

Full score

Jon Magnussen

# DECLARATION (AQ'S LEGACY)

*for string quartet*

early antique music

Approximate duration: 4'17"

#### ABOUT 'DECLARATION (AQ's Legacy)':

On the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, 'DECLARATION (AQ's Legacy)' celebrates the legacy of Ah Quon McElrath (AQ) and leaders who came before and after her to help our nation become a better place for its inhabitants. They leave us a legacy shaped by a view of the Declaration of Independence as a moral mandate for social equity. From the original "repeated injuries and usurpations" which the 13 American colonies suffered under British colonial rule, to more recent forms oppression, these leaders have led inspiring social justice movements to break unfair status quos and abolish slavery, secure voting rights for women, end racial segregation, discrimination and disenfranchisement, provide marriage equality and anti-discrimination laws, afford equal opportunity for our disabled, and more.

'DECLARATION (AQ's Legacy)' begins with a long, slow, five-count chord progression (the 'status quo'). A solo violin enters (the status-quo breaker), slowly and consistently playing G- and D-string double stops, sometimes in harmony with the status quo, sometimes in dissonant tension, with slowly evolving rhythmic patterns and widening registers. The solo violin, with consistency, persistence, flexibility, and passionate commitment, endeavors to persuade the other players to add their own personal voice to the G- and D-string double stop status quo.

While our founders' system of checks and balances allows many Americans to enjoy the fruitful work of these past 250 years, there are still Americans for whom promises in this founding document have yet to be kept. Today's status quo breakers — of the 'me too', 'black lives matter', 'pro choice', 'pro life', 'no kings' and other movements — remind us that even as our nation's journey, imperfect as it is, continues towards its 'more perfect union' promising Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness for all, there still remains work to be done.

(A version of this work first appeared in Jon Magnussen's 2024 score for the PBS Hawai'i documentary "Ah Quon McElrath: The Struggle Never Ends", which tells the story of how "one woman's compassionate determination helped to lift thousands of families out of poverty". Read more about this change agent from the 1940s and 1950s at [https://www.laborhistoryhawaii.org/.](https://www.laborhistoryhawaii.org/))

#### PERFORMANCE NOTES:

\*\* use the fullest length of bow, with deep, expressive bowing.

\*\*In the violin parts, 'col legno saltando' requires the LH fingers to 'drum' on the bow, enabling a col legno tremolo on open G-D strings. Please note that this technique requires the LH fingers to abstain from its usual role on the fingerboard (changing the string's pitch), and instead enhance the bounce of the col legno bow on the open G-D strings as the bow travels sul pont. > sul tasto > sul pont.).

# DECLARATION (AQ's Legacy)

On the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, 'DECLARATION (AQ's Legacy)' celebrates the courageous leaders of our country who have worked tirelessly since 1776 to help our nation live up to the promises of this founding document.

Deeply, fully ♩ = 74

solo, espress. (bow)

Jon Magnussen (2026)

Violin I  
*espress.*  
*mp*  
*cresc. poco a poco*

Violin II  
*mp*  
*espress.*  
*cresc. poco a poco*

Viola  
*mp*  
*espress.*  
*cresc. poco a poco*

Violoncello  
*mp*  
*cresc. poco a poco*  
*sempre crescendo*

8  
(shape the harmonic progression, taking care to preserve the primacy of soloists (G/D double stops))  
*solo, espress. (bow)*

14  
*colla parte*

19  
*espress.*

DECLARATION (AQ's Legacy)

(real notes)

Musical score for measures 24-27. The system consists of four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The music features complex rhythmic patterns with many triplets and sixteenth notes. The notation includes various articulations and dynamic markings.

28 *sempre crescendo*  
*colla parte*

Musical score for measures 28-30. The system consists of four staves. The music is marked *sempre crescendo* and *colla parte*. It features dense rhythmic textures with many triplets and sixteenth notes. The notation includes various articulations and dynamic markings.

31 (real notes)

Musical score for measures 31-33. The system consists of four staves. The music is marked (real notes). It features dense rhythmic textures with many triplets and sixteenth notes. The notation includes various articulations and dynamic markings.

34

Musical score for measures 34-36. The system consists of four staves. The music features dense rhythmic textures with many triplets and sixteenth notes. The notation includes various articulations and dynamic markings.

36

Musical score for measures 36-37. The system consists of four staves: Treble 1, Treble 2, Alto, and Bass. Measures 36-37 are marked with a '6' and feature complex rhythmic patterns with accents. The Alto and Bass staves have a '3' marking under the first measure.

38

Musical score for measures 38-39. The system consists of four staves: Treble 1, Treble 2, Alto, and Bass. Measures 38-39 are marked with a '6' and feature complex rhythmic patterns with accents. The Alto and Bass staves have a '5' marking under the first measure.

40

Musical score for measures 40-41. The system consists of four staves: Treble 1, Treble 2, Alto, and Bass. Measures 40-41 are marked with a '6' and feature complex rhythmic patterns with accents. The Alto and Bass staves have a '6' marking under the first measure.

42

Musical score for measures 42-43. The system consists of four staves: Treble 1, Treble 2, Alto, and Bass. Measures 42-43 are marked with a '6' and feature complex rhythmic patterns with accents. The Alto and Bass staves have a '3' marking under the first measure.

44 *sempre crescendo*

Musical score for measures 44-45. The system consists of four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The first two staves feature dense, sixteenth-note chordal textures with various fingering numbers (6, 7) and accents. The last two staves feature a bass line with triplet patterns and sustained notes. The instruction *sempre crescendo* is written above the first staff.

46

Musical score for measures 46-47. The system consists of four staves. The first two staves continue the dense sixteenth-note textures with fingering numbers (6, 7) and accents. The last two staves continue the bass line with triplet patterns and sustained notes.

48

Musical score for measures 48-49. The system consists of four staves. The first two staves continue the dense sixteenth-note textures with fingering numbers (6, 7) and accents. The last two staves continue the bass line with triplet patterns and sustained notes.

50 *(digging in...)*

Musical score for measures 50-51. The system consists of four staves. The first two staves continue the dense sixteenth-note textures with fingering numbers (7, 6) and accents. The last two staves continue the bass line with triplet patterns and sustained notes. The instruction *(digging in...)* is written above the first staff.

52

54

**ff**

56

**Poco più lento**

*col legno saltando: LH fingers drum bow tremolo on open G-D strings sul pont. (low 8ve) > sul tasto (high 8ve) > sul pont.*

**fff** **mp** **p** **ppp**