

## Syncopation

- A key characteristic of ragtime music is syncopation – one definition is: “an interruption of the regular flow of rhythm”
- It makes the song sound off-beat or ragged
- Scott Joplin called the effect “weird and intoxicating”
- Essentially, the melody is played between the metrical beats – so we have in 4/4 time the bass notes played on the 1 and 3 beats and the melody on the 2 and 4 beats
- Syncopation has been used in European music since the Middle Ages
- Classic ragtime was a new style: it blended African-American musical styles with European forms and melodies. Early ragtime has been called “folk ragtime”
- Irving Berlin said: “Syncopation is the soul of every true American. Ragtime is the best heart-raiser and worry-banisher I know.”



### Joseph Lamb (1887-1960)

- ❖ born of Irish emigrant parents in Montclair, New Jersey
- ❖ schooled at St. Jerome's College in Kitchener ON
- ❖ dropped out in 1904 to work for a dry goods company in New York City
- ❖ Largely self-taught, he composed his first rags as early as 1903 (age 16)
- ❖ By 1914 (age 27) music had become a hobby and he pursued a career as an accountant

