

# 1776

A MUSICAL PLAY

By Peter Stone and Sherman Edwards

Adapted by Paul Warshawer

Cast of Characters:

Members of the Continental Congress

President  
John Hancock

New Hampshire  
Josiah Bartlett

Massachusetts  
John Adams

Rhode Island  
Stephen Hopkins

Connecticut  
Roger Sherman

New York  
Lewis Morris  
Robert Livingston

New Jersey  
Rev. John Witherspoon

Pennsylvania  
Benjamin Franklin  
John Dickinson  
James Wilson

Delaware  
Caesar Rodney  
Thos. McKean  
George Read

Maryland  
Samuel Chase

Virginia  
Richard Henry Lee  
Thos. Jefferson

South Carolina  
Edward Rutledge

North Carolina  
Joseph Hewes

Georgia  
Dr. Lyman Hall

Secretary  
Charles Thomson

Custodian & Bellringer  
Andrew McNair

A Painter

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PLACE

A single setting representing the  
Chamber & Anteroom of the Continental  
Congress.

TIME

May, June & July 1776

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SCENE ONE

John Adams:

I have come to the conclusion that one useless man is called a disgrace, that two are called a law firm, and that three or more become a Congress. And by God, I have had THIS Congress! For ten years King George and his Parliament have gulled, culled, and diddled these Colonies with their illegal taxes, and when we dared stand up like men they stopped our trade, siezed our ships blockaded our ports, burned our towns AND spilled our blood. And still this Congress won't grant any of my proposals on Independence even so much as the courtesy of open debate! Good God, what in the hell are they waitinf for?

--(Lights up on Congress, sweltering in the heat of a premature summer's evening. The wall calendar reads "MAY '76")

Congress:

(Singing)

Sit down, John!  
Sit down, John!  
For God's sake, John  
Sit down!

Sit down, John!  
Sit down, John!  
For God's sake, John  
Sit down!

Voice:

Someone ought to open up a window!

Congress:

It's ninety degrees!  
Have mercy, John please!  
It's hot as hell in  
Philadel-phia!

Two voices:

Someone ought to open up a window!

John:

I say "Vote Yes!  
Vote Yes!"  
Vote for independency!

Congress A:

Someone ought to open up a window?

John:

I say "Vote Yes!"

Congress:

Sit down, John!

John:

Vote for independency!

Congress B: (Voices)

Someone ought to open up a window!

Congress B: (All)

No! No! No!

Too many flies!

Too many flies!

Congress A:

But its hot as hell in

Philadel-phia!

Congress A Voices:

Are you going to open up a window?

Congress A:

Can't we

compromise here?

John:

Vote Yes!

Congress B:

No, too many

Flies here.

John:

Vote yes!

Congress (full):

Oh, for God's sakes, John,

Sit down!

Hohn: (Speaking)

Good God!! Consider yourselves fortunate that you have John  
Adams to abuse, for no sane man would tolerate it!

Congress:

John, you're a bore!

We've heard this before!

Now for God's sake, John,

Sit down!

--(Scene shifts to the anteroom and lights up on Franklin & painter)

## SCENE TWO

John:

Franklin! Where in God's name where you when I needed you?

Franklin:

Right here, John, being preserved for posterity. Do you like it?

John: (Looks at painting)  
It stinks.  
--(Painter exits)

Franklin:  
As ever, the soul of tact.

John:  
The man's no Da Vinci.

Franklin:  
And the subject's no Mona Lisa.

John:  
Franklin, did you hear what I suffered in there?

Franklin:  
Heard? Of course I heard--along with the rest of Philadelphia.  
Lord, your voice is piercing, John!

John: I wish to God my arguments were. When will they make up their minds? With one hand they can raise an army and cheer the news from Bunker's Hill--while with the other wave the olive branch begging the king for a reconciliation. Why damn it, Fat George has declared us in rebellion--Why in bloody hell can't they?

Franklin:  
John, really! You talk as if independence were the rule! It's never been done before. No colony has ever broken from the parent stem in the history of the world!

John:  
Dammit, Franklin, you make us sound treasonous!

Franklin:  
Do I? (Thinking) Treason--"Treason is the charge invented by the winner as an excuse for hanging the losers."

