

# LIBRETTO VOCAL BOOK



*America's Award Winning Musical*

Music and Lyrics by **Sherman Edwards**

Book by **Peter Stone**

Based on a concept by **Sherman Edwards**



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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

### Members of the Continental Congress

President  
JOHN HANCOCK

Secretary  
CHARLES THOMSON

New Hampshire  
DR. JOSIAH BARTLETT

Custodian  
ANDREW MCNAIR

Massachusetts  
JOHN ADAMS

ABIGAIL ADAMS

Rhode Island  
STEPHEN HOPKINS

MARTHA JEFFERSON

Connecticut  
ROGER SHERMAN

A LEATHER APRON

New York  
LEWIS MORRIS  
ROBERT LIVINGSTON

A PAINTER

A COURIER

New Jersey  
REV. JONATHAN WITHERSPOON

Pennsylvania  
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN  
JOHN DICKINSON  
JAMES WILSON

Delaware  
CAESAR RODNEY  
COL. THOMAS MCKEAN  
GEORGE READ

Maryland  
SAMUEL CHASE

Virginia  
RICHARD HENRY LEE  
THOMAS JEFFERSON

North Carolina  
JOSEPH HEWES

South Carolina  
EDWARD RUTLEDGE

Georgia  
DR. LYMAN HALL

### THE PLACE

A single setting representing the Chamber and an Anteroom of the Continental Congress, a Mall, High Street, and Thomas Jefferson's Room, in Philadelphia; and certain reaches of John Adams' mind.

### THE TIME

May, June and July, 1776.

### THE SCENES

1. The Chamber of the Continental Congress
2. The Mall
3. The Chamber
4. Thomas Jefferson's Room and High Street
5. The Chamber
6. A Congressional Anteroom
7. The Chamber

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NOTE: The action is continuous, without intermission.

(or may be played in Two Acts  
as indicated in the script).

THE MUSICAL NUMBERS

Scene 1:

"FOR GOD'S SAKE, JOHN, SIT DOWN" ..... Adams & The Congress  
"PIDDLER, TWIDDLE" ..... Adams  
"TILL THEN" ..... Adams & Abigail

Scene 2:

"THE LEES OF OLD VIRGINIA" ..... Lee, Franklin & Adams

Scene 3:

"BUT, MR. ADAMS -- " ..... Adams, Franklin,  
Jefferson, Sherman  
& Livingston

Scene 4:

"YOURS, YOURS, YOURS" ..... Adams & Abigail  
"HE PLAYS THE VIOLIN" ..... Martha, Franklin & Adams

Scene 5:

"COOL, COOL CONSIDERATE MEN" ..... Dickinson & The  
Conservatives  
"MOMMA LOOK SHARP" ..... Courier

Scene 6:

"THE EGG" ..... Franklin, Adams, Jefferson  
& Congress

Scene 7:

"MOLASSES TO RUM" ..... Rutledge  
"COMPLIMENTS" ..... Abigail  
"IS ANYBODY THERE?" ..... Adams, Franklin,  
Jefferson, Thompson



Scene 1

In front of the Curtain:

JOHN

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 -- Stamp Acts, Townshend Acts, Sugar Acts, Tea Acts -- and when we dared stand up like men they stopped our trade, seized 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 hell are they waiting for?!

(The Curtain flies up to reveal:

The CHAMBER of the Second  
Continental Congress in  
Philadelphia.

AT RISE:

CONGRESS is in session, sweltering  
in the heat of a premature  
summer's evening. A large day-by-  
day wall calendar reads "MAY 8."

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!

VOICE FROM CONGRESS "B"  
SOMEONE OUGHT TO OPEN UP A WINDOW!

CONGRESS "B"  
NO! NO! NO!  
TOO MANY FLIES!  
TOO MANY FLIES!

CONGRESS "A"  
BUT IT'S HOT AS HELL IN  
PHILADEL -- PHIA ... !

VOICES FROM CONGRESS "A"  
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 SAKE, JOHN,  
SIT DOWN!

