“WHY SHOULD THE DEVIL HAVE ALL THE PRETTY TUNES?” THE GREAT AWAKENING OF A NEW AMERICAN IDIOM: *ORGAN MUSIC BASED ON SHAPE-NOTE HYMNS*

by

SARAH ROBERTA READ-GEHRENBECK

Submitted to the faculty of the
School of Music in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree,
Doctor of Music
Indiana University
December 2017

Accepted by the faculty of the
Indiana University Jacobs School of Music,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Music

Doctoral Committee

____
Christopher Young, Research Director & Chair

____
Janette Fishell

____
Mary Ann Hart

____
Gretchen Horlacher

____
Marilyn Keiser

December 6, 2017

Copyright © 2017

Sarah Roberta Read-Gehrenbeck

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my profound gratitude to my professors, who have been a great source of inspiration to me. Each one brought a unique palette of knowledge and experience to bear upon this project. Thank you, Dr. Young, for your guidance and insight as my Research Director. You have always given me a great deal to think about—the breadth and depth of your knowledge is truly stunning. A special thank you to Dr. Keiser – the reason I came to Indiana University in the first place. You planted and nourished the seeds of my passion for Hymnody, and you have supported my work from the beginning to the end of my studies. You have mentored me, and inspired me with your leadership and passion for education and performance. I count my blessings that I was able to absorb your wisdom as your Music Intern at Trinity. Prof. Mary Ann Hart, you are the very definition of a world-class pedagogue, and I treasure your advice and good humor. Dr. Fishell, your expertise and editorial advice have benefitted me tremendously, and I appreciate your support. Dr. Horlacher, you have provided critical insights and support with compassion and wit. You have stood by me through times of joy, and times of challenge. It is an awe-inspiring thing to interact with this brain trust!

A warm thank you to Phil Ponella, and his library and research staff at the Gayle Cook Music Library. You curate a profoundly important collection, and we are so lucky to have these personal and literary resources at IU.

I wish to thank my church families for their support and prayers: Trinity Episcopal Church, Bloomington, and First English Lutheran Church, Whitewater. Special thanks for the support of my friends in the Trinity Choir, and gratitude for the hospitality of Gates & Pat Agnew, Nancy Rayfield, and Anne Jones, who have hosted and encouraged me through my exams, recitals, and final document. A special thanks to Pr. Steve Hanson of FELC-Whitewater, an erudite and compassionate leader who has given me the flexibility I needed to meet my deadlines back at IU.

I'm grateful for the love and encouragement of my parents, Don and Roberta Read. They instilled perseverance and grit into their children, which they continue to teach by example. I want to thank my sister, Alison, for her advice and support. As a fellow professional of incredible intellect, she has been a valuable resource and sounding-board.

I wish to thank David and Helen Gehrenbeck for their love and support, as well as the gift of several musical scores that were pertinent to this project.

I wish to thank my husband, Robert Gehrenbeck, for his advice and insight. This is a defining moment for me, and I appreciate your scholarly wisdom and gentle editing. We are so fortunate that we are able to act as editorial eyes for each other, in addition to collaborating on the concert stage and in the adventure of parenting. Thank you for frequently reminding me that I really could do this!

Finally, I wish to thank my sons, Henry and Theo, for their patience. Thank you for understanding when your mother needed some quiet time to write. Although I am thrilled to have finished this research project, you are my greatest accomplishments, and always will be.

Alfred Music graciously granted permission to reprint excerpts from Gardner Read's *My Soul Forsakes Her Vain Delight* from *Eight Preludes on Old Southern Hymns,* (op. 90), Copyright © 1952 (Renewed) by H.W. Gray Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission.

The Primitive Methodists, or Ranters, acting upon the principle of "Why should the Devil have all the pretty tunes?" collect the airs which are sung at pot and public houses, and write their hymns to them. If the original words should be coarse, or indelicate, they are thought the more to require this transformation…They do not mince the matter by turning them into slow tunes, and disguising them by harmony, but sing them in their original lively time.[1]

-William Chappell

[1] William Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time,* Vol. II (London: Cramer, Bealle, and Chappell, 1859), 74.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments iv

Epigraph v

Table of Contents vi

Introduction 1

Chapter 1: The Roots of the Shape-Note Tradition in the New World 3

- Immigrants Import their Sacred Music to America
- 1640: First Psalter Published in America
- "Lining Out" the Psalms Devolves into Musical Anarchy
- Rise of the Singing Schools
- The First Great Awakening: Focus On Individual Worship
- Revolutionary American Composer William Billings
- Lowell Mason and the Tastemakers: A Battle for Standards
- The Shape-Note Tune Books of the Nineteenth Century
- Shape-Note Construction and The "American" Sound
- The Twentieth Century: Rebirth of a Repertory

Chapter 2: WONDROUS LOVE 21

Chapter 3: Samuel Barber's *Wondrous Love: Variations on a Shape-Note Tune* 28

Chapter 4: Additional Settings from the 1950s—Read and Sowerby 36

- Gardner Read's *Eight Preludes on Old Southern* Hymns (From *The Sacred Harp*)
- Leo Sowerby's Prelude on *Land of Rest*

Chapter 5: Shorter Settings from the 1970s and 1980s 53

- The Second Wave: Robert Powell, Dale Wood, and George Shearing
- George Shearing: Translations by a Jazz Master
- The Third Wave: Jean Langlais, Ronald Perera, and Daniel Pinkham

Chapter 6: Amazing Grace....................65

Early History

Rebirth in a Gospel Idiom

Chapter 7: William Bolcom's *Amazing Grace*—Pop Meets Art Music....................76

Conclusion....................84

Personalia....................88

Appendix: Selected Organ Settings of Shape-Note Tunes....................89

Select Bibliography....................95

List of Figures

Figure 1: *Beginner's Guide to Shape-Note Singing* (Grayson)..15

Figure 2: WONDROUS LOVE from *The Southern Harmony* (1854, Walker).......................................25

Figure 3: WONDROUS LOVE from *The Sacred Harp* (1911, Denson) 26

Figure 4: Tunes and Texts of Gardner Read's *Eight Preludes* (op. 90)..43

Figure 5: *My Soul Forsakes Her Vain Delight* (LEANDER) 44

Figure 6: *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* 45

Figure 7: Incipits of Melodic Statements: *My Soul Forsakes Her Vain Delight* 47

Figure 8: *My Soul Forsakes Her Vain Delight* (Read, op. 90), mm. 5-9 48

Figure 9: 33 Statements of the melody in Sowerby's *LAND OF REST* (Read, op. 90).....................52-53

Figure 10: AMAZING GRACE from *The Southern Harmony* (1844 ed.) 69

Figure 11: AMAZING GRACE (E.O. Excell arrangement, 1913)..70

Introduction

The shape-note tradition formed a singular expressive sound within the core of our new country's musical language. The original composers and performers of shape-note tunes rejected traditional European melodic contours and common-practice harmony, and their music can be viewed as an attempt to assert independence and forge a new language in the New World. Shape note tunes are emblematic of American ingenuity and a society that has continually reinvented itself. During the course of the nineteenth century, as European music became more prevalent in the United States, shape-note tunes were preserved in Appalachia and other geographically isolated areas, and thus became associated with the roots of American folk music.

Since enjoying a revival in the middle of the twentieth century, shape-note hymn tunes have secured a place in the hymnals of mainstream Christian denominations. These tunes, although modernized by the placement of the melody in the soprano, link modern congregations to their early American roots. In the latter decades of the twentieth century, a proliferation of recordings, specialized choral ensembles, and concerts focused on shape-note tunes reflected the renewed interest in this corpus of music. Composers of organ music in the last five decades have been inspired by the quintessentially American sound of shape-note tunes, and have capitalized on this unique, vernacular musical language. The shape-note tunes are a deep well of melodic material from which to draw—a decidedly American collection of *canti firmi*. This study presents a concise narrative of the history of the shape-note tradition in America, and attempts to answer the following questions: What confluence of factors were present at the birth of the shape-note hymnody tradition? What aesthetic considerations caused shape-notes to flourish in one geographic region over another? What are the characteristics of shape-note tunes? What are the harmonic implications of shape-note tunes, as realized in the tune books of the early nineteenth century? What makes these tunes sound so intrinsically American? Finally, what inspired 20th-century composers to create new works based on shape-note tunes? Since most of the composers writing pieces based on shape-note tunes are American, is there an element of nationalism inherent to this phenomenon?

This paper will identify and analyze seminal organ pieces based on shape-note tunes. Rather than compiling an exhaustive list of such pieces, it will focus on several representative works by important Twentieth and Twenty-first Century composers for the organ. Additional smaller settings will be mentioned to illustrate the extent of the shape-note influence on the organ repertoire, as well as to provide a reference for musicians interested in further examination of this body of work. A more extensive list of selected organ works is included as an appendix.

As will be demonstrated below, organ composers of the 1950s remain close to the source material of the shape-note tune books. Their settings evoke multiple aspects of the original shape-note idiom, including pentatonic melodies, quartal harmonies, and straightforward rhythms. Between the early 1960s and the mid-1970s, organ composers migrate away from the shape-note tradition, taking only the tunes, but leaving other characteristics of the genre behind. Since the 1970s, having excised the tunes from their original milieu, composers have felt more free to translate, repurpose, and update shape-note tunes, drawing on multiple influences, including jazz and gospel music.

Chapter 1: The Roots of the Shape-Note Tradition in the New World

IMMIGRANTS IMPORT THEIR SACRED MUSIC TO AMERICA

To truly understand the evolution of shape-note music, it is imperative to examine its origins. Initially, sacred music in the Colonies was an imported commodity, brought across the ocean by European immigrants. Many of the early settlers sought freedom from religious persecution, and they clung to their religious traditions with great zeal. They brought with them their Psalters and Bibles. Until the publication of *Bay Psalm Book* in 1640, importing music to the Colonies was the only practical option.

The original immigrants from Europe to the New World included Puritans from England, Calvinists from Holland, and many others who emigrated for reasons other than religious persecution.[1] These early settlers helped to shape sacred music while they established themselves in colonies in and around Plymouth, Massachusetts. They brought the *Ainsworth Psalter* (*The Book of Psalms: Englished Both in Prose and Meter, Henry Ainsworth,* 1612), and relied heavily on it in church services. Most of the thirty-nine tunes it contained were English, but Ainsworth included a handful of French and Dutch tunes, as well. Although Ainsworth's *Psalter* contains only single-line melodies, the text was set in a myriad of poetic meters, many of which are complicated.[2] Gilbert Chase, noted historian of American music, postulates that the use of the *Ainsworth Psalter* reflects that the first generations of settlers had some musical training and ability, a skill set that may have largely died out with the demise of those first settlers, given the lack of leisure time available to members of an agrarian economy.[3]

---

[1] Gilbert Chase, *America's Music: from the Pilgrims to the Present*, revised 3rd ed. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992) 6.
[2] Ibid., 7.
[3] Ibid., 8.

1640: FIRST PSALTER PUBLISHED IN AMERICA

By the latter decades of the seventeenth century, the early colonists felt overwhelmed by the metrical challenges of the *Ainsworth Psalter,* and many congregations voted to replace it with the *Bay Psalm Book* (*The Whole Booke of Psalmes Faithfully Translated into English Metre,* 1640)*,* the first book published on American soil.[4] The *Bay Psalm Book* went through several revisions until the balance between faithfulness to the King James version of the Bible and ease of delivery by a singing congregation had been reached in the 1651 edition. This version, renamed *The New England Psalm Book*, set most of the 150 metrical psalms in common meter (CM).[5] The use of common meter, with its easy alternation of lines of eight and six syllables, helped seventeenth-century Americans commit the Psalms to memory.

The Psalters in use in the Colonies during the seventeenth century had not married any particular tunes to specific Psalms, and many Psalters lacked music entirely. The first to depart from this format was *The New England Psalm Book*'s ninth edition (1698), which borrowed heavily from the British tome by John Playford: *Introduction to the Skill of Music* (in its eleventh edition by 1687).[6] In addition to instructions for singing (also included in previous editions), the editors borrowed Playford's notation under the Psalm tunes found in his 1672 edition: F (fa)- S (sol)- L (la)-M (mi), which Gilbert Chase asserts is the earliest known example of "fasola" notation published in the Colonies.[7] The concept of a pedagogical section, outlining the rudiments of music, was incorporated into later shape-note tune books.

"LINING OUT" THE PSALMS DEVOLVES INTO MUSICAL ANARCHY

Colonists imported the practice of "lining out the Psalms" to America, but the practice deteriorated, creating a need for more accessible sacred music. "Lining out" was a method by which a leader

[4] Chase, *America's Music*, 9.
[5] Chase, *America's Music,* 10.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.

(sometimes clergy, deacon, or trained musician) would intone a line of the Psalm for the day to be followed by the congregation's repetition of the same text. The practice of "lining out" was imported to America from England by the British and Scottish settlers who valued this style of Psalm singing. The need for lining out was most pronounced in congregations with low literacy rates, and became more common because of a shortage of Psalters. Without a book in hand, lining out was the most practical way to keep the congregations together while singing. As it turned out, the lining out of Psalms became rather a slippery slope for seventeenth- and eighteenth-century American congregations. The Psalm leaders were not always learned men, trained in music. The model of Harvard-educated clergyman leading the Psalms was only a best-case scenario, but not the most common one. Lining out the Psalms became known as *The Old Way* of singing, and leant itself to leaders who took quite a few liberties with the declamation of the text. According to contemporary accounts (mostly complaints), many deacons or Psalm leaders "emphasized melodic elaboration sung full-voice."[8] The Reverend Thomas Symmes wrote about the deteriorating condition of Psalm-singing in a pamphlet in 1720:

> The Rules of Singing not being taught or learnt, every one sang as best pleased himself, and every Leading-Singer would take the Liberty of raising any Note of the Tune, or lowering of it, as best pleas'd his Ear, and add such Turns and Flourishes as were grateful to him.[9]

It is clear from Symmes' complaint that he felt anarchy was creeping into sacred music. This is the root of a highly polarized debate between the merits of *The Old Way* (also known as *The Common Way*) and *Singing by Rule* (or *Regular Singing*). Clergy from Boston—many of them Harvard-educated—took up the cause for *Regular Singing,* arguing that the improvisatory embellishments of *The Old Way* were not only an assault on the ears, but led to singers showing off, and generally derailed the congregation's effort to sing the Psalms properly. Their objection to this style evokes other historical discussions of music obfuscating the text, such as the reforms in sixteenth century Europe, where a need for intelligible text was recognized, as polyphonic church music placed a greater focus on the music, rather than the sacred texts.

---

[8] Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2005) 25.
[9] Thomas Symmes, *The Reasonableness of Regular Singing*, (Boston: B. Green, 1720) 8.

The adherents to *Regular Singing* remained centralized in Boston, and began to publish pamphlets and give sermons in which they encouraged the development of Singing Schools to teach Americans how to sing "by Rule." They felt sure that singing in the uniform manner which they espoused was certain to be more pleasing to God than the cacophony of *The Old Way*.

RISE OF THE SINGING SCHOOLS

The absence of music education in the eighteenth century was soon filled by Singing Schools. Encouraged by the Boston clergy, people who wished to sing "by Rule" would attend classes offered by singing masters for a limited time, usually several months, in the evenings.[10] Richard Crawford points out that although the focus of these schools was music literacy for the purpose of better Psalm singing, the Singing School, as an institution, was a social one, and not an arm of the church.[11] There were still large segments of the population who held tightly to the methods of *The Old Way*, but Boston became the locus of music literacy and the primacy of the printed score. The period saw the publication of a number of instructional books that were antecedents to the shape-note tune books of the next century. Among them were John Tufts' *An Introduction to the Singing of Psalm Tunes* and Thomas Walter's *The Grounds and Rules of Musick, Explained,* both published in 1721.[12] These Boston publications, in addition to pamphlets and sermons warning against the abuses of *The Old Way,* established Boston as the epicenter of the campaign for "correct singing"—singing by note, rather than by whim. This interest in acquiring musical skills gave rise to a new profession in New England: the professional music teacher. For the first time, opportunities existed for men to make a living (or at least a part of their income) by setting up Singing Schools or by publishing pedagogical methods and tune books for beginning singers.

---

[10] Crawford, *America's Musical Life,* 28.
[11] Ibid., 32.
[12] Ibid.

Another threat to the *Old Way* of singing was imported from England in the 1720s: the psalm paraphrases of Isaac Watts. Watts had published *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* in 1707, in which he put forth a radical idea: many of the Psalms were "foreign to the State of the New Testament" and he felt them opposed to modern Christian thinking.[13] Watts preached on the importance of grace and the redemption outlined the New Testament which colored his understanding of the psalms he paraphrased. Clearly, a metrical, more updated reworking of the Psalms would increase their appeal. Watts' hymns were first published in America around 1720, and they made an indelible impression on the Colonists, spreading like wildfire among New England Protestants. They were especially important to the Wesleys, and made their way into Revival and Camp Meetings. Watts' hymn paraphrases continued to hold sway into the middle of the nineteenth century, when his hymns would be included in shape-note collections such as *The Sacred Harp* and *The Southern Harmony*.

THE FIRST GREAT AWAKENING: FOCUS ON INDIVIDUAL WORSHIP

An essential shift occurred in the eighteenth century. The myriad new strands of charismatic preaching, and a shift toward individualism caused a variety of groups to break off into new Christian denominations. Additionally, many more persecuted Christians of a variety of sects were immigrating to the New World in search of religious freedom. Mennonites, Moravians, Quakers and Shakers dotted the Colonial landscape with theocratic settlements. Methodists broke away from the Church of England, and Baptist and Presbyterian sects splintered into many new groups in the last few decades of the eighteenth century.[14] It was a time of great intellectual and geographic movement in the Colonies. All of this philosophical turbulence made room for more variety in the types and manner of worship than ever before.

[13] Chase, *America's Music*, 38-39.
[14] Ibid., 45.

The idea of singing as a vehicle for personal connection with God crystallized during the Great Awakening, when the Wesleys and other missionaries immigrated to the Colonies with a religious agenda. John and Charles Wesley reached Georgia in 1735, where they found fertile soil for their Gospel message. In addition to John Wesley, several other important charismatic preachers became active in the 1730s. The birth of the evangelical style of preaching can be traced to men such as George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards in New England.[15] Camp meetings and revivals sprung up about around charismatic itinerant preachers who brought the Church to the people, not content to be constrained by any building. Camp meetings and revivals emphasized the growing trend of personal redemption, as expressed by the conversion experiences of John Newton (author of the hymn *Amazing Grace*) and others. Salvation became individualized, as reflected in hymn texts: one must take ownership of one's "personal Savior." Themes of conversion and capitulation to God's saving grace are commonly professed in hymns by the Wesleys and their contemporaries. This focus on a personal relationship to God, coupled with the importance of singing hymns to praise God, is a link between the sacred music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The use of folk melodies was particularly sanctioned by the younger of the Wesley brothers, Charles. Richard Crawford points out that Wesley believed that "the devil long ago took over the domain of good tunes" and that it was essential for these tunes to be "recaptured" by cleaning their texts of secular content.[16] It bears mentioning that in 1761, John Wesley felt the need to introduce a few rules aimed at Methodist singers. In his *Directions for Singing,* the inclusion of exhortations to sing "the music exactly as printed," is reminiscent of Rev. Symmes' complaint concerning singing "By Rule," in 1720.[17] He further exhorts the congregation to "sing lustily, and with good courage," but tempers that advice by admonishing the faithful to resist the urge to "be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony…"[18]

---

[15] Chase, *America's Music*, 38-39.
[16] Crawford, *America's Musical Life,* 163.
[17] *United Methodist Hymnal*, (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), vii.
[18] *United Methodist Hymnal*, vii.

This nascent interest in both the study and performance of music—and learning to sing, in particular—led to two important developments in the eighteenth century: choirs were gradually established, and native composers began to publish and flourish in New England. One of the first and most original of these American composers was William Billings (1746-1800). A tanner who became a singing master, he composed prolifically, and published his first tune book *The New England Psalm Singer or American Chorister* in 1770, followed by *The Singing Master's Assistant,* in 1778.[19] In the years leading up to the American Revolution, this native composer found an enthusiastic following. Billings was the quintessential American patriot, and many of his tunes reflected his revolutionary sympathies, making them even more popular. His tune books are the first example of a collection of works published by a single composer in the Colonies, and his tunes remained popular through the nineteenth century, when some were included in shape-note tune books. Several of his tunes have weathered the culling of editors over time., including his most well-known tune, CHESTER.[20] Billings is perhaps best recognized in the twenty-first century for his fuging tunes[21], but one of his greatest contributions to what we recognize as the early American sound—one that the shape-note tune books exploit—is the independence of each of the four voice parts, creating more complexity and melodic interest for the singers.[22] Other self-taught composers, like Daniel Read and Timothy Swan followed Billings' pattern, dispersing independent and equally interesting melodies throughout all of the voice parts. These early American composers were tradesmen, for whom music was an important sideline, and they typically published their works by subscription. The compositions of

---

[19] Crawford, *America's Musical Life,* 40.
[20] Ibid., 38.
[21]Shape-note fuging tunes mimic European fugal process, but they are not true fugues. They begin with homophony followed by successive imitative entrances of each voice part in a polyphonic texture. Irving Lowens argues that the roots of American fuging tunes can be found in the 18th-century English "fuging psalm tune," which was brought to the New World by English immigrants. See Lowens, "The Origins of the American Fuging Tune" *Journal of the American Musicological Society,* vol. 6, no. 1 (Spring, 1953): 52. Fuging psalm tunes found popularity in the New World, just as their popularity was waning in England. William Billings' name tends to be credited as the foremost purveyor of this style of composition in the years around the American Revolution. Two younger contemporaries of Billings also composed fuging tunes: Daniel Read (1757-1835) known for the tune SHERBURNE, and Jeremiah Ingalls (1764-1838), composer of NORTHFIELD.
[22] Crawford, *America's Musical Life,* 43.

Read, Swan, and their lesser known contemporaries have also maintained a place in the shape-note tune books.

William Billings, in his *New England Psalm-Singer* (1770) echoes the sentiments of other tune-smiths of the late eighteenth century when he discusses his compositional process, alluding to the development of each voice independently. Shape-note hymns presented the melody in the tenor, placing them on a continuum with the Genevan Psalter, the early German chorale settings by Luther, and English psalters that Protestant immigrants brought to the New World. Historically, two other voices made up the rest of the texture, each vocal line conceived with a certain amount of independence. In this way, much less emphasis is put on the vertical thrust of the harmony, allowing fourths, fifths, and octaves as resting points, rather than full triadic treatment or the cadential formulae of the contemporary European tradition. George Pullen Jackson, writing in the 1930s and 1940s, focuses on how the "parts have been composed in such a manner that each voice part is equally "eventful" and thus, interesting to the singer."[23] Jackson highlights an important aspect of the shape-note tradition that dates back to its inception: it is music for singers, not for listeners—music that demands participation. Jackson asserts that "*Sacred Harp* music must be sung and not heard," meaning that it is not meant for the concert hall.[24]

William Billings was a provocative composer, railing against the confines of inherited compositional traditions. In his music, one finds evidence of the true emancipation of American compositional style from that of Europe. The bass and treble voices were written above and below the tenor melody, but composed so that each line maintained its own melodic interest. Composers like Billings specifically did not compose the outer voices with a mind to the vertical convergence of the voices, eschewing the Germanic practice of composers trained in their art. Harmony became coincidental – a simultaneous meeting of independent vocal lines, rather than a harmonic formula.

