WILLIAM
appling
piano
SCOTT JOPLIN
THE COMPLETE RAGS, WALTZES & MARCHES

DISC ONE

1 Sugar Cane A Ragtime Classic Two-Step (1908) 4:14
2 Pleasant Moments Ragtime Waltz (1909) 4:12
3 Country Club Rag Time Two-Step (1909) 5:21
4 The Ragtime Dance (1906) 4:24
5 Gladiolus Rag (1907) 5:19
6 Combination March (1896) 4:09
7 The Cascades A Rag (1904) 4:05
8 Bethena A Concert Waltz (1905) 7:44
9 Great Crush Collision March (1896) 6:04
10 Leola Two Step (1905) 4:32
11 Scott Joplin's New Rag (1912) 3:51
Total: 53:55

DISC TWO

1 Maple Leaf Rag (1899) 4:06
2 Binks' Waltz (1905) 5:45
3 Paragon Rag (1909) 4:46
4 Reflection Rag Syncopated Musings (1917) 6:37
5 The Easy Winners A Ragtime Two Step (1901) 4:22
6 Eugenia (1905) 6:22
7 A Breeze from Alabama A Ragtime Two Step (1902) 5:34
8 Harmony Club Waltz (1896) 6:38
9 Original Rags [arranged by Charles N. Daniels] (1899) 6:37
10 Cleopha March and Two Step (1902) 4:40
11 Antoinette March and Two-Step (1906) 3:18
12 Euphonic Sounds A Syncopated Novelty (1909) 4:42
Total: 63:27

DISC THREE

1 School of Ragtime 6 Exercises for Piano (1908) 2:10
2 Elite Syncopations (1902) 4:58
3 Peacherine Rag (1901) 4:27
4 Searchlight Rag A Syncopated March and Two Step (1907) 5:33
5 March Majestic (1902) 3:27
6 The Chrysanthemum An Afro-Intermezzo (1904) 5:58
7 The Strenuous Life A Ragtime Two Step (1902) 4:45
8 Nonpareil (None to Equal) (1907) 5:10
9 Prelude to The Sycamore 0:38
10 The Sycamore A Concert Rag (1904) 4:23
11 Pine Apple Rag (1908) 4:29
12 The Entertainer A Ragtime Two Step (1902) 5:11
13 The Augustan Club Waltzes (1901) 5:19
Total: 56:28

DISC FOUR

1 Wall Street Rag (1909) 6:16
2 The Favorite Ragtime Two Step (1904) 5:11
3 Rose Leaf Rag A Ragtime Two-Step (1907) 5:23
4 Palm Leaf Rag A Slow Drag (1903) 4:25
5 Rosebud Two-Step (1905) 3:23
6 Silver Swan Rag [attributed to Scott Joplin] (ca. 1914, pub. 1971) 5:21
7 Weeping Willow Ragtime Two Step (1903) 4:38
8 Fig Leaf A High Class Rag (1908) 5:19
9 Stoptime Rag (1910) 3:54
10 Magnetic Rag (1914) 6:33
11 Solace A Mexican Serenade (1909) 6:58
Total: 57:21

WILLIAM APPLING

William Appling was born in Cleveland, Ohio, and lived there during the years of George Szell's tenure as Music Director of The Cleveland Orchestra. As a gifted young musician, he thrived on the culture's outstanding musical opportunities and educational offerings. He studied piano with Elizabeth Lambright, Francis Bolton Kortheur, Egbert Fischer and Leonard Shure; he earned his B.A. and M.A. degrees at Western Reserve University. He was honored with the National Association of Negro Musicians' First Prize in Piano and awarded The Cleveland Orchestra's first Kulas Fellow in Choral Conducting.

Conducting Glenville High School Choral Club, 1965

For over fifty years William Appling's eclectic career as conductor, pianist and educator directly affected the lives and careers of thousands of students, many composers and music lovers. His teaching career began at Cleveland's Glenville High School where his choir accepted invitations to sing at the Hollywood Bowl, the New York World's Fair, and at Ohio Educators' Conferences. Shortly after, while he was Director of the Case Men's Glee Club and teaching piano at the Cleveland Institute of Music, he gave his debut piano recital at New York's Town Hall followed by performances at the Brooklyn Museum and

William Appling, 1981

Severance Hall. He also performed with The Cleveland Orchestra under the batons of Louis Lane and Robert Shaw and with the composer Darius Milhaud in Aspen, Colorado. While he ultimately focused greater attention on conducting and teaching, Appling's gifts as a pianist were widely praised.

In 1971, during his 25-year tenure at Western Reserve Academy in Hudson, Ohio, William Appling founded and directed Summer Music Experience (SME), an international six week program which offered intensive music training and performing experience to gifted students of high school age. Here students worked with artists including Robert Shaw, Andre Watts, Yoel Levi, Janos Starker, Lynn Harrell and Lorin Maazel. Many graduates of SME now enjoy highly successful careers as performers, composers, and as teachers at major music institutions worldwide.

