen
 Horn Roger Eastman, Ruth Ann Ploen
 Trombone Ray Vizcarra, Adam Liebreich-Johnsen, Travis Patrick
 Keyboards Diana Brownson, Jason Stout
 Percussion Debbie Minnichelli, Sandra Nitchman

Set Construction & Painting

Set Design and Construction Lead Steve Norris
 Set Construction Foreman Kelley Dawdy

Jeannine Barba	Michael Heidner
Nancy Brennan	Jacob Helfgott
Sue Brennan	Charles Kepler
Tammy Choy	Diane Kennedy
Evan Cooper	Eugene Krc
Andrew Dawdy	Bob Manning
Kelley Dawdy	Larry Moreno
Chris Francisco	Anastasia Muszynski
Diana Francisco	Roger Metzler
Isabella Francisco	Steve Norris
Bailey Furumoto	Susan Norris
Greg Furumoto	Ariel Swift
Joyce Goffeau	Kevin Wheaton
Michele Goffeau	Travis Wheaton
George Gov	Mark Williams
Kelley Gov	John Woodcock
Chuck Gustafson	Robin Wohlman

Kevin, You are without any doubt a thrice
 good father. Love, The Kids

Cast and Crew Biographies



Jeannine Barba (Choreographer)—This is Jeannine’s 13th TAP Production. She has played Adelaide (*G&D*), Ulla (*Producers*), Fraulein Kost (*Cabaret*) & choreographed *Fiddler*, *My Fair Lady*, *Joseph & 1776* (twice)! Jeannine has performed regionally for years. Favorite roles include Wicked Witch (*WOZ*), Miss Hannigan (*Annie*), Joanne (*Company*), Wardrobe (*Beauty*), Martha (*White Xmas*), Cruella DeVille (*Descendants*), Miss Andrew (*Mary Poppins*), Electra (*Gypsy*). Thanks to all of the “Cool Men” I got to work with (including my Craig).



Bobby Borich (Edward Rutledge)—Bobby returns to TAP after a year stint in Europe. Previous shows include *Joseph ATD* (Pharoah), *H2S* (Wally Womper), *Seussical* (Cat in the Hat), *Hairspray* (Wilbur Turnblad), *Forum* (Miles Gloriosus), *Bye, Bye Birdie* (Harry McAfee), *Big River* (The King), and in *1776* (Richard Henry Lee). Much love to his family, Itsuko, Delphi and Kai, for their incredible support! For Karen and Mike.



Susane Button (Hair & Makeup)—Susane graduated as a theater major from El Camino College after being a three-time winner on the Ted Mack Amateur Hour. She then toured as a dancer with *Disney on Parade* and then went on to perform in concerts, varsity shows and acted in a TV pilot and commercials. She now is a hair stylist. A few years ago, she started performing with Cup of Water, MBCC, the Notables, TAP, and the Norris and co-produced Act II there.



Erin Callaway (Abigail Adams)—Performance credits include, *TSoM*, *Mattress*, *Big River*, *The Misanthrope*, *Pajama Game*, *Fame*, *Babes in Arms*, and Erin has been a member of the SAG since 2006. In addition to performing, Erin is an accomplished public speaker and avid reader, and she loves Apologetics, working out, and playing disc golf. She is most proud of her 10-year hiatus from acting to become a mom of four incredible children. Special thanks to her gorgeous husband, Katon, and their four children, for being the greatest gifts ever.



Tammy Choy (Tech Director) - You’ll find Tammy in the sound booth working with the Armstrong team to ensure you hear every element of our production. She’s been Tech Director for numerous TAP shows having started when her friend and mentor, Chuck Gustafson, promised she would never have to act or sing if she took on this role. Tammy’s day job is Chief Information Officer at Aerospace. Shout out to her EIS and Security & EHS team whose dedication to our national security mission inspires her every day.



Evan Cooper (John Adams)—Evan is thrilled to return to the TAP stage to play the role of John Adams, having previously performed in TAP’s production of *Joseph* as Reuben. Evan also performs voice-over work in his role at Aerospace, alongside his various engineering duties. Evan lives in Redondo Beach with his fiancée Cathy, to whom he is grateful for all the support, and their menagerie of two dogs and two cats.



