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SHAPE-NOTE HYMNODY AS SOURCE MATERIAL FOR MODERN AND POST-MODERN CHORAL ART MUSIC

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SHAPE-NOTE HYMNODY AS SOURCE MATERIAL
FOR MODERN AND POST-MODERN CHORAL ART MUSIC

by

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Abstract

The musical repertoire known as shape-note hymns constitutes some of the oldest indigenous music still in use in America. This body of works has been studied for its origins and history, its continuing use in social and pedagogical functions, and its use in settings of worship. However, its use as the basis for performance-oriented, concert music has been far less explored. This present study seeks to examine the ways in which composers have arranged and adapted these hymns into choral art forms throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In particular, the study will examine the use of this music in large-scale forms and choral collections, as such works are distinguished from the typical arrangements of shape-note hymns one may encounter in settings of worship. This study will include a brief history of American shape-note music, the context and origins of twentieth-century shape-note adaptations, as well as a general history of the adaptation practice. The study will then focus on specific works by representative composers in an attempt to illustrate the various techniques composers employ when borrowing from the original works.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
List of Musical Examples	vii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
I. Background.....	1
II. Purpose of the Study	2
III. Related Literature.....	4
IV. Procedures and Methodology	6
CHAPTER TWO: A BRIEF HISTORY OF SHAPE-NOTE HYMNODY.....	9
I. The Origins of Shape-Note Hymnody.....	10
II. Shape-Note Hymnody in the South.....	11
III. Shape-Note “Singings” Today.....	15
CHAPTER THREE: ADAPTING AND ARRANGING SHAPE-NOTE MATERIAL...18	
I. The Origins and Context of the Practice	19
II. An Overview of the Practice	29
CHAPTER FOUR: A SURVEY OF REPRESENTATIVE COMPOSERS AND THEIR WORKS.....	40
I. Virgil Thomson’s <i>Four Southern Folk Hymns</i>	40
II. Alice Parker’s “Sing to the Lord”	44
III. William Duckworth’s <i>Southern Harmony</i>	48
IV. Carol Barnett’s <i>An American Thanksgiving</i>	54
V. Mack Wilberg’s <i>My Song in the Night: Five American Folk Hymns</i>	58

VI. William Averitt's <i>Over Jordan: Four Shape Note Tunes</i>	62
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....	66
BIBLIOGRAPHY	68
APPENDIX A: PERMISSION TO REPRINT	72
APPENDIX B: RECITAL PROGRAMS	76

List of Musical Examples

Example 3.1: NINETY-THIRD PSALM from <i>Southern Harmony</i>	24
Example 3.2: OLD HUNDRED from <i>Southern Harmony</i>	25
Example 3.3: KEDRON from <i>Southern Harmony</i>	27
Example 4.1: “Hebrew Children” from Duckworth’s <i>Southern Harmony</i>	52
Example 4.2: “Hebrew Children” from Duckworth’s <i>Southern Harmony</i>	53
Example 4.3: “McKay” from <i>An American Thanksgiving</i>	59

Chapter One: Introduction

I. Background

The body of musical literature known as “shape-note hymns” represents a substantial portion of musical output from nineteenth-century America. These works are so called because of the use of different shapes to represent different musical pitches. These hymns (sometimes known as “southern folk hymns” or even “white spirituals”) were especially popular in the American South. They were compiled in collections referred to as “tune books” and were important not only for their pedagogical value, but also for their use in social music-making (through events known as “singings”) and in worship settings as well. In fact, many of these texts and the shape-note tunes with which they are most commonly associated have found a permanent place as some of the most popular hymns still in use in settings of worship throughout America. (A few of these examples would be NEW BRITAIN/ “Amazing Grace,” NETTLETON/ “Come Thou Fount,” and FOUNDATION/ “How Firm a Foundation.”)

Today, the music of the shape-note tradition continues to live not only through the ongoing practice of “singings;” they also remain popular thanks in large part to their use in various arrangements and adaptations throughout the twentieth-century to the present day. Given the history and unique musical characteristics of shape-note hymns, it is not surprising that subsequent generations of composers have often used this repertoire as source material for numerous compositions. Whether through choral or instrumental

compositions, arrangements, adaptations, or original compositions inspired by the “language of shape-note music,” it is clear that these folk hymns have played a vital role in a substantial portion of important works written in the last several decades.

II. Purpose of the Study

Although much has been written about the history, sociological context and musical components of the original shape-note literature, far less has been written concerning the use of this repertoire as source material for later generations of composers. When such studies have been done, they are often within the context of a broader analysis of a composer’s overall output. The purpose of this study is to explore and compare choral works that utilize shape-note repertoire as source material. Due to the enormous amount of compositions that represent individual arrangements of shape-note hymns, this study will focus primarily on “concert” adaptations with an emphasis on large-scale or multi-movement works and collections. These works will be analyzed and compared to explore the methods that composers have used when borrowing from shape-note literature. It is important to reiterate that, by exploring these works, this study draws an important distinction in that it will focus on works that function as “concert” adaptations (choral art music) as opposed to the numerous octavos and simpler arrangements used within settings of worship. Although many adaptations could be used interchangeably in a variety of performing venues, the present study will focus on works that function as examples of substantial choral art music by reason of their depth of musical ideas, inherent musical language and style, and/or required performing forces.

This study will focus on the following representative composers and pieces: *Four Southern Folk Hymns* by Virgil Thomson, various works by Alice Parker, *Southern*

Harmony by William Duckworth, *My Song in the Night: Five American Folk Hymns* by Mack Wilberg, *An American Thanksgiving* by Carol Barnett, and *Over Jordan: Four Shape Note Tunes* by William Averitt. These works represent not only a historical view of shape-note based choral works (the earliest dating from 1937 and the most recent dating from 2010), they also illustrate compositional techniques (such as Nationalism, Minimalism, and Neo-romanticism) that are representative of modern and post-modern styles and musical trends.

It would be beneficial at this point to further clarify and differentiate between “large-scale” shape-note based compositions (as represented by these titles) and the smaller individual works alluded to previously. The large-scale works are perhaps better suited to a concert setting rather than a worship setting for several reasons. The most obvious reason is simply the composer’s intention by virtue of the length and multi-movement nature of the composition. Many of these compositions are obviously intended for performance as a single, large-scale work due to their thematic nature. An example of this idea would be William Averitt’s *Over Jordan*. Other works, although written more as “sets” or collections, perhaps function best when performed in a complete setting in order to display overall elements such as structural components and elements of unity/variety (such as Wilberg’s *My Song in the Night: Five American Folk-hymns*), or the thematic common basis of a single source (such as Duckworth’s *Southern Harmony*).

Another important factor that distinguishes these pieces from octavos would be the impractical nature of such works for use in a typical worship setting. This could be due to performing forces required (such as eight-part choral division or orchestral accompaniment), the level of difficulty of the work, or the inclusion of compositional

trends such as minimalism that are obviously more readily found in a concert or academic setting rather than a worship setting.

III. Related Literature

Recent studies have been done that could prove very beneficial to undertaking a thorough exploration of this topic. The following will illustrate not only the ways in which such works could be used, but also the ways in which these studies will differ from the objectives and content of the present study.

The idea of shape-note hymns as the basis for “concert” choral music was briefly addressed in R. Paul Drummond’s article “The Development of the American Folk Hymn as Choral Art Music”.¹ In this article, Drummond compares arrangements by composers such as Alice Parker, David N. Johnson, and Charles F. Brown. Drummond categorizes the arrangements in question according to those employing “conservative” styles (adhering closely to the original language of the hymns) to those employing more “liberal” styles (which “are thoroughly modern and heavily influenced by contemporary popular music and jazz.”²) Drummond’s article is especially useful for its discussion of the earliest twentieth century adaptations, but is limited in its overall scope. The focus is primarily on single arrangements or octavos, the discussion is limited to lesser-known composers (with the exception of Alice Parker), and the article was published in 1989 before many of the compositions in the present study were created.

Joanna Ruth Smolko’s dissertation, “Reshaping American Music: The Quotation of Shape-Note Hymns by Twentieth-Century Composers” also explores the use of shape-

¹ R. Paul Drummond, “The Development of the American Folk Hymn as Choral Art Music,” *Choral Journal* 29, no. 9 (April 1989): 27-35.

² Drummond, 34.

note hymnody as source material by later generations of composers. In her introductory material, Smolko explains that “when referenced in other works the [shape-note] hymns become lenses into the shifting web of American musical and national identity. This study reveals these complex interactions using cultural and musical analyses of six compositions from the 1930s to the present as case studies.”³ She further states that her work “demonstrates the ways in which shape-note quotations evoke American regional and national history, and the composers’ personal memories and identities.”⁴

Smolko’s work is distinguished from the present study in a number of ways. Five of the six compositions discussed in Smolko’s work represent musical genres other than choral works. The choral work she does include is William Duckworth’s *Southern Harmony*. The musical analysis of this work consists of a discussion of Duckworth’s “post minimalist” style as well as a more in-depth analysis of three movements from the work: “Wondrous Love,” “Holy Manna,” and “Primrose.” Other than a general discussion of the “post minimalist” style found throughout the piece, the remaining seventeen individual movements remain unexplored.

Another source relevant to the present study is James Randall Imler’s dissertation “The Legacy of William Walker’s *Southern Harmony*: Tunes and Arrangements from a Nineteenth-century American Tune Book.” While Imler takes a similar approach to the present study in that he focuses on twentieth-century arrangements of shape-note tunes,⁵ his study again differs from the present study in a number of ways. Imler’s study focuses

³ Joanna Ruth Smolko. “Reshaping American Music: The Quotation of Shape-Note Hymns by Twentieth-Century Composers.” (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2009). In ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304981750?accountid=13965>. (accessed March 24, 2013), v.

⁴ Smolko, iv.

⁵ James Randall Imler, “The legacy of William Walker’s *Southern Harmony*: Tunes and Arrangements from a Nineteenth-century American Tune Book.” (D.M.A. diss., University of South Carolina, 2007). In *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304808157?accountid=13965>. (304808157). (accessed May 6, 2013), iii.

on one tune book as a source for the arrangements in question: William Walker's *Southern Harmony and Musical Companion*. The present study will explore a number of sources and tune book compilers as referenced in the representative examples. The most important distinction between Imler's work and the present study has to do with the nature of the works under his scrutiny. Imler focuses primarily on single arrangements ("octavos") and individual movements rather than the larger-scale multi-movement "concert" works as discussed in the present study.

Finally, many works have been written concerning the historical context and musical components of the original shape-note material. The study of such works will be essential in understanding the characteristics of the original tunes in question as well as a comparison of the original tunes with their modern usage within the representative examples. These studies will include George Pullen Jackson's *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*,⁶ Dorothy Horn's *Sing to Me of Heaven: A Study of Folk and Early American Materials in Three Old Harp Books*,⁷ and Buell Cobb's *The Sacred Harp: A Tradition and Its Music*.⁸

IV. Procedures and Methodology:

The first portion of this study will be devoted to a brief history of shape-note music with an emphasis on some of the important collections and tune book arrangers/compilers associated with the repertoire. The next portion will be a discussion of some of the

⁶ Jackson, George Pullen. *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1933).

⁷ Horn, Dorothy D. *Sing to Me of Heaven: A Study of Folk and Early American Materials in Three Old Harp Books* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1970).

⁸ Buell E. Cobb, Jr. *The Sacred Harp: A Tradition and Its Music* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1978).

important and unique characteristics of shape-note hymns. This will be essential to an understanding of the original musical material and the ways in which later composers drew from this material. The study will then focus on the renewed interest in folk-hymnody during the twentieth-century by describing the historical, sociological and musical factors that led to the creation of shape-note arrangements and adaptations.

After a brief discussion of the earliest shape-note arrangements, the study will then focus on representative examples taken from various composers of choral music throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The study will include the background and context of each work, a brief analysis of at least one of the individual movements and/or sections of each work, performance considerations related to each work and a comparison of the compositional styles and specific types of source materials used for each composition.

Within the broader context of these topics, this study will also seek to answer the following questions and explore the following ideas: How have choral composers used the shape-note repertoire as a means of conveying an “American” quality and sound within their compositions? How have these composers adapted shape-note works to portray 20th century compositional idioms and trends? How does the musical material in these modern shape-note based works compare to the musical components as found in their original context? How have these composers adapted individual musical ideas such as melody, modality, rhythm, harmony, part-writing, etc.? How have these composers used the original tunes and texts to give structure to large-scale works? Is there a larger role that shape-note repertoire has played in the overall oeuvre of each individual composer? Has the composer written other shape-note based material? Does the composition of such works represent any new or different trends for the composer? etc.

By addressing these questions and topics, a greater understanding should be gained of the important role shape-note material has played in shaping modern choral works.

Chapter Two: A Brief History of Shape-Note Music

Famed conductor Robert Shaw once addressed a convention of choral musicians by reading aloud the texts of several American folk hymns. He followed with this statement: *“These words are miracles to me of ungraven images and boundless mystery. And their melodies, shaped and worn by lifetimes of tears, are as perfect as anything I know in music.”*⁹ These words by one of America’s most esteemed conductors, speaks to the beauty and power of a repertoire that, for many, remains some of the most important and vital music ever created in America.

This unusual repertoire, known as shape-note music, is full of dichotomies: it represents some of the oldest of all American music; yet its popularity has soared in recent times as more and more individuals perform it for the first time. Although it was often dismissed in the past as primitive, old-fashioned and poorly-written, modern scholars have found within its pages musical ideas that were decades ahead of their time. Finally, at its heart it is sacred music; yet it is most frequently heard today in social settings outside of the context of worship.

In order to understand this repertoire, its admiration by composers of recent times, and the ways in which these composers have used this material, it would be beneficial at this point to briefly examine the history and original context of shape-note hymnody.

⁹ Robert Shaw, “Worship and Arts” (address presented at the National Convention of the American Choral Directors Association, Nashville, TN, March 12, 1983), quoted in “The Development of the American Folk Hymn as Choral Art Music” by R. Paul Drummond in *Choral Journal*, pg. 27.

I. The Origins of Shape-Note Hymnody

The origins of American shape-note hymnody can be traced to the Psalmody of New England. This practice of singing metrical versions of the Old Testament Psalms was brought to the New World by the English Separatists (later known as the Pilgrims). The importance of this practice led to the publication of *The Whole Book of Psalms Faithfully Translated into English Meter* in 1640. This publication, later known as the *Bay Psalm Book*, was the first book published in the colonies.