(THEY freeze)

JOHN

(Spoken; roaring)

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

CONGRESS

(Action resumes)

JOHN, YOU'RE A BORE!

WE'VE HEARD THIS BEFORE!

NOW, FOR GOD'S SAKE, JOHN,

SIT DOWN!!

JOHN

I SAY "VOTE YES!" ...

SOME VOICES

NO!!

JOHN

VOTE "YES!" ...

CONGRESS (FULL

NO!!

JOHN

VOTE FOR

INDEPENDENCY ... !

CONGRESS "A"

SOMEONE OUGHT TO OPEN UP A WINDOW!

JOHN

I SAY VOTE "YES!" ...

CONGRESS (FULL)

SIT DOWN, JOHN!

JOHN

VOTE FOR INDEPENDENCY!!!

VOICE

WILL SOMEONE SHUT THAT MAN UP!!

JOHN

(Spoken)

Never! Never!

(HE storms from the Chamber, coming  
 downstage, and looks to Heaven for  
 guidance)

Dear God! For one solid year they have been sitting there  
 -- for one year! Doing nothing!



JOHN (Continued)

(Singing)

I DO BELIEVE YOU'VE LAID A CURSE ON  
NORTH AMERICA ... !  
A CURSE THAT WE HERE NOW REHEARSE IN  
PHILADELPHIA ... !  
A SECOND FLOOD, A SIMPLE FAMINE,  
PLAGUES OF LOCUSTS EVERYWHERE,  
OR A CATACLYSMIC EARTHQUAKE,  
I'D ACCEPT WITH SOME DESPAIR ...  
BUT, NO, YOU'VE SENT US CONGRESS --  
GOOD GOD, SIR, WAS THAT FAIR?

I SAY THIS WITH HUMILITY IN  
PHILADELPHIA ... !  
WE'RE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IN  
PHILADELPHIA ... !  
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE US HANGING  
ON SOME FAR OFF BRITISH HILL  
IF YOU DON'T WANT THE VOICE OF INDEPENDENCY  
FOREVER STILL,  
THEN, GOD, SIR, GET THEE TO IT ... !  
FOR CONGRESS NEVER WILL!

YOU SEE WE  
PIDDLE, TWIDDLE, AND RESOLVE.  
NOT ONE DAMNED THING DO WE SOLVE.  
PIDDLE, TWIDDLE, AND RESOLVE  
NOTHING'S EVER SOLVED IN  
FOUL, FETID, FUMING, FOGGY, FILTHY ...  
PHILADELPHIA!

(From the Chamber, rear, the VOICES  
of various CONGRESSMEN can be heard)

VOICE

SOMEONE OUGHT TO OPEN UP A WINDOW!

JOHN

(Spoken)

Oh, shut up!

CONGRESSMAN #1 (HANCOCK)

I now call the Congress' attention to the petition of Mr. Melchior Meng who claims twenty dollars compensation for his dead mule. It seems the animal was employed transporting luggage in the service of the Congress.

CONGRESSMAN #2 (WILSON)

The question, then, would appear to be one of occasion, for if the mule expired, not while carrying, but after being unloaded, then surely the beast dropped dead on its own time!



JOHN

Good God!!

(Singing)

THEY MAY SIT HERE FOR YEARS AND YEARS IN  
 PHILADELPHIA ... !  
 THESE INDECISIVE GRENADIERS OF  
 PHILADELPHIA!  
 THEY CAN'T AGREE ON WHAT IS RIGHT OR WRONG  
 OR WHAT IS GOOD OR BAD.  
 I'M CONVINCED THE ONLY PURPOSE  
 THIS CONGRESS EVER HAD ... WAS TO  
 GATHER HERE, SPECIFICALLY,  
 TO DRIVE JOHN ADAMS MAD!