John:  
I have more to do than stand here listening to you quote yourself!

Franklin:  
No, that was a new one!

John:  
Dammit, Franklin, we're at war!

Franklin:  
John, why don't you give up? Nobody listens to you--you're obnoxious and disliked.

John:  
I'm not promoting John Adams, I'm promoting independence!



Franklin:

Evidently, they cannot help connecting the two.

John: (Suspicious)

What are you suggesting?

Franklin:

Let someone else in Congress propose.

John:

Never! (Franklin shrugs)

Who did you have in mind?

Franklin:

I don't know. I really haven't given it too much thought.

--(Richard Henry Lee enters)

Lee: You sent for me Benjamin?

John: (Looking at Lee)

Never!!

Lee:

Ha, loo, Johnny.

John: (Nodding)

Richard.

Franklin:

Richard, John and I need some advice.

Lee:

If it's mine I'll give, it's yours, y'know that.

Franklin:

Thank you, Richard. As you know, the cause that we support has come to a complete standstill. Now, why do you suppose that is?

Lee:

Simple! Johnny here, is obnoxious and disliked.

Franklin:

Yes, that's true. What's the solution, I wonder?

Lee: (It's obvious)

Get someone else in Congress to propose--

Franklin:

Richard, that's brilliant! Wasn't that brilliant, John?

John: (Dully)

Brilliant.

Franklin:

Yes. Now the question remains--who can it be? The man we need must belong to a delegation that has publicly announced its support to independence. So far, only Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Delaware have declared our way.

Lee:

And Virginia, Benjie--don't forget Virginia.

Franklin:

Oh, I haven't Richard--how could I? But strictly speaking, while Virginia's views on independence are well known, your legislature in Williamsburg has never formally declared its delegation to support independence. Of course if we could think of an influential Virginian with enough influence to go down there and persuade them...

Lee:

Damn me if I haven't thought of someone!

Franklin & Adams: (Together)  
Who?

Lee: Me!

Franklin: Why didn't I think of that?

Lee:

I'll leave tonight--why, hell, right now if y'like. I'll stop off at home just long enough to "refresh the missus" and then straight to the matter. Virginia, the land that gave us our glorious Commander in Chief--George Washington, will now give the continent its proposal on independence. And when Virginia proposes, the South is sure to follow, and where the South goes, the Middle Colonies are sure to go. Gentlemen, a salute! To Virginia, the Mother of American Independence.

John: Incredible! WE're free and he hasn't even left yet!

--(Lights out on anteroom and up in the Chamber)

### SCENE THREE

--(The calendar shows "June 7", At opening, only McNair is on stage preparing the room for the day's festivities. Lyman Hall enters, looks around then clears his throat)

McNair: (Looking up) Yes?

Hall: I'm Dr. Lyman Hall, a new delegate from Georgia.

McNair: I'm Andrew McNair, Congressional Custodian. If you'll be needing anything at all just holler out, "McNair", as you'll hear the others do, and there won't be too long to wait.

Hall: Where does the Georgia delegation belong?

McNair: Oh, they mill about over in that corner--near the two Carolinas.

Hall: (Checking watch) It's after ten. I was told the Congress met at ten.

McNair: They'll be wandering in anytime now, sir--with Old Grape & Guts leadin' the pack.

Hall: Old WHO?

--(Hopkins: (Offstage) McNair!!)

McNair: Grape 'n' Guts.

Hopkins: Fetch me a mug o' rum.

McNair: Mr. Hopkins, you'll be pleased to meet Dr. Lyman Hall--

Hopkins: I don't need a doctor, dammit--

McNair:--new delegate from Georgia--

Hopkins: Why didn't you say so? I'm Stephen Hopkins, OLD delegate from Rhode Island. McNair, TWO mugs of rum!

Hall: I fear it's a little early in the day--

Hopkins: Nonsense! It's a medicinal fact that rum gets a man's heart started in the morning. I'm surprised you didn't know it. And speaking as the oldest man in the Congress--

McNair: Ben Franklin's older by almost a year

Hopkins: RUM!! (McNair scurries off) Tell me, Mr. Hall, where does Georgia stand on the question of independence?

