



REGIONAL MUSIC HERITAGE CENTER

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SCOTT JOPLIN INTERNATIONAL CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

Major Event Planned to Become Annual

Music! Music! Music! From Ragtime to Rock, Big Band to Jazz, it's all on tap during Texarkana's **Scott Joplin International Centennial Celebration**, March 31 through April 2, presented and hosted by the new Regional Music Heritage Center. It all begins with a Preview Party on Friday, March 31. Celebratory festivities follow on Saturday, April 1 (the day Joplin died 100 years ago) and ends with the presentation of markers on the famed Arkansas Municipal Auditorium's "Walk of Fame" honoring two of Texarkana's music icons.

"The centennial of the death of Scott Joplin is being marked all over the world," said Dave Mallette, Executive Director of the Regional Music Heritage Center. "His complete works will be performed at Carnegie Hall; he'll be celebrated at the Manhattan School of Music; Sedalia Missouri will dedicate an entire week to the Centennial, while other observations are taking place here and abroad. As his home city and the place he learned his art, Texarkana's Scott Joplin International Centennial Celebration will be a landmark event in this important year."

FRIDAY, MARCH 31, 2017

Friday night kicks off the weekend with a sparkling evening of food, beverages and international entertainment at Silvermoon on Broad, 217 W Broad in Downtown Texarkana, starting at 6:30PM. The **Texarkana Trio** direct from Belgium, Netherlands will rock the Theatre side with 1950s favorites. In the Great Hall, **Dr. John Tennison**, a Texarkana native now living in San Antonio who is among the world's leading authorities on Boogie-Woogie, gets toes a-tappin' with classics from the 1870s to his own 21st Century composition of "Quantonal." Jazz stylings will come from another native and premiere international jazz vocalist, **Roseanna Vitro**. Plus, **Carol Miles and Three of a Kind** with special guest **Candace Taylor** are also in the line-up. There may be a few surprises as well when others take turns "as the spirit moves them" to ensure a night of magical entertainment. It's a casual, impromptu, mix and match evening, designed to stroll between the Theatre, Lobby, and Great Hall at

your leisure, meeting performers...and your friends. Tickets are \$35.00 per person, and can be purchased online at www.texarkanarmhc.org.

SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 2017

YOUTH SHOWCASE

Saturday brings in a youth element with the Four States Student Jazz Showcase, sponsored by the Texarkana Jazz Orchestra and the Regional Music Heritage Center. "One of the primary focuses of the RMHC is education," said Mallette. "This weekend will not only allow them to hear the music of Joplin and the various forms it influenced, but also, through the auspices of TJO, they'll have a chance to learn more about the music they are currently playing." Regional high school jazz bands will work with professional clinicians and compete among themselves for a spot on the Historic Perot Theatre stage Saturday night. For more information, contact Eckstein at 903-285-1818 or Dickeckstein@hotmail.com.

SCOTT JOPLIN MURAL:

Another event from 11:00AM to 1:00PM on Saturday will be a Scott Joplin Memorial and Street Sign Dedication at the Joplin Mural, Corner of Main and Third Streets across from the Historic Perot Theatre. Sponsored by the Scott Joplin Support Group, the *Scott Joplin Way* toppers for street signs were created by Kyle Dooley, Texas City Planning Department, to mark specific streets associated with the ragtime icon and Texarkana's Pulitzer Prize winner! The program will include presentation of a miniature sign to Joplin descendants, choral selections, and a performance by hometown prodigy and ragtime pianist, **Jermaine Layton**. Layton is in great demand as a gospel and jazz pianist around the country with more than 16 years of experience as a classically-trained musician. Now residing in Dallas, Layton is both a vocalist and an instrumentalist in piano/keyboard, organ, alto and soprano saxophone, percussion oboe, and clarinet. He is currently accompanying keyboardist for Grammy award winning artist, Kirk Whalum. Layton's transportation is via AMTRAK's Texas Eagle, the official artists' transportation sponsor of the Scott Joplin International Centennial Celebration.

