

Director's Vision

By Daniel Goldstein

HELLO, DOLLY!

Tell us about your vision and inspirations for *Hello, Dolly!*

Hello, Dolly! is one of a handful of perfect musicals in the American canon, and it's a genuine honor to re-create it for the Goodspeed Musicals audience. As the show begins, we meet each of the characters at real turning points in their lives. As Dolly says in *The Matchmaker* (the Thornton Wilder play upon which *Hello, Dolly!* is based), there is "a moment in everybody's life when he must decide whether he'll live among human beings or not—a fool among fools or a fool alone." I know that I've experienced those moments when my entire life seemed to hinge on a single day, when jumping off a precipice into an uncertain future is not only the most difficult thing to do, it's the only thing to do. These are wounded and defensive people who ultimately, through friendship, music and a sense of adventure, find love.

What makes Goodspeed the perfect fit for this production? What are the challenges to staging in this unique venue?

Hello, Dolly! is an enormous show. The original Broadway cast featured 44 cast members on stage at the St. James Theater, which features a 30 foot proscenium and 1600 seats. We have 21 actors and Goodspeed Opera House features a 26 foot proscenium and 398 seats. Needless to say, we are more intimate here in East Haddam. We refer to this as "Goodspeed-izing" the show. Set Designer Adrian Jones and I have created a unit set that simply and easily transforms from a street in New York City to Vandergelder's Feed Store to a hat shop to the Harmonia Gardens, all by changing small details like window dressing and furniture. But throughout this, we always remain in a train station—based on the sadly demolished Pennsylvania Station—a place of transition, a place of coming and going. Most importantly, it keeps our focus on the actors and the musical itself.

What the audience can expect to see?

I'd like to leave you with the words of Barnaby, also the last words of *The Matchmaker*. Dolly asks him to tell the audience what the moral of the play is, and he's pushed forward to the footlights and says:



Director Daniel Goldstein with the set model at the first Goodspeed *Hello, Dolly!* read-through

Oh, I think it's about...I think it's about adventure. The test of an adventure is that when you're in the middle of it, you say to yourself, "Oh, now I've gotten myself into an awful mess; I wish I were sitting quietly at home." And the sign that something's wrong with you is when you sit quietly at home wishing you were out having lots of adventure. What we would like for you is that you have just the right amount of sitting quietly at home, and just the right amount of—adventure! So that now we all want to thank you for coming tonight, and we hope that in your lives you have just the right amount of—adventure!

We have one of the strongest casts I've ever assembled, and I think you'll agree. And we all thank every one of you for coming on this adventure with us.