

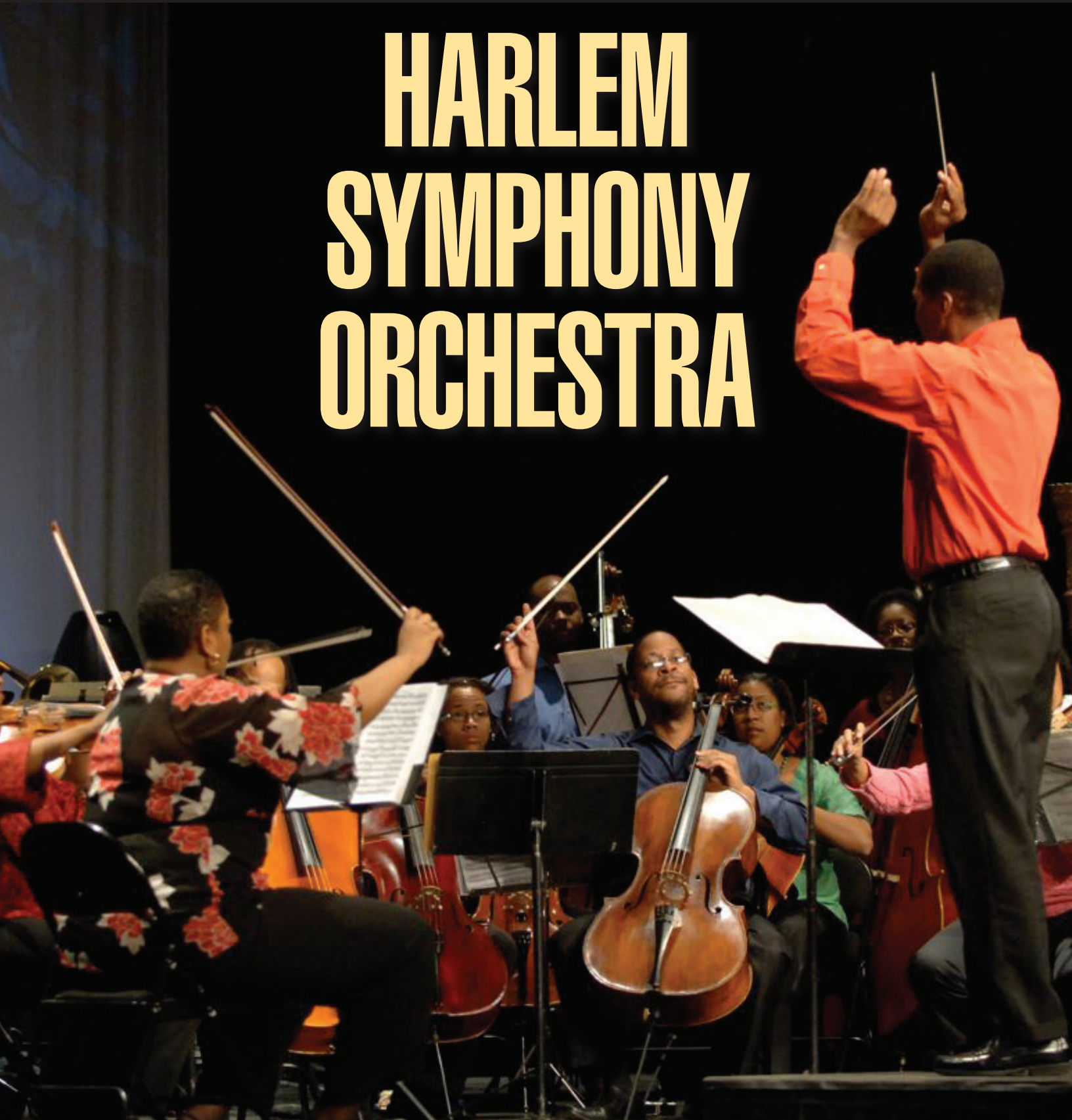
# APOLLO

EDUCATION

THE APOLLO THEATER STUDY GUIDE

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# HARLEM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA





From the graceful swells of string instruments to the thunderous roar of percussion, orchestral performances such as the one you'll see by the Harlem Symphony Orchestra, first developed in Italy during the early 1600s.

Early orchestras consisted of approximately 40 musicians playing various string, brass, and woodwind instruments. Over time they grew to include percussion and, today, can sometimes feature as many as 100 musicians playing together all at once!

