

## Overview

This activity highlights the life and music of the composer Scott Joplin. It can be adapted from simple coloring pages to a collage--whatever works best for your students or children. Discussion questions are included to facilitate a conversation about the life and music of Joplin.

## Instructions

For simple coloring pages, simply print out the included pages and listen to the corresponding musical piece while coloring that page. For example, find the "Rose Leaf Rag" coloring page, and color while listening to "Rose Leaf Rag". After the song is over, read and discuss the fact on that page together.

For the bouquet collage activity you will need a large piece of construction paper, scissors, glue stick, crayons, and stapler. Listen to the corresponding musical piece while coloring the page, but then cut out the flower and fact sheet after coloring. After the song is over, read and discuss the facts on the page together. Note: It may be fun to spread this activity over several days, focusing on one piece per day.

Continue in this fashion until all all coloring pages are colored and cut out. Arrange the cut out flowers and vase on the construction paper, and glue into place. Put all the fact pages in order, with the cover in front. Staple in the upper left corner to create a booklet. Then glue the back of the last page to the construction paper.



## Discussion Questions

Discussion questions are included on the page with the vase, but may be adapted for the age of the child. Additionally, this activity may spark an interest for further research on Scott Joplin's life and music. There are many wonderful resources available online, although I was personally disappointed to find out that there were few children's books on his life, and the one picture book I found, "Raggin'" by Barbara Mitchell seems to be out of print.



