

PRESS RELEASE

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“1776” Opens April 30, 2004

ST. MARK’S PLAYERS

St. Mark’s Church
3rd and A Streets, SE
Washington, DC 20003

1776 is a unique musical about the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. It gives a very human portrait of Jefferson, Adams, Franklin as well as Richard Henry Lee, John Hancock and the other founding fathers. Performances from April 30 through May 15 are at historic St. Mark’s Church located just 3 blocks east from the U.S. Capitol Building. (Please see Page 2 for details about reserving tickets.)

The St. Mark’s Players production of “1776” opens this Friday, April 30th. It is Directed by Jeffrey R. Breslow with Musical Direction by J. N. Wickert III, Choreography by Paula Becker and Vocal Coaching by Tom Bailey. This is a remarkably talented and experienced team who have created a memorable rendition of this lively and engaging drama with songs which tug at all the human emotions.

This production is especially timely because it is set against the background of election campaigns that are already heating to a fevered pitch. In many ways the divisions among the electorate today are just as heated as they were among the colonists in 1776. The regional passions about differing visions of the future of this nation being born in 1776 fueled sizzling debates about the wording of the text of the Declaration of Independence. The passion with which those views were held is forcefully recreated in this production.

1776 is a wonderful show to which to bring children of 10 and older. It is a dramatic portrayal of the men and women who played pivotal roles in the fight to declare the 13 colonies independence from Great Britain. It is especially germane for students who are juniors in high school because the curriculum for that year includes study of this period of American history.

1776 includes scenes featuring humor, foot tapping music, love stories, dancing and even onstage scuffles among the representatives of the colonies as they struggle valiantly in the heat of July in Philadelphia to craft a Declaration of Independence. Ultimately they succeed in a scene in which the crucial, wrenching compromise is made by John Adams so that there will be a declaration to which they will all, finally, pledge their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor.

The cast for this 1776 is a sparkling mix veteran community theater performers and relatively newer performers all of whose talents are well chosen by the Director and the

creative team. The 26 person cast includes following performers: John Adams is played by Christopher Tully, Abigail Adams by Persis Sosiak, Benjamin Franklin is played by Donald Neal, Richard Henry Lee by Blakeman Brophy, John Dickison by Alex Zavistovich, John Hancock by Ian Adams, Edward Rutledge by Ross Wolfarth, Thomas Jefferson by Theo Rutherford, Martha Jefferson by Courtney Carter, Samuel Chase by Paul Neiswander, Robert Livingston by John Condray and the Courier by Nick Aliff.

This production is the concluding offering in the 22nd season of shows presented by the St. Mark's Players in the Nave of National Historic Landmark St. Mark's Church. The Co-Producers of this show are Ellen and Larry Cardwell. Ellen founded the Players and Larry served in leadership capacities in the past. Each of them has produced shows that have won recognition in the annual, prestigious Ruby Griffith Competitions among the many of the region's strongest community theater companies.

1776 Credits: Book by Peter Stone, Music and Lyrics by Sherman Edwards, Produced by special arrangement with Music Theater International.

Performances of "1776" are April 30, May 1, 7, 8, 14 and 15 at 8pm, May 2 & 15 at 3pm and on May 9, Mother's Day, at 7pm. Reserve your tickets now by calling the box office at 202-546-9670 or by going online at www.stmarksplayers.org

Ticket prices are: Adults \$15, Seniors and Full-time students over 12 years of age are \$12, children less than 12 years of age are \$10. Group rates are available for groups of ten (10) or more people buying tickets as a bloc.

Seating for this production is limited to about 160 seats per performance so reserve early for best seats.

St. Mark's Church is located at the corner of 3rd and A Streets, SE just one block north of Independence Avenue, SE and one block south of East Capitol Street. The nearest Metro Stop is Capitol South on the Orange Line.