

I. "We Hold These Truths"

Narrator:

To the task of composing the American Declaration of Independence from England, Benjamin Franklin, the internationally respected senior member of the Continental Congress, quickly declined, stating, "I make it a policy never to write documents subject to editing by others." John Adams, the seasoned and experienced politician, was then called upon. Adams said, "There are three reasons why I should not accept this honor: first, I am disliked and obnoxious, so the document would lack credibility; second, it should be written by a Virginian; and third, Thomas Jefferson is ten times a better writer than I." The daunting task then came to the 33 year old Jefferson, who composed the draft in 1776 over a 17 day period in a hotel room in Philadelphia. Among the activities which helped focus and inspire his mind and words during this period was music - the playing of his violin.

(music begins - lights slowly up on Actor - Narrator sits)

Reverent and aspiring

Percussion 1 *chimes (with damper cloth on mallets)*
p

Percussion 2 *marimba (med yard)*
pp

Reverent and aspiring
Violin 2 *II with mute*
pp

Viola *II with mute*
pp

Actor *(sitting and writing, beginning to speak after the first chord has settled):*

"When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation." *(pause... stands up and speaks with manuscript in hand)*

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. - That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, - That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness." *(puts down manuscript, picks up his violin, sits, and speaks again, softer and more reflective)...* "among these rights are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness..."

(Tenor and Violin soloists stand, music resumes, lights down on Actor who leaves stage left until IV)