

PROGRAM NOTES CONTINUED

A Wonderful Life
The Musical

Arena Stage produced it professionally for the first time. In 2005, there was an Actors Fund benefit concert of *A Wonderful Life* at the Shubert Theatre in New York City. Most recently, Harnick made some changes to the script of *A Wonderful Life* in preparation for Goodspeed's production.

The basic moral at the heart of "The Greatest Gift", *It's a Wonderful Life*, and *A Wonderful Life* is that we are interconnected and important in ways we can never fully understand. These timeless works serve to remind us that it is impossible to calculate our impact on the lives of those around us. What's more, the film and stage version add narrative elements that further convey what many consider the truly valuable things in life such as sacrifice for the common good, community, friends, family and love. They achieve this while immersing the audience in the nostalgia of traditional Christmas holidays, old-fashioned romance, post-war

America and the idealized ethos of small town USA. It's no wonder countless families have made this timeless classic a holiday tradition.

Director and award winning playwright Michael Perlman will be making his Goodspeed debut with this production of *A Wonderful Life*. He sees Goodspeed as the perfect place to stage the show because the intimacy of the space allows the audience to know and appreciate the characters in an unusually heightened way. He also sees Goodspeed as a theatre that is part of a small, close, community that is evocative of a simpler time. Perlman intends to pay homage to the classic movie while making the show at once familiar and new on stage. We hope you enjoy this heartwarming family musical that celebrates the power of love and the goodness in all of us.



A scene from *It's A Wonderful Life*.