

Notes on Today's Black Composers -2/15/26

Jermaine Lamarr Cole

Jermaine L. Cole, the hip-hop artist known as J. Cole, was born in 1985 on a military base in Germany and raised in Fayetteville, North Carolina. His upbringing in a diverse environment shaped his music and personal perspective, blending social consciousness and a commitment to authenticity. During his youth, Cole enjoyed both basketball and music, and served as a first-chair violinist for his high school orchestra. Cole's albums, such as "Cole World: The Sideline Story," received widespread acclaim for their introspective lyrics and social commentary. These works established him as a significant figure in the music industry, both for their artistic depth and commercial success. Cole has received numerous music awards, including two Grammys. Beyond performing, Cole's influence extends to nurturing new talent and shaping the future of hip-hop music. He is also recognized for his philanthropic efforts, focusing on community development and youth empowerment. His contributions highlight his commitment to social causes and community upliftment.

From <https://history.hiphop/j-coles-jermaine-lamarr-cole/>

Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges

Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges was born in 1745 in the French colony of Guadeloupe. He was a contemporary of Mozart and Haydn, and wrote countless symphonies, sonatas, concertos, opera and string quartets. Today, he is recognized for being the first known classical composer of African descent.

Scott Joplin

Joplin was born in east-Texas, around 1867. He was greatly interested in classical music and opera, but also composed ragtime music, for which he has become best known. With the rise of jazz music, he was nearly forgotten until in 1940, a group of jazz musicians began incorporating ragtime in their music. Thus began a resurgence of interest in Joplin's music leading up to its use in the music score for the movie *The Sting* (1973) and the Broadway production of his opera, *Treemonisha* (1972). In recognition of his significant achievements, the Pulitzer Committee in 1976 issued a posthumous award for Scott Joplin's contribution to American music. Ragtime is now a permanent part of the American musical landscape.

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