Orchestral musicians must listen carefully to one

another, paying close attention to musical qualities such as **tone**, **dynamics**, and **blend**. While individual musicians are responsible for learning their own **musical parts**, everyone must work together as an **ensemble**. It is the responsibility of an orchestra's **conductor** to direct the musicians during rehearsals and performances and help balance the ensemble's overall sound.

A conductor uses their whole body to direct an orchestra, particularly their arms, hands, and even fingers! Standing on top of a **podium**, conductors often use a long thin stick called a **baton** to help enhance their movements.

## PARTS OF THE ORCHESTRA

Orchestras are made up of four distinct **instrument families**: **string**, **brass**, **woodwind**, and **percussion**.



Representing the **string family** are the violin, viola, cello, and double bass. Developed in Italy in the early 1500s, they range in size from the smallest and highest in pitch (violin) to the largest and lowest in pitch (double bass). Each instrument is made of wood and has four strings, which are most often played with a bow, although they can also be plucked with the fingers.

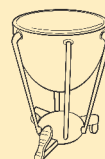


The **brass family** consists primarily of the trumpet, trombone, French horn, and tuba. All made of metal, brass players buzz their lips into a mouthpiece and then blow air through their horns to create sound. With the exception of the slide trombone,

the valves we see on most brass instruments today weren't introduced until the early 1800s.



The **woodwind family** includes the flute, piccolo, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, and in the earliest orchestras, the recorder. Whereas flute and piccolo players blow air over a small hole to create sound; oboes, bassoons, and clarinets are all reed instruments. When blowing air through their mouthpieces, a reed vibrates very quickly and creates sound.