[23] George Pullen Jackson, *The Story of the Sacred Harp*, *1844-1944: A Book of Religious Folk Song as an American Institution,* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1944, reprint 2010), 24.
[24] Jackson, *Story of Sacred Harp,* 31.

Shape-note hymns have several salient features that define them. Many of the tunes are pentatonic, or utilize gapped scales. The absence of a leading tone removes one of the prerequisites of tonality diminishing the momentum towards the tonic. The lack of smooth scalar gestures lends a rugged quality to the melodies. What may have sounded grotesque to those trained in the traditions of western European composition was considered a virtue by the rural audiences of camp meetings. Here, one finds no pretense of slick urban refinement, only a rough musical reflection of the geography of the American frontier. The agrarian communities that swooned over the itinerant preachers of Revivals and camp meetings held their tune books with calloused hands. Life was hard, and an echo of the Puritan sentiment about colonial psalmody seems rather apt for this later genre: "Gods (sic) Altar needs not our pollishings."[25]

LOWELL MASON AND THE TASTEMAKERS: A BATTLE FOR STANDARDS

In the late eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries, an acrimonious debate arose between, on the one hand, the educated clergy and European-trained musicians of Boston, and, on the other hand, the self-taught American composers. The discussion of "Singing By Rule" versus singing in "The Old Way" in the seventeenth century had metamorphosed into a question of "Musical Correctness" or "Musical Science" versus the anti-establishment self-taught composers and Singing School masters, such as Billings, Read, and Swan. Lowell Mason and Thomas Hastings held court in Boston and New York where they exerted considerable influence on the music of the urban churches. Vast improvements to congregational singing were called for by urban ministers. Mason advocated a return to "scientific" and "correct" church music, using German composers such as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven as models. Mason asserted that a musical reformation was required: the rules for common practice western European composition had been

[25] John Ogasapian, *Church Music in America: 1620-2000*, (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2007), 7.

ignored with detrimental consequences.[26] The *Handel and Haydn Society,* a civic choral society, flourished under Mason's leadership, sponsoring the publication of his first collection of hymns in 1821.[27] Mason's first tune book was published under the auspices of *The Handel and Haydn Society*, cementing its authority and setting it as the standard for those who espoused the musical "correctness" of classical music—meaning music from Europe.[28] He is given credit for bringing music education of a systematically high quality into the public schools, preparing future generations to be choristers and discerning consumers of music. Mason expanded the idea of the Singing Schools to include the education of children, as well as adding the performance of secular music. Mason perceived education as a path to freedom—freedom from the oral tradition, and its self-appointed music masters.[29] He also laid a foundation for professional church musicians. He left his bank job behind to become a prolific composer, educator, and church musician.

Lowell Mason and his contemporary, Thomas Hastings, were upholders of western European common practice harmony with simple, primarily homophonic, four-part hymn arrangements. These men were the standard bearers for *bon goût (good taste),* and elite and well-educated citizens backed their position in the debate. Later in the nineteenth century, the shape-note tune books became the center of a vitriolic public relations battle in which the "home-grown" and "homespun" was pitted against centuries of European "correctness," polarizing this new approach to composition against the European status quo. It is truly ironic that the birthplace of the Singing Schools became the locus of ire in the raging debate over shape-note tunes between the traditionalists and those exploring new harmonic and melodic territory.

Thus, the debate concerning what manner of music was proper to sing in church was reframed into a battle of opposing tastes. Increased musical training of the general public allowed choirs to be formed and flourish. Those who would protect "good taste" and "musical correctness" lobbied hard for

[26] Ogasapian, *Church Music in America,* 121.
[27] Ibid., 122-123.
[28] Crawford, *America's Musical Life,* 142.
[29] Ibid., 140.

trained musicians and choirs to lead the singing in church. They decried anything which they felt detracted from the *gravitas* of public worship, as well as anything written by an American composer who lacked formal training. Shape-note collections came under assault by reformers who upheld the traditions of European composition, beginning with Andrew Law at the turn of the nineteenth century, with the torch carried forward by Nathaniel Gould, Lowell Mason and Thomas Hastings over the first half of the nineteenth century.[30] Andrew Law and other espousers of traditional European harmonic boundaries launched a full assault against what they saw as a corruption of good musical taste, and a corrosive element in contemporary church music.[31] In 1800, Law wrote "that very much of the music in vogue is miserable, indeed."[32] With incendiary statements such as these, a rivalry between the new American composers and the European establishment coalesced in New England. Adherents of Law's ideals launched a full campaign against shape-note hymnody, which they saw as a degraded art that broke all the rules of common European practice. Thus, a campaign promoting the merits of musical "correctness" gained a firm foothold in the New England churches. The ideals at the root of this philosophy would become the impetus for public music education, spearheaded by Lowell Mason in the 19th century. Richard Crawford, writing in *America's Musical Life: A History* states:

> "American reformers since Andrew Law had maintained that harmonic correctness separated the sheep from the goats; musicians who understood the principles behind consonance, dissonance, and proper chord progressions and musicians who did not –i.e., the Yankee psalmodists."[33]

Supporters of a return to European compositional models created musical societies, and published tune books of their own, implying superiority based on their compilation by anonymous committees. Examples of these publications from the first decade of the nineteenth century include *The Salem Collection* and *The*

---

[30] Crawford, *America's Musical Life,* chapters 7-8.
[31] Ibid., 128.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Crawford, *America's Musical Life,* 142.

Middlesex Collection, notably omitting the works of Billings, Read, and other self-taught composers from the Colonies.[34]

After the Revolutionary War, the singing masters who had risen to prominence among urban churches in the late eighteenth century were forced to look farther afield for fertile ground upon which to plant their tunes. Many of these individuals headed west and south, so the style of singing associated with the shape-note tune books remained insulated from further "improvements" as it became culturally isolated.[35] The shape-note tunesmiths and their oblong tune books literally headed for the hills, becoming the domain of the rural masses, and protected by distance from the purgative reforming efforts of Lowell Mason and Thomas Hastings that would return the sacred music of the big-city churches to the musical roots of their European forebears.

The question of accessibility was an important issue later in history, when shape-note compilers sought an audience for their tune books. The notation, as well as the inclusion of well-known tunes, helped tune books like *Southern Harmony* (1835) and *The Sacred Harp* (1844) gain a foothold in the mid-nineteenth century America. Shape-note compilers were known to be great collectors of folk tunes, which gave their tune books broad appeal.

Yankee determination coupled with personal industry combined to ensure the production and dissemination of a tremendous number of hymn books and tune books as time passed. No clear winner emerged in the debate between the urban and rural styles of hymn composition until the shape-note tradition was marginalized by, and exiled from, New England urban centers in the late nineteenth century. By the metric of Lowell Mason's implementation of his standards for music education in the public schools, shape-note tunes lost the battle. However, their exile proved to be their saving grace. The rural folk maintained and preserved their singing traditions, untouched by urban progressives. While shape-notes disappeared from general use for a time, those who held onto the tradition became tenacious in their preservation, becoming curators of shape-note repertories and performance practices until shape-note hymnody

---

[34] Ibid.
[35] Ogasapian, *Church Music in America*, 105.

reemerged from the background, brought to light by early dilettante gatherers of folk songs and oral histories in the twentieth century.

THE SHAPE-NOTE TUNE BOOKS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Oblong tune books of the nineteenth century, such as *The Southern Harmony* (1835)*, and The Sacred Harp* (1844), aided in the dissemination of music by American composers to large swaths of their contemporaries across America. Many of the tunes in the shape-note books have their genesis in folk songs of Scotland, Ireland, and England.[36] Tune books such as *Southern Harmony* (1835) and *The Sacred Harp* (1844) remain central repositories of these tunes, while less broadly disseminated tune books, such as *Kentucky Harmony* (1816) and *The New Harp of Columbia* (1867) preserve important, if smaller, collections of tunes, perhaps giving a picture of a narrower geographic area and its musical riches.

What may have appeared grotesque to those trained in the traditions of western European composition was considered a virtue by the rural audiences of camp meetings. Here, one finds no pretense of slick urban refinement, only a rough musical reflection of the geography of the American frontier. Composers of shape-note tunes rejected traditional European common-practice harmony and melodic contours, as if attempting to assert independence from Europe through music. There are several salient features of shape-note tunes (or "folk hymnody," as they are often called) which cause them to stand apart from traditional western European "classical" music. Perhaps the most striking is that their harmonization is based on dyads, rather than triads, as pointed out by scholar Dorothy D. Horn, a protégé of George Pullen Jackson, whose work Horn continued after his death, following it to its natural conclusion.[37] Other distinct qualities of these tunes are their dependence on pentatonic melodic structures, and the placement of the melody in the tenor. Many of the shape-note tunes include folk songs appropriated for a theological and pedagogical purpose.

---

[36] David W. Music and Paul Westermeyer, *Church Music in the United States: 1760-1901,* (St. Louis: MorningStar Music Publishers, Inc., 2014), 36.
[37] Dorothy D. Horn, *Sing Me to Heaven,* (Tallahassee: University of Florida Press, 1970), 90-91.

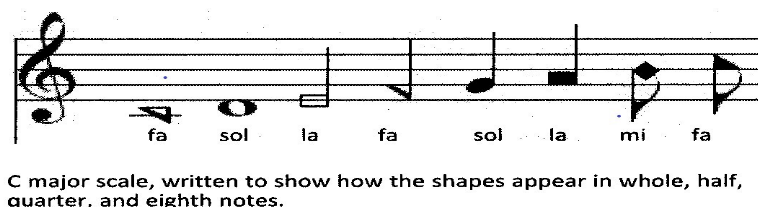
Shape-note tune books were directed at an audience of uninitiated and untrained musicians, as well as those who were attracted by their religious content. They came with instructions for the user: the rudiments of music were introduced, and the method for applying solmization to the various note-heads explained. Once this information was digested, amateurs had as much opportunity as trained musicians to enjoy hundreds of hymns, anthems, and fuging tunes. In this way, they became an equalizing force in American music, allowing people from all walks of life not only to participate in the singing, but even lead it. They embraced a democratic notion in their very performance practice.

Shape-note tunes have descriptive nomenclature. The tune books which preserve them were printed with a unique system of notation which utilized different shapes for the note-heads, indicating the place of each note within the scale. The solmization syllables *fa, sol, la,* and *mi* are the four essential syllables. The derivation of this system can be traced all the way back to Guido d'Arezzo, and his solmization for the hexachord.[38] However, in the shape-note system, *fa* is the tonic, and three of the four syllables are repeated. A major scale would be sung as "*fa-sol-la-fa-sol-la-mi-fa.*" Each syllable is assigned a unique shape, as shown in Figure 1, below. Thus, shape-note hymns were christened "*fasola"* music.[39] The original notation system was copyrighted by William Little and William Smith at the turn of the nineteenth century, although Andrew Law claimed to have invented the system in the 1780s.[40]

Shape-note tune books were primarily composed of hymns, but also included anthems and fuging tunes. While many of the tunes are pentatonic, others defy easy classification. Steeped in oral tradition, some tunes, such as *Wondrous Love,* are performed with altered tones, based on the inherited tradition—

[38] http://web.mit.edu/user/i/j/ijs/www/sn/sn-hist.html. See also the Sacred Harp Musical Heritage Assoc. website, which has an excellent summary of the shape-note tradition: https://fasola.org/introduction/note_shapes.html Essentially, there are two consecutive sets of *fa-sol-la* in a scale, with the addition of *mi* as the penultimate half-step, just before the return to the *fa.* In European common practice, this is represented by the leading tone (7th scale degree) relationship to the tonic. In the *fasola* system, *Fa* represents both scale degrees 1 and 4 (corollary to *do* and *fa* in modern solfege).
[39] David W. Music, *A Selection of Shape-Note Folk Hymns from Southern United States Tune Books: 1816-61,* (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 1970), ix.
[40] Crawford, *America's Musical Life,* 130.

Figure 1 *A Beginner's Guide to Shape-note Singing* **(2012)[41]:**



even with a copy of the *Sacred Harp* or other tune book right in the hands of the singer. Dorothy Horn, describes this phenomenon in her study of shape-note tunebooks, *Sing Me to Heaven*:

> The most obvious advantage of a shape-note notation is that it dispenses with the whole wearisome business of learning key signatures, thus removing one hurdle in the teaching of sight-singing…This shortcut has one limiting factor. Shapes have never been devised for chromatic inflections; in consequence, modulations, altered chords, and the harmonic and melodic forms of the minor are impossible. The singers don't mind, and the music doesn't seem to suffer much.[42]

Presumably, the original form of the tune WONDROUS LOVE was in the Dorian mode, but faced with the inability to accurately transcribe it as such in the shape-note system, early editors simply used the lowered sixth. However, the melody retained its Dorian identity when sung. The strong alliance between shape-note melodies and traditional folk tunes is at play in cases such as these. Singers remember the original folk melody, and accommodate the raised 6th scale degree, even though "singing the shapes" gives them no way to differentiate the altered tone using *fasola* solmization.[43]

---

[41] Lisa Grayson, *A Beginner's Guide to Shape-Note Singing: hints, stories, advice, and minutiae,* 5th ed., 2012 (online resource accessed at https://fasola.org/resources/Grayson_Beginners_Guide_2012.pdf (reprinted with permission), 3.

[42] Horn, *Sing Me to Heaven,* 7-8; David W. Music, *Church Music in the United States: 1760-1901* (St. Louis: MorningStar Music Publishers, Inc., 2014), 36.

[43] John Garst, ed. *The Sacred Harp,* (Bremen, GA: The Sacred Harp Publishing Co., 1991), 18-19. It is interesting to note that the *Rudiments of Music* in *The Sacred Harp* (1991) examines this precise issue. In chapter 3, section 15, it states: "Traditionally, minor music is sung in the Dorian mode, with the sixth degree a half step higher than the natural minor notation indicates…it is traditional to sing "fa" at the sixth degree, even though the pitch actually corresponds to "Fi.""

As stated above, during the course of the nineteenth century, as European music became more prevalent in the United States, shape-note tunes were preserved in Appalachia and other geographically isolated areas, and thus became associated with the roots of American folk music.

SHAPE-NOTE CONSTRUCTION AND THE "AMERICAN" SOUND

Several salient features of shape-note tunes can be generalized. Shape-note melodies are primarily pentatonic or hexatonic[44], and, therefore, lack a leading tone. They are often found in the Aeolian or Dorian mode, and they utilize gapped scales, which makes their sound unique when compared to the hymns of European composers (and their devotees). Despite their modal character, the notes of the tonic triad are still present within the mode, providing a bridge for modern composers who seek to interpret the shape-note melodies in new contexts, such as organ music. Shape-note tunes have a rugged quality, and resist the refinement of traditional Western European classical music. The melody is always placed in the tenor voice, and the surrounding voice parts—always treble and bass until the twentieth century, when an alto line was interpolated—are independent, rather than subservient to the melody. The 1991 version of *The Sacred Harp* describes this practice in its "Rudiments of Music":

> "In polyphony, no one part stands out. *Sacred Harp* music is polyphonic. The tune (melody, air) is carried by the tenor part, but the other parts, ideally, are good melodies on their own, making all parts interesting."[45]

Traditional modern hymn settings place emphasis on the melody in the soprano, while the alto, tenor, and bass part is strictly accompanimental. There are rare exceptions to this—consider the hymn tune MATERNA *(O Beautiful for Spacious Skies),* with an echo of the melody in the bass at the beginning of the refrain—however, the echo does not last throughout the piece, nor does it become fugal. Thus, these two

[44] *Hexatonic* refers to a collection of pitches that is typically pentatonic with one additional note, usually not the leading tone. Hexatonic scales are prevalent in many bodies of folk music around the world.
[45] Garst, *The Sacred Harp: 1991 rev.*, 21.

schools of thought espoused vastly different approaches to the treatment of melody, giving each style of composition its autonomy and originality.

It is in the application of harmony by the composers and compilers that one sees a stark contrast of ideals. Reformers, such as Lowell Mason, sought to set their hymns with the simplest, clearest, and most basic harmony, all properly aligned with the rules of voice-leading and harmonic progressions inherited from the Western tradition. The shape-note compilers yearned for less constrictive, and ultimately more democratic parameters. Shape-note tunes were meant to be fervent expressions of faith without the concerns of the concert hall or the classroom. This was a body of hymnody intended for anyone and everyone with no regard for prior musical training. Shape-note singers sat together in a hollow square formation, and the leaders of the songs came from within the group. This democratic hymn-singing experience – less polished and proper than the trained church choirs of the Reformers—was open to men, women, and children, alike. Each singer was an equal participant in the shape-note hymn, a practice that continues in *Sacred Harp* "singings" today. The practice of doubling of male and female voices also invested shape-note tunes with a very unique identity. Because of these doublings, the approach to voice-leading is different than that of European traditionalists, as is expressed in the *Rudiments of Music* (*The Sacred Harp,* 1991 ed.):

> Another rule of conventional harmony prohibits the motion of parts in parallel (or consecutive) fifths and octaves, where two voices maintain a constant interval over several notes. Parallel octaves are built into Sacred Harp singing when men and women sing the same part. In addition, parallel fifths between parts are a natural part of quartal harmony, and they abound in the Sacred Harp.[46]

In retrospect, one can imagine how passionate arguments about musical correctness could stem from this central issue. Musical science was diametrically opposed to the freely meandering independent parts of shape-note hymnody. Composers and compilers of shape-note tunes were arguing passionately

[46] Judith Tick, *Music in the USA: A Documentary Companion,* (Oxford University Press (Kindle Edition), 2010), 143.

for the emancipation of the voice parts from the exacting rules deemed "correct" by the established New England urban churches. William Billings stated his own musical declaration of independence in the late eighteenth century:

> "I don't think myself confined to any rules of composition laid down by any who went before me."[47]

Shape-note composers and compilers were proud of their independence from European "correctness" or musical "science," as it was sometimes called. A certain measure of joy can be read between the lines in the *Rudiments of Music* section in the 1991 edition of *The Sacred Harp.* One example among many, it outlines the diverse ways in which they eschew traditional rules of harmony:

> One rule of conventional harmony that is frequently violated in the Sacred Harp states that chords should be complete triads (or triads augmented with another note). In fact, most of the chords in 19th-century compositions are dyads. Even when alto parts were supplied in the 20th century, many of the chords were left as dyads by having the alto double a note in the existing harmony. This is especially true of minor pieces.[48]

Many of the shape-note tune books were originally in three parts, rather than four. The last part to be added was the alto, which "simply got what was left" after the soprano, tenor, and bass had been composed.[49] One could try to distill this aesthetic argument down to the matter of quartal harmony versus tertian harmony, but that would assume that there is no tertian harmony present in shape-note hymnody, such as is found in *The Sacred Harp, Southern Harmony,* or similar nineteenth century tune books. In fact, the addition of the alto part is one factor that causes this repertoire to have a pronounced mix of tertian and quartal harmonies.[50] The 1991 edition of the *Sacred Harp* outlined this phenomenon quite plainly:

> Late 18th-century New England composers (represented in the Sacred Harp by Billings, Read, Swan, Morgan, and others) used harmony that is basically tertian, that is, based on intervals of thirds. In contrast, the harmony used by the early 19th-century compilers of singing-school manuals (such as the Sacred Harp) is basically quartal, that is, based on intervals of fourths, and their

[47] Garst, *The Sacred Harp,* 21.
[48] Judith Tick, *Music in the USA: A Documentary Companion,* (Oxford University Press (Kindle Edition), 2010), 143.
[49] Garst, *The Sacred Harp,* 96.
[50] Ibid, 21.

> close relatives, fifths. In the early 20th century alto parts were added to the three-part pieces in the Sacred Harp, resulting in a hybrid harmony, part quartal and part tertian. . . . [51]

Expansive spacing, pentatonic or modal melodies, and quartal harmonies helped shape-note music to retain its distinctly American sound. What seemed deficient to some critics would later be considered part of its charm.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: REBIRTH OF A REPERTORY

More than a century after the publication of *The Southern Harmony* (1835) and *The Sacred Harp* (1844), musicians became acquainted with the uniquely American sound of shape-note hymns through the research of George Pullen Jackson. Writing in the 1930s, Jackson reintroduced Americans to an important chapter in their historical narrative by documenting the activity of populations in both mountainous and rural Southern regions that still interacted with these shape-note tune books on a regular basis. Fascinated by the modal elements and angular melodic trajectories of shape-note tunes, composers after 1950 found a new inspiration for organ compositions for both the church and the concert hall, which has only increased and intensified in the twenty-first century. Government-sponsored documentaries, like *The River,* scored by Virgil Thomson, wove shape-note tunes from Appalachia directly into the film's music while radio shows, such as Burl Ives' *Wayfarin' Stranger,* further brought a new level of national awareness to the shape-note repertory leading up to the 1950s.[52] Renowned shape-note expert David Warren Steel captures the uniqueness of its traditions in his 2010 monograph *The Makers of the Sacred Harp*:

[51] Judith Tick, *Music in the USA: A Documentary Companion,* (Oxford University Press (Kindle Edition), 2010), 143.

[52] Please see the chapter on Gardner Read for further discussion of these early 20th century disseminators of shape-note tunes.

> The Sacred Harp tradition is often cited as an embodiment of American democracy, but its history reflects the conflicts that formed the nation, as well. Originating in religious pluralism and cultural self-improvement, it has survived wars, political and religious struggles, commercial competition, litigation, and personal slights.[53]

One of the unique aspects of the shape-note repertory is that its geographic and cultural isolation helped it to resist change. The shape-note tune books provide modern singers, scholars, and composers with a direct link to a style of music-making that could easily have been lost after being marginalized. Instead, the virility of the shape-note tradition has persisted, if in society's niches. In the 20th and 21st centuries it has become party to hybridization with classical and folk idioms, adding to the wealth of its expression without decimating or completely subsuming the original source material. The old and the new coexist, leaving room for future composers to join the discussion with their own commentary on shape-note tunes.

[53] David Warren Steel with Richard Hulan, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010) 3.

Chapter 2: WONDROUS LOVE

To fully appreciate the organ music considered in this study, one must first examine the source of its inspiration. The tune and text associated with the archetypal shape-note tune, WONDROUS LOVE, will frame subsequent discussion of the organ music it inspired.[1] The tune WONDROUS LOVE first appears in Alexander Johnson's *Tennessee Harmony,* where it is listed as "new" in that 1818 publication.[2] But its history extends considerably further back in time.

Often, sacred music has roots in both the sacred and the secular. "Why should the Devil have all the pretty tunes?" is a repeating refrain throughout history, attributed to theologians and clergy from Ambrose of Milan to Martin Luther, and further promoted by the Wesleys in colonial America.[3] Scholar John Ogasapian reminds us that the borrowing of secular tunes for sacred purposes is the basis for the *contrafacta* of the Renaissance.[4] Preachers have used folk tunes as mnemonic devices for remembering the lessons of the Bible, or as a way to cleanse the tunes from less holy associations.

The tune WONDROUS LOVE is a perfect example of the migration of music from the realm of the profane to the sacred. In his book *The Story of the Sacred Harp: 1844-1944,* George Pullen Jackson explains that the "tune and stanzaic structure" of *What Wondrous Love Is This* was previously married to the ballad known as *Captain Kidd*.[5] Certainly, the popular ballad of the infamous pirate William Kidd was lodged deeply in the consciousness of eighteenth-century English immigrants to the Colonies, who often experienced piracy first hand.