As the population of the colonies increased, illiteracy was widespread. The ability to read music began to wane, and the practice of singing by “rote” began to dominate New England musical life. The resulting poor congregational singing led many New England preachers and ministers to advocate singing by note, a practice that was labeled as “Regular Singing.” To aid in these endeavors, instruction books on reading music began to appear. One of the earliest and most important was *An Introduction to the Singing of Psalm Tunes in a Plain and Easy Method* by Rev. John Tufts. This work is significant because it is one of the first that utilizes “nonstandard” notation. Tufts placed letters on the staff to represent the four solmization syllables of fa-sol-la-mi. The standard shapes associated with these syllables (and those used by later tunebooks) were first assimilated in *The Easy Instructor* by William Little and William Smith in 1802.

The popularity of books like *The Easy Instructor* led to the increasing demands of the public to learn to read music quicker, better and more efficiently. This led to the birth of the unique American institution known as the singing school. The advent of the singing school was important for several reasons. First of all, singing schools provided the perfect vehicle for the pedagogical tool of shape-notes. As the amount of singing schools increased, the demand for more singing school “textbooks” increased as well.

More and more singing school masters began to compile their own works or tunebooks. As the ability to read music (through the use of character notation) increased, tunebooks began to fulfill different functions. Not only were these books pedagogical in nature, they also served as a repository of pieces suitable for use in worship services and social gatherings.

Before long, the enthusiasm in the North for shape-note hymnody (the repertoire of the instructional tunebooks) began to wane. Musicians began to advocate a more “scientific” or learned approach to composition as used by the European music masters. The hymns of musical reformers such as Lowell Mason (1792-1872) displayed characteristics such as straightforward harmony and overall homophonic writing. The characteristics of the earlier shape-note repertoire (characteristics such as modality and polyphonic writing) were gradually replaced with writing that was considered more “correct” by European standards. In addition, the introduction of music education in the public school system eventually superseded the need for the singing school and the singing school masters, but not before these institutions and their corresponding musical creations had taken hold in the South.

II. Shape-Note Hymnody in the South

The shape-note repertoire found a suitable new home in the frontier areas of the South and West as the rugged nature of this music tended to match the pioneer spirit of these areas. In these regions, shape-note hymnody represented more than just religious expression. As author Glenn Wilcox states, “After the Revolutionary War, migrants to the frontier took the singing school with them, not only because it filled a religious need,

but because it had become an accepted and valued means of social intercourse in most communities.”¹⁰

The popularity of shape-note hymnody in the South and West is evident through the publication of numerous new tunebooks throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. Some of the most prominent of these include *The Kentucky Harmony* compiled by Ananias Davisson in 1815(?), *Virginia Harmony* compiled by James P. Carrell and David Clayton in 1831, *Southern Harmony* compiled by William Walker in 1835, and *Sacred Harp* compiled by B. F. White and E. J. King in 1844.

Publications such as these continued the practice of using tunebooks as pedagogical tools and as repositories of music suitable for use at church or social functions. A significant difference however, between these new collections and their New England predecessors would be the inclusion of a new type of piece: a piece labeled by modern scholars as the “folk hymn” or “white spiritual.”¹¹ The advent of the folk hymn is significant as it is more commonly associated with the shape-note tunebooks than any other type of work.

Though there are similarities between these new selections and the shape-note hymns of earlier generations, the differences are significant. As author Charles Hamm states: “The tunes are often pentatonic. More than that, these melodies take on the ubiquitous melodic shapes of the ballads, songs, and fiddle and banjo pieces of the oral-tradition music of this region.”¹²

¹⁰ Glenn C. Wilcox, “Introduction,” in *The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion*, ed. Glenn C. Wilcox (University Press of Kentucky, 1987), vi.

¹¹ Charles Hamm, *Music in the New World* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1983), 264.

¹² Hamm, *Music in the New World*, 264.

Still another type of piece emerged in these Southern tunebooks, the “campmeeting hymn.” The numerous campmeeting and revivals of the region started under the auspices of the so-called “Second Great Awakening” and spread throughout the region. Songs later known as campmeeting hymns were popular fare at such events and were characterized by simple, direct tunes and the use of refrains (both of which aided in memorization as music was often sung from memory in the early revivals).

The assimilation of folk-hymns and campmeeting hymns of the region along with New England anthems led to the creation of very eclectic tunebooks such as *Southern Harmony* and *Sacred Harp*. These two publications in particular, are without question the two most popular shape-note compilations ever assembled. *Southern Harmony* was compiled by William Walker, of Spartanburg, South Carolina. The book was published in New Haven, Connecticut in 1835. The success of Walker’s publication is remarkable, even by modern standards. Walker himself claimed to have sold more than 600,000 copies before the Civil War.

An interesting feature of *Southern Harmony* is its inclusion of texts and corresponding tunes that appeared for the first time. The most famous of these is of course the appearance of “Amazing Grace” and the associated tune, NEW BRITIAN. While both the tune and John Newton’s famous text appear individually in earlier collections, Walker was the first to pair them together, resulting in the most famous of all American folk hymns.

Like so many of the tunebooks that preceded it, Walker utilized the standard four-shape notations which we examined earlier. However, Walker employed a seven-shape system for his later compilation of 1866, *The Christian Harmony*. By employing a

separate shape for each pitch of the scale, he explained his conversion to the seven-shape system by asking, “Would any parents having seven children ever think of calling them by only four names?” Walker’s *Christian Harmony* never attained the popularity of his earlier publication, *Southern Harmony*. The same cannot be said however, for the most famous shape-note tune book of all: *The Sacred Harp*.

The Sacred Harp was compiled by B. F. White and published in 1844. White was heavily assisted in his efforts by E. J. King, who died shortly before the work came into publication. B. F. White was also from the Spartanburg, South Carolina area and was in fact, William Walker’s brother-in-law. It has been widely speculated that White assisted Walker in the compilation of *Southern Harmony*, but Walker failed to give White credit when the book was published. There is no real evidence to support this claim, but court records do indicate some type of property dispute between the two men.¹³ In 1842, White moved to Harris County, Georgia and began work on *The Sacred Harp*.

Much like *Southern Harmony*, *The Sacred Harp* owes much of its success to the eclectic nature of its contents. The contents of the tunebook include psalm-settings, folk-hymns, fuguing-tunes, odes and anthems, revival choruses and even a few reform tunes by composers such as Lowell Mason.¹⁴ In addition to composing and arranging several tunes themselves, White and King borrowed extensively from previous tunebooks, a seemingly common practice of the time. The popularity of *The Sacred Harp* is also due to the promotional efforts of B. F. White himself. His tunebook amassed a steady following thanks in large part to White’s use of the book at singing conventions, the precursor of the shape-note singings that are still held today.

¹³David Warren Steel with Richard H. Hulan, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 5.

¹⁴David Warren Steel with Richard H. Hulan., 7-9.

The popularity of shape-note music in the South gradually began to wane as the musical reforms advocated by men such as Lowell Mason began to make their way into the region. The popularity of folk hymns as a means of musical worship was gradually supplanted by the simpler, more homophonic style of the gospel hymn. In isolated areas of the south however, shape-note hymnody never really died away.

III. Shape-Note “Singings” Today

While the age of the singing school has long since passed, the shape-note repertoire remained alive and even continues today through the practice of singings. In this context, many of these folk hymns were “rediscovered” in the 20th century. More than just a means of keeping a tradition alive, shape-note singings are social gatherings (sometimes complete with the traditional “dinner on the grounds”) where participants spend the better part of a day (and even a few days) singing selections from one of the more popular tunebooks such as *Sacred Harp*. Today, shape-note singings are held in 37 states and other countries including Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom and Germany.¹⁵

Because shape-note music is so closely linked to the tradition of the singings, it would be beneficial at this point to take a closer look at these events and discuss the ways in which the shape-note repertoire is performed. At first glance, the sounds encountered at a shape-note singing may seem harsh, strange and even primitive to the novice listener. Shape-note performances such as those one may encounter at one of the many *Sacred Harp* singings still held across the South, are characterized by a certain vigor of sound, fervency of intent, and a seeming indifference to issues such as correct vocal production,

¹⁵ <http://www.fasola.org/singings> (accessed February 20, 2014).

dynamics and overall beauty of tone. Even Hugh McGraw, who is widely considered one of the leading authorities on shape-note literature and its performance of the past few decades, famously said “I would drive a hundred miles to sing Sacred Harp, but I wouldn’t cross the street to listen to it.”¹⁶

It must be remembered that this music represents communal effort, a characteristic that is too often uncommon in traditions of Western music. To sing shape-note hymns in their usual setting is to make music that is intended for participation rather than performance. Participants sing simply for the enjoyment that it brings. While the modern listener may be uncomfortable with the full-throated, strident style and somewhat “off” intonation that one is likely to encounter at a typical *Sacred Harp* singing, it should be remembered that such characteristics may actually represent a deeply-rooted and even intentional manner of performing this repertoire that goes beyond the initial impression of untrained singers performing a cappella repertoire. For example, some historians have pointed out that folk music often stems from a melodic system other than the tempered scale to which we are accustomed.¹⁷ Even the vocal style often associated with this repertoire may represent more of a customary albeit subconscious manner of singing such repertoire. Folk singer and historian Sam Hinton argued that the harsh, strident method of singing often employed in performing shape-note music represents a “traditional Anglo-Celtic vocal style embodying a ‘tight’ voice placed high in the singer’s range.”¹⁸

When observing a typical singing, one notices that performers sit in what is known as the “hollow square”, with tenors facing sopranos, altos to the right, and basses

¹⁶ Amelia Nagoski “Mode and Method: A Choral Conductor’s Guide to Concert Performance Practices of Sacred Harp,” *Choral Journal* (October 2006): 38.

¹⁷ Cobb, 45.

¹⁸ Sam Hinton, “The Shape-Note Hymns: An American Choral Tradition,” *Choral Journal* (January 1973): 8.

to the left. Participants take turn “leading” the music by standing in the middle of the square and calling out a page number in whichever tunebook is being used. Someone “pitches” the music by singing the tonic—either “fa” or “la” depending upon the tonic note of the song selected—and the group commences to sing the hymn, first on syllables or “by the note,” and then on the text. Many shape-note singings are considered all day affairs, and often certain traditions tend to be observed. One of these traditions is to start the event with the singing of the tune HOLY MANNA. Not only does this popular tune get things off to a rousing start musically, the corresponding text of “Brethren We Have Met to Worship” is appropriate to capture the mood and intent of the event as well.

In summary, shape-note hymnody has had a long and varied history as an integral part of America’s musical heritage. It has at various times functioned as a prominent type of music for use in worship, a popular form of social interaction, and it remains alive today as an interesting and vital method of preserving the musical past. While many have discovered this music recently through the “singings” that were mentioned previously, others have been exposed to this literature by way of concert repertoire as composers increasingly turned to this music as a source of inspiration for numerous arrangements and adaptations. It is this phenomenon that we will now examine more closely.

Chapter Three: Adapting and Arranging Shape-Note Material

The study of the original shape-note hymns makes a fascinating and worthwhile endeavor in its own right. Indeed, an ever-increasing amount of scholarship has been devoted to the study of this music as more musicians and historians throughout the twentieth century recognized its worth, not only as an integral part of America's musical past, but as a valuable repertoire worthy of admiration for its own strengths and merit. Much has been written concerning the pedagogical nature of this material, both in its day and in its continued use. Other studies have been devoted to the history of the repertoire, its place in comparison to other American music of the nineteenth century, and its function as a harbinger of regional tradition, communal expression and social music-making in general.

The purpose of the present study, however, is to examine the use of this material by subsequent generations of composers; composers who wrote within the traditions of Western "serious" classical or art music. The composers to be examined, who can be classified in general as Modern or even Post-Modern composers, wrote in the various compositional styles that comprise the mainstreams of musical thought in vogue during the past several decades. Composers who utilized the shape-note repertoire were able to freely adapt this material and assimilate it into a variety of settings, historic trends and musical genres found throughout the last century. The use of the original shape-note material by 20th century composers runs the gamut from the conservative to the more

extreme and experimental as composers adapted this material into works written in the styles of Nationalism, Neo-Romanticism, Minimalism and Post-Minimalism, and even the Avant-Garde.

Because the original body of shape-note song literature is, at its heart, religious in nature, the use of these hymns has continued to some degree for use in worship since its inception. As discussed, many of the most popular hymns still sung in churches today originate in part from the shape-note literature. Choral composers have often found in these old hymns a wealth of material for the creation of individual choral arrangements (or as they are commonly referred to—"octavos.") A survey of these arrangements would be a worthwhile endeavor in its own right, but it is the intent of this study to examine the use of shape-note material in the context of "concert" choral music—music which by virtue of its style, level of difficulty, length or specific genre is more appropriate in a concert venue rather than a worship setting. By discussing the works and composers represented in this study, I hope to address two simple but very important questions: Why has the shape-note literature proven to be such a compelling resource for so many composers and how have composers used this material to create some of their best original choral works? I shall begin by discussing the factors that led to the renewed interest in shape-note hymnody as we attempt to understand how and why so many composers were drawn to this repertoire.

I. The Origins and Context of the Practice

In an interview appearing in *Etude* magazine in 1949, famed British composer Ralph Vaughan Williams spoke to journalist LeRoy V. Brant about the need for American

composers to seek indigenous material from which to learn and study. Brant related the exchange as thus:

He [Vaughan Williams] asked me if I knew a book called *Southern Harmony*, and seemed delighted to know that I had a copy of it on my shelves. "They tell me it is hard to get," he said, "but it is a source book for some composer in the days to come." I asked him if he meant that some composer would use such melodies as themes for a major orchestra or chorale composition. "No, I don't mean that," he said flatly. "Composers derive their own themes more often than not. What I do mean is that there is a spiritual atmosphere that hovers around the age-old melodies, and that when a man once breathes in that atmosphere he is never the same again. He begins to live on a higher plane. His feelings for harmonies, contrapuntal idioms, developments, all are changed because he has learned the simple musical truths that come straight from God, and are to be found in music like this."¹⁹

The words of Vaughan Williams prove to be very significant and prophetic, as a survey of the works of modern and post-modern composers would suggest. Numerous composers have indeed turned to this repertoire as inspiration for many of their greatest musical achievements, including both instrumental and choral compositions. However, a closer examination would reveal that the practice of borrowing from the earlier repertoire for new compositions was a reality even before Vaughan Williams suggested its use in this interview. There were many factors and developments, both musical and sociological, which led to the revival of interest in shape-note music and the subsequent use of this material by American composers.

