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# Francis Johnson: Music Master of Early Philadelphia

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A lecture delivered on April 10, 2008 in the Rosenwald Gallery, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library, University of Pennsylvania. The lecture accompanied the opening of the exhibition, "Francis Johnson: Music Master of Early Philadelphia," in the Eugene Ormandy Gallery, 4th floor, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library. Total time: 37:27.

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# Francis Johnson: Music Master of Early Philadelphia

## **Abstract**

Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr., Associate Professor of Music, University of Pennsylvania, delivers a lecture on Francis Johnson (1792-1844), Philadelphia band leader and composer.

Johnson holds a special place in the history of American music. Although a free African American, he lived in an age when racial segregation and prejudice were commonplace. Despite these obstacles, he was able to achieve extraordinary renown and respect among the elite of Philadelphia through performances of his band at balls, parades, and promenade concerts. Following a series of concert tours late in his life, Johnson's fame eventually extended through the Midwest and across the Atlantic to London. His music survives today in piano arrangements published during his lifetime.

The lecture marked the opening of an exhibition in the Otto E. Albrecht Music Library. The exhibition included a selection from the over forty pieces of Johnson sheet music in the collection of the late Kurt Stein. Also part of the exhibition were prints, period newspaper articles, and a Kent bugle like that favored by Johnson.

To download a podcast of the lecture, select one of the additional files below.

Welcome, H. Carton Rogers, 00-04:52

Introduction, Richard Griscom, 04:52-13:06

Lecture, Guthrie P. Ramsay, Jr., 13:15-37:27

The event announcement is also available for download, by selecting the download button, at upper right.

The exhibition is available in an online version, at:

<http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/music/fjohnson/>

## **Disciplines**

Music

## **Comments**

A lecture delivered on April 10, 2008 in the Rosenwald Gallery, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library, University of Pennsylvania. The lecture accompanied the opening of the exhibition, "Francis Johnson: Music Master of Early Philadelphia," in the Eugene Ormandy Gallery, 4th floor, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library. Total time: 37:27.

# Francis Johnson: Music Master of Early Philadelphia



Image courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

**An exhibit in the Eugene Ormandy Gallery  
4th floor, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center**  
*Celebrating the acquisition of  
Francis Johnson sheet music from the collection of Kurt Stein  
and the renovation of the Eugene Ormandy Music and Media Center*

University of Pennsylvania Libraries  
3420 Walnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6206

## Francis Johnson: Music Master of Early Philadelphia

*You are invited to join us Thursday, 10 April 2008, 5:30pm*  
Rosenwald Gallery, 6th floor, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center



Lecture by Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr., Associate Professor of Music, University of Pennsylvania

Reception and viewing of the exhibition to follow  
in the Eugene Ormandy Gallery, 4th floor, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center

Philadelphia bandleader and composer Francis Johnson (1792-1844) holds a special place in the history of American music. Although a free African American, he lived in an age when racial segregation and prejudice were commonplace. Despite these obstacles, he was able to achieve extraordinary renown and respect among the elite of Philadelphia through performances of his band at balls, parades, and promenade concerts. Following a series of concert tours late in his life, Johnson's fame eventually extended through the Midwest and across the Atlantic to London. His music survives today in piano arrangements published during his lifetime, and the Otto E. Albrecht Music Library is pleased to exhibit a selection from the over forty pieces of Johnson sheet music in the collection of the late Kurt Stein. The exhibition also includes prints, period newspaper articles, and a Kent bugle like that favored by Johnson.

Free and open to the public (please bring photo ID)  
Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center, 3420 Walnut Street, Philadelphia  
(entrance by the Button on Locust Walk)  
Reservations appreciated but not required - (800) 390-1829 or [friends@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:friends@pobox.upenn.edu)  
[www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/francisjohnson.html](http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/francisjohnson.html)