The appropriation of well-known popular music was a powerful tool for the itinerant preachers of the "Second Great Awakening." The most easily taught and remembered tunes provided great return on

---

[1] Tune names will appear in capital letters; hymn texts will be italicized.

[2] David W. Music and Paul Westermeyer, *Church Music in the United Stated: 1760-1901,* (St. Louis, MO: MorningStar Music Publishers, Inc.,2014), 50.

[3] William Chappell is the source of this particular formulation, as noted above in footnote 1.

[4] Ogasapian, *Church Music in America,* 106 (footnote 4).

[5] Jackson, *Story of Sacred Harp*, 5.

the effort of teaching them to the crowds. They sought to evangelize and secure as many souls for the cause as possible through their camp meetings and revivals in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Folk tunes were a valuable mnemonic device for instructing the masses at revival meetings, where tune books and literacy were both in short supply. Simple, repetitive hymn texts combined with popular tunes allowed everyone to learn the hymns quickly, and to lodge them firmly in their memory. Camp meetings and revivals could last for multiple days. The agrarian communities that hosted them were often far removed, geographically, from churches, having no expectation of a regular, weekly opportunity for community worship.[6] This demographic identified as Christian, but not necessarily as a part of a particular congregation or denomination. Without regular Sunday worship opportunities, those nuances were immaterial.

New theological attitudes are expressed within the text of *What Wondrous Love Is This.* A major seismic shift of emphasis occurred late in the eighteenth century, making an indelible imprint on early nineteenth-century sacred song. The psalm paraphrases of Isaac Watts helped to Christianize and personalize the Christian′s understanding of traditional psalmody. This change in perspective is manifest in the highly personal devotional nature of camp meeting and revival choruses and songs. Hymn-writers and tunesmiths appealed to the individual's relationship with God. Pronouns in hymns change from "we" to "I," or from "our" to "my"—a manifestation of this change in perspective[7]. Personal devotion was emphasized in Baptist and Methodist camp meetings. Focus on grace replaced the old Puritan sense of predestination, while "the pietistic rhetoric of personal religion" and ecstatic outbursts of the revival era distanced this new brand of worship from the structured "officially sanctioned" hymnody and psalmody of

[6] Ogasapian, 108.
[7] The change in perspective to hymn texts in the first person has its roots in Pietism. Originating in 17th-century Germany, the movement helped to destabilize the central power and authority of the church, following on the heels of Martin Luther's reforms in the previous century. Emphasis on small-group Bible study and a personal dialogue with God threatened the relevance of established churches, causing rifts among Lutheran congregations. The tenets of Pietism informed early Methodists (followers of Wesley) and Presbyterians (followers of Zwingli). A steady influx of European immigrants to the American Colonies ensured that Pietistic ideals would be successfully transplanted in the New World.

the urban congregations.[8] Richard Crawford states that "*Wondrous Love* endures as an emblematic statement of a singing tradition that has distilled the attitude of religious praise into an untutored, uncompromising, heartfelt utterance."[9]

In any oral tradition, repetition is the key to the successful planting of a new song in the mind of the listener. Tunes with phrases or fragments that repeat lend themselves to easy memorization. A poetic text married to a tune in the proper meter will ensure that both tune and text, packaged together, will reinforce each other. Poetic scansion of *Wondrous Love* reveals an unusual form of 12.9.6.6.12.9.[10] There are two kinds of repetition built into its structure, both musical and textual:

> *What wondrous love is this! oh, my soul, oh my soul!*
> *What wondrous love is this! oh, my soul!*
> *What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss*
> *To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,*
> *To bear the dreadful curse for my soul.*[11]

The poetry of the first two lines is set to the same melody as the last two lines. Sandwiched between this repetitive melodic construction, the third line of the tune soars melodically upward, to the octave above the starting pitch, only to fall immediately back down, in perfect symmetry. As the tune is cresting its highest melodic note in the third phrase, there is also an internal textual rhyme within the third line of poetry as "this" is rhymed with "bliss." This pattern of repetition is not unique to the hymn version of this tune. *Captain Kidd* engendered the same repetitive melodic and textual structure:

> *My name was Robert Kidd, when I sailed; when I sailed*
> *My name was Robert Kidd, when I sailed;*
> *My name was Robert Kidd, God's laws I did forbid,*
> *So wickedly I did when I sailed, when I sailed,*
> *So wickedly I did when I sailed.*[12]

---

[8] Ogasapian, 105.
[9] Ibid, p. 168
[10] Crawford, 167.
[11] Garst, *The Sacred Harp,* 159.
[12] Crawford, 167-168.

The hexatonic melody of *Wondrous Love* is very disjunct[13]. Its melodic content follows expected norms in shape-note composition. A salient feature of many shape-note melodies is the complete absence of the third tone, which reinforces its modal identity. This also negates the possibility of a “4-3” suspension, and further differentiates this tune from melodies invested with an inherent diatonic quality.[14] There is but a passing reference to the sixth tone of the scale, which occurs only twice, in the same melodic fragment, which is repeated. In shape-note tune books such as *The Sacred Harp,* the sixth scale degree of WONDROUS LOVE always appears in its lowered form, that is, as D-flat in the key of F. However, as mentioned above, this pitch was always sung in its raised form in WONDROUS LOVE, placing the tune in the Dorian mode.[15] [16] In his monograph, commemorating the centennial of the Sacred Harp, George Pullen Jackson recounts watching a singer sing a D-natural, when D-flat was printed in the tune *Wondrous Love*, changing the overall mode to f-Dorian with that one alteration.[17] The way that the tune is realized is at odds with its printed form, revealing an important aspect of performance practice.[18] Singers relied on aural memory to sing that sixth tone in its raised form.

As is the usual custom for shape-note tunes, the melody is in the tenor voice. Figure 2 contains the setting of WONDROUS LOVE taken from the 1854 edition of *The Southern Harmony.* Early in the development of shape-note music, the melodies were harmonized with only two other vocal lines: bass and treble. Later in the 19th century, compilers started adding the alto part. Figure 3 is an illustration of the

---

[13] Whether or not the tune WONDROUS LOVE is “pentatonic plus one” (raised 6th scale degree) or hexatonic is up for debate. The presence of the 6th tone (D natural) is minimal, yet important. It occurs twice in the tune, the second iteration being a repeat of the same descending scalar phrase that one finds at the fifth complete measure of the original shape-note hymn. Is that enough to turn it from pentatonic to hexatonic? It certainly maintains a strong pentatonic identity, otherwise.

[14] Horn, *Sing Me to Heaven,* 98.

[15] Horn, *Sing Me to Heaven,* 19-23.

[16] Jackson, *The Story of the Sacred Harp*, xiv.

[17] Ibid.

[18] This is because the original folk melody, *Captain Kidd,* was probably in the Dorian mode, like many English folk songs. In the *fasola* tradition, there is no way to sing a solfege syllable that accurately indicates a raised 6th scale degree in a minor scale, because chromatic inflections are not part of the system. The singers remember the original contour of the Dorian folk tune, and therefore sing *fa*, despite the fact that they sing a raised tone for the 6th scale degree (which would be *fi* in modern solfege, using la-based minor). Barber presents the theme *Wondrous Love* in F-Dorian, right at the beginning of his *Variations,* essentially recognizing that same aural legacy of the raised 6th.

1911 version (Denson) of *The Sacred Harp,* which includes the alto line while still preserving the shape-note notation. Unfortunately, the alto lines had to be retrofitted to the three extant parts, meaning that the altos were often given the leftovers, harmonically speaking. *Wondrous Love* does not exhibit the same sort of independence in the accompanimental voices as one comes to expect in this genre, making the accompanimental voices quite repetitive, and significantly less interesting than the tenor melody. The setting is evocative of homophony, rather than the interplay of equally important voices interwoven. The tenor melody is the only truly autonomous voice in this shape-note hymn.

Figure 2 **WONDROUS LOVE** from *The Southern Harmony* (1854, Walker)[19]:

252 WONDROUS LOVE. 12, 9, 6, 6, 12, 9 *Christopher.*

What won-drous love is this, oh! my soul! oh! my soul! What won-drous love is this, oh! my soul! What won-drous love is this! That

caused the Lord of bliss, To bear the dread-ful curse for my soul, for my soul, To bear the dread-ful curse for my soul.

[19] William Walker, *The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion: New Edition, Thoroughly Revised and Greatly Improved,* (Philadelphia, PA: E. W. Miller, 1854), 252.

Figure 3 WONDROUS LOVE from *The Sacred Harp* (1911, Denson):

WONDROUS LOVE. 12, 9, 6, 6, 12, 9. 159

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."—JOHN 3: 16.

Key of F Minor. Alto by S. M. DENSON, 1911.

· What wondrous love is this! oh, my soul! oh, my soul! What wondrous love is this! oh, my soul! What wondrous love is this

2. When I was sinking down, sink-ing down, sink-ing down, When I was sink-ing down, sink-ing down, When I was sink-ing down

3. To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing; To God and to the Lamb I will sing; To God and to the Lamb,

4. And when from death I'm free I'll sing on, I'll sing on, And when from death I'm free I'll sing on, And when from death I'm free

That caused the Lord of bliss To bear the dread-ful curse for my soul, for my soul, To bear the dread-ful curse for my soul.

Be - neath God's right-eous frown Christ laid a - side His crown for my soul, for my soul, Christ laid a - side His crown for my soul.

Who is the great I Am, While mil-lions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing, While mil-lions join the theme, I will sing.

'll sing and joy - ful be, And thro' e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on, I'll sing on, And thro' e - ter - ni ty I'll sing on.

Because shape-note tunes are often pentatonic or modal, harmonization is dyadic, rather than triadic, as illustrated by the work of ethnomusicologist Dr. Dorothy Horn. [20] Dr. Dorothy Horn expounds on the analytical aspects of folk hymns in her tome, *Sing to Me of Heaven,* in which she notes that simultaneous pentatonic scales beginning at different pitch levels would naturally produce many perfect intervals.[21] This explains the plethora of fourths, fifths, and octaves endemic to shape-note hymns. Open fourths, fifths and octaves found at cadences are germane to shape-note tunes. Harmony becomes incidental—a byproduct of three or four pentatonic lines that happen to converge on fourths, fifths, or octaves at the end of a phrase. It is in this rejection of cadential preparation that we find another argument for shape-note tunes as a revolutionary new compositional idiom. European composers of the eighteenth century would

[20] Horn, *Sing to Me of Heaven,* 91.
[21] Ibid.

have rejected this music as the crude attempts of the uneducated, but newly-minted home-spun composers considered the lack of refinement to be a part of its charm, and its authenticity.

Chapter 3: Samuel Barber's *Wondrous Love Variations*

One of the most familiar examples of a solo organ composition based on a shape-note tune is Samuel Barber's *Wondrous Love* variations, published in 1959. The score includes a copy of the shape-note setting of *Wondrous Love,* printed as the frontispiece.[1] In his variations, Barber preserves some of the quartal and quintal harmonies and open position voicings of the original shape-note setting, but re-fracted through the lens of his own neo-classic approach. Published in 1959, Barber's work echoes the techniques that composers such as Aaron Copland used around the same time to articulate the American vernacular sound in concert music.

Samuel Barber (1910-1981) was a rather conservative composer, educated in one of the first classes at the Curtis Institute of Music. As he was steeped in the traditional western European musical language, the shape-note tradition would have offered Barber a new musical realm to explore. With the interest in quartal harmony in wider musical circles, especially by composers like Hindemith, it is interesting that Barber's best-known work for organ was based on a style of music quite remote from his own.

Perhaps the greater question lies in the commission of Barber's *Wondrous Love* setting, itself. Why did organist Richard Roecklein commission an organ work on a shape-note tune? Some historical context may be useful to answer this query. In the 1940s, Americans were steeped in a nationalistic fervor as their sons fought wars on foreign shores. World War II set the stage for a long period of nationalism. During times of crisis, it is natural for citizens to reassert their identity, contrasting their ideals and credos with those they seek to defeat on the world stage. As *The Sacred Harp* neared its 100th birthday in 1944, the haunting folk melodies of rural America were making their way into the consciousness of the American public through a variety of streams. Burl Ives' radio show, *The Wayfaring Stranger,* brought the tunes

[1] The footnote at the bottom of the frontispiece of Barber's score is rather misleading. That footnote is in the original source, which is the 1911 edition of *The Sacred Harp.* G. Schirmer included this page in their publication without attribution.

of rural America into the living rooms of 1940s American households[2]. In the concert hall, the symphonies of Charles Ives, replete with quotations of folk songs, popular songs, and hymns, were being premiered, although he composed them much earlier. Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring Suite* (1944) captured the ethos of the frontier, juxtaposing folk melodies (the Shaker tune *Simple Gifts*) and widely spaced sonorities to paint a picture of life in a rural mountain community. After WWII was won, films such as *The River* (1951), a government-sponsored documentary scored by Virgil Thomson, also helped popularize folk hymns.[3] Thomson had interwoven eleven tunes from *The Sacred Harp* and *The Southern Harmony* into his score.[4] This film was one of seven New Deal documentaries that Thomson worked on, before and after the war.[5] In this way, society at large was beginning to appropriate some folk and shape-note melodies, recasting them in new contexts.

The country "folk" were no longer the sole proprietors of shape-note tunes. Tunes from *The Sacred Harp* and *Southern Harmony* began to be adapted for inclusion in mainline denominational hymnals in the 1950s, amidst what John Ogasapian deems a "reaction to the post-war euphoria of the 1950s."[6] Ogasapian continues:

> "American egalitarian pragmatism asserted itself against what was perceived as a decadent and defeated European "elitism."[7]

The inclusion of hymns from shape-note tune books necessitated their evolution – the melody was reassigned from the tenor part to the soprano part, following conventional hymn-setting practices in twentieth-century Christian hymnody. David W. Music asserts that "today the shape-note folk hymn is viewed

---

[2] Jackson, *The Story of the Sacred Harp,* 41.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Roger Dettmer, Roger, *Virgil Thomson: The River, Suite from the Film Score for Orchestra,* Allmusic.com, accessed August 7, 2017.
[6] Ogasapian, 253.
[7] Ibid.

as a significant part of the American heritage of religious song."[8] That these tunes caught the interest of twentieth-century composers further solidified their place in the music of the church and the concert hall.

A particular characteristic of the shape-note tune *Wondrous Love* that may have attracted composers for the organ is that it lends itself to a theme and variation treatment. Composers took advantage of this tune's repetitive structure, naturally fitting into a variation treatment, as evidenced by the proliferation of organ partitas and variation sets based on it. Evocative of the contours of the shape-note setting, organ settings utilize the orchestral resources of the instrument as well as *bicinia*, trio texture, and ornamented chorale sections to create variety.

Samuel Barber's *Wondrous Love: Variations on a Shape-Note Hymn* (op. 34) was commissioned to celebrate the installation of a new organ by Walter Holtkamp at Christ Church Episcopal in Grosse Pointe, Michigan in 1958. Mr. Roecklein, its dedicatee, premiered the work, and it was published the same year. Roecklein came in contact with Barber in Rome, while the composer put the finishing touches on his Pulitzer Prize-winning opera, *Vanessa.* Barber actually visited Christ Church to study the sonic resources of the new Holtkamp prior to writing the piece, which allows us to speculate that the composer was quite cognizant of the tonal resources available to its intended performer. [9]

The shape-note harmonization is presented as the frontispiece to the work, giving the modern organist a direct link to the inspiration for the work.[10] Barber's treatment is of neo-classic construction, evoking the chorale-based partitas of J.S. Bach. Regardless of Barber's own relationship with organized religion, the perfection of Bach's organ music made a deep impression on him from his early student days at the Curtis Institute. Barbara Heyman, Barber scholar, notes that the organist who commissioned this work "loaned him a book on the chorale preludes of J.S. Bach, which elucidated in particular how Bach

---

[8] Music, David W. *A Selection of Shape-Note Folk Hymns,* x.
[9] Barbara Heyman*, Samuel Barber: The Composer and His Music,* (London: Oxford University Press, 1994), 400-401.
[10] Joseph Stephen James, et al, *Original Sacred Harp,* (Atlanta, GA: J.S. James, 1911, reprinted in 1921), 159.

used various motives and techniques to symbolize human emotions."[11] Clearly, Bach was already known and revered from Barber's student days, but this reference material may have strengthened Barber's understanding of Baroque *affekt,* informing his setting of *Wondrous Love.*

Barber's setting has a transparency of construction and *affekt* which serves to draw clear lines between each stanza of the hymn and its correlating variation. Each variation deals with one defining aspect of the hymn text. Barber's conservatory training is apparent in his careful treatment of *Wondrous Love* in variation technique. Rather than present the shape-note tune in its original form, Barber presents the theme in a homophonic rearrangement with tenor and bass parts transferred to the soprano and alto, and vice versa. Although it retains the open vertical interval and homophonic texture of the shape-note tune, the theme has been turned inside out in order to place the melody in the soprano range.

In the tradition of Bach, Barber knits together an accompaniment of dialoguing alto and tenor lines derived from the descending fourth of the original bass line in the shape-note version into his first variation. This section's salient feature is the "sigh motive" heard in both the *saltus duriusculus* (descending fourth) and the plaintive descending *suspirans* (half-step) which so expressively points to the text "when I was sinking down" in stanza two of the hymn text. The plaintive introductory material sets a contrite tone with overlapping alto and tenor statements of a contrasting counter-theme four bars prior to the entrance of the melody. The tune enters in the soprano, and presents the entire melody with only minor accommodations in meter to keep the phrase lengths flexible. As a counterpoint to the melody, the sigh motive continues throughout the variation, by turns in the alto or tenor voices. The pedal part takes no part in the melody, but fills out the harmony and evokes the wide octaves that occur when both male and female voices sing upper and lower parts in a shape-note tune. These octave doublings by male and fe-

[11]Heyman, 401.

male voices give shape-note tunes a unique aesthetic, but Barber's interaction with the historically informed shape-note singing tradition is speculative, at best. Interestingly, Barber limits the pedal to just four notes: F, A-flat, G, and C.

The busy texture of the second variation is evocative of the text "while millions join the theme, I'll sing on." Three or four voices are interwoven in an energetic texture with stretto entrances, each new voice seeming to vie for dominance in the texture. Successive entrances of the voices ascend higher and higher, interrupting and subsuming the prior entrance of the melody. Intentionally or not, Barber's second variation evokes the fuging tunes of Billings and other early American composers. Here, he maintains a mostly trio structure, while allowing the occasional entrance of a fourth voice. The tune is presented in a long note cantus firmus in the pedal while the other voices are played in diminution to the tune, a clear *hommage à* J.S. Bach. The entrances of each voice at the tonic or the fifth intimate a fugal treatment, but often the voices dissipate before they present a complete statement of the melody. Barber has set this variation in C Minor, a departure from the original tonality of F Minor. Barber foregoes any introductory material, and the second voice that enters the texture is only one eighth-beat behind the pedal cantus firmus. It is played in the alto tessitura, in diminution, in the original F Minor, an octave and a fourth above the pedal tune. Because the soprano voice enters a fifth above the alto (in C minor, like the bass), the listener expects that a traditional fugue will ensue. However, the fugal interplay is fleeting, and the original third entrance (on C, in the soprano) is subsumed into the final entrance in a yet higher soprano version of the tune in its original key of F-minor. The sum total of stacking independent statements of the melody is clearly meant to evoke the text "while millions join the theme, I will sing," found in the third stanza of the shape-note hymn. It is at once contrapuntally dense and ecstatic writing for keyboard, yet maintains fidelity to the original vocal inspiration. Barber deals more strictly with the meter in this variation, perhaps another allusion to the Baroque period and the music of J.S. Bach. The tightly knit construction helps to highlight the quasi-fugal texture throughout the variation. On the very last note of the melody in the pedal

cantus firmus, Barber adds a fifth to the pedal line, evoking once more those unique doublings of the shape-note singing tradition.

Barber's third variation mimics the dance-like melismatic chorale variations of J.S. Bach. Returned to its original key center of F Minor, the melody is to be played on a "soft 8' reed" in the tenor, thereby maintaining its preeminence against the melismatic soprano part. The *cantus firmus* is presented in its entirety in the left hand, which includes both the tenor and alto range in its purview. Akin to the first variation, the pedal serves mainly to flesh out the harmony, enjoying only two moments of melodic import at the middle and end of the tune. In this variation, the corollary to the text of the last printed stanza on the frontispiece is found in the dance-like quality of soprano line, perhaps pointing to the portion of that fourth stanza:"…and when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be…" There is a brief appearance of parallel fourths mixed in with the melodic material (left hand) in two instances in this variation, recalling the quartal harmony of shape-note tunes. Overall, the variation maintains a predominantly trio texture.

The most modern aspects of the entire work are found in the final variation. The salient feature of this closing section of the piece is the sequence of falling chromatic fourths upon which a jagged and angular version of a sometimes truncated melody is presented. In the extreme chromaticism of this final commentary on *Wondrous Love,* the listener catches shades of J.S. Bach's *Orgelbuchlein* setting of *Durch Adams Fall*, which features a chromatic bass, albeit in sevenths, rather than the fourths utilized by Barber. It is, perhaps, appropriate to note that Barber left explicit instructions about performing at least four of Bach's *Orgelbüchlein* chorales, each preceded by the chorale, at his own funeral.[12] The *suspiratio* or "sigh motive" from the first variation has been transformed into an angst-ridden trill figuration played by the right hand. This helps to unify the final section with Barber's first variation, reminiscent of the text of stanza one of the hymn: "When I was sinking down…" Yet Barber's musical frame of reference extends

[12] Iain Quinn, "Samuel Barber's Organ Music," *Tempo*, vol. 65, issue 256 (April, 2011), 50. The four *Orgelbüchlein* chorales indicated were *Das alte Jahr vergangen ist, Christ, du Lamm Gottes, O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde gross,* and *Ich ruf zu dir, Herr, Jesus Christ.*

beyond Bach. Barber's emphasis on just the initial two notes of the melody hearkens back to Beethovenian compositional process. The melody is transformed – sliced into smaller units, and decorated to the point of obfuscation with upper and lower neighbor tones, it bears only a vague resemblance to the melody of WONDROUS LOVE. In this final twenty measures, Barber shifts meters kaleidoscopically, disorienting the listener further. Moreover, organist Iain Quinn asserts that the tonal language bears a debt to Brahms.[13] Barber is stretching the possibilities of the tune, and perhaps it is here most evident that this piece was written by a twentieth-century composer. Barber calls for a "very much slower" tempo, as well as multiple registration changes throughout the final section. He advocates for an accumulation of sound through the addition of 16- through 4-foot stops, so that even in its relative calm, amid an ethos of resignation, there is gravitas and massivity to the sound. Combined with downward cascading chromatic fourths, this last section seems to be a commentary on the flawed nature of human existence. In this final section, Barber layers a multitude of voices – an ecstatic soprano melody juxtaposed against falling chromatic fourths (sometimes stacked in fifths or 34edian34) in the tenor tessitura. Voices enter and exit the texture, often in pairs. The pedal part enters on the penultimate page of the score on a chromatic four-note figure, but then immediately adopts the *suspiratio* figure introduced by the tenor voice at the head of the section. This music is unsettled, and lacks the sort of cadential finality that provides the listener with a feeling of rest. After a dense accumulation of sound, both in terms of number of voices and volume of sound through registration, the final page of the work reduces the texture, while diminuendoing to a *pianissimo* level for the last six measures. The entire work concludes in a denouement of just a few measures, but finishes with a Picardy third – evocative of the peace and joy expected "when from death I'm free," as stated in the final stanza of the shape-note hymn.