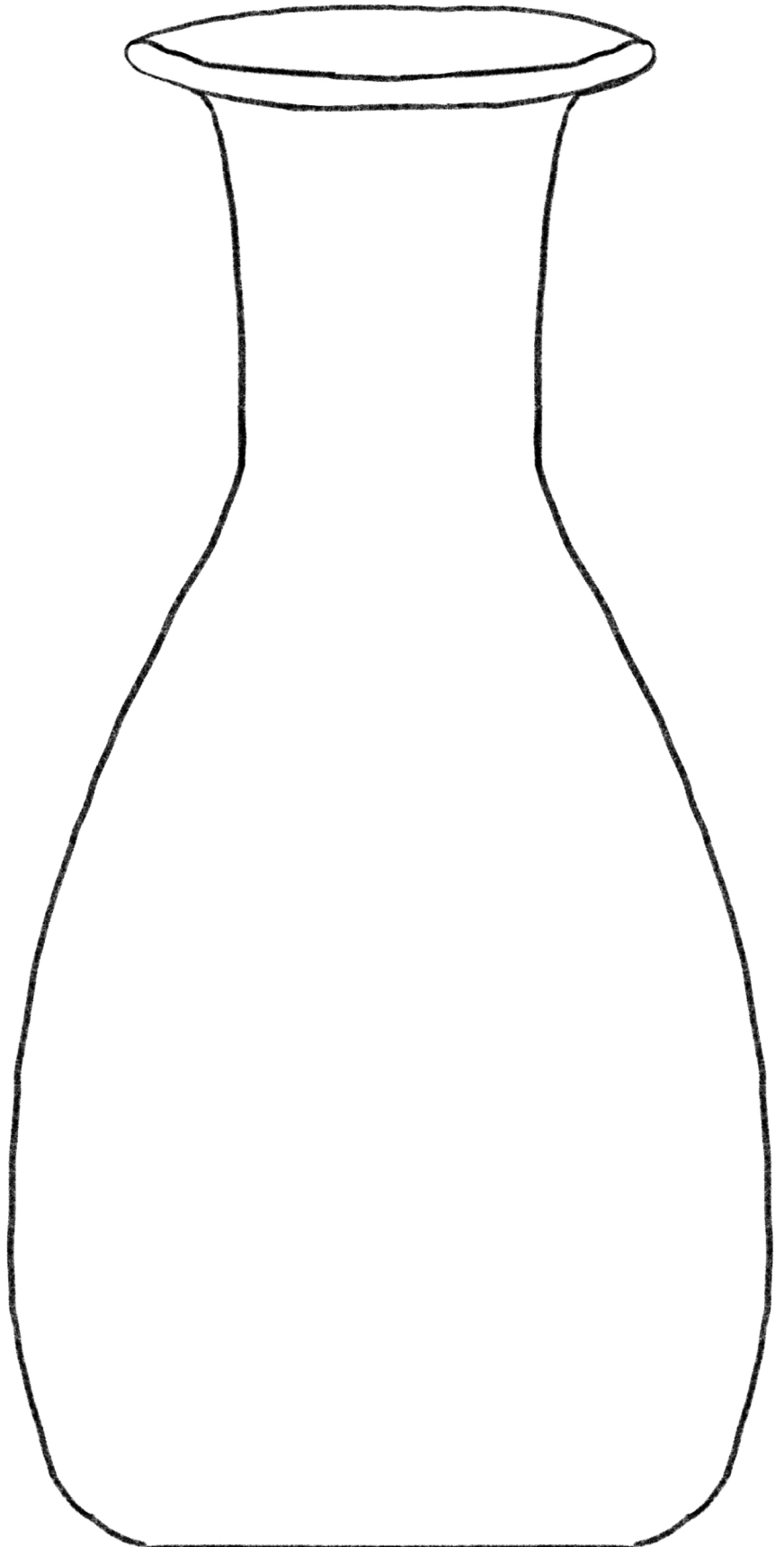
the life & music of

*Scott Joplin*

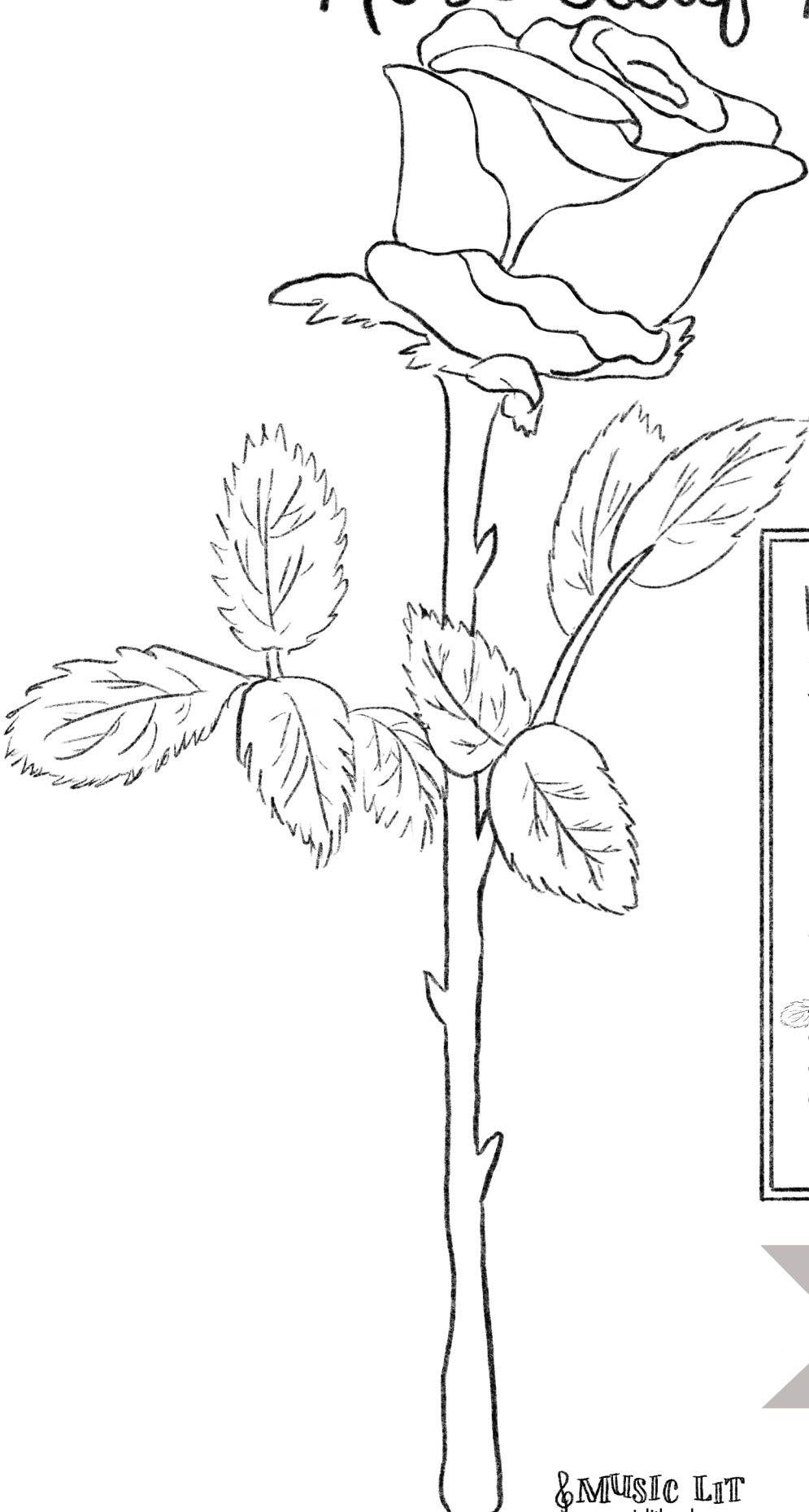
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### *Discussion Questions*

