

“Sweet Seraphic Fire:”
New England Singing School Music from *The Norumbega Harmony*

I. BOSTON

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|---|---|
| 1. NEW CANAAN
“The Lord Jehovah reigns” | Oliver Holden, 1793
Isaac Watts, 1719 |
| 2. MARYLAND
“And must this body die”
<i>Treble: Malone, L. O’Brien, Sears, Zanichkowsky; Counter: Lepak, Mampre, McArthur, Truelsen;
Lead: Jaster, D. O’Brien, Stoddard, Wright; Bass: Bliss, Dove, Holt, Randall, Schmeidler</i> | William Billings, 1778
Isaac Watts, 1707 |
| 3. BETHLEHEM
“While shepherds watched their flocks” | William Billings, 1778
Nahum Tate, 1702 |
| 4. LYNN
“I’m not ashamed to own my Lord” | Oliver Holden, 1793
Isaac Watts, 1707 |
| 5. FUNERAL HYMN
“Why do we mourn departing friends?” | Oliver Holden, 1792
Isaac Watts, 1707 |
| 6. AN ANTHEM FOR EASTER
“The Lord is ris’n indeed” | William Billings, 1787/1795
William Billings et al., 1787/1795 |

II. MASSACHUSETTS

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| 7. WALPOLE
“O, if my soul was form’d for woe” | Abraham Wood, 1786
Isaac Watts, 1707 |
| 8. BEAUTY
“We are a garden wall’d around”
<i>Treble: Reid, Sears, Zanichkowsky; Counter: Lepak, Matthews, Truelsen; Lead: D. O’Brien, Stefanov, Trial; Bass: Dove, Holt, Randall, Schmeidler</i> | Jacob French, 1789
Isaac Watts, 1707 |
| 9. HAPPINESS
“Sing, O daughter of Zion!” | Jacob French, 1793
Zephaniah 3: 14–15 KJV |
| 10. WOBURN
“Firm was my health, my day was bright” | Jacob Kimball, 1793
Isaac Watts, 1719 |
| 11. MONTAGUE
“You sons of men, with joy record” | Timothy Swan, 1801
Philip Doddridge, 1755 |

III. CONNECTICUT

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| 12. NEWPORT
“I send the joys of earth away” | Daniel Read, 1785
Isaac Watts, 1707 |
| 13. HATFIELD
“Ah Lord, ah Lord, what have I done”
<i>Treble: Brownsberger, Malone, L. O’Brien, Reid; Counter: Kazlauskas, Mampre, Matthews, Truelsen; Lead: Jaster, D. O’Brien, Stefanov, Wright; Bass: Dove, Harper, Holt, Schmeidler</i> | Thomas Baird, 1800
John Mason, 1693 |

14. ATTENTION
"Hark! from the tombs, a doleful sound!"

Asahel Benham [?], 1790
Isaac Watts, 1707

15. CRUCIFIXION
"Behold the Savior of mankind"

M. Kyes, 1798
Samuel Wesley, Sr., 1737

IV. MAINE

16. MECHIAS
"When, overwhelm'd with grief"

James Lyon, 1774
Isaac Watts, 1719

17. ST. PAUL'S
"How beauteous are their feet"

Supply Belcher, 1794
Isaac Watts, 1707

18. TRANSITION
"When snows descend and robe the fields"

Supply Belcher, 1794
Unattributed

Treble: Kazlauskas, Sears; Counter: Mampre, Truelsen; Lead: D. O'Brien, Stoddard, Wright; Bass: Dove, Holt, Randall

19. JUBILANT
"Blow ye the trumpet, blow"

Supply Belcher, 1794
Charles Wesley, 1750

20. THE LILLY
"Peaceful and lowly in their native soil"

Supply Belcher, 1794
Unattributed

Treble: Brownsberger, Zanichkowsky; Counter: Kazlauskas, McArthur; Lead: D. O'Brien, Wright; Bass: Dove, Stoddard

21. BUCKFIELD
"When strangers stand and hear me tell"

Abraham Maxim, 1802
Isaac Watts, 1707

V. VERMONT AND NEW YORK

22. PENNSYLVANIA
"When shall thy lovely face be seen?"

Nehemiah Shumway, 1793
Isaac Watts, 1706

23. SOUNDING JOY
"Joy to the world! The Lord is come!"

J. P. Storm, 1795
Isaac Watts, 1719

Treble: Brownsberger, Malone, Sears, Zanichkowsky; Counter: Lepak, Matthews, McArthur, Truelsen; Lead: Jaster, Stefanov, Stoddard, Trial; Bass: Bliss, Dove, Harper, Randall

24. REDEMPTION
"Glory to God on high"

Jeremiah Ingalls, 1805
Isaac Watts, 1707

VI. THE SOUTH AND THE WEST

25. CONSOLATION
"Come, humble sinner, in whose breast"

Lucius Chapin, c. 1812
Edmund Jones, 1787

26. LIBERTY-HALL
"Alas! and did my Savior bleed!"

Lucius Chapin, c. 1812
Isaac Watts, 1707

Treble: Brownsberger, Malone, Sears, Zanichkowsky; Counter: Lepak, McArthur, Matthews, Truelsen; Lead: Jaster, Stefanov, Trial, Stoddard; Bass: Bliss, Dove, Harper, Randall

27. THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM
"Ye nations all, on you I call"

The Southern Harmony, 1835
Unattributed

Verse 2: Treble: Malone, Stefanov; Lead: D. O'Brien, Wright; Bass: Dove, Stoddard

28. CONVOY
"Watchman, tells us of the night"

M. L. Swan, 1867
John Bowring, 1825

VII. CONTEMPORARY COMPOSITIONS

29. HALLELUJAH NEW
"And let this feeble body fail"

Roland Hutchinson, 1996
Charles Wesley, 1759

30. NATIVITY
"Mortals, awake, with angels join"

Bruce Randall, 1990
Samuel Medley, 1782

31. CORTONA
"Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings"

M. R. Truelsen, 1996
Robert Seagrave, 1742

32. GREAT DIVIDE
"God moves in a mysterious way"

Stephen Marini, 1998
William Cowper, 1774

33. ARINELLO
"Come, ye that love the Lord"

Dennis O'Brien, 1997
Isaac Watts, 1707

34. EV'RY STRING AWAKE
"Your harps, ye trembling saints"

Glen Wright, 1996
Augustus Toplady, 1776

35. TEN THOUSAND CHARMS
"Come, thou fount of ev'ry blessing"

Hal Kunkel, 1996
Robert Robinson, 1759

*Hearing Sweet Seraphic Fire:
The New England Singing School and the American Protestant Hymn Canon*

by Stephen Marini

Sweet Seraphic Fire brings together two unique bodies of American sacred song: choral compositions from the New England singing-school tradition and the most popular Evangelical Protestant hymn texts in historic American use. In the late eighteenth century the New England singing-school movement produced America's first great sacred-music style, employing several genres of unaccompanied four-part choral compositions with the melody in the lead (tenor) part. The enormous popularity of singing-school music also promoted a canon of hymn texts shared across America's competing Evangelical Protestant denominations. This recording contains neglected masterworks from the New England singing school that also helped to create the American hymn canon. Marking a more recent turn in this process, we have also included some new settings of traditional Evangelical lyrics written by leaders in the revival of singing-school music that has blossomed in the Northeast since 1976. Selection of pieces for this recording was determined by correlating *The Norumbega Harmony*—our collection of one hundred six historic New England singing-school compositions and thirty contemporary works in traditional style—with a list of the three hundred most frequently printed hymn texts in America from 1737 to 1960. I compiled the hymn text list in 1996–2000 as part of the American Protestant Hymns Project, a program of research and scholarly publication sponsored by the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals at Wheaton College and funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc., both of which have also supported this recording. The complete list, based on computer analysis of two hundred historic hymnals, has been published in Richard J. Mouw and Mark A. Noll, eds., *Wonderful Words of Life: Hymns in American Protestant History and Theology* (2004).

