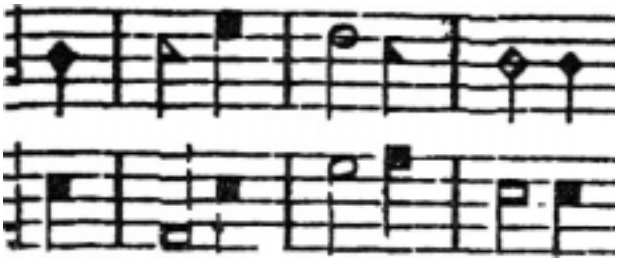
Pleasure Tunes My Tongue



Folk Hymns and Anthems
from the Sacred Harp Tradition

sung by **One Accord**

The music on this recording comes from an American tradition of choral fold music. The earliest music of this tradition is a product of the singing-school movement which developed in New England in the eighteenth century. Traveling singing masters taught singing shools, classes consisting primarily of teenagers. Singing schools were held to improve congregational singing, to train members of a church choir, or to train a group that would form the basis of a singing society.

At first, singing masters taught a small repertoire of mostly rural English church music. As the demand for more music grew, the siging masters began to compose music for their students to sing. Since the singing masters were essentially self-taught, and were lacking in knowledge of harmonic theory as practiced in European art music, the music of these "tunesmiths" was full of harmonic "mistakes." However, the singing-master composers developed a harmonic and stylistic language that is quite striking.

The music of the New England composers features melodies that are often modal or folk-like, in some cases composers used or adapted folk melodies. The melody is sung by the tenors, not the sopranos. The music features such compositional "mistakes" as parallel fourths, fifths, and octaves, and unprepared and unresolved dissonances. The stark "open" or "hollow" sound is achieved by using chords containing only the root and the fifth, lacking the third. The hollow sound is most noticeable when used at the long "gathering" or anacrusis notest.

A popular form used by the New England composers is the fuging tune. (The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century rural Anglo-American spelling fuge is used here to differentiate this form from the classical fugue.) A fuging tune has at least on section where each voice enters in turn, somewhat like a round. This results in textual overlap, each voice singing different parts of the text at the same time. Examplers of fuging tunes on this recording are *Whitestown*, *Morning*, *Soar Away*, *Wood Street*, and *Russia*.

A movement began in the 1780's and gained momentum in the nineteenth century to "reform" church music. As professionally-trained musiciatns began coming to the United States from Europe, many Americans began to consider American music inferior to European music. They noted the Europeans' use of "correct" harmony. American reformers began to write music folloing the rules of common-practice harmony and adopted the practice of giving the melody to the sopranos. They also stressed "elegance" and "simplicity," and considered the "wild fugues" inappropriate for church music.

While the reformers of church music were driving the American tunebook idiom out of the Northeast, pioneers were taking it southward and westward. The music also spread to English-speaking Canada.

In 1801, William Little and William Smith published a tunebook entitled *The Easy Instructor,* which introduced shape notation. Shape notation retained conventional staff notation but added a shaped note-head for each of the solmization syllables then in use -

fa, sol, la, and mi. (It became customary to sing the the tune in syllables before proceeding with the words.) This made sight singing much easier, and aided the spread of the tunebook idiom to American South and West.

In the new locations, composers continued to add to the repertoire. New England composers had used some folk melodies in their compositions, but in the South such use of folk melodies became common practice. A related practice was taking parts of existing melodies and piecing them together with stock melodic fragments to make new melodies. Revival spirituals were also added to the tunebook repertoire, the words of which consisted of a few lines from a well-known hymn, or other easily learned lines, followed by a catchy refrain. These usually began as the impromptu creations of a preacher and crowd at a camp-meeting revival.

In the twentieth century the early American tunebook idiom survives primarily in the shape-note tunebooks and singing conventions of the rural South. However, beginning in the 1930's, scholars began taking an interest in shape-note music. In time, people outside the South began to sing from the shape-note tunebooks, using primarily the *Original Sacred Harp*. Today active groups of shape-note singers can be found in the Northeast, Midwest and West Coast in addition to the traditional singers in the South.