1. What character traits do you admire about Scott Joplin?
2. What is one new thing you learned from this activity?
3. What kinds of things did Scott Joplin have to overcome in his lifetime?
4. Which piece did you like the best and why?
5. How do you think Scott Joplin chose the names for his ragtime pieces?



# Rose Leaf Rag



## What is Ragtime?

"Rag" is short for "Ragtime", which was a popular style of music between 1895 and 1919.

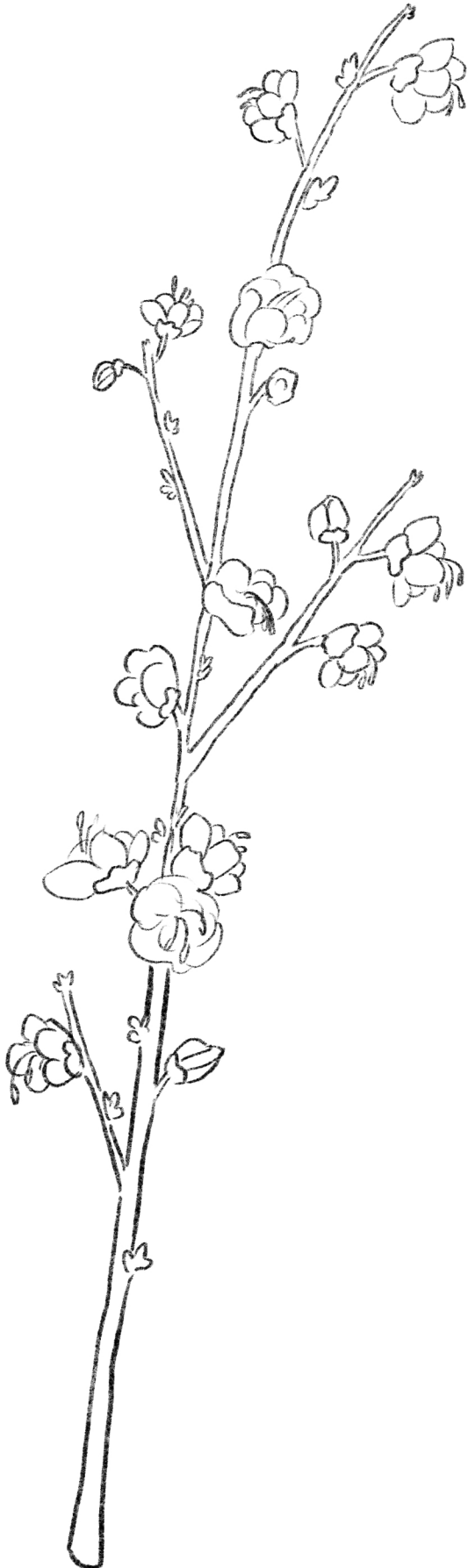
It got its name from its "ragged" or uneven rhythm patterns.

It has roots in African American musical traditions. Ragtime directly influenced the jazz movement.

Although at this time there were few opportunities for black musicians or composers, ragtime began a national craze and was some of the most popular music of the period.