From Puritan Psalmody to Singing School

The New England singing school began as a reform of Puritan worship. Following the teachings of John Calvin, New England's Puritans sang only the Psalms in worship, believing them to be a divinely inspired book of public praise. They used psalm translations cast into English metrical poetry, performed them sequentially—two or three each Sunday—and sang them in unison to achieve the greatest community comprehension. In 1640 the New England Puritans published their own metrical psalter, *The Whole Booke of Psalms Faithfully Translated into English Metre*, commonly known as the "Bay Psalm Book," which continued in use through the eighteenth century. Some Puritan congregations, however, preferred the psalters of the Church of England, either *The Whole Booke of Psalms* (1562) by Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins or *A New Version of the Psalms* (1696) by Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady.

The Puritans' repertory of psalm tunes, however, was quite small. To remedy this situation the ninth edition of the Bay Psalm Book (1698) carried a supplement of thirteen psalm tunes taken from John Playford's *Psalms and Hymns in Solemn Musick of Four Parts on the Common Tunes to the Psalms in Metre* (1671). This supplement remained the most widely circulated source of psalmody in New England for half a century. Puritan musical leadership was similarly limited. Local deacons led psalm singing by practicing "lining-out," a form of antiphonal or responsive singing in which the leader announced and pitched the tune, then read out one or two lines of the psalm. The congregation sang back the same lines to the appropriate section of the psalm tune. The process continued until the psalm text was completed. This already cumbersome technique was further compromised by lack of musical talent in the diaconate, whose duties were primarily fiduciary, not liturgical. The unfortunate results were tunes often placed at impossible pitch ranges, confusion about which tune was being sung and how it was written, an inevitable slowing of tempo, and a corresponding increase of vocal ornament.

By 1720, praise in New England's Congregational churches produced such cacophony that Boston-area ministers, including Cotton Mather, Peter Thacher, John Tufts, and Thomas Walter, demanded that worship singing be reformed. They rejected lining-out and called for the institution of singing schools to improve music literacy and vocal production. Tufts and Walter published instructional manuals based on the Bay Psalm Book tune supplement, and in 1723 Walter convened the first singing school in Boston. From these modest beginnings, singing schools spread slowly to other New England ports and up the Connecticut River Valley, reaching Jonathan Edwards's congregation in Northampton, Massachusetts, by the early 1730s.

The English Parish Style

Between 1720 and 1770, two powerful cultural forces reached New England that transformed the singing school's musical style and sacred texts after the Revolution. The first of these, the English Parish style of church music, also known as "West Gallery music," crossed the Atlantic and gradually displaced Puritan psalmody. Around 1700 Anglican composers began creating simplified choral settings of psalms and anthems for parish choirs capable of some musical accomplishment but unable to mount the great Cathedral-style works of William Byrd, Thomas Tallis, and Henry Purcell. The most elementary form of the English Parish style was the traditional psalm tune, or "plain tune," now rendered in the Baroque harmonies of the eighteenth century. A more demanding form was the "fuging tune," which began as a plain tune but about halfway through broke into a longer section with each part entering separately in *fugato* style—imitating the same melodic or rhythmic figure—then coming together in a final cadence. More accomplished still were set-pieces and anthems, extended settings of metrical texts and scripture passages respectively, which challenged the best parish choirs and exhibited the composer's highest level of skill.

The new plain tunes soon gained popularity on both sides of the Atlantic. Tufts and Walter used some of them in their instructional manuals of the 1720s. The more complex forms of the new style, however, were not published in America until the 1761 Philadelphia collection *Urania, or A Choice Collection of Psalm-Tunes, Anthems, and Hymns, from the Most Approv'd Authors*, edited by James Lyon (1735–1794). Soon Daniel Bayley of Newburyport, Massachusetts, began to reprint major collections of English Parish music, including William Tans'ur's *Royal Harmony Complete* and Aaron Williams's *Universal Psalmist*. On the eve of the American Revolution, the New England singing school had thoroughly absorbed the English Parish style, but it had not yet found its own musical voice.

Evangelical Poetics

The other influence in the transformation of the New England singing school was a new style of sacred poetry that articulated the inter-colonial religious revival of the 1730s and 1740s known as the Great Awakening. In the Awakening, Americans from Maine to Georgia gathered in unprecedented numbers to hear the charismatic preaching of itinerant evangelists led by Anglican George Whitefield, Presbyterian Gilbert Tennent, and Congregationalist James Davenport. The revivalists' message was "the necessity of the New Birth," the claim that true Christianity required an intensely personal experience of repentance for sin, faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross, spiritual rebirth under the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, and a life of sanctification and moral perseverance. Singing was an essential aspect of the Awakening, employed by the revivalists to raise the "holy affections" or religious emotions they believed to be the medium of spiritual encounter with God. George Whitefield began his preaching services with singing. Jonathan Edwards, the leading theologian of the Awakening, who had earlier endorsed singing schools for his Northampton congregation, wrote of the New Birth as the experience of God's absolute harmony and perfect proportion. Thousands experienced the New Birth. They soon formed Evangelical or "New Light" parties in every major American Protestant communion. Some even broke away to form new sectarian movements like the Separate Congregationalists and Separate Baptists.

The preeminent poet of the Awakening and early American Evangelicalism was Isaac Watts (1674–1748), an English Congregationalist minister who published two epoch-making collections of sacred poetry, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs in Three Books* (1707) and *The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament* (1719). In the first of these Watts argued that reborn believers possessed the same Holy Spirit that the Apostles did and therefore, like them, they should create new "hymns of human composure" to express their spiritual experience. In the second collection Watts went still further, claiming that David's Psalms were inadequate because David, though inspired, did not know God's full revelation in Christ. The Psalms, Watts concluded, should therefore be recast "as if David had been a Christian." For these purposes Watts created lyrics that were theologically complex yet poetically simple, writing primarily in quatrains with basic meters—Common Meter 6.8.6.8; Short Meter 6.6.8.6; and Long Meter 8.8.8.8—and rhyme schemes—ABAB or AABB.

Watts applied his Evangelical poetics in sacred lyrics such as “When I survey the wondrous cross,” “Alas! and did my Savior bleed!,” and “Joy to the world,” creating a potent and immensely popular new hymnodic voice that was deeply emotional and subjective on the one hand, yet richly biblical and vividly descriptive on the other. Editions of Watts’s poetical works poured from American presses after the Awakening, yet most New Englanders, including New Lights, refused to substitute them for the traditional psalters in worship. By 1770, the Evangelical poetry of Watts had begun to reshape popular religion in New England, but still lacked a musical vehicle through which to enter public worship. The renewal of the singing school would provide it.

William Billings and the Renewal of the New England Singing School

William Billings (1746–1800), a tanner by trade, an adherent of the Brattle Street Congregational Church, and a political associate of Samuel Adams and Paul Revere, burst onto the musical scene in 1770 with the publication of *The New-England Psalm-Singer*. A collection of one hundred twenty-seven plain tunes, fusing tunes, set-pieces, and anthems of genuine originality and excellence, it categorically surpassed previous efforts by American composers. Although his music was firmly grounded in the English Parish style, Billings proclaimed his artistic and cultural independence, stating in his introduction that he neither observed the received rules of composition nor required them of others. “Every composer,” he wrote, “should be his own carver.” He followed this dictum through a thirty-year musical career, producing six collections of original works with independently composed parts that often produced dissonance, open fourths and fifths, and modal passages, as well as striking rhythmic figures. Billings also embraced Watts’s sacred poetry. Nearly two thirds of the tunes in his collections *The Singing-Master’s Assistant* (1778) and *The Continental Harmony* (1794) set texts by Watts.

If Billings’s artistic creativity was freewheeling, however, his teaching of singing schools was quite the opposite. His tunebooks provided detailed lessons in notation literacy, music theory, and vocal practice that set a new instructional standard. He also traveled extensively in eastern Massachusetts training promising young musicians, some of whom also became singing masters and composers. Parishes and towns hired Billings and his circle to teach schools that met several times weekly for six to eight weeks, culminating in a public concert often featuring new works written for the class by the master. Over time a successful singing master could amass enough compositions to publish his own tunebook for purchase by subsequent classes. The singing schools also promoted the organization of local choirs who supported the congregation by singing from the west gallery of the meeting house opposite the pulpit. Sometimes they performed fusing tunes and anthems as special music.

