

SCOTT JOPLIN

RAGTIME  
FAVORITES  
FOR STRINGS

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AS PERFORMED BY

ZINN'S  
RAGTIME  
STRING  
QUARTET

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Published for: First Violin - Second Violin - Viola - Cello - String Bass (optional)  
Complete Score



## FOREWORD

Ragtime by string quartet? Why not? Ragtime is first of all a kind of music, American but with an Afro-American rhythm pulsing and syncopating at its core. Piano, to be sure, was its original instrument (if we choose to overlook the country guitars that must have come first); but music has many voices, as the forest has many birds. And the viols, above all, are voices.

The great ragtime composers themselves arranged their piano pieces for small orchestra, with felicitous results as notable recent recordings have proven. But it remained for concert violinist-composer William Zinn to go all the way to the traditionally sacrosanct string quartet, beloved vehicle of the European masters in their most serious moments.

Zinn's Ragtime String Quartet now concertizes at colleges and in surroundings like the Alice Tully Hall in New York's Lincoln Center. Upon the very first hearing, even by someone immersed in the classic piano rags (like the present writer), there is a grateful feeling of familiarity rather than the shock of surprise. It *sounds* right, ergo it *is* right. And I, personally, believe that the greatest — and perhaps most classically oriented — of the ragtime greats, Scott Joplin, would have heartily approved, could he have heard Zinn's group play *Scott Joplin's New Rag* or the *Heliotrope Bouquet*. For it is not the Sedalia master malignly metamorphosed into someone else; it is the great composer in a handsome, new, tailored suit.

Ragtime, 'tis sadly true, *was* born in honky-tonk surroundings, while the Establishment stuffed its ears (or perhaps they were stuffy to begin with) and looked askance. Today, however, ragtime has made it all the way to respectability and one should never forget that its greatest composers, Scott Joplin, James Scott, and Joseph Lamb, were respectable gentlemen all. But let us remember, too, that Chopin distilled his perfections from the rollicking folk merriment of the mazurka or the covert (but notorious) bawdiness of the ballroom waltz, just as Brahms gave lovely form to the wild gypsy czardas. And, like the classic masters, the ragtime masters classicized rather than sanitized. They retained all of the intoxicating "barrelhouse" rhythm of the red lights. "Bill Zinn's Original Honky-Tonk String Quartet", \*also known as "Zinn's Ragtime String Quartet" was organized in 1973 after Mr. Zinn had been experimentally scoring the piano rags for strings. "It seemed to me," he says, "that the strings could create another dimension in ragtime, and ragtime a new dimension in chamber music."

A permanent group was recruited after a search for the proper musicians — artists flexible and open-minded enough to recognize the true classicism in ragtime.

"Fortunately," says Zinn, "I found players to match my needs. They knew and admired one another, and had played on the same club dates, concerts, and recordings." Their temperaments, technique and musicianship jell in an exciting and comprehensive whole.

Rudi Blesh

## PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS

These rags can be performed in three combinations;

1. As a string quartet by omitting the bass part;
2. As a string quintet by adding the bass to the string quartet;
3. As a string orchestra. In the orchestral performance, the more difficult double-stops can be played divisi.

\*Their recording of *Maple Leaf Rag*, *Heliotrope Bouquet*, *Scott Joplin's New Rag* and other rags are available on "Classic-Jazz No. 13" (Music Minus One records).

# Country Club

SCOTT JOPLIN  
Arranged by WILLIAM ZINN

Slow march time

Violin I *f* *mf*

Violin II *f* *mf*

Viola *f* *mf*

Cello *f* *mf*

Bass (Optional) *f* *mf*

A

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Arranged by WILLIAM ZINN

[illegible]

A musical score for the song 'The Rose Tree'. It features five staves: two treble clefs (Soprano and Alto) and three bass clefs (Tenor, Bass, and a lower Bass line). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The music is written in a traditional style with various note values, rests, and dynamic markings like 'v' (piano) and 'f' (forte). The lyrics are written below the staves, aligned with the notes. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

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