Scott Joplin  
a ragtime bouquet

# Peacherine Rag



## *Scott's Musical Home*

Scott Joplin grew up with music in his home. His father played the violin and his mother played the banjo and sang.

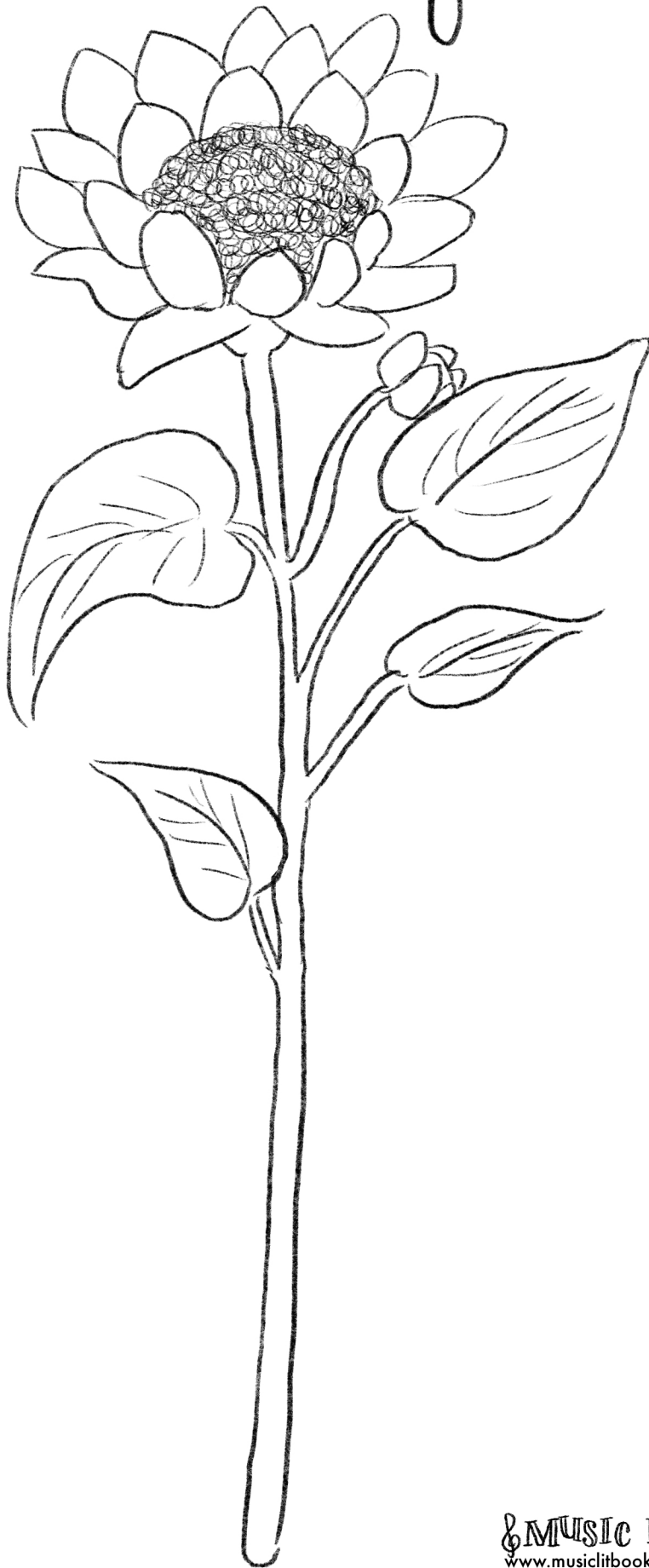
His father left the family when Scott was about 12, but his mom did not stop supporting or encouraging Scott's music. She worked hard to support the family and encouraged him to keep learning.

As Scott began performing, he learned there were few opportunities for black musicians because of harmful stereotypes and segregation.

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*Scott Joplin*  
a ragtime bouquet

# Sunflower Rag



## Scott Learns to Play

Around the age of 11, Scott Joplin started taking music lessons from a German-born Jewish music professor named Julius Weiss.