In short, Billings and his followers professionalized the singing school. They demonstrated that it was possible to make a career as a singing master, composer, and compiler of tunebooks, and they created a standard curriculum and a network of trained singing masters that assured sponsoring parishes and towns that their public praise would indeed improve. Above all, they produced a remarkable body of choral music based on the English Parish style but carrying a distinctive American inflection and appropriating the new Evangelical hymnody. So successful were their efforts that in a few decades the singing school had spread to every corner of New England and beyond to the south and west, establishing itself as a primary cultural and religious institution of revolutionary America and the new republic.

Boston and Beyond

Sweet Seraphic Fire traces the development of the New England singing school after 1770 in sections organized by geography and chronology. While these sections do not represent distinct sub-styles, they do indicate the emergence of new regional networks of singing masters and publishing centers beyond Boston, and they display characteristic aspects of the singing school’s musical and textual innovations. Our first section places Billings in his Boston context by juxtaposing his compositions with those of Oliver Holden (1765–1844), his younger rival from Charlestown across Boston Harbor. Two contrasting fusing tunes by Billings, MARYLAND and BETHLEHEM, along with his AN ANTHEM FOR EASTER, illustrate the mastery of those genres, for which he was celebrated in his lifetime. Holden, a lawyer, politician, and Baptist convert, began writing singing-school music around 1790. His FUNERAL HYMN, NEW CANAAN, and LYNN show him to be an able composer of plain tunes, fusing tunes, and set-pieces respectively, though he was more stylistically conservative than Billings.

From Boston, the singing-school movement spread simultaneously to rural Massachusetts and Connecticut. In central Massachusetts, Abraham Wood (1752–1804), Jacob French (1754–1817), and Timothy Swan (1758–1842) helped to establish a new tunebook publishing center at Worcester, while in Essex County, to the northeast, Jacob Kimball (1761–

1826) emerged as the leading composer of the 1790s. This group of composers was particularly adept at conveying the rhythmic energy, thematic inventiveness, and text-painting capacities of the fugal tune as it emerged from Billings's work, often setting Watts's praise psalms and hymn texts. Wood's WALPOLE, French's BEAUTY, Kimball's WOBURN, and Swan's MONTAGUE indicate the intense development of the fugal tune in Massachusetts from 1785 to 1801, while French's HAPPINESS displays a formidable array of compositional skills, learned from his teacher Billings, in one of the shortest yet most satisfying of singing-school anthems. In Connecticut, Andrew Law (1749–1821) and Daniel Read (1757–1836) created another center of tunebook publication in the New Haven area, where the demanding Calvinist “New Divinity” theology of Jonathan Edwards's followers held greatest sway. Connecticut composers accordingly excelled at producing highly emotional settings of penitential psalms and hymn texts. NEWPORT by Read and HATFIELD by Thomas Baird (fl. 1783–1806) are two early plain-tune spiritual ballads reflecting on the eternal dangers of sin, while ATTENTION by Asahel Benham (1754–1803) and CRUCIFIXION by M. Kyes (fl. 1790–1799) use extraordinary text-painting and fugal figures to render powerful sacred lyrics of death and resurrection.

By the 1790s the singing school had spread to New England's eastern and western frontiers. In both regions, folk melodic and rhythmic figures began to influence composers who nonetheless preserved the stylistic traditions of Billings and Read. MECHIAS is a very early melismatic plain tune from Maine written in 1774 by James Lyon, editor of the pioneering 1761 tunebook *Urania*, and named for the Down East port where he served as a Presbyterian minister. Four compositions follow from *The Harmony of Maine*, the 1794 tunebook by Supply Belcher (1751–1836) for which he was known as “the Handel of Maine.” The complex fugal sections, florid duets, and serial rhythms of ST. PAUL'S, TRANSITION, and JUBILANT recall Belcher's teacher Billings, while THE LILLY brings a gem-like simplicity to a one-stanza paraphrase of Matthew 6:28. By contrast BUCKFIELD, a rousing fugal tune by Abraham Maxim (1773–1829), reflects the simplified folk melodic and rhythmic figures of revival songs associated with the Second Great Awakening (1799–1810). Similar influences mark our selections from Vermont and upstate New York. PENNSYLVANIA by Nehemiah Shumway (1761–1843) is a complex classical fugal tune with extensive text-painting in the fugue, while SOUNDING JOY by J. P. Storm (fl. 1795–1801) and REDEMPTION by Jeremiah Ingalls (1764–1838) incorporate Yankee-Yorker folksong and revival music. The textual presence of Watts in virtually all of these compositions testifies to his preponderant influence on the singing school and frontier popular religion.

After 1800 the New England singing school performed a remarkable feat of cultural transmission, riding the Second Great Awakening south and west to the far perimeters of the American republic. Its early carriers were composers like Lucius Chapin (1760–1842), a furniture maker from Springfield, Massachusetts, who moved to southwestern Virginia during the 1790s. Around 1812, Chapin published a series of plain tunes, set to the spiritual ballads of Watts, from which come CONSOLATION and LIBERTY-HALL. Like Maxim, Storm, and Ingalls, Chapin absorbed regional folk musical influences, expressed here in the plaintive triple-meter tunes and ornaments of the Appalachian frontier. Later Southern composers wrote plain-tune spiritual ballads and camp-meeting revival songs, setting a wider range of popular hymn texts by poets like Methodist Charles Wesley and Baptist Robert Robinson. THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM, collected and published in *The Southern Harmony* (1835) by William Walker of Spartanburg, South Carolina, exhibits aspects of both genres with its vernacular lyric and triple-meter dance tune, while M. L. Swan's 1867 plain tune CONVOY illustrates the enduring effectiveness of the Southern spiritual ballad.

To the Twenty-First Century

Two hundred twenty-five years after the publication of Billings's *New-England Psalm-Singer*, the singing school has survived the devastation of rural life in the Deep South, its last traditional stronghold, and experienced a remarkable revival in the Northeast. Since 1976, singers in New England—including Norumbega Harmony, founded that year at Wellesley College—have built a flourishing network of weekly, monthly, and annual regional singings. Most of them use *The Sacred Harp*, published in 1844 by Georgians B. F. White and E. J. King, which is the canonical tunebook of most traditional singers in the Deep South. Much of the credit for this revival goes to Southern leaders including Hugh McGraw, Richard DeLong, and Jeff and Shelbie Sheppard, who have spent enormous time and energy replanting the singing-school tradition in its native soil. Norumbega Harmony's distinctive singing reflects this new hybrid of Southern and Yankee styles—full-voiced, textually focused, and often doubling the treble and lead parts as in the South, yet with a tone that is more choral than folk, and with less frequent ornamentation.

The 1991 revision of *The Sacred Harp* sparked an outpouring of compositions by Northeastern singers. This recording concludes with seven of them that offer a wide diversity of musical styles while setting traditional Evangelical texts of great

popularity. HALLELUJAH NEW by Roland Hutchinson of Montclair, New Jersey, is an upbeat plain-tune setting of Charles Wesley's death and resurrection hymn "And let this feeble body fail," replete with gospel hymn harmonies and a rousing refrain. Boston-area members of Norumbega Harmony wrote the next five tunes and led them in this performance. Bruce Randall's NATIVITY is an intense and fluid fugal tune for Medley's Christmas hymn "Mortals, awake, with angels join" that closely follows the stylistic vocabulary of Billings. CORTONA by Michal Truelsen is an ornamented plain-tune setting of Robert Seagrave's Methodist exhortation hymn "Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings" with soaring melodic lines and delicate text-painting. GREAT DIVIDE is a fugal tune by Stephen Marini that uses dissonance, dotted rhythms, and intervallic fugal figures to set William Cowper's 1774 hymn of perseverance "God moves in a mysterious way." Dennis O'Brien's ARINELLO, a setting of Isaac Watts's extraordinarily popular praise hymn "Come ye that love the Lord," employs the short tune-head and extended refrain typical of Southern fugal tunes. Glen Wright's vigorous fugal tune EV'RY STRING AWAKE for "Your harps, ye trembling saints," a 1776 exhortation hymn by Augustus Toplady, author of "Rock of Ages," combines more modern melodic and harmonic sensibilities with classic singing-school rhythmic figures and fugal structure. TEN THOUSAND CHARMS by Hal Kunkel of State College, Pennsylvania, our final selection, is a powerful plain tune setting of "Come thou fount of ev'ry blessing," a 1759 praise hymn by English Baptist Robert Robinson that is one of the most perennially popular hymn texts in American Protestant use. Kunkel uses subtle harmonic and melismatic effects to drive the tune into its rocking, syncopated refrain.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century there is much confusion about the founding of the American republic and the nature of Evangelical religion. The music of *Sweet Seraphic Fire* offers an opportunity to learn about both. Few cultural institutions from the nation's founding have survived, but the singing school has, and its carefully balanced yet highly experimental music makes the founding generation's values and sensibilities audibly present. The power of community is displayed here as well, in the enduring fellowship of singers both then and now. Evangelical religion also infuses this music, not in the politicized form it has so often taken, but rather in its spiritual and doctrinal essence distilled through its popular hymnody. As expressed by Watts and Wesley, Evangelicalism is a profoundly humble faith, rooted in the certain knowledge of human sinfulness before the Creator, astonished at salvation through divine atoning sacrifice, and reliant on sacred spirit to negotiate a pilgrimage of faith through a darkening world. These messages of creativity and community, humility and hope, from our founding generation have important lessons to teach us, if we can but learn to hear them.