YOU SEE ... WE

PIDDLE, TWIDDLE AND RESOLVE.  
 NOT ONE DAMNED THING DO WE SOLVE.  
 PIDDLE, TWIDDLE AND RESOLVE  
 NOTHING'S EVER SOLVED IN  
 FOUL, FETID, FUMING, FOGGY, FILTHY ...  
 PHILADELPHI --

(ABIGAIL ADAMS, JOHN's wife, a hand-  
 some woman of 32, now appears in  
 JOHN's imagination and interrupts)

ABIGAIL

JOHN, JOHN!  
 IS THAT YOU CARRYING ON, JOHN?

JOHN

(Spoken)

Oh, Abigail! Abigail -- I have such a desire to knock  
 heads together!

ABIGAIL

I know, my dearest. I know. But that's because you make  
 everything so complicated. It's all quite simple, really:

(Singing)

TELL THE CONGRESS TO DECLARE  
 INDEPENDENCY!  
 THEN SIGN YOUR NAME, GET OUT OF THERE,  
 AND HURRY HOME TO ME!  
 OUR CHILDREN ALL HAVE DYSENTERY,  
 LITTLE TOM KEEPS TURNING BLUE.  
 LITTLE ABBY HAS THE MEASLES  
 AND I'M COMING DOWN WITH FLU.  
 THEY SAY WE MAY GET SMALLPOX --

JOHN

(Spoken)

Madame, what else is new?

(MUSIC under)

JOHN (Continued)

Abigail, in my last letter I told you that the king has collected twelve thousand German mercenaries to send against us -- I asked you to organize the ladies and make saltpetre for gunpowder -- have you done as I asked?

ABIGAIL

No, John, I have not.

JOHN

Why have you not?

ABIGAIL

Because you neglected to tell us now saltpetre is made.

JOHN

(Impatient)

By treating sodium nitrate with potassium chloride, of course!

ABIGAIL

(A woman)

Oh, yes -- of course.

JOHN

Will it be done, then?

ABIGAIL

I'm afraid we have a more urgent problem, John.

JOHN

More urgent, Madame?

ABIGAIL

(Singing)

THERE'S ONE THING EVERY WOMAN'S MISSED IN  
MASSACHUSETTS BAY ...  
DON'T SMIRK AT ME, YOU EGOTIST, PAY  
HEED TO WHAT I SAY!  
WE'VE GONE FROM FRAMINGHAM TO BOSTON  
AND CANNOT FIND A PIN.  
"DON'T YOU KNOW THERE IS A WAR ON,"  
SAYS EACH TRADESMAN WITH A GRIN.  
WELL!  
WE WILL NOT MAKE SALTPETRE  
UNTIL YOU SEND US PINS!

JOHN

PINS, MADAME? SALTPETRE!

ABIGAIL

PINS!

JOHN &amp; ABIGAIL

(Alternating)  
SALTPETRE!

PINS!

SALTPETRE!

PINS!

SALTPETRE!

PINS!

'PETRE!

PINS!

'PETRE!

PINS!

'PETRE!

PINS!

'PETRE!

PINS!

JOHN

(Spoken)

Done, Madame! Done!

ABIGAIL

Done, John.

(Smiling)

Hurry home, John --

JOHN

As soon as I'm able.

ABIGAIL

Don't stop writing -- it's all I have.

JOHN

Every day, my dearest friend.

ABIGAIL

(Singing)

'TIL THEN ...

ABIGAIL &amp; JOHN

'TIL THEN ...

I AM, AS I EVER WAS, AND EVER SHALL BE ...

YOURS ...

YOURS ...

YOURS ...

YOURS ...

YOURS ...

JOHN

SALTPETRE ...

(Throws a kiss)

... JOHN.



ABIGAIL

PINS ...

(Throws a kiss)

... ABIGAIL.

(SHE goes)

CONGRESS

FOR GOD'S SAKE, JOHN ...

SIT DOWN ... !

(JOHN turns, waves them off in  
disgust, then crosses)

JOHN

(Calling)

Franklin -- !

Scene 2

The MALL. Sunlight. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN sits on a bench having his portrait painted.

JOHN discovers him.

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

FRANKLIN  
Right here, John ... being preserved for posterity. Do y' like it?

