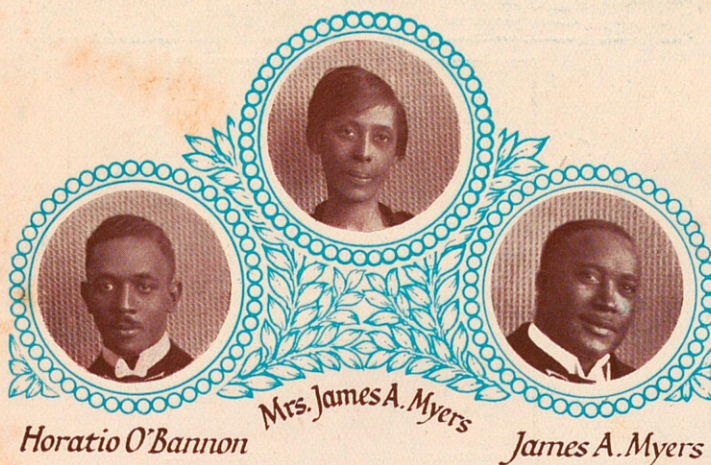


Spirituals & Plantation Songs from the Repertoire of the Fisk Jubilee Singers

Steal Away
Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
Walk all over God's Heaven
Inchin' Along
Go Down Moses
Ain't Goin' to Study War No Mo'
Who'll be a Witness
When Death Comes Knockin'
Nobody Knows the Trouble I See
Deep River
Hear The Lambs A Crying
The Old Ark's a Movering
Oh! Mary Don't You Weep
I Want to be Ready
Done Made My Vow
Go Tell It On The Mountain
Going Up
Remember Thou Thy Creator
Every Time I Feel The Spirit
Roll Jordan, Roll
Great Camp Meeting
Ezekiel Saw The Wheel
Swanee River
Old Black Joe
Old Kentucky Home
Carry Me Back to Old Virginia



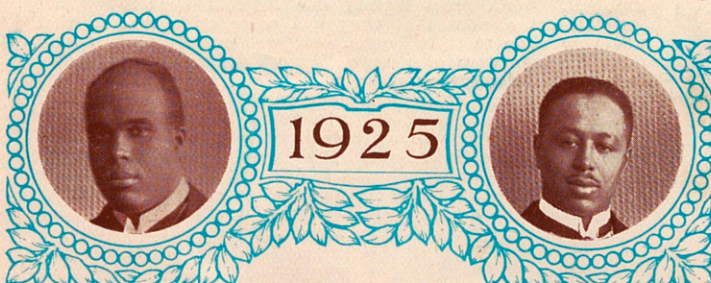
Horatio O'Bannon

Mrs. James A. Myers

James A. Myers

Honours achieved by THE FISK JUBILEE SINGERS of FISK UNIVERSITY NASHVILLE · TENNESSEE on their Triumphal European Tour.

Under the personal direction of
Mr. HUGH DILLMAN.



Lucile D. Collins

Carl J. Barbour

IT HAS TAKEN LOFTY ideals as well as great perseverance to build and maintain the fine University that now stands on the site that was occupied by a one-room log cabin at the close of the Civil War. It was in this cabin that Fisk University had its inception, and from it has grown a Negro University that stands shoulder to shoulder with, and is recognised by, the finest seats of learning in America.

Situated in the Southern City it was at first difficult to make rapid progress, but great credit is due to Nashville, Tennessee, where Fisk is located, for the moral support, as well as the financial encouragement, that the citizens have given the University.

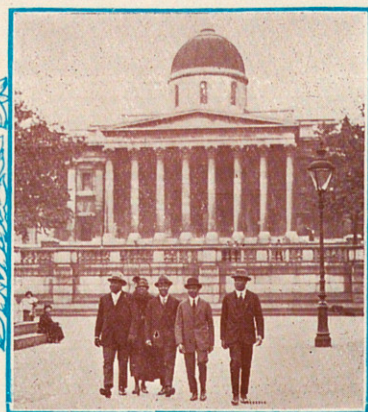
Sixty years is a short space of time to have produced the three finest groups of singers in the Negro race. Besides this it is interesting to know that Roland Hayes, who stands pre-eminent as a Negro singer, also came from Fisk University.

The first group of Jubilee Singers passed on their songs and traditions to a second, and the second group in turn passed them on to the third which forms the present. The present ensemble is a quintette made up of four men and one woman. They have devoted their lives to the collection and preservation of the Negro spirituals, plantation, and work songs, giving their time, and the money made by them, to aid in the maintenance of the University. They have of necessity lived their lives so simply and sincerely that they have developed personalities and artistic merits of the highest and most interesting character.

In the spring of 1924 they went to London, where their success was so pronounced that arrangements were immediately made for an European tour in 1925. This tour embraced England, France and Germany. In every instance their success, both financial and artistic, was beyond all expectations; having to give repeated concerts where one was thought to be sufficient.

