WELCOME TO 1776!

When 1776 was first suggested to me, I only knew it as the show that beat out HAIR at the 1969 Tony Awards for Best Musical. But as soon as I read the script, I understood that this musical could speak powerfully and directly to our lives today. In dramatizing the events surrounding the writing of the Declaration of Independence, 1776 points to the contradictions built into our nation’s founding—the ideals of equality and liberty celebrated and heralded in a document that achieved unanimous endorsement only after the anti-slavery clause in Jefferson’s original draft was edited out.

The reason why I do theater is to ask big questions. One of A.R.T.’s core values is inquiry, and working on this production has catalyzed a journey of learning and growth. In our creative process, we asked: How can we hold history as a predicament versus an affirming myth? How does an honest reckoning with our past help us move forward together? I hope these questions will be alive for you as you experience our production. These questions also resonate deeply with Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery, the landmark report which the university recently released to the public.

This project has centered collaboration with Co-Director and Choreographer Jeffrey L. Page and Associate Director Brisa Areli Muñoz. With the support of the estates of Sherman Edwards and Peter Stone, this production features an extraordinary cast of performers who reflect multiple representations of race, ethnicity, and gender, and who identify as female, trans, and non-binary. We invite you, the audience, to hold multiple realities at the same time: both this historical narrative and the identities of this company of artists alive in 2022. In this process, we hope that you will see the events that took place in Independence Hall in new ways.

As the professional theater company at Harvard University, the A.R.T. has the unique opportunity to collaborate with scholars and students as part of our research and development. I urge you to explore this digital program, which highlights our interactions with Harvard faculty, including Annette Gordon-Reed, whose remarkable scholarship on the Hemings family of Monticello influenced this production. You can also learn how our show includes, for the first time, the text of a letter written by Abigail Adams in March 1776, in which she urged her husband, John, to “Remember the Ladies” in the creation of a new American government. The educational mission of this production has been at the core of our journey, and has extended to our programs Declaration Reclamation and We Declare Boston, which invites local students to connect their own lives to the long sweep of history, grapple with its inherent contradictions, and advocate for the society in which they wish to live. Lastly, I encourage you to visit the We the People mural just off of our lobby, created through a collaboration with Artists for Humanity.

We have been waiting for two years to bring this production to our stage. As we finally welcome you to 1776, I am overwhelmed with gratitude—to all the artists and A.R.T. staff who have persevered through this difficult time, and to you, our audience and our community, who have endured this long journey with us. Thank you for joining us.

Diane
From Jeffrey L. Page
Co-Director and Choreographer, 1776

We often think of words, and of history, as finite and immovable things. Working on 1776, however, I’ve been reminded that there is an innate flexibility in our understanding of the past: the words and symbols of our cultural memory take on very different meanings through the act of reframing. Think, for example, of the portraits of the so-called founding fathers. Often, these paintings feature only one face—or a collection of very similar faces. But when we shift the gaze, even just a little bit, the picture changes.

When we look beyond the traditional limits of our foundational myths, we find other faces, other voices, other perspectives on what this country means. In this production, I’m interested in asking “Who gets to tell the story? Who gets the privilege of embodying cultural memory?” When we ask these questions, the familiar can become strange—we can blur the lines between the occluded and the included. We can illuminate new dimensions of our national story. After all, just outside the frame, we know that the lives of these “great men” intersected with, depended upon, and severely limited the lives of many others. The systems of power that brought these men to national prominence had international implications that continue to this day.

As a director and a choreographer, I’m interested in a tonal and gestural repositioning of the past. History is communicated not only in text and oral tradition, but in the body itself. Often, the body necessitates a reframing of the written word. We know this instinctually, through the recent years’ dependence on Zoom and FaceTime—a message sent to a friend changes dramatically based on the tone of voice, the face, the body’s position. Written text or even spoken words can’t seem to manifest fully without human representation.

A musical can make us laugh while also prompting reflections that provoke change. I am interested in examining how gesture, choreography, and physical action can come together to reveal the ineffable. The body can be a source of alternative narratives and clandestine signifiers. I’m curious about the idea of doubles—how can the oppressed and the erased start to rhyme with the “propertied” and powerful? I know that choreography is larger than the catchy two-step in the background; I believe that the human body is a carrier of significant information.

I am writing this note just a few days after a man with a camera strapped to his head and an XM-15 semi-automatic assault rifle gripped in his arms went on a shooting rampage in Buffalo, New York, the barrel of his gun inscribed with anti-Black racist slurs. The shooter killed 10 Black people. New York Magazine called this atrocity “American Exceptionalism.” I can’t help but think about the fact that this musical opened in 1969, in the midst of the Civil Rights Era—and for me, the story of this musical highlights that “1776” means very different things to different people. I hope that all of us will keep our gaze trained on the bandaged place. “Don’t turn away,” as Rumi once said: “that is where the light enters.”