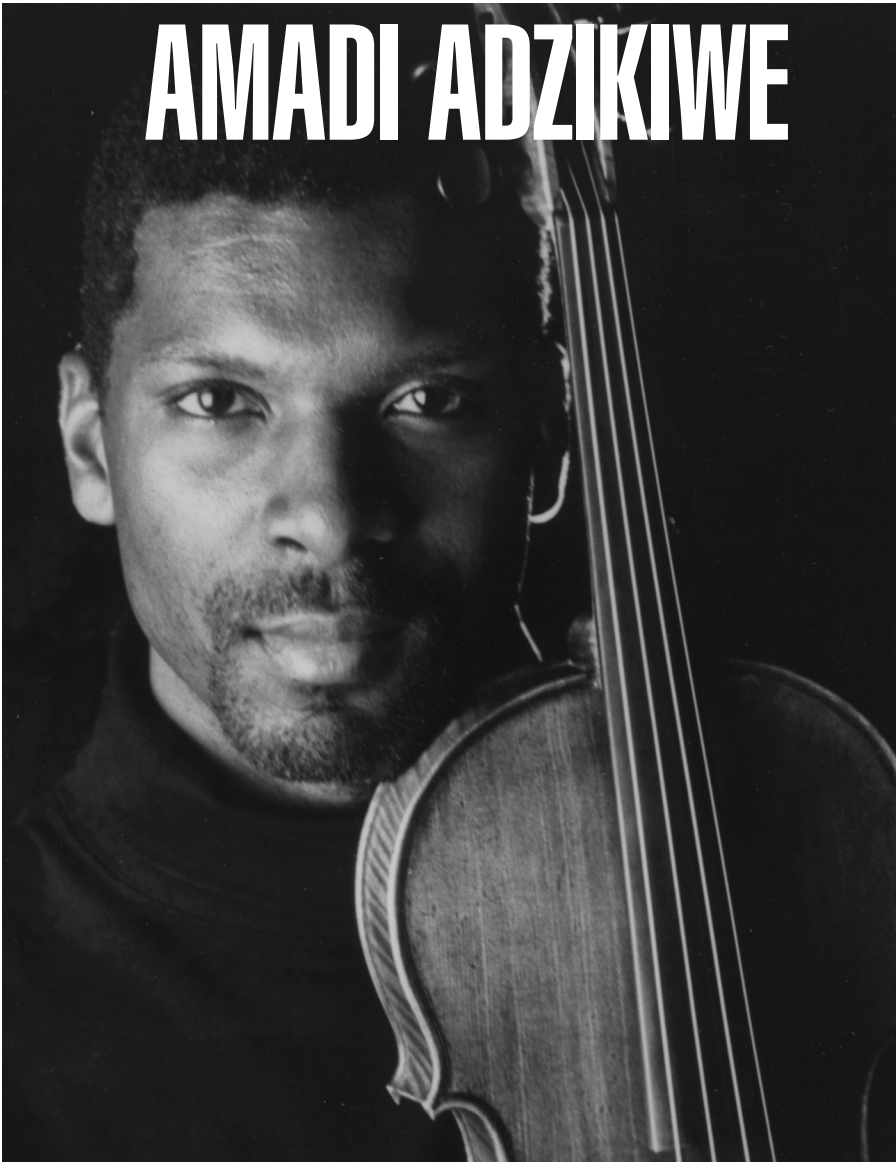


The **percussion family** features the snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, and timpani. Timpani are played with mallets and equipped with a foot pedal which can be tightened and loosened to control the drum's pitch.



# MEET THE CONDUCTOR

## AMADI ADZIKIWE



**D**irector of the Harlem Symphony Orchestra since 2004, Amadi

Azikiwe was born in New York City. After early violin and piano studies with his mother, he began formal viola training at the North Carolina School of the Arts. He continued his music education at the New England Conservatory, where he studied conducting and received a bachelor's degree in viola performance. He later received a master's degree in viola performance from the University of Indiana, where he also served as a professor of music.

As a violist, violinist, and conductor, Mr. Azikiwe has performed at many of the nation's premier classical music venues, including Lincoln Center in New York City and the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. Notable past performances include appearances with the New York Philharmonic; playing under the legendary conductor Leonard Bernstein at the prestigious Tanglewood Festival in Massachusetts; and performing in a ceremony at the U.S. Supreme Court House in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Mr. Azikiwe lives in Harlem, in New York City and enjoys studying history in his spare time.

## HARLEM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Created in 2004, the Harlem Symphony Orchestra celebrates the past, present, and future contributions of African American orchestral musicians. The Orchestra also seeks to provide role models who bring orchestral music to diverse communities and encourage youths of all ethnic origins to learn about classical music. The Harlem Symphony Orchestra's members are all African American and professional musicians, many of whom graduated from the nation's top music conservatories, including New York City's Juilliard School and Manhattan School of Music. Through its numerous educational outreach efforts, the Harlem Symphony Orchestra's mission is to create new audiences for orchestral music and promote African American involvement in the arts.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The banjo was developed on plantations in the U.S. South during the time when African Americans were enslaved. Its design originates from a West African instrument called the "Kora." Played with a syncopated fingering style, the banjo became a popular instrument in America, particularly in African American culture.



# MEET THE COMPOSERS

## Antonio Vivaldi

Antonio Lucio Vivaldi was born in Venice, Italy in 1678. His father started teaching him violin from an early age and young Antonio's talent on the instrument developed quickly. He became well known throughout Italy both as a performer and composer of **concertos**.

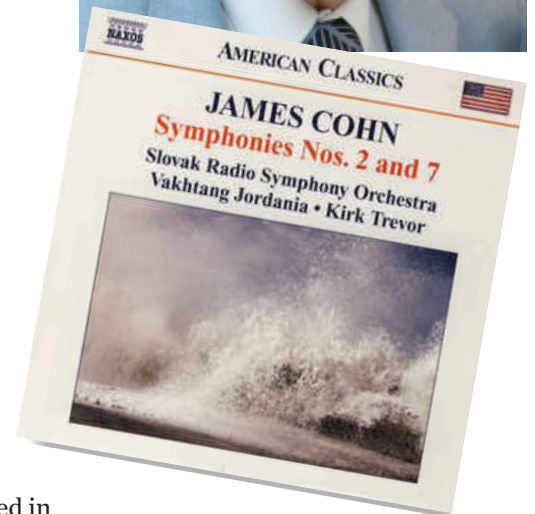
By age 25, he was appointed "Maestro di Violina" (Master of Violin) at an all-girls music school in Venice called "Ospedale della Pietà". He composed many of his masterful works during his time at the school and completed over 500 concertos in his lifetime, including his most famous work, "Four Seasons."



## James Cohn

Known for his inventive musical imagination, composer James Cohn was born in Newark, New Jersey in 1928. Learning to play the violin and piano when he was young, he graduated from The Juilliard School in New York City with a degree in composition.