Rutledge: Yes, where DOES Georgia stand on independence at the present time?

Hall: I am here without instructions, able to vote my own personal convictions.

Rutledge: And they are--?

Hall: Personal.

Rutledge: Dr. Hall, the deep South speaks with one voice. It is traditional--even more, historical.

Franklin: Will you get out of my way, please? (With a cane and one foot bandaged) Good morning, all.

Hall: Good Lord, do you have the honor to be Dr. Franklin?

Franklin: Yes, I have that honor--unfortunately, the gout accompanies the honor.

Hopkins: Been living to high again, eh Pappy?

Franklin: Stephen, I only wish that King George felt like my big toe--all over.

Hopkins: McNair!! Fetch a pillow and two more mugs of rum!

--All the members of the Congress begin mulling in, entering from L. & R.--  
John enters and is looking around for someone.

Franklin: Good morning, John.

John: Well, Franklin? Where's that idiot, Lee? Has he returned yet? I don't see him.

Franklin: Softly John, your voice is hurting my foot.

John: One more day, Franklin--that's how long I'll wait. That strutting popenjay was so damned sure of himself. He's had time to bring back a dozen proposals by now!

---Dickinson addresses Wilson, but does so only to attract the attention of all.

✓ Dickinson: Tell me, James, how do you explain the strange, monumental quietude that Congress has been treated to these past thirty days? Has the ill wind of independence finally blown itself out?

Wilson: If you ask me...

✓ Dickinson: For myself, I must confess that a month free from New England noise is more theraputic than a month in the country. Don't you agree, James?

Wilson: Well, I really...

✓ Dickinson: (To Adams) Mr. Adams, pray look for your voice sir! It cannot be far and God knows, we need the entertainment of this congress.

--Adams is burning up, but says nothing--

Franklin: Congradulations, John, you've made the greatest contribution to independence--you kept your flap shut.

John: (Burning) One more day...

Hancock: (Entering with Charles Thompson, the pedantic secretary of Congress) Gentlemen, the usual morning festivities concluded, I will now call Congress to order. (Gavel) Mr. Thompson.

Thompson: (Rising) The second Continental Congress meeting in the city of Philadelphia is now in session, seventh of June, seventeen-seventy-six, the three-hundred eith meeting.

McNair: Holy Joe!

Thompson: The Honorable John Hancock of Massachusetts Bay, President.

Hancock: Thank you, "r. Thompson. Mr. McNair, the stores of rum and other drinking spirits are hereby closed to the colony of Rhode Island for a period of three days.

McNair: Yes, sir.

Hopkins: John, you can't do that!

Hancock: Sit down, Mr. Hopkins. You've abused the priviledge. The chair wishes to welcome Dr. Lyman Hall of Georgia to this Congress and hopes he makes the best of it. My God, it's hot! What is the weather report, "r. Jefferson? Mr. Jefferson of Virginia?

--Jefferson is reading a book--

Hancock: Mr. Jefferson!!

Jefferson: (To his feet) Yes, sir?

Hancock: May we hear about the weather, as if it weren't speaking for itself.

Jefferson: (Checking guages on the window) Eighty-seven degrees of temperature, thirty-point-ought-six inches of mercury, wind from the southwest for the rest of the day, and tonight, (turns) tonight I'm leaving for home.

Hancock: On business?

Jefferson: Family business.

Hopkins: Give her a good one for me, young feller!

Jefferson: Yes, sir, I will.

Lee: (Bursting in) Benjie, I'm back--I'm back, Johnny.

McKean: Richard, we're pleased to see ya.

Franklin: What news, Dickie boy? What news?

John: Lee, is it done?

Lee: Done? Why certain-lee! (Cheers from those for independence.) Mr. President I have returned from Virginia with the following resolution. (He produces a piece of paper and reads)

Lee: "Resolved: That these united colonies are, (and by right ought to be) free and independent states, that they are absolved from all allieance to the British Crown, and that all political connections between them and the state of Gret Britian is, (and ought to be) totally dissolved."

John: Mr. President, I second the proposal!

Hancock: The resolution has been proposed and seconded. The chair will now entertain debate.