Nikolas Corzine (Courier)—Nikolas is excited to be making his TAP return with this production of *1776*. Past TAP credits include Joseph in *Joseph*, Jacey Squires in *Music Man*, and a Wickersham in *Seussical*. He has also performed in the Hermosa Beach based theatre company, Kaleidoscope, as Oberon/Theseus in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. When not on stage, Nikolas is teaching high school math at Simon Tech in Watts.



Michael DeBartolo (John Dickinson)—This is Mike’s 6th TAP show reprising *1776* role, plus *Bye Bye Birdie* (Ed Sullivan Show Mgr.), *Forum* (Hysterium), *Music Man* (Quartet), *Fiddler* (Lazar Wolf). Top film roles incl. *Conjuring 2* (Ron DeFeo Sr.), *GANGSTER LAND* (Hit Man). Lead TV roles incl. *Adventures with Baaco* (Mr. Dean), *Unusual Suspects: Little Girl Gone* (Bill Morrisey). Lead role in music video: *Matrimony* ft. Usher (Minister). More roles on IMDb.com incl. lead film role in *End of Loyalty* (Carmine) due this March.



Mark Eggert (Lewis Morris)—Mark returns to the James Armstrong stage with TAP in *1776*. Mark was recently seen as Tinsworthy in *9 to 5* at the Westchester Playhouse and as the Admiral in *Sound of Music* with TAP. Mark is an actor and vocalist in Long Beach.



Chris Francisco (Roger Sherman)—This is Chris’ first time not only with TAP, but in a theater production. His daughter, Isabella (playing Martha Jefferson), convinced him to try out by showing him the movie, *1776*. He truly enjoyed the film and couldn’t wait to try out. He is honored to share the experience with Isabella and feels completely honored to work with such amazing talent and newfound friends. Grateful to the man upstairs for looking out and hope everyone enjoys the show.



Isabella Francisco (Martha Jefferson)—Isabella is excited to perform with TAP again this winter, and even more excited to drag her dad (playing Roger Sherman) onto the stage with her for the first time! Some favorite recent roles of hers include Maria (*9 to 5*) and Liesl (*The Sound of Music*), with experience in several more shows. She is a barista at Starbucks and studies Psychology at El Camino College. Isabella spends most of her free time playing the ukulele, sewing, watching her favorite cartoons, and creating digital art. Visit @raekyomato on Instagram if you’d like to take a look!



Dave Fulton (Caesar Rodney)—Dave is a Michigan native who made it to Hermosa Beach after stops at the University of Notre Dame, various cities across the US and a stop in Brazil. Returning to TAP after a long sabbatical, he is thrilled to be back among old friends. Previous roles include Cliff in *Cabaret*, Harry in *Brigadoon* and Roger Sherman in *1776* (2005).



Chuck Gustafson (Director, Producer)—Chuck is pleased to be directing (and producing) *1776* and is enjoying the experience of working with such a dedicated cast and crew. Chuck has been involved with TAP since the very first show, *Grease*, way back in 1988. He's directed, produced, been on stage and been backstage. Favorites include directing *Camelot* and *Mary Poppins* and performing as Bud Frump in *How to Succeed*. He dedicates this show to the memory of his mother, thanks Monica for her love and support!



Monica Gustafson (Assistant Producer, Publicity, House)—Monica was a Bird Girl in TAP's 2018 *Seussical*. She finds her best work is behind the scenes, however, and her most prominent role is that of a loving and supportive wife to our humble Director. Hazzah!



Jay Harbison (Josiah Bartlett)—Proud to be performing in his second production with TAP, Jay has a background in choral music and show choirs, several national competitions, and the World Music Festival. He was a dancer in many shows/parades at Disneyland before joining the Navy/Navy Choir. Leading roles include *South Pacific* (Emile de Becque), *Grease* (Danny Godspell) (Jesus), *Hansel & Gretel* (Hansel). Principal roles include *Best Little Whorehouse*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *Sister Act*, *G&D*, *Macbeth*, and *Evita*.