In 1979 William Appling founded William Appling Singers & Orchestra (WASO), a professional ensemble that appeared in concert at venues including Severance Hall, Cleveland Museum of Art, Blossom Music Festival, Alice Tully Hall, Philadelphia Museum of Art and Bard Music Festival. Over its 25-year history, WASO was acclaimed by music critics nationally and internationally. About WASO's 1993 performance as part of the Bard Music Festival, Edward W. Said wrote in The Nation: "For me, there was one particularly jolting work that stood out over all the others. Performed with rapt concentration by the William Appling Singers under Appling, a remarkable choral conductor, it was heard for the first time in the United States: *Strauss's Deutsche Motette, Op.62...*"

Ever a champion of contemporary American composers, William Appling introduced many new works to his students at Glenville High School, Case Institute of Technology, Western Reserve Academy, and Vassar College. He presented numerous premieres with WASO and conducted WASO in four critically acclaimed recordings: *Wake Ev'ry Breath,* music by William Billings on New World Records; *Stresses in the Peaceable Kingdom,* the choral music of Richard Wilson; *Shall We Gather,* a recording of American hymns and spirituals; and *The Revenge of Hamish,* choral music by William McClelland, all on Albany Records. In 1996, WASO was the only professional musical organization in the United States to present concerts celebrating the 250th anniversary of the birth of William Billings, often considered America's first great composer.

WHY THESE RECORDINGS?

William Appling's "discovery" of Joplin was unexpected and fortuitous. In 1987, a freshman at Western Reserve Academy in Hudson, Ohio, signed up for piano lessons with a heated desire to learn only one piece, Scott Joplin's *Solace*. Although it was rare for a student to hold sway, Appling agreed, with one caveat: that the boy study from Joplin's *Collected Works* edition. When the student graduated, the book was left behind in a practice room. It later got packed with Appling's music library where it stayed in a box in his Poughkeepsie, New York, basement for over a decade. One afternoon in 2001, while rummaging through the basement's holdings, he came upon the Joplin volume. Reading it, he was astonished by what he'd found and regretted that he hadn't discovered it sooner. As he intimately explored each composition, Appling was struck by the complexity of Joplin's works, his harmonic genius, his exquisite sense of musical balance, and the precision of his voicings. As an African-American musician born in the 1930s, Appling also felt a personal empathy with Joplin's struggle in life, and understood his persistence and compelling drive to create in the face of society's oppression.

Joplin's instructions to performers that ragtime should never be played fast was printed at the beginning of almost every composition he published.

Case Men's Glee Club European Tour, 1972, Sachsein, Switzerland

Appling became fired with the single purpose of getting Scott Joplin and his music "out there with the best of the well-known European composers." He began the project of recording Joplin's complete piano works. He also began engaging artists for a fully-staged production of Joplin's opera *Treemonisha* and had sent a copy of the score to his brother Harold, a writer, with the idea of his putting the libretto into modern English so today's audiences could more readily appreciate the work. Unfortunately, advanced illness prevented Appling from realizing this production. However, before he died, he was able to record the complete piano works. The recordings, which Appling, out of physical necessity, made without use of the piano pedals —

were finished over two years, 2006-2007, at his home in Poughkeepsie on his superb Steinway D.

These recordings are of particular historical significance because they are the first "complete Joplin" ever recorded by an African-American pianist. More important, the insights which Appling had into Joplin's music were profound, and these are particularly evident regarding the tempi he chose for many pieces. Appling believed that the vast majority of Joplin performances were much too fast. He took very seriously Joplin's dictum that "It is never right to play ragtime fast." Joplin was adamant about tempi; this exact phrase or similar instructions were printed (often in a box) at the top of 30 of his 46 solo piano works. Appling understood that Joplin had undoubtedly been subjected to hearing his works played not as the serious, classical music he intended, but as good-time, honky-tonk dance music that pianists competed over to see who could play the fastest. Appling believed his more deliberate tempos were clearly what Joplin envisioned.

With his profound understanding of Joplin's music on this and many other levels, both musically and culturally, William Appling has given us what may be considered the "definitive" Scott Joplin.

Rehearsing Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 5* with soloists Daniel Majeske, violin, and David Ralph, harpsichord, at Western Reserve Academy, 1979

Scott Joplin, date unknown

ON WILLIAM APPLING'S PERFORMANCES OF SCOTT JOPLIN

Scott Joplin was born around 1868 (exact date of birth unknown), the son of a former slave, into a musical family. He came into a tradition of African-American plantation music by birthright. His training by a German musician who had settled in his hometown of Texarkana meant that Joplin cultivated the discipline of Western classical music as well.

