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Solfization, Scale, and Key in Nineteenth-Century Four-Shape Tunebooks: Theory and Practice

Discussions of shape-note tunebooks have tended to focus either on the music or on the theoretical introductions, with little attempt to interrelate the two. In this article I examine the theoretical introductions and the music in nineteenth-century four-shape tunebooks from the perspective of solfization, scale, and key with a view to illuminating the sometimes contradictory interrelationship of theory and practice.

Theoretical Introductions

To take a fresh look at the theoretical introductions, it is helpful to disjoin the notions of solfization, scale, and key, which are commonly linked in discussions of music of the so-called common practice period. Each of these terms has its own distinct history and set of definitions. Solfization refers to the use of syllables to designate and sing pitches. Scale is a ladder arrangement of notes, staff lines, or other musical elements. Key originally meant simply the letter name of a note. As more and more music came to be written in the major and minor modes, particularly during the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, musicians developed a system of key theory that emphasized harmonic means of establishing tonal centers through bass movement and chord function. Keys, which could be expressed

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by scales progressing from tonic to tonic, were limited to two modes: major and minor. An examination of the theoretical introductions in the light of their historical forebears demonstrates that the concepts of solmization, scale, and key were at first separate but later came to be linked under the influence of key theory.

Presentations of the rudiments of music in the shape-note books were derived from those of eighteenth-century American tunebooks, which were based in turn on English antecedents whose ancestry included medieval chant theory. As plainchant was evolving from an oral to a written tradition, the Guidonian solmization syllables, which were designed to assist in the accurate rendition of intervals, emerged sometime around A.D. 1000. Similar pedagogical interests lay behind the conversion of the Guidonian hand into the scala in German plainchant primers, beginning with Michael Keinspeck's *Lilium musicæ planæ* (Basel, 1496). Scala, the ladder arrangement of all the notes of the medieval gamut on a ten-line staff, integrates notation and solmization. Thomas Morley, in *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Prac- ticall Musicke* (London, 1597), presents a diagram of "the Scale of Musicke," or "Gam," that is modeled on those of the German plainchant primers, with the traditional six syllables distributed in seven hexachords; he says, however, that *ut* should be used only for the lowest note (*gammaut*), so that under most circumstances four syllables are sufficient for solmization. This is the root of the four-syllable fa-sola system that became popular in both England and America. In no way does Morley link scale with key, reserving discussions of the latter for the third part of his book, which focuses on composition. John Playford, in his seventh edition of *An Introduction to the Skill of Mu- sick* (London, 1674), takes up where Morley left off, saying that *sol* and *la* substitute for *ut* and *re* of the G hexachord. In his four-syllable sys- tem, *mi* is the "master note," above which *fa-sol-la-fa-sol-la* are to be sung before returning to *mi*, and below which *la-sol-fa-la-sol-fa* are to be sung before returning to *mi*. He says that a flat lowers the pitch and changes the syllable to *fa*, whereas a sharp raises the pitch but does not alter the syllable. His diagram of the scale, or gamut, in which the range is extended from C below the *gammaut* to *a*² above the treble staff, has full hexachordal names to the left but uses only four syllables for the three solmizations: the first with B-natural, the second with B-flat, and the third with B-flat and E-flat. His exercises for "tuning the voice" use the natural notes from G to G and hence are "pure solmization" independent of key. Like Morley, Playford dis- cusses key in another section of his book in conjunction with musical composition. Playford's book was one of the principal sources for eighteenth-century American tunebook rudiments.
Allen P. Britton describes the general contents of the theoretical introductions in eighteenth-century American tunebooks as follows:

The theoretical introductions in American tune-books of the eighteenth century characteristically begin with "the gamut, or scale of music." In some cases, a short definition of music precedes. Immediately following come sections dealing with "the names and measures of the notes, and their rests and use," "rules to find the mi," "the keys used in music," "the characters used in music," "other characters used in music," "the moods of time," and "lessons for tuning the voice." If the introduction is fairly elaborate the presentation of the rudiments of music may be followed by short discussions of such subjects as "choosing and arranging the parts," concords and discords, accent, syncopation, "soft and graceful singing," graces and ornaments, and "directory terms." The introduction may be concluded with a few miscellaneous observations on singing and learning to sing.7

With the addition of material on the four shapes, Britton's description applies equally well to the theoretical introductions of nineteenth-century four-shape tunebooks.