Barber trod down an experimental path for this commission. There is no indication from his biographical sketch that he came into contact with the shape-note repertory, directly. A child of the finest classical training, Barber produced a wonderfully neo-Baroque setting of WONDROUS LOVE, but

[13] Quinn, 48.

through the lens of his own compositional voice. His illustrative music perfectly conveys the *affekt* of this striking hymn. Because of its place in history, this music is one of several ways that the melody of a shape-note tune may have reached new ears in America, mid-century.

Chapter 4: Additional Settings from the 1950s—Read and Sowerby

GARDNER READ'S *PRELUDES ON OLD SOUTHERN FOLK HYMNS* (1952)

Although Barber's *Wondrous Love* remains perhaps the best known organ setting of a shape-note tune, his contemporary Gardner Read (1913-2005) merits the distinction of being the first American composer to write organ music based on shape-note tunes. Read's *Organ Preludes on Old Southern Hymns,* op. 90 (from *The Sacred Harp*) pre-date Barber's *Variations on Wondrous Love* by nine years.

Read had the opportunity to study with a storied group of compositional giants, including Howard Hanson, Bernard Rogers, Aaron Copland, and Jan Sibelius. Gardner Read has both neo-classic and neo-romantic elements in his music, but never allowed his compositional voice to be lost in a mimicry of those with whom he studied. It was a philosophy that he practiced as a teacher, as well. Martin Anderson writes:

> Read's output as a composer, which reached a total of over 150 works, embraces a variety of styles, his occasional embrace of modernist elements anchored in a relatively conservative tonal framework. [1]

John McDonald, a colleague in the Boston area who recorded the composer's piano music, described Read's music as follows:

> "…his work distilled many influences, especially from the early 20th century, but there is a very big romantic strain in his music, almost like Rachmaninoff on steroids. There is also a streak of Americana, of Coplandesque harmony. Binding everything together is an extraordinary degree of integrity and craftsmanship."[2]

Read spent several decades teaching composition at Boston University, from the late 1940s until the late 1970s. While there, he created and hosted a radio program called *Our American Music,* and his

---

[1] Martin Anderson, *Gardner Read, Composer of Modern Classicism," The Independent,* (online journal, December 14, 2005).
[2] Ibid.

interest both in notation and his strong affinity for musical nationalism must have made the shape-note repertoire particularly attractive to him.

Because Gardner Read is not as well known as the other composers discussed in this study, the following biographical sketch will help contextualize his music. Read's primary biographer, Mary Ann Dodd, states that he was "constantly surrounded by music" as a child, especially as his mother was an actively performing pianist. [3] Read was raised in his birthplace of Evanston, Illinois, and his family attended a plethora of concerts in the Chicago area. He began his career as a professional musician as a choir boy at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in 1921, until he joined the choir roster of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, which was closer to home.[4] Read was fortunate that his public high school took on a new initiative in the year he matriculated: a music major. His biographer states that Evanston was at the cutting edge of the curriculum under its new principal, Francis Bacon, and asserts that Read's high school was the first public high school to allow students to declare a music major.[5] Read also studied composition at Northwestern during the second half of his high school career, taking private lessons with Theodore Lams, who was a conservative but extremely effective teacher and, as Read puts it, "set me on the right path…"[6]

During his impressionable teen years, Gardner Read found a new creative outlet which combined a love of music and the theatre: silent movies. As Read tells it, he "lusted after a career as a theatre organist," and took organ lessons, yet never played professionally.[7] However, his love of the sonic palette and emotive breadth of the organ caused him to use organ in roughly one-third of his total output. Read called the organ a "very glamorous and fascinating instrument."[8]

After a steady diet of music throughout childhood, Read met Howard Hanson while studying at Interlochen. Hanson encouraged him to apply for a scholarship to the Eastman School of Music, which he

---

[3] Mary Ann Dodd and Jayson Rod Enquist, *Gardner Read: a Bio-Bibliography,* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 2-3.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., 4.
[8] Dodd and Enquist, 4.

subsequently won. At Eastman, he studied composition under Hanson and Bernard Rogers. He was awarded numerous fellowships over the course of his career, allowing him to travel and study with some very well-known composers, including Sibelius and Copland. In fact, Read was given an opportunity to study with either Hindemith or Copland during a fellowship to Tanglewood in 1941. He chose Copland because he "already wrote too much like Hindemith," and he wanted to broaden his perspective.[9] He related that Copland was "always thinning out my compositions," finding Read's harmonies too lush and decadent.[10] It was this very "stripping down to the bare essentials" that helped him grow as a composer.

Read's earliest academic appointments included Chair of the Theory & Composition departments at the St. Louis Institute of Music (1941-1943); Kansas City Conservatory of Music (1943-1945); and the Cleveland Institute of Music (1945-1948).[11] In 1948, he accepted an offer from Boston University to become "Professor of Composition and Composer-in-Residence," where he served on the faculty for three decades, until retirement in 1978.[12]

Gardner Read was extremely proud of his American heritage, illustrated by the fact that he could trace his family roots back nine generations to the arrival of his English ancestor John Read in Rhode Island in 1660.[13] Like other Americans of this generation, one can imagine that his was a patriotism brought to maturity by personal experience and sacrifice "for the cause," having lived through both World Wars and subsequent conflicts. Read was an outspoken supporter of his fellow American composers. A topic he returned to again and again, Read seemed mystified by American benefactors' continued patronage and performance of European ex-patriots' music to the exclusion of music by American composers in the

---

[9] Ibid., 8.
[10] Ibid., 8.
[11] Ibid., 10-11.
[12] Ibid., 11.
[13] Ibid., 2.

decades following World War II.[14] From 1953-1960, he hosted a radio show in Boston called *Our American Music,* which gave American composers the opportunity to speak to a national audience, and gave their music national exposure.[15] Read broadcast a format of interviews, recordings, and commentary in his weekly show. In 1962, Read delivered a commencement address entitled *Our National Culture in Jeopardy* in which he decried the lack of a national cultural identity within the discipline of classical music, and argued for support and infrastructure, foreshadowing the creation of the National Endowment for the Arts.[16] Even at age 80, when interviewed for *The American Organist* in 1993, Read complained:

> "We need sympathetic performers…So many organists seem to be indifferent to what's happening in contemporary music. They want to play the same old things over and over again—a lot of 19th-century music…endless Franck and Reger and Bach and Vierne and Widor. Once in a while you'll see a contemporary work sort of squeezed in there. And what are the odds that it will be an American work?"

Understanding Gardner Read's efforts to bring American music to the forefront, it is no surprise that he was attracted to the uniquely American contents of the shape-note tune books for his two distinct sets of "Preludes on Old Southern Hymns." Coupled with his interest in notation, (he wrote five books about various types of music notation), he must have found *The Sacred Harp* practically irresistible as a deep well of "Americana" that he might dip into multiple times. With these works, Read joined a succession of composers creating a new American identity through old American tunes, mostly in the orchestral sphere, under the influence of Charles Ives, Aaron Copland, and Virgil Thomson, among others.[17] As a mid-century composer, Read was heavily influenced by the national wave of nostalgia for all things

---

[14] Anderson, n.p.
[15] Ibid., 13.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Joanna Ruth Smolko, "Reshaping American Music: The Quotation of Shape-Note Hymns by Twentieth-Century Composers," (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh), 2009, 11-18.

American that inspired a renewed zeal for home-grown melodies. Read spent a fair amount of energy rallying support for his colleagues, and decrying the number of commissions landing in the hands of foreign composers.[18]

Read composed *Eight Preludes on Old Southern Hymns* in 1950. This first of two sets of preludes on "Old Southern Hymns," as Read calls them, are all based on shape-note tunes that he borrowed from the 1902 edition of *The Sacred Harp.*[19] There is a brief but informative "Foreword" in the first edition (1952), which is not retained by H.W. Gray in the more recent edition (1994) of the *Preludes* under the collection title: *Hymns and Carols for Organ by Gardner Read.* In the 1952 edition, Read educates the performer about the source of his inspiration for these preludes. He points out some salient features of shape-note tunes he took from the 1902 edition of *The Sacred Harp*:

> "The hymn-tunes are essentially modal, with the lowered seventh of the scale the most characteristic feature. The original notation for the "Sacred Harp" employed square, triangular and diamond-shaped notes as well as the conventional round notes."[20]

Read stops short of explaining why these special note-heads were used, or making any reference to "fa-sola" singing, although he does explain that the tune always appears in the tenor "according to the then prevailing custom."[21] In the very first sentence of the "Foreword," Read refers to these tunes as "white spirituals and Southern hymns," evocative of the title of George Pullen Jackson's seminal work *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands* (1933). As referenced earlier, George Pullen Jackson brought shape-notes back into the forefront of our national consciousness after rediscovering them—and later championing them—in the 1930s through the 1950s.

[18] Dodd and Enquist, *Gardner Read,* 2-3.
[19] Read, *Eight Preludes on Old Southern Hymns*, Foreword.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.

Read reveals that the *Preludes* are composed as "the simplest kind of chorale-prelude, with the melody always predominate." [22]Indeed, Read's classical training in composition is clearly demonstrated in every prelude through his use of canonic and imitative writing, diminution, and other tools so often relied upon in variation sets. As a final note to the performers, Read suggests that all could be played "in their entirety," as the "necessary key and mood contrast" formed by their arrangement is conducive to playing the preludes as a complete set on a recital, although they also "may be performed separately or in any combination desired."[23] But he defers to the performer concerning registration, as each performer will "prefer to select suitable registration to the resources of his instrument."[24] This did not stop H.W. Gray from inserting a Hammond Registration in the first edition, removed for the more recent edition of Read's *Hymns & Carols for Organ* (1994).

Shape-note tunes were still relatively unfamiliar to the general public in 1950, although that decade would see them included in several mainline Protestant hymnals. Because of this, the melody of each shape-note tune (without text) is presented prior to each of Read's organ preludes. Sometimes, the tune name is also listed, parenthetically, under the title.

Gardner Read was a curator of mid-twentieth century neo-Romantic harmonic language within the framework of traditional forms. He used fugal process, ostinato, bitonality, and other classical compositional tools to translate the rugged beauty of the shape-note tunes into a hybrid of modern and antique musical expression. Most of the tools and devices that he used to recreate the tunes in a mid-century aesthetic are of classical derivation. His harmonic language reflects an awareness of the original shape-note hymn, allowing dyadic and quartal harmonies, as well as parallel sevenths to provide color.

---

[22] Read, *Eight Preludes on Old Southern Hymns*, Foreword.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.

Yet Read is also an innovator. He is the first published 20th-century composer to choose shape-note tunes as a basis for organ preludes. Shape-note tunes are primarily modal, so using them as the inspiration for new chorale-preludes is unique in the organ repertory at this time. A younger contemporary of Paul Hindemith, Read must have been influenced by the general interest in quartal harmony embraced by composers in the 1950s. Hindemith's treatise, *The Craft of Musical Composition* (1937), sought to extend the tonal system, assessing each interval on its relative merits with relation to consonance or dissonance, without lessening the emphasis on the "primacy of triadic relationships."[25] Hindemith's three organ sonatas are all composed around this time (1937-1940): exemplars of his reframing of tonality, filled with fourths and sevenths. It is fascinating to consider that quartal harmony emerges as a tool for modernist composers at the same time that shape-note tune books like *The Southern Harmony* (1844) and *The Sacred Harp* (1850) are celebrating their centennials. The shape-note tune books utilize quartal harmony in a completely different context, yet two streams of intense focus on quartal harmony are present simultaneously. Read seamlessly fuses these two streams in his *Eight Preludes*.

A catalogue of the shape-note tunes in Read's *Eight Preludes on Old Southern Hymns* (1952) is illustrated by Figure 4, below. The two oldest tunes were published in the late eighteenth century, but the bulk of Read's opus 90 is based on nineteenth-century shape-note tunes. All of the tunes Read selected were wed to hymn texts written in the eighteenth century, over half of which were composed by Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley.

[25] Robert P. Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music,* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), 226-227.

Figure 4 **Tunes and Texts of Gardner Read's *Eight Preludes on Old Southern Hymns* (1952):**

	Tune Name	First Line of Text	Year/Source of Tune	Year/Source of Text
I.	LEANDER	*My Soul Forsakes Her Vain Delight*	1818 Tennessee Harmony	1707 Isaac Watts
II.	KEDRON	*Thou Man of Grief*	1799, United States Sacred Harmony	1762 Charles Wesley
III.	DAVID'S LAMEN-TATION	*David, The King, Was Grieved and Moved*	1778 William Billings	1778 William Billings
IV.	PROMISED LAND	*On Jordan's Stormy Banks*	1835 arr. M. Durham	1787 Samuel Stennet
V.	VICTORIA	*Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed*	1850 Leonard Breedlove	1707 Isaac Watts
VI.	FIGHT ON	*Fight On, My Soul*	1859 J.P. Reese	1781 George Heath
VII.	DETROIT	*Do Not I Love Thee*	1820 Bradshaw	1755 Philip Doddridge
VIII.	CONSOLATION	*Once More, My Soul, the Ris-ing Day*	1816 Kentucky Harmony	1707 Watts

Read's attention to craft and approach to harmony are illustrated by *My Soul Forsakes Her Vain Delight,* on the shape-note tune LEANDER, from his *Eight Preludes on Old Southern Hymns* (1952). A jaunty tune in 6/8 meter, LEANDER could easily have inspired William Chappell's piquant question, "Why should the Devil have all the pretty tunes?"[26] Gardner Read sets only the half of the tune for his organ setting. The text of the hymn corresponds to the first stanza of Isaac Watts' hymn, found in *The Sacred Harp* at no. 71:

My soul forsakes her vain delight
And bids the world farewell;
Base as the dirt beneath the feet
And mischievous as hell.[27]

[26] Lowens, "*Origins of the American Fuging Tune,"* 46-52.
[27] Garst, *The Sacred Harp,* 71.

Read marks this first prelude in his *Eight Preludes on Old Southern Hymns* "Quickly, with spirit (dotted quarter =104). The tempo mandates that the piece will have a strong feeling of two, rather than six. The sprightly character of Read's setting perfectly depicts the "mischievous" nature of the human soul called out by the text of the hymn. Read introduces each of his *Eight Preludes* with a presentation of the shape-note melody. Figure 5 illustrates the shape-note tune LEANDER.

Figure 5 ***My Soul Forsakes Her Vain Delight*** **(LEANDER):**[28]

GARDNER READ
Opus 90

I. "MY SOUL FORSAKES HER VAIN DELIGHT"
("Leander")

Used by permission of ALFRED MUSIC.

Many shape-note hymns have close relationships with one another, or with popular folk songs of their time, and LEANDER is no exception. George Pullen Jackson points out that phrase 5 and phrase 6"[29] are related to the folk tune, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," as demonstrated below[30]:

[28] Gardner Read, *Eight Preludes on Old Southern Hymns (from "The Sacred Harp"),* (New York: NY: H.W. Gray Co., Inc., 1952), 1.
[29] nb: what G.P. Jackson labels "phrase 5 and 6" is really the third of four phrases. Jackson was a German professor, and a dilettante gatherer of folk tunes.
[30] George Pullen Jackson, *Spiritual Folk-Songs of Early America,* (Locust Valley, N.Y.: J.J. Augustin, 1937, re-printed in Gloucester, MA by Peter Smith Publisher, Inc., 1975), 131.

Figure 6 ***When Johnny Comes Marching Home*** **(melody transcribed by David Bruce):**[31]

When Joh- ny comes mar- ching home a- gain, Hur- rah, Hur- rah. We'll give him a he- ro's

wel- come then, Hur- rah, Hur- rah, the men will cheer and the boys will shout, the

la- dies the- y will all turn out and we'll all feel gay when John- ny comes mar- ching home.

The importance of centonization, a form of musical borrowing, bears a mention, here. David W. Music describes centonization as "the presence of the same phrase in otherwise unrelated melodies."[32] LEANDER is illustrative of the close connection between folk tunes in popular culture and shape-note hymnody. *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* is a Civil War ballad, published by Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore in 1863, under the pseudonym Louis Lambert.[33] Gilmore was an Irish immigrant, and an important nineteenth-century band leader in the Boston area who enlisted in the Union Army, along with his entire band, in 1861.[34] After *Johnny* had enjoyed two decades of popularity, Gilbert claimed that he thought he had borrowed the tune. He called it:

> "a musical waif which I happened to hear somebody humming in the early days of the rebellion, and taking a fancy to it, wrote it down, dressed it up, gave it a name, and rhymed it into usefulness for a special purpose suited to the times" (Musical Herald, 1883).[35]

[31] Used by permission. https://www.8notes.com/scores/5082.asp. License: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/.
[32] Music, David W., *A Selection of Shape-Note Folk Hymns from Southern United States Tune Books, 1816-61,* Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 1970 Introduction, x.
[33] *When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again*. Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 2002. Online Text. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200000024/. (Accessed July 06, 2017).
[34] Ibid.
[35] Lighter, "Best Antiwar Song," 17.

As stated earlier, George Pullen Jackson pointed to a connection between LEANDER and *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* in the 1930s, but his scholarship inferred that the shape-note tune might have come from a Gaelic folk melody.[36] One might consider LEANDER as the inspiration for *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*, not the reverse. It should be noted that the tune LEANDER was published in *Johnsons' Tennessee Harmony* in 1818—which far pre-dates the publication of the Civil War ballad in 1863.[37] Although the melodies of LEANDER and *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* mimic each other's melodic contour in only the third four-bar phrase, they have much in common in terms of the overall ethos, dance-like quality of the tune, and setting in a 6/8 meter.[38] A variety of scholars and collectors of Civil War-era music speculate on the true source for the ballad. It is catalogued in some detail on the Library of Congress website, where the author speculates that Gilbert is recalling an earlier Gaelic folk tune, *Johnny, I Hardly Knew Ye,* while stating that Gilbert said the borrowed tune actually came from a Negro spiritual.[39] No matter the source, the interplay between folk music and shape-note hymns is important. Whether because of intentional *contrafacta*—such as the cleansing of drinking songs for use in Revivals (as Charles Wesley espoused)—or merely a subconscious reference to a tune lingering in the mind of a composer, folk and sacred melodies comingle in nineteenth-century music. Perhaps the irresistible connection to *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* caused Read to utilize only the first two phrases of LEANDER for his organ setting.

Read relies on his classical training to produce a delightful *fugato* on LEANDER. Read's setting of this Aeolian melody begins with a direct quote of the first two phrases of the original tenor melody,

---

[36] Jackson, *Spiritual Folk-Songs of Early America*, 131.
[37] Music, David W., *A Selection of Shape-Note Folk Hymns,* xxxvi.
[38] This would be a good topic for an ethnomusicologist to explore, in order to establish a lineage of the two melodies. Also, note the presence of African-American musicians in photos of Gilmore's band – he may have come in contact with the folk tune from one of his own band members. The Christy Minstrels, active from 1843-1855, also published an elaborate piano arrangement of the tune, attributed to G.M. Moore, who popularized it, by singing it in their shows, and Brinley Richards, the arranger of the piano version. Various off-shoots of the Christy Minstrels remained active in the 1860s, but much of their performance history pre-dates Patrick Gilmore's 1863 publication of *When Johnny Comes Marching Home.*
[39] *When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again*. Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 2002. Online Text. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200000024. (Accessed July 06, 2017).

which he places in the soprano, unaccompanied. In subsequent entrances, the tune is always presented at the fifth, thus, not a true fugue. The anacrusis (from dominant to tonic) further preserves the direct quote of the original shape-note melody. Entrances occur in the following scheme:

Figure 7 Tracing the incipits of each melodic statement *My Soul Forsakes Her Vain Delight*:

First entrance (introduction of theme)	E–A	(soprano, unaccompanied)
2nd entrance (m.9)	B –E	(tenor, manual: left hand)
3rd entrance (m. 22)	F#-B	(alto, manual: left hand)
4th entrance (m. 31)	C#-F#	(pedal, tune in augmentation)
5th entrance (m. 61)	E-A	(soprano, partially in augmentation)

Read uses the relationship of fifths in one other way: he closes the work with the iteration of a melodic dominant-tonic closing gesture: open falling fifths – from E down to A –spanning three octaves, hearkening back to traditional Western practice harmony, and his neo-Romantic tendencies as a composer.

In this prelude, the accompanimental material is all derived from the melody. After a complete statement of the first half of the melody, Read begins to sequence the last measure of the melody in measure seven, spinning it out and developing that fragment of the melody in various permutations, in authentic classical treatment. In measure seven, the soprano morphs into a driving accompanimental motive as counterpoint to the new entrance of the melody, in the tenor range (Fig. 8). Read builds the texture up, layering voice by voice until he has achieved a five-voice texture at the entrance of the pedal (m. 31). Interestingly, the pedal never takes on the accompanimental gesture, although it does play an accompanimental role in the prolonged pedal tones of the second half of the piece.

Figure 8 **Gardner Read *My Soul Forsakes Her Vain Delight* (op. 90), mm. 5-9 (LEANDER):**

©1952, used by permission of ALFRED MUSIC.

One notable feature of the accompanimental material is its kaleidoscopic shifting number of voices. Rather than following the strictures of classical polyphony, Read takes a more liberal approach to following each voice to its logical conclusion. In preparation for the entrance of the alto statement of the theme, the tenor ascends into the soprano range, as Read fashions a duet out of the two voices, by conjoining them into the right-hand part. This mostly dyadic accompaniment ascends to a high register, leaving plenty of room for the alto melody to join the dance. The right-hand accompaniment becomes a mix of dyads and single notes, utilizing fourths, fifths, and sixths- with an occasional third or seventh thrown in for variety.

The rhythmic treatment is very straightforward, although by no means square. Read invests the piece with a busy energy by amassing a continuous flow of eighth notes. The anacrusis of the shape-note tune aids in propelling the flow of the piece ever onward, giving it a sense of urgency and a breathless quality. Read utilizes hemiola in several places (soprano, mm. 31, 42, and 61; pedal, m. 31) to create rhythmic interest, and make the fugato less predictable. Overall, his use of rhythmic elements is very conservative in this piece.

Harmonically, he is much more adventurous. As referenced earlier, he allows the tenor to converge on the soprano part in m. 23, creating dyads and quartal harmony, which evokes the source material of *The Sacred Harp.* Like Billings and other shape-note composers before him, Read allows the harmony to exist in a more linear context, rather than worry about what harmonies would be implied based on how

the voices lined up vertically. It is here that one really feels the influence of Hindemith, while at the same time wondering if this is just an *homage* to the inherent disjunct quality of shape-note hymnody, independently wrought, rather than conceived in the ways of traditional Western European harmony.