JOHN  
(HE examines the painting carefully)  
It stinks.

(The PAINTER goes)

FRANKLIN  
As ever, the soul of tact.

JOHN  
The man's no Botticelli.

FRANKLIN  
And the subject's no Venus.

JOHN  
Franklin! You heard 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 heaven my arguments were. By God, Franklin, when will they make up their minds? With one hand they can raise an army, dispatch one of their own to lead it and cheer the news from Bunker's Hill -- while with the other they wave the olive branch begging the King for a happy and permanent 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

Damnit, Franklin, you make us sound treasonous!

FRANKLIN

Do I?

(Thinking)

Treason -- "Treason is a charge invented by winners 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

Damnit, Franklin, we're at war!

FRANKLIN

To defend ourselves, nothing more. We expressed our displeasure, the English moved against us and we, in turn, have resisted. Now our fellow Congressmen want to effect a reconciliation before it becomes a war.

JOHN

Reconciliation my ass! The People want Independence!

FRANKLIN

The People have read Mr. Paine's "Common Sense." I doubt the Congress has.

(HE studies JOHN)

John -- why don't you give it 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

What are you suggesting?

FRANKLIN

Let somebody else in Congress propose.

JOHN

Never!

(FRANKLIN shrugs)

Why? --

Who did you have in mind?



FRANKLIN

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

(RICHARD HENRY LEE, a tall, loose-jointed Virginian aristocrat of 45, enters)

LEE

You sent for me, Benjamin?

JOHN

(Looking at LEE, then at FRANKLIN)

Never!!

LEE

Halloo, Johnny.

JOHN

(Nodding)

Richard.

FRANKLIN

Richard, John and I need some advice.

LEE

If it's mine t' 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 publicly committed to support Independence and at the present time only Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Delaware have declared our way.

LEE

And Virginia, Benjy -- 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 authorized its delegation here in Congress to support the cause. Of course, if we could think of a Virginian with enough influence to go down there and persuade the House of Burgesses --

LEE

Damn me if I haven't thought of someone!

FRANKLIN &amp; 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 Stratford just long enough to refresh the missus and then straight to the matter. Virginia, the land that gave us our glorious Commander-in-Chief --

(A short DRUM ROLL)

-- George Washington -- will now give the continent its proposal on Independence! And when Virginia proposes, the South is bound to follow -- and where the South goes the Middle Colonies go! Gentlemen, a salute! To Virginia, the Mother of American Independence!

JOHN

Incredible! We're free and he hasn't even left yet!

(To LEE)

What makes you so sure you can do it?

(MUSIC begins)

LEE

Hah!!

(Singing)

MY NAME IS RICHARD HENRY LEE!  
VIRGINIA IS MY HOME  
MY NAME IS RICHARD HENRY LEE!  
VIRGINIA IS MY HOME ...

LEE (Continued)

AND MAY MY HORSES TURN TO GLUE  
IF I CAN'T DELIVER UP TO YOU  
A RESOLUTION -- ON INDEPENDENCY!

FOR I AM F.F.V.  
THAT IS, THE FIRST FAMILY  
IN THE SOVEREIGN COLONY OF VIRGINIA.  
THE F.F.V.  
THE OLDEST FAMILY  
IN THE OLDEST COLONY IN AMERICA!

AND, MAY THE BRITISH BURN MY LAND  
IF I CAN'T DELIVER TO YOUR HAND  
A RESOLUTION -- ON INDEPENDENCY!

Y' SEE IT'S -- HERE A LEE  
THERE A LEE  
EVERYWHERE A LEE, A LEE!

FRANKLUN & LEE

(Alternating)

SOCIAL --

LEE!

POLITICAL --

LEE!

FINANCIAL --

LEE!

NATURAL --

LEE!

INTERNAL --

LEE!

EXTERNAL --

LEE!

FRATERNAL --

LEE!

E-TERNAL --

LEE!

(Together)

THE F.F.V.

THE FIRST FAMILY

IN THE SOVEREIGN COLONY OF VIRGINIA!