FILM SCREENINGS:

If film is your forte, then the Texarkana Museum Systems has a collage of video's centered around Joplin that will be playing continuously starting at 1:00PM at the Museum of Regional History, 219 N. State Line Ave. They will include Burns Barr's 1998 concert video at the Historic Perot Theatre: "An Evening of Ragtime Music" with the late Jerry Atkins as master of ceremonies. Performing on dual grand pianos were the internationally recognized Joplin ragtime master Scott Kirby, and Texarkana's Vickie Al-Dubais, with commentaries from the late J. Hamilton-Douglas from the Joplin House in St. Louis, Missouri.

SCOTT JOPLIN CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

The main celebration event begins seating at 7:00pm in the Historic Perot Theatre, 219 Main Street, Downtown Texarkana Texas. Starting with the introduction of Joplin descendants, the **Student Jazz Ensemble** winner will open the evening's entertainment. Texarkana's **Carol Miles** takes the stage, performing an arrangement with original lyrics written just for the Centennial. Miles is a former international fashion model, actress, singer and composer who released three records in Europe between 1980 and 1990. Having studied classical voice in Paris, France, she traveled extensively in Europe with the Glamour Jazz troupe and opened for Ertha Kitt in Berlin, Germany. She now calls Texarkana home and sings with the Texarkana Chorale along with her Trio, Three of a Kind. Commenting on her selection, Miles said, "I've combined H. Lerner's 'Kansas City' with Scott Joplin's 'The Entertainer' to create 'The Texarkana Jazz Rag.'" Miles will be accompanied on piano by

Chicago pianist Allen Batts who recorded with the legendary singer, Lou Rawls. Batts now lives in Hope AR, teaches piano at the University of Arkansas at Hope, and often performs around the country.

Taking the stage next is the awards-winning, internationally-recognized ragtime pianist, composer, recording artist, and historian, **Reginald Robinson**, coming from Chicago on AMTRAK's *Texas Eagle*. Beginning his career in 1992, Robinson has recorded five albums that display his virtuosity as a performer, composer, and arranger. According to his biography, Robinson has shared the stage with such luminaries as Herbie Hancock, Marian McPartland, Koko Taylor, Randy Weston, and Allan Toussaint among others. He's also a well-known composer and arranger for movie scores, stage plays, and live screenings. In 2004, Robinson received the rare and coveted John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellowship grant for innovative ragtime! In the ensuing years, he has been lauded as a music historian, lecturing at colleges and universities across the United States. He has also been collecting and preserving historical data related to ragtime and Black Classical Music, even serving as a contributing historian to the 2010 PBS documentary, *Chicago's Black Metropolis*. Critic Dick Hyman said: "Reginald (has) so absorbed all the classic rags that he could write them as well as the old masters could." His performance in Texarkana will be historic!

The first segment concludes with Texarkana's own internationally-acclaimed jazz vocalist and educator, **Roseanna Vitro**. She will be accompanied by a small ensemble from the Texarkana Jazz Orchestra. Grammy nominated, Vitro has the gift of interpreting the Great America Songbook with a 21st century perspective importing them into the jazz celebration with no limitations. With 14 critically-acclaimed recordings, including *Live at the Kennedy Center*, popular tributes to Ray Charles, Bill Evans, Clare Fischer, and the Grammy nominated *Randy Newman Project*, this Texarkana native is a consummate performer, educator, journalist, and jazz ambassador. She has deep roots in southern rock and gospel music, seasoned with theatre, pop, classical and jazz music. *The Denver Post* said "She is a creative storyteller who sings jazz like she means it, understands lyrics and knows how to caress a melody and, most of all swings like mad!" It's a pleasure to welcome Roseanna Vitro home to debut her signature sound in the Historic Perot Theatre.

Post intermission begins with the presentation of the first **Regional Music Heritage Center Lifetime Achievement Award** to a member of an iconic Texarkana family of musicians and music supporters. **Rule Beasley**, a descendant of the Beasley Music Store owners, will receive the "Boogie" as tribute to his many accomplishments as performer, educator, lecturer, and musicologist.

Finally, closing out the star-studded evening, is the **Texarkana Jazz Orchestra** under the direction of Dick Eckstein. Filling the house with the sounds of the best of classic big band jazz, this group of talented musicians from the four states region are dedicated to the enhancement and preservation of this genre. Many of the members serve their communities as music educators at Junior and Senior High Schools. During the past 20 years, they have performed in a wide variety of venues from community concerts, private parties, dances, and club dates to church services. No matter what the style or where they play, TJO rocks the rafters. Joining them for several numbers will be Ms. Vitro with standards familiar to every music lover.

