

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1974

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford

President and Mrs. Ford have invited Gunther Schuller and his New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble to entertain in the East Room of the White House following a State Dinner in honor of His Excellency Giovanni Leone, President of the Italian Republic and Mrs. Leone on Wednesday, September 25, 1974 at 8:00 p.m.

The New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble was organized two years ago by Gunther Schuller, President of the New England Conservatory. The group recorded the Grammy Award winning "Scott Joplin: The Red Back Book" which hit the top of the classical record charts in the current ragtime craze. Its second hit, "More Scott Joplin Rags" brought more overflowing concerts and TV appearances on a nationwide tour. Mr. Schuller arranged parts of this year's Grammy winning music from "The Sting".

Gunther Schuller, who was inaugurated as the New England Conservatory's ninth president on November of 1967, was born in New York City. His father was a violinist in the New York Philharmonic from 1923 to 1965. At the age of 12, Gunther Schuller actively began to pursue musical studies, taking up the study of composition with Dr. T. Tertius Noble, the flute, and later, the French horn. When he was only 16, Mr. Schuller began to play professionally, including the American premiere of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony with the New York Philharmonic under Toscanini. The next year he accepted a position with the Ballet Theatre Orchestra under Antal Dorati. At 17, he became solo French horn player with the Cincinnati Symphony, and by the time he was 19, he had accepted a position in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra.

Not only is Mr. Schuller a composer, conductor and teacher, but he is the author of two books: a work on Horn Technique (1962) and Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development (1968).

The Ensemble consists of 16 members with a stringed quartet, trumpet, clarinet, flute, trombone, french horn, sousaphone, bassoon, oboe and rhythm section. The Ensemble toured the United States and Canada this past summer. Some of the festivals in which they performed include the annual Scott Joplin Festival in Joplin's birthplace, Sedalia, Missouri; the Berkshire Music Festival in Tanglewood; and the Newport Music Festival in Newport, Rhode Island. During the summer, the Ensemble also taped a television special paying tribute to the works of Scott Joplin. It includes scenes on a Mississippi riverboat and 19th century opera house.

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