A. Historical and Sociological Factors

The renewed interest in shape-note music can be viewed as part of the general renewed interest in Appalachian culture that occurred during the 1930's. As author Jane S. Becker

¹⁹ LeRoy V. Brant, "America Holds the Hopes of the Musical World: An Interview with Ralph Vaughan Williams," *Etude* 67, no. 4 (April 1949): 255.

explains, “During the depression decade of the 1930’s, the folk and their traditions seemed to offer Americans the foundation for a way of life.” Becker further states that

“The 1930’s thus offer rich material for exploring the construction of folk and tradition in the nation’s consciousness. In this decade, Americans enthusiastically collected, presented, marketed, and consumed the nation’s folkways past and present. The public encountered folk culture on festival and theater stages, over the radio and in recordings, at country fairs and museum exhibitions, in popular magazines and published fiction, and through department stores and mail-order catalogs.”²⁰

Because shape-note music was still such a vibrant part of the culture in many places of the Southern Appalachians, articles regarding shape-note singings began to appear during the 1930’s in publications such as *Reader’s Digest*, *National Geographic* and *Time* magazine as well as music journals such as *Etude* magazine.²¹ Against this background, the first major scholarly research to deal with shape-note music also appeared through the writings of George Pullen Jackson.

Without question, no single figure of the 20th century did more for the promotion of shape-note music than George Pullen Jackson. Jackson was a professor of German at Vanderbilt University and was also active as a music historian. His discovery of what he termed a “lost tonal tribe” and their unusual music led to a life-long fascination with the shape-note repertoire and the creation of several invaluable volumes relating to the subject. Beginning in 1933 with the publication of his monumental book *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*, Jackson explored the facets of a repertoire that, while not entirely forgotten by American scholars and musicians, remained relatively unknown and neglected outside of isolated pockets in the South. Over the next couple of decades,

²⁰ Jane S. Becker, *Selling Tradition: Appalachia and the Construction of An American Folk, 1930-1940* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 5.

²¹ John Bealle, *Public Worship, Private Faith: Sacred Harp and American Folksong* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1997), 99-103.

Jackson continued to research and discuss shape-note hymnody through publications such as *Spiritual Folk-Songs of Early America*, *The Story of the Sacred Harp*, and *Another Sheaf of White Spirituals*.

In these publications, Jackson discussed the history of the repertoire, the origins of hundreds of tunes and texts, provided theoretical analyses of individual tunes, organized similar songs into song families, classified songs according to certain styles (such as “campmeeting hymns”), and compared individual songs to similar selections as found in other genres such as Spirituals. The research and scholarly writings of George Pullen Jackson did much to make this repertoire accessible to a new generation of shape-note enthusiasts and brought a long-forsaken repertoire to the attention of musicians and composers curious to learn about America’s musical past.

The interest in shape-note music that began in the earlier part of the twentieth century only expanded as the century progressed. For example, the “Early Music” movement that flourished during the closing decades of the twentieth century did much to keep shape-note hymnody within the American musical consciousness. Many performers and enthusiasts of the early music movement turned to the shape-note repertoire not just because it represents some of America’s “earliest music;” but because of the kinship it has with European early music from the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Many of the characteristics of early choral music can be found in the shape-note repertoire; specifically: polyphonic writing, tenor placement of the main melody, modal melodic writing, the use of perfect intervals at cadential points in the phrase, and the use of parallel intervals such as fourths, fifths, and octaves. It is natural then, that performing groups such as the Boston Camerata, the Waverly Consort, The Tudor Choir, His

Majestie's Clerkes and Anonymous Four have frequently performed and recorded the shape-note repertoire in recent decades.

While the renewed interest in Appalachian culture and the resurgence of shape-note research may be some of the sociological and historical reasons composers turned to this repertoire, it must also be said that composers used this material because of the inherent unique qualities and characteristics it possessed. We shall examine some of these characteristics in order to better appreciate how, and for that matter, why modern composers utilized this material.

B. Musical Factors: Characteristics of the Shape-Note Repertoire

As any general survey of twentieth-century music history will suggest, composers of the early part of the twentieth century were often eager to break with the traditions of Austro-Germanic Romanticism that dominated the last half of the nineteenth century. This of course, led them to treat the elements of composition such as melody, rhythm and harmony in non-traditional and innovative ways. These composers were constantly seeking new paths and resources to imbue their works with a sense of the unique, unusual and the exotic.

As many American composers were to find, the melodies found in the shape-note tunebooks provided such a resource. The tunebooks proved to be valuable repositories of long-forgotten tunes that were different in many ways from the typical melodic styles to which they were accustomed. Many of the melodies of these hymns are based on modal patterns rather than the traditional major and minor scales that we are accustomed to hearing. In addition, the tunes often employ the use of gapped-note scales where one or

more of the scale degrees are not used. The most common type of gapped-scale is a pentatonic scale, a scale comprised of five pitches that is a common feature in many folk music traditions.

One of the more striking effects of pentatonic and other gapped-note scales is the sense of tonal ambiguity they can create. Because gapped-note scales often omit the half-steps normally found in a major or minor scale, the harmonic pull towards the “tonic” or primary pitch is not as strong as one would normally expect. This results in a less-pronounced, somewhat ambiguous sense of key. That effect can be discerned in the shape-note tune titled NINETY-THIRD PSALM, that is based on a gapped-note scale (Example 3.1—tenor melody).

NINETY-THIRD PSALM: S. M. *Chapin.* Baptist Harmony, p. 121.

1 Grace! 'tis a charm-ing sound; Har-mo-nious to the ear! Heav'n with the e-cho shall re-sound, And all the earth shall hear.

2 Grace first con-tribed the way To save re-bel-lious man; And all the steps that grace dis-play, Which drew the wondrous plan.

3 Grace first inscribed my name In God's eternal book; 'Twas grace that gave me to the Lamb, Who all my sorrows took.

4 Grace led my roving feet To tread the heavenly road; And now supplies each hour I meet, While pressing on to God.

5 Grace taught my soul to pray, And made my eyes o'erflow; 'Twas grace that kept me to this day, And will not let me go.

6 Grace all the work shall crown, Through everlasting days; It lays in heaven the topmost stone, And well deserves the praise.

Example 3.1. NINETY-THIRD PSALM hymn, from electronic facsimile taken from *Southern Harmony*, as collected in the Christian Classics Ethereal Library at Wheaton College, Illinois, www.ccel.org/walker/harmony2/Page_7 (accessed 10 June 2014).

One of the most unusual and prominent aspects of shape-note hymns is the harmonic writing and corresponding texture. It is this quality along with the use of the shapes themselves that was so strongly denounced by advocates of the “European styles” of composition. For example, shape-note hymns are written in more of a contrapuntal style

than a chordal style. The main hymn tune is supported by other independent melodic lines. The composers and arrangers of these hymns were more concerned with the melodic and horizontal effect of each part as opposed to the vertical effect of the harmony. Consequently, many of the traditional rules of part-writing were broken. Parallel motion perfect intervals abound, the third of the chord is often omitted resulting in hollow-sounding cadences, intervals such as thirds and sixths are often treated as dissonances, dissonances are often unprepared, and parts frequently overlap and cross each other. Several of these features can be observed in the shape-note version of the hymn tune OLD HUNDREDTH (referred to as OLD HUNDRED in many shape-note tunebooks) (Example 3.2).



Example 3.2. OLD HUNDRED hymn, from electronic facsimile taken from *Southern Harmony*, as collected in the Christian Classics Ethereal Library at Wheaton College, Illinois, www.ccel.org/walker/harmony2/Page_22 (accessed 10 June 2014).

Another interesting feature is the use of so-called “dispersed harmony”, where the vertical spacing between the individual parts is often wider than the close-knit harmony of traditional part-writing procedures. In addition, the primary tune in shape-note

hymnody occurs in the tenor line, not the soprano. In shape-note singing practice, it is common for the men and women to double the tenor and the top or treble line at the octave, respectively.

It has often been noted that shape-note hymnody shares many common features with older European styles of compositions. The use of parallel intervals, modality, and tenor placement of the melody creates an unusual connection to music of the Middle ages and early Renaissance, a fact that has not escaped the notice of many recent ensembles that specialize in the performance of early music.

While much has been said regarding the melodies, modes, and harmonies associated with the shape-note literature, ideas pertaining to rhythm and meter are perhaps less studied. However, a closer examination of these elements would indicate certain characteristics and mannerisms that also contribute to the unique and unusual sounds of the literature. For example, asymmetrical phrases are common, musical meters may sometimes be at odds with their corresponding texts, and the use of dotted rhythms, grace notes and unusual accents abound. These qualities can found in the tune KEDRON, a tune used in many of the old tunebooks including *Southern Harmony* (Example 3.3).

From a historical standpoint, it is ironic that so many of these features that were denounced by earlier reformers are the very features of this music that have attracted composers in recent times. Characteristics such as modal melodies and gapped scales, lively and uneven rhythms, parallel intervals, hollow cadences, and free use of contrapuntal dissonance that seemed so primitive in the nineteenth century were readily embraced by composers of the twentieth century as a natural part of the new musical aesthetic. As musicologist Charles Seeger said, “There is, then, something about these

three-voice shape-note settings that is not only centuries older than their day, but a good half- or three-quarters of a century in advance of it.”²²



Example 3.3. KEDRON hymn, from electronic facsimile taken from *Southern Harmony*, as collected in the Christian Classics Ethereal Library at Wheaton College, Illinois, www.ccel.org/walker/harmony2/Page_3 (accessed 10 June 2014).

C. Shape-Note Hymnody and American Musical Nationalism

Beyond the inherent characteristics of the shape-note repertoire, composers also turned to this material because of the quality of nationalism it engendered. For many early twentieth century composers, the idea of writing nationalistic compositions was a way to embrace a new musical language while simultaneously connecting with and drawing from the cultures in which they worked.

In America, the idea of a nationalistic style was not new to the 20th century. Many music historians seem to argue however, that the greatest and most successful attempts at creating a type of “American” musical nationalism really stem from the works of early twentieth century American composers. For many of these composers, the unique and relatively unexplored repertoire of nineteenth century American shape-note music provided the perfect source of inspiration for creating nationalistic music of merit.

²² Charles Seeger, “Contrapuntal Style in the Three-voice Shape-note Hymns of the United States,” in *Studies in Musicology, 1935-1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 250.

Even within the small sampling of shape-note based compositions that we are discussing, we find that frequently composers have turned to this repertoire to create compositions that are nationalistic or specifically “American” in content. Is such a practice truly valid? After all, a large portion of the folk tunes used in these hymns originate from ancient Anglo-Celtic sources that early settlers of the Appalachians brought with them. Many of the texts used in the shape-note tunebooks are in fact adapted from European authors. (The texts of English poet Isaac Watts for example, are used more frequently than those of any other author in one of the most popular and successful of the tunebooks—William Walker’s *Southern Harmony*.) Even the practice of singing by shapes itself seems to have originated in England.

The “American” quality that these works seem to engender is due to a combination and assimilation of several factors, rather than one single characteristic. It is the use of the folk tunes (both indigenous and those of earlier origin) with their inherent modality; combined with the open parallel intervals, lively and uneven rhythms, social functions of the music, and the simple association of these tunes with the rural Appalachian and Western frontiers that creates a certain “American” quality that so many composers have sought to emulate and capture. Indeed, some have argued that many of the musical genres and styles we come to think of as being quintessentially “American” in nature actually originate in part from the shape-note repertoire. Famed American composer and critic Virgil Thomson claimed that the shape-note repertoire “is the musical basis of almost everything we make of Negro Spirituals, of cowboy songs, of popular ballads of blues, of hymns, of doggerel ditties, of all our operas and

symphonies.”²³ He also said “it contains...the conception of freedom in part-writing that has made of our jazz and swing the richest popular music in the world.”²⁴ While these statements do seem to exaggerate the point, it cannot be argued that this repertoire has provided many composers with a wealth of source material from which to borrow.

II. An Overview of the Practice

A. Early 20th-century Adaptations

Beginning in the early 1930’s, a small group of folklorists and composers began to arrange and adapt folk hymns into settings that reflected a more conventional (“chorale-style”) approach to harmony than that found in the original shape-note tunebooks. One of the earliest sets of these arrangements was *Twelve Folk Hymns* published by J. Fischer and Bro. publishers in 1934.²⁵ The introduction to this collection explains the methods the arrangers used when adapting the original material.

New arrangements were necessary because, as they appear in the Shape-note books, the hymns present difficulties to modern ears and modern singers: the air [melody] is always given to the tenor, many of the settings are for three parts only, the leading of the parts is more nearly akin to the earlier discant than to the later counterpoint and although there are many beautiful and amazing effects, the result is too exotic to make a general appeal.²⁶

When compared to the adaptations of some of the composers we will discuss later, the philosophy of these arrangers when adapting the shape-note hymns is curious and significant. In his assessment of this publication, R. Paul Drummond points out that “the harmonizations in the collection, of course, corrected these ‘difficulties’ by moving

²³ Virgil Thomson, *A Virgil Thomson Reader* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981), 17.

²⁴ Thomson, 216.

²⁵ Drummond, 31.