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TUNE COMMENTARIES

The commentaries supply the following information: (1) tune title and location in *The Norumbega Harmony*, (2) first line, author, title, first edition, stanzas, and poetic meter of the text, and the rank and number of its printings from the American Protestant Hymns Database, indicated as M (Rank N = 76/ Printings N = 200); (3) composer, musical form, key, and original "mood" or tempo marking of the tune; (4) occasional technical notes on texts and tunes; and (5) the text as sung in this performance.

ABBREVIATIONS

HSS = Isaac Watts, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs, in Three Books*. London: J. Humfreys, 1707.

Maine = Supply Belcher, *The Harmony of Maine*. Boston: Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer T. Andrews, 1794.

PDI = Isaac Watts, *The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament*. London: J. Clark, R. Ford, and R. Cruttenden, 1719.

SMA = William Billings, *The Singing Master's Assistant*. Boston: Draper and Folsom, 1778.

Southern = William Walker, *The Southern Harmony, and Musical Companion*. Spartanburg, S.C.: William Walker, 1835.

Union = Oliver Holden, *The Union Harmony*. Boston: Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer T. Andrews, 1793.

I. BOSTON

1. NEW CANAAN [NH 34–35]

TEXT: “The Lord Jehovah reigns,” Isaac Watts, Psalm 93, “The eternal and sovereign God,” *PDI*, sts. 1–3, 5. Particular Meter, 6.6.8.6.6.8. M (69/40). TUNE: Oliver Holden, Fuging Tune in D, *Union*, I: 47. Mood: Allegro.

*The Lord Jehovah reigns,
And royal state maintains,
His head with awful glories crown'd;
Array'd in robes of light,
Begirt with sov'reign might,
And rays of majesty around.*

*Upheld by thy commands,
The world securely stands,
And skies and stars obey thy word;
Thy throne was fix'd on high
Before the starry sky:
Eternal is thy kingdom, Lord.*

*In vain the noisy crowd,
Like billows fierce and loud,
Against thine empire rage and roar:
In vain, with angry spite,
The surly nations fight,
And dash like waves against the shore.*

*Thy promises are true,
Thy grace is ever new:
There fix'd thy church shall n'er remove;
Thy saints with holy fear
Shall in thy courts appear,
And sing thine everlasting love.*

2. MARYLAND [NH 10–11]

TEXT: “And must this body die,” Isaac Watts, “Triumph over death, in the hope of the resurrection,” *HSS*, II:110, sts. 1–2, 5–6. Short Meter, 6.6.8.6. M (54/54). TUNE: William Billings, Fuging Tune in A minor, *SMA*, 29. Mood: Allegro.

*And must this body die,
This mortal frame decay?
And must these active limbs of mine
Lie mould'ring in the clay?*

*Corruption, earth and worms
Shall but refine this flesh,
'Til my triumphant spirit comes
To put it on afresh.*

*These lively hopes we owe
To Jesus' dying love;
We would adore his grace below
And sing his pow'r above.*

*Dear Lord, accept the praise
Of these our humble songs,
'Til tunes of nobler sound we raise
With our immortal tongues.*

3. BETHLEHEM [NH 4–5]

TEXT: “While shepherds watched their flocks by night,” Nahum Tate, “The song of the angels,” Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady, *A Supplement to the New Version of the Psalms* (London: Daniel Brown, 1702), Hymn 12, sts. 1–2. Common Meter, 8.6.8.6. M (48/62). TUNE: William Billings, Fuging Tune in E, *SMA*, 69. Mood: Adagio.

*While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.*

*Fear not, said he, for mighty dread
Had seiz'd their troubled mind,
Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind.*

4. LYNN [NH 28–30]

TEXT: “I’m not ashamed to own my Lord,” Isaac Watts, “Not ashamed of the gospel, 2 Tim. 1:12,” *HSS*, I: 03, sts. 1–4. Common Meter, 8.6.8.6. M (42/68). TUNE: Oliver Holden, Set-Piece in C, *Union*, I: 100. Mood: Allegro.

*I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
Nor to defend his cause,
Maintain the honor of his word,
And glory of his cross.*

*Jesus my God I know his name,
His name is all my trust,
Nor will he put my soul to shame,
Nor let my hope be lost.*

*Firm as his throne his promise stands,
And he can well secure
What I've committed to his hands,
Till the decisive hour.*

*Then will he own my worthless name
Before his Father's face,
And in the new Jerusalem
Appoint my soul a place.*

5. FUNERAL HYMN [NH 20–21]

TEXT: “Why do we mourn departing friends?,” Isaac Watts, “The death and burial of a saint,” *HSS*, II:3, sts. 1–4. Common Meter, 8.6.8.6. M (45/65). TUNE: Oliver Holden, Plain Tune in E minor, *American Harmony* (Boston: Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer T. Andrews, 1792), 8. Mood: Allegro.

*Why do we mourn departing friends?
Or shake at death's alarms?
'Tis but the voice that Jesus sends,
To call them to his arms.*

*Are we not tending upward, too,
As fast as time can move?
Nor would we wish the hours more slow,
To keep us from our love.*

*Why should we tremble to convey
Their bodies to the tomb?
There the dear flesh of Jesus lay,
And left a long perfume.*

*Thence he arose, ascending high,
And show'd our feet the way;
Up to the Lord our souls shall fly,
At the great rising day.*

6. AN ANTHEM FOR EASTER [NH 38–43]

TEXT: “The Lord is ris’n indeed,” William Billings, composite text from Luke 24:34 and 1 Corinthians 15:20 KJV, and Edward Young, “Night the Fourth, The Christian Triumph,” *The Complaint; or, Night-Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality*, 5th ed. (London: R. Dodsley, 1743), lines 271–273, 288–293, and 298–300, alt. Particular Meter, 10.10.10.10. TUNE: William Billings, Anthem in A, in Jacob French, *Harmony of Harmony* (Northampton, Mass.: Andrew Wright, 1802), 131–136. Billings first published this composition as an independent work in 1787, then added the elaborate fusing section “Shout, earth and heav’n” in his 1795 edition of the piece, now lost. French’s edition, performed here, is one of five published shortly after Billings’s death in 1800.

*The Lord is ris’n indeed, Hallelujah.
Now is Christ risen from the dead
And become the first fruits of them that slept. Hallelujah.
And did he rise? Hear, O ye nations, hear it, O ye dead.
He rose, he rose, he burst the bars of death
And triumph’d o’er the grave.*

*Shout, earth and heav’n, this sum of good to men,
Whose nature then took wing and mounted with him from the tomb.
Then I rose, then first humanity triumphant
Past the crystal ports of light and seized eternal youth.*

*Man all immortal hail, heav’n all lavish of strange gifts to man,
Thine all the glory, man’s the boundless bliss.*

II. MASSACHUSETTS

7. WALPOLE [NH 54–55]

TEXT: “Oh, if my soul was form’d for woe,” Isaac Watts, “Repentance at the cross,” *HSS*, II:106, sts. 1–4. Common Meter, 8.6.8.6. TUNE: Abraham Wood, Set-Piece in B minor, in Isaiah Thomas, *Laus Deo! The Worcester Collection of Sacred Harmony* (Worcester, Mass.: Isaiah Thomas, 1786), 81. Mood: Allegro.