Rick Heckman (Musical Director, Conductor)—Rick is delighted to be musically directing *1776* with TAP. He has musically directed and performed in over 230 different musical productions. Favorites include *Legally Blonde*, *Assassins*, *Chicago*, *A Chorus Line*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Spamalot*, and *Urinetown*. Rick owns Safe Skies Computer Services, which specializes in small business computer consulting. He lives in Westminster with his wife Monica with whom they just celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary.



Michael Heidner (Charles Thomson)—Michael's first show with TAP was *1776* almost 20 years ago and he has performed in almost every show since. Even though he has performed all around the South Bay, nothing quite compares the relationships he has formed with TAP performers, musicians and production crew. He is excited to be part of the backstage production crew for the first time. He would like to thank his family and friends. And lastly, thank you to Karen Hill, for being one of the most kind and genuine people he has ever known, as well as being a great makeup artist. Thank you for being you.



Jacob Helfgott (Col. Thomas McKean)—Jacob has been involved in TAP since *Brigadoon* in 2009. His more prominent roles include Tommy Djilas in *The Music Man* (2015), Levi in *Joseph* (2019), and Rolf in *The Sound of Music* last summer. He currently works as a tutor in Manhattan Beach. On his off-time, he enjoys reading and running.



Charles Keppler (Thomas Jefferson)—Charles is back again in his second performance with TAP. He first performed with the group as Rolf Gruber in *TSoM*, last summer. Prior to that, he has played as Chip in *Putnam County's Spelling Bee*, Tommy in *Carrie*, and various roles and ensemble parts in Monty Python's *Spamalot*, *Theory of Relativity*, and *Next to Normal*. Charles would specifically like to thank his D&D group for their patience with him while he was off at rehearsal so frequently. Thank you for coming, and he hopes you enjoy the show!



Eugene Krc (Joseph Hewes)—Eugene has participated in many of The Aerospace Players productions over the years while working for The Aerospace Corporation, including *Damn Yankees*, *Oklahoma*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *Hello Dolly*. His most recent role was in *Big River* with his wife Sabrina. *1776* is his return to the stage, after taking time off to raise a family.



Tony McQuilkin (Programs, Rev'd John Witherspoon)—Tony returns to TAP after an absence of five years, reprising his role as Rev'd John Witherspoon. Favorite roles from previous shows: The "Mad" Hatter (*Fiddler*), Railway Conductor (*The Music Man* and *Bye Bye Birdie*), Counselor Robinson (*Big River*), Harrison Howell (*Kiss Me Kate*), and Cord Elam (*Oklahoma!*). Tony sings with The Concert Singers in Westchester. A retired college math teacher, he enjoys both Scottish and English country dancing.



Bob Minnichelli (Benjamin Franklin)—This is Bob's 32nd TAP production in roles from Sound Board Operator to Director and many stage roles. Favorite roles include Tevye, Max Bialystock, George Banks, Nicely-Nicely, Harold Hill, Seymour, Ben Franklin, the Grinch, and directing *Cabaret* and *Sound of Music*. He plays a Systems Engineer in his day jobs as a Principal Engineer at Aerospace and teaching at USC. Bob appreciates, as always, the bell-banger in the pit for her percussive love and support!



Lawrence A. Moreno (Andrew McNair)— Lawrence from Torrance (LFT) is very happy to be returning to the stage for TAP after a 7 year hiatus. You may recognize LFT from *Annie Get Your Gun* as Sitting Bull, *Big River* as The Strange Woman (yes Woman). He also has choreographed for TAP *Joseph*, *Guy and Dolls*, *My Fair Lady*... "I hope you will see *LITTLE ME* at MBCC, opening 3/24/2023"! A roll he's been waiting years to perform (covid). He would like to thank Chuck and his amazing production staff for all their effort to make this show happen. He dedicates this show to his mother.