For modern musicians steeped in major and minor scales, reading key theory anachronistically into the solmization exercises of the tunebooks can distort the meaning of these theoretical introductions by misconceiving their historical contexts. While explaining the presentation of the gamut in Thomas Walter's *Grounds and Rules of Musick Explained* (Boston, 1721), Britton writes:

The fasola solmization, as it is commonly called, utilizes the syllables fa-sol-la-fa-sol-la-mi-fa for the ascending notes of the diatonic scale from tonic to tonic. Mi, the syllable for the seventh degree of the major scale or the second degree of the minor, is the only unambiguous syllable and is consequently used as a reference point. Notice that the diatonic series [given by Thomas Walter] begins on the fourth degree [F] rather than the first. Throughout the century writers seemed to feel no necessity for beginning musical exercises on the tonic. Although the music sung was quite definitely tonal, tune-book compilers were still largely innocent of a tonal theory. This exercise is unusual in its own time, however, for the most common practice was to begin on the fifth degree [G].8

Similarly, concerning nineteenth-century tunebooks Phil D. Perrin writes, "Since all American music from 1801 to 1860 was composed in either the major or minor mode, all systems of notation contained a method of indicating scale degrees so that they could be identified
by the singer. All of the systems were based on the concept of a seven-degree scale, but some used only four syllables to designate the seven scale degrees."

From the historical point of view, the problem with the explanations by Britton and Perrin is that they proceed from major and minor scales to solmization rather than the other way around. (Perrin further oversimplifies his explanation when he says that all American music of the period is in either the major or minor mode. Mixolydian, Phrygian, and Dorian tunes exist in significant numbers in the shape-note books, and harmonic practices frequently differ from standard major-minor key theory.) Solmization is designed simply to keep the whole steps and half steps in proper order, irrespective of the key or mode. Following Playford, the compilers of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American tunebooks designate mi, not a tonic scale degree, as the "master note" for determining other syllables up and down. Once the singer knows the position of the half steps, diatonic patterns of any sort can be sung. Eighteenth-century American tunebooks rarely give these series as major or minor scales, and even the nineteenth-century books, which often do present major scale and minor scale patterns, sometimes present others. When flats or sharps appear in the key signature, the singer must know the "removes of mi"—that is, the rules for determining the location of mi—so that the other syllables may be placed properly, thereby maintaining the correct order of whole steps and half steps. Playford gives the removes of mi through three flats only; Walter, through two flats and three sharps; and most nineteenth-century four-shape tunebook compilers, through four flats and four sharps (some of the later ones offer a second version of the removes of mi, which accounts for key signatures of up to seven flats and seven sharps).  

William Little and William Smith, in The Easy Instructor (Philadelphia, 1801), were apparently the first to use shape notes for pedagogical purposes: the syllables sol, la, mi, and fa were represented by a circle, square, diamond, and triangle, respectively. Both the introductory "Advertisement" and "Report" call attention to the innovation and utility of the use of four characters for the four syllables, but the presentation itself is entirely straightforward: the syllables sol, law, mi, and faw simply appear with the shapes underneath in six different rhythmic values. The Little-Smith four-shape system was widely adopted, especially in the South. Appearing at the end of the rudiments in early and later editions of The Easy Instructor are vocal exercises called the "eight notes" and "intervals proved." The former is a stepwise, diatonic series of notes first rising to the octave and then returning. The latter demonstrates the diatonic intervals within an octave by presenting them first filled in stepwise, then as skips; the
intervals are presented initially upward from the bottom note of the octave and then downward from the top note. In early editions of The Easy Instructor these two exercises maintain the natural notes from G to G that are characteristic of Playford and most eighteenth-century American tunebooks, but later editions have them in G major, with the requisite adjustment in the shapes. Hence, in what emerged as an increasingly common practice, solmization became linked to major and minor scales.

Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second (Harrisburg, Pa.: John Wyeth, 1813) gives a diagram of the gamut, or scale of twenty-two notes, that is descended from those of Morley and Playford (fig. 1). This model served as the basis for later diagrams of the gamut, or scale, in American tunebooks. Other tunebooks simply give separate staves with clefs, letters, and usually syllables.

