

Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow

“Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow” is a Negro Spiritual and “Plantation Song” first collected and published in 1867. It was further collected and celebrated at Hampton University in the early 20th century, and later popularized by soprano Dorothy Maynor through her school, the Harlem School of the Arts. The current choral arrangement is by Mark Hayes.

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Lyrics

1. There's a star in the East on Christmas morn

Rise up shepherds and follow.

It'll show you the place where the child is born.

Rise up shepherds and follow.

Chorus:

Leave your sheep and leave your lambs.

Rise up shepherds and follow.

Leave your ewes and leave your rams.

Rise up shepherds and follow.

Follow, follow, rise up shepherds and follow.

Follow the star of Bethlehem

Rise up shepherds and follow.

2. If you take good heed to the angel's words,

Rise up shepherds and follow.

You'll Forget your flocks, you'll forget your herds,

Rise up shepherds and follow. Chorus

I. Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow

THERE'S A STAR IN THE EAST, Tune: Rise Up, Shepherd. Suzanne Flandreau of the Center for Black Music research in Chicago notes that this spiritual, usually known as "Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow," is from the Hampton collections. The earliest publication seems to be *Religious Folksongs of the Negro as Sung on the Plantations*, published in Hampton, Virginia by Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (1909) (Flandreau-Stulken correspondence). The Christmas festivities at Hampton began very appropriately with carols, sung at the annual Christmas concert on Tuesday evening, December 21. . . . There were other Christmas songs by girls' and boys' choruses, and the two beautiful Christmas plantation melodies – "Go Tell it on the Mountain" and "Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow."

"A Christmas Plantation Song," also known as "Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow," said to have been first published in *Slave Songs of the United States*, edited by William Francis Allen, Charles Pickard Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison in 1867 and also printed in *Religious Folk Songs of the Negro as sung on the Plantations*, edited by Thomas P. Fenner, Virginia, 1909. The songs in this collection were collected during the American Civil War from slaves in Georgia and South Carolina. It could be called an American shepherd carol, resembling a European shepherd carol, with the principal singer giving out the line and the chorus repeating the refrain (a 'question-and-answer' carol).

This plantation song collected during the Civil War highlights the polyphony that call and response and echoing patterns produce. The melody moves from voice to voice to give each section an opportunity to alternate between singing the melody and responding to it. Contrasts in dynamics and vocal timbre lifts the melody off the page with the ostinati keep the rhythmic pulse moving. Easily suited to a children's chorus or a women's chorus.

"Jesus the Light of the World," Behold That Star," "Go Tell it on the Mountain," and "Rise Up Shepherd and Follow" were songs the slaves had made to celebrate the birth of a baby born with nowhere to lay his head. How clearly must the slave parents, especially the mothers, have understood Mary and Joseph. How they as slave parents must have longed for an Egypt to flee to when the auction block loomed.

The American soprano Dorothy Maynor popularized "Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow" and other African-American spirituals, and the Harlem School of Music in New York City. She also helped familiarize Americans with several other Negro spirituals about the birth of Jesus.

At first glance, it might appear that the lovely song "Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow" is a typical carol. Like most American folk carols, it probably dates from the vague chronological expanse of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. In its content, there is nothing particularly out of the

ordinary, with normal biblical allusions such as shepherds and the star being the focus of the lyrics.

On further examination, though, the song gives the impression of being atypical in some ways. It was published in 1867, only two years after the Civil War, while most black spiritual carols were not formed in an uncommon manner. The verses are frequently sung by a soloist, with an ensemble of voices singing the key phrase, "Rise up, Shepherd, and Follow" in response. It furthermore is marred by two errors of fact in the otherwise good words. The shepherds are described as seeing the star of Bethlehem, when that nocturnal phenomenon really was viewed by the Wise men, and it chooses the terminology "star in the East," when the star was probably in the West and followed by men coming from the East. The mistake comes from the misinterpretation of the portion of Matthew 2:2 which says "we have seen his star in the East." If the star was actually in the eastern sky, the Wise men would have most likely traversed the Mediterranean Sea, while if the star was in the western sky, they could have begun the journey from any of the many lands of west Asia. This logic is entirely consistent with Matthew 2:2 which indicates that the Wise men came from the East.