The end of the setting is skillfully managed. Situated on a prolonged F# pedal point, one despairs of a return to the original key of the piece. Gardner Read quickly and deftly uses the accompanimental material to throw us back to E. In a single measure, he plants the pedal on an E pedal point, and abandons the F# to accomplish the return to the original Aeolian melody. Over an E pedal-point of three measures, the accompanimental material is spun out with a particular emphasis on parallel fourths and sevenths, a reference to the traditional shape-note setting. The prominence of E also sets up a rather strong dominant-tonic yearning, as E is the dominant of the original key of A (Aeolian). By fragmenting the accompanimental material, and manipulating it to form a bit of a bridge, Read sets up the final statement of the melody. In m. 61, Read returns to the original statement of the melody in the soprano, in Aeolian (A). Initially, one expects a verbatim statement of the melody, akin to the opening statement of the piece. At bar 66, the melody dissolves into an augmentation, as it had in other measures, prior. The prelude ends with three successively lower statements of E to A, culminating in a complete denouement on a *pianissimo* E to A in the pedal, affecting a diminuendo through a reduction in sound and tessitura.

It may be impossible to assert, without reservation, whether or not Read's fusion of traditional compositional devices and quartal harmony are more a product of the context of the 1950s, and Hindemith's influence, or a desire to remain true to the source material for the melody. One could posit that it is likely a confluence of two strongly quartal bodies of repertoire colliding in history. It is especially ironic to remember that this is the composer who turned down the chance to study with Hindemith, self-diagnosing that he already "wrote too much like Hindemith." As so many composers remind us, they are a composite of all that has come before them. Read's many other preludes are worthy of further study and per-

formance. They run the gamut of emotional and musical content, each with a distinct personality. Groundbreaking for its time, Gardner Read's *Eight Preludes on Southern Hymns* should be recognized as the beginning of a new sub-genre within the genre of organ music: organ music based on shape-note tunes.[40]

[40] Scores of organists came into contact with Read's organ settings of through the American Guild of Organists (AGO). The AGO included Read's *Preludes* among the options for the repertory component for the AGO Service Playing exam. Clearly, the AGO recognized the value and relevance of these works early on.

LEO SOWERBY'S PRELUDE ON *LAND OF REST* (1956)

Before proceeding to organ works of the 1970s, one further composer from the era of Read and Barber will be considered briefly: Leo Sowerby. Known as the "Dean of American Church Music," Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Sowerby was organist at St. James Episcopal Church, later Cathedral, in Chicago for four decades. Like his contemporaries, Read and Barber, Leo Sowerby was inspired by the lilting melody of a particular shape-note tune, in Sowerby's case, LAND OF REST. During the 1950s, he published his *Prelude on "Land of Rest"* (1956) as part of a series of ten hymn tune arrangements, released under the auspices of the *St. Cecilia Series*.[41] His introduction to this tune came through a collection of folk music published in 1938: *Folk Hymns of America,* collected and arranged by Annabel Morris Buchanan, rather than through a shape-note tune book.[42] Sowerby came into contact with several of the new tunes for these ten chorale preludes through his work on the 1940 Episcopal hymnal committee.[43] *Prelude on "Land of Rest*" is dedicated to Richard Wayne Dirksen, his professional colleague. The chorale prelude is imitative, and contains thirty-three complete statements of the tune LAND OF REST. The statements often occur in duets, with each voice entering a bar behind its duet partner. Usually, the entries occur at the space of a full measure – sometimes in closer proximity. Figure 9 illustrates the various duet entries, and details salient features in the accompanimental material. Sowerby has chosen a 6/4 meter to convey the lilt of the tune LAND OF REST.

---

[41] Stover, Harold. "Leo Sowerby at 100" in *The New England Organist,* May-June 1995.
[42] Harry Plantinga, "Land of Rest," (Hymnary.org, 2007).
[43] Marilois Ditto Kierman. *The Compositions of Leo Sowerby for Organ Solo.* Master's Thesis: The American University, 1967 (University Microfilms M-1098).

Figure 9: 33 complete statements of subject (LAND OF REST melody) in Sowerby's *Prelude:*

Paired Duets	***Key***	***Accompanimental material***
Anacrusis to m. 1; soprano + m. 1 (beat 6); tenor	F	Alto interpolated into texture at m. 1; rounds out 3-voice texture mimicking soprano melodic contour in contrary motion
m.9 (beat 6) Bass (pedal) + m.10 (beat 6) soprano	F	Alto accompaniment is offshoot of end of melody in soprano, bar 9; utilizes many dyadic fourths
m. 18 (beat 6) alto + m.19 (beat 6) soprano	F	Accompaniment is freely-composed in mezzo soprano tessitura; begins to introduce E-flat into this part, foreshadowing next duet pair in key of B-flat
m. 27 (beat 6) tenor + m. 28 (beat 6) bass (pedal)	B-flat	Quasi-ostinato soprano counter-melody
m. 36 (beat 6) bass (pedal) + m. 37 soprano	F	Left-hand punctuates the texture with seventh chords on beats 2 and 5 of mm. 37-43
m.45, beat 6) soprano + m. 46 (beat 6) tenor	B-flat F	Sop: B-flat against tenor in F- bitonality in the two melodic voices! Accompaniment is parallel 4th dyads in mezzo soprano and alto range; altered chromatics notes in mm. 57-58
m. 54 (beat 6) pedal + m. 55 (beat 6) soprano	G	Accompaniment is a continuation of dyadic fourths that began in previous section, now a melodic and rhythmic ostinato in tenor (left hand); in G major to match transposed tune
m. 63 (beat 6) alto [disperse between left and right hands] + m. 64 (beat 3) soprano + m. 64 (beat 6) tenor (left hand)	F	Special instance of 3-part canonic writing, all at the interval of a half-bar. No accompanimental material – the strict canon creates incidental harmony
m. 72 (beat 6) alto + m. 73 (beat 3) soprano	F	Pedal ostinato (m. 72) is accompanimental, derived from tune; sparse harmony expands in .76 to lush, planning 2nd inversion chords
m. 81 (beat 6) tenor + m. 82 (beat 3) soprano	B-flat F	Second bi-tonal melodic duet; In m. 84, pedal ostinato reduced to a descending 5-note scalar motive while right hand chords expand- often 5-voice texture in this section

Figure 9: **33 complete statements of subject (LAND OF REST) in Sowerby's *Prelude*** (cont.)

m. 90 (beat 6) alto + m. 91 (beat 3) soprano + m. 91 (beat 6) tenor + m. 92 (beat 3) bass	F	Overlapping entries of all four voices for full SATB melodic texture
m. 98 (beat 6) alto + m. 99 (beat 3) soprano	F	Pedal counterpoint is derived from tune – descending 4-note "reprise" motive, presented in augmentation at mm. 106-107
m. 107 (beat 6) soprano + m. 108 (beat 3) tenor	F	Quasi-imitative line in alto, freely composed, makes up the harmony
m. 116 (beat 6) soprano + m. 117 (alto)	F	Complete absence of pedal in this section; both soprano and alto voices split into melody + second accompanimental voice in narrow contour to original subject
m. 125 (beat 6) pedal + m. 126 (beat 3) mezzo soprano	F	Mezzo range melody excised from rest of texture- right-hand solo in canon with bass (pedal) melody; left hand is accompanimental, with recollections of the melody

The exacting discipline of presenting such a long melody fugally dictates much of the counterpoint, leaving little room for other decoration. However, Sowerby's originality shines through the accompanimental material, where he makes use of parallel fourths and seventh chords, as well as pedal ostinati. Although there are instances of bi-tonality and chromaticism, Sowerby's harmony is mostly conservative. Sowerby's reference to a folk-tune collection, rather than any shape-note collection (such as *The Sacred Harp)* suggests that any fascination with fourths is merely a natural reflection of the folk idiom, rather than a reference to the quartal theory of Hindemith gaining traction at the time.

Prelude on "Land of Rest" is quite a bit longer and more contrapuntally dense than the multitude of compact variation sets from the 1970s and later (with the notable exception of the *Gospel Preludes* of William Bolcom). A fair amount of discipline is required to execute the piece effectively, its complexity demanding a clarity of articulation, and the ability to sustain the requisite energy across its long melodic lines. One can assume that it would have enjoyed wide popularity, both as a sacred work and as a concert piece.

Chapter 5: Shorter Settings from the 1970s and 1980s

Approximately a decade after Barber's *Wondrous Love* was published, a proliferation of organ compositions based on shape-note tunes mirrored the increasing popularity of shape-note singing in American culture, beginning in the 1970s with sets of pieces by Dale Wood, George Shearing, Wilbur Held, and Robert Powell. Much of the music from this period and later is functional music, clearly intended for church organists. Many of the organ settings are variation sets, or brief through-composed variations, suitable to the needs and temporal limitations of a worship service. There is a wealth of literature from the 1980's and 1990's based on shape-note tunes, and if anything, the stream of composition in this genre is holding steady, rather than declining, in the 21st century.

THE SECOND WAVE: ROBERT POWELL, DALE WOOD, GEORGE SHEARING

Following the organ works of Read, Sowerby, and Barber in the 1950s, interest in shape-note tunes by organ composers seems to have waned for a short period, even though as many as nine tunes of shape-note origin had taken up residence in main-line Protestant hymnals by the 1960s.[1] The notable exception to this lapse is Robert Powell's *Sacred Harp Suite* (1962), based on the shape-note tune DETROIT. Powell includes eight variations on a tune that is often paired with the hymn text *Do Not I Love Thee*. He relies on classic forms, featuring bicinia and trio texture, as well as quasi-fugal and imitative variations. Evocative of the many quartal harmonies in *The Sacred Harp,* the penultimate variation features many dyads in the manual accompaniment over a pedal melody. The variations are short, but tastefully executed. The *Suite* is a link to Barber and Read, who made references to the shape-note tunes they set by publishing the melodies and source material as a frontispiece.

[1] Charlie W. Steele, *"Southern Harmony* Revisited: in the Pew and on the Organ Bench," *The Diapason* (January, 2011), 22. WONDROUS LOVE, HOLY MANNA, DOVE OF PEACE, and NEW BRITAIN are just a few examples of shape-note tunes found in American Protestant hymnals in the second half of the 20th century.

The second tidal wave of interest in shape-note music crested in the 1970s and early 1980s. More shape-note tunes found a permanent home in mainline Protestant hymnals, such as *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (1978); the Episcopal *Hymnal 1982*; the *United Methodist Hymnal* (1989); and the *Presbyterian Hymnal* (1989).[2] The tradition of "Sacred Harp Sings"—which had continued, uninterrupted, in the south for a century—now found willing converts in the north. Shape-note tunes were finding their way into the hearts of singers in northern urban centers, as demonstrated by the founding of numerous Sacred Harp singing societies in northern cities. Folklore studies gained traction at academic institutions, which brought folk music more credibility as a serious body of music deserving further investigation.

Thus, a proliferation of organ compositions based on shape-note tunes reflected the rediscovery of shape-note tunes across disciplines in the 1970s. Organ composers came into more regular contact with shape-note tunes and their sources, as *The Sacred Harp* and *The Southern Harmony* were distributed at academic institutions, and student chapters of shape-note "Singings" were established. Folk-hymn scholar David W. Music suggests several reasons for the soaring popularity of the shape-note tunes:

> "The increase in the number of shape-note tunes is due to a number of factors including: 1) the bicentennial of the USA in 1976 with church musicians seeking to honor their country by searching out some of its native expressions…2) the broadening of the base of congregational song to include a wider diversity of styles and types than before…3) in a few cases, these melodies have become familiar outside the church…"[3]

Contributors in the 1970s include Dale Wood, whose *Organ Book of American Folk Hymns* (1970) included seven shape-note tunes. He followed that collection with a number of smaller organ settings on shape-note tunes in his *Wood Works* series in the 1980s. Wilbur Held featured three shape-note tunes in *Preludes and Postludes, Vol. 1 (General Postludes),* published in 1972: HOLY MANNA, NEW BRITAIN, and RESTORATION. Held noted in the score that the source was *"Southern Harmony,* 1854." Two

---

[2] Steele, "*Southern Harmony* Revisited," 21.
[3] Ibid.

years later, Harold M. Best[4] published a collection which included three shape-note tunes. *Voluntaries on Early American Hymn Tunes"* (1974) included organ settings of NEW BRITAIN (erroneously called *Amazing Grace*[5]), CLEANSING FOUNTAIN, and NETTLETON. Like Held's settings, Best's settings are extremely brief, seemingly destined for use solely in church, rather than the concert hall.

GEORGE SHEARING: TRANSLATIONS BY A JAZZ MASTER

In the late 1970s, shape-note tunes made a giant leap across genres. Published by Sacred Music Press in 1977, George Shearing's *Sacred Sounds from George Shearing for Organ, Based on Early American Hymn Tunes* featured shape-note tunes prominently:

1. NEW BRITAIN
2. MIDDLEBURY
3. RESTORATION
4. ANTIOCH
5. I LOVE THEE
6. LAND OF REST
7. CONSOLATION
8. DISTRESS
9. HAPPY LAND

Blind from birth, Shearing would not have been influenced by the quirky visual notation of the shape-note tune books. A jazz pianist, Shearing emigrated to the U.S. in the late 1940s, and toured the U.S. extensively. Theoretically, he could have come into contact with these tunes while touring. In the absence of more definitive evidence to the contrary, the more likely explanation is that these tunes were suggested to

---

[4] Harold M. Best (1931-) is Dean Emeritus of Wheaton College Conservatory of Music. Dr. Best earned his DSM from Union Theological Seminary. His published compositions include choral and organ works. He was the professor of organ at Nyack Missionary College prior to his years as a music professor at Wheaton.

[5] Organ compositions based on shape-note tunes are often just given the tune name as a title. Some composers (e.g. Dale Wood) list both the tune name and the texts most frequently married to that tune. Shearing gave all of the compositions in his collection a title based on the tune name, except for *Amazing Grace.* Shearing would not have known of the storied past associated with the text of *Amazing Grace,* and that it had not always paired with the tune NEW BRITAIN. Prior to 1909, *Amazing Grace,* the hymn, was paired with a number of other tunes, including ARLINGTON and GALLAGHER. Please refer to Chapter 6 of this paper for more information.

Mr. Shearing by Dale Wood. Wood was the Executive Editor at Sacred Music Press, and had already published his *Organ Book of American Folk Hymns* in 1970, which included two of the very same tunes published in the Shearing arrangements in 1970 (ANTIOCH and MIDDLEBURY). In the 1990s, *Wood Works (Book 3)* included several more shape-note tunes: HAPPY LAND, HIDING PLACE, and the previously published setting of MIDDLEBURY. It is difficult to resist the idea that Wood and Shearing had a dialogue –musical, if not verbal—about these shape-note tunes, and the slice of "Americana" they represent. The note accompanying Shearing's organ music states that he recorded versions of these tunes in his free moments while on the road, touring. The music was then transcribed by Marcia and Michael McCabe, and corrected and edited by Shearing with the help of Dale Wood as editor.[6] Ideas about soloing out certain lines, and many of the registration indications come from Mr. Shearing, who "spent hours at the organ console" with Wood.[7] Regarding registration indications, Wood and Shearing advise caution against too rigid an interpretation, taking a page from the playbook of Felix Mendelssohn and other great composers for the organ:

> Many organ registrations, dynamic indications, and tempo suggestion [sic] are those of the editor and subject to individual interpretation by the performer. Note that phrase endings are marked with a comma, which should not be interpreted as a break or pause. Printed music is a blueprint – the performer is the builder.[8]

Shearing's settings are highly inventive, concise commentaries on the tunes. There are usually three to five statements of the melody, perhaps correlating to specific texts or stanzas. Shearing utilizes various types of construction (such as pedal-point, trio textures, *manualiter* sections, etc.) and registrations to vary his palette throughout the collection. Almost all of the settings feature pedal, and a full complement of other voices – in one case, double pedal is required (LAND OF REST). They are serviceable pieces for church, due to their length and both aural and technical accessibility. Shearing gives us a charming set of

---

[6] George Shearing. *Sacred Sounds from George Shearing for Organ, Based on Early American Hymn Tunes*, (Dayton, OH: Sacred Music Press, 1977) 2.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

well-constructed pieces in a language peppered with extended tertian harmonies, as in jazz. The shape-note tunes have lost all vestiges of their modal flavor in this collection – only the melodic outline remains in this new translation of shape-notes into the jazz idiom. Shearing treats these tunes as a theme he can "riff" on, improvising with the building blocks of a seasoned jazz pianist. Shearing stays well within the confines of traditional formal structures, but imbues the tunes with his own harmonic palette, putting a personal stamp on each of these small, contained settings of shape-note tunes. They are extremely serviceable, both in their appeal and abbreviated length, and also by virtue of including nine different shape-note tunes, not just the three or four most popular tunes.

THE THIRD WAVE: JEAN LANGLAIS, RONALD PERERA, AND DANIEL PINKHAM

In the 1980s and 1990s, the interest in shape-note hymns continued to intensify. Many composers wrote small sets of pieces intended for practical church use. Robert Powell returned to that repertory as inspiration for two books of organ works entitled *Early American Preludes* (1997, 1998) which featured about a dozen shape-note tunes. Other composers, such as Sam Batt Owens, wrote three sets of organ miniatures based on shape-note tunes in the 1980s. Like many organist-composers, he was drawn to the unusual contours of shape-note tunes which enjoyed a wave of popularity as they were given more attention in the latter decades of the twentieth century.

JEAN LANGLAIS: SHAPE-NOTES WITH A FRENCH ACCENT

One of the most unique of the smaller collections of organ pieces on shape-note tunes in this decade comes from overseas. French composer Jean Langlais is the only foreign organ composer included in this study. He was commissioned by Fred Bock, editor at H.T. FitzSimons, to write a set of organ pieces

inspired by American tunes.[9] Langlais' *American Folk-Hymn Settings* (1986) were inspired by early American shape-note hymns, including *Amazing Grace* (NEW BRITAIN), *How Firm a Foundation* (FOUNDATION) and *On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand* (PROMISED LAND). The pieces are compact, yet harmonically adventurous. Langlais' tonal language is infused with modernism. He elevates the tunes by treating them as he would a Gregorian chant, utilizing classical forms with the twist of a modern approach to harmonization. Langlais was naturally drawn to folk tunes, as Ann Labounsky states:[10]

> Langlais has used folk music materials very effectively in a number of his earlier works—Folkloric Suite (1954), Eight Songs of Brittany, Noels avec Variations, Twenty-four Pieces are collections that come to mind…Of the six folk-hymns chosen for these settings, Langlais had a prior acquaintance with three: "How Firm a Foundation," "Battle Hymn of the Republic," and "Amazing Grace" (the latter he heard sung, by Joan Baez, at the Notre Dame Cathedral). The remaining three were selected from a group of Methodist, Episcopal, and Southern Baptist hymns suggested by the publisher.[11]

Composing his *American Folk-Hymn Settings* benefited Langlais at a crucial juncture of his life. His widow, Marie-Louise Jaquet Langlais, shares an intimate portrait of Langlais in her online book, *Langlais Remembered.* The commission for this suite of American folk-hymns arrived while Langlais was recovering from a stroke. They would provide Langlais with an opportunity for mental exercise—a sort of occupational therapy. Madame Langlais writes:

> "I questioned his doctor…and he was very clear: composition, he said to me, is fundamental for your husband's equilibrium and for his progress in language. Take the risk, and insist that he create this collection. It can only be beneficial to him. So, I again proposed themes, and he chose those that seemed to him to have the most popular rhythm…a year and a half after his stroke in 1984, even while reading and writing were still impossible [for] him, here was Jean Langlais back in the world of composition!"[12]

---

[9] Ann Labounsky. *Jean Langlais: American Folk-Hymn Settings for Organ,* (H.T. FitzSimons Company, 1986. Foreword.

[10]In the editorial note published with Langlais' *American Folk-Hymn Settings,* it is suggested that he had heard "Amazing Grace" delivered by Joan Baez in Notre Dame Cathedral, a statement that he vehemently denies. Mme. Langlais has written that he was completely unfamiliar with these American folk-hymns, and only learned of them when Fred Bock sent him copies of the hymnal arrangements found in Methodist and Baptist hymnals. See her discussion in *Langlais Remembered,* published online at AGO website by Marie-Louise Langlais.

[11] Labounsky, *Jean Langlais: American Folk-Hymn Settings,* Foreword.

[12] Langlais, Marie-Louis Jaquet. *Langlais Remembered* (online artice).

Clearly, the source material for Langlais' *How Firm a Foundation* was Hymn #529 in the Methodist Hymnal. A survey of shape-note tune books and 19th century hymnals reveals that this text was paired with a different tune in its early days. The tune, now known as FOUNDATION, was published under the title BELLEVUE in *The Sacred Harp* (1844). In *The Southern Harmony* and other hymnals, the text had been paired with a variety of other tunes, ADESTE FIDELIS (also known as PORTUGUESE HYMN) being one of its most prominent partners.[13] The only source with a key signature of A-flat major and five stanzas is the 1969 Methodist hymnal. This piece is divided into five variations, each making reference to a specific stanza.

How Firm a Foundation begins with a rather benign statement of the tune in the soprano, reharmonized over a protracted A-flat pedal point with Langlais' unique flair. This first variation is a transparent SATB arrangement of the tune on the Great principal chorus. In the second variation, the texture is reduced to three voices. The melody is placed in the tenor, and dyads of fourths and fifths accompany in the right hand. The second variation is indicated for the principal chorus of the Swell, devoid of any pedal part.

Langlais' harmonic language becomes more modern and chromatic as the piece progresses. In the third variation, there are obvious references to the third stanza of the hymn text: "When through the deep waters I call thee to go, the rivers of woe shall not thee overflow." The tune is presented in the soprano in a highly decorated form, which sometimes obfuscates it. At times, the tune seems to drown in a sea of accompaniment which is venturing away from the home key of A-flat. This stanza must have had deep resonance for Langlais, given his battle to recover the ability to speak and read for himself. Fortunately, his ability to compose remained intact, allowing him one avenue of direct communication.

Langlais' highly chromatic approach to harmony is especially evident in the fourth variation of *How Firm a Foundation,* evocative of the painful refining process alluded to in the fourth stanza of text:

---

[13] A very helpful resource for comparing myriad versions of hymn tune and text pairings can be found at http://hymnary.org.

“the flame shall not hurt thee; I only design thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.” Langlais has superimposed a version of the melody in A minor over extended tertian harmonies that are fairly consonant when considered without the melody, but which create highly dissonant sonorities against it.[14]

Langlais is generally proscriptive in his registration indications, and he indicated a combination of Swell Foundations and Voix Celestes in variation four, investing it with an ethereal quality. The lack of indication for the pedal is a mystery. At this point, all pedal couplers are off, and nothing is indicated for the initial pedal registration, suggesting an error in the edition. The performer can assume that a light 8’ stop would balance the rest of the registration for this variation.

One formal quirk of Langlais’ setting is an interpolation of the opening statement of the tune, in its completion, following this most chromatic fourth variation via a “D.C. al Coda.” There is no preparation for the return to its original tonality. It would work equally well to leave this *da capo* out, and continue on to the final variation, written as a coda—also in the original key of A-flat major. Langlais sets the last stanza for a pedal solo, accompanied by *tutta forza* chords in both hands on the *Grands Jeux* (marked “tutti” in the score). He makes use of registral leaps, and pedal octaves, creating an all-encompassing sonic climax. A *codetta* of eight measures follows the complete statement of the tune. This collection of descending chromatic chords in the manuals exists in contrary motion to an ascending four-note pedal tetrachord, reminiscent of improvisations heard at Parisian cathedrals. It sets up a unique final cadence to an A-flat triad with F as an added sixth. Langlais speaks with unerring poetry through this composition, his voice as sharp and deliberate as ever.