✓ Dickinson: (Rising assuming weariness) Mr. President, Pennsylvania moves, as always, that the question of independence be postponed, indefinitely.

Wilson: I second the motion.

Hancock: In your eagerness to be loved, you seem to have forgotten that Pennsylvania cannot second its own motion.

Read: Delaware seconds.

McKean: You would, ya little weasel!

Hancock: The motion to postpone has been moved and seconded. Mr. Thompson.

--Thompson goes to the talley board. As each colony votes he announces it and records it on the board. Hopkins gets up and leaves the chamber--

Thompson: On the motion to postpone indefinitely the resolution of independency or proceed with debate, all those in favor of debate say "yea" all those for postponement say "Nay". (Intoning)  
New Hampshire--

Bartlett: New Hampshire favors debate and says, "Yea".

Thompson: New Hampshire says "Yea". Massachusetts--

John: Massachusetts, having born the brunt of the King's tyranny--

Those against: Shame! Shame!!

Those for: Sit down, John!

John: Yes, I said tyranny! Massachusetts now and for all time says "Yea".

Thompson: Massachusetts says "Yea". Rhode Island--Mr. Hopkins?  
Where's Rhode Island?

McNair: Rhode Island is out visiting the "necçessary."

Hancock: After what Rhode Island's consumed, I can't say I'm surprised. We'll come back to him, Mr. Thompson.

Thompson: Rhode Island passes.

--The others laugh, Thompson not realizing what the joke was.  
Connecticut--

Sherman: (He holds, as he will throughout the play a shallow bowl of coffee) While Connecticut has, till now been against this proposal, my legislature has instructed me that, in the event it is introduced by any colony OUTSIDE of New England, Connecticut could not any longer withhold it's support. Connecticut says, "Yea".

---Franklin & Adams exchange looks--

Thompson: Connecticut says Yea. New York--

Morris: Mr. Secretary, New York abstains--courteously.

Thomson: New York abstains--

Morris: --courteously,...

Thomson: New Jersey

Hancock: Absent, Mr. Secretary.

Thomson: New Jersey is absent. Pennsylvania--

✓ Dickinson: Pennsylvania, for the twenty-fourth time, says "Nay".

Thomson: Pennsylvania says "Nay". Delaware--

Rodney: Delaware, as ever for independence, says "yea".

Thomson: Delaware says "Yea." Mary-land--

Chase: Mary-land would welcome independence if it were given, but is highly skeptical that it can be taken. Mary-land says Nay.

Thomson: Mary-land says "Nay". Virginia--

Lee: Virginia, the first colony says, "Yea".

Thomson: Virginia says yea. North Carolina--

Hewes: North Carolina respectfully yields to South Carolina.

Thomson: South Carolina--

Rutledge: Mr. President, altho we in South Carolina have never considered seriously the question of independence, when a gentleman proposes it attention must be paid. However, we in the

South, the DEEP South, unlike our friends in New England have no cause for impatience at this time. If however, at a later date it becomes the desire of our sister colonies to effect a separation, we will not stand in its way. But for the time being, South Carolina says, "Nay".

Thomson: South Carolina says "Nay".

Hewes: North Carolina--

Thomson: --says "Nay". Yes, Mr. Hewes, I know. Georgia-- Georgia--

Hall: (He looks around uncertainly) Mr. Secretary. Georgia seems to be split right down the middle. The people are against it, and I'm for it. (Understandable laughter) But in all fairness until I can figure it out, I'd better lean a little towards their side Georgia says nay.

Thomson: Georgia says "Nay". Rhode Island. RHODE ISLAND!! Second call.

Hopkins: (Offstage) I'm coming'. I'm comin'. (Entering) Hold yer damn horses.

Thomson: We're waiting on you, Mr. Hopkins.

Hopkins: It won't kill you. You'd think that Congress would have its own pisser! Allright. Where does she stand?

Thomson: Five for debate, five for postponement, one obstention, and one absence.

Hopkins: So its up to me, is it? Well, I'll tell ya--in all my years I have never heard, seen, nor smelled an issue that was so dangerous it couldn't be talked about. Hell yes, I'm for debating anything--Rhode Island says Yea.