James P. Page

Eight years ago, when I first heard Sacred Harp music, I was immediately struck by the musical qualities I had longed for. The sonorous open fifths and octaves, the dispersed and often dissonant harmonies, the sometimes vigorous and sometimes plaintive spirit, and the irregular musical phrases all answered some deep desire in me. I found this coupled with texts that were direct, affecting, poetic. This type of hymnody became a rich vehicle for the expression of my own faith.

As my knowledge of the music grew, and expanded to include other shape-note music of the same idiom, the idea of making a recording emerged as a durable way to share the music with others. The chorus was formed, and has pressed with amazing vigor toward the goal of making this recording.

The chorus is a composite of professional and amateur, trained and untrained singers. Our objective was to approach the music in a manner that was disciplined but not formal. These are, after all, folk hymns. Nor did we strive for a rendering that is historically pure, that task is left for others with other qualifications and inclinations. Tastes do change: my desire was simply to render the music as it seemed best at the time.

I hoped in shaping this record to make something that might serve as an introduction for those not familiar with the music. But my main objective was to treat the music first of all as a vehicle for worship, stressing its imminent meaningfulness. I strive, in the selection and ordering or the songs, to form an artistic whole.

It is my belief that the qualities of much modern classical music has prepared our ears to hear this music in a new way and to appreciate it. For those especially interested in hymnody, I believe it will be a breath of fresh air. It is both old and new.

As the *Kentucky Harmony* tunebook of 1818 concludes: "Without further remarks

we commit this Work to the hands of a candid, generous and enlightened public, believeing that a perfect work will not be expected from the hands of man, they are left to judge whether this compilation merits attention or not."

Kathleen Posthuma Thro

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Notes to the Songs and Texts

Some sixteenth-century religious reformers attempted to restore the scriptural basis of Christian worship by rejecting hymns of "human composition" in favor of the divinely inspired hymns of the Book of Psalms. In Geneva, John Calvin oversaw the versification of the psalms into French poetry that was strophic, ie. organized into stanzas that could be sung to successive repititions of a simple melody in a popular style. Such "metrical psalms," sung by the congregation without harmonies or instrumental accompaniment, were the only music allow in the public worship of the Reformed churches. While European metrical psalms employed tunes in a variety of metrical patterns, English psalm paraphrases (beginning with the "Old Version" of Sternhold and Hopkins) were confined to a small number of meters derived from English popular ballads, all are iambic, that is, consisting of pairs of syllables in which the second is stressed. Chief among these metrical patterns are Long Meter (L.M.), four lines of eight syllables each (8888), Common Meter (C.M.), 8886, and Short Meter, 6686. Psalms and tunes of the same meter are thus mutually interchangeable, and tunes are traditonally given names, such as WIINDSOR or DUNDEE, which are not immediately associated with a particular text. Other versifications of the psalms became available; the "Bay Psalm Book," published in Puritan Massachusetts as early as 1640, achieved some currency in New England. The "New Version" by Nicholas Brady and Nahum Tate (1696), was authorized by the Church of England. During the 18th century, however, these were largely supplanted by Isaac Watt's *Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament* (1719). A paraphrase, rather than a translation, Watt's Psalms appeared at a time when prejudice against hymns were breaking down. Watt's psalms and his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1707), also written in the traditional psalmodic meters, gradually won acceptance in public worship on both sides of the Atlantic, and opened the way for other evangelical hymn writers, including Charles Wesley, who wrote hymns in a much greater variety of meters. By 1800, American poets like John Leland were contributing hymns in a popular style to a growing revival movement that would soon manifest itself in the great outdoor camp-meetings of the early 19th century.

