WE SHALL OVERCOME
Songs of the “Freedom Riders” and the “Sit-Ins”
Spirituals, gospels and new songs of the Freedom Rider and Sit-In Movement sung by The Montgomery Gospel Trio, The Nashville Quartet and Guy Carawan

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Spirituals, Gospels and new songs of the
Freedom Rider and Sit-in Movement

sung by
The Montgomery Gospel Trio
The Nashville Quartet
and
Guy Carawan

Nashville Quartet - Joseph Carter, Bernard Lafayette, James Bevel, Samuel Collier

Montgomery Trio - Minnie Hendrick, Mary Ethel Dozier, Gladys Burnette Carter

The three high school girls from Montgomery, Alabama and the four seminary students from Nashville, Tennessee that are heard singing on this record are representative of hundreds of thousands of other Southern Negro students who are making it known through their historic "sit-ins", "stand-ins" and "freedom rides" that they will accept nothing less than first class citizenship today in America.

Nashville Quartet

The four fellows attend American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville. They have been key leaders and participants in the demonstrations there and on the recent "freedom ride" through Alabama and Mississippi. They have been to jail and suffered violence and abuse many times for the cause of freedom. They have seen the lunch counters and theatres opened to Negroes in Nashville as a result of their actions.

Along with their serious approach to life they have the ability to laugh and sing and entertain others. Their singing for and with the students when they were in jail helped keep the morale up and ease tensions. As one student put it "it eased that knot in the pit of
Montgomery Trio

The three girls from Montgomery know what it is to live in one of the most brutal Jim Crow cities in the South. They have witnessed the historic happenings of the 1955 bus boycott, the mob violence in reaction to the "sit-ins" and the "fear of freedom." Lack of police protection from the hoodlum elements has made it harder for students to demonstrate in Montgomery than in Nashville. Also the police have directly intimidated the students but still this has not been demonstrated. The Montgomery Improvement Association has carried on the struggle in spite of constant harrassment by the police and attacks of violence from white hate groups. These girls who sang spirituals and gospel songs that express the spirit of freedom have supported this organization and for many other groups in Montgomery. They are used to the fact that the meetings may be barrassed by police or white hoodlums and that they have to be careful about where they go, what they do and what they say. Songs like "We Are Soldiers In the Army," "Hold On" and "I'm Gonna Let My Little Light Shine" are some of their battle songs that have helped to lift the spirits of many people in Montgomery.

New York Trio

Both the girls from Montgomery and the fellows from Nashville were heard on the floor of the 1955 Congress of the Negro People held this year at Carnegie Hall in New York at a benefit concert for the Highlander Folk School where they appeared with Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth from Birmingham, Alabama and with Pete Seeger, Guy Carawan, Memphis Slim and Willie Dixon. (It was at the Highlander Folk School in the Cumberland Mts. of Tennessee that Guy Carawan set both of these girls and a third, Franklynn Tomlinson, on their way to Montgomery.) In the summer of 1956, the girls from Montgomery and the fellows from Nashville traveled to New York for the concert. He has sung with both groups many times and twice in Nashville. He and the fellows worked together to make the Folkways L.P. The Nashville Sit-In Story and they put on Nashvillian folk song "hootenanny."

Although the freedom of contact with whites which at present is as possible in Montgomery, the morning before they started home to Nashville and Montgomery on the train Moe Asch planned and asked them to come to his studio and make this record. Though they were all tired from the weekend, they continued singing and what you hear on this record is a fairly spontaneous session of impromptu singing and harmonizing that took place that morning before they all started back to their respective homes.