During Joplin's early years as a traveling bandleader and pianist, a new style of music from along the Mississippi River and the Midwest began sweeping the world in popularity—a type of music written, notated and printed for solo piano called ragtime. It combined the ebullient syncopation of African-based music with the harmony and structure of Western march forms. Joplin's brilliance lay in the inventive, prolific and expressive way he took this rather strict form and wove something memorable, substantial and unique from it. His sheet music sold well into the millions of copies, giving him the title "King of Ragtime," but Joplin did not believe that ragtime was a wholly commercial entertainment. He considered ragtime, at the level he composed it, serious art. Despite its popular status, and despite its beginnings in dance halls, saloons, and "places of ill repute," he wanted pianists to perform ragtime in a sensitive and dignified fashion, not in a hell-raising and infectious fashion, as people were, and still are, tempted to do. By all accounts, he was a sensitive and dignified man. He constantly exhorts the player from the printed page: "Do not play this piece fast. It is never right to play Ragtime fast."

How fast was too fast? Unfortunately, illness caused Joplin to cease playing before a reliable audio recording of his interpretations and preferred tempi could be made. Two of his students left somewhat conflicting accounts of Joplin's style. One, Brun Campbell, a pianist and barber who studied with Joplin in the late 1890's, made a recording of *Maple Leaf Rag* in the 1940's that certainly is not precise according to the printed page; it gallops along at a markedly lively tempo. Another student, William Sullivan, who studied with Joplin from 1910-12, wrote that Joplin's playing was "very slow and methodical." Joplin constantly admonished Sullivan to "place a strong accent on the first beat." Sullivan observed that by the time of his studies, Joplin was in ill health. It is impossible to know whether the composer's methodical and slow playing

was necessitated by increasing neurological deficits. Certainly by the time Eubie Blake heard Joplin (probably around 1915) his playing had deteriorated to a level below anything recognizable as artistic.

Despite the lack of recorded evidence, we can deduce Joplin's preferences by what he wrote in his manual *School of Ragtime.* Joplin makes it clear: ". . .we wish to say here, that the 'Joplin ragtime' is destroyed by careless or imperfect rendering, and very often good players lose the effect entirely, by playing too fast. They [the rags] are harmonized with the supposition that each note will be played as it is written, as it takes this and also the proper time divisions to complete the sense intended."

If executed precisely as written, Joplin promises that the compositions will achieve the desired "weird and intoxicating effect."

Performing Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" with the Cleveland Orchestra, Robert Shaw, conducting, 1962

William Appling takes Joplin's directive to heart. Always a proponent for closely following a composer's intentions, Appling plays each of the compositions in this complete recording with extreme attention to dynamics, rhythm, and articulation. Listen to the crisp, joyful performance of "Scott Joplin's New Rag," its heavy accents on the downbeats, just as Joplin wanted, the inexorable crescendos (as notated) in the left hand, leading to the powerful fortissimos that Joplin asks for in the score.

Similarly, in *Euphonic Sounds,* Appling plays the abrupt eighth-rest silences that Joplin indicates (in the fifth bar of the first theme) with exacting authority. What results for the listener is breathtaking surprise. In this track, the sharp dynamic contrasts are accompanied by exaggerated, authoritative accents on the downbeat and a vigorous bass line, making the performance dance. When the contrasting "C" section comes along, with its surprising twist into D minor and an even more shocking detour into D-flat Major, Appling coaxes a soft and prancing effect from the piano that makes us aware we are in the presence of some fresh and heady stuff, reminding us of some guys called Mozart and Schubert.

The Sycamore begins, as its indicated Tempo di Marcia calls for, with plenty of oomph—strong accents in the bass and an equally strong accent on the syncopated (tied) note in the melody. The tempo is dignified, yet the accents Appling gives the march lend an insistent, humorous quality. Then, in a masterful character change, he leads the "C" and "D" sections into a bit of romanticism, with a skillful rubato in the dotted rhythms of the melody, and a lingering, sinuous sigh in the chromatic passage in the left hand.

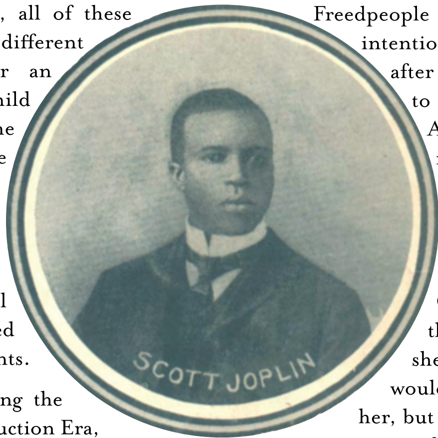
Lyricism continues in Appling's performance of *Solace*. With a lilting flexibility that's never indulgent, Appling keeps the rhythmic integrity of the underlying bolero rhythm so that this "Mexican serenade" recalls a last, nostalgic dance. Appling plays the many beautiful tunes contained in *Solace* with a ringing tone that invites lasting memories.

