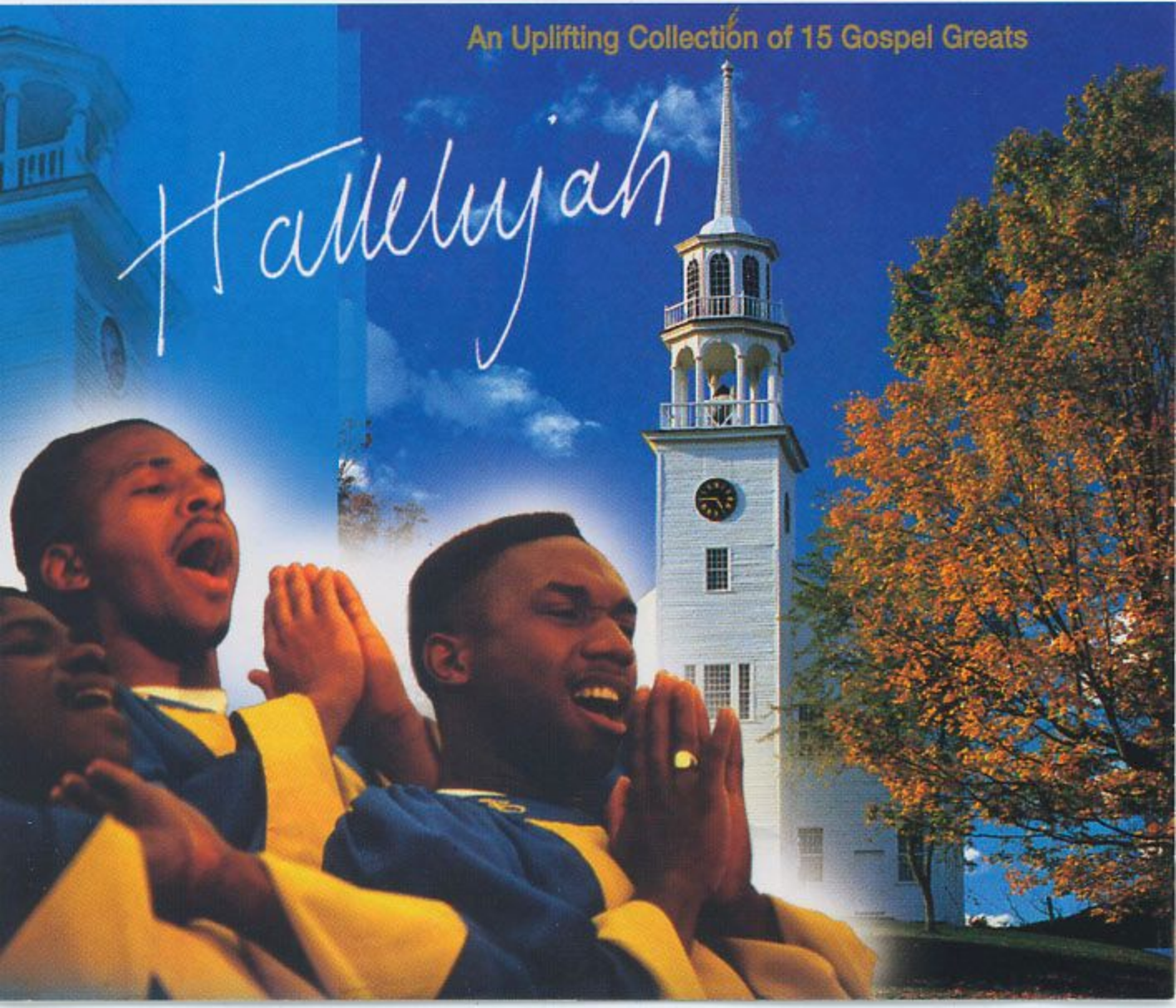


Kings of Gospel



An Uplifting Collection of 15 Gospel Greats

Hallelujah





Cross Jordan Singers

Music Club digs deeply into the vast treasures at Hob Records and draws from the vaults the very best in traditional male gospel quartet singing from the 1950s and '60s.