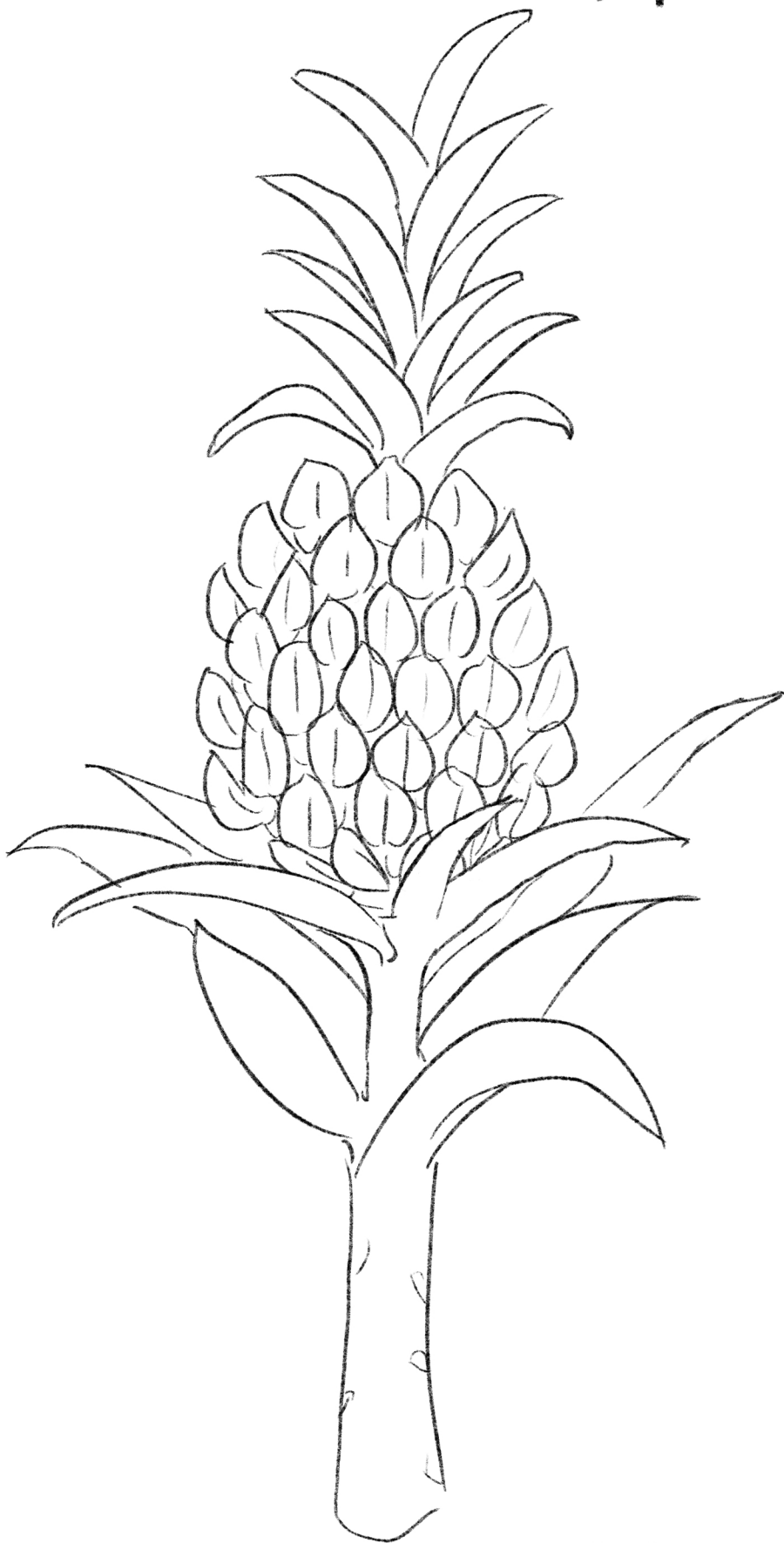
Weiss took compassion on Scott's family's financial situation and gave lessons to Scott for free. Together they explored many genres like opera, folk, and classical music. Weiss helped Scott's mother purchase a piano.

Scott never forgot his music teacher or his kindness, and sent him money and gifts until he died.