The timbre and quality of their voices individually and the perfection of their ensemble singing made admiring friends for them among such men as Ravel and Rabaud. Their method of tone production was an amazing phenomena among teachers of music in Germany.

In England, on June 11th, they had the honour of a command performance and sang for their Majesties the King and Queen in the Waterloo Room at Windsor Castle. Both King George and Queen Mary were enthusiastic about their singing, and discussed with them at length the origin of their songs and how they had been preserved. The following day the King sent them a very substantial cheque to be used in aid of their University. Singing as they did before the greatest personages of Europe they went from country to country, meeting with success on every side. On their return to London, where they gave their last concert, Mr. Herbert Hughes said in the "Daily Telegraph": "These amazing singers come back to us for a final concert untouched and unspoiled by the great success of their European tour; simplicity and sincerity seem to be theirs."



LONDON

Morning Post.

The "Swanee River" is an old song, too old and familiar almost for the itinerant singers of our streets. But as we listened to the Fisk Jubilee Singers at the Aeolian Hall last night, it moved us as only the absolutely sincere and deeply felt things in art can do. It ceased to be a mere plantation ballad, beautiful and pathetic if you will, but still a ballad, and became, instead, the cry from the heart of a people, voicing, without bitterness or hatred, the infinite sadness of human life. We wish we could deal with their art in length. But no notice, however brief, should omit to mention the sureness of their touch, the certainty with which they catch the mood of the moment, whether grave or gay, and, not least, the real beauty of their singing.

More beautiful unaccompanied singing of its kind one cannot hope to hear.

Daily Express.

They certainly deserve their success. I have never heard any local quintet to touch these five singers in suppleness of touch and tone. Altogether one of the most attractive concerts I have attended in a long time.

A large audience and unlimited enthusiasm greeted the Fisk Jubilee at their concert on Saturday.

Daily Mail.

Their pieces—hymns, and such popular songs as "Old Black Joe," simply harmonised—were sung with that sweet, well rounded and never forced tone peculiar to the coloured folk, and they found easily the soft spot in the hearts of the audience.

London Era.

Members of the third generation of Fisk Jubilee singers are here and we know how the Negro Spirituals should be sung. They reach a rare perfection in their singing. They not only delight us, they have taught us.

Daily Telegraph.

A delight of a rare kind. The occasions are indeed few and far between, when one may truthfully describe an artist, or a group of artists, as being incomparable. The visit of these wonderful singers has given the critic that opportunity and justification. One has only to listen to these singers, who have the religious tradition in their blood, to realise how intensely sincere these Spirituals really are; to realise, also, that the singing itself has an unwritten technique of a subtle and lovely kind that seems to be a secret of the coloured musicians alone.

The Lady.

What the Fisk University Jubilee Singers don't know about "Negro Spirituals" (as the songs in which the coloured people of America in the days of slavery expressed their yearning for a country "built high above the stars," where they would be free, are called) is probably not worth knowing. It is at Fisk University, in Tennessee, that the authoritative versions of these wonderful songs are most jealously guarded, and the traditional interpretation protected from the white man's sophisticated "improvements." It was a great privilege to hear a quartet from the famous negro university at the Aeolian Hall last week, and I doubt whether we shall ever again be satisfied with "imitations" now that we have had a taste of the genuine art of the coloured singer. The simplicity of the Fisk artists (four male singers and a female contralto) defies imitation. That is a spiritual quality, but their singing has musical qualities as inimitable. Few white singers understand the distinctive negro rhythm, as we realised when we heard our old friend "Walk all over God's Heaven," lilted in a way which transformed it.

Referee.

The Fisk University Jubilee Singers appeared at the Aeolian Hall and sang Negro Songs and Spirituals with a real soft quality, exquisite finish, and, above all, sincerity of expression.



PARIS

La Musique.

Lovers of rare and delicate sound have been favoured this week with an exquisite feast.

The Fisk Jubilee Singers are five negro artists—four men and one woman—forming a vocal quintet of unforgettable quality. The woman's voice merges itself with the male voices so discreetly and with such an amazing subtlety and delicacy that it is impossible for the most sensitive ear to detach it from the other voices of the ensemble. The homogeneous equilibrium of this quintet is of an extraordinary beauty, and one feels that the hidden intervention of the woman's contralto voice must unite and harmonise, bind as it were, the vocal male quartet in the same way that organ makers comprehend the marvellous binding together of many sounds into one glorious tone. She introduces a mysterious richness into the whole, in the manner of a great organ player. It is also of an organ that one thinks on hearing these exquisitely placed voices, so accurate and true, so supple and so perfectly disciplined. They give one that reassuring sensation, that security of well-being and pleasure that only the most perfect instruments seem to attain. These singers have miraculously escaped from all the weakness and servitudes that mar so much vocal work. And what a sweet, thrilling and poignant timbre is theirs. Their voices have a remarkable quality, something intense and concentrated, as if they had been strained through some secret musical sound, which renders them immensely moving. The tenors have an accent that is of an unbelievable seduction; their singing is at the same time a combination of naive simplicity, great sadness, tenderness and mysticism.