In this complete performance of Scott Joplin's compositions for piano, Appling's playing is rhythmically alive, tender with melodiousness, and confident but never stiff. He achieves, as Joplin envisioned for an ideal performance, "…an intoxicating effect."

- Debra Lew Harder, D.M.A., M.D.
Concert pianist, professor, classical music broadcaster

HE WAS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE WRITING THIS MUSIC

"He was not supposed to be writing this music." This was a statement that William Appling often made when contemplating the complexity of Scott Joplin's music. Historical conditions, social forces, economic constraints, all of these factors suggested a different path and status for an African American child born in Texas in the 1860s. There were counter forces, however, within African American communities in the years after the Civil War that nurtured Joplin's spirit and talents.



Joplin was born during the height of the Reconstruction Era, the period after the Civil War that was characterized by extraordinary changes in the United States. The exact year of his birth is uncertain. Biographers usually cite 1867 or 1868. The Civil War had ended, officially, in 1865, preserving the union of the states. The war era was followed by a roughly ten-year phase of rebuilding. This "reconstruction" involved fundamental issues of freedom, equality, and civil rights that would affect the entire nation. At the heart of the rebuilding was a central question: What would be the status of African Americans in post-Civil War society?

Freedpeople (ex-slaves) made their intentions clear during and after the war. Slaves fled to Union Army lines. Anecdotal accounts reveal changes among slaves still on the plantation. Helen Chestnut, a plantation mistress in South Carolina, observed that the butler, whom she had taught to read, would no longer look at her, but stared beyond her as if envisioning freedom. Nearby, other slaves rejoiced openly when news somehow reached them that Union troops had successfully entered the coastal Sea Islands. Chestnut was surprised that these slaves knew about the war and the significance of the conflict for their own lives. In January,

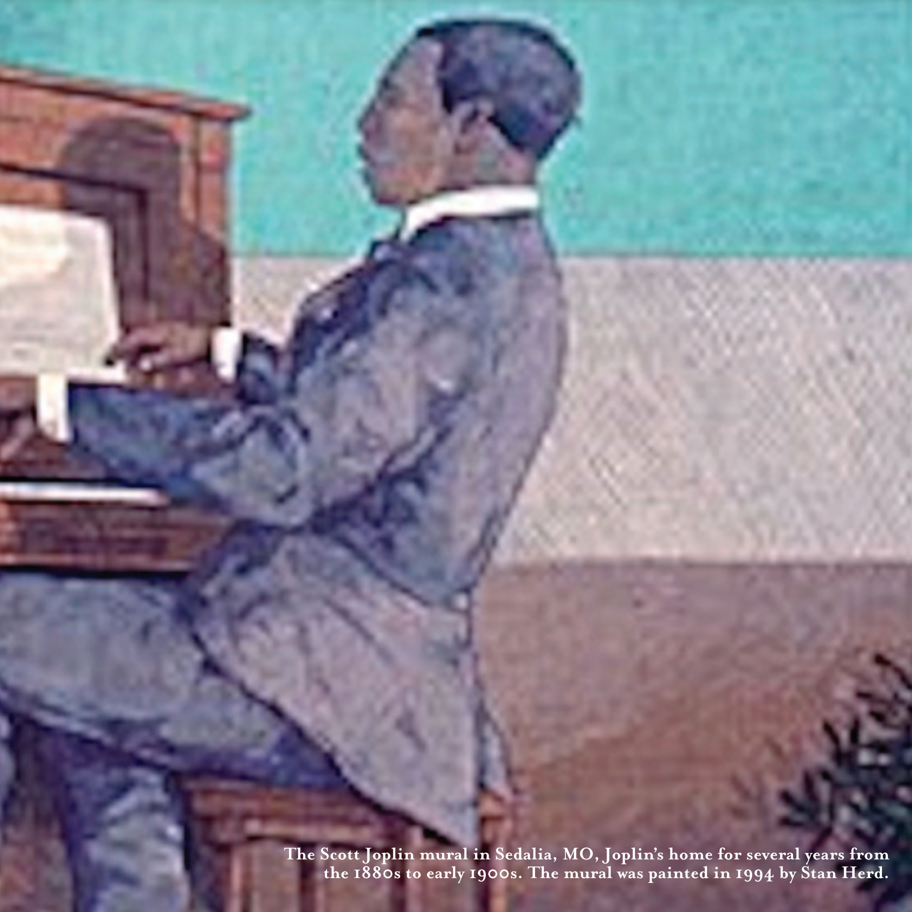
Conducting Vassar Madrigal Singers, 1991

