

Mp3 Frank Townsell - Blind Boone's Piano Music



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A blend of African American and Classical music including ragtime elements by Boone (1864-1927). Unique style. 12 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Piano solo, JAZZ: Ragtime Details: Born on December 11, 1941 in Kansas City, Missouri, Frank Townsell grew up in Kansas City and began his piano studies at age of five. In 1959 Frank made his first appearance as a piano soloist with the Kansas City Philharmonic Guild Orchestra. Frank received a Bachelor of Arts in French Literature from the University of Missouri while studying piano with Richard Canterbury and a Master of Music degree in Piano Performance from the University of British Columbia while studying with Dale Reubart. In 1971, he received a Diploma from the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France. His teachers were Nadia Boulanger, Robert Casadesus and Jean-Jacques Painchaud. He then studied privately with Nadia Boulanger until his return to the United States in 1972. Frank scored a triumph at his Paris debut, receiving an ovation which led to further successful appearances in France. At Reid Hall in Paris he was a soloist on a recital program in honor of the legendary Mlle. Boulanger and was also featured in recitals at the Fontainebleau Palace where he played for Queen Frederika of Greece. Mlle. Boulanger said of Mr. Townsell's talent: "This is a musician of real value and complete seriousness. I recommend him highly." Frank has appeared in music festivals in Columbia, Missouri and in London, England. *** John W. "Blind" Boone - The Man Notes by Frank Townsell Born in Miami, Missouri, on May 17, 1864, one year after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, John W. Boone ("Blind" Boone) became, during his lifetime, one of the most loved and respected musicians in America. His mother, Rachel Boone, had fled to freedom during the Civil War and worked, during the war, as a cook in an army camp in west-central Missouri. Rachel claimed to be among the numerous descendants of Daniel Boone and adopted the family name. John's father was a bugler about whom little is known. Early years: Shortly after giving birth to her son, John, Rachel moved to

Warrensburg, Missouri where she worked as a domestic for several prominent families. At the age of six months, John's eyes were removed to save his life due to "brain fever". According to later sources this was probably some form of meningitis. In spite of his handicap, John led a happy, contented life and displayed early abilities for music. At the age of three, he was observed by neighbors singing and beating time on an old tin pan. At the age of seven someone gave him a French harp which he learned to play to earn money from the local residents. When he was eight, his mother married Harrison Hendrix who had five children and they moved to a one-room log cabin. Apparently it was a happy household because John remained close to his step-brothers and sisters throughout his life. About this time Rachel decided to enroll him in the Missouri School for the Blind in St. Louis. Donations were made by the local townspeople and in the fall of 1873 Boone left by train for St. Louis. "Blind" Boone's musical genius is discovered: John did not like school very much and preferred to go to the music room to listen to the older students practice. Soon he was able to play easily the pieces that he heard and was befriended by a fellow student, Enoch Donley, who showed him some of the rudiments of piano technique. It was Donley who persuaded a piano teacher to listen to John. The teacher was very impressed and declared Boone a genius. Boone became proficient in his studies and in less than one year he was able to play any composition he heard.

John Lange and "Blind" Boone John Lange and "Blind" Boone: Shortly afterwards, John met John Lange, a man who was to play an important role in the development of his musical career. Lange heard Boone play in a church concert and was so impressed that he offered to manage his career. Lange is also important as one of the first African-American managers of a concert artist. He was a successful businessman and had considerable influence in the black community. Lange also saw to it that Boone developed his gifts to a greater extent by arranging further training. So Boone was sent to Christian College in Columbia, Missouri, where he studied the classics with Anna Heuerman and perfected his skills. The first concert of the Boone Company under Lange's auspices was held on January 18th, 1880 at St. Paul's Methodist Church in Jefferson City, Missouri, and was a great artistic success. Boone played a Hungarian Rhapsody by Liszt and some Beethoven Sonatas as well as selections from operas, and a number of his own compositions including the famous "Marshfield Tornado", a piece for which he was to become famous. This piece was a musical representation of a tornado which actually happened in Marshfield, Missouri. According to his biographer, Boone refused to reproduce the piece, either by publication or piano roll, claiming that he wanted to reserve it for his own use. During this period

Boone married Eugenia, Lange's sister, who frequently traveled with him on his tours. Boone plays over 26,000 concerts: Thereafter, Boone became a highly successful concert artist, playing in thousands of concert halls and churches and earning an enormous income. By 1916 his company had played over 26,000 concerts throughout the world and Boone was described by his contemporaries and critics as a musical genius with a both a phenomenal musical ear and musical memory. One of his most remarkable feats was to ask a performer to come from the audience and play a piece which was unknown to him, after which he would repeat it exactly as performed. His reputation was so great that the Chickering Piano Company made a nine foot concert grand for his use exclusively. This impressive instrument was made entirely of oak and is now kept in the Boone County Historical Society at Columbia, Missouri where it is made available to visiting pianists. Like his famous contemporary, Scott Joplin, Boone wrote music in a variety of styles, but whereas Joplin (whom he knew) was best known for his ragtime music, Boone was best known for his classical compositions although he also wrote and played ragtime music. Boone wrote waltzes, galops, polkas and caprices and infused them with African-American rhythms and melodies. One of his most famous compositions has, as its basis, the melody made famous by Stephen Foster - "Old Folks at Home". The ragtime pieces use indigenous folk tunes of Columbia and show his consummate knowledge of the genre, a knowledge developed from his school days in St. Louis. Last years: Boone's career flourished during the 1890's when opera houses were the primary source for entertainment and, in particular, his type of variety show. However, around 1920 his career began to decline when the radio and movie theaters superseded the concert hall as the main source of entertainment. There was no longer a demand for his type of company. Furthermore, in 1916 Lange died, creating a decline in bookings and a decrease in finances. At Boone's death on October 4, 1927 Boone's estate amounted to only \$132.65. His grave remained unmarked until 1971. Boone's last words give insight into his character: "Blindness has not affected my disposition. Many times I regard it as a blessing, for had I not been blind, I would not have given the inspiration to the world that I have. I have shown that no matter how a person is afflicted, there is something that he can do that is worthwhile." Boone's presence on the concert stage paved the way for many African-American performers and made the music of African-Americans more accessible to the general public. In this respect, he was a pioneer.

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