LEE

AND MAY MY WIFE REFUSE MY BED  
IF I CAN'T DELIVER, AS I SAID,  
A RESOLUTION -- ON INDEPENDENCY!

JOHN

(Spoken)

Spoken modest-Lee. God help us!

LEE

He will, John! He will!



LEE (Continued)

(Singing)  
THEY SAY THAT GOD IN HEAVEN  
IS EVERYBODY'S GOD

FRANKLIN

Amen!

LEE

I'LL ADMIT THAT GOD IN HEAVEN  
IS EVERYBODY'S GOD ...  
BUT, I TELL Y', JOHN, WITH PRIDE  
GOD LEANS A LITTLE ON THE SIDE  
OF THE LEES! THE LEES OF OLD VIRGINIA!

Y' SEE IT'S  
HERE A LEE, THERE A LEE  
EVERYWHERE A LEE -- A LEE!

FRANKLIN &amp; LEE

HERE A LEE, THERE A LEE  
EVERYWHERE A LEE --

LEE

LOOK OUT! ... THERE'S  
ARTHUR LEE!  
"BOBBY" LEE! ... AN'  
GENERAL "LIGHTHORSE" HARRY LEE!  
JESSE LEE!  
WILLIE LEE!

FRANKLIN

AND RICHARD H. --

LEE

THAT'S ME!!  
AND MAY MY BLOOD STOP RUNNING BLUE  
IF I CAN'T DELIVER UP TO YOU  
A RESOLUTION -- ON INDEPENDENCY!  
(HE begins strutting, a military  
cakewalk)  
YES SIR, BY GOD, IT'S  
HERE A LEE!  
THERE A LEE!  
COME ON, BOYS, JOIN IN WITH ME!

(THEY do, JOHN reluctantly)

HERE A LEE! THERE A LEE!

FRANKLIN

(Spoken)  
When do y' leave?

LEE

IMMEDIATE-LEE!  
HERE A LEE! THERE A LEE!

FRANKLIN

(Spoken)  
When will you return?

LEE

SHORT-LEE!  
HERE A LEE! THERE A LEE!  
AND I'LL COME BACK  
TRIUMPHANT-LEE!

FRANKLIN & JOHN

HERE A LEE! THERE A LEE!  
(Etc.)

LEE

FORRR-WARRR ...  
HO-OOO!  
(LEE struts off.)

FRANKLIN and JOHN follow him almost  
as far as the wings, then drop out  
and return, breathless but relieved)

JOHN

(Spoken)  
That was the most revolting display I ever witnessed.

FRANKLIN

They're a warm-blooded people, Virginians!

JOHN

Not him, Franklin -- you! You and your infernal obsession  
for deviousness! If you'd come right out and asked him  
straight he'd've been gone a half an hour ago!

FRANKLIN

Cheer up, John -- at this very moment our cause is again  
riding high -- sitting straight in the saddle and in full  
gallop for Virginia!

(LEE suddenly reappears)

LEE

(Singing)  
-- AND OUR WOMEN ARE ... SERENE ...  
... FULL BOSOMED ...

FRANKLIN

(Perking up)  
... FULL BOSOMED ... ?

LEE  
FULL BOSOMED! BENJY --  
EVERYONE A QUEEN! ... THEY ARE --

(MUSIC IN, at tempo)

LEES! DAMNIT!  
THE LEES OF OLD VIRGINIA! YES, SIR! BY GOD!  
(Drawing his sword, HE parades around,  
followed by FRANKLIN and JOHN)

ALL  
IT'S HERE A LEE!  
THERE A LEE!

LEE  
COME ON, JOHN,  
STEP LIVE-A-LEE!

ALL  
HERE A LEE!  
THERE A LEE!  
EVERYWHERE A LEE -- A LEE!  
(Etc.)

(Marching, THEY exit, LEE waving his  
sword, FRANKLIN lumbering, JOHN  
moving like an out-of-step puppet,  
looking up to Heaven for the answer)