

Unit 7 – Focus on

3. Music for a cause

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David: Grandpa, are you ready to help me for my presentation on the Civil Rights Movement?

Grandpa: Of course, David! Let's start this way.

David: What is it? It makes me think of gospel music!

Grandpa: Well, this is “We Shall Not Be Moved” and yes, it does sound like gospel, but it reminds me of many more things, you know. I heard it for the first time in August 1963. It was during the Washington March for Freedom and Jobs. I had never taken part in a demonstration before. It was the first time for me.

David: Your first demonstration? Wow! Was it big?

Grandpa: Well, to give you an idea, I had never seen so many people brought together for a cause. Wherever I looked there were people, black and white, young and old, walking together and singing in unison.

David: And they were singing “We Shall Not Be Moved”?

Grandpa: No, they were singing “We Shall Overcome”. But the Freedom Singers were on stage, and they sang “We Shall Not Be Moved”. Whenever I listen to these songs, I remember that wonderful day, all those people singing and dreaming of a better world. These songs mean a lot to me.

David: Why “Freedom Singers”, Grandpa?

Grandpa: Simple, David. Their music represented the Civil Rights Movement and it helped black people to defend their rights. Their songs allowed them to become true American citizens, to get equal rights.

David: And you, Grandpa, what did it do for you?

Grandpa: A lot, and it still does. Whatever problem I may have, these songs remind me that there's no crisis we can't overcome. They make me feel as joyful and optimistic as we all felt that day.