--Cheers from those for independence

Hancock: McNair, get Hopkins a rum.

McNair: But you said...

Hancock: Get him the whole damn barrel if he wants. (Pause) The chair now declares this Congress a committee-of-the-whole for the purpose of debating Virginia's resolution of independence. Mr. Dickinson.

✓ Dickinson: Well now. You've got your way at last, Mr. Adams--the matter may now be discussed. I confess, I'm almost relieved. There's a question I've been fairly itching to ask you: Why?

John: Why, what, Mr. Dickinson?

✓ Dickinson: Why independence, Mr. Adams?



Adams: For the obvious reason that our continued association with Great Britain has become intolerable.

✓ Dickinson: To whom, Mr. Adams? To you? Then I suggest you sever your ties immediately. But please be kind enough to leave the rest of us here where we are. Personally I have no objections to being part of the greatest empire on earth, to enjoying its protection and sharing its benefits--

John: Benefits? What benefits? Cruel repressions? Crippling taxes? Abolished rights?

✓ Dickinson: Is that all England means to you, sir? Is that ALL the affection and pride you can muster for the nation that bore you? For the noblest, most civilized nation on the face of this planet? Some men are patriots, like Mr. Washington--some are anarchists, like Mr. Paine, some are internationalists like Mr. Franklin here. But you sir, are nearly an a-gi-ta-tor, disturbing the peace, creating disorder, endangering the public welfare and for what? Your petty little personal grievances? Your taxes are too high. Well, sir, so are mine. But surely ~~there~~ our present system must provide a gentler means of redressing grievances short of (bangs fists on table) revolution!!! That's what he wants--nothing less will satisfy him. Violence, Rebellion, Treason. Now sir, are these the acts of an Englishmen?

Adams: Not Englishmen, Americans!

✓ Dickinson: No sir, Englishment

Adams: You and your Pennsylvania proprietors--you cool conservative men. You go to the rear of every issue so that if we should go under, you'll remain afloat.

✓ Dickinson: Are you calling me a coward?

Adams: Yes!! COWARD!!

✓ Dickinson: Madman!!

Adams: Landlord!!

✓ Dickinson: Lawyer!!

---The battle is joined by the others. The two begin dueling with their walking sticks. Congress is in an uproar--

Hopkins: Whack him, John.

Franklin: Ho, Sparticus.

Congress: Let go, stop it, what kind of manner..etc.

---Rodney now steps between them and pushes them apart.

Rodney: Stop it. Stop it!! This is the Congress. Stop it, I say. The enemy is out there.

✓ Dickinson: No, Mr. Rodney, the enemy is right here!

Rodney: No, no I say, he's out there--England--England, closing in, cutting off the air--there's no time-- no air--(He is stricken)  
Thomas--!

McKean: Caesar--Caesar!!

--He looks around as the Congress falls silent--  
Dr. Hall?

Hall: (Kneeling beside Rodney) Colonel McKean--

McKean: Aye, it is the cancer.

Hall: He should go home.

Rodney: (Disgusted with himself) Yes, a man should die in his own bed..  
John, John Adams--

John: Yes, I'm here, Caesar.

Rodney: I leave you a divided Delaware. Forgive me.

McKean: I'll take you home, Caesar. (He lifts Rodney and turns to John) I'll be back within the week.

Rutledge: Mr. President, South Carolina calls the question.

Hancock: What's that, Mr. Rutledge? (He's distracted)

Rutledge: (Walking to the tally board) (Moves Delaware from the yea column, to the Nay column.) I said, Mr. President, South Carolina desires to end debate and call for the question of independence.

Read: (Glowing) I second

---Again, Bedlam after everyone finds out whats happened.

Congress: No, you can't do that! Call the question! Etc.

Hancock: (Pounding the gavel) Gentlemen, please. The question has been called and seconded. Mr. Thomson, call the roll.

John: (To Franklin) Do something, think!

Franklin: I'm thinking, I'm thinking--but nothing is coming.

Thomson: All those in favor of the resolution of independence as proposed by the colony of Virginia signify by saying--

Franklin: Would you read the resolution again? I've forgotten it.

