

I'm Gonna Sing 'Til The Spirit Moves In My Heart

“I'm Gonna Sing 'Til The Spirit Moves My Heart” is a traditional spiritual arranged by Moses Hogan. It was originally published and performed by the Fisk Jubilee Singers in the late 1800's.

This report is divided into the following sections:

Lyrics

I. Moses Hogan

II. Moses Hogan Singers

III. Spirituals

IV. Fisk Jubilee Singers

Audio Links and Discography

References

Lyrics

I'm gonna sing 'til the spirit moves in my heart

I'm gonna sing 'til the spirit moves in my heart

I'm gonna sing 'til the spirit moves in my heart

I'm gonna sing 'til Jesus comes.

I'm gonna sing 'til the spirit moves in my heart

I'm gonna sing 'til the spirit moves in my heart

I'm gonna sing 'til the spirit moves in my heart

I'm gonna sing 'til Jesus comes.

It was grace that brought me

It was grace that taught me

It was grace that kept me

And it's grace that will lead me home

I'm gonna pray 'til the spirit moves in my heart

I'm gonna pray 'til the spirit moves in my heart

I'm gonna pray 'til the spirit moves in my heart

I'm gonna pray 'til Jesus comes.

Can't you feel the spirit movin'

Can't you feel the spirit movin'

I'm gonna shout 'til the spirit moves in my heart
I'm gonna shout 'til the spirit moves in my heart
I'm gonna shout 'til the spirit moves in my heart
I'm gonna shout 'til Jesus comes.
I'm gonna sing "til my Jesus comes.

I. Moses Hogan

Born in New Orleans, Louisiana on March 13, 1957 Moses George Hogan was a pianist, conductor, and arranger of international renown. A graduate of the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA) and Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Ohio, he also studied at New York's Juillard School of Music and Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Mr. Hogan's many accomplishments as a concert pianist included winning first place in the prestigious 28th annual Kosciuszko Foundation Chopin Competition in New York. Hogan was appointed artist in residence at Dillard University in New Orleans in 1993 and served as artistic director of the internationally acclaimed Moses Hogan Chorale. The chorale evolved as an outgrowth of the New World ensemble organized by Hogan when he began his exploration of the choral music idiom in 1980. The chorale electrified audiences in the finest and most prestigious concert halls at home and abroad, ranging from Washington, DC's John F. Kennedy Center to the famed Sydney Opera House in Australia. The Chorale's high musical standards and unique repertoire consistently elicited praise from critics worldwide. Hogan was an exclusive arranger and composer for Hal Leonard Music Corporation.

In the final years of his life, Mr. Hogan became increasingly in-demand internationally as an arranger, conductor and clinician. He was commissioned to arrange and perform several compositions for a 1995 PBS Documentary, "The American Promise," whose soundtrack was released separately by Windham Hill records under the title "Voices." Later, Hogan recorded and conducted several of his arrangements with the famed Mormon Tabernacle Choir on their release "American Heritage of Spirituals." His discography also includes a recording of Spirituals with renowned countertenor Derek Lee Ragin produced by Aira Records as well as MGH Records' The Battle of Jericho and Songs of Reflection which features thirty arrangements for mixed chorus. Hogan's contemporary setting of spirituals, original compositions and other works have been revered by audiences and praised by critics the New York Times and Gramophone magazine. They have become staples in the repertoires of high school college church, community and professional choirs worldwide. Hogan's choral series is published by Hal Leonard Corporation and by Alliance Music Publishers.

II. The Moses Hogan Singers

Moses Hogan, *Artistic Director*, began exploring the choral music idiom in 1980 with the organization of the *New World Ensemble*. In 1994, Hogan's acclaimed *Moses Hogan Chorale*, which completed its final touring season in 1999, came to the notice of the American Choral Directors Association, which extended invitations to perform at its conventions on both the regional and national levels, and these appearances in turn led to invitations from around the world. The *Moses Hogan Singers* continues this performance legacy while preserving and celebrating the heritage of the African-American choral tradition.

