

Carolina Shout

James P. Johnson's signature.
Fats Waller, Count Basie and Duke Ellington learned to play
this note-by-note by listening to Johnson's 1918/1921 piano roll version.



James P. Johnson (1891-1955) was an important transitional figure between ragtime and jazz piano styles. His style became known as Stride. As a boy, Johnson studied Classical music and Ragtime. He started playing professionally in a sporting house, and then progressed to rent parties, bars and vaudeville. He eventually became known as the best piano player on the East Coast and was widely utilized as an accompanist on over 400 recordings and from 1916 on, produced hundreds of piano rolls under his own name. He backed up many of the Classic Blues singers of the 1920s, such as Ida Cox, Ethel Waters and Bessie Smith. Johnson's 1921 recording of Carolina Shout is considered to be the first recorded Jazz piano solo by some critics, although it sounds a lot like Ragtime to this listener's ears.

Arrangeret af Arne Dich
udfra en midfil af 1944-indspilningen

James P. Johnson

♩=200

A

5

9

13

17

3

3

3

2

3

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Carolina Shout" in 2/2 time, key of D major. The score is arranged in five systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 200. Measure numbers 1, 5, 9, 13, and 17 are indicated at the start of their respective systems. There are three triplet markings (indicated by a '3' over a group of notes) in measures 13, 14, and 17. A box labeled 'A' is placed to the left of the first system. The score ends with a double bar line and a final chord in measure 17.

B

21

25

29

34

C

37

41

45

49

D

Measures 53-56: This system contains four measures of music. The treble clef part features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some grace notes. The bass clef part provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and one flat (Bb).

Measures 57-60: This system contains four measures of music. The treble clef part continues the melodic development with some slurs and ties. The bass clef part maintains the accompaniment. The key signature remains one sharp and one flat.

Measures 61-64: This system contains four measures of music. The treble clef part shows a continuation of the melodic theme. The bass clef part provides a steady accompaniment. The key signature remains one sharp and one flat.

Measures 65-68: This system contains four measures of music. The treble clef part features a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure. The bass clef part continues with chords and moving lines. The key signature remains one sharp and one flat.

E

Measures 69-72: This system contains four measures of music. The treble clef part has a more active melodic line with eighth notes. The bass clef part continues with a steady accompaniment. The key signature remains one sharp and one flat.

Measures 73-76: This system contains four measures of music. The treble clef part continues with eighth notes and some rests. The bass clef part features a more active accompaniment with moving lines. The key signature remains one sharp and one flat.

Measures 77-80: This system contains four measures of music. The treble clef part continues with eighth notes. The bass clef part features a more active accompaniment with moving lines. The key signature remains one sharp and one flat.

Measures 81-84: This system contains four measures of music. The treble clef part continues with eighth notes. The bass clef part features a more active accompaniment with moving lines. The key signature remains one sharp and one flat.

F

85

88

89

92

93

96

97

100

G

101

104

105

108

109

112

113

116

H

117

122

128

I

133

137

141

Coda

145

150

"Carolina Shout" by James P. Johnson (notes by John Roache)

Here is "Carolina Shout" by James P. Johnson, the self-proclaimed "Father of Stride Piano".

This sequence was performed from a score which was transcribed by Riccardo Scivales from a recording made by Johnson on August 15, 1944. In the recording Johnson is accompanied on drums by Eddie Dougherty.

The piano and drums were performed by John E. Roache using the Riccardo Scivales score.

The drum accompaniment is performed in the same style as the recording.

The score can be found in "Harlem Stride Piano Solos" by Riccardo Scivales, published by Ekay Music Inc.

Scivales annotates the score as follows:

"This is the ultimate "test-piece" for every aspiring Stride pianist. Johnson recorded it several times, first a piano rolls (1918 & 1921). Duke Ellington as well as Fats Waller, Cliff Jackson and Joe Turner (to name only a few) learned "Carolina Shout" note-for-note from the 1921 piano roll. Ellington also considered this piece as "the most solid foundation" for him, and recorded it as a solo in 1956. Johnson composed its basic themes while working at Jim Allan's in The Jungles (1914) and "Carolina Shout" reveals the influence of the various musical dimensions from which he drew inspiration."

"The theme of the A strain originates from a traditional ragtime motive freely picked up and elaborated by various early jazz musicians. The B and the D strains are very reminiscent of the fiddle or banjo music played at set dances. The C strain is built upon a call-and-response pattern and is clearly the pianistic transposition of black religious music, featuring high and spirited "shout" of the preacher and the ecstatic response of the congregation. The E strain reiterates these concepts."

"The story of Johnson's early recordings of "Carolina Shout" parallels the transition from the "fast-shout" style to the Stride style. "Carolina Shout" was cut on piano rolls in 1918 and in May, 1921 and then recorded on October 18, 1921 for the Okeh label. These three renditions are very dissimilar. Both the piano rolls retained some of the mechanical nature of ragtime and "fast-shout" (some of which is also due to the piano roll medium). The 1918 roll in particular has very few tenths and "back beats" in the accompaniment, it lacks the Coda, and features an odd 23-bar B strain never used again by Johnson.

The 1921 roll is as much more articulated both in phrasing and rhythm, featuring 10ths, "back-beats" and a Coda. It is very close to the 1921 Okeh recording, but does not feature the right hand variation on the A2 strain. This variation, built on a double-third based phrasing, establishes the definitive Stride "sound" and is featured for the first time in the 1921 Okeh recording, which is the "final" version of "Carolina Shout. The 1944 rendition reported here is close to this version, with a fantastic drive added."

James P. Johnson

Johnson, James P., b. Feb. 1, 1894, New Brunswick, N.J., U.S. d. Nov. 17, 1955, New York, N.Y. in full JAMES PRICE JOHNSON highly influential black American jazz pianist who also wrote popular songs and composed classical works. A founder of the stride piano idiom, he was a crucial figure in the transition from ragtime to jazz.

In his youth Johnson studied classical and ragtime piano techniques, and by his late teens he was performing in saloons, in dance halls, and at parties in a black community on Manhattan's West Side, near Hell's Kitchen. While playing for dancers before 1920 he became noted for his rare ability to create embellishments, variations, and improvisations on popular songs, including the blues, relatively new at the time. He made piano rolls followed by recordings of his own songs. He also composed and orchestrated music for stage revues, including *Keep Shufflin'*, a 1928 collaboration with his leading student, Fats Waller.

Johnson's symphonic works, according to composer Gunther Schuller, use "basic Negro musical traditions that emulated roughly Liszt's approach in his Hungarian rhapsodies." However, these works, which include *Yamecrow* (1928), *Harlem Symphony* (1932), and the one-act opera *De Organizer* (c. 1940), with a libretto by Langston Hughes, have seldom been performed.

As played by Johnson, stride piano, a development of ragtime, used two-beat left-hand rhythms to accompany right-hand melodies that featured uncommon interpretative variety. Representative pieces range from the heartily swinging, up-tempo "Carolina Shout" and "Carolina Balmoral" to the delicate and reflective, slower-paced "Blueberry Rhyme" and "Snowy Morning Blues." Grace and elegance of musical line characterize his solos, and among his accompaniments, his work in singer Bessie Smith's "Backwater Blues" is especially notable. The most popular songs that he wrote include "The Charleston," "Old Fashioned Love," and "If I Could Be with You One Hour Tonight."

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