As I previously observed, the various lessons for tuning the voice in major and minor keys demonstrate the increasing links of solmization and key theory. Britton reports two instances of exercises in major keys in the eighteenth century, one by Thomas Walter in The Grounds and Rules of Musick Explained and a later one by Nehemiah Shumway in The American Harmonist (Philadelphia: John McCulloch, 1793). Around the same time as the publication of the later editions of The Easy Instructor, the following instructions appeared in Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music (Harrisburg, Pa.: John Wyeth, 1810): "In sounding the eight notes, I think it proper to begin at one of the key notes rather than with the upper Sol, as taught by most authors; then ascend and descend, first from Fa the sharp key note; afterwards, taking the same pitch, ascend and descend from La, the flat key note, as

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in the examples. By this means the learner will become acquainted with, and perceive the difference of the major and minor keys.\textsuperscript{18} By the second decade of the nineteenth century, this practice became widespread.\textsuperscript{19}

Further penetration of key theory into the tunebooks is evident in the widespread practice of defining major and minor keys in terms of the intervals in the respective scales.\textsuperscript{20} Discussions of scale degrees by name appear in William Walker’s \textit{Southern Harmony and Musical Companion} (New Haven, Conn., 1835) and B. F. White and E. J. King’s \textit{Sacred Harp} (Philadelphia, 1844).\textsuperscript{21} In an even closer linking of solmization to scale degrees, \textit{The Southern Harmony} presents seven-syllable and seven-number systems, without, however, endorsing them.\textsuperscript{22} \textit{The Sacred Harp}, seen today as a holdout from encroaching seven-syllable or numerical systems of sight-singing, contains the following instruction: “In performing melody lessons, the teacher should have his pupils to learn well the sound, the name [i.e., syllable], and the number of each note, from 1 to 8” (emphasis added).\textsuperscript{23}

Presentations of key in the four-shape tunebooks are derived from those of the eighteenth century. Britton quotes from the fifth edition of \textit{The Village Harmony} (Exeter: Henry Ranlet, 1800), which is itself based on Samuel Holyoke’s earlier \textit{Harmonia Americana} (Boston: Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer T. Andrews, 1791):

\begin{quote}
THERE are only two natural or primitive Keys used in music, viz., the cheerful or lively, called the Major or Sharp Key, and the melancholy or mournful, called the Minor or Flat Key—C is the sharp, and A is the flat key. The last note in the Bass is always the key note, and is \textit{faw} or \textit{law}; if the key be sharp, it is \textit{faw}, if flat, \textit{law}. The key note is the foundation of the tune, and from it all other parts are derived. In the sharp key, every 3d, 6th, and 7th, is half a tone higher than in the flat. When flats or sharps are placed in the beginning of a tune, they form what are called \textit{Artificial Keys}, which have the same effect as the natural keys. The key note will not always be on C or A.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{quote}

This quotation from an eighteenth-century source summarizes effectively the discussions of key (i.e., mode) that are found in nineteenth-century four-shape books. John G. McCurrly, however, in \textit{The Social Harp} (Philadelphia: T. K. Collins Jr., 1855), disputes the traditional association of major keys with happy tunes and texts and minor keys with somber ones. He finds the differences between keys in what he maintains is the differing strengths and qualities of individual notes:

But some writers say that minor-keyed tunes are applied to poetry that is solemn, pensive, and melancholy; and major-keyed
tunes are applied to poetry that is animating, spirited, and cheerful. But I differ with those writers. If that be true, why is the good old hymn, "O! shall I see Jesus," &c., applied to tunes in the minor and major keys? and why was the hymn, "Lord, what a thoughtless wretch was I," &c., applied to Huntington in the major key, and also to Greenwich in the minor key? and the hymn called "The Family Bible," applied to four different tunes, two of which are in the major key, and two in the minor? This proves at once that the keys are independent characters. The reason why tunes are in different keys is, there are seven sounds belonging to each key note in music, and each sound is different in strength and quality.25

"Pure solmization" is still evident, however, even in the midst of all this key theory. According to McCurry, "There are seven sounds belonging to each key-note in music, and these sounds are expressed by four syllables,—me, faw, sole, law,—three of which represent two sounds each, viz., faw, sole, and law. The syllable me represents one sound only. That syllable having but one place in the octave which is between law and faw, is made the governing note in transposition. . . You see by the foregoing examples that the notes, faw, sole, law, come twice before me; then comes faw again."26 The examples, one-octave note series with various key signatures, often begin on some note other than the key note; hence, they are "pure solmization" exercises, not major and minor scales.