A nationally auditioned ensemble, the *MOSES HOGAN SINGERS* made their debut in 1998 in New York at Alice Tully Hall during the World Projects Corporation *New York Choral Festival*. The *Moses Hogan Singers* made their recording debut in 1998 on the EMI record label with acclaimed soprano *Barbara Hendricks* on the release entitled *Give Me Jesus*, which features the arrangements of Moses Hogan. The Singers recently completed two international tours with Ms. Hendricks to Greece, Germany, Spain and Switzerland during the summer of 2000 and to the Netherlands and Belgium in December of 2001.

The Moses Hogan Singers made their European Orchestral debut with the *I Flaminghi* Orchestra, Rudolf Werthern, conductor, for the televised *Christmas Special* with Barbara Hendricks at Sint Jan Cathedral, s'Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands.

The Moses Hogan Singers are a collaboration of musicians dedicated to the preservation, integrity and excellence of the multiple aspects of choral music. Special repertoire emphasis is focused on the choral works of Mr. Hogan and works by African-American composers. Concert performances in the United States during the 2002-2003 season will include recitals in Michigan, Georgia, Louisiana, New York and California.

III. Spirituals

Spirituals are the Southern sacred "folk" songs created and first sung by African Americans during slavery. Their original composers are unknown, and they have assumed a position of collective ownership by the whole community. They lend themselves easily to communal singing. Many are in a call-and-response structure, with back-and-forth exchanges between the leader and the group. A formal concert tradition has evolved from the original spirituals, with solo and choral arrangements based on original slave melodies, employed for performance by amateur and professional artists.

Although it is impossible to determine with certainty when the first spirituals were created, most scholars speculate that these songs proliferated near the end of the eighteenth century and during the last few decades leading up to the end of legalized slavery in the 1860's. Spirituals functioned on many levels for enslaved Africans. While the songs primarily expressed deeply held religious convictions, especially for newly converted Christians, they also reflected deep

longings for freedom, often masked in the form of secret codes or messages imbedded in the lyrics of the songs.

The immersion of early twentieth century African American composers like Harry Burleigh into the world of European classical music composition not only inspired their own new arrangements of spirituals, but also exerted an influence on the work of the European and American mentors with whom they studied. New jazz interpretations of the spirituals have surfaced; opera divas like Kathleen Battle and Jessye Norman have performed acclaimed concerts of spirituals; a small but significant cadre of church musicians are pushing for the re-integration of spirituals into church worship; there are a variety of national educational initiatives aimed at educating children and families about the cultural significance and relevance of the spirituals tradition; there are uses of the spirituals in secular-based ministries.

IV. Fisk Jubilee Singers

The **Fisk Jubilee Singers** are a group of [African American](#) singers first organized in [1871](#). Their early repertoire centered on [spirituals](#), but also included some [Stephen Foster](#) songs. The word "jubilee" was originally intended to set them apart from [blackface minstrels](#), but was soon adopted in the names of several minstrel troupes.

In [2002](#) the [Library of Congress](#) honored their song "[Swing Low, Sweet Chariot](#)" by adding it in the [United States National Recording Registry](#).

The singers were a fundraising effort for [Fisk University](#), a [historically black university](#) in [Nashville, Tennessee](#), although one that was not initially approved by the university itself. The treasurer at Fisk at that time was George L. White. In an effort to raise money for the University, he gathered a nine-member chorus of students to go on tour in an attempt to earn money. On [October 6, 1871](#), the group of students left for their U.S. tour. They began in small towns, some of which were not receptive to their performances.

On December 22, 1871 the group performed in Henry Ward Beecher's Plymouth Church. Afterwards, Beecher opened his purse and encouraged his congregation to give by stating, "They cannot live on air. They sing like nightingales but need more to eat than nightingales." With Beecher's support, the group raised \$850. As an additional fund raising inducement, White announced plans to build Jubilee Hall at Fisk--a building that would serve as an imperishable stone and brick refuge against southern vigilantes.