These misconceptions are far from unique to "Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow." The great song "The First Nowell" also contains both of the mistakes, and other carols are by no means free of this type of misimpression. So it might be preferable to categorize the textual faults of "Rise Up, Shepherd" as quite typical of the carol genre, instead of something new.

II. Mark Hayes

As a beginning piano student of ten years of age, Mark Hayes had little idea of the foundation he was laying for his future career in music. From those inauspicious beginnings in northern Illinois, his career has blossomed into international tours to Europe, the Far East, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and Brazil. Now an internationally known writer, his music can be found in the music libraries of the finest churches and universities in the country, and he is in increasing demand for choral clinics and concerts. Two exceptional piano teachers who encouraged Mark to develop improvisational skills within the first year of lessons guided his early musical training. His musical talents grew through the support of his family and through playing at church and school events. He earned a Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance, magna cum laude from Baylor University, but his degree was only a small part of what he gained from those four years. During his college years his dream to become a composer and arranger of contemporary Christian and sacred music was born and nurtured.

Today Hayes' vocal and instrumental writing is widely acclaimed and performed across the nation. He is well-known for his unique choral settings which draw from such diverse styles such as gospel, jazz, pop, folk, and classical to achieve a truly "American sound." The popularity of his music is evident in the numerous offers of commissions he receives from universities and churches throughout the country. Te Deum, his newest work for oratorio chorus and orchestra, was commissioned and premiered by Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, TX in April

2004. His works are regularly featured at annual conventions of the American Choral Directors' Association and the Music Educators' National Conference. His personal catalog, compiled over the last 29 years, includes well over 600 published original compositions and arrangements, which are distributed by several leading publishers. Hayes has produced and arranged over 50 recordings for various artists and publishers, 25 keyboard folios, and seven volumes of the Mark Hayes Vocal Solo Collection.

"Empowering church musicians has always been one of my goals", says Hayes. He lives this out by regularly serving as a clinician at arranging, orchestration, and piano improvisation workshops throughout the country. Because of his creative arranging approach, his performance expertise, and his "hands on" experience as a church pianist for so many years, Hayes is able to give fresh insights into improvisation, accompanying, and congregational hymn playing for the church musician. He is also a co-creator of a multi-level piano method series designed for young church pianists. To further educate and encourage new arrangers and composers, he has served as an adjunct composition instructor at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri from 1991-1993.

Occasionally Hayes incorporates a piano concert featuring his own arrangements into a weekend choir clinic. His warm, sensitive style at the keyboard and behind the conductor's podium makes him an instant favorite among all age groups. Mark is often contracted to provide music leadership for national church conferences, and has shared the stage with such people as former president Jimmy Carter, and well-known authors Tony Campolo, and Keith Miller.

In addition to his involvement in the sacred and secular choral music fields, Hayes is increasingly sought after as an orchestrator and record producer. Mark Hayes is a recurring recipient of the Standard Award from ASCAP, and his album, "I've Just Seen Jesus," received the Dove Award, the equivalent to a Grammy in gospel music.

III. Dorothy Maynor

The noted black American soprano and music educator, Dorothy Maynor, the daughter and granddaughter of Norfolk clergymen, was one of the most highly praised singers of the 1940's and 1950's. She had "a soaring, bell-like soprano capable of exquisite musical effects, supported by a sincere and ardent temperament," wrote Nicolas Slonimsky.