Thanks so much for taking this journey with us.

Jeffrey
American Repertory Theater and
Roundabout Theatre Company

Present

1776

Music and Lyrics by Sherman Edwards
Book by Peter Stone
Based on a concept by Sherman Edwards
Directed by Jeffrey L. Page, Diane Paulus
Choreography by Jeffrey L. Page
Music Supervisor David Chase
Orchestrations John Clancy
Vocal Design AnnMarie Milazzo
Music Director Ryan Cantwell
Scenic Design Scott Pask
Costume Design Emilio Sosa
Lighting Design Jen Schriever
Sound Design Jonathan Deans
Projection Design David Bengali
Hair and Wig Design Mia Neal
Casting Director Stephen Kopel, CSA
Supervising Producer Tamar Climan
Associate Director Brisa Areli Muñoz
Production Stage Manager Alfredo Macias
Production support of 1776 is provided by Katie and Paul Buttenwieser, The Linda Hammett Ory & Andrew Ory Charitable Trust, Allison Johnson, and Serena and Bill Lese.

Support for 1776 education and engagement programming is provided by the Ford Foundation.

Additional production support is provided by Jeannie and Jonathan Lavine, Janet and Irv Plotkin, Professor Mark V. Tushnet, and National Endowment for the Arts.

Additional education and engagement support is provided by Bank of America, Fresh Sound Foundation, Klarman Family Foundation, and Mass Humanities.

Media Support is provided by WBUR.

Production support of the run of 1776 at Roundabout Theatre Company is provided by Elizabeth Armstrong.

First performance at the Loeb Drama Center on May 17, 2022.

Original Production directed by Peter Hunt

Originally Produced on the Broadway Stage by Stuart Ostrow.

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

A.R.T. has been inspired by the scholarship of the following Harvard faculty members, who contributed to the creative process through a range of presentations and conversations: Danielle Allen, Vincent Brown, Annette Gordon-Reed, Jane Kamensky, Jill Lepore, Timothy Patrick McCarthy, David Moss, John Stauffer, and Mark V. Tushnet.

Runtime: Two hours and forty-five minutes, including one fifteen-minute intermission.

This production contains stylized representations of racialized violence, particularly related to enslavement. Additionally, this production contains sexually suggestive themes, occasional strong language, haze, a brief strobe effect, a non-firing replica firearm, and a gunshot sound effect.

Any video and/or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.
COMPANY
for full company bios, please see the digital program

Cast (in order of appearance)
John Adams: CRYSTAL LUCAS-PERRY
Robert Livingston: GISELA ADISA
George Read: NANCY ANDERSON
Col. Thomas McKean: BECCA AYERS
Andrew McNair: TIFFANI BARBOUR
Abigail Adams/Rev. Jonathan Witherspoon: ALLISON KAYE DANIEL
Stephen Hopkins: ALLISON BRINER DARDENNE
Thomas Jefferson: ELIZABETH A. DAVIS
Charles Thomson: MEHRY ESLAMINIA
John Dickinson: JOANNA GLUSHAK
Richard Henry Lee: SHAWNA HAMIC
Martha Jefferson/Dr. Lyman Hall: ERYN LECROY
John Hancock: LIZ MIKEL
Benjamin Franklin: PATRENA MURRAY
Joseph Hewes: ONEIKA PHILLIPS
Samuel Chase: LULU PICART
Edward Rutledge: SARA PORKALOB
James Wilson: SUSHMA SAHA
Roger Sherman: BROOKE SIMPSON
Courier: SALOME SMITH
Dr. Josiah Bartlett: SAV SOUZA
Caesar Rodney: JILL VALLERY
Standbys: ARIELLA SERUR, GRACE STOCKDALE, IMANI PEARL WILLIAMS,
ROSE VAN DYNE, SABRINA K. VICTOR

Dance Captain: JILL VALLYER
Fight Captain: GRACE STOCKDALE

BAND
Music Director/Conductor/Keyboards: RYAN CANTWELL
Drums/Percussion: MIKE DOBSON
Guitar: SCOTTY JOHNSON
Violin: MARISSA LICATA
Cello: THOMAS BARTH
Double Bass: KATE FOSS
Reeds: PAUL MARDY
Trumpet: ANDREW SORH
Trombone: SKYE DEARBORN
French Horn: HAZEL DEAN DAVIS
Band Contractor/Violin Sub: JASON FISHER

Synthesizer Programming by Billy Jay Stein and Hiro Iida for Strange Cranium Productions, Inc.
Associate Synthesizer Programmers—Fuso Murase and Naoya Iwaki
**Additional Staff**