About the movement:

Since Feb. 1st, 1960, hundreds of thousands of Negro students have demonstrated their desire and determination to struggle for "first class citizenship" in America. In over three hundred Southern communities they have "sat-in" at public diners and lunch counters, "stood-in" at public movie theatres, "kneel-in" at churches, "waited-in" at public beaches, visited segregated public schools to rewrite the segregated seating signs in buses, trains, depots and stations where waiting rooms, rest rooms, drinking fountains and rest rooms are segregated. They have come together to express this new surge towards freedom at all worship places, prayer vigils and peace walks. They have participated in voter registration drives and stimulated economic withdrawal campaigns against the businesses that practice Jim Crow customs. They have very effectively dramatized to their communities, the country and the world that they will no longer accept "second class citizenship" in this "land of the free and the home of the brave." They have once and for all broken the Southern stereotype and disproven the idea that Negroes are happy with segregation. Over three hundred students have had to go to jail because they participated in these demonstrations. Many have suffered violence at the hands of hoodlums and policemen who in many cases are committed to enforce the custom of segregation. But this has not dampened the spirits of the students or the effectiveness of the movement. On the contrary it has continued to spontaneously mushroom all over the South where Negro student communities exist and their courageous action has caused the older generation of adult Negroes who are generally very cautious when it comes to such radical social action to act in support of it. Shocked and indignant over the treatment given the students by the hoodlum elements, police and courts, the adults have furnished them with aid and raised great quantities of money for their legal defense, participated in economic boycotts and gone to the polls in greater numbers, demonstrated with the students in increasing numbers and expressed a great pride in these bold steps by the younger generation.

The result so far of all this protest has been the desegregation of store to store eating facilities in over a hundred and fifty Southern communities. Many gains on other fronts have been made also but most of the emphasis has been put on the lunch counters and the students have demonstrated that has come to be known as the "sit-in." News of the "sit-in movement" and its accomplishment has spread and the "sit-ins" will surely take their place in our history books as a milestone in the Negro drive for equality in the United States.

It appears that this is only the first chapter in this new ground swell of student protest. Already in Nashville, Tennessee, the students have written chapter two. After the first major Southern city to achieve lunch counter desegregation last year, they have gone ahead this year to again become the first to achieve desegregation of the movie theatres, February 1st, 1961, the first anniversary of the "sit-ins," was celebrated by South wide "stand-ins" at movie theatres denied to the Negro students. In Nashville it took but three to three months to again be successful. This was about the same amount of time it took them to secure counter stools last year. Now they are already discussing what their goal should be for next year.

The key to this all success has been the students use of the philosophy and the techniques of "non-violence" which they have adhered to with great dedication. The first example of its great power and usefulness was the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955. Martin Luther King learned the ideas and techniques of Ghandi to the situation in Montgomery and preached them to his six thousand followers who stayed off the buses and walked for eighteen months. This was the first successful mass non-violent campaign in the United States. Since that successful milestone Rev. King and his fellow ministers of the newly formed Southern Christian Leadership Conferences have been urging more mass social action campaigns based on non-violence to secure equal rights for the Negro in the South. Also such groups as CORE, AFSC & FOR with leadership experienced in the techniques of non-violence have been working and working in the South for the last few years. It was a likely thing for the students to have adopted these ideas and techniques once they came in contact with them. Once the powerful example from Montgomery was set and such a strong spokesman as Rev. King had preached the gospel of non-violence (which actually represents a radical fulfillment of the Ghandian teachings) across the South the stage was set for the Negro students to make use of it. It provided an effective channel of action for them when the time came to show their growing unrest and dissatisfaction with the slow pace of desegregation. The spark that set off the whole series of non-violent demonstration across the South was the Feb. 1st sit-in of four students at Greensboro, North Carolina in 1960. The students after a number of years in the power of non-violence has given them the courage to go back day after day and face the crowds of hoodlums, the assaults and abuse without striking back.
and attempt to stand tall and peaceful in the face of danger and try and feel brotherly feelings towards their opponents. And it is this courageous, disciplined and loving behavior that has won them the respect and concern of so many people to their cause.

As I write this, news of the latest and most dramatic of all the student non-violent protests in the South, the Freedom Ride, is being broadcast on the radio. The mob violence in Birmingham, Anniston and Montgomery, Alabama has been the worst yet. Many freedom riders have been beaten senseless. Over seven hundred Federal Marshalls had to be called in along with National Guardsmen to help local police keep order while three groups of freedom riders rode interstate busses and used bus stations without regard for the segregation signs. In Anniston their bus was burned to oblivion by an incendiary bomb thrown into the bus and some of the riders were hospitalized.