Thomson: "Resolved that these United Colonies are, (and ought to be) free and independent--"

--Rev. Witherspoon enters looking around for a familiar face.

Witherspoon: I beg your pardon, but I'm the Reverend John Witherspoon, new Delegate from New Jersey--? Our old delegation has been recalled and our legislature has sent a new one.

Adams: Quickly, man, where do you stand on independence?

Witherspoon: Oh, haven't I made that clear? I suppose I haven't. But the reason for the change--we've been instructed to vote FOR independence.

John: Mr. President, I move for a postponement.

✓ Dickinson: Ha! I wish you the same luck I had with it.

Franklin: Adams is right. We need a postponement.

✓ Dickinson: On what grounds?

Franklin: (To Adams) On what grounds?

John: Mr. President, how can this congress vote on independence without--uh--a written declaration of some sort defining it?

Hancock: What sort of document?

John: Well, you know--uh--listing all the reasons for the separation and--uh--our goals and aims and so on and so forth, ditto, ditto, ditto, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

Hancock: We know those don't we?

John: Well, good God yes, WE know them, but what will the rest of the world think? Certainly we require the aid of a powerful nation like France or Spain, and such a document would be consistent with European delicacy.

Chase: Come, come, Mr. Adams, you'll have to do better than that. Answer straight, what would be its purpose?

--A pause; for once John is speechless.

John: Yes, we'll--

Jefferson: (Rising and speaking deliberately) To place before mankind the common sense of the subject, in terms so plain as to command their assent. (Winking at John, he sits. Dickinson laughs)

✓ Dickinson: Mr. Jefferson, are you seriously suggesting that we publish a paper declaring that our illegal rebellion is a legal one?

Franklin: Why, Mr. Dickinson, I'm surprised at you. You should know that rebellion is always legal in the first person--such as our rebellion. It is only illegal in the third person--their rebellion, that is illegal.

--Laughter

Mr. President, I second the motion to postpone the vote on independence for a period of time sufficient for the writing of a declaration.

Hancock: It has been moved and seconded. Mr. Secretary--

Thomson: All those in favor of the motion to postpone signify by saying, "Yea".

--Adams, Bartlett, Hopkins, Sherman, Witherspoon, and Lee say "Yea."

Six colonies say "Yea." Against?

✓--Dickinson, Chase, Read, Rutledge, Hewes, and Hall say Nay.  
Six colonies say "Nay".

Morris: Mr. Secretary, New York abstains--courteously.

Hancock: Mr. Morris, what in the hell goes on in New York?

Morris: I'm sorry, Mr. Hancock, but the simple fact is that our legislature has never sent us explicit instructions on anything.

Hancock: Never?? That's impossible!

Morris: Have you ever heard what goes on at a meeting of the New York legislature? They speak very fast and very loud and nobody pays any attention to anybody else, with the result that nothing ever gets done. I beg the Congress' pardon.

Hancock: My sympathies, Mr. Morris. The vote again being tied, the chair decides in favor of a postponement. So ruled. A committee will be formed to manage the declaration, said document to be written, debated, and approved by the beginning of July, three weeks hence, at which time Virginia's resolution on independence will be voted on. Is that clear? (General consensus) Very well. Will the following men please serve on the declaration committee? Dr. Franklin, Mr. John Adams, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Livingston, and of course, Mr. Lee.

Lee: Excuse me but I must be returning to the sovereign country of Virginia as I have been asked to serve as governor. Therefore I must decline--respectfully.

Hancock: Very well, Mr. Lee, you're excused. I suppose we could leave it a four-man committee.

John: Just a moment. This business needs a Virginian. Therefore I propose a replacement--Mr. Thomas Jefferson.

Jefferson: No! Mr Adams, NO!

Hancock: Very well, Mr. Adams, "Mr. Jefferson will serve.

Jefferson: I'm going home too--to my wife!

John: Move to adjourn.

Jefferson: No wait--

Franklin: Second!

Jefferson: It's been six months since I've seen her.

Hancock: It's been moved and seconded--any objections?

Jefferson: Yes! I have objections!

Hancock: So ruled, Congress stands adjourned.

Jefferson: (Falling on deaf ears) I need to see my wife, I tell you!

