



# GOING TO SEE *1776*



Photo of Jake Loewenthal, Derrick D. Truby Jr. and Jonathan Atkinson by Scott Suchman.

## Ford's Theatre: Sensory-Friendly Performance Pre-Visit Story

# 1776



Photo of the cast of 1776 by Scott Suchman.

**1776 is a musical about the founding of the United States and how the Continental Congress agreed to declare independence from England.**

**This musical tells a story with actors talking, dancing and singing on the stage.**

# Stage



Photo of 1776 set by Scott Suchman.

Most of the play takes place in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, PA. On stage, we see a meeting room with lots of tables and chairs. Images, videos and shapes are projected on the back wall.

I will see a modern-day museum exhibit, inside and outside the historic Independence Hall, a Massachusetts farm and a Philadelphia neighborhood street.

# Music



Photo by Gary Erskine.

There is a band sitting in front of the stage that plays music throughout the performance. The area is called an orchestra pit, and it is much lower than the stage.

The music can be both loud and soft at times. In some songs, there is loud, rhythmic drumming. The actors onstage will sing and dance along with the music.

# Based on a True Story



Photo of Tom Story, Jimmy Mavrikes, Joe Mallon, Evan Casey and Peter Boyer by Scott Suchman.

The play *1776* is about the Second Continental Congress that met in Philadelphia from 1775–1776. During that year, General George Washington was leading the Continental Army in a war against the British.

The Continental Congress was made up of delegates from the original 13 colonies. Together, they signed the Declaration of Independence and started the American Revolution.

# Bringing History to Life



Photo of the cast of 1776 by Scott Suchman.

In the beginning of the show, the characters are in modern clothes. As they interact with the objects on stage, they become the historical characters of the Continental Congress. The costumes and the set help the audience imagine we are transported back in time to colonial America.

# Debate



Photo of Buzz Mauro and Greg Twomey by Scott Suchman.

The characters in this play are trying to decide whether or not to declare independence from England and begin the Revolutionary War.

The characters argue about what to do. Sometimes they simply disagree and want to use their words to find a solution. Sometimes they are so angry with each other that they physically fight.

The actors are pretending and have practiced these moments many times. No one actually gets hurt.

# Hypocrisy



Photo of Joe Mallon by Scott Suchman.

The Declaration of Independence says that “all men are created equal.” But in the 1770s, slavery existed in the American colonies. One of the things the characters argue about the most is whether or not slavery should be allowed to continue after they declare independence.

The song “Molasses to Rum” is about how important slavery is to the economy in the southern and northern colonies. In the end, the delegates agree to allow slavery to continue, even though it conflicts with the idea that “all men are created equal.”

# Women of the Revolution



Photo of Justine "Icy" Moral by Scott Suchman.



Photo of Kanysha Williams by Scott Suchman.

There are two female characters in this play. Martha Jefferson is married to Thomas Jefferson. She travels to Philadelphia to visit her husband while he is working on the Declaration of Independence.

Abigail Adams is married to John Adams. They have many children together and she stays at home in Massachusetts. Instead of visiting, she and John write letters to each other. Abigail provides love and encouragement to her husband as he argues in Congress. She also leads her community to provide supplies to support the war effort.

## **GOING TO SEE 1776 – CREDITS**

All stage photos are from the 2026 Ford's Theatre production of *1776*

The pre-visit materials were developed by:

Ford's Theatre Access Committee

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