

Program Name: Rags to Riches: Kansas City Celebrates the Music of Scott Joplin

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Artist: The TurpinTyme Ragsters

## Special Requirements:

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Five chairs

## Special Points of Interest:

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Composer Max Morath makes the point that it was actually women who made Ragtime respectable: "It was mainly our grandmothers who purchased those colorful rags (ragtime songs)...often as not in the face of stormy parental objection."

## Performance Description

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Ragtime music is an important American art form and was America's first original, nationally-popular music. Its roots are entrenched in the socio-economic plight of its 19th-century creators. Its evolution is from many cultures, which include African, Latin, and European influences.

The TurpinTyme Ragsters will present the music, life, and career of Scott Joplin along with the top Ragtime composers from the Kansas City area.

Ragtime, like most popular musical trends, reflects a mingling of cultural events, technological advancements, entertainment, and musical personalities at the turn of the 19th century.

The TurpinTyme Ragsters demonstrate how music is created in a group setting. The sounds they hear as "the ensemble" are impossible without the individual contributions of the musicians and their instruments. Students will also participate in "building a band" by learning to clap the basic tango rhythm that is the basis of most Ragtime compositions.



## Educational Objectives & Standards

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### Students will:

- Hear Ragtime compositions
- Experience the culture of the Ragtime-era
- See how technology allowed Ragtime to become a global phenomenon

### History:

- Understands the broadly defined areas of state and local historical events

### Music

- Identifies (by genre or style) music from various historical periods and cultures

## Artist Bio: The TurpinTyme Ragsters

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**Gary Richmond** is the cornetist and leader of the TurpinTyme Ragsters. Gary leads and has organized many other groups including a civil war era music group and a 14-piece German band.

**Stephanie Cox** has performed professionally from New York City to Hawaii. She is currently one of the busiest freelance trombonists in Kansas City.

**Greg Briggs** is a freelance

woodwind performer in the Kansas City area and has performed with many national artists.

**Mark Cohick** is a freelance woodwind performer and has performed with international tours of “West Side Story” and “A Chorus Line”. **Mike Thompson** is the drummer for the TurpinTyme Ragsters. He has the ability to play styles from big band to jazz to Polkas.

## Vocabulary

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### List of Resources:

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#### Books:

King of Ragtime: Scott Joplin and His Era  
by Edward A. Berlin  
Oxford University Press;  
New Ed edition (December 1, 1995) ISBN: 0195101081

#### Videos:

Uniquely Kansas City, Volume 2:  
A Great Town Rises  
KCPT-TV, Kansas City, Missouri

Uniquely Kansas City, Volume 3:  
The Golden Age  
KCPT-TV, Kansas City, Missouri

#### Music:

The Complete Piano Music Of Scott Joplin  
John Arpin, Intersound Records, #1715  
Audio CD (January 28, 1997)  
ASIN: B000003QWN

Contact KCYA for more information about this and other programs

816.531.4022  
KCYA.org

**Cakewalk:** A 19th-century public entertainment among African Americans in which walkers performing the most accomplished or amusing steps won cakes as prizes.

**Ensemble:** A group of musicians performing together or the act of simultaneous performance.

**Ragtime:** A style of jazz characterized by elaborately syncopated rhythm in the melody and

a steadily accented accompaniment.

**Scott Joplin:** American pianist and composer known for his ragtime works, including *Maple Leaf Rag* (1899) and the opera *Treemonisha* (1911).

**Syncopation:** A shift of accent in a passage or composition that occurs when a normally weak beat is stressed.

## Post-Performance Activities

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1. Explore Ragtime music by listening to recordings, both historical and modern.
2. Use a map and trace the routes that the Ragtime phenomenon took into the Heartland of America, the East Coast, and Europe.
3. Who was responsible for Ragtime’s growth? How did technology spread the “Ragtime sound?”
4. Compare the rapid spread of Ragtime music to modern Pop music. Who were the “mega-

stars” of Ragtime? How did their lives compare to the pop-stars of today? Did they become rich? How were the Ragtime-stars treated in the United States as compared to Europe?

5. Try to adapt a well-known song to a Ragtime style.