It has a great freshness, too, about it, a great sensitiveness and overall a profound faith. Their balance and technique are impeccable—such as can only be gained by working together for years—as do the great string quartets. Their music has the same quality as their songs. Whether the songs be religious or secular, the music of these five artists is of the highest order. Certain compositions of theirs possess the great qualities of literature—an audacity, an elegance and a nobility that astonish one. During a whole evening these five singers, who execute their entire programme unaccompanied, held their public by their infinite charm. This combined human organ is one of the most beautiful instruments that it is possible to hear. Why, in the use of massed choirs, does one not think of using the astonishing variety of tone or timbre supplied by the ethereal differences of singers of many races? A beautiful chorus, in order to be enriched with a completion we have not known as yet, ought to be international. Russian basses are as indispensable as Italian tenors, and one ought not to neglect the precious and unique support of voices of such exquisite beauty and value as the Negroes possess. When shall we hear, under this symbolic form, the Great Chorus of a Society of Nations?

La Journal.

It was an unusual and marvellous concert that was given last night at Salle Gaveau. We heard of these singers from Fisk University and we were anxious to hear them sing. Ravel, Rabaud, Philipp, Millerand, Poincaré, Eva Gauthier, Ambassador Harrick, Roland Hayes, Dushkin, and as many of the American Colony as we French left room for filled the hall. With great dignity five Negroes appeared before us. It was obvious that they had come on a mission that was very close to their hearts. It was equally obvious that these Negroes were of a type that we did not know. Five intelligent and sensitive faces, with no suggestion of jazz and syncopation about their demeanour, with their first song they captured their audience. Negro Spirituals and plantation songs are not entirely new to us, but they are new as far as this quality of interpretation goes. Their pure unspoiled voices give to the music a tessitura of great individuality and beauty which I doubt if the most gifted artists of other races could emulate or capture. The intensity of their emotion stirred us all to an enthusiasm most unusual even for a French audience.



BERLIN

Dr. Adorf Heibboorn (Berliner Allgemeine Zeitung).

One can rightly call the concert given last evening at Beethovensaal by the Fisk Jubilee Singers a real musical event. A diversion from the heterogeneous elements of other negro singers are the hymns and plantation songs of these singers from America. What beautiful singing! Sometimes purposely throaty and nasal when the occasion demands, and then again so sweetly melodious and plaintively beautiful. Such singing can only be accomplished by long and intelligent training. The artistic skill of this recital was of such high order that one might hold it up as a model to many a celebrated European star. The union of these five voices is so exquisite in its blending that one seldom hears each singer separately. A crescendo on the one hand; a decrescendo like a softly breathed pianissimo on the other, such as I have never heard from a group of singers before. This is only possible where the best voices collaborate with the highest musical ability and intelligence. All of this was found last night when the Fisk Jubilee Singers sang to us a delightful programme of Negro Spirituals.

Voosische Zeitung.

The sensation of the last few months has certainly been the appearance of the Fisk Jubilee Singers at Beethovensaal. It seemed that all Berlin was there anxious to hear these dusky singers from Nashville, Tennessee. They proved beyond a doubt that ensemble singing can be one of the finest forms of art. No sooner had we heard the beauty and sincerity of these artists' first notes than a great warmth of feeling was established between them and their audience. What is it so peculiarly haunting in their music? Primitive, but stirringly beautiful, apparently native and untouched, it has great smoothness and polish. One hears wild, untamed, yet rhythmic strains, so haunting that they carry you back to the songs of their African ancestors. In this singing one hears the recitative and parlance of the choir leader, which is taken up by the choir. They produce their art so perfectly, with such musical intelligence and simplicity, that at times it seems almost to be a cunning.

Not understanding their language, I found myself carried from mood to mood by these fine artists through their great sadness and melancholy laments to a harmless frivolity where they made this vibrate music turn somersaults in its joyousness. It was certainly a most unusual evening, and one I will never forget.

Der Montag Morgen.

Where could one hear, "Go, Tell it on the Mountain," Rhodes' beautiful song, "Remember Thou Thy Creator," sung as these five negro singers sang it last night in Beethovensaal. The delicate rendering of the notes astonished us all again and again. It was like a spring meadow filled with lovely flowers caressed now and then by a gentle wind. I am sure "Swanee River" has never been sung as this group of artists sang it. We have much to learn from them, and thank them for coming to us. It is with deep regret I hear they can give but one concert in Berlin.

Berliner Tageblatt.

These Fisk Jubilee Singers are certainly interesting to know. Their wonderful singing took effect immediately on the great audience that filled Beethovensaal as it has rarely been filled since the war. With perfect diction they combine a musical knowledge that creates a balanced harmony and a blending of voices the like of which I have never heard. Their music is a means that allows nothing to be concealed, and it strips naked your very soul. Such music enables one to see and judge the composer's mode of living and the whole character of a nation from which it springs. It was such music and artistry that was shown to-night by the masterly delineation of the Fisk Jubilee Singers.