[14] It is hard to conceive of this particular variation as suitable “service music,” despite what the publishers suggest in the *Foreword*. Many twenty first-century congregations cannot tolerate this level of sustained dissonance, and a dry acoustic would not do it no favors. This fourth variation is a tremendous example of word-painting, perhaps most appreciated by erudite and academic audiences.

PERERA and PINKHAM

Two composers from established twentieth-century lineages include Ronald Perera (b. 1941), who studied with Randall Thomson, and Daniel Pinkham (1923-2006), who studied with Samuel Barber. Perera, a native Bostonian, taught at Smith College for a number of years, before retiring to devote himself full time full time to composition.[15] Both Perera and Pinkham wrote variation sets on WONDROUS LOVE. The impetus for Perera's composition was the wedding of two close friends in 1970, for which he served as organist.[16] He states that some of the music was "still in sketch form." At this first performance.[17] On a sabbatical, Perera was finally able to complete the manuscript. His inspiration came directly from a shape-note source:

> At this time [1986], I completed all five variations (to which I gave the title *Meditations*) and submitted the piece to my publisher, E.C. Schirmer. I was not familiar with the Barber variations or other organ pieces based on shape-note tunes, but I had a reprint of *Southern Harmony,* and I was attracted to the tunes and their settings.[18]

Perera's *Five Meditations on Wondrous Love* (1986) opens with a homophonic statement of the theme under which the text of the hymn's first stanza is printed. Perera follows this with five independent meditations. Perera's *Meditations* defy easy correlation to the stanzas of the hymn which inspired them. After the presentation of the theme (with the first stanza of *Wondrous Love* interpolated into the score), the subsequent five variations each present the tune with varying levels of clarity. Each meditation is a self-contained unit. Although there is no clear scheme of key relationships demanding that they be played *attaca,* they do form a cohesive variation set, suitable for concert use. The *Meditations* all sound quite modern, both in their utilization of extended tertian harmony and their angular, disjunct melodic motives.

---

[15] Perera, Ronald. Music Associates of America. ttp://www.musicassociatesofamerica.com/roster/Perera.
[16] Perera, Ronald. Email correspondence with author, August 4, 2017. Additional information follows in the above contextual section, all gleaned from the same email correspondence.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.

Perera alternates conservative settings with more experimental ones. He takes a more traditional approach to his treatment of the melody in the first and third *Meditations.* In *Meditation I,* Perera creates a dialogue between the right hand on a solo manual, and the pedal, which echoes fragments of the opening gesture. That gesture is gleaned from the first five pitches of the hymn, recalling the words "*What Wondrous Love is This"* to anyone familiar with the hymn. This dialogue occurs over a sonic backdrop of extended tertian harmonies on soft 8' stops on an accompanimental manual. The effect is a constant wash of colors, shifting and unrelenting, creating a new context for this reverie on the incipit of *Wondrous Love.* Mid-way through this first *Meditation,* Perera brings the work to a cadence on an A-major triad under a fermata, the Spartan nature of which starkly contrasts with the lush sonorities from which it proceeded. Immediately after this harmonic point of rest, Perera begins again with an exact repeat of the opening measures, now inverting the melodic and accompanimental lines. For the second half of the *Meditation,* the left-hand has the melodic incipit gesture on the solo 8' stop, while the right hand provides the wash of extended tertian harmonies. The cadence at the end of the *Meditation* exactly mirrors the cadence at its mid-point, resolving to an A-major triad.

In Perera's *Meditation II,* the listener is greeted with a high quotient of non-structural two-note snippets in the opening introductory material, including leaps of melodic ninths and tenths, which particularly imbue this *Meditation* with its unique flavor. The introductory material evokes an ethos of chaos as clashing seconds and thirds are offset by a two-note gesture that favors leaps greater than an octave. Through the disjointed sound of his second *Meditation,* Perera gives an impression of randomness, further reinforced by the temporal disorientation created by his generous use of rests. However, Perera maintains fidelity to the tune by relying on the intervals of phrase one as a unifying feature of this movement. The descending ninth of the opening gesture is a reference to the first two notes of WONDROUS LOVE, displaced by an octave. Perera further transforms and obfuscates the whole-steps and thirds of the initial phrase of WONDROUS LOVE throughout the accompanimental gestures of this variation. Metric uncertainty persists until the tune finally enters on the downbeat of bar 12, in the pedal. The accompanimental

manual parts continue to leap around with very little relation to the tune, which is soloed out in the pedal. Periodically, one of the accompanimental voices desists from its jagged two-note gesture, and picks up the opening phrase of the tune, albeit in diminution to the presentation of the shape-note melody in the pedal. This suggests a reference to the canonic treatment one might expect in a variation set. However, the hymn tune soon dissolves back into the frenetic two-note accompanimental gesture, eschewing any logical conclusion of the melodic material, other than the consummation of the tune in the pedal part. Perera's strategic use of rests and a collection of disjunct leaping two-note flourishes in the accompaniment invest *Meditation II* with a very modern language and sensibility, even though vestiges of time-honored compositional techniques like canonic treatment make a fleeting appearance.

In *Meditation III,* Perera utilizes a more conservative approach, with the melody placed in the soprano voice in a lilting 6/8 meter. The rest of the voices in the texture are clearly subordinate, if thematically unified with the prevailing rhythm of this *Meditation:* quarter-eighth-quarter-eighth note. *Meditation IV* owes a debt to Olivier Messiaen. The feature that most stands out about this variation is the many groupings of quintuplets and sextuplets played in the right hand. Here, as in *Meditation II,* Perera obfuscates the melody and tries to dissolve any sense of time by placing this very active and asymmetrical melodic material over lengthy, harmonically static and expansive sonorities. The lack of harmonic inertia in *Meditation IV* suggests the emphasis on duration that invests the music with a sense of the Eternal, recalling Messiaen's influence on composers of the later 20th century. Perera also shifts meters in this relatively slow *Meditation*, further disorienting the listener, and preventing a strong downbeat from emerging.

Perera's *Meditation V* offers a final commentary on the shape-note hymn *Wondrous Love.* This final variation is more conservative, and arguably more virtuosic, than the other meditations. Phrases of the shape-note melody are meted out in segments, always presented in the pedal with 16' pitch coupled with the Great foundations. *Meditation V* is registered with a full complement of foundations on all manuals, yet each manual speaks with its own distinct voice and dynamic level. The shifting back and forth across

three manuals provides textual and dynamic contrast. The segments of the melody in the pedal (accompanied on the primary manual) are offset by quick, quiet echoes of the accompanimental material on the secondary manual, at a *piano* dynamic. Flourishes, in octaves, recall the fourth *Meditation* with its quintuple gestures, punctuating the *Meditation* on a tertiary manual, marked *mezzo forte*. Although Perera foregoes metric shifts, he stipulates that each phrase has a distinct tempo, investing the movement with a feeling of elasticity.[19] In the final four bars, the organist is instructed to pull on the reeds and couplers so that maximum volume can be accomplished in the final iteration of the last phrase of *Wondrous Love.*

Perera's *Five Meditations* bear the imprint of echoes from contemporary 20th century composers: a hint of William Albright, Petr Eben, and Olivier Messiaen can be heard in Perera's intense chromaticism, disjunct melodic motives, and temporal disjointedness. Perera pushes the extremes of tonal norms, creating a vibrant set of variations with a great variety of color and timbre. Yet even as Perera expands the tonal implications for the tune, and offers some very modern counterpoint to the tune through accompanimental gestures, he still maintains the logic of traditional formal structures well within the normal range for western classical music. *Five Meditations on Wondrous Love* is a fascinating set worthy of intense study.

Daniel Pinkham, another New Englander, makes direct reference to Barber's setting of the same tune in the frontispiece to his *Wondrous Love: Five Variations for Organ* (1993):

> Samuel Barber's magnificent setting was published in 1949 [sic] and was designed for the concert organist with a large instrument at his disposal.[20] The present setting, by contrast, was designed to have but modest technical demands and to be effective on a small instrument.[21]

---

[19] For example, Manuals I and III are always assigned a tempo of quarter note = 72, while Manual II is assigned a faster tempo of 112 to the quarter note.

[20] Pinkham, Daniel. *Wondrous Love: Five Variations for Organ.* Thorpe Music Publishing Company (Bryn Mawr, PA), 1993, Frontispiece. Pinkham erroneously dates Barber's *Wondrous Love Variations* to 1949. The correct date is 1959.

[21] Ibid.

Daniel Pinkham's career was multi-faceted, dedicated to his work as a composer, a pedagogue, and a church musician. Pinkham steered the music program at King's Chapel, Boston for over forty years.[22] He held a variety of teaching positions, including a long tenure at New England Conservatory, and earned no fewer than six honorary doctorates.[23] His compositional output is massive, and varied. Pinkham's *Wondrous Love: Five Variations* are atypical for the decade in which they were composed. Each variation is a tiny confection: extremely brief variations in a neo-Romantic language. Here, one finds no hint of the twelve-tone compositional techniques Pinkham experimented with in the 1950s, nor the highly dissonant language of his cyclic works from the 1970s. The *Variations* give the impression of being a set either for a beginner, or for a church with only the most modest of resources on the organ. The entire suite needs to be performed as a whole. Pinkham, like Read, allows the original shape-note hymn to inform his treatment of the melody, and approach to harmony. In the second variation, Pinkham places the tune in the tenor, as it was in the original shape-note hymn. In variation three, the voices enter imitatively, although not in a perfect canon. The addition of a drone note gives the illusion of a three-voice texture, although at times, it really is distilled to just two. Pinkham's fourth variation is an elegantly conceived canon at the octave, between an upper and lower statement of the theme, played on the manuals. Pinkham creates novelty by adding a compositional twist: the tune in the upper manual is in diminution to the statement of the tune in the lower manual. Pinkham exploits the colors of the organ in the opening and closing variations. Variation 1 relies on quiet flue stops and celestes, creating a wash of sound, while the final variation relies on the kaleidoscopic colors produced by a chromatic reharmonization of the melody. The very last measure of the final variation is a convergence of all parts via contrary motion towards the middle of the keyboard, attaining harmonic peace in the final resolution to a D-major chord.

---

[22] Ibid.

[23] Sabine Feisst, "Pinkham, Daniel," *Grove Music Online,* ed. Deane Root, accessed June 26, 2017, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.

It is striking that many of the composers of organ music from the mid-1980's and later were trained organists, as well. Although Gardner Read, Samuel Barber, and William Bolcom all studied organ, none of those composers identify primarily as an organist. The abundance of smaller solo organ settings of shape-note tunes in the last decades of the twentieth century seem to spring both from an increased interest in the roots of America's music, as well as a practical need on Sunday morning. Many of the works listed in the Appendix are small in scale, and perfectly conceived for those spaces in the church service where they can help to establish thematic unity in a church service: prelude, offertory, and postlude. Primarily variation sets, or sets of three or more different shape-note tunes, this is a corpus of repertoire from which organists can draw again and again.

Chapter 6: Amazing Grace

Amazing Grace is a hymn with a storied past. It has been set by many composers in the 20th century. As one of two shape-note hymns chosen by William Bolcom for his *Gospel Preludes,* it attained a new profile in the world of concert music, and represents the culmination of a shape-note hymn's journey—gathered from the rural folk, dressed in new garments, and claimed for the concert repertory. Its transmission history is important to consider in order to better understand all of the influences brought to bear on its identity. By the second half of the twentieth century, it attained dual citizenship in both the sacred and secular repertories. In the secular realm, it shed some of its original associations, taking on new connotations, running the gamut from important social movements to the banal.[1] *Amazing Grace (Gospel Preludes, Book 2)* by William Bolcom, represents the attainment of its artistic zenith. Bolcom's version extends the harmonic language of this hymn as jazz, gospel, and classical art forms intersect within the same musical work.

EARLY HISTORY

The hymn *Amazing Grace* crossed the Atlantic with English immigrants to America in the late eighteenth century, and was initially set to several different tunes, including some that eventually found a strong marriage with other hymn texts, such as AZMON (*O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing)*. *Amazing Grace* has remained in continuous use with a variety of tunes, since its initial publication.

The tune most commonly paired with *Amazing Grace* today is NEW BRITAIN, about which there is a vibrant scholarly debate concerning its origin. No definitive manuscript has yet emerged, and a healthy amount of speculation about its source and transmission history exists. In many instances, it is

[1] Turner, *Amazing Grace,* 196-209. In Chapter 12 ("Icon"), Turner elucidates just how fully *Amazing Grace* has been divested of its spiritual connotations, its essence appropriated for everything from social justice movements, like the Civil Rights movement or the Conservation movement, or even as a label for perfume. It has permeated American culture to become practically a brand of its own.

difficult to verify the composer of a shape-note tune, as the repertory faces the same challenges as any body of music strongly defined by the presence of oral transmission. A common occurrence in the transmission of folk hymns is centonization, whereby several tunes are so closely related that it is difficult to assign primacy to one or the other as the origin of a particular tune.[2] NEW BRITAIN is closely related to two tunes in *The Columbian Harmony*: ST. MARY'S and GALLAHER*,* for example.[3] William Walker was the first to print the text of *Amazing Grace* with NEW BRITAIN, a marriage that has endured the test of time. Walker's marriage of the highly personal, penitent story of John Newton to this tune was a stroke of genius. This example from *The Southern Harmony* (Fig. 10) illustrates that the original melodic contour (found in the tenor) differs only slightly from modern hymnal versions. The difference is primarily in the third phrase (measures 9-10):

Figure 10 ***Amazing Grace,* from *The Southern Harmony* (1854 ed.)[4]:**

8 NEW BRITAIN. C. M. Baptist Harmony, p. 123.

1 Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound) That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see

2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved: How precious did that grace ap - pear, The hour I first believed!

3 Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

4 The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

5 Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

6 The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who call'd me here below,
Will be for ever mine.

After Walker initially brought the tune and text together, there were still a number of collections that paired *Amazing Grace* with ARLINGTON, AZMON, or as many as eighteen other tunes. It remained in flux until Edwin Othello Excell took it upon himself to make his own arrangement, just after the turn of

[2] Music, David W. *A Selection of Shape-Note Folk Hymns,* x.
[3] Turner, Steve. *Amazing Grace,* 119.
[4] Walker, *Southern Harmony* (1845), 8.

the twentieth century. Excell emphasized the diatonic harmonic implications of the tune, and set it in the more contemporary style of gospel music in 1900, smoothing it out further in 1910.[5] The arrangement in Figure 11 is from the collection *Make Christ King: A Selection of High Class Gospel Music for Use in General Worship, and Special Evangelistic Meetings* (1913):[6]

Figure 11 ***Amazing Grace,*** **arranged by Edwin Othello Excell (1913):**

No. 251. Amazing Grace.
John Newton. Second Tune. Arr. by E. O. Excell.
1. Amazing grace! how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see.
2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear And grace my fears relieved; How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed!
3 Thro' many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come; 'Tis grace hath bro't me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.
4 When we've been there ten thousand years Bright shining as the sun, We've no less days to sing God's praise Than when we first begun.

Widely published in the 1910s, NEW BRITAIN finally took hold as the dominant tune for the hymn *Amazing Grace.* Once NEW BRITAIN was solidly married to the hymn *Amazing Grace,* the tune became a part of its core identity, especially after 1920.

Two qualities have contributed to NEW BRITAIN'S permanence, beyond the text. When analyzing the merits of NEW BRITAIN as a melody, its strength is in its flexibility and accessibility. The tune is constrained to an octave, making it very accessible to all singers. It was the perfect vehicle for the repetitive hymn texts and responses of revivals in the second Great Awakening. Although it is essentially a pentatonic tune, NEW BRITAIN has triadic movement within its melody, which lends itself to diatonic

[5] Turner, *Amazing Grace,* 134.
[6] Edwin Othello Excell, *Make Christ King: A Selection of High Class Gospel Music for Use in General Worship, and Special Evangelistic Meetings,* (1913), accessed on June 26, 2017 at hymnary.org.

treatment. The very first interval of the hymn is an ascending fourth, leading to the tonic. As the tune progresses, it oscillates between the pitches of the tonic triad. These features help the tune to feel grounded. Undergirding the melody is a gentle arch, ascending and descending at the same rate—a trajectory which implies an elegant symmetry.

A major component of the longevity of *Amazing Grace* is the authenticity of its original message. This is no theoretical treatise, but a personal redemption story. Newton's personal experience invested the text with integrity. The theme of personal salvation fit perfectly into the charismatic preaching of "The Great Awakenings" and camp meeting revivals brought over from England in the 1730s. It was composed in 1779 by John Newton, a Christian minister with a dark past as a slave trader. Although the modern mythology surrounding the origin of this hymn centers on Newton's epiphany about the evils of the slave trade, he was slow in becoming a true abolitionist, as slavery was a commonplace industry in his lifetime.[7] Newton did became a mentor to the politician who championed the Abolitionist cause in England, William Wilberforce. The battle for England's soul played out in the political theatre over the course of seventeen years, and slavery was finally officially abolished in 1807, an accomplishment that Newton outlived by about eight months.[8]

In Newton's hymn, the focus on themes of redemption and a personal intervention by Jesus, as Savior, were very appealing to consumers of shape-note tune books in the United States, and an easy sell for preachers in the popular camp meetings and revivals in the late eighteenth through early twentieth centuries. The integrity of its sung theology, with a damaged soul at the heart of the story, was a story that played exceptionally well in America.

The passage of time caused the facts of the hymn *Amazing Grace* to become blurry. There are many spurious associations in early scholarship that suggest that the tune NEW BRITAIN (*Amazing*

---

[7] Turner, *Amazing Grace,* 92, 106-107.
[8] Ibid, 107.

Grace) is a spiritual, or a folk tune from the British Isles. Although no definitive manuscript has yet surfaced to debunk these theories, it is not likely to have originated from the spiritual tradition. The tune lacks some of the more telling characteristics of spirituals, such as call and response, or internal text repetition. It also lacks a link to a specific Old Testament Bible story. Spirituals placed an emphasis on Old Testament imagery, and often utilized coded language that held double meanings related to escape to freedom.[9] A myriad of influences played out in the development of the Spiritual: work songs, call and response songs reminiscent of African antiphonal singing, and even the old practices of "lining out" psalms in the established churches of the plantation owners.[10] However, the inference that *Amazing Grace* might be rooted in the spiritual tradition is not completely without basis. Two important similarities link *Amazing Grace* to the rise of spirituals, and their appreciation in the north, after the Civil War. One of the most prominent themes in the spiritual tradition is the emphasis on "going home"—a heavenly home, rather than a terrestrial one.[11] The hymn *Amazing Grace* does, in fact, end with the phrase "grace will lead me home," at the end of its first, best remembered stanza. The second salient point is a musical one. Several scholars have compared the contour of the tune NEW BRITAIN with the spiritual *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot.* Although the two melodies are set to different meters, they do bear some resemblance. It is exciting to speculate that the Fisk Jubilee Singers[12] could have sung *Amazing Grace* during their northern tours in the 1870s, but that is beyond the purview of this scholarship.[13]

Amazing Grace and NEW BRITAIN have endured a marriage of nearly 185 years. In addition to the charismatic message of the hymn, the tune not only "fit snugly into the required musical space, but the music enhanced the meaning," as noted by Steve Turner.[14] The symbiosis of text and tune has contributed

---

[9] Ogasapian, *Church Music in America*, 180.
[10] Ibid., 179.
[11] Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 422.
[12] See Personalia for a more complete discussion of the *Fisk Jubilee Singers*.
[13] It is a leap of logic, but it's possible that there is a link between the Fisk Jubilee Singers and the migration of *Amazing Grace* into the spiritual, and then pop idiom, distinct from its migration from the Gospel idiom to pop culture. They might have helped to disseminate *Amazing Grace* (NEW BRITAIN) in the late 1880s, after it made its first appearances in a Baptist hymnal in *Baptist Chorals* (1888).
[14] Turner, *Amazing Grace,* 124.

to its continuum of popularity, enriched by its translation into a variety of both sacred and secular expressions.

REBIRTH IN A GOSPEL IDIOM

The popularity of *Amazing Grace* grew as it permeated two strong currents of musical development: folk (fasola) and gospel song traditions. From there, it had many advocates who kept it at the forefront of both shape-note hymnody and gospel singing. Folk and blues genres of the early twentieth century were a natural outgrowth of those two traditions. With new stylistic translations, *Amazing Grace* has gained a foothold in new territory, winning new admirers. An uninterrupted performance tradition among gospel and folk singers has elevated *Amazing Grace* to cult status. American culture has taken ownership of *Amazing Grace*, forgetting its roots as an English hymn.

Several streams of music developed simultaneously in the nineteenth century. As shape-note hymnody gained traction in the South, the gospel tradition originated in the Sunday School movement of the 1840s and 1850s. This tradition bore the influence of sentimental, simple parlor songs from the secular sphere.[15] Singable melodies were paired with simple harmonies and strong, regular rhythms of the day's popular music: waltzes, marches, and the like.[16] Several charismatic preachers and musicians, including contemporaries Philip Bliss and Ira D. Sankey, helped to disseminate hymns like *Amazing Grace* recast as solo gospel songs.[17] In 1874, Philip Bliss published his *Gospel Songs,* and it is this collection from which the entire genre derives its label, although many other composers, such as Stephen Foster and William Bradbury, were engaged in similar publications in the years after the Civil War ended.[18]

Gospel songs spread like wildfire in the hands of traveling ministers like Dwight L. Moody and Ira Sankey, who even traveled to Europe to deliver their evangelical message, after converting thousands

---

[15] Ogasapian, *Church Music in America*, 183.
[16] Ibid., 186.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid., 184, 186-187.

across the U.S. These hymns emphasized the pietistic rhetoric of a personal relationship with God, and the idea of direct access to the Creator – no need for a clerical intermediary. The history of American sacred music is marked by many different attempts at liberation from the hierarchy of organized religion. John Ogasapian notes that the "low church evangelical wing found much in common with the revivals' emphasis on personal faith over apostolic authority, historical doctrine and tradition, and doctrinal discipline."[19] The musical evangelization of Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey has this emphasis on personal salvation at the heart of its message.

As mentioned in the chapter on *Amazing Grace,* the tune and text marriage was modernized and popularized around 1910. The torch was passed from white evangelical singers like Ira Sankey to African-American singers through the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church, and further disseminated through radio and early recordings. Recordings of *Amazing Grace* exist from 1926, when two African-American ministers were recruited to record their own version of the popular gospel song based on the version in Walker's *Southern Harmony*.[20] Many African-American singers of the early twentieth century had learned *Amazing Grace* from their parents and grandparents, part of the oral tradition of the illiterate slave population.[21]

In the 1930s and 1940s, African-American singers such as Mahalia Jackson embellished *Amazing Grace* at a time when jazz and the blues were taking center stage, bringing it more into the realm of secular life.[22] Jackson's seminal recordings of *Amazing Grace* in 1947 are exemplars of the gospel style. Jackson takes a full thirteen seconds to deliver the first word of the hymn in her version, adding quite a lot of

---

[19] Ogasapian, *Church Music in America*, 105.
[20] Turner, *Amazing Grace,* 152.
[21] Turner, *Amazing Grace,* 149. Many of those singers of the early 20th century who recorded *Amazing Grace* commercially, and also rural singers recorded by folk-song collectors such as the Lomaxes talk about learning it from their grandparents, who were slaves, or children of slaves. In the case of *Amazing Grace,* it is most likely that *The Sacred Harp* or *Southern Harmony* would have been passed down through oral tradition, even though the original source was a shape-note tune book. Forced illiteracy meant a heavy reliance on oral transmission.
[22] Turner, *Amazing Grace,* 152.

embellishment as she unpacks that first word.[23] Jackson made an indelible mark on *Amazing Grace,* further aiding its dissemination through a lifetime of live performances and records that sold over a million copies.[24] Those who followed her could not help but feel her influence.