The singing-school was an attempt to foster musical literacy among the American

colonists. Tunebooks were an aid to instruction in sight-reading and part-singing; they augmented the meager repertory of tunes used in public worship. By the mid-18th century, American tunebooks, like their British counterparts, had begun to include fuging-tunes and anthems, as well as plain psalm tunes. Between 1770 and 1810 hundreds of tunebooks were printed, mainly in New England; these included the works of the first American composers - William Billings, Daniel Read, and many others - as well as old and new British tunes. Printed in an oblong format, tunebooks nornally supplied only a single stanza of poetry to each composition - the remainder of the text would be supplied from Watts or from another psalm or hymn book. The invention of shape-notes around 1800 simplified musical instruction still further, and led to the production, by 1860, of many more tunebooks in Pennsylvania, the Ohio Valley, and the South, many including settings of folk and popular melodies to religious words. Most of the pieces heard here are printed in *The Sacred Harp,* a Southern shape-note tunebook that has been in constant use since its first publication in 1844.

NINETY-THIRD S.M., by Lucius Chapin (1760-1842), was originally printed as BRENTFORD in an untitled 8-page sheet of tunes in Andrew Law's seven-shape notation printed in 1812 for John Logan, a singing-master in Augusta County, Virginia. It is a plain tune in a slow measure, whose internal repititions and ornamentation suggest folk origin and transmission. Another version of this tune was published by Jeremiah Ingalls in *The Christian Harmony* (1805).

Text: Phillip Doddridge, "Salvation by Grace," based on Ephesians 2, 5. "By Grace ye are saved."

> Grace! 'tis a charming sound,
> Harmonious to the ear!
> Heaven with the echo shall resound
> And all the earth shall hear
>
> Grace first contrived the way
> To save rebellious man,
> And all the steps which grace display
> Which drew the wondrous plan
>
> Grace taught my wand'ring feet
> To tread the heavenly road
> And new supplies each hour I meet,
> While pressing on to God.
>
> Grace all the work shall crown
> Through everlasting days,
> It lays in heaven the topmost stone
> And well deserves our praise.

WHITESTOWN L.M.D., by Howd, was printed in Stephen Jenks' *Musical Harmonist* (1800). It is a "double" tune, that is, a setting of two stanzas of text. It is also a fuging-tune, in which the parts enter successively in melodic imitation. Fuging-tunes originated in England as elaborated or extended psalm-tunes; they were widely cultivated in

America before 1800. The original text was Watts' Ps. 107, part 4, verses 3-4.

Where nothing dwelt but beasts of prey
Or men as fierce and wild as they
God bids th' oppressed and poor repair
And builds them towns and cities there

They sow their fields, and trees they plant
Whose yearly fruit supplies their want
Their race grows up from fruitful stocks
Their wealth increases with their flocks

White's Town was a name given to a large tract of land in Oneida County, NY, intensely settled by Connecticut fpioneers during the years 1785-1800. The title and text identify these Yankee pioneers with the invading Hebrews in Canaan.

Text: Isaac Watts, Psalm 89, part 2, "Mortaility and Hope - A Funeral Psalm," verses 1-2, derived from verses 47-48 of the scriptural psalm, "Remember how short my time is, wherefore hast thous made all men in vain? What man is he that liveth, and shall he not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?"

Remember, Lord, our mortal state,
How frail our life, how short the date!
Where is the man, who draws his breath,
Safe from disease, secure from death?

Lord, while we see whole nations die,
Our flesh and sense repine and cry,
Must death forever rage and reign?
Or hast thou made mankind in vain?

DAVID'S LAMENTATION by William Billings (1746-1800). The anthem was a setting of a prose text, in which the composer had free rein to express the words without the necessity of strophic repitition. This short anthem was printed in *The Singing Master's Assistant* (1778). The alto was revised by Ananias Davisson in *Kentucky Harmony*, 1816.

Text: 2 Samuel 18.33, revised by William Billings.

David the king was grieved and moved, he went to his chamber and wept. And as he went, he wept and said, O my son! O my son! would to God I had died for thee, O Absolom, my son, my son!