As in eighteenth-century sources, nineteenth-century four-shape tunebooks rarely discuss the chromatic scale.27 The Social Harp has a diagram that compares the whole steps and half steps of the major and minor scales against the half steps of the chromatic scale. Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second has the unusual feature of a discussion of the three Greek genera, taken from "Dr. Rees's Cyclopaedia."28

**Accidentals**

According to Allen Britton, discussions of accidentals in eighteenth-century theoretical introductions are rare.29 This has implications for the treatment of altered pitches in the minor mode in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Britton maintains:

The only version of the minor mode normally taught during the eighteenth century was that commonly called the natural. . . . Nothing was said regarding raised intervals in the ascending scale even though certain of the traditional psalm tunes ("Windsor," for instance) contained the raised leading tone, and the insertion of the raised leading tone in the harmonizations of final
cadences was not uncommon. However, the theoretical treatment
given the "flat key," or minor mode, was generally in accord with
the minor music popular at the time, which usually featured low-
ered rather than raised seventh degrees and never utilized the
raised sixth degree.\footnote{30}

He goes on to cite William Billings as a case in point: this compos-
er's early publications of minor tunes lack raised sevenths, whereas
his later publications of the same tunes contain them, despite the ab-
sence of theoretical explanation.

Nineteenth-century four-shape tunebooks likewise shed no light on
the problem of accidentals and the possible alteration of notes. Dis-
cussions are generally limited to the definition of flat, sharp, and nat-
ural "characters" as accidentals that lower, raise, or restore pitches,
with occasional mention of their place in key signatures.\footnote{31}
Both the \textit{The Southern Harmony} and \textit{The Sacred Harp} describe the introduction
of accidentals for purposes of effecting a gradual modulation, with a
resultant change in solmization syllables; sudden key changes require
a change in key signature.\footnote{32}

Ananias Davisson, in \textit{Kentucky Harmony} (Harrisonburg, Va.: Ana-
nias Davisson, 1816), eliminates accidentals altogether. He employs
flat, sharp, and natural signs only for key signatures at the beginning
of the composition and at internal changes of key or mode. In the
somewhat expanded preface to his second edition of this tunebook
(1817), he calls attention to his deliberate simplification of the rud-
iments and dismisses accidental flats, sharps, and naturals as contra-
dictory, confusing, and unnecessary. In a combative tone and color-
ful style, he argues:

In this the Author, in order to abbreviate the rudiments, has tak-
en the liberty of dismissing seven characters, \textit{viz.} the accidental
Flat, Sharp, and Natural; the hold, the staccato, the direct, and
the Counter, or C Cliff [sic]... As it would be unjust, however
 trifling those characters are, to disinherit them without notice, he
will briefly drop a few remarks, and pass them by. We shall first
notice the accidental flats and sharps, these characters we are told,
stand in direct opposition to each other, the one pulling up, and
the other down; from this stiffnecked contrast we beg to be releas'd, believing them to be of no other use, than to destroy the
ease and freedom of pronunciation, and convert the beauties of
nature into a kind of sonata, that is not only more unpleasant,
but almost impossible to perform with accuracy. I say almost
impossible, because, when acquiring our first principles of sound,
we are taught to pronounce the semitone between \textit{me} and \textit{few},
and \textit{law} and \textit{few}, and no where else; and consequently when one
of those characters steps in, we must either deviate from our first principles, or go back and form a new system of seven semitones to the octave, (such as has never yet been seen) and learn to sound a semitone between every note, or remain inadequate to the performance[.] But a third character is presented to us call'd a natural, (for my part I call it unnatural,) this character we are told restores a note to its primitive sound; here we would undoubtedly need a scale of contradiction, or something else, that would learn the pupil to say one thing, and mean another, or in other words name one note, and sound another, for we are commanded not to change the name, but the sound. For my part I have thought it advisable where restorations were necessary, to make them myself, rather than leave them to the scholar; having learned from experience that when left to the latter, it remains undone. As there are four concords which can be advantageously used in composition; I think it better to remove a dissonant, and place it where it will harmonize, than to trouble the learner with a train of useless characters. I will venture to assert, that any person, who will undertake to teach a raw set of youngsters, that have no knowledge of the degrees of sound, will find it sufficiently difficult, to get the unavoidable semitones performed with accuracy, without being pester'd with sinks, and raises, and primitive restorations[.] Now I do not wish to be understood, to entirely curtail the authority of the natural; far from it, I use it as a restorative, in certain pieces where the key is transposed, and requires to be restord [sic] to its natural standing, as in the Prodigal Son; but in no other case. . . Thus I have gave [sic] my reasons for turning six characters out of office, believing [sic] them to have no other tendency, than to swell the rudiments, and perplex the learner with a crowd of mysteries which are in my opinion useless[.] I will further add, in connection with this argument, that the gentleman from whom I received my instruction, had been in the constant habit of teaching for fifteen years, and was pronounced a teacher of the first eminence; and by that gentleman to the best of my recollection, I never was stop't by the interposition of an accidental flat, sharp, or natural, either to sink a half tone, raise a half tone, or make any primitive restoration. 

