



Director Daniel Goldstein at the first read-through of *Anything Goes*. ©Diane Sobolewski

Income inequality is at an all-time high. It's an election year with a sharply divided population. Overseas, a hateful and terrifying enemy carrying out mass ethnic and cultural extermination is rising quickly in power and invading the minds of the American people.

You might think that I'm talking about 2016, but you would be mistaken. I'm talking about 1934, when *Anything Goes* burst on to the Broadway scene with Ethel Merman as Reno sounding her clarion voice through the brick walls of the Alvin Theater (now the Neil Simon) on 52nd Street all the way down to Times Square, where the news on the ticker was bleak, bleak, and more bleak.

But within the walls of the Alvin (where 44 years later the Goodspeed hit *Annie* would open), there was nothing but joy. The cold American winter quickly thawed under the spell of those Cole Porter tunes.

In 1986, when Weidman and Crouse put together a draft of their new book to *Anything Goes* for the landmark Lincoln Center revival, things weren't so different. But wisely, rather than updating the script, they let the social parallels shine through the original story. We intend to do the same.

But this production is going to do something else, too. I want to celebrate what only Goodspeed Musicals does. This is my 5th show at Goodspeed, which has become a home away from home. To celebrate this remarkable place, and the new era being ushered in by new Executive Director Michael Gennaro, we're doing something that has rarely been done on The Goodspeed stage. We're putting the orchestra on stage and extending the stage over the pit. The singing and dancing will take place in the middle of the theater in

a way you've never seen before, and you'll get to see the Goodspeed orchestra strut their stuff front and center. *Anything Goes* has one of the greatest scores in history and thrilling opportunities to showcase Kelli Barclay's miraculous choreography. We have put together a spectacular and diverse company, one of the best that Goodspeed has ever seen. The best part of seeing a show at Goodspeed is knowing that we're really all in the same room, and in this production, you'll feel that more strongly than ever.

**// Joy will flow like champagne on a cruise ship. Won't you join us for a glass? //**

Times are rough these days. The country is divided, the world is threatened, we all live with a bit of fear. *Anything Goes* is just the medicine we need. As Gregory Mosher said when he programmed the 1986 revival at Lincoln Center, "There is a lot to be said for the theater providing real joy." Now it's 2016, and inside The Goodspeed the joy will flow like champagne on a cruise ship. Won't you join us for a glass?