John Nolan (George Read, Photography)—This will be John's 18th production with TAP, returning to *1776*, his very first show ever in 2005. Past roles have included: General Genghis Kahn Schmitz (*Seussical*), Mayor Shinn (*The Music Man*), Marcus Lycus (*Forum*), and Pap Finn (*Big River*). John has worked for the Aerospace Corporation for 39 years. He is very thankful for his #1 fan (and fiancé) Peggy for all of her support and help in his theatrical endeavors



Steve Norris (Set & Lighting Design)—Steve has directed *H2\$, Forum* and *Producers* for TAP as well as *My Three Angels, Kismet, Dracula, The Rainmaker* and *Promises, Promises* at MBCC. He has written/directed his own plays including *An Evening with Edgar Allan Poe* and historical pieces for Women’s History Month for the Arts Council of Torrance, for which he is President. He has been awarded the Shakespeare Award, TPAC President’s Award, and Torrance Arts Commission "Excellence in Arts Award" for Literature.



John Ranaudo (Samuel Chase)—John started w/ TAP’s *BBB* as a policeman & again in *The Music Man*; Nachum the Beggar in *Fiddler*, sang and danced (yeah, right!) in the ensemble in *Mary Poppins*; Jawan, the Brigand, in MBCC’s *Kismet* and Baron Elberfeld in TAP’s *TSoM*. He performed in chorus through high school and did his part as a baby boomer playing in coffee shops/bars while in college. He thanks his production crews & cast members for their support & his loyal fans & family who attend his performances.



John Schroeder (Richard Henry Lee)—This is John’s second TAP production after first joining the company in 2018 as Bert in *Mary Poppins*. The following year, John was honored by the Valley Theatre Awards as Best Lead Actor in a Musical for his work as Blake in *A Carol Christmas* with The Group Rep in N Hollywood. Most recently playing Eddie in *The Legend of Georgia McBride* (just before the COVID shutdown), he has also appeared in productions at Theatre 40 in Beverly Hills and sings with choral ensembles Jouyssance and The Randy Van Horne Singers.



Ariel Swift (Assistant Producer)—Ariel has performed in nine shows with TAP and is currently the club Treasurer. Her favorite shows include *Mary Poppins* (Mrs. Corry), *Fiddler* (Tzeitel), *Annie Get Your Gun* (Sylvia Potter-Porter), *Forum* (Vibrata), and *BBB* (Alice). She works in the System Analysis and Simulation Subdivision at Aerospace. Ariel sends her love and gratitude to the production team, her friends and family, and especially her husband, Travis, whom she met through TAP.



Susan Tabak (Tickets)—In 1995, Susan performed in her first TAP play, *Sugar*, and since then has been involved with 22 plays—on stage, producing, or assistant producing. Thanks to the cast and crew for their hard work and long hours and to my husband John for all his support.



Mark Torres (Robert Livingston)—Mark finds allure in the stage and is thrilled to join this incredible production team. Mark studied classical voice at Cole Conservatory of Music. He conducts research on the self-esteem effects of musical theatre performance in undergraduates. Shows: *The Who’s Tommy* (Tommy), *The Wedding Singer* (Robbie), *Sister Act* (Curtis), *Xanadu* (Danny), *Spamalot* (Robin), *Spelling Bee* (Panch), *Sweeney Todd* (Anthony), *Evita* (Magaldi u/s), *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* (Senator Wingwoah), *Toxic Avenger* (Professor Ken), *Jekyll & Hyde* (Simon Stride) as well as others.



Kevin Wheaton (Stephen Hopkins)—Kevin has been engaged in TAP shows since 2000 when he was back stage in *Oliver* with his twins, Alanna and Travis. Favorite roles include Jeff Douglas in *Brigadoon*, Issachar in *Joseph*, the Wizard in *Mattress*, one of Doolittle’s cronies in *My Fair Lady*, Senex in *Forum*, Buffalo Bill in *AGYG*, Assistant Director and Charlie the Anvil Salesman in *The Music Man*, and Director of TAP’s *Fiddler* in 2016. Kevin was a Project Engineer in Project West Wing at Aerospace, but is now retired.



Travis Wheaton (Lyman Hall)—This is Travis’ 16th show with TAP. His favorite shows include *BBB* (Arthur), *The Producers* (Old Lady), and *Fiddler* (Fyedka). Having received his Master’s in Education at California State University Dominguez Hills, Travis teaches mathematics at Granada Hills Charter High School. Travis is happy to be involved in another TAP production with his beautiful wife, Ariel.



