

'RAGS TO RICHES'

NEWPORT RAGTIME BAND

<i>Flute & piccolo</i> Jennifer King	<i>Trombone</i> Marc Fields	<i>Drums</i> Brian Malone
<i>Clarinet</i> Hal Melia	<i>Piano</i> Steve Hinnenkamp	<i>Violin</i> Manami White
<i>Trumpet</i> John Zappa	<i>Banjo</i> Bob Poe	<i>Bass</i> Mike Sharfe



James R. Cassidy, *Music Director*

10 A.M. Tuesday, February 28, 2023
7 Hills Church
Florence, Ky.

James Cassidy, *leader*
Deondra Kamau Means, *vocalist*

Deondra Kamau Means



Deondra is a master storyteller and resident playwright of The Children's Theatre of Cincinnati. He has 30 years of experience as a voice actor and he worked with the Hear/Now Festival for the past three years. He was voice talent for Blood Cotton and co-produced and assistant directed American Socialist: The Life and Times of Eugene Victor Debs. He was featured as a voice artist with Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra Lollipops as a narrator for Peter and the Wolf. He's a featured singer with the Hues Corporation and was recorded as a featured soloist with Kentucky Symphony Orchestra's Ragtime Band in Rags to Riches. In addition to directing audio play readings and podcasts for The Children's Theatre, Deondra is a voice talent with Sound Images based in Cincinnati, Ohio. ■

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

The Kentucky Symphony Orchestra appreciates student and teacher letters and or reviews regarding today's performance. We forward some of your letters along to the funders who support these free educational offerings. Student teacher letters are most helpful in grant writing. Send all correspondence to:

Kentucky Symphony Orchestra
P.O. Box 72810
Newport, Ky. 41072

Next KSO Concert:

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7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 25

Greaves Concert Hall, NKU



Call (859) 431-6216 or visit
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"RAGS TO RICHES"
The Roots of America's Musical Heritage

"Just a Closer Walk with Thee" ♦	Traditional
"The Entertainer"	Scott Joplin
"St. Louis Blues" ♦	W.C. Handy
"Queen Rag"	Floyd Willis
"When It's Sleepy Time Down South" ♦	Clarence Muse
"Castle Walk"	James Reese Europe
"Black Bottom Stomp"	Jelly Roll Morton
"Yo Feet's Too Big"	Fats Waller
"Weary Blues" ♦	Artie Matthews
"Minnie the Moocher" ♦	Cab Calloway
"When the Saints Go Marching In" ♦	Traditional

♦ arranged or transcribed by Scot Woolley

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America's 'ragged' music

Today, it's a familiar pattern: A black musical style catches on in the mainstream, and its detractors pounce upon it as a sign of moral decay. It happened with hip-hop, it happened with rock-'n'-roll, and it happened with jazz. More than a century ago, it happened with ragtime.

Ragtime is often cited as the first truly American musical genre, and it is no coincidence that it emerged and swept the nation just as American society was undergoing radical changes. The nation was becoming more urban and more industrial, as foreign immigrants teemed to the coasts and southern blacks, squeezed by both political and economic discrimination, headed north to cities like Chicago, Detroit, and St. Louis.

Today's selections

Performed as either an instrumental or vocal, "**Just a Closer Walk with Thee**" is perhaps the most frequently played number in the hymn and dirge section of traditional New Orleans jazz funerals. Its author is unknown. Both Elvis Presley and Tennessee Ernie Ford had hits with it in the '50s.

In his short career, Scott Joplin (1867–1917) wrote 44 original ragtime pieces, one ragtime ballet, and two operas. One of his first pieces, the "Maple Leaf Rag", became ragtime's first and most influential hit.

As a boy, Joplin was taught music theory, keyboard technique, and an appreciation of such European music styles as folk music and opera. After a stint in 1893 performing in Chicago for visitors to the World's Fair, Joplin formed his first band. He moved the next year to Sedalia, Mo., and began

working as a pianist in the Maple Leaf Club, namesake of the rag. Joplin, by then married, moved to St. Louis in 1900. It was there he wrote "**The Entertainer**"

Joplin moved to New York in 1907 but by 1917 had been admitted to a mental hospital because of dementia. He died there on April 1, 1917. In 1976 Joplin was posthumously awarded the Pulitzer Prize.

