

Michael, Row the Boat Ashore

Modern folklore collectors tell us that "Michael" originated in the islands off the coast of Georgia where it has been sung since slave days. It is fairly unusual in that it is both a spiritual and a work song—specifically, a sea chantey—which was sung by slaves rowing plantation river boats. When the load was heavy, they invoked the help of the Archangel Michael, intoning the lines to the stroke of the oars. In 1961, the Highwaymen made the song a universal favorite with their million-selling record.

Very steady and not too fast

mf

4/4

Introduction: Treble clef, 4/4 time. The melody begins with a quarter note G4, followed by a half note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass line consists of a steady eighth-note pattern: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3.

C F/Cbass C F

Mi - chael row the boat a - shore hal - le - lu

Chords: C (x0232), F/Cbass (x33233), C (x0232), F (x21332). The melody is in the treble clef, 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "Mi - chael row the boat a - shore hal - le - lu".

C G F/Gbass C/Gbass G Am D/Abass

iah, Mi - chael row the boat a - shore hal - le -

Chords: C (x0232), G (x0232), F/Gbass (x33233), C/Gbass (x33233), G (x0232), Am (x0223), D/Abass (x0223). The melody is in the treble clef, 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "iah, Mi - chael row the boat a - shore hal - le -".

The musical score consists of four systems of music. Each system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. Chords are indicated above the vocal line.

System 1: Chords: C/Gbass, G, C, C, F/Cbass. Lyrics: lu - iah. Sis - ter help to trim the

System 2: Chords: C, F, C. Lyrics: sail hal - le - lu iah, Sis - ter

System 3: Chords: G, F/Gbass, C/Gbass, G, Am, D/Abass, C/Gbass, G, C. Lyrics: help to trim the sail hal - le - lu iah. *Repeat for additional verses*

System 4: Chords: F/Gbass, G, C, F, C. Lyrics: *last time* Mi - chael *much slower* row the boat a - shore, oh, yes.

2. Jordan's river is chilly and cold, halleluiah,
 Jordan's river is chilly and cold, halleluiah,
 Jordan's river is wide and deep, halleluiah,
 Jordan's river is wide and deep, halleluiah,
 Michael, row the boat ashore, oh, yes.

3. Gabriel, blow the trumpet horn, halleluiah,
 Gabriel, blow the trumpet horn, halleluiah.
 Michael's boat is a gospel boat, halleluiah,
 Michael's boat is a gospel boat, halleluiah,
 Michael, row the boat ashore, oh, yes.

