Freedom Music: From Spirituals to Protest Songs

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What are Spirituals?

- Historically?
- Culturally?
- Musically?
Spirituals

- Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
- Wade in the Water
- Steal Away to Jesus
- Roll, Jordan, Roll
- Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child
- Go Down, Moses
- Didn’t my Lord Deliver Daniel
- Mary Don’t you Weep
- Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen

Etc...
"A keen observer might have detected in our repeated singing of 'O Canaan, sweet Canaan, I am bound for the land of Canaan,' something more than a hope of reaching heaven. We meant to reach the North, and the North was our Canaan." -Frederick Douglass
Spirituals & the Civil Rights Movement

“In a sense the freedom songs are the soul of the movement...we sing the freedom songs today for the same reason the slaves sang them, because we too are in bondage and the songs add hope to our determination that “We shall overcome, Black and white together, We shall overcome someday.” - Martin Luther King Jr.
From Spirituals to Freedom Songs

**Spiritual (1800’s):**
Don't you let nobody turn you aroun',
Turn you aroun', turn you aroun',
Don't you let nobody turn you aroun',
Keep the straight an' the narrow way.

**Protest Song (1960’s)**
Ain't gonna let segregation turn me 'round,
Turn me 'round, turn me 'round.
Ain't gonna let segregation, turn me 'round.
I'm gonna keep on a-walkin', keep on a-talkin',
Marchin' on to freedom land
The Freedom Singers
Orlando, 2016

Protesting the Westboro Baptist Church
Miami, 2020

Protesting Police Brutality
Charlottesville, 2017

Protesting White Supremacy
Minneapolis, 2020

Protesting Police Brutality
“We sing the freedom songs for the same reasons the slaves sang them, because we are still in bondage.” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.