John K Wilson (James Wilson)—This is John’s first show with TAP. His favorite role was Harold Hill in *The Music Man*. Other credits include Curly in *Oklahoma*, Billy Flynn in *Chicago*, Cliff Bradshaw in *Cabaret*, Conrad Birdie in *Bye, Bye Birdie*, Sheriff Ed Earl Dodd and Melvin P Thorpe in *Best Little Whorehouse, Wilbur* in *Hairspray*, Harold in *The Full Monty*, Sennex in *Forum*, Kenickie in *Grease* and dozens of others as well as in the films, *I See You.Com*, *Lost Signal* and *Showgirls*. Fun Fact: He is the direct descendant of James Wilson who he is portraying. This is a bucket list role for John.



Robin Wohlman (Painter, TAP Artist)—Robin’s favorite past TAP roles include Princess #12 (*Once Upon a Mattress*), Kate (*Brigadoon*), and the Reporter (*Bye Bye Birdie*). Offstage, Robin has designed the logo for 28 TAP productions, illustrated 2 children’s books (*Tex Rex: Octopus Rex Rides the Range* and *Octopus Rex Saves Christmas*) by Barbara Hart, and designed the first logo for the musical *The Rose Bowl Queens*. She was the Painter in TAP’s first production of *1776*.



John Woodcock (Assistant Director, John Hancock)—This is John’s 34th production with TAP and he is proud to reprise his role as John Hancock. Other favorite roles include the Fiddler in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Spats in *Sugar*, Erronius in *Forum* and Sir Dinadan in *Camelot*. John is a retired Air Force Lt. Colonel. Much love and many thanks to my beautiful wife Susan – “I couldn’t have done this without you!”

Abbreviations used:

Aerospace	The Aerospace Corporation
AGYG	<i>Annie Get Your Gun</i>
BBB	<i>Bye, Bye Birdie</i>
Fiddler	<i>Fiddler on the Roof</i>
Forum	<i>A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum</i>
H2\$	<i>How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying</i>
Joseph	<i>Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat</i>
Mattress	<i>Once Upon a Mattress</i>
MBCC	Manhattan Beach Community Church
TAP	The Aerospace Players
TSoM	The Sound of Music

In Memoriam: Karen Hill and Mike Riccio

The TAP family suffered two great losses with the passing of Karen Hill and Mike Riccio last fall. Both had been long time members of the TAP family contributing to many of our shows, always in a selfless and dedicated manner ...



Karen first started working hair and makeup for TAP shows in 2004, for the club's first production of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat." Over the years since, she worked a total of 20 shows, often leading the hair and makeup process, and sometimes handling it by herself. Throughout, she was a joy to work with, always friendly and eager to have a chat, while always well-organized and focused on the task at hand (which could be pretty enormous with a cast of 50 or more people!). Her smile was infectious. Even last year when her health was poor and we were wrestling with a global pandemic, she found a way to be a part of Sound of Music. We miss her greatly.

Mike's first show with TAP was "Hello Dolly," in 1997 where he played the part of a Cop, and worked on the design and construction of the set. The following year, he dove headfirst into TAP: he designed (and largely built by himself) the set for "Little Shop of Horrors," while also performing as the Puppeteer of the Plant. And that summer, he designed the set for "Damn Yankees," while also appearing on-stage as one of the ballplayers. This became a pattern of his, taking on multiple roles, doing whatever was needed, and always throwing himself into it all with passion and enthusiasm. In sum, he worked on more than 20 shows for TAP – and hosted quite a few cast parties along the way! He, too will be missed greatly, but remembered for his great passion, friendship and generosity.