For songs from gospel's Golden Age, first we head for the City of Brotherly Love and the long-standing Dixie Hummingbirds lead by the smooth, soulful Ira Tucker singing "Get Away Jordan" and Herbert Brewster's "Move On Up A Little Higher" (Parts 1 & 2) first recorded by Queen Anderson. The group at this time was composed of Beachey Thompson, tenor, Ira Tucker, baritone/lead, James B. Davis, baritone and William Bobo or Providence Thomas, bass. These sides are from the highest point in the group's lengthy singing career.

Staying in the same era, we make for the Old Dominion state and the Richmond-based Harmonizing Four lead by the velvet voice of Tommy Johnson singing "Jesus Is A Friend To Everyone" and "I'll Never Turn Back No More." The now-retired Harmonizing Four date back to 1927 and chose mainly to stick with traditional and Baptist hymn-type material. Group soldiers included Tommy Johnson, lead, Levi Hansley, tenor, Lonnie Smith, tenor, Joseph Williams, Baritone and the legendary Jimmy Jones, bass.

Traveling to the City of Angels for the Watts-based Mighty Clouds of Joy, we have chosen two standards dating back to the beginning of their Recording career, "Amazing Grace" and "Old Time Religion," lead by the iron-clad lungs of Joe Ligon. These songs were recorded live by Brother Henderson at Will Rogers Park when the outfit was composed of Joe Ligon, lead, Bedile Goldsmith, tenor/manager, Freddie Jackson, Jerome Brown, Johnny Wesley, Johnnie Gibson and the late Johnny Martin.

Globally acclaimed soloist Tommy Ellison with The Palmetto State's Five Singing Stars give out with "Hard To Get Along" and "Heaven To Me." The group has a history dating back to 1953. The original Five Singing Stars were composed of Tommy Ellison, lead/tenor, Roosevelt Walker, high tenor and guitar, Clarence Robinson, baritone, Eli Evans, tenor and Bill Whitty, bass. This hard-singing group continues to excite audiences all over the nation.

The Brooklyn All-Stars came about in the late 1950s when bass singer Thomas Spann took Hardie and Maurice Clifton plus Nathaniel Cook out of The Singing Stars of Louisburg and built an exciting quartet. Elastic high tenor songbird Hardie Clifton

Kings of

and The Brooklyn All Stars impress with the airy "Careless Soul" and again with the sanctified "I'm Coming Home." Clifton was a disciple of the Sam Cooke School of Gospel Singing.

The dynamic Dewey Young and The Flying Clouds (a.k.a. Devine Travelers) enliven the spirit with their traditional reading of "I Heard The Voice Of Jesus Said" and "I'll Guide Thee." These sides were originally recorded by Bobby Robinson in the Big Apple when the group was made up of Dewey Young, lead tenor, Charles Blair, second tenor, Leroy Williams and Rafer Gordan, baritones and Joe Moore on guitar. The tough-singing Dewey Young has a long and illustrious career, having sung with Rev. Julius Cheeks in The Sensational Nightingales and Gospel Knights as well as with Rev. Claude Jeter in The Swan Silvertones.

The gravel-throated James Milligan and The Cross Jordan Singers also first recorded for Bobby Robinson in New York. We have included their supercharged renditions of "Wagon Wheels" and "Won't It Be Grand." The Cross-Jordans tore up the churches in their day. Members included James Milligan, lead, Louis Johnson, Henry Lindsey, Drew Lindsey, Edward Pressley and Robert Milton, baritone.



Harmonising Four

Louis Johnson served in many world-renowned gospel quartets including The Gospel Clefs and Swan Silvertone Singers.