1865 — three months before the end of the Civil War — U. S. government officials met in Savannah, Georgia, with 20 black ministers. The meeting had been prompted by Union General William T. Sherman's need to have something done about the thousands of former slaves, who had fled plantations and were now following his troops. A transcript of this extraordinary meeting reveals the clear vision and aspiration of the black delegates. Although they were all ministers, their backgrounds varied. Five of the men were free-born; three had been emancipated in slave owners' wills prior to the war; three had purchased their own freedom; and nine had been slaves until the Northern army arrived. The government officials in the room asked questions, queries that suggest that they knew little about the thinking of these black men: Did they, and those they represented, understand the war? Could they take care of themselves? Did they prefer to live among whites or to themselves? Yes, they responded, they understood and supported the Union army. They wanted land and could take care of themselves. And, nearly all of them expressed a desire to live apart from whites. Four days after the meeting, General Sherman issued Field Order Number 15, designating abandoned plantation land in the Sea Islands and coastal South for freedpeople to cultivate, and directing also that they were to govern themselves without interference.

The behavior of freedpeople after the war continued to upset the old order. The enrollment of 180,000 black soldiers in the Union army had challenged prevailing social norms and expectations, north and south, but there were more changes to come. Freedpeople registered their marriages with the Freedmen's Bureau, moved about searching for families or just exercised their ability to walk unhindered. They petitioned for land, held political meetings, built churches, and created social organizations. With the help of allies, they also built schools. They also magically changed their demeanor. Historian Eric Foner, in his in-depth study of Reconstruction, describes reports across the South of former slaves whom planters could not control: the cook, for example, who went off to a meeting about freedom, saying if the former mistress wanted her dinner, she could cook it herself. There was widespread resistance by freedpeople to onerous labor contracts that attempted to replicate slavery. A planter in Alabama complained that the freedpeople on his land refused to accept the contracts, wouldn't work and wouldn't leave.[2] Many freedpeople would assert that they had a right to the land, earned by generations of their sweat and blood.

The Civil War and its aftermath shaped Scott Joplin's world, with the atypical twist that was Texas. His family's history before the war reflected the complex narrative of African Americans in the South. Details are difficult to establish, but both of his parents were apparently born in the early 1840s. His mother, Florence Givens, may have been a freeborn woman from Kentucky.

Glee Club rehearsal, Western Reserve Academy



The Scott Joplin mural in Sedalia, MO, Joplin's home for several years from the 1880s to early 1900s. The mural was painted in 1994 by Stan Herd.

The Scott Joplin House, St. Louis, MO

Maple Leaf Club Sign, Sedalia, MO

His father Jiles (or Giles) Joplin had been born into the slave system in South Carolina and was taken to Texas as a child by the slave owner Charles Moores. This journey was not unusual. Numerous slave owners in the South had moved to the eastern region of the new state of Texas, where cotton production could thrive. Jiles was freed before the Civil War, which does not seem typical. He and Florence married before or during the war and lived through the unusual situation of war-time Texas. Part of the Confederacy, but not part of the fighting, Texas experienced no wartime destruction and no weakening of the slave system. War disrupted slavery in the other Confederate states, with thousands of slaves leaving the plantations, many of them enlisting in the Union army. The Emancipation Proclamation should have affected Texas, making all slaves there "forever free." However, if this news reached them, they could not readily exercise that freedom. Slavery actually increased as Southern planters sent their slaves to Texas for safe keeping or moved there with them to escape the war. For the Joplins, slavery must have seemed secure in Texas.[3]

Nor did change come quickly or easily. The Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery in April 1865, was not announced in Texas until June. The delay created uncertainty for slaves, who would have had to consider their actions carefully. When the announcement was finally made in June,

freedpeople celebrated with "Juneteenth" celebrations that are still held today by African Americans, especially in the West. The official order in June had stated clearly that "all slaves are free" and that there was now a state of "absolute equality" between them and the people who had been in the position of their masters. Leading Texans, however, clung to the hope that slavery would continue, in some form. Governor James Throckmorton, a former Confederate officer, bemoaned the fact that the federal government probably would not let Texas free slaves gradually, but he expressed confidence that "we will be enabled to adopt a coercive system of labor." A Houston newspaper assumed that a system of forced labor would replace slavery. State legislators did what they could to retain slavery. Black Codes in 1866 established rules of conduct for "persons formerly known as slaves and free people of color", a category that included Joplin's parents and their first child, Monroe, who was born in 1861.

The previous free status of the Joplins would have made no difference; they, like any other black person in the state, faced fines of $1.00 for such transgressions as "leaving home without permission" or "impudence". Labor contracts required all members of a family to work—a typical characteristic of slavery. Black children could be forced into sham apprenticeships, where they could "learn" farm labor and be disciplined with corporal punishment. Black men, convicted of trivial offenses, became a valuable source of convict labor. Not running afoul of the law did not guarantee freedom or peace. Other statutes denied African Americans the basic civil rights of citizens. Joplin's parents would not have been able to vote or be on a jury. Their testimony in court would have been limited to cases involving other black people.[4]

Joplin's family would have lived also under the "Reign of Terror" that swept through Texas and the other Confederate states after the war, as Southern whites, wishing to retain control, carried out a siege of violence against freedpeople and their white allies. The violence in Texas was extraordinary. White vigilante groups roamed and maimed at will, without fear of repercussion. Reports to the federal government described black homes burned, black men shot down in the streets, targeted political assassinations of white and black Republicans, intimidation of voters, teachers attacked and, according

to one account, schools 'burnt nearly as fast as they could be erected.' The Ku Klux Klan, which was born during this era, carried out raids in northern Texas, where the Joplins lived.[5] These were perilous times in which to live, let alone raise a family.