*Oh, if my soul was form’d for woe,
How would I vent my sighs!
Repentance should like rivers flow
From both my streaming eyes.*

*'Twas for my sins my dearest Lord
Hung on the cursed tree,
And groan'd away a dying life,
For thee, my soul, for thee.*

*Oh! how I hate those lusts of mine
That crucify'd my God;
Those sins that pierc'd and nail'd his flesh
Fast to the fatal wood.*

*Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die;
My heart has so decreed;
Nor will I spare the guilty things
That made my Savior bleed.*

8. BEAUTY [NH 58–59]

TEXT: “We are a garden wall'd around,” Isaac Watts, “The church the garden of Christ, Song of Solomon 4:12–15, 5:1,” *HSS*, I:74, sts. 1–2, 4. Long Meter, 8.8.8.8. **TUNE:** Jacob French, Fuging Tune in G, in *New American Melody* (Boston: John Norman, 1789), 121. Mood: Allegro.

*We are a garden wall'd around,
Chosen and made peculiar ground;
A little spot, inclos'd by grace
Out of the world's wide wilderness.*

*Like trees of myrrh and spice we stand,
Planted by God the Father's hand;
And all his springs in Sion flow,
To make the young plantation grow.*

*Make our best spices flow abroad,
To entertain our Savior God:
And faith, and love, and joy appear,
And ev'ry grace be active here.*

9. HAPPINESS [NH 69–71]

TEXT: “Sing, O daughter of Zion!,” Zephaniah 3:14–15 KJV, alt. **TUNE:** Jacob French, Anthem in A, *The Psalmodist's Companion* (Worcester, Mass.: Leonard Worcester for Isaiah Thomas, 1793).

*Sing, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O Israel!
Be glad!
Rejoice with all thy heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.*

*The Lord hath taken away thy judgment;
He hath cast out thine enemy,
The King of Hosts, even the Lord is in the midst of thee;
Thou shalt not see evil anymore.*

10. WOBURN [NH 80–81]

TEXT: “Firm was my health, my day was bright,” Isaac Watts, Psalm 30:6, Part 2, “Health, sickness, and recovery,” *PDI*, sts. 1–2, 4, 6. Long Meter, 8.8.8.8. **TUNE:** Jacob Kimball, Fuging Tune in A minor, *The Rural Harmony* (Boston: Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer T. Andrews, 1793), 33. Mood: Allegro.

*Firm was my health, my day was bright,
And I presumed 'twould ne'er be night;
Fondly I said within my heart,
Pleasure and peace shall ne'er depart.*

*But I forgot thine arm was strong
Which made my mountain stand so long
Soon as thy face began to hide,
My health was gone, my comforts died.*

*"Hear me, oh God of grace," I said,
"And bring me from among the dead."
Thy word rebuked the pains I felt,
Thy pard'ning love removed my guilt.*

*My tongue, the glory of my frame,
Shall ne'er be silent of thy name;
Thy praise shall sound through earth and heav'n,
For sickness heal'd and sins forgiv'n.*

11. MONTAGUE [NH 86–87]

TEXT: "You sons of men, with joy record," Philip Doddridge, "God adored for his goodness, and his wonderful works to the children of men, Psalm 107:31," *Hymns Founded on Various Texts in the Holy Scriptures* (Shrewsbury, England: J. Eddowes and J. Cotton, 1755), Hymn 61, sts. 1–2, 5–6. Long Meter, 8.8.8.8. TUNE: Timothy Swan, Fuging Tune in D minor, *New England Harmony* (Worcester, Mass.: Andrew Wright, 1801), 54–55. Mood: Allegro.

*You sons of men, with joy record
The various wonders of the Lord,
And let his pow'r and goodness sound
Through all your tribes the world around.*

*Let the high heav'ns your songs invite,
Those spacious fields of brilliant light,
Where sun and moon and planets roll,
And stars that glow from pole to pole.*

*But oh! that brighter world above,
Where lives and reigns incarnate love!
God's only Son, in flesh array'd,
For man a bleeding victim made.*

*Thither, my soul, with rapture soar,
There, in the land of praise, adore;
This theme demands an angel's lay,
Demands an everlasting day.*

III. CONNECTICUT

12. NEWPORT [NH 102–103]

TEXT: "I send the joys of earth away," Isaac Watts, "Parting with carnal joys," *HSS*, II:11, sts. 1–2, 4–5. Long Meter, 8.8.8.8. TUNE: Daniel Read, Plain Tune in B minor, *The American Singing Book* (New Haven, Conn.: Daniel Read, 1785), 56. Mood: Allegro.

*I send the joys of earth away;
Away, ye tempters of the mind,
False as the smooth deceitful sea,
And empty as the whistling wind.*

*Your streams were floating me along
Down to the gulf of black despair;
And while I listen'd to your song
Your streams had e'en convey'd me there.*

*Now to the shining realms above
I stretch my hands and glance my eyes;
O for the pinions of a dove,
To bear me to the upper skies!*

*There, from the bosom of my God,
Oceans of endless pleasures roll;
There would I fix my last abode,
And drown the sorrows of my soul.*

13. HATFIELD [NH 114–115]

TEXT: "Ah Lord, ah Lord, what have I done," John Mason, in John Mason and Thomas Shepherd, *Penitential Cries*, 2d ed. (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1693), sts. 1–4. Common Meter, 8.6.8.6. TUNE: Thomas Baird, Plain Tune in G minor, in Daniel Belknap, *The Evangelical Harmony* (Boston: Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer T. Andrews, 1800), 20. Mood: Allegro.

*Ah Lord, ah Lord, what have I done,
What will become of me?
What shall I say, what shall I do,
Or whither shall I flee?
By wand'ring have I lost myself,
And here I make my moan;
O whither, whither have I strayed,
Ah Lord, what have I done?*

*Thy candle searches all my rooms,
And now I plainly see,
The num'rous sins of earth and hell
Are summed up in me.
The seeds of all the ills that grow
Are in my garden sown,
And multitudes of them are sprung;
Ah Lord, what have I done?*

*I have been Satan's willing slave,
And his most easy prey;
He was not readier to command
Than I was to obey.
Or if at times he left my soul,
Yet still his work went on;
I was a tempter to myself;
Ah Lord, what have I done?*

*I put at all the threats of heav'n,
And slighted all its charms;
Nor Satan's fetters would I leave
For Christ's inviting arms.
I had a soul but priz'd it not,
And now my soul is gone,
My forced cries do pierce the skies;
Ah Lord, what have I done?*

14. ATTENTION [NH 106–107]

TEXT: "Hark! from the tombs, a doleful sound!," Isaac Watts, "A funeral thought," *HSS*, II:63, sts. 1, 3–4. Common Meter, 8.6.8.6. M (49/60). TUNE: Asahel Benham (?), Fuging Tune in A minor, in Asahel Benham, *Federal Harmony* (New Haven: A. Morse, 1790), 18. Mood: Allegro.

*Hark! from the tombs, a doleful sound!
Mine ears, attend the cry;
"Ye living men, come, view the ground
Where you must shortly lie."*

*Great God, is this our certain doom?
And are we still secure!
Still walking downward to the tomb,
And yet prepare no more!*

*Grant us the pow'r of quick'ning grace,
To fit our souls to fly;
Then, when we drop this dying flesh,
We'll rise above the sky.*

15. CRUCIFIXION [NH 108–111]

TEXT: "Behold the Savior of mankind," Samuel Wesley, Sr., "On the crucifixion," in John Wesley, *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns* (Charleston, S.C.: Lewis Timothy, 1737), sts. 1–4. Common Meter, 8.6.8.6. M (69/40). TUNE: M. Kyes, Set-Piece in E minor, in Asahel Benham, *Social Harmony* (New Haven [?]: Thomas and Samuel Green [?], 1798), 49. Mood: Adagio.