"**St. Louis Blues**", by William Christopher Handy (1873–1958), was one of the first blues songs to succeed as a pop song. Published in September 1914 by Handy's own company, it later gained such popularity that it inspired the dance step the Foxtrot. The version with Bessie Smith and Louis Armstrong was inducted in the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1993. The St. Louis Blues NHL team is named after the song.

In the early 1900s Floyd Willis (pianist, piano tuner, composer) penned the "**Queen Rag**" after the Island Queen, the paddle-wheel steamship based in Cincinnati. He lived most of his life at 503 Russell St. Covington, Ky. It was never confirmed whether Floyd was related to the W.H. Willis Music company that is still in business today.

Clarence Muse (1889-1979) was a black lawyer, writer, director, composer, and actor who appeared in over 150 films, including 1979's *The Black Stallion*. He also was the first African American to direct a Broadway show. Muse co-wrote, "**When It's Sleepy Time Down South**," which became a huge hit for Louis Armstrong.

James Reese Europe (1881–1919) was the leading figure on New York's black music scene in the 1910s. In 1910 he organized the Clef Club, a

society for blacks in the music industry. In 1912, they made history when they played a concert at Carnegie Hall.

Europe's Society Orchestra became nationally famous in 1912, accompanying dancers Irene and Vernon Castle, who in turn hired him to write most of their music, including the "**Castle Walk**".

Widely recognized as a pivotal figure in early jazz, Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton (1885–1941) claimed to have invented jazz outright. Morton was the first serious composer of jazz, popularizing exotic rhythms and including improvisation. Jelly Roll Morton wrote "**Black Bottom Stomp**" in 1925 as a reference to Detroit's Black Bottom area, on the city's near East side. The dance became a sensation and ended up overtaking the popularity of the "Charleston."

Thomas Wright "Fats" Waller (1904–1943) was a prolific songwriter and recording artist, jazz pianist, organist, composer, and comedic entertainer. Waller came to Cincinnati in 1932. He was among the many great names to work at WLW-AM when, in the depths of the Depression, Powel Crosley was hiring talent to help sell his radios. Waller had his own show — *Fats Waller's Rhythm Club* — for a time, and also played on the station's famed *Moon River*.

Waller was fired from the Nation's Station, though the exact reason remains unclear. The traditional story has Waller caught playing jazz on the *Moon River* organ — dedicated to Crosley's mother — while smoking and drinking. His song "**Yo' Feet's Too Big**" from the 1930s is a commentary on the size of his date's

"pedal extremities."

"**Weary Blues**" was written 1915 by Artie Matthews (1888–1958) in response to a challenge to write a rag that could compete with the popularity of Handy's "St. Louis Blues." Matthew's entry, which foreshadowed Boogie Woogie, eventually entered the jazz standard repertoire.

In 1916 Matthews moved to Cincinnati, where he spent much of the rest of his life. In an effort to aid the city's black population, he and his wife opened the Cosmopolitan School of Music in 1921. This became the first conservatory of its kind in the country, being owned by black Americans yet focusing on all forms of music. Matthews also worked with many Cincinnati churches as a choir director and organist, and with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra as an arranger.

Cabell (Cab) Calloway III (1907-1994) was an American singer, songwriter, bandleader, conductor and dancer. He was associated with the Cotton Club in Harlem, where he combined vaudeville and jazz. His song "**Minnie the Moocher**" employed scat singing (nonsensical ad-libbed lyrics) and a call and response with his band and audience. The song was recorded in 1931 and was the first jazz record to sell a million copies.

Though it originated as a spiritual, people are more likely to hear "**When the Saints Go Marching In**" played by a Dixieland band. It was made popular by Louis Armstrong's 1938 recording. The song also inspired the name of New Orleans's NFL team. — *Thomas Consolo*