On a parallel track to the early twentieth-century development of gospel music, folk song collectors such as George Pullen Jackson and Alan Lomax traveled deep into Appalachia and the rural South to ferret out remote communities whose song traditions remained largely unspoiled by the modernization of the big city. They sought to preserve the vestiges of the past by recording music in the rural south and Appalachia, as well as by interviewing living practitioners of folk singing.[25] Their efforts were not limited to academia, but rather disseminated over the radio, and through film scores. Folk musicians Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger kept songs like *Amazing Grace* in the ears of Americans by performing them across the country.[26] Seeger and Guthrie popularized songs like *Amazing Grace* at Worker's Rallies in the 1940s, singing the song against the backdrop of oppression of the workers, rather than the oppression of slavery that originally inspired the hymn by Newton. *Amazing Grace* would continue to gain new social and political connotations as it became popular during the Civil Rights' Movement in the 1960s, and the Folk revival of the late 1960s and 1970s.

Amazing Grace became a crossover hit, popular in sacred and secular circles. In a myriad of different contexts, the connotations implied by the text sometimes changed as a reflection of is locus. This was a part of the process of the shape-note tune become fully entrenched in the pop culture genre. It occurred to such an extent that by the 1960s, performers like Joan Baez were singing it without any idea that it was a Christian hymn.[27] *Amazing Grace* adapted, and took up residence equally in the sacred and secular domains, its duality seemingly enriching its existence. This hymn so captured the ear of the public that

[23] Ibid., 157.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Turner, *Amazing Grace,* 164-166.
[26] Ibid., 168-170.
[27] Ibid., 216-217.

it continues to coexist in the church and in popular music worlds, simultaneously- quite a feat for a hymn that is over 150 years old. Its longevity is, at least in part, due to the perfect marriage that exists between the tune NEW BRITAIN and its hymn text.

Chapter 7: William Bolcom's *Amazing Grace*—Pop Meets Art Music

Pulitzer Prize-winning composer William Bolcom translates shape-note tunes into high art music with jazz and gospel styles as a conduit for his expression in his *Gospel Preludes*. Two of the *Preludes* are based on shape-note tunes: NEW BRITAIN (*Amazing Grace*), and FOUNDATION (*How Firm a Foundation*). As shown above, by Bolcom's time, songs such as *Amazing Grace* had taken on a double life, remaining prominent in sacred and secular realms. He capitalizes on this duality, fusing together the past and present, giving shape-note melodies a new framework and relevance in the concert world. Bolcom layers influences across history, from J.S. Bach's *Canonic Variations* to an infusion of gospel riffs and jazz gestures[1]. His work is an appropriate summation of the long journey of shape-note tunes from their rural roots to a refined modernity in esoteric art music.

To establish the context of Bolcom's achievement, a consideration of attitudes towards art music during the 1970s is relevant. In his second edition of *Organ Literature: A Comprehensive Survey,* Corliss Arnold offers a window into the aesthetics of erudite academic traditionalists in the early 1970s:

> Romantic clichés were used by [Horatio] Parker and his contemporaries, but their works were a great improvement upon the hundreds of transcriptions and cheap pseudo-organ music absorbed by church congregations and the audiences at theaters and municipal auditoriums about the turn of the twentieth century. For many years orchestral organs were popular, and the music performed on these instruments had saccharine tunes which could be easily remembered, foot-tapping rhythms, and often earth-shaking volume.[2]

It is exactly this status quo that William Bolcom sought to upset in his *Gospel Preludes,* less than a decade later. "Gospel" is an evocative term – it carries certain assumptions in the mind of a twenty-first century audience. It bespeaks of a genre diametrically opposed to high art music, making the fusion of shape-note melody with gospel idioms in the context of esoteric art music an original combination, indeed.

---

[1] Michael Mazzatenta, "William Bolcom's *Gospel Preludes for Organ*" in *The American Organist,* vol. 27: no. 11 (November, 1993), 62-63.

[2] Corliss Arnold, *Organ Literature: A Comprehensive Survey: Volume I: Historical Survey,* 2nd ed., (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, Inc., reprint of 1973 ed., 1984), 262.

Speaking in 2014, in reference to William Bolcom's *Gospel Preludes,* Gregory Hand pointed out that "the term [gospel] has less to do with music," and more to do with point of view:

> The adjective "gospel," when applied to hymns, of course, also refers to hymns whose texts emphasize the participant's personal (or the congregation's corporate) relationship with God. This, I believe, is the true meaning of the word "gospel" in this collection: Bolcom only uses hymns that emphasize this personal relationship…each of these preludes feature musical influences that are outside the realm of the African-American church music tradition.[3]

Like Shearing before him, Bolcom has translated *Amazing Grace* into a "third stream" reality – a fusion of the jazz and classical genres.[4] Bolcom's music is an imaginative collage of the music of the past and present, inspired and complex. His settings provide new commentary on the hymns from a late-twentieth century perspective. Bolcom is not bound by any expectations or implications of traditional shape-note craftsmen of the past. The shape-note melodies have been emancipated from their original harmonic implications. The shape-note tunes provide melodic inspiration; Bolcom provides transformation.

Bolcom is particularly fond of mixing genres in his compositions. Michael Mazzatenta highlights an insightful statement by the composer in a 1990 article by Otto Friedrich. In it, Bolcom states his creative *raison d'etre:*

> "If you mix popular and classical forms it brings life to both genres. By making them touch, something fresh, new, and organic grows. I like the traditional and the newest culture coexisting in the same piece. The Classical masters had that possibility – Haydn is full of pop tunes – and I want it too."[5]

Bolcom's music is a tapestry of many threads interwoven and stitched into new designs. Classical, jazz, blues, and folk idioms all combine in his uniquely expressive compositional voice. Bolcom's *Gospel*

---

[3] Gregory Hand, "Performing William Bolcom's Gospel Preludes for Organ," *The American Organist,* vol. 48, no.5 (May 2014), 32.

[4] Crawford, *America's Musical Life,* 769.

[5] Otto Friedrich, "Where the Old Meets the New," *Time,* vol. 135, no. 5 (January 29, 1990), 77. Dr. Michael Mazzatenta became the general editor of all four books of *Gospel Preludes,* continuing the work of his dissertation on Bolcom's *Gospel Preludes.*

Preludes are a veritable catalogue of historical influences. Bolcom shared the following about the impetus for *Amazing Grace*:

> "I decided to set tunes that suggested a variation (no one suggested them to me…). Amazing Grace implied a set of variations (including my sly reference to "Von [sic] Himmel hoch" which opens an opportunity to write a Bachian canon, and I can assure you I didn't think about civil rights, just a good tune. (The next variation is an absolute contrast in style.) What a Friend is obviously influenced by my love of black-church organ playing. I don't think of anyone's performance being a goad to doing A[mazing] G[race], but I may have been subliminally influenced by any number of performances I'd heard. That in my experience is much more "how it works" than any direct influence. What I write is a result of my digesting everything I hear. Too many musicologists shortcut past that digestion process, thinking in terms of simple cause and effect. It's not that simple, and the process is also a mystery to me."[6]

As Bolcom explained, *Amazing Grace,* or, more accurately, NEW BRITAIN*,* invites variation treatment on several levels. Hymns—naturally strophic by the very nature of their multiple stanzas—work well in a variation structure. It is common practice among organists to vary registrations on successive stanzas of a hymn. Each new stanza offers an opportunity for a new organ registration, which can be utilized to provide musical commentary or reflection on the mood or thrust of the stanza's meaning. Additionally, NEW BRITAIN is melodically repetitive, repeating the first six pitches (in C: G-C-E-C-E-D) of the tune three times (in the first, second, and last phrases of the hymn).

Bolcom's *Gospel Preludes* are divided into four books. Each set includes three pieces. *Amazing Grace* is the final piece in *Book 2,* published in 1981. Dr. Mazzatenta has included a brief program note on each work, at the end of the publication of the complete *Gospel Preludes.* Of *Amazing Grace,* he has this to say:

> *"Amazing Grace* is the largest setting within this collection, written in Theme and Variations form. The five variations incorporate distinct and contrasting styles—from gospel, theater-organ, Baroque (quoting J.S. Bach's *Canonic Variations on "Von* [sic] *Himmel hoch"* BWV 769a) and jazz to atonal."[7]

[6] Bolcom, William. Email exchange with Sarah Read Gehrenbeck, Tuesday. March 20, 2017.
[7]William Bolcom, ed. Michael Mazzatenta, *Complete Gospel Preludes*, rev. 3rd ed. (n.p.: Edward B. Marks, 1994), 88.

The rhythms of the *Gospel Preludes* set a high bar for performers. They are far more complex than most other shape-note inspired organ works, notated with excruciating attention to detail. As Bolcom is both a cultivator and an innovator within classical and jazz genres, it is fascinating to note the precision of his notation is in this work. Gregory Hand, writing in *The American Organist,* notes:

> "Bolcom spent considerable effort in showing exactly how long notes should be held…Every short note is written as a 16th note, followed by a 16th rest. This is unlike most organ music, where matters of articulation are not usually notated so precisely…the score would probably be more intuitively understood by organists if the 16th notes were simply written as eighth notes with staccato markings."[8]

Bolcom's fastidiousness is a testament to his classical training. The composer has every right to assume that some performers of the *Gospel Preludes* will lack first-person contact with either the gospel or jazz repertory. Durational integrity is key to effective performance practice. At the organ, the velocity or force with which a note is struck will have virtually no effect on the quality of its sound (save in the case of sensitive tracker instruments). However, one of the markers of good organ performances is the precision of the duration of the notes – their length is far more important than their onset. Exact durations given in Bolcom's *Amazing Grace* are surely intended to allow for a more authentic performance of the work, capturing both the essential ratio of one bit of melody to another, as well as contributing to its *affect*—be it sprightly, or subdued.

Bolcom's unique powers of synthesis are apparent in the successful juxtaposition of several styles in *Amazing Grace.* His complex and lush harmonic language evokes the music heard in African Methodist Episcopal (AME) churches. Like an inside joke, the pedal part begins the piece with a downward "grace" note leaping down a fifth. The grace notes that pepper the piece add authenticity to its gospel sound. Like other *Gospel Preludes* (*What a Friend We Have in Jesus* is one example), the melody is often enlarged by chords or clusters, making it a literal "handful" to perform. The effect on the listener is to en-

[8] Hand, *Performing Bolcom's Gospel Preludes,* 32.

rich and enlarge the sound of the melody, which is competing with a very full accompanimental part, including a walking pedal line, a corollary to the string bass′ function in a jazz combo. Bolcom's harmonic language utilizes the full resources of jazz and blues idioms, more evocative of a Hammond B3 than a concert hall organ[9]. Throughout all but the second variation, Bolcom chooses to reharmonize each note of the melody, a nod to the gospel stylings of Fats Waller and other jazz stylings he absorbed in his student days.[10]

Each of the six sections of Bolcom's *Amazing Grace* embodies a distinct stylistic identity. No matter how Bolcom dresses the melody – or interrupts it – one perceives the tune either directly, or through the movement of the harmony. One never entirely loses track of the tune as the underpinning for the work. Bolcom composes an introductory passage which returns at the beginning of the fifth variation, dovetailing with the end of the fourth variation, and creating a deceptive cadence. This introductory material serves as a unifying feature to a piece with quite disparate styles of composition. The hymn *Amazing Grace* is most often published in the key of G major, but has been published in several other keys, including F Major and A-flat Major. [11] All of these keys are quite removed from its original shape-note setting, in which the pentatonic melody centered around C. Bolcom chose the key of A Major for his setting. Initially, the introductory passage gives the impression of establishing F-sharp minor as the key of the work. Beginning in the relative minor is an adroit, if unsettling, move on Bolcom's part; the composer beguiles us with his craft, cadencing in A Major as he brings the theme in for its first statement.

---

[9] The term that jazz organists use for this style of right-hand melodic decoration is "squabbling," an onomatopoeic reference to the sound of this technique on a Hammond organ. Conversation with Chicago keyboardist Rick Gehrenbeck quoting his teacher, jazz organist Chris Foreman.

[10] *Pipedreams* (Radio Program #0715), Interview with William Bolcom by Michael Barrone, April 9, 2007.

[11] In 1854, NEW BRITAIN was paired with *Amazing Grace* in *Baptist Harmony* in a shape-note setting of the traditional three parts (treble, tenor, bass). Set in the key of C Major, it included the full six stanzas of the hymn that Newton composed. In 1883, a setting of NEW BRITAIN was published in round-note (standard) notation with *Amazing Grace.* It is attributed to William Walker, and presented in the key of A Major. It appears in *Shook's Song Evangelist: a new collection of music for Sunday schools, gospel meetings, choirs, and private worship*. The four-part harmony in standard notation probably bespeaks of the audience to whom it was being marketed. The publishers were based in Chicago and Cleveland- not hotbeds of shape-note singing with the rise of Industrialism. The use of shape-notes was already receding into the rural areas by late in the 19th century.

In variation 2, Bolcom pays homage to J.S. Bach, as did Barber. Variation 2 begins with a direct quotation (transposed up a sixth) of Bach's *Canonic Variations on Vom Himmel hoch,* layered over *Amazing Grace,* which appears as a cantus firmus in the pedal. This elegantly conceived canon draws most of the attention away from the melody, as the listener's ear is drawn to (focus on) the two rapidly moving canonic voices in the manuals. The use of canonic voices draws a parallel to the text "and grace will lead me home," which Gregory Hand aptly suggests is the reason for a canon – one voice follows the other to that promised home.[12] One could argue that the melody is an afterthought, completely incidental to the tightly-wrought canon. Although the pedal registration indications allow for an additional 4' stop, the admonishment "not too prominent" comes from the composer. The subjugation of the melody is evidently intentional. Impossibly clever, Bolcom maintains the canonic interplay of the manual parts consistently throughout Variation 2. This section remains in A-major, like much of the rest of the work.

Variation 3 presents the tune, bisected by brief harmonic interjections. The distilling of the melody into small, compact iterations evokes Beethoven's compositional process. The ascending fourth incipit of the tune, E-A, is turned on its head, as E descends to A, passing through D. Bolcom makes use of durational accents, and metes out small slices of silence amidst the many moving parts of his musical gestures. A radical departure from the incessant sixteenths of Variation 2, the rests perforate the texture and create drama in performance. His use of silence gives the listener a chance to process the complex chords, while intensifying the dramatic ethos of the piece through momentary bouts of silence. The silences also extend the melody over the course of the variation, delaying its full unfolding. The idea of extending the melody is one that Bolcom credits to J.S. Bach,[13] but it also bears strong resemblances to the gospel stylings of artists like Mahalia Jackson, Aretha Franklin and other singers with roots in the African-American Baptist tradition.[14] The rests provide the listener a window of opportunity to more fully digest what Bolcom is doing harmonically. Bolcom conveys the melody in little motives, and the harmonic interjections

[12] Hand, 37.
[13] *Pipedreams* (Radio Program #0715), Interview with William Bolcom by Michael Barrone, April 9, 2007.
[14] Turner, *Amazing Grace,* 157-158.

serve to help extend the theme, slowing the pace of its revelation. This process of extending a tune and slowing down the texture is emblematic of the gospel style. Along with the extended tertian chords and dense harmonies, the idea of a melody extended on an epic scale gives the piece its gospel flavor.

In Variation 4, Bolcom takes the arrangement on an excursion to D-flat, departing from the primary key center of A-major. Variation 4 is where the tune will reach its most heroic form, surrounded by constant chromaticism and a fortissimo dynamic marking. As an utter departure from the moments of repose in the silences of Variation 3, Bolcom creates a wash of sound, marking "sonorous!" at the beginning of Variation 4. Gregory Hand, who has recorded Bolcom's *Gospel Preludes,* suggests that Bolcom has in mind the fifth stanza, "When this flesh and heart shall fail" as the inspiration for this variation.[15] However, the fourth stanza in many modern denominational hymnals begins, "When we've been here ten thousand years, bright shining like the sun…." This is a far more likely text to have inspired the triumphant and other-worldly chromaticism of this variation.

The transition between Variations 3 and 4 is densely chromatic, and epic in scale. Bolcom deftly demonstrates his compositional prowess by using a chromatic wedge to transition between his primary key of A Major, and its mediant, C#, re-spelled as D-flat major (measures 67 and 68). As the bass line descends, the ascending motive sequences the right-hand gestures in contrary motion to the bass. It is at this point that Bolcom introduces A-flat into the bass line, preparing the future statement of the melody in D-flat—the first note of the melody being A-flat, sung in the tenor range. The use of D-flat major seems far removed from the home key of A-major, but Bolcom reveals the reason for his use of D-flat major at the end of Variation 4. Out of the smoky sonic texture of chromatic chords, the complete statement of the melody culminates on the downbeat of measure 80. Simultaneous to this achievement of the melody is the moment when the piece begins its pivot back to its roots –the introductory passage, reappearing as an introduction to Variation 5. Rather than affecting an authentic cadence at m. 80, utilizing a D-flat triad to

[15] Hand, 37-38.

harmonize the last syllable of the melody, Bolcom places it over a V^{11} chord. This, in turn, serves as the extended dominant framework for the transitional material in bars 80 and 81. The pedal line spells out this enharmonic morphing most obviously: the falling fifth motive in the pedal, A-flat down to D-flat (bar 80), is re-spelled as G-sharp down to C-sharp in bar 81. After two iterations back the sharp key (bar 81), Bolcom takes the pedal C-sharp and repurposes it as the dominant of F-sharp minor, in bar 82.

Once the shift to F-sharp minor is achieved, Bolcom begins Variation 5 with an exact quote of mm. 1 – 3. Bolcom chooses to further spin out this introductory motive for a full six bars, doubling its impact, and bringing it to more of a conclusion before introducing the tune as a quarter-note anacrusis to bar 88. The tune is presented in the soprano, accompanied by repeated second-inversion triads in the left-hand, and a fairly static bass, relying on a see-sawing tonic-to-dominant motive for much of this variation. It is this motive in the bass that unifies the fifth variation perfectly with the introductory material – both utilize a falling fifth emphasis on the tonic-dominant relationships in the pedal. Minimizing chromaticism in this fifth variation infuses it with an ethos of calm, following a storm of harmonic activity in Variation 4.

The rest of the piece is a true *dénouement*, ending placidly with further recollections of the introductory material. This piquant reminiscence culminates in a very neo-classic ending—notwithstanding a few jazz harmonies. The piece distills down to what is, essentially, an authentic cadence in A-major: tonic-V^{11}-tonic. Bolcom takes the tune of NEW BRITAIN beyond its logical conclusion, elevating the material in a virtuosic concert piece. Bolcom's work stands equally in the sacred and secular realms, mirroring the duality of the hymn's development in the late 20th century. Because of its length and technical difficulty, it could be argued that the work is more at home on the concert stage. However, some church organists might appropriately include it within a church service. Bolcom brings *Amazing Grace* into focus in the late twentieth century as a mirror of its time, realizing its artistic possibilities within a twentieth century lens of gospel, jazz, and classical traditions.

Conclusion

Shape-note tune books struck a blow to conformity in the years following the Revolutionary Period, up through the American Civil War. Anyone could collect and publish their own compositions, or the compositions of others, with or without attribution. One egalitarian outcome of shape-note hymnody was to make the music accessible to all people at a time when literacy rates were often tied to social status. Shape-note tunes offered equal opportunities to 19th-century singers, as they were relatively easy to sing. It was also reasonably easy for composers to bring their tunes to publication, as no guild standards or training were required for composers—only a study of the *Rudiments of Music* that introduced practically every shape-note tune book. Providing the musically illiterate with a tool to decode this body of repertoire had an equalizing effect: participation in the singing was no longer relegated to cantors or professional musicians. The practice of shape-note singing, with its hollow square formation and opportunity for all to lead was—and still is—a musical incarnation of purely democratic collaboration.

Shape-note music is "of the people, by the people, and for the people,"—values that reflect the American ideals expressed so eloquently by President Lincoln in his *Gettysburg Address*. It is a remnant of a successful musical and societal experiment, its mettle proved by its uninterrupted performance tradition. Today, shape-note tunes offer testimony to the quality and variety of homegrown music borne of the Singing Schools, carried through a kaleidoscope of influences into the 21st century. The history of songs like *Amazing Grace* provides a catalogue of the history of sacred music in America.

Shape-note tunes have branched out into three domains in the 21st century: sacred music (both mainline denomination and the living tradition of the Sacred Harp Singings); in classical concert music; and in the world of pop culture, from folk songs at political rallies to movie scores, such as *O Brother, Where Art Thou* (2000) and *Cold Mountain* (2003). Musicologists and shape-note singers continue to research the shape-note collections and the hundreds of shape-note tunes about which we know only a fraction of their true narrative. In addition to the proliferation of shape-note "singings" throughout the United

States, serious scholars are turning their attention to the transmission history of these tunes and the impact of oral traditions. Although the *fasola* system is a written one, oral transmission has a dominant position in the reception history of this repertory.

The Sacred Harp and *The Southern Harmony* are veritable treasure troves of engaging shape-note melodies that continue to inspire organ compositions more than 150 years after the tune books were first published. Brimming with strophic hymn texts, the shape-note tunes translate neatly into variation sets that highlight the composer's artistry and commentary on the tunes. Variation sets offer composers a limitless range of possibilities, with great liberty in the number of movements, phrases, or stanzas available to them. Composers create variety by altering many different parameters—harmony, structure, texture, rhythm, tempo, and registration. Even though the melodies are mostly modal, shape-note tunes have tremendous flexibility. Composers find easy bridges between modality and tonality by using notes common to both systems, such as the notes of the tonic triad: fusing old and new ideas together to create something evocative of both the past and the present.

Several shape-note tunes, such as WONDROUS LOVE and NEW BRITAIN, have continued to captivate composers. Many possible factors explain their appeal, including external, non-musical ones. Associations with the Civil Rights movement, seminal recordings by famous 20th-century artists from Mahalia Jackson to Judy Collins, dissemination by early folk music collectors, and deep ties within the realm of sacred music offer reasons for the bias in favor of these particular shape-note tunes. Around the middle of the 20th century, nostalgia for an imagined, idealized America of yesteryear contributed to the resurgence of interest in shape-notes tunes. Several of the 20th century composers of shape-note settings for organ, such as Gardner Read and Samuel Barber, came of age between the two World Wars. Deep currents of nationalism permeated the life experience of those composers. Sourcing American folk tunes resonated in a special way with these mid-century American composers. Pride in American ingenuity and appreciation for the trailblazing contributions of composers in the early history of the nation offered further motivation for delving into the shape-note repertory. There was a desire to identify an authentic

American sound—a musical birthright. At the core of modern scholarship surrounding shape-notes is the quest for the roots of early American music.

In this paper, a number of organ variations on shape-note tunes have been explored. One striking feature is the myriad of different lengths and levels of complexity employed by various composers. Some, like Barber and Perera, extend the harmonic language associated with the tunes through various decorations of the melody, or reharmonization of the accompanimental material. Yet for all of their modernizing through tonal language, the forms are essentially those of classical variation sets in use for hundreds of years. On the other hand, composers like Langlais and Shearing rely on the improvisatory language and construction which defines so much of their compositional output. Their concern is not so much centered on formal unity, but on the most interesting reinterpretation they can create from material that has already been trodden over repeatedly.