²⁶ John Powell, ed. *Twelve Folk Hymns* (Glen Rock, NJ: J. Fischer and Bro., 1934), quoted in Drummond, 31.

the melody to the soprano part and providing consistent four-part settings.”²⁷ Drummond further states that “all parallelisms were removed from the part-writing (‘leading’) and thirds were added to ‘complete’ every chord.”²⁸ Perhaps the most significant aspect of these adaptations is the fact that the harmonies “exploited the modal tendencies of the melodies.”²⁹ The composers of these “harmonizations” (John Powell, Hilton Rufty, and Annabel Morris Buchanan) continued to publish arrangements of the folk hymns and other folk songs with J. Fischer and Bro. publishers as part of a series titled “The Old Harp Singers of Nashville, Tenn. Series of Old American Folk Songs.”³⁰

Other composers began to contribute to this series as well including Sydney Dalton, Don Malin, E. J. Gatwood, and even George Pullen Jackson. When assessing the arrangements provided by these composers, Drummond draws some interesting conclusions concerning their methods and compositional practices. He states that “these arrangers tended to write humming backgrounds, responsorial and antiphonal textures and highly contrapuntal scale passages that were probably derived from the modal scale rather than from the melody.”³¹ Based on Drummond’s analyses and overall conclusions concerning these early adaptations, they often seem to employ an ornate and somewhat convoluted treatment of the shape-note hymns that seems at odds with the simple, “rustic” and straightforward quality of the originals. These early adaptations are in stark contrast to the more direct and organic way of handling the shape-note material as exemplified by later arrangers and composers. The significance of these early adaptations then, is predominantly in their historical importance as some of the first such works to

²⁷ Drummond, 31.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

explore the original repertoire and their use in providing American choral ensembles with exposure to this important part of the nation's musical heritage.

If historical value is the main contribution of these arrangers and composers, then the career and works of Annabel Morris Buchanan should be given special attention. Her influence in bringing the shape-note repertoire to the attention of a wider audience is quite significant. Annabel Morris Buchanan was born in Groesbeck, Texas in 1889. She studied organ at the Guilman Organ School and piano, composition and voice at the Landon Conservatory in Dallas. She was active as a choral director, composer and lecturer. She worked with fellow folklorist and composer John Powell in collecting and editing folk and country songs from the South. It is believed that during her lifetime she collected over 2,000 songs.³² She frequently lectured in various places throughout the South on the importance of folk music and the need to preserve it for future generations. One of her more notable speeches was given in 1939 at the First International Music Congress in America, in New York; where she spoke on "Modal and Melodic Structure in our Anglo-American Folk Music: Introducing a neutral mode."³³ She died in Paducah, Kentucky in 1983.

Although she wrote a number of original songs and even an oratorio, her collection titled *Folk Hymns of America* is of special significance to this discussion. This collection, published by J. Fisher and Bros. in 1938, contains settings of 50 American folk hymns drawn largely from the shape-note tradition. While the musical settings themselves are similar to the simple, four-part adaptations of the 1934 publication, the real interest of the collection lies in the historical background and context of each tune

³² *International Encyclopedia of Women Composers*, 2nd edition (New York: Books and Music [U.S.A.] Inc., 1987), s. vv. "Buchanan, Annabel Morris."

³³ *International Encyclopedia of Women Composers*, s. vv. "Buchanan, Annabel Morris."

which Buchanan includes. Her “Introduction” to the volume includes a general history of American folk-hymnody and the classification of different types of songs such as “General Songs”, “Campmeeting Hymns” and “Secular Songs in Sacred Form.” She then traces the origin of each tune (where possible,) its inclusion in different nineteenth century tunebooks, and theoretical considerations regarding the songs (such as the mode or scale employed by each tune). Interestingly enough, she traces many of the tunes to a living tradition rather than merely a written reference. In the “Foreword” she states:

Among my earliest recollections are the songs and tunes of my parents and grandparents: songs and tunes which, heard in the impressionable years of childhood, have profoundly influenced my life. And of these, none are more vivid in my mind than the old hymns with their ancient modes and tunes, many of them learned through family tradition, others from yellowed shape-note hymnals—the ‘long-ways’ books from which I first learned to read music.³⁴

Considering this was written in the early part of the century before many of the major composers in question were to turn to this repertoire, perhaps the most significant aspect of this collection is its inclusion of tunes (many of which Buchanan discovered through oral tradition) that would later come to represent the shape-note literature: tunes such as WONDROUS LOVE and MORNING TRUMPET that would become common fare in so many later adaptations.

Before we turn our attention to some of the major composers associated with our topic, mention should also be made of the composer Lewis Henry Horton. Lewis Henry Horton (1898-1978) taught at Oberlin College, Morehead State University, and the University of Kentucky. Although many of his works are largely forgotten today, his use of shape-note materials within the context of new choral compositions is relevant due to the specific genres in which he utilized these tunes. Horton wrote cantatas based on

³⁴ Annabel Morris Buchanan, *Folk Hymns of America*, (New York: J. Fischer and Bros., 1938), “Foreword.”

shape-note hymns including *The White Pilgrim* (1940) and *An Appalachian Nativity* (1955). The overall musical language of these works tends to be conservative and direct, without the innovative and lasting appeal that has characterized other shape-note adaptations. Once again, the importance of these works seems to be in their historical value as these are some of the first large-scale choral works to borrow from shape-note hymnody.

In summary, many of the earliest adaptations of shape-note literature are characterized by “updated” harmonizations, overtly simple and direct settings, or a musical language that perhaps lacks a sense of authenticity when compared with the popular and lasting arrangements of composers such as Virgil Thomson and Alice Parker that were to follow. It should be reiterated, however, that these early arrangements are important nonetheless as they represent some of the first excursions by composers into the practice of adapting the original shape-note material into 20th century choral idioms.

B. Adaptations by Major “Modern” Composers

The works of these early composers and arrangers did much to broaden the use of these hymns beyond the confines of pedagogy and the traditional “singings” where they were normally heard. It was through the efforts of certain major American composers, however, where the concept of shape-note hymnody as the basis for choral concert music truly begins to take hold. The composers in question, active in the decades immediately before and after World War II, wrote in many styles and trends such as Neo-classicism. In general, their work can simply be described under the broader heading of musical “Modernism.”

Henry Cowell (1897-1965) was one of the first American composers to embrace the tenants of musical modernism and compose in a truly original style that broke with the traditions of the previous generation. His innovative use of ideas such as tone clusters and dissonant counterpoint often predates the use of the same material by European composers. His penchant for experimentation is illustrated in his self-proclaimed determination to use “a different kind of musical material for each different idea that I have.”³⁵ His interest in the use of folk materials eventually led him to the discovery of Walker’s *Southern Harmony* and shape-note hymnody. (The book was introduced to him by his wife, ethnomusicologist Sidney Robertson.) As a result, Cowell began to write his own *Hymns and Fuguing Tunes* for various ensembles including chorus. Later, he also arranged a suite of fuguing tunes by early American composer Lewis Edson Jr. for chorus and various types of accompaniment. Although these choral works are rarely performed today, the earliest examples represent some of the first attempts by a major composer to incorporate the style of shape-note hymnody into the medium of art music.

Randall Thompson (1899-1984) is another major American composer who was influenced by the shape-note repertoire. Although he rarely quoted the songs directly, he often assimilated the characteristics of the hymns within his compositions. In the early 1930’s he became acquainted with the music of the *Sacred Harp* tunebook through the efforts of John Powell.³⁶ He studied different editions of the Sacred Harp and later incorporated elements such as gapped-note scales,³⁷ melodic writing in the tenor voice, and even passages reminiscent of fuguing tunes into his famous choral work of 1936, *The*

³⁵ Richard Crawford, *An Introduction to America’s Music* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 366.

³⁶ Alfred Mann, ed., *Randall Thompson: A Choral Legacy* (Boston: E. C. Schirmer, 1974), 70.

³⁷ Byron W. McGilvary, “The Choral Music of Randall Thompson, An American Eclectic” (DMA diss., University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1979), 66.

Peaceable Kingdom.³⁸ The shape-note influence was to remain with him throughout his career as evidenced by a later choral work first performed in 1983, the *Twelve Canticles*. These settings stem from a lecture he delivered in 1981 at Emory and Henry College wherein he discussed the influence of the shape-note repertoire on his work.³⁹ Once again, the influence is predominantly indirect as the settings employ stylistic features associated with the repertoire rather than the actual tunes. These features include the use of gapped-note scales, “hollow” cadential patterns, three-part texture and even textual similarities to the hymns themselves.⁴⁰

Of all the major twentieth century American composers, none is more commonly credited with capturing the quality of an “American sound” than Aaron Copland (1900-1990). For many, his ballets, orchestral works, operas, songs, and choral pieces represent the epitome of an American style of composition. It is curious then, that he was not more openly influenced by shape-note music than a survey of his works would seem to suggest. While he famously included the folk hymn “Simple Gifts” in his ballet *Appalachian Spring* and *Old American Songs*, the original tune was a Shaker hymn, and as such, comes from a different melodic, harmonic and even textural tradition than the repertoire we are investigating. Copland did make fairly extensive use of at least one shape-note tune, the hymn “Zion’s Walls.” “Zion’s Walls” first appears in the 1855 tunebook *The Social Harp*, compiled by John G. McCurry. (In this collection, McCurry credits himself as the composer of the tune). Copland uses the “Zion’s Walls” tune in his

³⁸ Mann, 70.

³⁹ Gene Lee Hinson, “An Investigation of Common Stylistic Traits Found in Selected Sacred Choral Works of Randall Thompson and Virgil Thomson” (Ph.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1992), 61. In ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304014951?accountid=13965> (accessed June 11, 2014).

⁴⁰ Hinson, 61-63.

Old American Songs, set II and also in his opera *The Tender Land*. Although Copland's *Old American Songs* are performed frequently by contemporary ensembles, it should be mentioned that the two sets in this collection were originally solo vocal works that were later arranged for chorus by Irving Fine, Raymond Wilding-White and Glenn Koponen.

Other than these examples, Copland's attempts at conveying a sense of nationalism often come from his subject matter or the inclusion of secular folk tunes and dances, rather than the use of folk hymnody. It seems ironic then, that the characteristics of Copland's music that are often cited as being examples of an "American sound"--characteristics such as open intervals, slow harmonic motion, rhythmic freedom, and simple, direct melodic writing--are also the same characteristics inherent to the shape-note repertoire that has represented for so many others a true sense of American musical style. There is evidence to suggest, however, that perhaps Copland's overall musical style was influenced more by the characteristics of shape-note hymnody than what those isolated hymn quotations may seem to suggest.

Virgil Thomson suggests that the "hymn lore" of Copland's *Appalachian Spring* has "as its direct source my uses of old Southern material of that same kind in *The River* [a 1937 documentary film for which Thomson wrote the score]." ⁴¹ (Thomson's score borrows extensively from shape-note hymnody, as we will shortly discuss.) Thomson went so far as to claim that Copland's "break-through into successful ballet composition, into expressive film-scoring, and into...the most distinguished populist music style yet created in America did follow in every case very shortly after my experiments in these directions. We were closely associated at the time and discussed these matters at

⁴¹Virgil Thomson, *American Music since 1910*, Vol. 1 of *Twentieth-Century Composers*, ed. Anna Kalin and Nicolas Nabakov (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), 54.

length.”⁴² Ned Rorem, a composition student of Copland, seems to corroborate

Thomson’s assessment. Rorem said,

Virgil’s ‘Americanness’ predates Aaron’s. Virgil’s use of Protestant hymns and, as he call them, ‘darn fool ditties’ dates from the twenties. Aaron’s use came later. One may prefer Aaron’s art to Virgil’s, but give Virgil full credit: Aaron knew a good thing when he saw it. Although he’s had wider influence, he’d not be what he is without Virgil’s ground-breaking excursions.⁴³

Most importantly, Copland himself acknowledges the importance of Virgil Thomson’s work when he told Thomson that his use of folk material in the score to *The River* was “a lesson in how to treat Americana.”⁴⁴ The mention of Virgil Thomson brings us to the first major composer to directly employ shape-note hymns in the context of choral compositions with lasting results. His work will be examined more closely in the next chapter.

C. “Post-Modern” Adaptations

Shape-note hymnody has continued to be a source of inspiration for numerous composers throughout the closing decades of the twentieth century and even into the twenty-first century. This is evidenced by instrumental works such as Donald Grantham’s popular *Southern Harmony* for wind band and William Averitt’s *Tunebook* and *Transversions (with Ecstasy)* for various instrumental ensembles. Of course, many choral works by composers such as Alice Parker, William Duckworth, Carol Barnett, and William Averitt were also inspired by this repertoire. In the present study, the designation of such choral works as “post-modern” is primarily one of chronological convenience as it is often generally used to describe serious art music written within the last several decades.

⁴² Thomson, *American Music since 1910*, 55.

⁴³ Ned Rorem to Vivian Perlis, New Haven, Connecticut, January 20, 1987, in *Copland Since 1943*, Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989), 123.

⁴⁴ Thomson, *American Music since 1910*, 55.

However, the term also is used to describe specific musical trends such as Minimalism, Post-Minimalism and the Avant-garde; terms that have relevance to this present study as well (as we shall shortly discover). Post-modernism is by nature an age of pluralism and eclecticism; and this is clearly evidenced by the shape-note compositions represented in this study.

Some composers incorporated shape-note hymnody into compositions that truly convey the more radical and experimental musical styles. For example, David T. Little's (b. 1978) oratorio *Am I Born* (2012) employs post-minimal and avant-garde techniques. The work, scored for soprano solo, choir and orchestra, is based on the shape-note hymn IDUMEA (which is often paired with the text "Am I Born to Die" by Charles Wesley). *Southern Harmony* by composer William Duckworth (1943-2012) is another example of shape-note material used within the context of an extreme musical trend. The minimalist/post-minimalist language of this work will be discussed in the next chapter.

Other composers of recent times have used shape-note hymnody within the basis of more conservative musical styles. For example, while Carol Barnett (b. 1949) employs a good deal of dissonance in her instrumental works, her choral suite *An American Thanksgiving* (based on tunes from *The Sacred Harp*) is more conservative and relies heavily on the harmonies of the original tunes. Alice Parker (b. 1925), adopts a similar approach in many of her famous arrangements of shape-note music. The shape-note adaptations of Mack Wilberg (b. 1955) rely heavily on the melodic material of the tunes. He often surrounds these with rich orchestrations in a more Neo-Romantic style.

Composer William Averitt (b. 1948) is unique in that he used shape-note material for both conservative and more extreme compositions. His *Passion of Our Lord Jesus*

Christ According to St. Matthew and his *Traveling Home: An American Requiem* are both large-scale works that incorporate shape-note hymns between movements that employ extremely dissonant harmonic language. By contrast, his suite *Over Jordan* employs a more conservative harmonic language and treats the hymns in a more traditional manner. Averitt's aesthetic when working with shape-note material is exemplary of that of many composers when utilizing these hymns. He stated: "As a composer, I have never had much interest in using conventional, functional tonality. Working with these tunes has given me something of a middle ground between the past and my own interpretation of the present."⁴⁵ Averitt's works will be further discussed in the next chapter.

In summary, shape-note hymnody has been the basis of many choral works throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and has been used in a wide variety of styles and settings. The history of shape-note adaptations of the last century yields an interesting and ironic fact: for some composers it was used to convey a sense of the past while others relied on this material to convey a sense of the new and modern. However it has been used, the sheer volume of such adaptations and the quality of such works reveals the importance and stature of shape-note hymnody as being one of the most influential and vital forms of American music.

⁴⁵ William Averitt, email message to the author, June 8, 2014.

Chapter Four: A Survey of Representative Composers and Their Works

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a more detailed look at a few representative examples of concert style adaptations and arrangements of shape-note hymns. The titles included here illustrate many different facets and aspects of the overall repertoire under study. For example, these works represent the overall history of the adaptation practice (the earliest dates from 1937 and the most recent dates from 2010), as well as accompanied and a cappella adaptations, and works ranging from conservative to more experimental styles.

Each section will include related background information to the overall piece as well as a brief analytical description and performance considerations for at least one movement of each work. The exception to this procedure, the section dealing with Alice Parker's "Sing to the Lord," is a single-movement composition. As such, it will illustrate how readily such pieces may work within a concert setting. It is hoped that this information will provide a foundation for conductors wishing to perform these selections as well as those wishing to study each piece in further detail.

I. Virgil Thomson's *Four Southern Folk Hymns*

Background

Virgil Thomson was born in Kansas City, Missouri in 1896. He studied music at Harvard University in 1919 and later went to Paris to study with famed music pedagogue, Nadia

Boulanger. In addition to his work as a composer, he became one of the most famous music critics of the twentieth century, with numerous articles and reviews appearing in the *New York Herald Tribune* from 1940 until 1954. By the time of his death in 1989, he was widely recognized as one of the leading figures of American music.

Virgil Thomson's arrangements of shape-note hymns are the first such works by a major American composer to remain in the choral repertoire today. The genesis of these works can be traced to the year 1937, when he provided music for the documentary film *The River*, a government-sponsored film concerning land erosion and the Mississippi River. While working on this project, he immersed himself in a study of indigenous music of the region and began correspondence with George Pullen Jackson who assisted him in his endeavors. One of the shape-note tunebooks Thomson acquired was the 1854 edition of William Walker's *Southern Harmony*, a book which contained the tune RESIGNATION—a tune that was to feature prominently in Thomson's score for *The River*. Thomson's discovery of the RESIGNATION tune (and the corresponding text "My Shepherd Will Supply My Need") was to prove very significant, for it was also in 1937 he wrote his arrangement of the same text and tune for four-part a cappella chorus.

Over the next several years this single choral work was to become Thomson's most popular and commercially successful composition. He capitalized on this success by adapting the work into arrangements for various ensembles including women's chorus, men's chorus, three-part mixed chorus and even solo voice and piano. In 1949, he arranged three more shape-note tunes for four-part cappella chorus that, together with "My Shepherd Will Supply My Need" formed a full set titled *Hymns from the Old South*

(also known under the title *Four Southern Folk Hymns*⁴⁶). Later, in 1984, he wrote another set of folk-hymn arrangements (this time for mixed chorus and piano accompaniment) titled simply *Southern Hymns*.

Analytical and Performance Considerations for “My Shepherd Will Supply My Need”

The most popular title from *Four Southern Folk Hymns* is without question “My Shepherd Will Supply My Need.” The text for this movement is Isaac Watt’s paraphrase of the twenty-third psalm. This text was paired together with the hymn tune titled RESIGNATION as far back as John W. Steffy’s 1836 tunebook titled *The Valley Harmonist*.⁴⁷ Virgil Thomson’s setting of the text and corresponding tune reveals subtle yet important differences when compared with the hymn as found in Walker’s *Southern Harmony*.

In his analysis of the work, John Cage points out that the original tune and harmonization as found in *Southern Harmony* are built entirely on a pentatonic scale (as the fourth and seventh scale degrees are not used in any of the separate vocal parts). Thomson’s arrangement, however, maintains the pentatonic melody; but utilizes harmonic writing that “makes full use of the key of D Major.”⁴⁸ The texture of Thomson’s arrangement contains numerous imitative (or at the very least, independent) entrances at the beginning of phrases that transition to a more homophonic sound as the phrase continues. The result is a textural approach that is similar in concept, although different in realization from the polyphonic (yet largely homorhythmic) nature of the

⁴⁶ Nick Strimple, *Choral Music in the Twentieth Century* (2005 repr., Pompton Plains, New Jersey: Amadeus Press, 2002), 221.

⁴⁷ Hinson, 23.

⁴⁸ John Cage, “His Music,” in *Virgil Thomson: His Life and Music*, Kathleen Hoover and John Cage (1970 repr., Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1959), pg. 181.

original. Another interesting feature of Thomson's arrangement is his manner of extending the phrases at the end of each line by the addition of a measure. The resulting eight-measure phrases differ from the asymmetrical seven-measure phrases of the original. John Cage points out that these extensions keep in practice with the way the original hymns are actually sung in the South as singers often employ holds at cadences, and that these changes in melodic phrasing distinguish Thomson from "other composers, who would have been pleased by the written asymmetries to copy and even exaggerate them."⁴⁹ Cage further states that Thomson "not only 'squared them up,' as in practice they often are, but searched his own response to musical history, attempting in his harmonization to place each hymn as accurately as possible at that point in European time most becoming to it."⁵⁰ Finally, Thomson adds further variety by varying the tempo slightly for each verse, and by adding dynamic changes to underscore textual imagery and meaning in phrases such as "when I walk through the shades of death." In addition, he inserts some unusual breaks (or caesuras) at the end of certain phrases for dramatic effect.

The work is accessible overall and makes few demands from a melodic or harmonic standpoint. (However, the range of the parts should be carefully considered as Thomson writes a high 'A' for tenors and a low 'D' for basses.) One aspect of the work which may present some difficulty would be Thomson's indications for tempo. The first verse is marked "allegro ma sostenuto" with the quarter note equaling 120, the second "meno mosso" with the quarter equaling 108, and the third is marked with "maestoso"

⁴⁹ Cage, 218.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

with a quarter note indication of 96. These issues are compounded by the fact that expressive changes of tempo and caesuras are indicated within the verses themselves.

II. Alice Parker's "Sing to the Lord"

Background

No composer of choral music has done more for the promotion of the shape-note hymnody than Alice Parker. A list of her numerous arrangements of this repertoire is extensive and varied, and in fact many of her works have become staples of choirs and ensembles throughout America. Many of these arrangements stem from her collaborations with conductor Robert Shaw. Alice Parker first studied with Robert Shaw as a graduate student at the Julliard School of Music where Shaw was Director of Choral Activities. Later, in 1948, the Robert Shaw Chorale was signed to a recording contract with the RCA Victor company. In addition to the performance of standard choral masterpieces, the group was to record lighter fare such as arrangements of carols, folk songs, spirituals, and folk hymns. As he was familiar with her previous work as a graduate student, Shaw turned to Parker for assistance in creating the arrangements in question. Thus began a successful collaboration where Parker worked chiefly as composer and Shaw worked chiefly as a careful editor.⁵¹ Alice Parker maintained an interest in American folk hymns long after the collaboration ended in 1967 when Shaw moved to Atlanta.

⁵¹ James Edward Taylor, 2012. "The Collaborative Arrangements of Alice Parker and Robert Shaw." (Ph.D. diss., The University of Alabama, 2012) 11. In ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1095740066?accountid=13965> (accessed June 11, 2014).

Despite the enormous popularity and success of her individual arrangements, her work with the shape-note repertoire has not been limited to this genre. For example, she has written several large-scale, multi-movement works based on shape-note hymns as well. Some of these, such as the work titled *Melodious Accord*, really function as a collection of individual pieces unified by a common factor such as an original source. In contrast is her cantata *Journeys: Pilgrims and Strangers* which contains a stronger sense of narrative and unification amongst the separate movements. It should also be mentioned that Parker even wrote an opera that borrows heavily from shape-note material: the opera *Singer's Glen* written in 1978 that includes depictions of nineteenth century singing schools.⁵²

As interesting and noteworthy as such works may be, it is primarily for her single arrangements that Alice Parker is so highly regarded. While many of these single arrangements are accessible and appropriate in settings of worship, their craftsmanship and musical value is such that they make substantial contributions to the choral concert repertoire as well. One of the trademarks of these arrangements is Parker's ability to capture the mood and character of the original hymn while maintaining her own personal style. She said "If I have a chance to arrange tunes from a certain time and place I learn about them from working with them—but my impulse is never to create a 'historical setting'. The tune ends up being filtered through my 20th/21st-century musical ideas."⁵³

At the same time, Parker was quick to mention her indebtedness to the original musical language of the hymns in question. She said, "The arrangements themselves are patterned closely after the harmonizations found in the old hymnals. The stark open 4ths

⁵² Smolko, 113.

⁵³ Alice Parker, interview with Joanna Ruth Smolko, April 26, 2006, quoted in Smolko, 113.

and 5ths, the parallel octaves, the changes to 2- and 3- part writing, the imitative sections are all part of that style. The very sounds that seemed uncouth and out of fashion in the 19th century now sound fresh and even modern to us.”⁵⁴ While all of these elements are present and discernible in Parker’s writing, it is the melody itself that is given prominence. It seems that the actual tunes were the feature that drew Parker to her choice of songs when creating her arrangements during the Shaw collaboration. In her book *The Anatomy of Melody*, she relates that while

working together [with Shaw] on arrangements for albums recorded by the Shaw Chorale, [...] I spent hours, days and weeks in the New York Public Library sifting through thousands of songbooks. I began to get a sense of what melodies would work for me, for us, which would produce a wonderful arrangement or which would lead to okay but uninspiring results.

The answer was always within the single line itself—not the setting, the harmonies (actual or implied), or any of its elements separately. The tune itself (text + rhythm + pitch) contained, like a seed, all the elements needed for its growth....Over the twenty years Robert Shaw and I worked together, I came to have a profound respect for any melody that lasted, any melody that successive generations have sung and loved and kept in their hearts and passed on to the next.⁵⁵

Analytical and Conducting Considerations for “Sing to the Lord”

Parker’s arrangement of the shape-note hymn “Sing to the Lord” was published in 1967.

The tune, known as DUNLAP’S CREEK, appeared with various texts in numerous nineteenth century tunebooks including *A Compilation of Genuine Church Music* from 1847 and the popular tunebook *Harmonia Sacra* compiled by Joseph Funk in 1860. This latter tunebook includes the same text that Alice Parker uses for this arrangement. The text is from Isaac Watts’ poem titled simply “Hymn 62.” A closer examination of

⁵⁴ Alice Parker, *Sing to the Lord 16 Early American Folk Hymns*. Robert Shaw and Alice Parker. (New York: RCA Victor, 1967). LP recording, program notes.

⁵⁵ Alice Parker, *The Anatomy of a Melody: Exploring the Single Line of Song* (Chicago: Gia Publications, 2006), 3-4.

Parker's arrangement will serve as an example of her compositional methods when borrowing from this material.

Like the original hymn, Parker's "Sing to the Lord" is written for four-part *a cappella* voices. However, within this somewhat limited framework she incorporates a variety of compositional ideas that provide not only musical interest; they serve to illustrate textual ideas and images as well. The first verse is set to a statement of the tune with the men and women singing unison (albeit an octave apart). This simple technique not only allows the vigorous and bold nature of the original tune to be clearly apparent, it is also perfectly suited to the idea of the "heavenly hosts and earth" united in praise as demanded in the text. The second verse proceeds with the sopranos singing the melody while the countermelody of the basses provides the imagery of "stores of lightning" through a quick, descending major scale. The third verse creates further variety as the tenor countermelody reaches a high G-sharp on the phrase "a sovereign voice divides the flames" while both tenor and bass maintain strong dynamics through the phrase "and thunder roars along." The fourth verse represents an immediate change of mood through soft dynamics and marked articulation to portray the impending doom as illustrated in the text. The fifth verse continues with independent four-part writing and a legato articulation to illustrate the various components as listed in the text--all in praise of the Creator. The final verse provides a stirring conclusion and appropriate declamation of the text through full dynamics and a broadening of the overall tempo. Because Parker's arrangement relies so heavily on the original tune, variety is achieved through changes of texture and expressive details. These details should be strictly observed in order to convey Parker's

subtle illustration of the text. In addition, the character of the original tune should be considered when choosing articulation and appropriate tempo for performance.

“Sing to the Lord” illustrates why Alice Parker’s arrangements have been so popular and successful. By incorporating techniques such as simple changes of texture and dynamics, by balancing the vigor and character of the original hymns with a more polished melodic and harmonic style, her writing has produced works of lasting appeal that exemplify the ways in which shape-note material can be utilized by modern composers of choral music.

III. William Duckworth’s *Southern Harmony*

Background

Perhaps no work illustrates the extent to which composers of the twentieth century utilized shape-note hymnody than does *Southern Harmony* by composer William Duckworth. Considering the large-scale structure, the harmonic writing, the extreme use of a cappella divisi, and the overall musical language of the work; this is choral writing that is clearly intended for the concert stage rather than settings of worship. The predominant musical styles of this work are those of Minimalism and even Post-Minimalism, musical styles clearly associated with Post-Modern artistic developments.

Duckworth was born in North Carolina in 1943. He was exposed to the shape-note literature as a child in his family’s church and was reacquainted with this material as a graduate student at the University of Illinois. Later, in response to a commission from Neely Bruce at Wesleyan University, he wrote *Southern Harmony* between 1980 and 1981. The individual movements were not assimilated into a complete performance until

1992.⁵⁶ Duckworth described his compositional process for the work as thus: “Every day, before I started writing, I would put myself in the right frame of mind by singing through (the original) *Southern Harmony* for at least an hour, soprano, then alto, tenor, bass. In the course of the year I sang through the book several hundred times.”⁵⁷

Some of the most unusual and original treatments of the shape-note material by any composer can be found within this work. Duckworth’s writing goes beyond mere arrangements and adaptations. *Southern Harmony* has been described as “a parody in the word’s ancient sense, not a humorous imitation, but a rewriting of borrowed material, hovering between paraphrase, commentary, and new creation.”⁵⁸

The work is based on the 1854 edition of William Walker’s famous tunebook of the same name. Duckworth’s *Southern Harmony* is divided into four separate books, each comprised of five separate movements individually titled based on the corresponding hymn tune from which it borrows. The sheer variety of techniques used by the composer when assimilating the original shape-note material throughout the composition serve to set this work apart from any of the other titles discussed in this study. Whereas other composers rely mostly on the original text and melodic/harmonic material when creating choral arrangements of this repertoire, Duckworth utilized text, melodies, harmonic structures, rhythmic details and even the solfege syllables themselves when crafting this work. As stated in his own words: “When I decided to write a choral work based on this material, I wanted, first, to maintain the integrity of the hymns—their

⁵⁶ Kyle Gann, *William Duckworth: Southern Harmony*, The Gregg Smith Singers dir. Gregg Smith, Lovely Music, Ltd. CD 2033, 1994, liner notes.

⁵⁷ William Duckworth, quoted in Kyle Gann, liner notes.

⁵⁸ Gann.

strength, vitality and emotion. In using each hymn tune, I focused on only one aspect of it; sometimes it was the harmony or the rhythm—less frequently, the words.”⁵⁹

Author Adam B. Silverman illustrates the Minimalistic characteristics of the work when he lists Duckworth’s predilection for “cycling notes, subtracting or adding them in successive repetitions, and phasing a melody in canon against itself.”⁶⁰ Silverman further adds that the style of Duckworth’s writing illustrates Post-minimal techniques as well when he discusses Duckworth’s “predilection for interfering with a process set in motion.” He states that Duckworth will “alter notes, delete beats, or change registers at will, even if it interferes with the strict employment of a musical process.”⁶¹ The resulting musical language is an unusual and compelling blend of different and even disparate musical styles. By forging together stylistic traits that seem completely unrelated, Duckworth has created a musical crossroads where the folk and the classical, the ancient and the modern, and the traditional and experimental all meet. In order to illustrate the sheer variety and wealth of ideas found within the overall work, we shall turn our attention to two of its movements that are markedly different in character.

Analytical and Performance Considerations for “Hebrew Children” and “Wondrous Love”

While the hymn tune is apparent and easily discernible in some of these movements, in others Duckworth’s use of the original musical material is often quite subtle. He explained that “although the actual hymn tunes themselves are present in some

⁵⁹ William Duckworth, “Hebrew Children” from *Southern Harmony* (Henmar Press; New York: C. F. Peters, 2000), preface.

⁶⁰ Silverman, “Stylistic Combination and Methodical Construction in William Duckworth’s *Southern Harmony*,” *Contemporary Music Review* Vol. 20, part 4 (2001), 46.

⁶¹ Silverman, 48.

form in every piece, they break through to the surface only occasionally. Most of the time they are submerged in the texture, subtly affecting the form and content of the musical surface.”⁶² The somewhat veiled use of the original material is illustrated in the movement titled “Hebrew Children”, a composition that displays to full effect the use of repetitive figures so inherent to musical Minimalism.

For example, the original tune is fully stated, with slight modifications, most clearly beginning in measure 17 of the second tenor part (Example 4.1). However, the ‘B’ portion of the tune proceeds in measure 25 of the first tenor part, again with slight modifications (Example 4.2). In both instances, the original hymn tune is easily overlooked because of the active writing that surrounds it. Author Kyle Gann has also noted that this movement “is a kind of chaconne or passacaglia, expanding the original bass line through repetitions and adding a wealth of pentatonic patterns in the voices above.”⁶³

The title of this movement is of course connected to the original text and would seem to have nothing to do with the musical content of Duckworth’s composition. It has been suggested, however, that the crescendo and decrescendo heard throughout the movement is actually a subtle reference to the original text and title. As musicologist Robert Fink suggests, “the repetition of simple melodic figures and reference syllables is shaped into a great arch that swells and recedes, as if the Children of Israel were to march out of the distance, cross one’s path, and disappear again over the desert horizon.”⁶⁴ The chief difficulty in performing the work would be the rapidly changing solfege syllables

⁶² “Hebrew Children”, preface.

⁶³ Kyle Gann, liner notes in *Southern Harmony*.

⁶⁴ Robert Fink, *Surprised by Beauty: Minimalism in Choral Music*, Boston Seccession. Jane Ring Frank, artistic director, Boston Seccession Inc. CD. 2007, liner notes.

and the numerous repeats found throughout the score (all of which are designated to be repeated three times.)

[illegible]

Example 4.1 “Hebrew Children” from *Southern Harmony*, mm. 16-23. Copyright © (2000) by Henmar Press, Inc. Used by permission of C. F. Peters Corp. All Rights Reserved.

24 **3X** **1X**

f

La la la sol la sol la la la la Sol sol sol la sol

f

la la la la la la La la fa sol fa fa la mi fa Sol sol sol fa mi

f

la sol fa la La la la la la la la la la la la la La la la la la

f

la la la la la la La la la la la la la la la la Sol sol sol fa sol

f

la sol la La la la la la la la la la la La la la la la la

f

la sol fa la La la fa sol fa fa la mi fa Sol sol sol fa mi

28 **3X** **1X**

la la fa fa La sol la la la la la la sol La sol la

la la sol sol La mi fa fa la la la la fa sol la La fa la

la la la la la la La la la la la la la la la la La la la la la la

la la sol la La mi la sol fa la la sol la La sol la

la la la la la la La la la la la la la la la la La la la la la la

la la sol sol La mi fa fa la la fa sol la La fa la

Example 4.2 “Hebrew Children” from *Southern Harmony*, mm. 24-31. Copyright © (2000) by Henmar Press, Inc. Used by permission of C. F. Peters Corp. All Rights Reserved.

The next movement quotes from one of the most popular shape-note hymns: WONDROUS LOVE. Instead of the traditional text associated with this tune, Duckworth uses the text “And am I born to Die?” from the shape-note hymn IDUMEA. Duckworth’s composition begins with a solo voice singing a chant-like derivation that perhaps pays homage to the Anglo-Celtic ancestry of the original WONDROUS LOVE tune. In the second verse, we hear the same melody again supported by suspended pitches underneath, resulting in a sound that hearkens back to medieval organum. In the third verse, the cadential points are somewhat reminiscent of late medieval polyphony. However, the verse also jumps from the ancient to the modern as the full choir enters in an unusual sort of bitonality: the Aeolian modality of the sopranos and altos is juxtaposed with the Mixolydian modality of the tenors and basses, resulting in an unsettled sound that is perfectly suited to the text which it conveys. The movement concludes with the opening solo melody, this time sung over a suspended unresolved chord.

The absence of accidentals belies the tuning and harmonic issues the choir may encounter when performing this movement. Parts often clash through the use of dissonant intervals in the third verse; and the lengthy sustained pitches of the second and last verses require careful attention to tuning and intonation as well.

IV. Carol Barnett’s *An American Thanksgiving*

Background

Carol Barnett is a Minnesota-based composer who currently serves on the faculty of Augsburg College in Minneapolis. She studied composition at the University of Minnesota with Dominick Argento and is a charter member of the American Composers Forum. She served as the composer-in-residence with the Dale Warland Singers from

1991 to 2001. Her description of her own objectives as a composer is well-suited to this present study. She says,

When writing, I often use preexisting material—folk melodies, literary influences, and, for vocal or choral music, the texts. I am most interested in communicating with my listeners by using musical language familiar to them, then adding something new—more complex harmonies, elements from a different musical tradition, or departures from the expected formal structure[...]

I believe that music is a language based on nostalgia—remembered sounds which evoke other places, times and emotions. While writing accessibly, I try to find something unusual to say, something unique, magic, that bypasses intellect and goes straight to the heart.⁶⁵

Barnett's idea of something new from something old, of the familiar combined with the unexpected, captures the very essence of the repertoire which we are investigating.

Perhaps the lasting appeal of original shape-note tunes combined with Barnett's subtle yet effective portrayal of the texts explains why her work titled *An American Thanksgiving* is considered the most popular of all her compositions.⁶⁶

An American Thanksgiving is an a cappella choral suite comprised of three movements, each an arrangement of a shape-note hymn. The work was commissioned for the final season of the Dale Warland Singers and premiered in 2003. Barnett relates that the “concert had a Thanksgiving theme, so she chose three hymns from the original *Sacred Harp* collection based on their compatible texts and compelling melodies.”⁶⁷ She said when composing the three movements of *An American Thanksgiving*, “she tried to stay close to the wonderful spirited rhythms and elemental, forthright harmonies of the

⁶⁵ Carol Barnett, quoted in Carol Barnett.net, “Profile: Artistic Statement” http://www.carolbarnett.net/artistic_statement.html (accessed June 11, 2014).

⁶⁶ Barnett website.

⁶⁷ Carol Barnett, “McKay” from *An American Thanksgiving* (Corvallis, Oregon: earthsongs, 2003), program notes.

original settings found in the *Sacred Harp* collection.”⁶⁸ It should be stated that Barnett’s mention of the “original *Sacred Harp* collection” refers to the tunebook in general rather than the actual first publication of *The Sacred Harp* in 1844 as the tune McKay (which we shall shortly examine) did not appear until the *Sacred Harp* revisions of the 20th century. Although the individual movements of *An American Thanksgiving* are effective when performed separately; when viewed as a single composition the suite represents a significant contribution to the 21st century choral concert repertoire due to the variations of tempo and key, the musical demands of the eight-part a cappella writing, the use of a common source and of course the “compatibility of the texts” as mentioned by the composer.

Analytical and Performance Considerations for “McKay”

The specific movement I would like to examine is the second movement titled “McKay.” The tune itself was written in 1908 by Seaborn McDaniel Denson, a singing school teacher active in Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi.⁶⁹ S. M. Denson, as he is known in the 1991 edition of *The Sacred Harp*, was active as an editor for the 1909 tunebook titled *Union Harp and History of Songs*, and the so-called “James revision” of the *Sacred Harp* from 1911. The 1936 *Sacred Harp* revision labeled him as “a great Sacred Harp singer, leader and teacher, and the most profound writer of dispersed harmony yet known.”⁷⁰ The tune by Denson titled McKAY first appeared in the *Union Harmony* and was written in honor of Rev. Samuel Martin McKay of Clay County, Alabama.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Barnett, “McKay”, program notes.

⁶⁹ Steel, 108.

⁷⁰ Steel, 108.

⁷¹ Steel, 231.

The text of McKAY is the second and third verse of the poem “On Jordan’s Stormy Banks I Stand” by Samuel Stennett, an eighteenth-century English preacher and poet. The poem first appeared under the title “Heaven Anticipated” in the 1787 publication compiled by John Rippon titled *A Selection of Hymns from the Best Authors, Intended to Be an Appendix to Dr. Watts’s Psalms and Hymns*. The text was very popular amongst tunebook compilers as it was set to numerous tunes including the popular PROMISED LAND, (a tune that will be discussed in the final section of this chapter).

Barnett’s setting of the text and the corresponding tune McKAY is noteworthy in several respects. Despite the active writing and rich harmonies produced by the eight-part divisi score, the composer’s harmonic palette adheres closely to the Aeolian modality of the original tune: only two isolated accidentals appear throughout the entire score. The work begins with a statement of the tune sung by a tenor solo; an appropriate designation since most shape-note hymns delegate the actual hymn tune to the tenor line. After this, the various vocal parts enter with melodic fragments all borrowed from the original tune, yet presented in a layered effect similar to that of a “quodlibet,” a type of piece in Western music where separate melodic components (often taken from the same source) are presented simultaneously. This technique, together with the gradual growth in dynamics heard throughout the selection, creates a cumulative effect wherein the eight parts seem to depict the “rivers of delight” to which the text alludes. All of these components gradually build towards a strong statement of the hymn tune as sung by the men before it transitions to a rich homophonic treatment sung by the full choir.

The various changes of texture contribute much to the effect of the work. For example, within the first 24 measures, the writing progresses from monophonic,

homophonic and then to polyphonic textures (Example 4.3). First and second altos should be mindful of the ostinato figure (mm. 20-21) as the pattern remains constant despite the shift from duple to triple meter. Careful attention to dynamic markings is crucial to balance the various melodic ideas throughout the plentiful divisi writing.

V. Mack Wilberg's *My Song in the Night: Five American Folk Hymns*

Background

Mack Wilberg currently serves as Music Director for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and has also served on the faculty of Brigham Young University. His work with folk hymns includes several successful single arrangements including “My Shepherd Will Supply My Need,” and “Bound for the Promised Land”; as well as collections such as *Four American Folk Hymns* (which includes his very popular adaptation of “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing”) and the focus of this study, *My Song in the Night: Five American Folk Hymns*. The work, published by Oxford University Press in 2009, includes arrangements of “Amazing Grace,” “Down to the River to Pray,” “His Voice as the Sound,” “My God, My Portion, and My Love,” and “My Song in the Night.” The collection is available with orchestral accompaniment or piano/organ accompaniment.

All of the individual titles in this collection are based on original shape-note hymns with the exception of “Down to the River to Pray.” The inclusion of this tune (which is usually attributed to origins as an African-American spiritual) raises an interesting point that bears brief mention. The folk hymns and campmeeting hymns of the shape-note tradition are often grouped with African-American spirituals under the broad heading of “American folk hymns.” While there are certain differences between all of

Commissioned for the Dale Warland Singers' final concert season
by Mike and Kay McCarthy, September 2003

II. McKay

Samuel Stennett, 1787

S. M. Denton, 1908
arr. Carol Barnett

$\text{♩} = c. 58$
Solo *mf* *espress.*

T ♩ O the trans - port - ing, rap - t'rous scene that ris - es to my sight!

6
T ♩ Sweet fields ar - rayed in liv - ing green, and riv - ers of de - light.

11
tutti *mp*
T ♩ There gen - 'rous fruits that nev - er fail on trees im - mor - tal grow,
B ♩ There gen - 'rous fruits that nev - er fail on trees im - mor - tal grow,

16
pochissimo rall.
T ♩ there rocks and hills and brooks and vales with milk and hon - ey
B ♩ there rocks and hills and brooks and vales with milk and hon - ey

$\text{♩} = c. 84$, more and more ecstatic
marcato, but light
20
A ♩ *mp* O rap - t'rous scene, O rap - t'rous scene,
T ♩ *p* O liv - ing green, O liv - ing
B ♩ *p* flow. flow.

24
S ♩ *mp* floating Sweet
A ♩ *p* O rap - t'rous scene, O rap - t'rous scene, O rap - t'rous scene,
T ♩ *mp* legato *p* green, O liv - ing green, O liv - ing green, O liv - ing
B ♩ *mp* *legato* Rocks and hills and brooks and vales, and rocks and hills and brooks and vales, and

Example 4.3 “McKay” from *An American Thanksgiving*, mm. 16-27. Copyright © (2003) by Carol Barnett. Used by permission of earthsongs. All Rights Reserved.

these genres, their similarities illustrate the mutual influence these genres had on each other during the compilation of the nineteenth century tunebooks.

So far, we have seen works that represent 20th century musical trends such as Nationalism and Minimalism. Wilberg's settings, however, can easily be labeled as representing a more Neo-Romantic style. Rich orchestrations, soaring melodic lines, and lush harmonic writing are featured predominantly in many of his adaptations. Although many of Wilberg's folk-hymn arrangements would be very much appropriate in settings of worship, their scope, required performing forces and level of musical craftsmanship, make them conducive to concert settings as well.

Analytical and Performance Considerations for "My Song in the Night"

Although shape-note tunebooks are filled with a variety of selections such as campmeeting hymns, anthems and fuguing tunes; most of this repertoire is in fact simply a form of folk music. As such, it is often difficult to trace the exact origins of tunes and sometimes texts. After all, a folk song is by its very nature a song that is passed along through tradition, often with adaptations and changes occurring as the music is discovered by a new generation or as it moves through different regions. Such is the case with our next selection, the folk hymn "My Song in the Night."

The original tune, titled EXPRESSION, is one used in many of the 19th century tunebooks including *The Sacred Harp*. It is part of a tune family, wherein tune variants exist both in the shape-note tunebooks and sometimes in the realm of secular folk-songs. Wilberg's text for "My Song in the Night," is the same as that used in an earlier

arrangement from 1967 by Paul Christiansen. The text used by both of these arrangers is most likely compiled from multiple sources including Caleb Taylor's "Oh Jesus My Savior, I Know Thou Art Mine" and Joseph Swain's "O Thou in Whose Presence My Soul Takes Delight." This process of centonization, (the creation of a work from preexisting elements) is not at odds with the shape-note repertoire as it was frequently employed by the tunebook compilers themselves.

Wilberg's treatment of the EXPRESSION hymn tune in "My Song in the Night" exploits the somewhat tonally ambiguous nature of the original tune by creating harmonic movement that moves freely between the key of B major and its relative G-sharp minor. Another interesting feature of Wilberg's "My Song in the Night" is the way in which he develops ideas from the original tune as the basis for the musical material of the accompaniment. This technique seems to be one of the characteristics of his style as he uses similar procedures in some of his best-known works, including other settings of shape-note hymns such as "My Shepherd Will Supply My Need." In "My Song in the Night," the ostinato-like figure of the piano accompaniment is taken from isolated motives found within the opening measures of the melody, thereby imparting a subtle but organic sense of unity to the work.

While other composers borrow multiple features from the original folk hymns when arranging this repertoire, Wilberg limits himself to the musical material of the melody itself as it contained all of the harmonic and structural elements he needed when crafting this effective arrangement. Other than extended phrases and limited use of divisi, the work is very accessible as much of it is unison with very straightforward harmony.

VI. William Averitt's *Over Jordan: Four Shape Note Tunes*

Background

For composer William Averitt, the attraction to shape-note hymnody is due in large part to “the deep connection that these great tunes make with audiences.”⁷² Consequently, this repertoire has provided source material for a number of substantial works. In 1997, he wrote the *Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to St. Matthew* for choir, orchestra and soloists. The work, revised in 2009, intersperses adaptations of shape-note hymns in between movements that relate the passion narrative. In a practice similar to the use of chorales in the choral masterworks of composers such as Bach and Mendelssohn, the insertion of shape-note hymns provide moments of reflection and meditation when compared to the dramatic settings of the actual passion account. It is interesting to note that although Averitt adapts the tunes into new harmonizations, they still provide a conservative contrast to the harsh and dissonant tonal language that he employs for the surrounding movements.⁷³

Averitt adopts a similar procedure in his 2010 work for eight-part a cappella chorus and soprano solo: *Traveling Home: An American Requiem*. Here, Averitt intersperses relevant shape-note hymns between the traditional texts of the requiem mass. The direct harmonies and sparse textures of the folk hymns provide dramatic contrast to the thick textures and bold harmonic writing of the requiem movements; creating once again an interesting and substantial work that frames the shape-note hymns in a completely new context.

⁷² Averitt email.

⁷³ Jennifer Adam, “William Averitt’s *Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to St. Matthew*,” *Choral Journal* (August 2011): 15.

In contrast, Averitt's choral suite *Over Jordan* for chorus and 4-hand piano incorporates the shape-note material into a more traditional context. The work was written in 2010 for The Shenandoah Arts Academy Chorale (now known as the Arts Chorale of Winchester) in Winchester, VA. Since the work was intended for a community choir, "the most difficult (professional) materials are found in the two piano parts rather than in the voice parts" as it was "intended for singers of limited experience."⁷⁴ Obviously, the choral writing differs from many movements of the *Passion* and *Requiem* due to level of difficulty of the indigenous choral movements found in these works. However, Averitt points out that his treatment of the shape-note tunes themselves in all of these works is actually similar. For example, he said of his shape-note movements in the *Requiem* that they are "at least 90% directly out of the *Sacred Harp*", and that his "inconsequential contributions to the original, simple 4-part music, in most cases, were simply to add dynamics and minor edits, leaving the harmonies, etc. intact and almost exactly as found in the lovely originals."⁷⁵ He further states when comparing the *Passion* and *Over Jordan*: "In both cases, things are deeply influenced by the accompaniments: virtuosic piano 4-hands in one and orchestra in the other."⁷⁶

Although the scale and magnitude of *Over Jordan* is smaller in scope than his other titles, there is still much to the design and qualities of the work that deserves our attention. According to Averitt, the four movements of *Over Jordan* are linked thematically by text: "heaven as the after-life objective for the Christian."⁷⁷ Beyond this general theme, a certain sense of narrative can be discerned. The first movement

⁷⁴ Averitt email.

⁷⁵ Averitt email.

⁷⁶ Averitt email.

⁷⁷ Averitt email.

“Wayfaring Stranger” speaks of the trials and brevity of life, “When I Can Read My Title Clear” reminds us these hardships are temporary, “Let Me Go” is a farewell at the close of life, and the last movement “Promised Land” is an affirmation of the reward of heaven. Averitt described the assimilation of texts thus: “Always, in writing a cycle of pieces, I look for things that will allow a variety of moods and tempos, and these four tunes seemed to offer that possibility.”⁷⁸

Analytical and Conducting Considerations for “The Promised Land”

The last movement uses the same text by Samuel Stennett that we studied earlier in the setting “McKay.” However, in addition to more verses from the original poem, Averitt uses the “campmeeting” or “revivalist” version of the hymn for this movement.

“Campmeeting” hymns were found in many of the original shape-note tunebooks including *Sacred Harp*. They are characterized by the repetition of a single refrain that contributes to the fervor and exuberant nature of the hymn; a characteristic that Averitt fully captures. The choral writing in this movement is slightly more intricate and active compared to the typical settings as found in the shape-note tunebooks. While fast harmonic motion and quick-moving inner voices contribute to the energy and sense of anticipation of the work, much of the inherent shape-note characteristics are actually linked to writing found in the accompaniment. Open intervals, abrupt pauses and asymmetrical phrasing in the piano-writing convey a quality that subtly captures the rugged musical language of the original shape-note style. The choral writing is, once again, not overtly difficult. The primary difficulties would be of textual clarity (because

⁷⁸ Averitt email.

of the quick tempo) and careful attention to the numerous expressive indications as indicated in the score.

As the last movement of *Over Jordan*, “The Promised Land” functions as a summation of the entire suite; in addition to the use of the PROMISED LAND tune, the tune WAYFARING STRANGER (as used in the first movement) is quoted as well. Averitt explains that not only did this tune work musically in this context, it carried an underlying meaning as well: “Though the words are from ‘The Promised Land,’ the musical allusion to ‘Wayfaring Stranger’ also harkened back to its underlying textual meaning heard in the first movement: the journey through life with its struggles, culminating in this final struggle to cross over the stormy banks of the “Jordan” into heaven.”⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Averitt email.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Throughout its long, rich, and varied history, shape-note hymnody has performed numerous functions within the context of American musical culture. Its origins as a means of effective musical pedagogy continued throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and it still functions in the same capacity to a certain extent. In settings of worship, the numerous arrangements of these hymns currently in use remain no less engaging than the original tunes as used by earlier congregations. The participatory nature of this repertoire remained intact as the context of shape-note performance transitioned from the singing school to the “singings” that are still held today. The resurgence and popularity of these events in recent times indicates that the function of shape-note music as a means of communal effort and social interaction remains unique and valid, even in an increasingly fragmented society.

In this study, we have found shape-note hymnody to be a resource of abundant musical material composers have been able to adapt and use throughout the last several decades. The renewed interest in Appalachian culture and the desire to learn more about the roots of American music led musicians to rediscover a repertoire that had been previously denounced and unduly neglected. The earliest efforts at adapting this material into choral arrangements were an attempt to reconstitute the hymns into an “updated” context. Consequently, the unique musical characteristics of these works were often ignored or replaced with more conventional idioms. Before long, however, composers

began to embrace such idiosyncrasies as compelling attributes of an important repertoire that adapted readily into the context of modern musical thought.

The objective of many composers when arranging this material has been to maintain the character and authentic qualities of the original hymns, while simultaneously crafting substantial and unique works of choral art. While this has been a constant objective of many of the composers we have discussed in this study; their efforts were by no means formulaic, as the various genres and styles of their works have shown.

For Virgil Thomson, these folk hymns provided a sense of nationalism and “American authenticity.” For William Duckworth, their archaic musical language forged a connection between the distant past and musical modernism. For Mack Wilberg, it was enough to revel in the melodic riches and stirring texts these hymns provided. Melodic, harmonic, textual and even regional characteristics were employed depending upon the chosen context for Alice Parker, Carol Barnett and William Averitt.

For all of these individuals: their works speak to us not just because of their skill and craftsmanship as composers, but because they drew from sources that remain as vibrant and moving today as when they were first created. In the words of folklorist and composer Annabel Morris Buchanan:

“The traditional music and balladry we seek as inspiration for American art-forms ... have come down to us from a time when melody was paramount, when balladry was at its best. They are valuable, not because they are old, but because only that which is fine, or that which has in some manner touched the heartstrings of the people, can endure for centuries.”⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Annabel Morris Buchanan, “Anglo-American Folk Music” (Address for Bluefield, West Va., lecture-recital, April 15, 1946). Quoted in “Annabel Morris Buchanan, “*Southern Women’s Influence on Culture* Web site <http://engl080.web.unc.edu/about/>. (Accessed June 11, 2014).

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David Guthrie
DMA candidate, Choral Conducting
USC School of Music

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On Jun 4, 2014, at 10:39 AM, "GUTHRIE, DAVID" <guthried@email.sc.edu> wrote:

Hello,

My name is David Guthrie and I am a graduate student at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC. I am currently working on a dissertation for the DMA in Choral Conducting degree.

My topic deals with choral arrangements based on shape-note hymns. Some of the works I would like to include in this study would be the three selections from Carol Barnett's *An American Thanksgiving*.

I spoke with someone at your company recently about the possibility of including a copy of one or two pages from each of these publications as examples within my study. My understanding was that this would be fine as long as I receive confirmation in writing.

The works in question are the individual movements from *An American Thanksgiving* including:

"Webster", "McKay", and "Ninety-Third Psalm".

If you could verify by response to this email that I have permission to include copies of no more than two pages from each of these works I would greatly appreciate your help.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

David Guthrie
DMA candidate, Choral Conducting
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APPENDIX B: RECITAL PROGRAMS



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
School of Music

DAVID C. GUTHRIE, *conductor*

in

GRADUATE RECITAL

University Chorus
Ryan Blakemore, *piano*
Eddie Huss, *organ*

Thursday, November 29, 2012
4:00 PM • Shandon United Methodist Church
Columbia, South Carolina

I

Cantate Domino	Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)
Sing Me To Heaven	Daniel E. Gawthrop (b. 1949)
Herrscher des Himmels (from <i>Weinachtsoratorium</i>)	J.S. Bach (1685-1750)
Psalm 23 (from <i>Requiem</i>)	Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

Brittany Chapman, Aubrey Nelson, Devin Davis, *soloists*

Bogoróditse Djévo	Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)
There Is No Rose	John Joubert (b. 1927)

(over)



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
School of Music

II

Gloria John Rutter
(b. 1945)

I. "Gloria in excelsis Deo"

II. "Domine Deus"

Trio: Anna Mills Polatty, Amber Lindsay, Kate Tidaback

III. "Quoniam tu solus sanctus"

III

Abendlied Josef Rheinberger
(1839-1901)

City Called Heaven Traditional Gospel Song
(arr. Josephine Poelinitz)
Damarah Reid, *soloist*

Lux Aurumque Eric Whitacre
(b. 1970)
Amber Lindsay, Samantha Crandall, *soloists*

Light of a Clear Blue Morning Dolly Parton
(b. 1946)
(arr. Craig Hella Johnson)

Jovanna Mastro, *soloist*
Aubrey Nelson, *flute*
Ensemble: Caroline Graff, Kathryn French, Lili Kinman,
Rebecca Geigel, Kayla Fore, Kate Tidaback

It Takes a Village Joan Szymko
(b. 1957)

Ethan Babson, *soloist*
Braylyn Salmond and Levi Walker, *percussion*

Mr. Guthrie is a student of Dr. Larry Wyatt and is also studying with Dr. Alicia Walker. This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Conducting.



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
School of Music

Graduate Vocal Ensemble
DAVID C. GUTHRIE, conductor

in
DOCTORAL CONDUCTING RECITAL

"And Joyful Voices Sound"

Caleb Houck, piano and organ
Monica Hickey and Brittany Dennig, violin
Chin-Wei Chang, viola and Patrick O'Neil, cello
Meredith Jones, flute

Thursday, December 6, 2012
6:00 PM • Recital Hall

I

Omnes de Saba venient Jacob Handl
Ecce concipies (1550-1591)
Jacob Handl

Magnificat in B-flat Francesco Durante
(1684-1755)

- I. Chorus "Magnificat anima mea"
- II. Aria (Soprano and Alto) "Et misericordi" - Chorus "Fecit potentiam"
- III. Chorus "Deposuit potentes"
- IV. Duet (Tenor and Bass) "Suscepit Israel"
- V. Chorus "Sicut locutus est"
- VI. Chorus "Gloria Patri - Sicut erat in principio"

Brianna Valencia, soprano and Matt Sickles, countertenor
Dustin Ousley, tenor and Keith Walker, bass

From *Christmas Responsories* Michael Haydn
(*Responsoria ad Matutinum in Nativitae Domini*, MH 639) (1737-1806)

Hodie nobis caelorum
Hodie nobis de caelo
Quem vidistis, pastores
Verbum caro factum est

(over)



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
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Prope est Dominus
(from *Nine Advent Motets*, Opus 176, No. 8)
Omnes de Saba venient
(from *Six Hymns*, Opus 58, No. 1)

Josef Rheinberger
(1839-1901)
Josef Rheinberger

II

Wexford Carol

Traditional Irish Carol
(arr. Philip Stopford)

Karly Minacapelli, *soprano* and Devin Davis, *tenor*

Lully, Lulla, Lullay

Philip Stopford
(b. 1977)

I Saw Three Ships

Traditional English Carol
(arr. Philip Stopford)

Seven Joys of Christmas, Opus 25b

Kirke Mechem
(b. 1925)

The Joy of Love: "This is the Truth" ~ Virginia Herlong, *soprano*
The Joy of Bells: "Din don! Merrily on High"
The Joy of Mary: "Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine"
The Joy of Children: "Patapan"
The Joy of the New Year: "New Year Song"
The Joy of Dance: "Fum, fum, fum!"
The Joy of Song: "God Bless the Master of this House"

*Mr. Guthrie is a student of Dr. Larry Wyatt.
This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Conducting.*



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
School of Music



Summer Chorus II

presents

St. Paul

by

Felix Mendelssohn

Larry Wyatt and David Guthrie,
conductors

Matthew Ganong, pianist

Tina Milhorn Stallard, *soprano*

Ginger Jones, *alto*

Walter Cuttino, *tenor*

Jacob Will, *bass*

USC School of Music Recital Hall

Friday, August 2, 2013, 7:30 PM

Sunday, August 4, 4:00 PM

PROGRAM

First Part

No. 1 Overture

No. 2 Chorus "Lord, Thou Alone Art God"

Lord Thou alone art God, and Thine are the Heaven, and the earth and the mighty waters.
The Heathen furiously rage, Lord, against Thee, And against Thy Christ. Now behold, lest our foes
prevail, and grant to Thy servants all the strength and joyfulness, that they may preach Thy Word.

No. 3 Chorale "To God On High"

To God on high be thanks and praise, Who deigns our bonds to sever, His cares our drooping souls upraise, And harm shall
reach us never. On Him we rest, with faith assur'd, Of all that live the mighty Lord, For ever and for ever.

No. 4 Recitative "And The Many That Believed"

And the many that believed were of one heart, and of one soul. And Stephen, full of faith and full of power, did great wonders
among the people. And they of the Synagogue were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake. Then
they suborned men who were false witnesses, which said, We verily have heard him blaspheme against these holy places,
and against the law. And they stirred up the people and the elders, and came upon him, and caught hold of him, and brought
him to the council, and spake:

Michael Lu, *baritone I*
Jonathan Trotter, *baritone II*

No. 5 Chorus "Now This Man Ceaseth Not"

Now this man ceaseth not to utter blasphemous words against the law of Moses, and also God. Did we not enjoin and straitly
command you, that you should not teach in the Name ye follow? And lo! ye have filled Jerusalem throughout with your
unlawful doctrine! He hath said, and our ears have heard him, Jesus of Nazareth, He shall destroy all these our holy places,
and change all the customs which Moses delivered us.

No. 6 Recitative and Chorus "And All That Sat In The Council"

And all that sat in the council looked stedfastly on him, and saw his face as it had been the face of an angel, Then said the
High Priest: Are these things so? And Stephen said; Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken to me. The God of glory appeared
unto our fathers, delivered the people out of their afflictions and gave them favour. But they understood it not. He sent
Moses into Egypt, for He saw their afflictions, and heard their groaning. But they refused him, and would not obey his word,
but thrust him from them, and sacrific'd to senseless idols. Solomon built Him an house; albeit the Most High God dwelleth
not in temples which are made with hands, for heaven is His throne, and earth is but His footstool. Hath not His hand made
all these things? Ye hard of heart, ye always do resist the Holy Ghost. As did your fathers, ev'n so do ye. Which of the
Prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before the coming of Him, the Just One,
with whose murder ye have here been stain'd. Ye have received the Law, receiv'd it by the disposition of angels, and ye have
not obey'd it! Take him away! For now the Name, the Name of God he hath blasphem'd and who blasphemeth Him, he shall
perish! Lo! I see the heavens open'd, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.

No. 7 Air "Jerusalem, Thou That Killest The Prophets"

Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, thou that stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gather'd
unto Me thy children, and ye would not!

No. 8 Recitative "Then They Ran Upon Him" Chorus "Stone Him To Death"

Then they ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him, and cried aloud:
Stone him to death, for he blasphemeth God, for he hath blasphem'd God; and who does so shall surely perish.

No. 9 Recitative "And They Stoned Him" Chorale "To Thee, O Lord"

And they stoned him: and he kneeled down and cried aloud; Lord, lay not this sin to their charge, Lord Jesus, receive my
spirit. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. To Thee, O Lord I yield my spirit, Who break'st in love, this mortal chain.
My life I but from Thee inherit, And death becomes my chiefest gain. In Thee I live, in Thee I die, Content, for Thou art ever
nigh.

No. 10 Recitative "And The Witnesses"

And the witnesses had laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul, who was consenting unto his
death. And devout men took Stephen, and carried him to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

No. 11 Chorus "Happy And Blest Are They"

Happy, and blest are they who have endured. For though the body dies, the soul shall live for ever.

No. 12 Recitative "And Saul Made Havock Of The Church"

And Saul made havock of the Church; and breathing out threat'nings and slaughter against the disciples, he spake of them much evil, and said:

Aria "Consume Them All"

Consume them all, Lord Sabaoth, consume all these Thine enemies. Behold, they will not know Thee, that Thou, our great Jehovah art the Lord alone, the Highest over all the world. Pour out Thine indignation, and let them feel Thy Power.

No. 13 Recitative and Arioso "But The Lord Is Mindful Of His Own"

And he journey'd with companions towards Damascus, and had authority and command from the High Priest that he should bring them bound, men and women, unto Jerusalem. But the Lord is mindful of His own, He remembers His children. Bow down before Him, ye mighty, for the lord is near us.

No. 14 Recitative and Chorus "The Conversion"

And as he journeyed he came near unto Damascus; when suddenly there shone around him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth; and he heard a voice saying unto him: Saul, Saul, why persecu'st thou Me? And he said: Lord, who art Thou? And the Lord said to him: I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And he said, trembling and astonish'd: Lord, what wilt Thou have me do? The Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the city and there thou shalt be told what thou must do.

Pam Keesler, Casandra Prosser, Jerryana Williams, *soprano I*; Hindel A. Garrison, Virginia Herlong, *soprano II*
Cynthia M. Dobson, Tammie Jones, *alto I*; Matt Sickles, Susan Wyatt, *alto II*

No. 15 Chorus "Rise! Up! Arise!"

Rise! Up! Arise! Rise, and shine! for thy light comes, and the glory of the Lord, doth appear upon thee. Behold, now, total darkness covereth the kingdoms, gross darkness on the people, gross darkness covereth the people. But upon thee riseth the mighty Lord, the glory of the Lord appeareth upon thee.

No. 16 Chorale "Sleepers, Wake, A Voice Is Calling"

Sleepers, wake, a voice is calling; It is the watchman on the walls, Thou city of Jerusalem. For lo, the Bridegroom comes! Arise, and take your lamps. Hallelujah! Awake! His kingdom is at hand. Go forth, to meet your Lord.

No. 17 Recitative "And His Companions"

And His companions which journeyed with him stood, and they were afraid, hearing a voice but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth, and when his eyes were open'd, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus; and he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

No. 18. Aria "O God, Have Mercy"

O God, have mercy, have mercy upon me, and blot out my transgressions according to Thy loving kindness, yea, even for Thy mercy's sake. Deny me not, O cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy spirit from me, O Lord. Lord, a broken heart, and a contrite heart is offer'd before Thee. I will speak of Thy salvation, I will teach transgressors, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee. Then open Thou my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall shew forth Thy glorious praise.

No. 19 Recitative "And There Was a Disciple"

And there was a disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; to him said the Lord: Ananias, arise, and enquire thou for Saul of Tarsus; for behold, he prayeth. He is a chosen vessel unto Me, the Lord; and I will shew unto him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake.

No. 20 Solo and Chorus "I Praise Thee, O Lord"

I praise Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart for evermore. For great is Thy mercy toward me, and Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell. The Lord, He is good: He will dry your tears, and heal all your sorrows. For His word shall not decay.

No. 21 Recitative "And Ananias Went His Way"

And Ananias went his way, and enter'd into the house, and laying his hands upon him, said: "Hear thou, brother, Saul! The Lord hath sent me hither, even Jesus, that appear'd unto thee as thou camest, that thou might'st receive thy sight, and be likewise filled with the Holy Ghost." And there fell from his eyes like as though it were scales; and he received sight forthwith, and rose, and was baptized. And straight way he preached Jesus in the synagogues, and testified that He is very Christ.

No. 22 Chorus "O Great Is The Depth"

O great is the depth of the riches of wisdom and knowledge of the Father! O great is the depth of the riches of wisdom and of the knowledge of our God! How deep and unerring is He in His judgments! His ways are past our understanding. Sing His glory for evermore, Amen.

Summer Chorus II

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Bass
Pat Blackwell	Elaine Abercrombie	Phillip Ashley	Jim Adams
Darlene Townsend Bradley	Beth Anderson	Andrew Bozard	Bob Bly
Ian Burger	Sara Beardsley	Christopher Burger	Albert Clark
Myong Dean	Linda P. Caughman	Jacob Burger	Craig Coelho
Hindel A. Garrison	Cyntha M. Dobson	Xavier Carteret	Stuart Condra
Virginia Herlong	Tatiana Domond	Devin Davis	Stephen Crowell
Donna Howser	Mary Ellen Doyle	Bob DeBenedetto	Alan Danahy
Lisa R. Ingram	Katherine Ellstrom	David Guthrie	Frank F. Edson
Pam Keesler	Mary K. Elsasser	Andrew Kerr	Jim Ewing
Becca Kelly	Karen Hardy	Paul Lindley, II	Larry A. Fountain, II
Sun Leister	Tammie Jones	Robert Marino	Bert Gornto
Patricia M. Minor	Diana Keane	David Roof	Olin Jenkins
Chungyul Park	Chris Keefer	Mike Taylor	Julein Kaprino
Casondra Prosser	Jayne Keefer	Charles Walvoord	Jay Leeper
Teresa S. Riley	Jessica Kross	Andy Wells	Michael Lu
Sonye Rhym	Jessica Lee		C. Joseph Long
Sukari B. Salomé	Karen Lumpkin		Arthur Lumpkin
Amanda C. Sharko	Lill Mood		Tom Matrone
Laura Smith	Rebecca M. Moore		Gib Rogers
Lisa L. Smith	Matt Sickles		David Scharfe
Zelia Stroy	Sarah Scharfe		Joe Setzer
Penelope G. Tolson	Sue Sprott		James E. Thompson
Kate Noel Wells	Susan Stubbs		Jonathan Trotter
Jerryana Williams	Peg Taylor		Tim Wert
	Diane Westmoreland		Jim Weston
	Natalie Weston		
	Susan Wyatt		

The performance conducted by David Guthrie is in partial fulfillment of the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in choral conducting.

Acknowledgements

Xavier Carteret, Tom Matrone, Graduate Assistants
 Lisa Smith, Choral and Opera Administrative Assistant

Upcoming USC choral events Fall 2013

Tues, Oct 1, 7:30 pm
 Wed, Nov 13, 7:30 pm
 Thurs, Nov 14, 7:30 pm
 Wed, Nov 17, 6:00 pm
 Tues, Nov 19, 7:30 pm
 Fri, Nov 6, 7:30 pm
 Sun, Dec 8, 6:00 pm

Gospel Choir-Festival of Spirituals
 Carolina Alive
 University Chorus
 Gospel Choir
 Men's Chorus & Women's Chorus
 Concert Choir Christmas Concert
 Concert Choir Christmas Concert

Booker T. Washington Auditorium-USC
 School of Music Recital Hall
 Place-TBA
 Francis Burns United Methodist Church
 Rutledge Chapel-USC Horseshoe
 First Presbyterian Church
 Shandon United Methodist Church

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UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
School of Music

Graduate Vocal Ensemble

DAVID C. GUTHRIE, conductor
in
DOCTORAL LECTURE-RECITAL

"Rivers of Delight"
Shape-Note Hymnody and Choral Art Music

Lisa Churchya, piano
with
Lee Ousley, soprano
Stephanie Bova, piano

Tuesday, February 25, 2014
6:00 PM • Recital Hall

Holy Manna ("Brethren We Have Met to Worship")	American Folk Hymn arr. John Carter (b. 1930)
My Shepherd Will Supply My Need	American Folk Hymn arr. Virgil Thomson (1896-1989)
Sing to the Lord	American Folk Hymn arr. Alice Parker (b. 1925)
from <i>Southern Harmony</i> Hebrew Children Wondrous Love	William Duckworth (1943-2012)
Lee Ousley, soprano	

(over)

McKay
(from *An American Thanksgiving*)

S. M. Denton
(1854-1936)
arr. Carol Barnett
(b. 1949)

Lawrence Abernathy, *tenor*

My Song in the Night
(from *Five American Folk Hymns*)

American Folk Hymn
arr. Mack Wilberg
(b. 1955)

The Promised Land
("On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand")
(from *Over Jordan*)

Matilda Durham
(1815-1901)
arr. William Averitt
(b. 1948)

Lee Ousley, *soprano*

*Mr. Guthrie is a student of Larry Wyatt.
This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Conducting.*