Tickets for the Centennial Celebration evening at the Historic Perot Theatre are \$40, \$27, and \$15* with *half-price discounts for students to age 18, accompanied by an adult. For information, call the Regional Music Heritage Center at 832.498.3830 or purchase online at www.texarkanarmhc.org. Tickets may also be purchased by calling the Perot Theatre at 903.792.4992 or visiting the Perot Theatre Box Office, corner of Third and Main Streets.

SUNDAY, APRIL 2, 2017

The weekend is still in celebration mode on Sunday, April 2. At 2:00PM, the Historic Perot Theatre will once again be the venue of choice for two rollicking musical performances as **Texarkana Rocks! 1954-1956** hits the venerable stage.

First up is “**Elvis!**” arriving by AMTRAK’s *Texas Eagle* from Los Angeles, Calif.

As background, Mallette recalled: “The Arkansas Municipal Auditorium is well known for being one of the first places a young unknown by the name of Elvis Presley performed. So it’s only right that we celebrate the music of a ‘new’ Elvis: the acclaimed national and international impersonator **George Thomas**.” Thomas has done five USO tours abroad, performed at Mikael Gorbachev’s 75th birthday, and in NBC and ABC network programs as an Elvis tribute artist. Mallette continued, “In this segment we’ll also honor the late Texarkana College President, **Dr. Carl “Cheesy” Nelson**, who has the distinction of most likely being the world’s *first* Elvis impersonator and doing it on the AMA stage when the real Elvis was running late for a performance. We understand Cheesy’s act was so good that Elvis waited until he finished, then joined the young Texarkanian on stage for a duet!” Mallette added, “Since rock and roll has its roots in the music of Boogie-Woogie, which is tied to Joplin’s earliest influences in Texarkana, the RMHC wanted to highlight Joplin’s contributions with this tribute.”

Extra special guests to finish the Celebration weekend is an acclaimed European vintage cover band. **The Texarkana Trio**, from Belgium in the Netherlands, was founded in 2015 after a gig in Antwerp where they met for the first time. According to their biography, the Trio plays authentic rockabilly, without drums. They specialize in 1950s era hillbilly boogie, country bop, and rock ‘n roll. As their website says: “With a big fat slappin’ double bass (Ron Wouters), howling lead guitar (Jeroen van Delden) and scratching rhythm guitar (Pascal Snijders), we blast out both rare and known covers plus original songs.” Since one of their greatest influences has been Elvis Presley, they’ll provide the back line for George Thomas.

To top it off, Texarkana’s own Rockabilly pioneer **Pat Cupp** may join the group for a rendition of his international hit, “Long Gone Daddy.”

Tickets for the Sunday performances are \$45 (VIP Seating), \$27, and \$18. For information, call 832.498.3830. Online tickets are available at www.texarkanarmhc.org. Patrons may also call 903.792.4992 or visit the Perot Theatre Box Office for tickets.

Following the show, the public is invited to the Arkansas Municipal Auditorium’s Walk of Fame to dedicate plaques honoring two of Texarkana’s own iconic musicians: **Pat Cupp** and the late jazz master, **Jay Franks**. Then, enjoy free auditorium tours and photos with “Elvis” and The Texarkana Trio.

It’s still not over, though. The Scott Joplin Support Group has a surprise for those who return Downtown. The first *Skyscape: Music in the Air* will be unveiled at 7:30PM at the Lindsey Railroad Museum on East Broad, owned and operated by local educator and historian Dr. Beverly Rowe and her husband. It’s a large metal sculpture placed on the rooftop in the shape of a train engine which will be lighted each night. The brief dedication will highlight the railroad Skyscape’s beginnings as well as detail further sculptures planned for other Downtown rooftops in the coming months.

THE CELEBRATION CONTINUES ... into the year

A series of additional musical performances and listening sessions using the internationally known Klipsch sound systems are planned throughout this Joplin Centennial year at the Regional Music Heritage Center, 116 East Broad Street. For information and schedules, join the RMHC Facebook Page or email dave@texarkanarmhc.org to be added to the mailing list. The RMHC does not share or sell its lists, so all requests remain secure.