COMMUNION C.M. printed in *Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music*, 1810. This melody was set as LIBERTY HALL by Lucius Chapin or his brother Amzi (1768-1835) in four voices, and appears in several sources from 1812-1820. Like other tunes associated with the Chapins, is resembles a ballad tune.

Text: Isaac Watts, Book, Hymn 9, "Godly Sorrow from the Sufferings of Christ," verses 1 and 4 only.

Alas! and did my Savior bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?

Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When God, the might Maker died
For man the creature's sin.

MORNING L.M., by Amos Pillsbury (1772-1812), was printed in his *United States Sacred Harmony* (1799). A new alto part to this fuging-tune was added by Seaborn M. Denson in *Original Sacred Harp* (1911).

Text: Isaac Watts, Horae Lyricae, "Christ's Dying, Rising and Reigning." This hymn, beginning "He dies, the heavenly lover dies," was revised by Martin Madan, and printed in his *Psalms and Hymns* (1760), stanzas 1-4 are sung here, though stanza 2 has undergone further revision by a later hand.

He dies, the Friend of Sinners dies!
Lo! Salem's daughters weep around!
A solemn darkness veils the skies;
A sudden trembling shakes the ground.

Ye saints approach! the anguish view
Of him who groans beneath your load.
He gives his precious life for you;
For you he shed his precious blood.

Here's love and grief beyond degree -
The Lord of glory dies for men!
But lo! what sudden joys we see!
Jesus, the dead, revives again!

The rising God forsakes the tomb;
Up to his Father's court he flies.
Cherubic legions guard him home,
And shout him welcome to the skies.

EASTER ANTHEM by Willian Billings, was printed in early 1787, and is bound in several copies of *Suffolk Harmony* (1786).

Text: This anthem incorporates both prose and poetry. The quasi-liturgical opening, with its interjected hallelujahs, incorporates 1 Corinthians 15:20. The remainder is taken from Edward Young's *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts*, a popular visionary epic, the excerpts come from the section entitled "Night the Fourth, The Christian Triumph".

The Lord is risen indeed, halleluhjah!
Now is Christ risen from the dead,
and become the first fruits of them that slept, hallelujah!

And did he rise? Hear it, ye nations!

Hear it O ye dead! He rose! He rose!
He burst the bars of death (And triumphed o'er the grave...)

Then, then, I rose, then first humanity triumphant

pass'd the crystal ports of light,
... and seiz'd eternal youth.

...Man, all-immortal hail;
Hail, Heaven! all-lavish of strange gifts to man!
Thine's all the glory; man's the boundless bliss.

AFRICA C.M., by William Billings, was printed in his New England Psalm-Singer (1770). It is a florid psalm-tune in the style of William Tans'ur, an English psalmodist whose works were known in the American colonies.

Text: Isaac Watts, Book 1, Hymn 39, "God's Tender Care of His Church." The hymn is based on Isaiah 49:13-14. Only the opening stanza is sung here.

Now shall my inward joys arise,
And burst into a song;
Almighty love inspires my heart,
And pleasure tunes my tongue.

EXULTATION 669, by Humphreys, was printed in Ananias Davisson's *Supplement to the Kentucky Harmony* (1820).

Text: Charles Wesley wrote this humn for the birthday of his wife, and published it in Hymns For Families (1767). Like many of Wesley's hymns, it is written in a meter not found in traditinal psalmnody. Stanzas 1-3 and 7 only.

Come away to the skies,
My beloved arise,
And rejoice in the day thou wast born,
On this festival day,
Come exulting away,
And with singing to Zion return.

We have laid up our love,
And our treasures above,
Tought our bodies continue below,
The redeemed of the lord,
Will remember his word,
And with singing to paradise go.

Now with singing and praise,
Let us spend all the days,
By our heavenly Father bestowed;
While his grase we receive
From his bounty, and live
To the honor and glory of God.