Dramaturg: ROBERT DUFFLEY
Assistant Stage Managers: GENEVIEVE KERSH, JOHN MEREDITH
Assistant Choreographer: COURTNEY ROSS
Assistant Directors, SDCF Charles Abbott Fellow: MARINA MONTESANTI
Music Assistant: IAN CHAN
Dialect Coach (NYC): DAWN-ELIN FRASER
Dialect Coach (Cambridge): ERIKA BAILEY
Fight Director: THOMAS SCHALL
Make-Up Design: RACHEL PADULA
Associate Scenic Designer: STEPHEN CARMODY
Associate Costume Designers: SARAH DECKER, ANNIE LE
Associate Lighting Designer: AARON TACY
Assistant Lighting Designer: ANNA BREVETTI
Associate Sound Designer: DANIEL LUNDBERG
A1/Mixer: TIMOTHY JARELL
TSDCA Fellow: LUCY PECKHAM
Associate Hair and Wig Designer: ASHLEY WISE
Associate Projection Designer: BRITTANY BLAND
Projections Programmer: DANNY CARR
Electronic Music Design: STRANGE CRANIUM
Copyist: RUSS BARTMUS
Rehearsal Pianist: CYNTHIA MENG
Research Consultant: EMILY SNEFF
Additional Dramaturgy: ELIZABETH AMOS
Production Assistants: ELISE JOYNER, SAGE LUMSDEN, MAIA TIVONY
Costume Production Assistant: ANGIE LE
COVID-19 Safety Managers: ALI REGAN, CHARLOTTE PALMUCCI
Company Management Intern: MAX SEELIG

**Special Thanks**

Nicole Brown, Alyssa Mt. Pleasant
Nadia DiGiallonardo, Rich Mercurio
Melissa D’Anello, Archon Fung, Anthony Saich, Tova Wang, Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation; Catherine Allgor, Sara Martin, Massachusetts Historical Society; Museum of the American Revolution; Revolutionary Spaces; Royall House & Slave Quarters
Jane Kamensky’s HIST 1776 students at Harvard: Chinaza Asigebu, Desmond Goodwin, Liz Hoveland, Nithyani Karthiga, Ben Sorkin, Oliver Sughrue, Michael Wallace, Sarah Wexner, Harry Sage; A.R.T. Summer 2019 Artistic Interns: Ruva Chigwedere, Ece Hakim, Allie Jeffay, Genevieve Lefevre, Chloe Levine, Lindsay McAuliffe, and Eli Troen; The students of TDM 194; David Moberg, Emma Rogers
Buffer Trenouth Physical Therapy and Wellness

Additional Lighting Equipment provided by Christie Lites.
Additional Sound Equipment provided by Sound Associates, Inc.
Additional Projections Equipment provided by Sound Associates, Inc.
Rehearsed at the New 42nd Street Studios
Musical Numbers

ACT 1
Sit Down, John: John Adams, Company
Piddle, Twiddle, and Resolve: Adams, Company
Till Then: John and Abigail Adams
The Lees of Old Virginia: Lee, Franklin, Adams
But, Mr. Adams—: Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, Sherman, Livingston
Yours, Yours, Yours: John and Abigail Adams
He Plays the Violin: Martha Jefferson, Franklin, Adams

ACT 2
Cool, Cool Considerate Men: Dickinson, Hall, Hewes, Read, Rutledge, Wilson
Momma, Look Sharp: Courier, McNair, Company
The Egg: Franklin, Adams, Jefferson
Molasses to Rum: Rutledge, Company
Yours, Yours, Yours (Reprise): Abigail Adams
Is Anybody There?: Adams

For the first time in a professional production of 1776, the script includes—with the permission of the Stone and Edwards estates—an excerpt of Abigail Adams’ March 31, 1776 letter to John Adams:

I long to hear that you have declared an independancy—and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the Laidies we are determined to foment a Rebelion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.

For more of the correspondence between John and Abigail, please visit The Adams Papers Digital Edition, published by the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Inspired by the scholarship of Annette Gordon-Reed, this production features a depiction of Robert Hemings—the enslaved fourteen-year-old (and half-brother of Martha Jefferson) who accompanied Thomas Jefferson to the Second Continental Congress as a servant. From Gordon-Reed’s The Hemingses of Monticello (W.W. Norton & Company, 2008):

Throughout the early days at Monticello, Robert Hemings traveled extensively with Jefferson in Virginia, and in 1776 the fourteen-year-old lived with Jefferson in Philadelphia when he was a member of the Continental Congress and wrote the Declaration of Independence.

Robert Hemings is portrayed here by Imani Pearl Williams. For more information about the Hemings family, please see the Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia, published digitally by Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello.