

# The Sting



Set in 1936, the movie is about a pair of Chicago con artists (Newman and Redford) who find themselves in a high-stakes game against the master of all cheating mobsters (Robert Shaw) when they set out to avenge the murder of a mutual friend and partner [Robert Earl Jones]. Using a bogus bookie joint as a front for their con of all cons, the two feel the heat from the Chicago Mob on one side and encroaching police on the other. But in a plot that contains more twists than a treacherous mountain road, the ultimate scam is pulled off with consummate style and panache.

Thanks to the flavourful music score by Marvin Hamlisch, this was also the movie that sparked a nationwide revival of Scott Joplin's ragtime jazz, which is featured prominently on the soundtrack.

## Scott Joplin

Scott Joplin was an American composer. He was born on November 24, 1868 in Bowie County, Texas. He died April 1, 1917 in New York City.

Joplin studied piano and from the mid-1880s, he gave piano performances throughout the Midwest. Joplin made his home in Sedalia, Missouri in 1895, where he studied at the George R. Smith College for Negroes. He hoped for a career as a classical composer and pianist. He published some songs that made him immediately famous. He then moved to St. Louis in 1900 to work more closely with his publisher, John Stark.

In 1902, Joplin's first major composition was a ballet suite that utilized the rhythms of a type of music called "ragtime." Ragtime was a combination of folk tunes, African rhythms, and Creole influences. It was played by small groups in the streets of New Orleans and on showboats on the Mississippi River. It was peculiarly American, and it was like no other music heard before. Over time, Joplin became known as the "King of Ragtime."

Joplin's most famous compositions are the Maple Leaf Rag, and The Entertainer, which became popular again when it was heard in the movie The Sting. in the 1970s.

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1. When and where was The Sting set?
  2. In your own words explain the plot.
  3. What type of music was important in the film?
  4. Who is Scott Joplin and when did he live?
  5. What is Ragtime?
  6. Where did Scott Joplin study?
  7. What were his most popular compositions?
  8. Write your own report about The sting and Joplin.