William Bolcom's *Gospel Prelude* on *Amazing Grace* is perhaps the most successful example of the fusion of old forms and modern language. With *Amazing Grace,* Bolcom has fixed a place for himself on the continuum of composers who have made important contributions to organ literature based on shape-note tunes. He has created a variation set in the most classical of styles, yet the appealing freely-composed introductory and interlude material incorporates the harmonic palette and rhythmic intensity of the gospel idiom. Technical demands, coupled with Bolcom's clear, idiomatic writing for the instrument, provide modern organists with a fulfilling foray into the shape-note repertoire. Bolcom has interwoven two idioms from popular culture—gospel and folk—and translated them into concert music.

The introduction of the shape-note repertory to the concert stage breathed new life into an old idiom. After decades of isolation, shape-note tunes were reintroduced to audiences as *The Southern Harmony* and *The Sacred Harp* celebrated their centennials in the mid-twentieth century. New settings by choral and organ composers brought this corpus of hymnody fresh attention. At the same time, shape-note tunes found a permanent home in mainline denominational hymnals. This rediscovery of shape-note hymnody has served as a mutually reinforcing phenomenon for the preservation and performance of both the

source material and new compositions based on the tunes. Shape-note hymnody might have been lost, altogether, were it not for the great reawakening of interest initiated in the 1930s, and continuing to this day. As the origin of shape-note tunes recedes further into the rear-view mirror of history, one looks ahead to a continued appreciation and performance of both the hymnody and the concert music. The original tunes, and the many variations they have elicited have found a permanent place in the repertory. As expressions of American ingenuity, shape-note music will continue to inspire singers, organists, composers, and audiences for years to come.

Personalia

The **Fisk Jubilee Singers** were a choral phenomenon in the Reconstruction Era. They are important because they are the first choral group to perform the spiritual repertory, publicly. Their concert tour was mounted as a fundraiser to keep the doors of Fisk University (Nashville, TN) open. Fisk University was the first collegiate institution to admit students without regard to race. The Fisk Jubilee Singers bravely toured around the country in 1871, and by 1872 were singing for the President. Rampant racism met these children of former slaves, yet they persisted in their tour schedule. The excellence of their singing won them invitations abroad, including an invitation to sing for Queen Victoria. They cultivated an international profile, and the group continues to perform today. There are many good resources about the Fisk Jubilee Singers, including their website: **http://www.fiskjubileesingers.org/music.html**

Thomas Hastings (1784-1872): A contemporary of Lowell Mason, Hastings wrote of the merits of traditional composition, and espoused them in his own writing. A choir master for four decades, Hastings was based in New York, and wrote over a thousand hymns. The tune TOPLADY is one of his best known.

Lowell Mason (1792-1872): Mason began his professional life as a bank clerk, but soon found his true calling in the music world. Mason promoted "musical science" and "musical correctness," which were concepts diametrically opposed to the work of the Yankee tunesmiths who comprised the earliest shape-note composers. Mason published his own tune book under the auspices of the Handel and Haydn Society in 1821. He composed over 1600 hymns.

John Newton (1725-1807): Newton began his career as a sailor, and worked on slave ships. He was conscripted for service by the Royal Navy. He experienced a great deal of personal suffering, from shipwrecks to indentured servitude. Upon his rescue and return to England, he converted, and reformed his ways, eventually becoming an ordained minister. At the end of his life, he influenced William Wilberforce, a passionate orator and politician who argued for an end to slavery in Britain.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748): British theologian, scholar, and hymn-writer. Watts wrote over 750 hymns, earning him the title *Father of English Psalmody.* He employed eloquence and his natural poetic gifts to paraphrase the Psalms into elegant, vernacular settings. His hymns and Psalm paraphrases fundamentally changed how 18th-century Christians thought about sacred song, and inspired the Wesleys and others by incorporating the lessons and perspectives of the New Testament. Because of Watts' influence, hymn-writers shifted to a first person perspective (using "I," instead of "we,") when writing of the relationship between God and every individual, rather than referencing corporate Christian experience.

John Wesley (1703-1791): Along with his younger brother, Charles, John Wesley is considered the founder of Methodism. This nascent denomination grew from a student club at Oxford to a denomination and movement that converted over 100,000 people to its particular brand of Christianity. Wesley wrote hundreds of treatises as an active theologian, critic, and abolitionist. He preached in open air revivals, like his classmate and friend, George Whitefield. The Wesleys were invited to come and preach in the Colonies, part of the Revival preaching of the First Great Awakening. This concept was aligned with their belief that they could bring the church to the people, including those who had been incarcerated.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788): With his older brother, John, Charles helped to establish the Methodist denomination, which grew out of a student Bible study and prayer group from their days at Oxford. Charles was distressed by the idea of separation from the Anglican Church. He composed over 6000 hymns.

Appendix

Selected Organ Settings of Shape-Note Tunes

(Alphabetical, By Composer)

Composer	Collection / Title (Publisher, Date)	Tune Name
Franklin Ashdown	Partita on an Early American Folk Hymn (H.W. Gray, 1999)[1]	FOUNDATION
Samuel Barber	Wondrous Love: Variations on a Shape-Note Hymn (G. Schirmer, 1959)	WONDROUS LOVE
Harold M. Best	Voluntaries on Early American Hymn Tunes (Abingdon Press, 1974)	
	1. Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound	NEW BRITAIN
Marilyn Biery	Jerusalem, My Happy Home (Concordia, 2005)[2]	LAND OF REST
Seth Bingham	Twelve Hymn-Preludes for Organ: Set 1 (H.W. Gray, 1942)	
	4. Martyn (Jesus, Lover of My Soul)	MARTIN[3]
James Boeringer	The Promised Land: Organ Settings from "The Sacred Harp" (Lorenz, 2010)	
	1. Jefferson	JEFFERSON
	2. Leander	LEANDER
	3. New Britain (Amazing Grace)	NEW BRITAIN
	4. Lenox	LENOX
	5. The Hebrew Children	HEBREW CHILDREN
	6. The Promised Land	PROMISED LAND
	7. The Saints' Delight	SAINTS' DELIGHT
	8. The Spiritual Sailor	SPIRITUAL SAILOR
William Bolcom	Complete Gospel Preludes (Edward B. Marks Music Co., 1980)	
	Book 2: Amazing Grace	NEW BRITAIN
	Book 4: Free Fantasia on "O Zion Haste" and "How Firm a Foundation"	FOUNDATION
Charles Callahan	Eight Quiet Preludes on American Hymn tunes (MorningStar, 2011)	
	8. Samanthra	SAMANTHRA

[1] Also available in *The Organist's Anthology: Preludes, Postludes, and Special Music,* vol. 2, ed. James L. King III (H.W. Gray, 2004).

[2] Found in the collection *Jubilate,* vol. II (Concordia, 2005) ed. James Kosnik and J. Michael McMahon.

[3] Bingham uses a variant spelling of this tune name.

Selected Organ Settings of Shape-Note Tunes (cont.)

(Alphabetical, By Composer)

Composer	Collection / Title (Publisher, Date)	Tune Name
Kenton Coe	3 Organ Preludes on American Folk Hymns (MorningStar, 1993)	
	1. My Shepherd Will Supply My Need	RESIGNATION
	2. What Wondrous Love is This	WONDROUS LOVE
	3. Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound	NEW BRITAIN
Matthew Corl	Prelude on "I Come With Joy" (H.W. Gray, 2004)[4]	DOVE OF PEACE
Emma Lou Diemer	Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing (Lorenz, 2003)	NETTLETON
John Eggert	Variations on Wondrous Love (Concordia, 1992)	WONDROUS LOVE
Alfred Fedak	Variations on BEACH SPRING (Selah, 2006)	BEACH SPRING
Gerre Hancock	Variations on "Coronation" (Paraclete, 2000)	CORONATION
Barbara Harbach	Come and Join the Dance: Folk Tunes and Spirituals for Organ (Augsburg, 2007)	
	6. Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus	JEFFERSON
	8. God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heaven	HOLY MANNA
	10. How Long, O God	NEW BRITAIN
Wilbur Held	Preludes and Postlude, Vol. 1 (Augsburg Fortress, 1972)	
	2. God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heaven	HOLY MANNA
	6. Amazing Grace	NEW BRITAIN
	7. God of Grace and God of Glory	RESTORATION
	7 Settings of American Folk Hymns (Concordia, 1984)	
	1. Beach Spring	BEACH SPRING
	3. Foundation	FOUNDATION
	5. Detroit	DETROIT
	6. Wedlock	WEDLOCK
	7. Kedron	KEDRON
Karl Hirten	As a Fire is Meant for Burning (Concordia, 2005)[5]	BEACH SPRING
Donald Johns	Three Partitas for Organ (Augsburg Fortress, 1992)	
	1. Wondrous Love	WONDROUS LOVE
	2. Amazing Grace	NEW BRITAIN
	3. How Firm a Foundation	FOUNDATION

[4] Also available in *The Organist's Anthology: Preludes, Postludes, and Special Music,* vol. 2, ed. James L. King III (H.W. Gray, 2004).

[5] Found in the collection *Jubilate,* vol. II (Concordia, 2005) ed. James Kosnik and J. Michael McMahon.

Selected Organ Settings of Shape-Note Tunes (cont.)

(Alphabetical, By Composer)

Composer	Collection / Title (Publisher, Date)	Tune Name
Donald Johns	Eleven Hymn Preludes (Augsburg Fortress, 1993)	
	3. Resignation	RESIGNATION
	9. Holy Manna	HOLY MANNA
	10. Windham	WINDHAM
	11. Jefferson	JEFFERSON
Gordon King	Prelude on Resignation (Concordia, 1987)	RESIGNATION
Jean Langlais	American Folk-Hymn Settings for Organ (H.T. FitzSimons Co., 1986)	
	1. Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound	NEW BRITAIN
	3. How Firm a Foundation	FOUNDATION
	4. When I Can Read My Title Clear	PISGAH
	5. On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand	PROMISED LAND
Robert Lau	Variations on Wondrous Love for organ (Paraclete Press, 2008)	WONDROUS LOVE
David Lasky	Prelude on Amazing Grace (H.W. Gray, 2004)[6]	NEW BRITAIN
Paul Manz	God of Grace: A Compilation of Favorites for Organ (MorningStar Music, 2004)	
	3. Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing	NETTLETON
	20. What Wondrous Love Is This	WONDROUS LOVE
Charles W. Ore	11 Compositions for Organ, Set VII (Concordia, 2002)	
	1. Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound	NEW BRITAIN
Sam Batt Owens	Preludes on Sacred Harp Tunes (Augsburg, 1983)	
	1. Prelude on Happy Land	HAPPY LAND
	5 Little Romantic Preludes on Early American Hymn tunes (Augsburg, 1984)	
	1. Jerusalem, My Happy Home	LAND OF REST
	5. Brethren, We Have Met to Worship	HOLY MANNA
	5 More Romantic Preludes on Early American Hymn tunes (Augsburg, 1992)	
	1. Prelude on Middlebury	MIDDLEBURY
	2. Prelude on Warrenton	WARRENTON
	3. Prelude on Foundation	FOUNDATION
	4. Prelude-Fantasy on New Britain	NEW BRITAIN
	5. Prelude on Wondrous Love	WONDROUS LOVE

[6] Also available in *The Organist's Anthology: Preludes, Postludes, and Special Music,* vol. 2, ed. James L. King III (H.W. Gray, 2004).

Selected Organ Settings of Shape-Note Tunes (cont.)

(Alphabetical, By Composer)

Composer	Collection / Title (Publisher, Date)	Tune Name
Ronald Perera	Five Meditations on 'Wondrous Love' (E.C. Schirmer, 1988)	WONDROUS LOVE
Daniel Pinkham	Wondrous Love: Five Variations for Organ (Thorpe, 1993)	WONDROUS LOVE
Robert Powell	Sacred Harp Suite (Abingdon Press, 1962)	DETROIT
	Early American Hymn-Tune Preludes, Set 2 (Concordia, 1998)	
	1. O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come	DISTRESS
	2. So Fades the Lovely Blooming Flower	DISTRESS
	3. My Soul Forsakes Her Vain Delight	LEANDER
	4. Sometimes a Light Surprises the Christian	LIGHT
	5. Jesus, My All, to Heaven Has Gone	NORTH PORT
	8. Say Now, Ye Lovely Social Band, i	SOCIAL BAND
	9. Say Now, Ye Lovely Social Band, ii	SOCIAL BAND
	10. Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing	WARRENTON
Gardner Read	Eight Preludes on Old Southern Hymns (H.W. Gray, 1952)[7]	
	1. My Soul Forsakes Her Vain Delight	LEANDER
	4. On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand	PROMISED LAND
	7. Do Not I Love Thee, O My Lord	DETROIT
	8. Once More, My Soul, the Rising Day	CONSOLATION
	Six Preludes on Old Southern Hymns (H.W. Gray, 1963)[7]	
	1. By Babel's Streams We Sat and Wept	BABEL'S STREAMS
	2. How Happy are the Souls Above	HEAVENLY REST
	4. Hail! Ye Sighing Sons of Sorrow	SONS OF SORROW
	6. Hark! The Jubilee is Sounding	JUBILEE
George Shearing	Sacred Sounds from George Shearing for Organ (Sacred Music Publishers, 1977)	
	1. Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound	NEW BRITAIN
	2. Come Away to the Skies	MIDDLEBURY
	3. There is a Happy Land	HAPPY LAND
	4. I Know That My Redeemer Lives	ANTIOCH
	5. Jerusalem, My Happy Home	LAND OF REST
	7. So Fades the Lovely Blooming Flower	DISTRESS
	8. Once More, My Soul	CONSOLATION
	9. Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy	RESTORATION

[7] Both of Gardner Read's sets of Preludes on Old Southern Hymns were subsequently published together in the collection *Hymns & Carols for Organ* (H.W. Gray, 1994).

Selected Organ Settings of Shape-Note Tunes (cont.)

(Alphabetical, By Composer)

Composer	**Collection / Title (Publisher, Date)**	**Tune Name**
Leo Sowerby	Prelude on "Land of Rest" (H.W. Gray, 1956)	LAND OF REST
Albert L. Travis	3 Folk Hymn Improvisations for Organ (MorningStar, 1986)	
	1. Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound	NEW BRITAIN
	3. Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy	RESTORATION
Joe Utterback	Variations on Amazing Grace (Jazzmuze, Inc., 1992)	NEW BRITAIN
Joe Utterback	Prelude on BEACH SPRING: Four Variations (Jazzmuze, Inc., 2011)	BEACH SPRING
Dale Wood	Organ Book of American Folk Hymns (Sacred Music Press, 1970)	
	1. Antioch	ANTIOCH
	2. Wondrous Love	WONDROUS LOVE
	3. Middlebury	MIDDLEBURY
	4. Variations on a Hymn for Lent	MARTYRDOM
	5. Pisgah	PISGAH
	6. The Saints' Delight	SAINTS' DELIGHT
	7. Sons of Sorrow	SONS OF SORROW
	Music for Organ (Sacred Music Press, 1975)	
	1. Prelude on New Britain (Amazing Grace)	NEW BRITAIN
	3. Meditation on Kedron	KEDRON
	6. Voluntary on Jefferson	JEFFERSON
	Wood Works for Organ: Book 3 (Sacred Music Press, 1991)	
	4. O Jesus, King Most Wonderful	HIDING PLACE
	5. There is a Happy Land	HAPPY LAND
	8. Now with Singing and Praise	MIDDLEBURY
	Wood Works for Organ: Book 4 (Sacred Music Press, 2001)	
	3. How Firm a Foundation	FOUNDATION
	6. Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound	NEW BRITAIN
Alec Wyton	Preludes on Contemporary Hymns (Augsburg, 1972)	
	2. In Adam We Have All Been One	SAINTS' DELIGHT
	4. God of Grace and God of Glory	RESTORATION
	7. God Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens	HOLY MANNA

Select Bibliography

MUSICAL SCORES: ORGAN WORKS

Barber, Samuel. *Wondrous Love Variations*. U.S.A.: G. Schirmer, 1959.

Bolcom, William. *Complete Gospel Preludes*. Originally published in four volumes. Book Two commissioned by Marilyn Mason, and published by Edward B. Marks (n.p.), 1980. Revised Third Edition published Edward B. Marks (n.p.), 1994.

Langlais, Jean. *American Folk-Hymn Settings*. N.p.: H. T. FitzSimmons, 1986.

Pinkham, Daniel. *Wondrous Love: Five Variations for Organ*. Bryn Mawr, PA: Theodore Presser/Thorpe Music Publishing, 1993.

Read, Gardner. *Eight Preludes on Old Southern Hymns (from "The Sacred Harp").* New York: NY: H.W. Gray Co., Inc., 1952.

Read, Gardner. *Hymns and Carols for Organ*. Miami, FL: Belwin Mills Publications/Warner Bros. Publications, 1994.

Shearing, George. *Sacred Sounds from George Shearing for Organ, Based on Early American Hymn Tunes*. Dayton, OH: Sacred Music Press, 1977.

Sowerby, Leo. *Prelude on "Land of Rest."* In *Saint Cecilia Organ Compositions, no. 826.* New York: H.W. Gray Co, Inc., 1956

MUSICAL SCORES: SHAPE-NOTE COLLECTIONS AND HYMNALS

Evangelical Lutheran Worship. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006.

Music, David W, ed. *A Selection of Shape-Note Folk Hymns from Southern United States Tune Books, 1816-61*. Recent Researches in American Music 52. Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2005.

Swan, Marcus Lafayette. *The New Harp of Columbia*, facsimile ed. with an introduction by Dorothy D. Horn, Ron Petersen, and Candra Phillips. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1978. Reprint of 1867 ed.

The Hymnal 1982. New York: Church Hymnal Corporation, 1985. (Episcopal)

The Sacred Harp: the best collection of sacred songs, hymns, odes, and anthems ever offered the singing public for general use. Bremen, GA: Sacred Harp Publishing Co., 1991

Walker, William. *The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion…New Edition, Thoroughly Revised and Greatly Improved.* E.W. Miller: Philadelphia, PA, 1854, p.252

The Presbyterian Hymnal. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990.

United Methodist Hymnal. Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989.

Wyeth, John. *Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second: With a New Introduction to the Da Capo Edition by Irving Lowens*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1964. Reprint of Harrisburg, PA: 1820 ed.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Alexander, J. Heywood, ed. *To Stretch Our Ears: A Documentary History of America's Music*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002.

Arnold, Corliss Richard. *Organ Literature: A Comprehensive Survey. Volume I: Historical Survey, Second Edition.* Metuchen, N.J. 1984, original copyright, 1973.

Bohlman, Philip V., Edith L. Blumhofer, and Maria M. Chow. *Music in American Religious Experience.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Brooks, William. "Music in America: An Overview (Part 1)." In *The Cambridge History of American Music*, ed. David Nichols, 30-48. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Broyles, Michael. "Immigrant, Folk, and Regional Music in the Nineteenth Century." In *The Cambridge History of American Music*, ed. David Nichols, 135-157. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Chase, Gilbert. *America's Music: From the Pilgrims to the Present*. 3rd rev. ed. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1987.

Cook, Nym. "Sacred Music to 1800." In *The Cambridge History of American Music*, ed. David Nichols, 78-102. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Crawford, Richard. *America's Musical Life: A History*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005.

Ellenwood, Leonard. *The History of American Church Music*, rev. ed. New York: Da Capo Press, 1970.

Eskew, Harry, and Hugh T. McElrath. *Sing With Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Hymnology*. Nashville, TN: Church Street Press, 1995.

Eskew, Harry. "A Bicentennial Tribute to William Walker" in *The Choral Journal.* August, 2009, vol. 50: no. 1, pp. 55-58.

Gould, Nathaniel D. *Church Music in America*. New York: AMS Press, 1972. Reprint of Boston, 1853 ed.

Grayson, Lisa. *A Beginner's Guide to Shape-Note Singing,* Fifth edition (2012), accessed online: https://fasola.org/resources

Hand, Gregory. "Performing William Bolcom's *Gospel Preludes* for Organ" in *The American Organist,* May, 2014, vol. 48, no. 5, pp. 32-41.

Hindemith, Paul. *Unterweisung im Tonsatz,* 1937.

Hitchcock, H. Wiley. *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction*, 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000.

Hood, George. *A History of Music in New England*. New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1970. Reprint of Boston, 1846 ed.

Horn, Dorothy D. *Sing Me to Heaven*. Gainesville FL: University of Florida Press, 1970.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES (cont.)

Jackson, George Pullen. *Spiritual Folk-Songs of Early America*. Locust Valley, N.Y.: J.J. Augustin, 1937, (reprinted in Gloucester, MA by Peter Smith Publisher, Inc., 1975) p.131

______. *The Story of the Sacred Harp 1844-1944: A Book of Religious Folk Song as an American Institution.* Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1944.

______. *White and Negro Spirituals: Their Life Span and Kinship.* New York: Da Capo Press, 1975 (reprint of first edition, 1944).

______. *White Spirituals of the Southern Uplands; the Story of the fasola folk, their songs, singings, and "buckwheat notes."* Chappell Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1933.

Kierman, Marilois Ditto. *The Compositions of Leo Sowerby for Organ Solo.* Electronic thesis: The American University, M.A., 1967.

Langlais, Marie-Louis Jaquet. *Langlais Remembered.* Published 2016, available online, accessed at AGO website, 2017.

Lowens, Irving. *Introduction to Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second*, v-xiv. New York: Da Capo Press, 1964.

______. *Music and Musicians in Early America*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1964.

______. "The Origins of the American Fuging Tune." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 6, no. 1 (1953): 43-52. doi:10.2307/829998.

Mazzatenta, Michael. "William Bolcom's Gospel Preludes for Organ." Dissertation. Arizona State University, 1991.

______. "William Bolcom's *Gospel Preludes for Organ*" in *The American Organist.* November, 1993, vol. 27: no. 11, pp. 62-63.

Morgan, Robert P. *Twentieth-Century Music*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991.

Music, David W. and Westermeyer, Paul. *Church Music in the United States: 1760-1901.* St. Louis: MorningStar Music Publishers, Inc., 2014.

Ogasapian, John. *Church Music in America, 1620-2000*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2007.

Quinn, Iain. "Samuel Barber's Organ Music," in *Tempo*, April, 2011, vol. 65, issue 256, pp. 38-51.

Rhoades, Larry "Theme and variation in twentieth-century organ literature: analyses of variations by Alain, Barber, Distler, Dupre, Durufle, and Sowerby." Electronic Thesis or Dissertation. Ohio State University, 1973. https://etd.ohiolink.edu/

Steele, Charlie W. *"Southern Harmony* Revisited: in the Pew and on the Organ Bench" in *The Diapason.* January, 2011, pp. 20-23.

Tick, Judith. *Music in the USA: A Documentary Companion*. Oxford University Press. Kindle Edition.

Turner, Steve. *Amazing Grace: The Story of America's Most Beloved Song.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2002.

Young, Carlton R. "Sacred Harp Singing, Remnant of Frontier Religion." In *We'll Shout and Sing Hosanna: Essays on Church Music in Honor of William J. Reynolds*, ed. David Music, 201-228. Fort Worth, TX: School of Church Music, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1998.