Local police in Birmingham, Anniston and Montgomery in many instances during the first few days refused to give the riders protection. Some of these officials are under federal investigation now. If it hadn't been for the Federal Marshalls there would have been additional serious violence in Montgomery where a mob formed outside of a church where fifteen hundred Negroes were holding an anti-segregation rally featuring the freedom riders and Martin Luther King. They had to use tear gas to disperse the mob. Two bus loads of freedom riders then went on to Jackson Mississippi where twenty seven of them were arrested and are now in jail. Seven more are in jail in Montgomery along with integration leaders Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker, Rev. Ralph Abernathy and Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth for using the segregated bus facilities there. Just what the outcome will be of all this is not yet clear. Student and adult integration leaders are calling for a Southwide assault on segregated travel facilities (including train & airplane stations) in response to these beatings and jailings. All of this has been headline news both in the U.S. and abroad for the last week. The Freedom Ride, if it accomplishes nothing else, has surely achieved its goal of dramatizing these evil practices to the American people and the determination of the students to overcome these un-American practices.
On the mayor's steps after 4,000 students marched in silence over two miles to that spot in protest of the bombing of Attorney Looby's home, Tenn. (From left to right; Mayor Ben West, Rev. C.T. Vivian, and three student leaders; Diane Nash, Curtis Murphy and Lonnie Hubbard.)

Martin Luther King speaking to a mass meeting of 4,000 people the night after Attorney Looby's home was bombed.
Band 1: **This Little Light of Mine**

**CHORUS:**
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Deep down in the South, I'm gonna let it shine,
Deep down in the South, I'm gonna let it shine,
Deep down in the South, I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

We have the light of freedom, we're gonna let it shine,
We have the light of freedom, we're gonna let it shine,
We have the light of freedom, we're gonna let it shine.
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

God gave it to us, we're gonna let it shine,
God gave it to us, we're gonna let it shine,
God gave it to us, we're gonna let it shine.
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Oh, all in the church, we're gonna let it shine,
Oh, all in the church, we're gonna let it shine,
Oh, all in the church, we're gonna let it shine.
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

(Repeat first verse)

Band 2: **There's a Meeting Here Tonight**

Meeting tonight, meeting tonight, meeting on the old campground.
Meeting tonight, meeting tonight, meeting on the old campground.

Sing just like this on the old campground,
Sing just like this on the old campground,
Sing just like this on the old campground.
This is the way we pray on the old campground.

Shouting tonight, shouting tonight,
Shouting on the old campground.
Shouting tonight, shouting tonight,
Shouting on the old campground.

Meeting tonight, meeting tonight, meeting on the old campground.
Meeting tonight, meeting tonight, meeting on the old campground.

Band 3: **Rock My Soul**

**CHORUS:**
Rock my soul in the bosom of Abraham,
Rock my soul in the bosom of Abraham,
Rock my soul in the bosom of Abraham.
Oh, rock my soul.

Sounds of life, raging high,
Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down;
Sometimes I laugh, sometimes I cry;
Sometimes I'm level to the ground.

(Chorus)

Band 4: **Hold On**

Paul and Silas bound in jail,
Had no one to go their bail;
Keep your hand on that plow, hold on.

**CHORUS:**
Hold on, hold on,
Keep your hand on that plow, hold on.

Freedom's name is mighty sweet,
Soon one day I'm proud we're gonna meet;
Keep your hand on that plow, hold on.

(Chorus)

Band 5: **Let Us Break Bread Together**

Let us break bread together on our knees,
Let us break bread together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,
Oh, Lord have mercy on me.

**CHORUS:**
Let us pray to God together on our knees,
Let us pray to God together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,
Oh, Lord have mercy on me.

Band 6: **We Are Soldiers in the Army**

**CHORUS:**
We are soldiers in the army;
We have to fight, although we have to cry.

**CHORUS:**
We've got to hold up the blood-stained banner,
We've got to hold it up until we die.

My mother was a soldier;
She had her hands on the Gospel Plow.
One day she got old, she couldn't fight anymore,
She said, "I'll stand here and fight anywhere."

(Chorus)

I'm so glad I'm a soldier;
I've got my hands on the Gospel Plow.
One day I'll get old and I can't fight anymore,
But you know I'll stand here, child, and I'll fight anywhere.