On the Historical Ties of TAP's Production of 1776

In this production, we have gone to great lengths to tie our designs for sets, props, costumes to our historical knowledge of the times, creating replicas or facsimiles of these liberally throughout the production. We have also taken advantage of paintings and documents from that era; you will see projections of a number of these throughout the show. Finally, the sound effects are also a match to the time period. We thought it might be of interest to share some of the details of our efforts within this essay,

Projections

The show depicts the signing of the Declaration of Independence, its debates, struggles, and creation. Its completion was a seminal moment in the Revolutionary War. Its intention was to inspire the colonists and the Continental Army, and to distill the spirit of independence across the colonies. In 1776, a number of dispatches from George Washington are read to the 2nd Continental Congress. These messages reveal the difficulties and despair he faced due to supply shortages and the usage of an inexperienced and undisciplined citizen army. We thought it a nice addition to project several paintings of Washington during the readings. The paintings we chose were created by iconic American painters such as Stuart, Peale, Trumbull and Chappel. We are also projecting a painting of the Battle of Long Island, the first and only head-to-head battle with British General Howe, and the first of George Washington's many losses. Washington's evacuation of Long Island, however, was brilliant, saving the Continental Army from obliteration. The ultimate signing of the Declaration of Independence was a boost to morale and a great recruiting tool which allowed him to absorb his future battle losses and continue to the final victory of independence. We have created a visualization of this process, from an image of the original Declaration, to enhance the show's recreation of the actual signing process.

Props

"Politics, as well as Religion, has its superstitions. These, gaining strength with time, may, one day, give imaginary value to this relic, for its great association with the birth of the Great Charter of our Independence."

– Thomas Jefferson

This inscription, penned by Thomas Jefferson, can be found on the portable writing desk he used in drafting the Declaration of Independence. In 1825, he gifted it as a wedding present to his granddaughter and her husband. In the accompanying letter, he wrote that this "imaginary value" may one day "see it carried in the procession of our nation's birthday, as the relics of the Saints are in those of the Church."

The thank-you letter from his grandson-in-law, Joseph Coolidge, recognizes the significance of this object.

"When I think of this desk, 'in connection with the great charter of our independence,' I feel a sentiment almost of awe, and approach it with respect; but when I remember that it has served you fifty years—, been the faithful depository of your cherished thoughts; that upon it have been

written your letters to illustrious and excellent men—your plans for the advancement of civil and religious liberty, and of Art and Science; that it has, in fact, been the companion, of your studies, and the instrument of diffusing their results;—that it has been the witness of a philosophy which calumny could not subdue, and of an enthusiasm which eighty winters have not chilled,—I would fain consider it as no longer inanimate, and mute, but as something to be interrogated and caressed."

In recognition of this sentiment, the 1776 production team has tried to bring the Jefferson writing desk and several other relics to our representation of Independence Hall and the Armstrong Theater.

On Mr. Hancock's desk, you may see a replica of his gavel, and the Syng inkstand. Mr. Hancock's original gavel resides in the New-York Historical Society Museum & Library. The inkstand, used by all the delegates in the signing of the Declaration, is named after the Philadelphia silversmith who crafted it in 1752, Philip Syng. You may also notice the rising sun atop Mr. Hancock's chair; the chair in which he sat during the creation of the Declaration carried a similar decoration.

Our replica of the Pennsylvania Gazette, carries a copy of the masthead from the period, stating it as "Containing the Freshest Advices Foreign and Domestic". The Gazette was published by Benjamin Franklin starting in 1726 and continued for ten years after his death in 1790. Franklin used the twice-weekly Gazette to promote his political views, write of his scientific experiments, and publish letters and essays, often under a pseudonym. The Gazette was also the first to report on the vote for independence. On July 3rd, this single sentence was included on page 2: "Yesterday the CONTINENTAL CONGRESS declared the UNITED COLONIES FREE and INDEPENDENT STATES." The full text of the Declaration was first published on July 6th, by the Pennsylvania Evening Post.

Other show props include recreations of period flyswatter and fans, and a replica of a Kentucky long rifle, first developed in the early 1700s, becoming standard in the 1750s, and common in the American militia of the 1770s.

In the lobby you will find the Grand Union flag, or Continental Colours, representing the Congress and the United Colonies. It was first hoisted by Lt. John Paul Jones aboard the colonial warship Alfred on 3 December 1775 and was raised by Gen Washington 1 January 1776 for the birth of the Continental Army. While the revolutionary war was fought under many flags, it wasn't until 14 June 1777 that the congress approved a resolution for the stars and stripes design we recognize today.