*Behold the Savior of mankind
Nailed to the shameful tree!
How vast the love that him inclined
To bleed and die for thee!*

*Hark, how he groans, while nature shakes
And earth's strong pillars bend!
The temple's veil in sunder breaks,
The solid marbles rend.*

*'Tis done, the precious ransom's paid.
"Receive my soul," he cries;
See where he bows his sacred head,
He bows his head and dies.*

*But soon he'll break death's envious chain,
And in full glory shine.
O Lamb of God, was ever pain,
Was ever love like thine?*

IV: MAINE

16. MECHIAS [NH 122–123]

TEXT: “When, overwhelm’d with grief,” Isaac Watts, Psalm 61:1–6, “Safety in God,” *PDI*, sts. 1–4. Short Meter, 6.6.8.6.
TUNE: James Lyon, Plain Tune in C, in John Stickney, *The Gentleman and Lady’s Musical Companion* (Newburyport, Mass.: Daniel Bayley, 1774), 45. Mood: Allegro.

*When, overwhelm’d with grief,
My heart within me dies,
Helpless, and far from all relief,
To heav’n I lift mine eyes.*

*O lead me to the rock
That’s high above my head,
And make the covert of thy wings
My shelter and my shade.*

*Within thy presence, Lord,
Forever I’ll abide;
Thou art the tow’r of my defense,
The refuge where I hide.*

*Thou givest me the lot
Of those that fear thy name;
If endless life be their reward,
I shall possess the same.*

17. ST. PAUL’S [NH 158–159]

TEXT: “How beauteous are their feet,” Isaac Watts, “The blessedness of gospel times, Isaiah 3:2, 7–10, Matthew 13:16–17,” *HSS*, I:10, sts. 1–4. Short Meter, 6.6.8.6. M (36/74). TUNE: Supply Belcher, Fuging Tune in F, *Maine*, 24. Mood: Allegro.

*How beauteous are their feet,
Who stand on Zion’s hill;
Who bring salvation on their tongues,
And words of peace reveal!*

*How charming is their voice,
How sweet the tidings are.
Zion behold thy Savior King,
He reigns and triumphs here.*

*How happy are our ears,
That hear this joyful sound,
Which kings and prophets waited for,
And sought but never found!*

*How blessed are our eyes,
That see this heav’nly light;
Prophets and kings desired it long,
But died without the sight.*

18. TRANSITION [NH 160–161]

TEXT: “When snows descend and robe the fields,” Unattributed, “The Seasons,” in Abner Kneeland, *National Hymns, Original and Selected; for the use of those who are “Slaves of No Sect”* (Boston: The Investigator, 1832), Hymn 45, st. 1. Common Meter, 8.6.8.6. TUNE: Supply Belcher, Fuging Tune in D minor, *Maine*, 29. Mood: Allegro. Belcher set only the first verse of this hymn, which apparently circulated in manuscript form during the late eighteenth century.

*When snows descend and robe the fields
In winter’s bright array,
Touch’d by the sun the luster fades
And weeps itself away.*

19. JUBILANT [NH 140–141]

TEXT: “Blow ye the trumpet, blow,” Charles Wesley, “Year of Jubilee, or the New Year–Leviticus 25,” *Hymns for New Year’s Day* (London: n.p., 1750), sts. 1, 6. Particular Meter, 6.6.6.6.8.8. M (18/101). TUNE: Supply Belcher, Fuging Tune in C, *Maine*, 39. Mood: Allegro.

*Blow ye the trumpet, blow,
The gladly solemn sound;
Let all the nations know,
To earth’s remotest bound;
The year of jubilee is come,
Return, ye ransom’d sinners, home.*

*The gospel trumpet hear,
The news of heav’nly grace;
And, saved from earth, appear
Before your Savior’s face:
The year of jubilee is come,
Return, ye ransom’d sinners, home.*

20. THE LILLY [NH 142]

TEXT: “Peaceful and lowly in their native soil,” Unattributed, in *Maine*, 36, st. 1. Particular Meter, 10.10.10.10. TUNE: Supply Belcher, Plain Tune in E minor, *Maine*, 36. Mood: Allegro.

*Peaceful and lowly in their native soil,
They neither know to spin nor care to toil;
Yet with confess’d magnificence deride
Our mean attire and impotence of pride.*

21. BUCKFIELD [NH 166–167]

TEXT: “When strangers stand and hear me tell,” Isaac Watts, “Christ dwells in heaven, but visits on earth. Song of Solomon 6:1–3,12,” *HSS*, I:76, sts. 1–2, 6. Long Meter, 8.8.8.8. TUNE: Abraham Maxim, Fuging Tune in C, *The Oriental Harmony* (Exeter, N.H.: Henry Ranlet, 1802), 31. Mood: Allegro.

*When strangers stand and hear me tell
What beauties in my Savior dwell,
Where he is gone they fain would know,
That they may seek and love him too.*

*My best beloved keeps his throne
On hills of light, in worlds unknown;
But he descends, and shows his face
In the young gardens of his grace.*

*Oh, may my spirit daily rise
On wings of faith above the skies,
Till death shall make my last remove
To dwell forever with my love.*

IV: VERMONT AND NEW YORK

22. PENNSYLVANIA [NH 174–176]

TEXT: “When shall thy lovely face be seen?,” Isaac Watts, “Come, Lord Jesus,” *Horae Lyricae: Poems, Chiefly of the Lyrical Kind* (London: S. and D. Bridge, 1706), sts. 1–4. Long Meter, 8.8.8.8. TUNE: Nehemiah Shumway, Fuging Tune in G minor, *The American Harmony* (Philadelphia: John M’Culloch, 1793), 154–155. Mood: Allegro.

*When shall thy lovely face be seen?
When shall our eyes behold our God?
What lengths of distance lie between,
And hills of guilt? A heavy load!*

*Our months are ages of delay,
And slowly ev’ry minute wears:
Fly, winged time, and roll away
These tedious rounds of sluggish years.*

*Ye heav’nly gates, loose all your chains;
Let the eternal pillars bow;
Blest Savior, cleave the starry plains,
And make the crystal fountains flow.*

*Hark, how the saints unite their cries,
And pray and wait the gen’ral doom;
Come, thou the soul of all our joys,
Thou, the desire of nations, come.*

23. SOUNDING JOY [NH 180–181]

TEXT: “Joy to the world! The Lord is come!,” Isaac Watts, Psalm 98, Part 2, “The Messiah’s coming and kingdom,” *PDI*, sts. 1–4. Common Meter, 8.6.8.6. M (12/111). TUNE: J. P. Storm, Fuging Tune in D, in Thomas Atwill, *The New-York Collection of Sacred Harmony* (Lansingburg, N.Y.: Thomas Atwill, 1795), 42. Mood: Allegro.

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev’ry heart prepare him room,
And heav’n and nature sing.*

*Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy.*

*No more let sins and sorrow grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love.*

24. REDEMPTION [NH 189]

TEXT: “Glory to God on high,” Isaac Watts, “The nativity of Christ, Luke 1:30 and 2:10,” *HSS*, I:3, sts. 7, 1. Short Meter, 6.6.8.6. M (58/51). TUNE: Jeremiah Ingalls, Plain Tune in G, *The Christian Harmony* (Exeter, N.H.: Henry Ranlet, 1805), 199. Mood: Allegro.

*Glory to God on high;
And heavenly peace on earth;
Good-will to men, to angels joy,
At our Redeemer’s birth.*

*Behold, the grace appears!
The promise is fulfill’d;
Mary, the wondrous virgin, bears,
And Jesus is the child.*

V: THE SOUTH AND THE WEST

25. CONSOLATION [NH 199]

TEXT: “Come, humble sinner, in whose breast,” Edmund Jones, “The Successful Resolve I will go in unto the king, Esther 4:16,” in John Rippon, *A Selection of Hymns* (London: Thomas Wilkins, 1787), 355, sts. 1–4, 6. Common Meter, 8.6.8.6. M (36/74). TUNE: Lucius Chapin, Plain Tune in A minor, *A Collection of 16 Tune Settings printed by Andrew Law at the request of John Logan* (Philadelphia: Andrew Law, c. 1812). Mood: Allegro. Chapin’s *Collection* was privately printed, but his tunes quickly entered public use. See LIBERTY-HALL below.