Although rarely mentioned in the same breath as divas such as Marian Anderson and [Leontyne Price](#), Dorothy Maynor's influence on classical music is just as impressive. Even more impressive is the influence she's had on thousands of students who've passed through the halls of the Harlem School of the Arts, the school she founded in 1963 in New York's sometimes-troubled [uptown](#) neighborhood. Following a singing career that spanned a quarter century in which Maynor delighted audiences in concert halls around the world with her warm, rich soprano, she then spent another twenty-five years as executive director of the school. Though

largely forgotten as a singer, Maynor's place in history is assured with her greatest artistic achievement, the Harlem School of the Arts.

In 1942 she married the Reverend Shelby Rooks, who became the minister of St. James Presbyterian Church in Harlem. Additionally, Maynor embarked upon a recording career in which she sang arias, spirituals, and operas. Her interpretations of the latter, however, were limited to the recording studio because no opera company of the time would allow a black person to perform in their productions. Although her singing earned Maynor extremely favorable reviews from critics around the world, she wasn't allowed to audition for the Metropolitan Opera. In an ironic twist, she would become the first black member of the Met's board of directors in 1975. "I learned 23 roles and never got to sing them," Maynor lamented to Peterson of Essence.

IV. Hampton University

Hampton University is a [historically black university](#) located in [Hampton, Virginia, United States](#). The campus overlooking the northern edge of the harbor of [Hampton Roads](#) was founded on the grounds of "Little Scotland", a former plantation in [Elizabeth City County](#) not far from [Fort Monroe](#) and the [Grand Contraband Camp](#), each tangible symbols of freedom for former [slaves](#) shortly after the end of the [American Civil War](#).

First led by former [Union](#) General [Samuel C. Armstrong](#), among the school's famous alumni is educator [Dr. Booker T. Washington](#). Under what is now called the [Emancipation Oak](#) tree, [Mary Smith Peake](#) taught the first classes on [September 17, 1861](#), in defiance of a Virginia law against teaching slaves, free blacks and mulattos to read or write, a law which had cut her own education short years earlier. Several years later, U.S. President [Abraham Lincoln](#)'s Emancipation Proclamation was read to local freedmen under the same historic tree, which is still located on the campus today, and also serves as a symbol for the modern City of Hampton.

Audio Links and Discography

If you subscribe to iTunes, BuyMusic, Rhapsody or a similar service, keyword in "Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow" and then you can listen to a sample from each artist.

YouTubes

Kathleen Battle - Rise Up Shepherd - Boys Choir of Harlem

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itZRfhuRJKA&feature=related>

FAMU Concert Choir (toward the end) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5KIv6SFFqw>

The Bennett College Choir <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wx2h1EbLcuI>

Unknown Chorus: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nG1tZe9J7-A&feature=related>

Unknowns Chorus: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0jBQFMxDII&feature=related>

These select recordings can be purchased online:

Cambridge Singers and John Rutter: <http://tinyurl.com/5r5385>

Songs From My Heart: Choral Music of Andre Thomas: <http://tinyurl.com/63effw>

Pete Seeger: <http://tinyurl.com/6oeesv>

References:

The above article about the song “Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow” was extracted from these websites. For more information, please read the articles:

<http://tinyurl.com/5g7hnn>

http://www.midamerica-music.com/bios_concert/hayes.htm

<http://www.andysmusiconline.com/products/rise-up-shepherd-and-follow-ssa-a-cappella/hl48005161.html>

http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Hymns_and_Carols/rise_up_shepherd_and_follow_1.htm

<http://www.answers.com/topic/dorothy-maynor>

<http://www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Maynor-Dorothy.htm>

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

<http://www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Maynor-Dorothy.htm>

Book: “The Southern Workman” by Samuel Chapman Armstrong Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (Va.), Hampton Institute

Book: “If You Don't Go, Don't Hinder Me” By Bernice Johnson Reagon

Book: “The Christmas Carol Reader” By William Emmett

Book: “With One Voice” By Marilyn Kay Stulken, Evangelical

Book: “A Langston Hughes Encyclopedia” By Hans A. Ostrom