Hallalujan! we sing
To our Father and King,
And his rapturous praises repeat;
To the lamb that was slain,
Hallelujan again!
Sing, all heaven, and fall at his feet!

NORTH PORT L.M., by R. R. Osborne, was printed in the first appendix of *The Sacred Harp* (1850). It is a "revival chorus," or spiritual song with refrains.

Text: John Cennick, "Following Jesus as the Forerunner." The well-known text is in quatrains of long meter. Because of the internal refrain, each verse of the tune requires only half a stanza of the poem, hence the first stanza of poetry requires two verses of music to declaim it. The additional stanzas sung here comprise the first half of stanza 5 and the second half of stanza 6 of the original poem.

Jesus, my all, to heaven is gone, glory hallelujah,
He whom I fix my hopes upon, glory hallelujah;
I want a seat in paradise, glory hallelujah,
I love that union never dies, glory hallelujah!
His track I see, and I'll pursue, glory hallelujah,

The narrow way till him I view, glory hallelujah;
I want a seat in paradise, glory hallelujah,
I love that union never dies, glory hallelujah!

Lo! glad I come; and thou, dear Lamb, glory hallelujah,
Shall take me to the as I am, glory hallelujah;
I want a seat in paradise, glory hallelujah,
I love that union never dies, glory hallelujah!

I'll point to thy redeeming blood, glory hallelujah,
And say, behold the way to God, glory hallelujah;
I want a seat in paradise, glory hallelujah,
I love that union never dies, glory hallelujah!

SOAR AWAY by A. M. Cagle, 1935, printed in the Denson revision of *The Original Sacred Harp* (1936). It is a plain tune with a fuging refrain.

Text: claimed by A. M. Cagle. The meter is reminiscent of the "Hallelujah Meter," i.e., 6666.4444 or 6666.88.

I want a sober mind, an all sustaining eye,
To see my God above, And to the heavens fly.
I'd soar away above the sky, And fly to see my God above.

I want a godly fear, a quick discerning eye,
That looks to thee, my God, and sees the tempter fly.
I'd soar away above the sky, And fly to see my God above.

WOOD STREET L.M., by Judy Hauff, was printed in *A Midwest Supplement* (1987). It

is a modern fuging tune in a solemn measure reminiscent of MORNING.

Text: "New Version," Psalm 137, stanzas 1-2, "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept when we remembered thee, O Sion. As for our harps, we hanged them up upon the trees that are therein." (*Book of Common Prayer*).

When we our weary limbs to rest
Sat down by proud Euphrates stream,
We wept, with doleful thoughts oppressed,
And Sion was our mournful theme.

Our harps, that when with joy we sung
Were wont their tuneful parts to bear,
With silent strings neglected hung
On willow-trees that withered there.

COLUMBUS C.M.D. Melody in *The Columbian Harmony* (1829), this arrangement, from The Southern Harmony (1835), is probably by William Walker, who added the alto part in 1866.

Text: Anonymous, American, early 19th century. While the term "hymn" usually denotes an expression of praise, "spiritual songs" focus on the Christian experience; they were especially popular at camp-meetings. This example is attributed to *Mercer's Cluster,*
verses 1, 2 and 6.

Oh, once I had a glorious view
Of my redeeming Lord,
He said, I'll be a God to you,
And I believed his word.
But now I have a deeper stroke
Than all my groanings are;
My God has me of late forsook;
He's gone, I know not where.

Oh, what immortal joys I felt
On that celestial day,
When my hard heart began to melt,
By love dissoved away!
But my complaint is bitter now,
For all my joys are gone;
I've strayed, I'm left, I know not how,
The light's from me withdrawn.

What shall I do? shall I lie down
And sink in deep despair?
Will he forever wear a frown?
Nor hear me feeble prayer?
No, he will put his strength in me,
He knows the way I've strolled;

And when I'm tried sufficiently,
I shall come forth as gold.

