

The words of a blues song might be sad, but the music and the beat wrap around your heart like one of your grandmother's hugs.

The roots of the blues go back to slavery.

They wove hope on the air by singing songs called spirituals—songs for the spirit.

She sang church songs, gospel, but she knew blues and brought the blues feeling into church music.

Mahalia grew up in New Orleans, Louisiana, the city where jazz was born and where there is still more good music and good food per block than anyplace in the world.

Mahalia grew up loving music, and the person she wanted to sing like was none other than Bessie Smith.

It was in church that Mahalia first started singing.

Mahalia's singing brought her to the attention of Thomas A. Dorsey, who directed a number of gospel choirs in Chicago.

He began taking her to out-of-town churches for concerts and her reputation began to grow almost as fast as you are.

She would go on to become the most famous gospel singer in the world, and in 1976 she received (posthumously) a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award.