

GRAND PRAIRIE UNION NEWS

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Civil Rights Anthems Live Again In *Oh Freedom!*

Every Movement - labor, women's, civil rights - has it's music. No American political effort used music more effectively and burrowed itself into the national song track like the 1960's Civil Rights fight.

Drawing on Gospel, Jazz, blues and spirituals, a rich musical texture overlaid the effort. We Shall Overcome became a an international anthem, adapted to many causes and efforts. Thew song originally began as the spiritual *I Shall Overcome* and was adapted by union tobacco workers who passed it to the civil rights effort.

Western Illinois Folk and roots musician Chris Vallillo has gathered these together in his latest CD: ***Oh Freedom! Songs of the Civil Rights Movement.*** Often these songs are performed by Gospel Choirs, not always in a folk or country tradition with slide guitar, mandolin, and harmonica. Chris, backed by Rocky Maffit on percussion and vocals, weaves together richly textured and spirited renditions of these classic songs.



For those who were around in the 60's, this is a poignant reminder of music's power to awaken a nations conscience and power people to the sacrifices of a non violent movement.

For younger generations who might have heard snippets of these songs on documentary films, this is a wonderful and accessible introduction to an historic and moving genre.

Helpfully, Chris includes a short paragraph on each song detailing it's roots, evolution and use.

The Civil Rights Story is still not fully resolved in our culture; this Cd is a great reminder of those efforts and it's unfinished legacy. See www.chrisvallillo.com to download or order.

-Mike Matejka

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