--All the Congress moves out, the Committee moves downstage.

Adams: (Sings) All right, Gentlemen. Let's get on with it. Which of us will write our declaration of independence?

Franklin: (Sings) Mr. Adams, I say you should write it.  
To your legal mind and brilliance we defer.

John: Is that so!  
Well, if I'm the one to do it,  
They'll run their quill pens through it.  
I'm obnoxious and disliked you know that sir!

Franklin: Yes, I know.

Adams: Then I say you should write it, Franklin, you!

Franklin: Hell no!

Adams: Yes, you, Dr. Franklin, you!

Franklin: But-

Adams: You-

Franklin: But-

Adams: You-

Franklin: But--

Mr. Adams.

But Mr. Adams!

The things I write

Are only light extemporanea.

I won't put politics on paper

It's a mania.

So I refuse to use the pen--in Pennsylvania.

Glee Club: Pennsylvania!

Pennsylvania!

Refuse

To use...the pen!

--John paces & thinks

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John: Mr. Sherman, I say you should write it.  
You are never controversial, as it were.  
Sherman: That is true.  
Adams: Whereas if I'm the one to do it  
They'll run their quill pens through it.  
I'm obnoxious and disliked, you know that, sir!  
Sherman: Yes, I do.  
Adams: Then I say you should write it, Roger, you!  
Sherman: Good heavens, no!  
John: Yes, you, Roger Sherman, you!  
Sherman: But-  
John: You-  
Sherman: But-  
John: You--  
Sherman: But---  
Mr. Adams!  
But Mr. Adams!  
I cannot write with any style  
Or proper etiquette.  
I don't know a participle from a predicate.  
I'm just a simple cobbler  
From Conneticut!  
Glee Club: Connecticut!  
Connecticut!  
A simple cobbler, he!  
--John resumes pacing.

John: Mr. Livingston, maybe you should write it.  
You have many friends and you're a diplomat.  
Franklin: Oh, that word!  
John: Whereas, if I'm the one to do it,  
They'll run the ir quill pens through it.  
Glee Club: He's obnoxious and disliked, did you know that?  
Livingston: I hadn't heard!  
John: Then I say you should write it, Robert, you!  
Livingston: Not me Johnny!  
John: Yes! You Robert Livingston--you.  
Livingston: But-  
John: You-  
Livingston: But-  
John: You  
Livingston: But--  
Mr. Adams!  
Dear Mr. Adams!  
I've been presented with a new son  
By the noble stork,  
So I am going home to celebrate  
And pop a cork  
With all the Livingstons together,  
Back in old New York.  
Glee Club: New York!  
New York!  
Going to pop..a cork!  
--All eyes go to Jefferson.  
Jefferson: Mr. Adams!  
Leave me alone!!

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John: Speaking firmly) Mr. Jefferson--  
Jefferson: I beg you, Mr. Adams. I've not seen my  
wife these six months.  
Adams: (Quoting) And we solomly declare that we will  
preserve our liberties, being with one  
mind resolved to die free men--rather than to  
live slaves!"  
Thomas Jefferson wrote that. You write 10 times  
better than any man inCongress, including me.  
Now, what will it be--Will you be a patriot? Or  
a lover?  
Jefferson: A lover!  
Adams: No!  
Jefferson: Who will make me, Mr. A.?  
John: I will Mr. J.!  
Jefferson: You??  
Adams: Yes!  
Jefferson: How will you do it?  
Adams: By--physical force if necessary.It's your duty,  
damn it!!  
Jefferson: Mr. Adams!  
Damn you Mr. Adams!  
You're obnoxious and disliked,  
That cannot be denied!  
Once again you have come between me and my  
Lovely bride!  
Glee Club: Lovely bride  
--Adams stares them quiet)  
Oh, Mr. Adams you are driving me to homicide!  
Glee Club: Homicide!  
Homicide!  
Adams: QUIET! (Thrusts pen into Jeffersons hand)  
Do -with-it-as-you-like-!  
Glee Club: We may see mur--der, yet!!

--John goes followed by the others.  
Jefferson alone, studies the pen for a moment, the  
goes!

CURTAIN---ACT ONE