Had these Texans been successful, Scott Joplin would have had a much different path in life to negotiate. The role envisioned for a young, black boy in that postwar scenario was not the one that Scott Joplin was to play. Political changes and forces within his family and surroundings created a new script and different possibilities. Time was on his side. His birth in 1868, and his early youth, coincided with the political stage called Radical Reconstruction that brought dramatic changes to the South and nation. Texas, like the other former Confederate states, was put under military supervision. A new amendment to the constitution, the Fourteenth, established citizenship and equal treatment under the law for African Americans in the nation, and in the states where they resided. The Fifteenth Amendment gave black men the right to vote. The effect was dramatic. Black and white men voted, wrote new state constitutions, and created new state governments. Thousands of African Americans participated in the civic life of the nation, functioning as actors, rather than merely as objects of concern. Historians have identified hundreds of African Americans who held elected or appointed office during Reconstruction, including two United States senators and fourteen members of the House of Representatives. Even in Texas, where African Americans were only about 25% of the population, ten black delegates were elected to the Texas state convention to write a new constitution. Nineteen black men served in the Texas state legislature and others held local offices.[6] Viewed on a personal level, the political status of the Joplins, and other African Americans, was no longer ambiguous. They had been "free". Now they were citizens with civil rights, even though those rights would be contested.

Joplin was growing up also in an era of persistence and mobilization by black Texans. Even during the tumultuous months following the war, some planters complained about black laborers who argued about the terms of the labor contracts or would not work under them. The year that Texas passed the Black Codes, African Americans held political conventions in the state. Twenty-

six schools for freedpeople had opened in January of that year, offering day and night classes for children and adults. Freedpeople fled from Klan attacks, but also fought back. Juneteenth celebrations became occasions for social gatherings, relaxation, and political education. Chapters of the Union League in Texas organized freedpeople politically, held social events, such as picnics, arranged mutual aid for their members, and supported black farmers and laborers in their negotiations with employers.[7]

No records have come to light that describe Jiles Joplin's negotiations with his employer. Like most black families in Texas, the Joplins had few economic choices, but made the best of their circumstances. One historian noted that the four million black people who became free after the Civil War brought certain strengths with them. They were long-time Americans, some of them with roots in the country stretching back five generations. They had an African American culture that had enabled them to survive, and they had watched and understood the dominant white culture. The years of free status that Jiles and Florence Joplin had experienced would

William Appling, 1983

have given them opportunities to add to that knowledge and time to devise strategies for survival. In 1870, they were living on land owned by a white farmer, William Caves, in what is now Cass County in north Texas. They, and four other black families, were probably farm laborers. Scott Joplin was two years old, his brother Monroe was nine, and a third child, Robert, was one year old. The census of that year records two other adults in the household: a Milton Givens, age 60, and Susan Givens, age 70, who were probably related to Florence Joplin and may have been her grandparents. This means that Scott Joplin was growing up in an extended family of parents, grandparents (or other elders) and siblings. The family, in turn, was part of a black population that was at least one third of the residents of Cass County—numbers sufficient to support black community life.[8]

By the time of the next census, in 1880, the Joplin family had moved to neighboring Bowie County and was living in Texarkana, a town situated on both sides of the Texas-Arkansas border. Their decision to move was one that many African Americans were making at that time. By the late 1870s, Reconstruction was ending, a victim of Northern fatigue and the opposition of Southern whites who opposed change and carried out a relentless campaign to "redeem" the South. A rigid system of racial segregation and repression known as Jim Crow was taking shape. Without political power or access to their own land, most African Americans became ensnared in sharecropping or low wage labor and were subjected to economic intimidation and terror. Due to their small percentage of the electorate, African Americans in Texas were still voting; however, Redeemers controlled political power in the state. In

Houston, delegates at a national convention of colored men in 1879 probably summed up the feelings of many black Texans who were dissatisfied with the condition of their lives. Former masters, the men charged, continued to treat them “like legal property taken from them illegally”. The delegates urged the black population in the state to join the “Exoduster” movement to Kansas that was drawing thousands of black migrants from the South. The number of Black Texans who did leave for Kansas that year was so large that they became known as the “Texodusters”.[9] The Joplin family chose to remain in Texas. Their ability to create a life there — like those who chose to start over in a new place — reflects their resilience and strength.