Several weeks later in Hartford, Connecticut the Jubilee Singers sang at the Asylum Hill Congregational Church and at Allyn Hall providing Samuel Clemens with his first opportunity to see and hear their performance. In Washington, D. C. the Jubilees met President Grant at the White House and sang "Go down, Moses" for him. Their concerts sold out and excursion trains were chartered to bring in out-of-towners. After they experienced discrimination from conductors on the railroads George Pullman integrated his cars for them.

After a concert performed in [Cincinnati, Ohio](#), the group donated their small US\$50 profit to the victims of the notorious 1871 fire in [Chicago, Illinois](#). The group then traveled on to [Columbus, Ohio](#) where they were tired and discouraged. White, determined to raise their spirits, named them "The Jubilee Singers." This was a reference to the year of Jubilee in the Bible in the 25th chapter of the book of [Leviticus](#).

Soon, the audiences they performed for began to appreciate their voices and they began to receive praise for their talents. Prior to the formation of this group, most black music was being performed by [white](#) musicians and it took a while for audiences to accept the talent of The Jubilee Singers as a group of black performers. Eventually, they were able to earn enough money to send back to Fisk University to help cover some expenses. Near the end of [1872](#), [President Ulysses S. Grant](#) invited them to perform at The White House.

A tour of the British Isles was launched in April 1873. Queen Victoria was impressed with these "real negroes" and her approval guaranteed their popularity. They presented themselves as refined black Victorians and were even painted as a group by Victoria's own portrait artist.

On March 10, 1873 Samuel Clemens wrote from Hartford to alert Tom Hood and George Routledge about the Jubilee's upcoming visit to London. Although Ward does not provide his readers with the text of Clemens' letter, a portion of the recommendation read:

I was reared in the South, & my father owned slaves, & I do not know when anything has so moved me as did the plaintive melodies of the Jubilee Singers. It was the first time for twenty-five or thirty years that I had heard such songs, or heard them sung in the genuine old way--it is a way that white people cannot imitate, . . . for one must have been a slave himself in order to feel what life was & so convey it in the music. Do not fail to hear the Jubilee Singers. (*Mark Twain's Letters, Volume 5: 1872-1873*, p. 315-16).

After a tour of [Europe](#) in [1873](#), the group earned enough money to send back to Fisk to construct the university's first-ever permanent building. The building was named Jubilee Hall, and it is still standing today.

The therapeutic value of singing a slave spiritual is extolled by musicologist Horace Clarence Boyer whose remarks in the documentary are also included by Ward in his book: "It begins to take the frown out of the face. The shoulders come back to their natural position . . . you're going through a cleansing process . . . coming back to where you wanted to be. Things are not quite as bad as you think they are . . . the more you sing it, the more you find relief, the more you believe there is a way out of this"

Audio Links and Discography

If you subscribe to iTunes, BuyMusic, Rhapsody or a similar service, keyword in "I'm Gonna Sing 'Til The Spirit Moves In My Heart" and then you can listen to a sample from each artist.

YouTube

Prairie Voices <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BBGt2AqFF8&feature=related>

Hillside Chorus http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HN_WkhOG8G8&feature=related

Moses Hogan Chorale:

http://www.imeem.com/tubmyster/music/HdOvBZQr/moses_hogan_chorale_im_gonna_sing_til_the_spirit_moves_in_m/

These select recordings can be purchased online:

Lucy Kinchen Chorale: <http://cdbaby.com/cd/lkchorale2>

Richard Zielinski Singers: <http://cdbaby.com/cd/zielinski2>

Fisk Jubilee Singers: <http://www.singers.com/gospel/fiskjubileesingers.html>

References:

The above article about the song “I’m Gonna Sing ‘Til The Spirit Moves In My Heart” was extracted from these websites. For more information, please read the articles:

http://www.musicroom.com/se/ID_No/09821/details.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses_Hogan

<http://www.singers.com/choral/moseshogan.html>

<http://www.singers.com/choral/spirituals.html>

<http://www.twainweb.net/reviews/jubilee.html>

<http://www.a-cappella.com/product/2186/religious-blackgospel>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fisk_Jubilee_Singers

Book: “The Story of the Jubilee Singers” By J. B. T. Marsh