

# A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Henry Luce

WHEN she thought about ragtime music at all, TIME's Hilary B. Ostlere admits, she "was like everybody else who considers it merely something played in bars by people with funny hats and striped sleeves." That was several months ago, and since then Ostlere has become a rags buff. She had an opportunity to indulge her new musical interest by doing the research for this week's Music section story on the late composer Scott Joplin.

The backgrounds of Ostlere and Robert T. Jones, who wrote the story, are about as close to ragtime as Bach is to Bacharach. Jones studied classical piano for 20 years, attended Juilliard and once coached young opera students. Since 1968 he has contributed to our critical sections. Ostlere, born in Wales and reared in London, danced professionally with the Ballet Rambert before coming to the U.S. twelve years ago. She still teaches ballet in her spare time. Independently, the two discovered—and became part of—the ragtime revival. Jones borrowed two unpublished volumes of Joplin's works and tried them on his piano for six hours straight, developing a sore left wrist from Joplin's thumping bass beat—and much affection for the tunes.

Ostlere, meanwhile, set out to learn what the old ragtime dances were like. In a Harlem retirement home, she found 89-year-old Ida Forsyne Hubbard, a popular dancer at the turn of the century who had known Joplin and performed to his music. With Jones at the piano and Ostlere on the boards, the old trouper instructed both in the rhythm and techniques of ragtime. Says Jones: "She conducted me, forced me to play it as she remembered Joplin. With a nod and her voice, she taught me what Joplin himself sounded like." She also taught Ostlere dances like the Dude Walk and Back Step Prance.

We usually try to keep our future plans, especially cover stories, as a surprise for our readers. This time, however, we give advance notice of a sizable project: TIME will soon publish a special issue devoted almost entirely to the American woman. The articles will report on the changing roles and aspirations of women in the family, the economy, the arts, politics and other parts of U.S. society. To complement our reportage and analysis, we invite comments from our women readers. Specifically, have your attitudes and experiences as a woman changed much in recent years? How, if at all, would you reorder your personal or professional life? Letters should be kept below 200 words and sent to TIME, Time & Life Building, Rockefeller Center, New York, N.Y. 10020.



JONES, HUBBARD, OSTLERE

The Cover: Drawing in pen and ink with dyes by Bob Peak.

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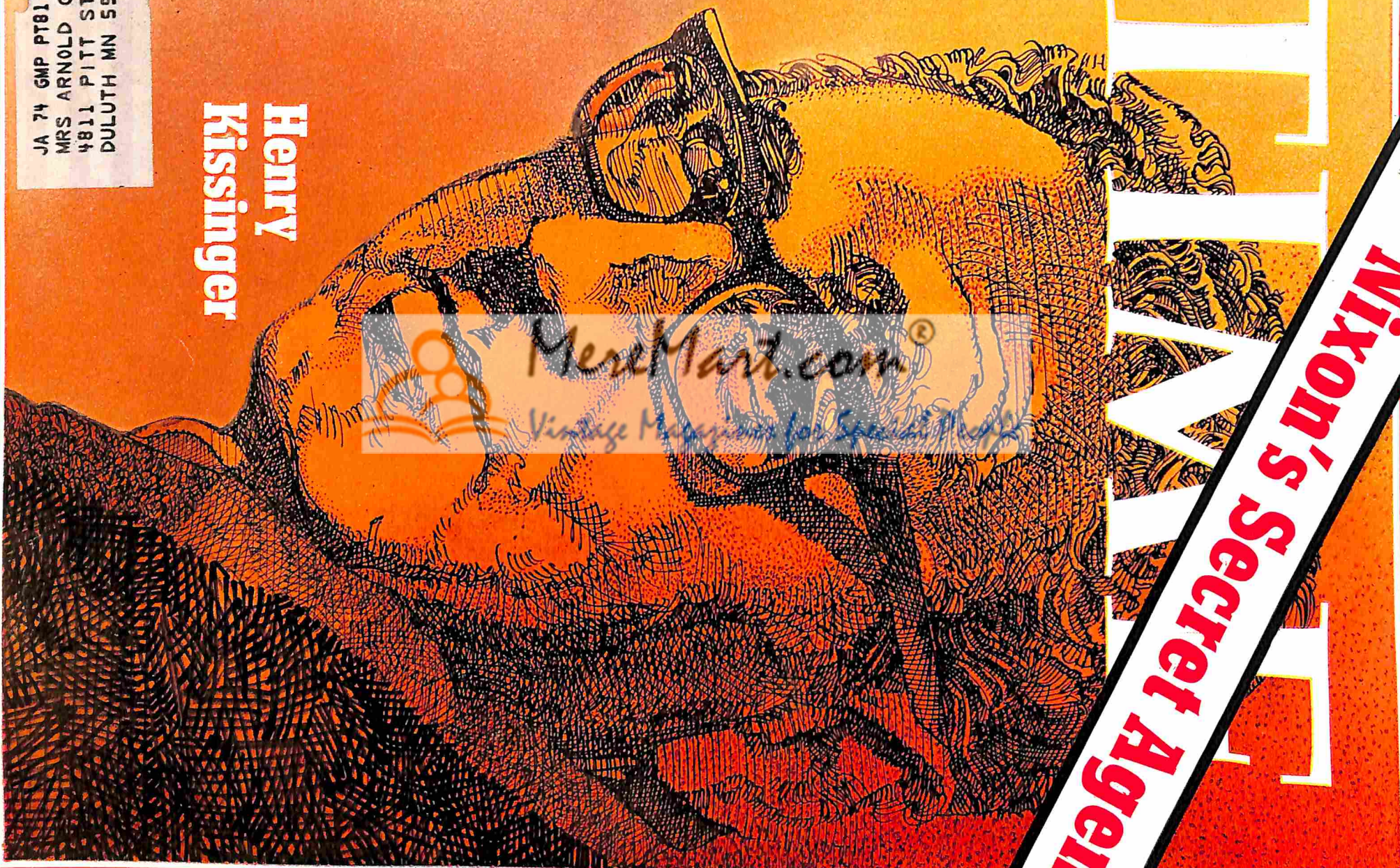
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# Nixon's Secret Agent



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