He has composed music for solo performers, chamber ensembles, choirs, symphony orchestras, and more. While his works are rooted in classical traditions, his unique style of composing can also be modern and humorous to listen to. Cohn's pieces have been performed all over the world and featured on radio, television, and in movies.



## Musical composition

can refer to an original piece of music, either a song or an instrumental music piece, the structure of a musical piece, or the process of creating or writing a new song or piece of music. People who create new compositions are called composers in classical music. In popular music and traditional music, the creators of new songs are usually



**"MUSIC IS MY CONNECTION TO THE WORLD. IT GUIDES ME TO UNDERSTAND MY PLACE IN**  
**RELATION TO OTHERS AND CHALLENGES ME TO MAKE CLEAR THE THINGS I DO NOT UNDERSTAND. I IMAGINE THAT MUSIC IS A MEETING**  
**PLACE AT WHICH ALL PEOPLE CAN CONVERSE ABOUT THEIR UNIQUE DIFFERENCES AND COMMON STORIES." — JESSIE MONTGOMERY**

## Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is one of the most famous composers in classical music history. Born in Salzburg, Austria in 1756, he was considered a child prodigy on piano by the age of three. He wrote his first composition at age five; mastered the violin by age six; and wrote his first opera at age twelve.

Regarded by many to be a musical genius, Mozart composed over 20 operas and 40 symphonies in his lifetime. He is perhaps most famous for one of his twelve variations on a French folk song, better known around the world today, as "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star".



## Jessie Montgomery

Violinist, composer, and music educator, Jessie Montgomery, was born in New York City in 1981. Recognized as an important emerging composer by the American Composers Orchestra, her music has been featured on National Public Radio and is performed regularly by acclaimed chamber ensembles such as the PUBLIQuartet and Catalyst Quartet.

Since 1999, Jessie has worked with The Sphinx Organization, which supports the accomplishments of young African American and Latino string players. She is a graduate of The Juilliard School and holds a master's degree in composition and film scoring from New York University.



### WHAT IS FILM SCORING?

*Imagine you're watching a movie and an exciting action scene takes place. What might the music in the background sound like? Soft or loud? Slow or fast? Calm or suspenseful? Composing music for movies is called **film scoring**, and composers like Jessie help make what we hear in movies, become as important as what we see!*

called songwriters; with songs, the person who writes new words for a song is the lyricist. "Composition" is the act or practice of creating a song or other piece of music. In many cultures, including Western classical music, the act of composing typically includes the creation of music notation, such as a sheet music "score", which is then performed by the composer or by other instrumental musicians or singers. In popular music and traditional music, songwriting may involve the creation of a basic outline of the song, called the lead sheet, which sets out the melody, lyrics and chord progression.

# JOHN HENRY

The story of John Henry is one of the greatest tales of African American folklore ever told. According to legend, Henry was a railroad worker whose job was to drill tunnels through mountainsides. Famous for his strength, one day he was challenged to a contest to see who could drill a tunnel faster, man or machine.

Competing against a steam-powered drill, like a runaway train John Henry swung his hammer with all his might. Winning triumphantly, he fell to his knees in exhaustion immediately after the contest. He had worked so hard, and drilled so fast, that his heart simply couldn't keep up. John Henry died right then and there, with his hammer still in his hand.



**DO NOW:**  
Can you think of a story with a theme as legendary as that of John Henry? Like James Cohn, can you make variations to the story and tell it in a new and different way?

## WORDS TO KNOW

**Concerto:** A piece of music written for a featured soloist who is accompanied by an orchestra.

**Theme and Variation:** The compositional practice of theme and variation is noticeable when a particular musical idea is played (theme), followed by the theme being played again, but in a slightly different way (variation). For example, a theme may be played slowly while its variation may be played faster.

**Sinfonia Concertante:** Like a concerto, a Sinfonia Concertante is a piece of music written for a soloist (if not multiple soloists) who is accompanied by an orchestra. Different from a concerto, in a Sinfonia Concertante, soloists aren't always the focus of the piece. Instead, soloists contribute to the overall blend of the orchestra, working collectively to achieve a well balanced ensemble sound.