*Come, humble sinner, in whose breast
A thousand thoughts revolve,
Come, with your guilt and fear oppress,
And make this last resolve.*

*"I'll go to Jesus, tho' my sin
Hath like a mountain rose;
I know his courts, I'll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.*

*"Prostrate I'll lie before his throne,
And there my guilt confess;
I'll tell him I'm a wretch undone,
Without his sov'reign grace.*

*"I'll to the gracious King approach,
Whose scepter pardon gives;
Perhaps he may command my touch,
And then the suppliant lives.*

*"I can but perish if I go;
I am resolv'd to try;
For if I stay away, I know
I must for ever die."*

26. LIBERTY-HALL [NH 201]

TEXT: "Alas! and did my Savior bleed!" Isaac Watts, "Godly sorrow arising from the sufferings of Christ," *HSS*, II: 9, sts. 1–2, 4. Common Meter, 8.6.8.6. M (5/127). TUNE: Lucius Chapin, Plain Tune in A minor, in Robert Patterson, *Patterson's Church Music* (Cincinnati: Browne and Looker, 1813). Mood: Adagio. In this first publicly printed version of Chapin's tune, Patterson added a counter part and used Watts's "Alas!" as the text.

*Alas! and did my Savior bleed!
And did my Sov'reign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
To such a worm as I?*

*Was it for crimes that I had done,
He groan'd upon the tree?
Amazing pity! Grace unknown!
And love beyond degree!*

*Thus might I hide my blushing face,
While his dear cross appears;
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,
And melt my eyes in tears.*

27. THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM [NH 207]

TEXT: "Ye nations all, on you I call," Unattributed, in *Southern*, 78, sts. 1–3. Particular Meter, 8.7.8.7. TUNE: Unattributed, Plain Tune in A minor, in *Southern*, 78. Mood: Allegro.

*Ye nations all, on you I call,
Come hear this declaration,
And don't refuse this glorious news
Of Jesus and salvation.
To royal Jews came first the news
Of Christ the great Messiah,
As was foretold by prophets old,
Isaiah, Jeremiah.*

*To Abraham the promise came,
And to his seed forever,
A light to shine in Isaac's line,
By Scripture we discover;
Hail, promis'd morn! the Savior's born,
The glorious Mediator;
God's blessed Word made flesh and blood,
Assumed the human nature.*

*His parents poor in earthly store,
To entertain the stranger,
They found no bed to lay his head,
But in the ox's manger;
No royal things, as used by kings,
Were seen by those that found him,
But in the hay the stranger lay,
With swaddling bands around him.*

28. CONVOY [NH 210]

TEXT: "Watchman, tell us of the night," John Bowring, *Hymns* (London: John Bowring, 1825), sts. 1–6. Particular Meter, 7.7.7.7. M (49/60). TUNE: M. L. Swan, Plain Tune in A minor, *The New Harp of Columbia* (Nashville: W. T. Berry, 1867), 29. Mood: Allegro.

*Watchman, tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are.
Trav'ler, o'er yon mountain's height,
See that glory-beaming star.*

*Watchman, does its beauteous ray
Aught of joy or hope foretell?
Trav'ler, yes, it brings the day,
Promis'd day of Israel.*

*Watchman, tell us of the night;
Higher yet that star ascends.
Trav'ler, blessedness and light,
Peace and truth, its course portends.*

*Watchman, will its beams alone
Gild the spot that gave them birth?
Trav'ler, ages are its own:
See, it bursts o'er all the earth.*

*Watchman, tell us of the night,
For the morning seems to dawn.
Trav'ler, darkness takes its flight,
Doubt and terror are withdrawn.*

*Watchman, let thy wand'rings cease;
Hie thee to thy quiet home.
Trav'ler, lo! the Prince of Peace,
Lo! the Son of God is come!*

VI: CONTEMPORARY TUNES

29. HALLELUJAH NEW [NH 242–243]

TEXT: “And let this feeble body fail,” Charles Wesley, “Burial Romans 8:18,” *Funeral Hymns, Second Series* (London, 1759), sts. 1, 7, alt. Common Meter, 8.6.8.6. D. with refrain. M (54/55). TUNE: Roland Hutchinson, Plain Tune in G, 1996. The text of the refrain “And I’ll sing hallelujah” appears in the camp meeting song HALLELUJAH in *Southern*, 107.

*And let this feeble body fail,
And let it faint or die;
My soul shall quit this mournful vale,
And soar to worlds on high.*

*Refrain: And I’ll sing hallelujah,
And you’ll sing hallelujah,
And we’ll all sing hallelujah,
When we arrive at home.*

*Oh what are all my suff’rings here,
If, Lord, thou count me meet
With that enraptured host t’appear,
And worship at thy feet!*

*Give joy or grief, give ease or pain,
Take life or friends away,
But let me find them all again,
In that eternal day.*

30. NATIVITY [NH 214–215]

TEXT: “Mortals, awake, with angels join,” Samuel Medley, “The incarnation of Christ, Luke 2:14,” in Augustus M. Toplady, *The Gospel Magazine, or Treasury of Divine Knowledge*, IX (London, 1782), sts. 1–4, 8–9. Common Meter, 8.6.8.6. M (65/44). TUNE: Bruce Randall, Fuging Tune in G, 1990.

*Mortals, awake, with angels join,
And chant the solemn lay;
Joy, love, and gratitude combine
To hail th’auspicious day.*

*In heav’n the rapt’rous song began,
And sweet seraphic fire
Through all the shining legions ran,
And strung and tuned the lyre.*

*Swift through the vast expanse it flew,
And loud the echo rolled;
The theme, the song the joy was new,
’Twas more than heav’n could hold.*

*Down through the portals of the sky,
Th’impetuous torrent ran;
And angels flew with eager joy
To bear the news to man.*

*With joy the chorus we'll repeat,
"Glory to God on high;
Good will and peace are now complete,
Jesus was born to die."*

*Hail, Prince of life, forever hail!
Redeemer, Brother, Friend!
Though earth, and time, and life shall fail,
Thy praise shall never end.*

31. CORTONA [NH 236–237]

TEXT: "Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings," Robert Seagrave, "Heaven desired," *Hymns for Christian Worship* (London, 1742), st. 1. Particular Meter, 7.6.7.6.7.7.6. M (37/73). TUNE: M. R. Truelsen, Plain Tune in G minor, 1996.

*Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,
Thy better portion trace;
Rise from all terrestrial things
T'wards heav'n thy native place.
Sun and moon and stars decay,
Time shall soon this earth remove.
Rise, my soul, and haste away
To seats prepared above.*

32. GREAT DIVIDE [NH 250–251]

TEXT: "God moves in a mysterious way," William Cowper, "Light shining out of darkness [John 13:7]," in John Newton, *Twenty-six Letters on Religious Subjects* (London, 1774), sts. 1–2. Common Meter, 8.6.8.6. M (24/90). TUNE: Stephen Marini, Fuging Tune in D minor, 1998. This tune is dedicated to the memory of Joseph DiIulio and Paul Viglione.

*God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.*

*Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sov'reign will.*

33. ARINELLO [NH 246–247]

TEXT: "Come, ye that love the Lord," Isaac Watts, "Heavenly joy on earth," *HSS*, II:30, sts. 1, 8, 10, alt. Short Meter, 6.6.8.6. M (3/153). TUNE: Dennis O'Brien, Fuging Tune in G, 1997.

*Come, ye that love the Lord,
And let your joys be known:
Join in a song with sweet accord,
And thus surround the throne.*

*The men of grace have found
Glory begun below;
Celestial fruits on earthly ground
From faith and hope may grow.*

*Then let our songs abound,
And ev'ry tear be dry;
We're marching through Immanuel's ground
To fairer worlds on high.*

34. EV'RY STRING AWAKE [NH 239–241]

TEXT: “Your harps, ye trembling saints,” Augustus M. Toplady, “Weak believers encouraged,” in *Psalms and Hymns for Public and Private Worship* (London: E. & C. Dilly, 1776), Hymn 224, sts. 1, 4. Short Meter, 6.6.8.6. M (66/43). TUNE: Glen Wright, Fuging Tune in E minor, 1996.

*Your harps, ye trembling saints,
Down from the willows take,
Loud to the praise of Christ, our Lord,
Bid ev'ry string awake.*

*The time of love will come,
When we shall plainly see
Not only that he shed his blood,
But each shall say for me.*

35. TEN THOUSAND CHARMS [NH 244–245]

TEXT: “Come, thou fount of ev'ry blessing,” Robert Robinson, “Grateful Recollection—Ebenezer, 1 Samuel 7:5–12,” in *A Collection of Hymns used by the Church of Christ in Angel-Alley, Bishopsgate* (London, 1759), sts. 1–2 with refrain. Particular Meter, 8.7.8.7. M (7/133). TUNE: Hal Kunkel, Plain Tune in B-flat, 1996. The text of the camp meeting refrain “I will rise and go to Jesus” appears in RESTORATION in Hugh McGraw, et al., eds., *The Sacred Harp, 1991 Edition* (Bremen, Ga.: Sacred Harp Publishing Company, 1991), 312.

