

GENTRAIN SOCIETY SPECIAL EVENTS



“RAGTIME THE MUSICAL”

From the Novel by E.L. Doctorow

Sunday, April 19, 2020

*Mountain View Center for the
Performing Arts*

Mountain View, California

Next Gentrain Society Regional Theater Trip Announced

Our next Gentrain Society Regional Theater trip will take us to Mountain View on Sunday, April 19, for TheatreWorks’ production of *Ragtime, The Musical*. Thus far there have been three iterations of *Ragtime*, and each of them has garnered a cluster of awards: the novel, by E. L. Doctorow, published in 1974, won a National Book Critics Award in 1975, and an American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Award in 1976. Both Modern Library and *Time* magazine named it one of the best 100 novels of the 20th Century. The film made from the book in 1981 by Miloš Forman was nominated for eight Oscars and six Golden Globe Awards. And the musical in 1996 was nominated for 12 Tony Awards (it won four), and narrowly lost the Best Musical Award to Disney’s *Lion King*; it was also nominated for 13 Drama Desk Awards (it won five), and its revival in 2009 was nominated for six Tony Awards and seven Drama Desk Awards (it won one).

The musical features three families from three different social strata at the turn of the century: a white upper-middle-class family in New Rochelle, New York; an African-American jazz pianist from Harlem, his girlfriend, and their son; and a Jewish immigrant and his daughter on the Lower East Side. The play deals with interactions among these families and groups, the interactions catalyzed by a large number of historical figures, including J. P. Morgan, Henry Ford, Booker T. Washington, Emma Goldman, Harry Houdini, Stanford White, Evelyn Nesbit, and Harry Thaw—there are even cameo appearances by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. The primary narrative thread concerns the Harlem ragtime pianist, Coalhouse Walker, Jr., and his confrontation with a racist fire chief and its consequences, a thread which pulls the other families and social classes into its fabric. The musical generally takes a positive view of America as a melting pot, but it is at the same time aware of the problems for the rest of the century generated by what is usually called the Progressive Age. That, plus some fine music and dazzling staging, makes this play a splendid way to spend a Sunday afternoon in the cozy village of Mountain View.

As always, Grant Voth, former Gentrain Coordinator and long-time guide for these theater trips, will give an introduction to the play in Lecture Forum 101 on Friday afternoon, April 17, from 1:00-3:00 p.m., designed to enhance understanding and enjoyment of the piece.

The cost is \$80.00 per person which includes play ticket, bus transportation, Dr. Voth’s lecture, and snacks on the bus ride. **Please make your check payable to “MPC Gentrain Society”** and mail to Wayne Cruzan, 75 Via Chualar, Monterey, CA 93940. **Please include your telephone number and/or your email address.** Questions? Call Wayne at 831-375-2371 or 831-917-0511.

The bus will leave the MPC Parking Lot B on Fishnet Road at 10:00 a.m. for arrival in Mountain View around 11:30 a.m. The play begins at 2:00 p.m. You will be dropped off near the theater where there are numerous restaurants for lunch prior to the play. The bus will then pick you near the theater for our return trip to Monterey. We should be back in Monterey around 6:30 pm.