A poster of the Declaration of Independence can also be seen in the lobby. It is based on an engraving made by William J Stone in 1823. John Quincy Adams, as Secretary of State, recognized that the original Declaration was becoming faded and worn from years of public display. He commissioned Stone for the full-size copperplate engraving. Today, the Declaration is maintained under the most exacting archival conditions possible at the National Archives in Washington D.C.

Sets

In designing and building the set, we have studied images of the Independence Hall as maintained today, but have also read accounts of the hall written at the time. The colors and detailing of the walls, as well as the green desk coverings and ornaments (candlesticks, quills, and inkwells) are based on today's Independence Hall. There is historical evidence that these desk coverings, called "baizes," were used in Independence Hall to help with acoustic problems. The green color—common in courtrooms, offices, and libraries—was perceived as neutral, practical, and dignified. Like Independence Hall, we do not have a matching set of chairs. While it is known that a stock of Windsor chairs were ordered for the Hall years, the specific types and designs are not known (and there are many variants of Windsor chairs)

Costumes

The costumes for our production match the styles common at the time, including frock coats, waistcoats, breeches, long stockings and wigs. We have reflected the regional variations in colors, with New Englanders and Quakers favoring dark, solemn colors, often browns and blacks, with Southerners and some of the northern gentry favoring brighter colors. Wigs were

common in that era, having originated years earlier with King Louis the VIII (to cover his premature baldness), though not universal. Wigs were often white, powdered to suppress the bad odors and lice to which they were susceptible. We have tried to represent this in our production, with some delegates in white wigs, and some with "natural" hair (of course, we're using wigs for some of those, too!), worn in ponytails.

Sounds

The bell you hear ringing is a replica of the original Liberty Bell that was specially funded by the Liberty Bell Education Foundation in 1976 with the goal of bringing everyone the inspiring story of the founding of the United States and the principles of personal freedom upon which our founding was achieved. The bell is an exact replica of the original Liberty Bell and was cast in France and then mounted on a trailer and taken to thousands of schools throughout the US allowing over a million children in 36 states the opportunity to learn about this symbol of freedom. The bell now hangs at Highground Veterans Memorial Park in central Wisconsin.

And finally, if you listen carefully, you might hear some of the birds that were likely part of Congress' daily listening pleasure during their time in Philadelphia. Can you identify the calls of the Song Sparrow, Gray Catbird, Indigo Bunting, Carolina Wren, and Common Yellowthroat? Each is native to North America and live in or migrate through Pennsylvania.

Perhaps the best historical tie in our production is the presence of John Wilson in our cast. He is a direct descendant of Judge James Wilson, part of the Pennsylvania delegation, and is playing him in this show.



John, "You know the Drill - Break a leg!" - Love, the Ranaudo Family



Previous Shows by The Aerospace Players

2022: *The Sound of Music*

2019: *Joseph and the Amazing
Technicolor Dreamcoat*

2018: *Mary Poppins*

2017: *Seussical*

2016: *Fiddler on the Roof*

2016: *Annie Get Your Gun*

2015: *The Music Man*

2014: *A Funny Thing Happened on the
Way to the Forum*

2013: *The King and I*

2012: *Bye, Bye, Birdie*

2012: *Camelot*

2011: *Once Upon a Mattress*

2010: *The Producers*

2009: *Brigadoon*

2009: *Cabaret*

2008: *My Fair Lady*

2007: *South Pacific*

2006: *Big River*

2005: *Kiss Me Kate*

2005: *1776*

2004: *Joseph and the Amazing
Technicolor Dreamcoat*

2003: *Guys and Dolls*

2002: *Oklahoma!*

2001: *How to Succeed in Business
Without Really Trying*

2000: *Oliver!*

2000: *City of Angels*

1999: *The Music Man*

1998: *Damn Yankees*

1998: *Little Shop of Horrors*

1997: *Hello Dolly!*

1997: *Once Upon a Mattress*

1996: *Fiddler on the Roof*

1995: *Sugar*

1994: *Guys and Dolls*

1993: *Bye, Bye, Birdie*

1992: *Oklahoma!*

1991: *Finian's Rainbow*

1990: *Damn Yankees*

1990: *Playing Our Song*

1989: *The Pajama Game*

1988: *Grease*

Check out our online
program with
production photos of
1776!