*Come, thou fount of ev'ry blessing,
Tune my heart to sing thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.*

Refrain

*I will rise and go to Jesus,
He'll embrace me in his arms;
In the arms of my dear Savior,
Lo! there are ten thousand charms!*

*Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above;
Praise the mount, O fix me on it,
Mount of God's unchanging love.*

Norumbega Harmony is a social, spiritual, and musical community dedicated to the preservation, performance, and promulgation of New England singing-school music. Founded in 1976 at Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts, we have met weekly for nearly thirty years to sing from *The Sacred Harp* and historic New England singing-school collections. Our members have sung with traditional singers in the Deep South and we observe the practices of Sacred Harp singing in the hollow square. Norumbega has also undertaken an active outreach program, performing at more than one hundred New England educational and cultural institutions. We sponsor the monthly Greater Boston Sacred Harp Open Singing and the annual New England Singing of *The Sacred Harp*, and our members maintain close relationships with the United Kingdom Shape-Note Convention and the West Gallery Music Association. Our tunebook, *The Norumbega Harmony* (2003), is the culmination of a decades-long communal project of collecting, selecting, editing, and publishing compositions from the New England singing-school tradition. Very few of its one hundred thirty-six historic and contemporary compositions

have been published in *The Sacred Harp* or in modern editions. *Sweet Seraphic Fire* is Norumbega's third recording, preceded by *Sing and Joyful Be: Early American Fuging Tunes, Anthems, and Spiritual Songs* (1989) and *Come to Zion: Shaker Songs* (1992), recorded at and produced by Hancock Shaker Village, Inc.

Stephen Marini, founder and singing master of Norumbega Harmony, is the Elisabeth Luce Moore Professor of Christian Studies and Professor of American Religion and Ethics at Wellesley College in Wellesley, Massachusetts. He learned traditional Sacred Harp singing in the Deep South while teaching at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill during the mid-1970s. A historian of American religious culture, he is the author of *Radical Sects of Revolutionary New England* (Harvard University Press, 1982) and *Sacred Song in America: Religion, Music, and Public Culture* (University of Illinois Press, 2003), as well as numerous essays on early American religion, politics, and sacred music. Since 1978 he has also taught regularly on graduate theological faculties including Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Andover Newton Theological School, Harvard Divinity School, and most recently, Yale Divinity School/Yale Institute of Sacred Music.

For more information on Norumbega Harmony and its activities, please visit our Web site at www.norumbegaharmony.org.

NORUMBEGA HARMONY
Stephen Marini, Singing Master

Treble

Sarah Brownsberger
Tom Malone
Lyra O'Brien
Nancy Reid
Mary Sears
Anayis Mampre Wright
Jane Zanichkowsky

Counter

Anne Kazlauskas
Amy Lepak
Susan Mampre
June Matthews
Karen McArthur
Michal Truelsen

Lead

Susan Jaster
Stephen Marini
Dennis O'Brien
Ishmael Stefanov
Robert Stoddard
Ron Trial
Jody Wormhoudt
Glen Wright

Bass

David Bliss
Robert Dove
Jim Harper
Bill Holt
Hubert Jessup
Bruce Randall
Richard Schmeidler

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- Come to Zion: Shaker Songs.* Norumbega Harmony, Stephen Marini, Singing Master, Hancock Shaker Village, Inc.
Make a Joyful Noise: American Psalmody 1770–1840. New World Records 80255-2.
Rivers of Delight. Word of Mouth Chorus, Larry Gordon, Director, Nonesuch CD 71360.
Sacred Harp Singing. Alabama Sacred Harp Singers. Rounder Records 1503.
Sacred Harp Singing in Western Massachusetts, 2000–2001. Western Massachusetts Sacred Harp Convention.
Sing and Joyful Be: Early American Fuging Tunes, Anthems, and Spiritual Songs. Norumbega Harmony, Stephen Marini, Singing Master, Norumbega Harmony, Inc., NBH-001.
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Southern Journey, Volume 9: Harp of a Thousand Strings: All Day Singing from the Sacred Harp. Alabama Sacred Harp Singers. Rounder Records 1709.
Southern Journey, Volume 10: And Glory Shone Around: More All Day Singing from the Sacred Harp. Alabama Sacred Harp Singers. Rounder Records 1710.
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Producer: Stephen Marini

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Photographs: D. W. Stapleton, Jr.

Front cover: Oliver Holden, *Select Harmony* (1783), intaglio print by Isaac Sanford. Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society.

Pages 2–7: William Billings, *The Continental Harmony* (1794), intaglio print and details. Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society.

Back cover verso: Thomas Lee, Jr., *Sacred Harmony* (c. 1800), intaglio print by Thomas Lee, Jr. Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society.

Back cover: Timothy Swan, *The Songster's Assistant* (1800), intaglio print by Alexander Ely. Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society.

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SWEET SERAPHIC FIRE: NEW ENGLAND SINGING SCHOOL MUSIC FROM *THE NORUMBEGA HARMONY*
NORUMBEGA HARMONY, STEPHEN MARINI, SINGING MASTER 80640-2

1. <i>New Canaan</i> (Oliver Holden, 1793)	2:14
2. <i>Maryland</i> (William Billings, 1778)	3:16
3. <i>Bethlehem</i> (William Billings, 1778)	2:29
4. <i>Lynn</i> (Oliver Holden, 1793)	1:36
5. <i>Funeral Hymn</i> (Oliver Holden, 1792)	3:12
6. <i>An Anthem for Easter</i> (William Billings, 1787/1795)	3:26
7. <i>Walpole</i> (Abraham Wood, 1786)	3:04
8. <i>Beauty</i> (Jacob French, 1789)	2:02
9. <i>Happiness</i> (Jacob French, 1793)	1:11
10. <i>Woburn</i> (Jacob Kimball, 1793)	2:15
11. <i>Montague</i> (Timothy Swan, 1801)	1:27
12. <i>Newport</i> (Daniel Read, 1785)	1:52
13. <i>Hatfield</i> (Thomas Baird, 1800)	2:59
14. <i>Attention</i> (Asahel Benham [?], 1790)	2:50
15. <i>Crucifixion</i> (M. Kyes, 1798)	2:26
16. <i>Mechias</i> (James Lyon, 1774)	1:53
17. <i>St. Paul's</i> (Supply Belcher, 1794)	1:57
18. <i>Transition</i> (Supply Belcher, 1794)	1:16
19. <i>Jubilant</i> (Supply Belcher, 1794)	1:22
20. <i>The Lilly</i> (Supply Belcher, 1794)	:43
21. <i>Buckfield</i> (Abraham Maxim, 1802)	1:21
22. <i>Pennsylvania</i> (Nehemiah Shumway, 1793)	3:03
23. <i>Sounding Joy</i> (J. P. Storm, 1795)	2:01
24. <i>Redemption</i> (Jeremiah Ingalls, 1805)	1:23
25. <i>Consolation</i> (Lucius Chapin, c. 1812)	1:40
26. <i>Liberty-Hall</i> (Lucius Chapin, c. 1812)	1:33
27. <i>The Babe of Bethlehem</i> (<i>Southern Harmony</i> , 1835)	1:41
28. <i>Convoy</i> (M. L. Swan, 1867)	2:10
29. <i>Hallelujah New</i> (Roland Hutchinson, 1996)	2:15
30. <i>Nativity</i> (Bruce Randall, 1990)	1:53
31. <i>Cortona</i> (M. R. Truelsen, 1996)	:50
32. <i>Great Divide</i> (Stephen Marini, 1998)	1:50
33. <i>Arinello</i> (Dennis O'Brien, 1997)	1:46
34. <i>Ev'ry String Awake</i> (Glen Wright, 1996)	2:09
35. <i>Ten Thousand Charms</i> (Hal Kunkel, 1996)	1:47

Total time: 73:22

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