The census that places the Joplin family in their new home in Texarkana in 1880 also shows changes in the household. Scott Joplin was now 12 years old and attending school. The elder Givens were absent, but there were three additional children: Jose (or Osie), 10 years old; William, 4; and Myrtle, 3 months old. The oldest child, Monroe, was 19. The census listed Jiles Joplin as a “common laborer”, which does not reveal much about him. Further research has revealed that Jiles Joplin had obtained a valuable job as a laborer on a railroad that paid wages higher than were typically obtainable by black workers. A map of Texas shows three railroad lines intersecting Texarkana, making the town something of a hub for travel and commerce. Joplin’s mother did domestic work, one of the few occupations available to black women in the South. His older brother Monroe worked also, adding to the family’s income with his job as a porter in a local store. In Texarkana, Scott Joplin’s emerging musical talent became apparent. This flowering did not occur in a vacuum. Both of his parents had musical ability. His father played the violin and his mother sang and played the banjo. They shared these skills and interests with their children. Scott and his younger brothers, Robert and William, could play the violin. Scott Joplin would later give guitar and mandolin lessons in Texarkana. His father is said to have played the violin for social gatherings as one of his tasks on Charles Moores’ plantation before the war, a setting that suggests to one biographer that Jiles Joplin would have been familiar with European modes of music, including waltzes and reels, and been able to pass on this knowledge to his children. Jiles and Florence would not have been the

only musical influences on young Scott. Biographer Susan Curtis has pointed out the ways in which music permeated African American culture and was an integral part of community life. Spirituals, chants, songs, and shouts were embedded in the rhythm of everyday life, including worship, celebrations, and labor. The African American music Joplin would have heard in Texas was also diverse, with roots in various southern regions, including New Orleans.[10] An interesting speculation is whether Joplin was exposed, as a child, to Mexican American and American Indian music.

Biographers have tried to determine the details of Joplin's musical training. His parents, especially his mother, nurtured his talent and interest in music. There is agreement that Florence Joplin obtained permission for young Scott to play the piano in the house where she worked. His father or his mother purchased a second hand piano for him. There were music teachers outside of his family also during his youth. Two local teachers have been named: Mag Washington, described as "a mulatto," and J. C. Johnson, identified as part Indian and part black. A turning point in his life was his contact with a German music teacher, probably Julius Weiss, who had migrated to Texas. Weiss is credited with advancing Joplin's musical talent and expanding his knowledge of classical musical forms. From age about eleven into his teens, Joplin received free lessons from Weiss. A common thread during these years is Joplin's extraordinary musical talent, an ability that caused Julius Weiss to become involved in the boy's musical education. Joplin's concentration on music, and his mother's support, may have caused strain in his parents' marriage, with his father favoring more immediate and practical work for his son. Any disagreement they had over their son's direction does not seem to have interrupted or slowed Joplin's pursuit of music. In his teens, he was playing music at local events and had formed a vocal quartet that performed in the Texarkana area. One woman from Texarkana, who had heard Joplin play, recalled his inventiveness: "He did not have to play anybody else's music," she said. "He made up his own, and it was beautiful." During his teens or early twenties, Joplin moved beyond Texarkana and became a traveling musician. Two of his brothers, Robert and William, would also have careers in music and theater, with Robert becoming a well-known performer in vaudeville.[11] When and where Scott Joplin

travelled remains uncertain. By 1894, however, he was living in Sedalia, Missouri. His music continued to evolve and reached the complexity that led William Appling to say, "Joplin was not supposed to be writing this music."

Joplin's continuing development as a musician was in sharp contrast to the confining system of Jim Crow that flourished and was deemed constitutional by the Supreme Court in 1896 in the famous Plessy v. Ferguson case. Joplin was negotiating a racially stratified world, separate and unequal, but there were other influences. His life and work should be understood also within the context of the energizing forces emanating from African American communities. A rising black middle class continued to promote the importance of racial achievement. Black colleges, established during Reconstruction, were producing their first graduates. The Black women's club movement chose the motto, "Lifting As We Climb". W. E. B. Du Bois, the noted scholar and activist, wrote of the need to nurture a "talented tenth." Even Booker T. Washington's emphasis on manual skills and accommodation can be seen as a way to achieve amidst what seemed like impossible conditions for African Americans in the Jim Crow South.

There is still another element to be considered in understanding the emergence of Joplin's talent. In the face of oppressive conditions, in a world of racist assumptions and expectations, a world that often demanded submission or death for black men and women, there existed also the support of black families, community and institutions. Du Bois, who was approximately the same age as Joplin, observed that these social connections could feel confining for a person with exceptional talent, but they also provided "a social world and mental peace." In his memoir, *Defending the Spirit: A Black Life in America,* Randall Robinson describes the mantle of love that he experienced growing up in segregated Virginia in the 1950s. Living behind what he called "the race wall", most African Americans did not surrender, but were committed to "defending the spirit".[12] Joplin must have experienced a measure of this support and spirit as he grew and matured as an artist.

