

## Choreography: “Ragtime”

**Example 1 – Youtube Title:** [“Ragtime – Opening Number – Rosie O’Donnell Show”](#) There’s a lot to like about this piece. First off, it’s the Broadway run’s cast, so... there’s that. Anyway, the separate **lighting** designation for each of the three groups is wonderful. I really want to follow the first 2:00 minutes or so. I want to frame the opening as a few still shot poses being staged for the photographer. Keep spacing available for lead characters’ line delivery. I love the slight mixture of the populations that takes place starting at 3:10. However, it’s vital that the populations remain starkly separated as the end of the opening number approaches. I think there’s something to be said by a staging choice we saw at Pioneer. The immigrants witness the distrust that the white population has of the Harlem population. They watch the reactions, then they imitate this sense of distrust. That would mean that the white and Harlem populations move first, while the immigrants stand still, observing. Next, the immigrants move in sequence with the Harlem population and copy the white population. I’d like to plan with this idea. For the final position, I would like the white population on the US runway, SL & SR platforms, and pooling down the stairs a bit. I want the Harlem group to be positioned ML to DL and the immigrants MR to DR. They should almost taken on the appearance of standing line a line of some sort as if preparing to board a rag ship. See libretto. I also LOVE the functioning flash for the **period camera**.

**Example 2 – Youtube Title:** [“Ragtime”](#) Again, this is the Broadway cast. I like the sense of energy and life that invades the space as the Harlem crowd enters DL. Let’s follow that. I’d love to have Coalhouse make his entrance wheeled in on a piano attached to a platform. The Rosie show’s clip was limited due to their studio setup for the performance. There’s so much to marvel at here. I LOVE the sense of rushed interactions that take place starting at 2:06. However, ultimately, everyone ends up back, separated by their own comfort zone and group with which they identify. The Little Boy remains isolated so long because most believe he share the role of the omniscient narrator along with the Little Girl in the novel. I’m not sure if I’m keeping this device or not yet.

**Example 3 – Youtube Title:** [“Ragtime – The Musical ‘Opening’”](#) At least now we’re dealing with a high school group. I actually kind of like the use of **flags and bunting** in the background to reflect Americana AND Father’s business. Overall, I feel the number is too static. Yes, we want to be careful how and when we use our movement, but this is too little. Each group needs more energy as they claim their share of American upon entering.

**Example 4 – Youtube Title:** [“Ragtime \(Opening\)”](#) I think the strength of this production’s version is the **lighting**. Their use of silhouette is really nicely incorporated into the number. Their staging of Evelyn’s entrance on the swing works really well also. They also make solid use of the SL and SR platforms outcroppings for such figure as J.P. Morgan and Ford. I’m sure we’ll follow suit in this manner.

### Main Points:

- Utilize the changing still portraits at the very start of the number. There should be vivid movement (during the “la, la, la’s”, punctuated by abrupt stops into the new tableaux).
- Big energy as the Harlem crowd takes the stage. Let them bring life and work to truly take and fill the space

- Much more of a sense of cautious excitement mixed with a certain apprehension towards their new surroundings
- Add in the rushed flurry of ALL groups mixing at the appropriate moment in the song (see video notes above).
- Isolate and separate each group at the end in final tableaus (see video notes above for positions).

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