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Scott Joplin  
a ragtime bouquet

# Pineapple Rag

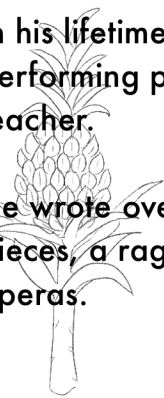


## *Scott's Many Jobs*

Scott Joplin left his job as a railroad worker to go to the Chicago world's fair where he heard ragtime music that inspired him to write his own.

In his lifetime he was a composer, performing pianist, and music teacher.

He wrote over 100 ragtime pieces, a ragtime ballet, and two operas.



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*Scott Joplin*  
a ragtime bouquet

# The Chrysanthemum



## Scott's Operas

Scott Joplin wrote two operas in his lifetime.

His first opera was taken from him as payment after he couldn't pay hotel fees and the opera is now considered lost.

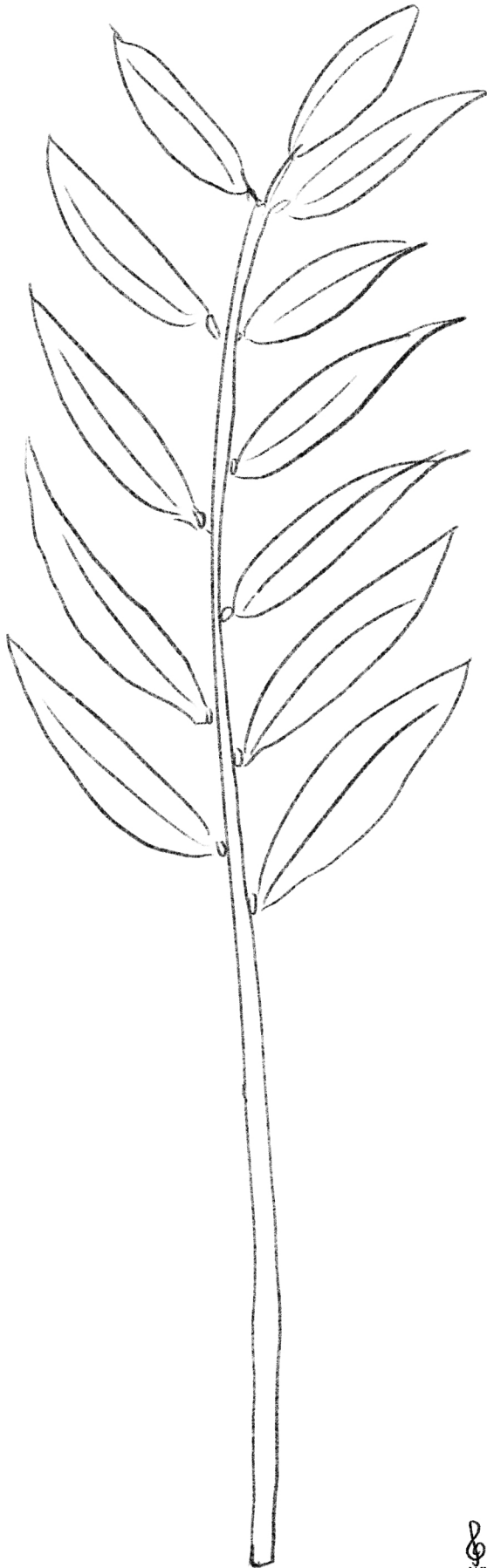
His second opera combined many styles like ragtime, spirituals, black folk songs, and the call-and-response form.

In 1972, 59 years after his death, Joplin was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for his second opera.

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Scott Joplin  
a ragtime bouquet

# Willow Tree Rag



## *Scott's Early Death*

Towards the end of his life, Scott Joplin's popularity plummeted. Although he was still hard at work, less and less people were interested in what he had to share.

He became bankrupt, and very sick with syphilis. He died in 1917 and was buried in an unmarked pauper's grave.