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CONTEMPLATING JOPLIN'S WORLD

I received a call from William Appling one Saturday afternoon in the summer of 2008. William was working on Joplin's music, and asked me if I would put together a timeline of events for Joplin's era. He felt that having a greater sense of what was happening in the world, when Joplin was composing, would help him better understand Joplin's music. The timeline below is the one that I created for William, with some rewording for clarity. He told me that the list was helpful and that he believed that Joplin was aware of many of these events. —Patricia Oldham

SCOTT JOPLIN ERA

1883 The Metropolitan Opera House opens in New York City. The first program is a performance of *Faust*.

1892 Ida B. Welles publishes *Southern Horrors*, documenting the lynching of African-Americans, and leads an anti-lynching crusade.

African-American women in Washington, DC create the League of Colored Women and will open kindergartens for African-American children.

1895 Noted abolitionist, statesman, and writer Frederick Douglass dies.

Booker T. Washington gives a much publicized speech in Atlanta, Georgia in which he recommends that African-Americans accommodate to racial segregation and focus instead on self-help and industrial education.

Paul Laurence Dunbar publishes *Majors and Minors*.

1896 In *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court provides constitutional protection for racial segregation, using the doctrine "separate but equal" for public facilities. Jim Crow, a system of racial segregation and repression, flourishes in the South and in other regions of the nation.

Black women's clubs unite in the National Association of Colored Women. Using the motto "Lifting As We Climb," they fight for the equality of women and the elevation of the race.

1898 The Spanish-American War lasts several months and provides the U.S. with former Spanish colonies in the Caribbean and the Pacific, but war continues until 1903 in the Philippines, where the U.S. faces Filipino rebels seeking independence.

The United States annexes Hawaii.

1900 Henry Oswald Tanner, an African-American painter, wins honors at home and abroad, including the Paris Exhibition.

African-Americans begin boycotts of segregated streetcars in the South.

1901 President William McKinley is assassinated.

Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery*, is published in book form.

1902 Federal legislation extends the Chinese Exclusion Act, prohibiting nearly all Chinese immigration to the U.S.

1903 W.E.B. Du Bois publishes *The Souls of Black Folks*. He rejects Booker T. Washington's strategy, advocates a struggle for equal rights and education, and describes a "double consciousness" in African-American identity.

The Wright brothers carry out the first sustained flight of an airplane at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

1905 W.E.B. Du Bois calls on Black leaders to launch a renewed fight for racial equality. They meet in Canada in what becomes known as the Niagara Movement.

The first motion picture theater opens in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Patrons pay five cents to see *The Great Train Robbery*.

1906 The first radio program of music and words is transmitted on December 24.

1907 A "Gentlemen's Agreement" between the U.S. and Japan bars further Japanese immigration to the U.S.

1908 Two African-Americans are lynched in a race riot in Springfield, Illinois that stuns many in the nation.

1909 White and Black reformers meet in New York City and will create the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

1911 A fire in the Triangle Shirtwaist factory in New York City kills 146 workers, most of them teenage immigrant girls. The incident increases calls for safety regulations in the workplace.

1912 The *S.S. Titanic* sinks in the Atlantic Ocean on its maiden voyage.

Woodrow Wilson is elected president. During his first term, he will extend racial segregation in federal offices.

1913 Two amendments to the United States Constitution are ratified, providing for an income tax (16th Amendment) and the direct election of U.S. senators (17th Amendment).

Henry Ford introduces a new system, the assembly line, in his automobile factory.

1914 The Great War (World War I) begins in Europe.

1915 The film *Birth of a Nation* is screened at the White House.

German U-boats sink the British ship, the *Lusitania*, in the Atlantic Ocean. One hundred and twenty-eight Americans are among the dead.

Booker T. Washington dies.

1916 Margaret Sanger opens the first birth control clinic in the nation. Police arrest Sanger and close the clinic.

1917 The U.S. enters World War I in what President Wilson calls a war to make the world "safe for democracy." Although African-American soldiers are segregated and largely excluded from combat, some Black units fight with the French army and receive French medals of honor.

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CREDITS

Recorded in Poughkeepsie, New York, 2006-2007, Steinway D
Recorded by George Faddoul, The Barn, Ravenna, Ohio
Produced by William McClelland and George Faddoul | Edited by William McClelland
Mastered by George Faddoul and William McClelland
Cover art and program book design by The Design Studio™ at Disc Makers
Cover photo of William Appling by Nick Granito

This recording was made possible with grants from:
Charles A. Dana Foundation | ICF Foundation | Peck Stacpoole Foundation

Seven tracks on this recording were previously released on:
William Appling Plays Scott Joplin and J.S. Bach. Albany Records TROY1163.

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