**Soloist:** Someone who performs a selection of music on their own, "solo" meaning "alone" in Italian.

**Composer:** Someone who writes their own music.

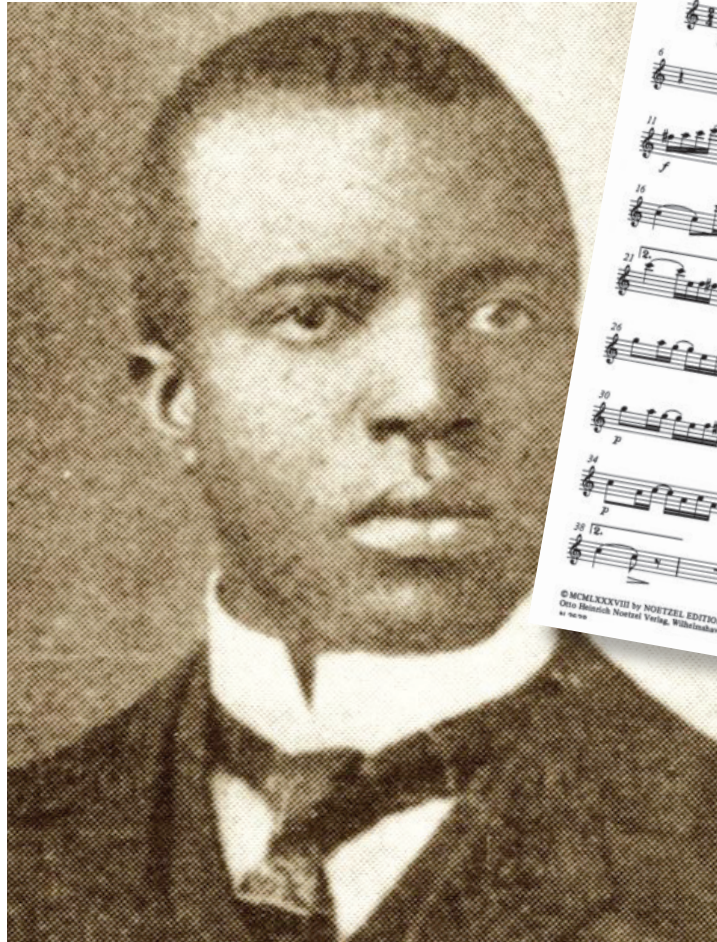


# SCOTT JOPLIN

African American composer

and pianist, Scott Joplin, was born in Northwest Texas in the late 1860s. He grew up hearing his father play popular folk songs on his violin and his mother singing and playing the banjo, an instrument which influenced his approach to playing and composing on the piano.

Working as a railroad laborer in his teenage years, Joplin left Texas in the late 1880s to pursue a career in music. He arrived in Chicago just in time for the World's Columbian Exposition, also known as the 1893 World's Fair. The six-month long event showcased a stunning array of modern technological marvels, including Joplin's revolutionary musical composition and performance style, called **Ragtime**.



## FUN FACT:

Nearly 70 years after his death, Joplin's "The Entertainer" sparked a Ragtime revival, with the composition becoming popular once again in the 1973 movie, "The Sting."

Continuing to travel and compose in cities including St. Louis and Sedalia, Missouri, Joplin's "piano rags" became faster in tempo and heavier in **syncopation**. His swinging melodies and rhythms encouraged listeners to dance. Likely his most influential

composition, "Maple Leaf Rag," was published in 1899 and became an enormous hit in the U.S., paving the way for the development of Jazz in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

While he studied and wrote music rooted in European classical traditions, Joplin's syncopated compositions were no doubt influenced by his parent's connections to popular music and Western African traditions. He wanted his compositions to be entertaining and fun.

Joplin's ability to bring the two musical worlds together, between classical art and popular entertainment, planted the seed from which much African American music grew in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Without Scott Joplin and Ragtime, there would be no Jazz, Rhythm and Blues, Gospel, Rock and Roll, Soul, Funk, Hip Hop, or Rap.

## DO NOW!

The 1893 World's Fair was known for introducing many modern marvels to visitors, including the music of Scott Joplin. Can you guess which of the following were also introduced at the Fair?

- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| A) Cracker Jacks    | D) Wrigley's Gum    |
| B) The Ferris Wheel | E) The Zipper       |
| C) The Dishwasher   | F) All of the above |

Answer: F) All of the above

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

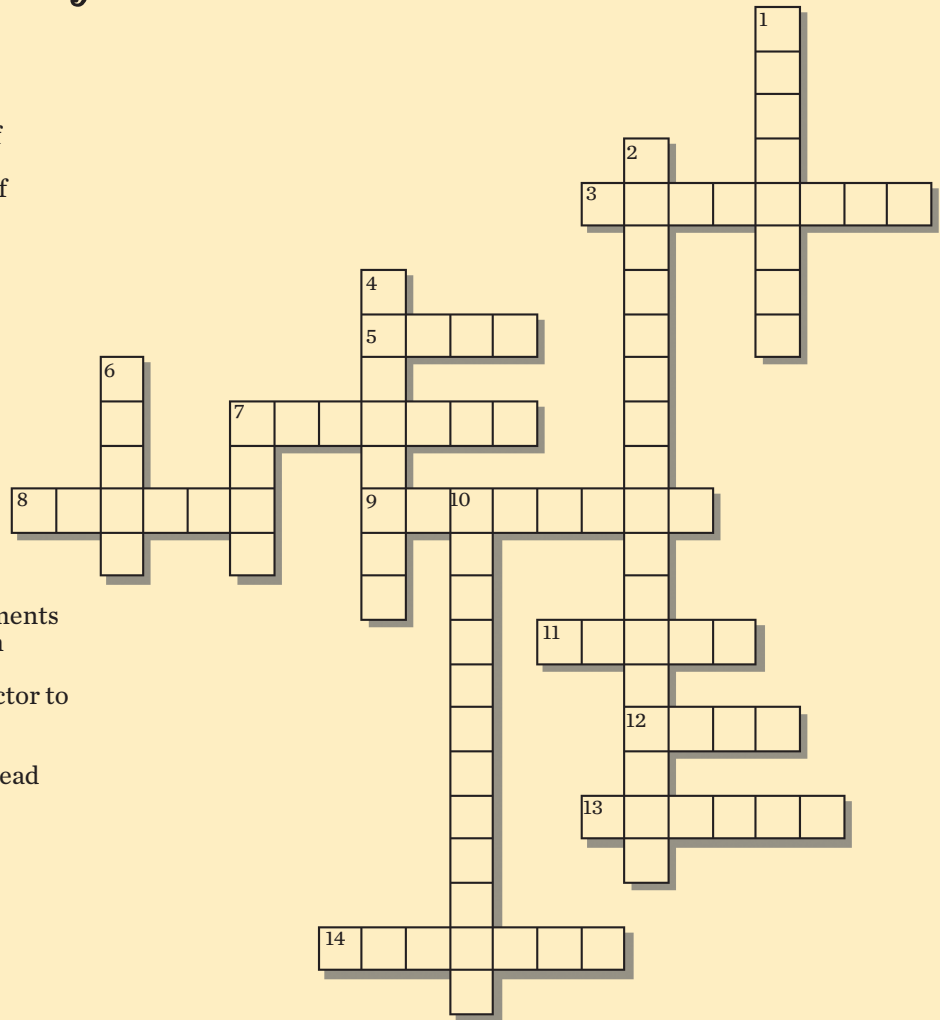
## I Hear a Symphony

### Across:

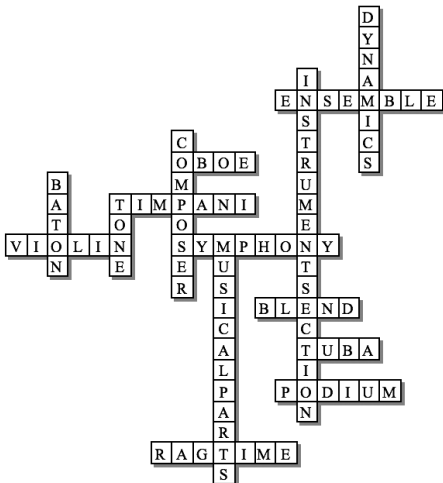
- 3 A group of musicians
- 5 Part of the woodwind family of instruments
- 7 Part of the percussion family of instruments
- 8 Part of the string family of instruments
- 9 A composition written for an orchestra
- 11 Balance of sound
- 12 Part of the brass family of instruments
- 13 An elevated platform the conductor stands on
- 14 A syncopated style of music created by Scott Joplin

### Down:

- 1 The volume of music
- 2 A grouping of the same instruments
- 4 Someone who writes their own music
- 6 A long stick used by the conductor to direct the orchestra
- 7 The sound of an instrument
- 10 The printed music musicians read



### Crossword Puzzle Answers:



**Written by**  
Tim Sullivan

### Apollo Theater Education Staff

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Debbie Ardemento  
*Associate Director of Education*  
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