

Hey Kids, Meet Scott Joplin

American Musician and Composer (1867 or 1868-1917)



Scott Joplin, the second of six children, was born sometime between June 1867 and January 1868 in eastern Texas. His father was a slave, while his mother was born a free black woman. After 1871 Joplin and his family moved to Texarkana, Texas. It was then that young Scott taught himself music on a piano in a home where his mother worked.

Exhibiting musical ability at an early age, Joplin received free music lessons from a local German music teacher. His teacher not only trained him to play the piano well but also gave him a well-rounded

knowledge of classical music form. It was this training in classical form that served him in later years in developing his compositional style.

In the late 1880's Joplin left home to pursue his musical career. By 1898 Joplin had sold six pieces for the piano. By 1889 he had published his most celebrated composition, *Maple Leaf Rag* which placed Joplin at the top of the list of ragtime performers and established ragtime as an important musical form. In the early 1900's, Joplin and his new wife, Belle, moved to St. Louis, Missouri. While living there, he composed some of his best-known works including *The Entertainer* and *Elite Syncopations*.

Scott Joplin died April 1, 1917. He remains the best-known ragtime composer and performer. He also is regarded as one of the three most important composers of classic ragtime.

