

Name \_\_\_\_\_ This assignment is due \_\_\_\_\_

## UNIT 1

Jazz represents a merging and melding of many different peoples and their heritages. During the late 1800s in America's south, music was an integral part of the life of plantation slaves of African descent. Plantation songs, spirituals, and field hollers were a part of everyday life—to celebrate, to mourn, to entertain, to commemorate, to worship, and to accompany the drudgery of work. This music of the plantations blended with the European-American musical traditions to create the basis for blues, ragtime, and other musical forms from which jazz evolved.



### RAGTIME (1880s - early 1900s)



**Shade in the area on the timeline in which Ragtime was popular.**

- ◆ Construction of the Metropolitan Opera House, New York City, New York and Brooklyn Bridge, Brooklyn, New York was completed (1883).
- ◆ German physicist Wilhelm Roentgen discovered the X-ray (1895).
- ◆ The first modern Olympic games were held in Athens, Greece (1896).

#### THE MUSIC

Ragtime was one of the early musical styles that contributed to the development of jazz. Originating in the South during the late 1800s, ragtime was composed primarily for the piano. It combined a sixteenth-note-based syncopated melody with the form and feel of a march. On the piano this was achieved by the pianist's left hand playing a steady "boom-chic" bass and chord pattern and the right hand playing the syncopated tune. Playing in this syncopated style was called "ragging," which is probably the origin of the term "ragtime."

#### THE MUSICIANS

Probably the most well-known ragtime composer was **Scott Joplin** (1868-1917). Born in Texas, Joplin studied piano as a young man. Since there were few schools in the southern United States that African-Americans were allowed to attend, Joplin probably did not go to school until he was a teenager. During his teens, Joplin began playing piano in bars to support himself. He eventually attended George Smith College, a college for African-American students in Missouri. After finishing school, Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag* was published in 1899. Eventually, Joplin earned enough with the publication of this single work to support himself and to allow him to focus completely on composing. In all, he wrote 50 piano rags, two ragtime operas, and a few songs.

Other important musicians of the ragtime era included pianists **Artie Matthews**, **James Scott**, and **Tom Turpin**.



Scott Joplin



### DID YOU KNOW

- *Maple Leaf Rag* sold 1 million copies, making Scott Joplin a wealthy man.
- Scott Joplin won a Pulitzer Prize half a century after his death for his 1911 ragtime opera, *Treemonisha*.
- Joplin's rag, *The Entertainer*, received renewed popularity when it was featured on the soundtrack to the 1970s movie, *The Sting*.
- New Orleans, on the Mississippi River and close to the Gulf of Mexico, is one of the busiest port cities of the United States.
- Before the radio was commonly available, player pianos provided a popular way to hear the newest ragtime tune.
- For a listening example of ragtime music, refer to **Willie L. Hill, Jr.'s** *The Instrumental History of Jazz*, a two-compact-disc set (Disc 1, track 1).

## UNIT 1 QUIZ

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Instrument \_\_\_\_\_

- ◆ Read each statement below. If the statement is true, write T in the blank. If the statement is false, write F in the blank.

- \_\_\_\_ 1. Jazz is a type of music derived from many different peoples and their heritages.  
\_\_\_\_ 2. Primarily, jazz combines music of the plantations of America's South with European-American music influences.  
\_\_\_\_ 3. Jazz is a brand new type of music created during the last decade.

### RAGTIME

- ◆ Name an event that took place during the time of ragtime.

4. \_\_\_\_\_

- ◆ Read each statement below. If the statement is true, write T in the blank. If the statement is false, write F in the blank.

- \_\_\_\_ 5. Early ragtime music was composed primarily for the banjo.  
\_\_\_\_ 6. Ragtime combined a syncopated melody with the form and feel of a march.  
\_\_\_\_ 7. In ragtime, the piano player usually played the syncopated part with his or her left hand.  
\_\_\_\_ 8. The term "ragtime" probably comes from the word "ragging," which meant to play in a syncopated style.

- ◆ Probably the most well-known ragtime composer was Scott Joplin. List three facts about his life and work.

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

### BONUS QUESTION

- ◆ Using Willie L. Hill, Jr.'s *The Instrumental History of Jazz*, a two-compact-disc set published by N2K Encoded Jazz, play an example of ragtime, *Maple Leaf Rag*, by Scott Joplin (Disc 1, track 1). What instrument performs *Maple Leaf Rag*? Was this typical of ragtime music?

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