SOLITUDE NEW C.M., by Elisha West (1756- after 1808) in *The Village Harmony*, 2nd ed (1796).

Text: A bizarre double paraphrase of Psalm 11, verse 1, "In the Lord put I my trust; how say ye then to my soul, that she should flee as bird unto the hill?" (Book of Common Prayer). Stanza 1 is altered and contracted from Watts' Long Meter parahrase of this verse; the second stanza is the same verse in Tate and Brady's "New Version":

My refuge is the God of love;
My foes insult and cry, -
Fly, like a timourous trembling dove,
To distant mountains fly?

Since I have place my trust in God,
A refuge always nigh,
Why should I like a timorous bird
To distant mountans fly?

RUSSIA L.M., by Daniel Read (1757-1836), printed in *The American Musical Magazine* (1786), is a typical American fuging-time, originally set to stanza 3 of Watts' Psalm 62:

False are the men of high degree,
The baser sort are vanity;
Laid in the balance, both appear
Light as a puff of empty air.

It was one of the "Core Repertory" of 101 tunes most frequently printed in America before 1811. See Richard Crawford, *The Core Repertory of American Psalmody* (Madison, Wis., A-R Editions, 1984).

Text: Isaac Watts, Psalm 62, verses 1 and 2, "Truly my soul waiteth upon God, from him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvations; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved."

My spirit looks to God alone;
My rock and refuge is his throne;
In all my fears, in all my straits,
My soul on his salvation waits.

Trust him, ye saints, in all your ways;
Pour out your hearts before his face;
When helpers fail and foes invade,
God is our all-sufficient aid.

JORDAN C.M.D., by William Billings, was printed in his *Suffolk Harmony* (1786). This popular tune is also in the Core Repertory, and is without doubt that sung by Captain Bildad in *Moby Dick* (Chapter 22), to these words.

Text: Isaac Watts, Book 2, Hymn 66, "A Prospect of Heaven makes Death Easy," verses 1, 3, 5 and 6.

There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign,
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.

Sweet fields, beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dressed in living green;
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.

Oh! could we make our doubts remove,
those gloomy doubts that rise,
And see the Canaan that we love
With unbeclouded eyes.

Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er -
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore.

BOUND FOR CANAAN 7676, by Elisha J. King (1821-1844), was printed in *The Sacred Harp* (1844), of which King, a resident of Talbot County, Georgia, was junior author.

Text: This spiritual song was popular at camp-meetings, and is usually attributed to John Leland (1754-1841), each stanza is followed by a revival chorus.

Oh, when shall I see Jesus,
And reign with him above?
And from the flowing fountain,
Drink everlasting love?
I'm on my way to Canaan, to the New Jerusalem.

When shall I be delivered
From this vain world of sin?
And with my blessed Jesus
Drink endless pleasures in?
I'm on my way to Canaan, to the New Jerusalem.

Through grace I am determined
To conquer, though I die,
And then away to Jesus,
On wings of love I'll fly.
I'm on my way to Canaan, to the New Jerusalem.

CLAREMONT by Temple and (David) Merrill, was printed in *The Psalmodist's Best Companion* (1799). It is a Set Piece, that is, a through-composed (non-strophic) setting of a poem in several stanzas. Like the Anthem, the Set Piece (sometimes called Ode) offers the composer greater expressive scope than does the traditional psalm or hymn tune.

Text: Alexander Pope, "The Dying Christian to His Soul."

Vital spark of heavenly flame!
Quit, O quit this mortal frame!
Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying;
O the pain, the bliss of dying!
Cease, fond nature! cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life!
Hark, they whisper - angels say,
Sister spirit, come away!
What is this that absorbs me quite,
Steals my sense, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirit, draws my breath?
Tell me, my soul - can this be death?
The world recedes! - it disappears!
Heaven opens on my eyes! - my ears
With sounds seraphic ring!
Lend, lend you wings! I mount! I fly!
O grave, where is thy victory?
O death, where is thy sting?

--David Warren Steel