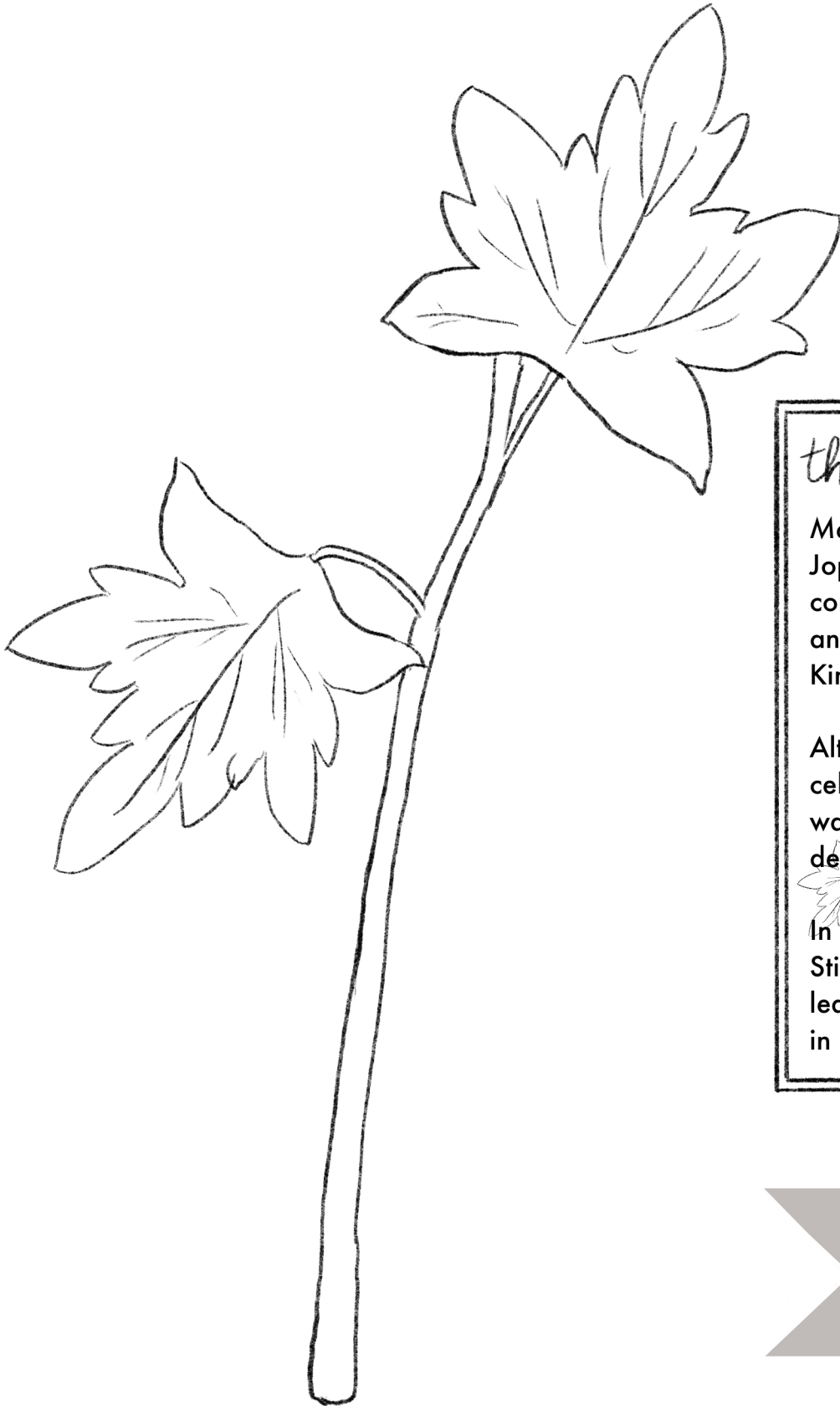
His grave remained unmarked for 57 years, when in 1974 a movie featuring his music sparked renewed interest in his life and music.

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*Scott Joplin*  
a ragtime bouquet



# Maple Leaf Rag



## *the King of Ragtime*

Maple Leaf Rag was Scott Joplin's most famous composition during his lifetime and earned him the title "the King of Ragtime".

Although his music was celebrated during his lifetime, it was largely forgotten after his death.

In 1973 a movie called "the Sting" used Scott's music, which led to a huge revival and interest in his music.

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Scott Joplin  
a ragtime bouquet