We top the proceedings with The Windy City's sweet-singing Clefs of Calvary giving out joy with "He Promised To Meet Me There" led by ex-Blind Boys soloist Roscoe Robinson. The Clefs of Calvary fall into that Soul Stirrers, Mid-west, minor-key gospel sound category along with the Crume Brothers and Highway Q C's. The outfit was composed of Roscoe Robinson, lead tenor, Robert Dixon, Percy Clark, Ezell Wilkins and

Gospel

Richard Franklin on guitar. The boys were first organized in the early 1960s by James Phelps who had just quit The Soul Stirrers to form his own unit. Roscoe Robinson also has a long and distinguished career in gospel singing having warbled in The Five Blind Boys of Mississippi, Silver Quintette and Southern Sons. The Clefs of Calvary would have won greater recognition had it not been for the fact that Robinson went on to sing as an R&B solo item.

All of the aforementioned quartets have one thing in common: they all stick to the traditional Post-War, post-jubilee singing style. Close harmonies, swing leads, vocal dramatics and melismatic trickery. Today's male quartet scene is dominated by contemporary gospel groups like The Brower Brothers, The Racy Brothers, Gospel Hi-Lites and Men of Standard. All perform with a far more instrumental complexity. The choir phenomenon is very much alive and well today and tends to overshadow the lesser community-based organizations. Outreach choirs lead by star preachers are the trend of today.

The current African American church marketplace is twenty-seven million souls

strong. A double-digit market growth has brought the major record companies into the picture. Kirk Franklin and Donnie McClurkin serve as trendsetters. But there will always be call for the kind of rooted church music found on this collection. The Mighty Clouds, Dixie Hummingbirds and Five Singing Stars still go out over the nation's highways and byways, taking good-old, honest, sanctified church music to the homes of everyone.

I am sure you will agree that Hob's "Kings of Gospel" will bring you all the honest-to-goodness testimony you will ever need.

*Opal Louis Nations
December 1998*

Opal Nations, born in Brighton, England, is a music producer, writer of both fiction and music articles, and vocalist with 1960s groups Alexis Korner Band, The Frays, and The Ram Holder Group, as well as former KPFA (Berkeley) deejay.



Dixie Hummingbirds



Mighty Clouds Of Joy

1. **Move Up A Little Higher**
Dixie Hummingbirds
(Trad./Arr. Dixie Hummingbirds)
2. **Jesus Is A Friend To Everyone**
Harmonizing Four
(Trad./Arr. Harmonizing Four)
3. **Amazing Grace**
Mighty Clouds Of Joy
(Trad./Arr. Mighty Clouds Of Joy)
4. **Hard To Get Along**
Five Singing Stars
(Trad./Arr. Five Singing Stars)
5. **Careless Soul**
Brooklyn All Stars
(Trad./Arr. Brooklyn All Stars)
6. **I Heard The Voice Of Jesus Said**
The Flying Clouds
(Trad./Arr. The Flying Clouds)
7. **Wagon Wheels**
Cross Jordan Singers
(Trad./Arr. Cross Jordan Singers)
8. **He Promised To Meet Me There**
Clefs Of Calvary
(Trad./Arr. Clefs Of Calvary)
9. **Get Away Jordan**
Dixie Hummingbirds
(Trad./Arr. Dixie Hummingbirds)
10. **I'll Never Turn Back No More**
Harmonizing Four
(Trad./Arr. Harmonizing Four)
11. **Old Time Religion**
Mighty Clouds Of Joy
(Trad./Arr. Mighty Clouds Of Joy)
12. **Heaven To Me**
Five Singing Stars
(Trad./Arr. Five Singing Stars)
13. **I'm Coming Home**
Brooklyn All Stars
(Trad./Arr. Brooklyn All Stars)
14. **I'll Guide Thee**
The Flying Clouds
(Trad./Arr. The Flying Clouds)
15. **Won't It Be Grand**
Cross Jordan Singers
(Trad./Arr. Cross Jordan Singers)

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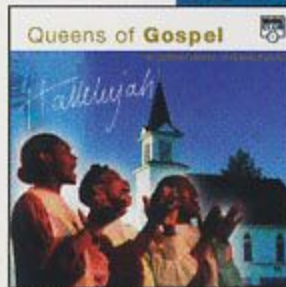
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