(Chorus)

Band 7: **We Shall Not Be Moved**

**CHORUS:**
We shall not, we shall not be moved,
Just like a tree that's standing by the water,
We shall not be moved.

We're fighting for our freedom, we shall not be moved,
We're fighting for our freedom, we shall not be moved;
Just like a tree that's standing by the water,
We shall not be moved.

(Chorus)

We must stand and fight together, we shall not be moved,
We must stand and fight together, we shall not be moved;
Just like a tree that's standing by the water,
We shall not be moved.

(Chorus)

SIDE II

Band 1: **Your Dog**

Dog, dog, dog, dog.
My dog loves your dog.
Your dog loves my dog.
Etc....

Lead voice:
All of them dogs:
I'm talking about a rabbit dog,
I'm talking about a 'coon dog,
I'm talking about a moon dog,
All of them dogs.

I'm talking about a big dog,
I'm talking about a little dog,
All of them dogs,
All of them dogs,
All of them dogs.

I'm talking about your dog,
I'm talking about my dog,
All of them dogs,
All of them dogs.

I wonder why can't we sit under the apple tree.

My little doggie was a-playing one day,
(dog, dog, a-dog, dog, dog.)
Down in the meadow in a bundle of hay.
(dog, dog, a-dog, dog, dog.)
Your little doggie then came along,
(dog, dog, a-dog, dog, dog.)
Hey, little doggie, won't you walk me home.
(dog, dog, a-dog, dog, dog.)
You won't walk with me,
You won't talk with me.
Why don't you hold my hand,
So we can understand?
Now, can't you see that you and me
Will be so a-happy?
Sit under the apple tree.
My dog a-love your dog,
And your dog a-love my dog. Etc...

Lead voice:
All of them dogs.
I'm talking about a rabbit dog,
I'm talking about a 'coon dog,
I'm talking about a moon dog,
I'm talking about a black dog,
I'm talking about a white dog,
I'm talking about a hot-dog,
All of them dogs. (5X)
I wonder why can't we sit under the apple tree.

Band 2: MICHAEL ROW THE BOAT ASHORE
CHORUS:
Michael rowed the boat ashore,
Hallelujah!
Michael rowed the boat ashore,
Hallelujah!
Never been to heaven, but I've been told,
Hallelujah!
The streets up there are made of gold,
Hallelujah!

(CHORUS)
Jordan's River is deep and cold,
Hallelujah!
Chill my body but not my soul,
Hallelujah!

(CHORUS)
Never been to heaven but I've been told,
Hallelujah!
The streets up there are made of gold,
Hallelujah!

Band 3: I'M SO GLAD
I'm so glad I'm fighting for my right,
I'm so glad I'm fighting for my right,
I'm so glad segregation's got to go,
I'm so glad segregation's got to go,
I'm so glad integration's on its way,
I'm so glad integration's on its way,
I'm so glad we're in this fight together,
I'm so glad we're in this fight together,
I'm so glad we're fighting to be free,
I'm so glad we're fighting to be free,
I'm so glad we're fighting to be free,
I'm so glad we're fighting to be free,
I'm so glad Hallelujah, I'm so glad.
I'm so glad Hallelujah, I'm so glad.

Band 4: OH FREEDOM
Oh, freedom, oh, freedom,
Oh, freedom after awhile;

And before I'll be a slave,
I'll be buried in my grave,
And go home to the Lord and be free.

No more heartache, no more heartache,
No more heartache after awhile;
And before I'll be a slave,
I'll be buried in my grave,
And go home to the Lord and be free.

There'll be freedom, there'll be freedom,
There'll be freedom after awhile;
And before I'll be a slave,
I'll be buried in my grave,
And go home to the Lord and be free.

(Repeat first verse)

Band 5: WE SHALL OVERCOME
We shall overcome, we shall overcome,
We shall overcome someday.
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

The truth will make us free, the truth will make us free,
The truth will make us free someday,
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

We'll walk hand in hand, we'll walk hand in hand,
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

We are not afraid, we are not afraid,
We are not afraid today,
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

The truth shall make us free, the truth shall make us free,
The truth shall make us free someday,
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

(Repeat first verse)