

Piano Music Celebrating Black History

Robbie Padilla, piano

February 19, 2021, 7:00

streamed live on [YouTube](#)

Bethena (1905)

Scott Joplin
(1868-1917)



From the Southland (1910)

Henry Thacker "Harry" Burleigh
(1866-1949)



I. Through Moanin' Pines

"Along de desolate roads we pass thro' lonely pines and wither'd grass:
De win' moans in de branches tall an' a heavy sadness broods o'er all!"

II. The Frolic

"Clean de ba'n an' sweep de flo', ring my banjo, ring!
We's gwine dance dis ebenin' sho', sing my banjo, sing!
All day long in de burnin' sun we wuk'd an' toil'd, lost an' won.
Now de ebenin' shadders come, now de bendin' wuk is done!
Den come 'long Nancy, come 'long Sue. We'll dance down care de whol' night thoo."

III. In De Col' Moonlight

"Just a tender heart repinin': 'Cased, yet 'scapes its bindin'.
And in mem'ry of a home forgets it's not its own.
Toil on seeker, stumble, cry, never know de reason why!
Alone in de moonlight call to the sky, listen for de col' reply!"

IV. A Jubilee

"Altho' you see me go 'long so, ma spirit's boun' fo' de Hebbenly sho'.
Gwine walk right up to de golden do' to my home in de New Jerusalem!"

V. On Bended Knees

"Oh, I look away yonder, what do I see? A band of angels after me.
Come to tote me away from de fiel's all green 'cause nobody knows de trouble I've seen!"

VI. A New Hidin'-Place

"My Lord, what a mornin', when de stars begin to fall!
De rocks an' de mountains shall all flee away; but you shall have a new hidin'-place dat day."

from **24 Negro Melodies, Op. 59 (1905)**

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor
(1875-1912)



3. Take Nabandji

"Thata, nabandji, nabandji!
Thata, nabandji, nabandji!"

17. Many Thousand Gone

"No more auction block for me, no more, no more,
no more auction block for me. Many thousand gone."

Sonata in E Minor (1932)

Florence Beatrice Price
(1887-1953)



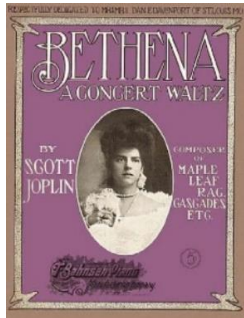
I. Andante-Allegro

II. Andante

III. Scherzo: Allegro

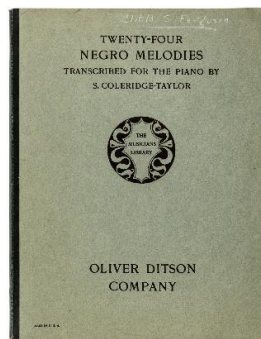
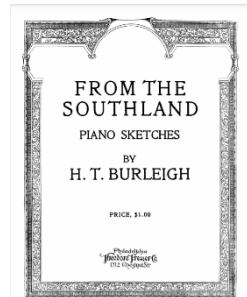
I'm so glad to share this virtual recital with you! If you'd like to support, you can donate what you can to the [virtual tip jar](#)! Learn more about my music at [rpadillamusic.com](#).

Program Notes: Piano Music Celebrating Black History



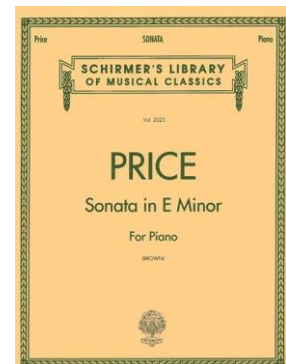
We begin the program with a work that is most different from the rest, *Bethena*, a concert waltz by **Scott Joplin**. Joplin, the “King of Ragtime”, was a product of the American South, growing up in a railroad town in northeastern Texas, then spending some of his most significant years in Sedalia, Missouri. Many of Joplin’s well-known ragtime works, such as *Bethena* that you’re hearing tonight, were composed in Missouri between 1896-1907 then, afterwards, in New York City. After Joplin’s death, ragtime was widely forgotten about until a revival of ragtime recordings and movies in the 1970s.

The second set in the program, *From the Southland*, depicts African American life at or before the turn of the 20th Century. Though there are no sung words, each piece is accompanied by a poem written by Burleigh’s wife, Louise Alston (1879-19??). In contrast to our first composer, **H.T. Burleigh** was a northerner born in Erie, Pennsylvania, who lived in New York City most of his adult life. Burleigh is mostly known for his 200-300 art songs and the vocal qualities are quite evident in this piano work, *From the Southland*, that was dedicated to the next composer in this program.



We move to a selection from a vast collection of works entitled *24 Negro Melodies* which, just like works by those before him, Brahms and Dvořák, and those after him, Grainger and Bartók, is based on folk tunes – in this case, Africa and the African diaspora. *Take Nabanaji*, with an unknown translation, is based on a melody from South East Africa while *Many Thousand Gone* is an American melody originating from slavery. Though **Samuel Coleridge-Taylor** visited the United States several times, he lived in England his entire life. Each of the *24 Negro Melodies* has a dramatic compositional style taking simple folk themes and turning them into virtuosic pieces.

We finish this program with a massive piano sonata by a composer who lived throughout a tumultuous America. **Florence Beatrice Price** mostly lived in Little Rock, Arkansas, during her first four decades before spending the rest of her life in Chicago, Illinois. Price’s compositions have roots in the European tradition reflective of the Romantic era with a heavy melodic influence of spirituals and even a sprinkle of blues. Price was prolific in her compositional output of piano, vocal, chamber, and orchestral works. Though her works were largely forgotten after her death, a revival of Florence Price’s music has steadily grown since the early 2000s. The first annual International [Florence Price Festival](#) was held in 2020 and will continue to honor the work of Florence Price and promote the music of historically marginalized composers.



I'm so glad to share this virtual recital with you! If you'd like to support, you can donate what you can to the [virtual tip jar](#)! Learn more about my music at [rpadillamusic.com](#).