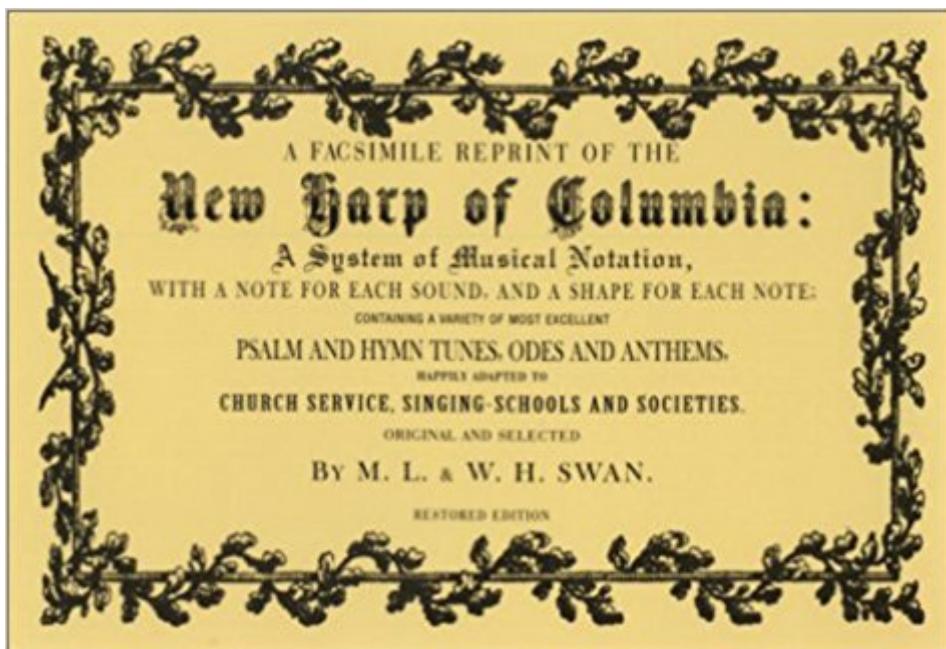


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The New Harp Of Columbia, Restored Ed



Synopsis

In the small towns and rural areas of early America, church-sponsored “singing schools” proliferated as a way of both improving congregational singing and drawing communities together. Congregants attending these schools were taught a form of musical notation in which the notes were assigned different shapes to indicate variations in pitch—a method that worked well with singers having little understanding of standard musical notation. These schools eventually became major social events that drew hundreds of attendees, and today countless enthusiasts carry on the shape-note tradition. The New Harp of Columbia, originally published in Knoxville in 1867, was a shape-note tunebook used in East Tennessee singing schools. It was based on an even earlier publication, The Harp of Columbia (1848). In 1978, the University of Tennessee Press published a facsimile edition of The New Harp with an introduction by Dorothy D. Horn, Ron Petersen, and Candra Phillips that detailed the history of shape-note singing as well as the story of the tunebook itself and its original compilers, W. H. Swan and M. L. Swan. That edition went out of print in 1999. Now, for this “restored edition” of the tunebook, the Press has reprinted not only the full text of its 1978 facsimile edition but has included additional tunes that were part of the original 1848 Harp of Columbia. A few verses to some songs favored by contemporary singers have also been added, and a new foreword by Larry Olszewski and Bruce Wheeler brings the story of the tunebook and its users up to date. Included in the book are old psalm and hymn tunes, anthems, fuguing pieces, and folk hymns—a total of more than two hundred pieces that represent a fascinating slice of Americana. As a reviewer for the Journal of Church Music noted of the 1978 facsimile: “[The book is] a worthwhile addition to any church musician’s library, especially those interested in the development of American sacred music over the past two centuries.” This publication marks a significant new step in preserving an important musical tradition.

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Customer Reviews

In the small towns and rural areas of early America, church-sponsored "singing schools" proliferated as a way of both improving congregational singing and drawing communities together. Congregants attending these schools were taught a form of musical notation in which the notes were assigned different shapes to indicate variations in pitch—a method that worked well with singers having little understanding of standard musical notation. These schools eventually became major social events that drew hundreds of attendees, and today countless enthusiasts carry on the shape-note tradition. The New Harp of Columbia, originally published in Knoxville in 1867, was a shape-note tunebook used in East Tennessee singing schools. It was based on an even earlier publication, The Harp of Columbia (1848). In 1978, the University of Tennessee Press published a facsimile edition of The New Harp with an introduction by Dorothy D. Horn, Ron Petersen, and Candra Phillips that detailed the history of shape-note singing as well as the story of the tunebook itself and its original compilers, W. H. Swan and M. L. Swan. That edition went out of print in 1999. Now, for this "restored edition" of the tunebook, the Press has reprinted not only the full text of its 1978 facsimile edition but has included additional tunes that were part of the original 1848 Harp of Columbia. A few verses to some songs favored by contemporary singers have also been added, and a new foreword by Larry Olszewski and Bruce Wheeler brings the story of the tunebook and its users up to date. Included in the book are old psalm and hymn tunes, anthems, fuguing pieces, and folk hymns—a total of more than two hundred pieces that represent a fascinating slice of Americana. As a reviewer for the Journal of Church Music noted of the 1978 facsimile: "[The book is] a worthwhile addition to any church musician's library, especially those interested in the development of American sacred music over the past two centuries." This publication marks a significant new step in preserving an important musical tradition.

it was exactly what I wanted and could not find anywhere else

The "book description" above will tell you exactly what the book is. The New Harp of Columbia is still in active use by "Old Harp" singers in Knoxville, Tennessee and surrounding counties. It has a somewhat different notation ("Swan shapes") from other seven-note books such as Christian Harmony and the various "Stamps-Baxter" (convention music) books. New Harp of Columbia and Christian Harmony singers gather together at Camp DoReMi at Wildacres near Spruce Pine in western North Carolina every August for several days of singing from both books. The New Harp of Columbia and Marion Hatchett's A Companion to The New Harp of Columbia are published by the University of Tennessee Press.

The New Harp of Columbia is a repository of Odes, Anthems, Fuging pieces, Marching Tunes, Sea Chanteys, Dirges, Folk Tunes, Calvary Tunes put to meter and matched to the prime sermons of the day and written by the tune smiths into hymns. (The Hymn "Amazing Grace," was mixed and matched to a tune New Britain or Middleton is contained therein but not to J. Cowper's Hymn of John Newton's sermon.) This singing school manual breaks the music into separate parts for easy reading and written into character notes or shapes to help distinguish the notes for a people in a time who could not read let alone read music. It is part of a two hundred year plus ongoing American social community and spiritual tradition. More information can be found [...] or [...] Larry Olszewski- Old Harp Singer

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