



A TIMELINE OF THE WOMEN  
WHO CHANGED AMERICA



## May 2021 Her Story ENewsletter Violinists

Music and the arts have suffered tremendously during the current pandemic. Yet they are so important to our life and culture. In this month's eNewsletter, we feature two violinists: Maud Powell and Regina Carter.



Recognized as a musical prodigy around age seven, **Maud Powell** began taking violin and piano lessons in the Chicago area. When she was 13, Powell traveled with her mother and her brother to Europe where she studied in Germany. She debuted with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1885 and later with the New York Philharmonic. She advocated for music composed by diverse individuals – Americans, women, and Blacks. Powell also commissioned pieces of music that she could perform. She premiered 15 violin concertos including those by Tchaikovsky, Dvorak, and Sibelius that today are considered standard in the violin repertoire.

In 1904 Powell was the first solo instrumentalist to record for the Victor Company. She made international best-selling recordings for the next 15 years, bringing classical music to the masses. She was America's greatest violinist of the time and ranked with the supreme international violinists of the day. Her many achievements include being the first woman to form and head her own string quartet and performing at every U.S. and many Canadian military camps during World War I. In 2014, Powell was posthumously awarded a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award.



Versatile violinist **Regina Carter** began playing the violin at age four using the Suzuki method. This well known, internationally acclaimed method and curriculum of teaching music is helpful, especially to young students. Carter had previously taken piano lessons starting when she was two. Defying being pigeonholed, she plays jazz, R&B, classical, country, African and almost every other genre of music. She taught music after training at the New England Conservatory of Music and Oakland University (Michigan). Carter played in an all-female jazz quintet (Straight Ahead) and the String Trio of New York prior to releasing her debut solo album in 1995. In 2001, she was the first nonclassical violinist and the first African American to play Niccolò Paganini's violin which was made in 1743 by Giuseppe Guarneri.

Carter, who was featured in J. Jill's Inspired Women campaign, received a MacArthur "genius" grant as well as the Doris Duke Artist Award. The MacArthur program said this about her, "Regina Carter is a master of improvisational jazz violin. Though her work draws upon a wide range of musical influences – including Motown, Afro-Cuban, Swing, Bebop, Folk and World – she has crafted a signature voice and style. . . . Carter's performances highlight the often overlooked potential of the jazz violin for its lyric, melodic, and percussive potential." Carter was nominated for a Grammy in 2018 for Best Improvised Solo. She is on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music.

Maud Powell and Regina Carter are among the more than 850 women profiled in our book *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America*. Women's accomplishments continue to inspire and encourage us all. Continue to help us tell women's stories!

Charlotte Waisman and Jill Tietjen

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