

# Scott Joplin



Composer, Musician  
Scott Catalog # 2044  
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Stamp Artist: Jerry Pinkney

Scott Joplin was born on November 24, 1868 in Texarkana, Arkansas. He learned to play the piano as a child and with the help of a neighbor, mastered the classics.

In the early days, Scott moved from place to place playing wherever and whenever he could get a job. He played mostly in Honky-Tonk establishments, (a usually tawdry nightclub or dance hall), during this time, but in 1893 he landed a job as a band leader at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

In 1896 he moved to Sedalia, Missouri and attended George Smith College where he began a serious study of musical composition. He also played at the Maple Leaf club during this time. While playing at the club he met John Stark, a music publisher who published Scott's first ragtime composition, Original Rag and his most famous piece, Maple Leaf Rag Time.

Around 1900, Joplin became involved in the new Jazz music that was just beginning at this time. Jazz was a combination of the tunes and cakewalks of Blacks, quadrilles, minuets, and waltzes that were popular in southern cities such as New Orleans. Ragtime unlike Jazz, however is played almost exclusively on the piano.

Scott Joplin wrote many other rags which include such famous tunes as: Sugar Cane Rag, Wall Street Rag, Peacherine Rag, Gladiolus Rag, Palm Leaf Rag, The School of Ragtime, and Magnetic Ragtime. He also wrote two ragtime operas, A Guest of Honor and Tremonisha.

His 1902 composition, The Entertainer, was used as background for the 1973 movie, The Sting.

Scott Joplin died on April 11, 1917 in New York, New York. In 1976 he was posthumously awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his many contributions to music composition.

Sources:

Encyclopedia Britannica

Encyclopedia Africana