Davisson's dispensing with accidentals altogether is a particularly extreme case. Nonetheless, accidentals for the same piece often vary from tunebook to tunebook. The evidence suggests that there was no uniform practice in using accidentals, whether written or altered in oral practice, either by supplying chromatic alterations where they are absent from the score or by ignoring written accidentals.
Practice

Irving Lowens has identified Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second (1813) as the first tunebook to introduce folk tunes in substantial numbers. This collection in turn served as a source for Davisson's Kentucky Harmony and later shape-note collections.34 Many of the pieces attributed to particular composers in the tunebooks were actually folk tunes from the oral tradition that were transcribed and arranged by the "composer." For example, George Pullen Jackson writes the following about William Caldwell's Union Harmony (Maryville, Tenn.: F. A. Parham, 1837):

Considering the forty-two tunes to which Caldwell has affixed his own name as composer, it would seem, offhand, that he was a prolific maker of tunes. But a statement of the compiler in his Preface modifies this assumption. He states there that "many of the tunes over which the name of the Subscriber [the undersigned, namely, Caldwell], is set are not entirely original, but he has harmonized, and therefore claims them." He states further that "many of the airs which the author has reduced to system and harmonized, have been selected from the unwritten music in general use in the Methodist Church, others from the Baptist and many more from the Presbyterian taste."35

Many of the pieces in the shape-note tunebooks derive from folk song. Consequently, they have many secular and sacred variants and exhibit so-called gapped and modal scales.36 The four-shape tunebooks, which grew out of a tradition of singing by note, came to blend written and oral traditions. The theoretical introductions never mention gapped or modal scales, and both the introductions and the music present a confused and contradictory picture of chromatic alteration. Can the theory of the tunebooks account for the gapped and modal scales of the folk hymns? Can a coordinated examination of theory, music, and modern shape-note practice illuminate historical performance?

To the first question, whether the tunebook theory can account for the gapped and modal scales of the folk hymns, the answer, in part, is yes. Gapped scales present no difficulty, since they simply omit notes from the diatonic scale. The clue to accommodating modal scales within the shape-note stylistic conventions lies in statements about the key note. Nearly all the tunebooks state that the key note is to be found in the last note of the bass, but two sources—The Missouri Harmony and The Southern Harmony—also add that it is generally the last note of the tenor as well.37 A Mixolydian tune in the tenor would end on sol, a fifth above the bass fa, the key note for a piece in
a “sharp key.” Lowens identifies “Adoration” and “New Canaan” of Wyeth’s Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second (1813) as the respective equivalents of “Condescension” and “Reflection” in Davissón’s second edition of Kentucky Harmony (1817)—these pieces are absent from the first edition.\(^3\) Wyeth presents the tunes in the major mode, however, with the tenor ending on the same note as the bass, whereas Davissón publishes the tunes in the Mixolydian mode, with the tenor ending a fifth above the bass (exx. 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b). Davissón’s versions appear in identical form in The Missouri Harmony.\(^4\) Table 1 presents a list of four-shape Mixolydian tunes with the tenor ending on sol above fa in the bass in a “sharp key.”\(^5\) Most of these tenor tunes also begin on sol. The Southern Harmony, one of the books that specifically mentions that the key note is generally found in the last note of the tenor as well as the bass, is remarkable for the comparatively large number of Mixolydian tunes in it.

The musical style and notation can also accommodate Phrygian tunes, where the melody in the tenor would end on la, a fifth above the bass note la, the key note in the “flat key.” Such Phrygian tunes are rare, however. One instance is “Hebrew Children,” which appears in both The Southern Harmony and The Sacred Harp (ex. 3). Two others, both from The Sacred Harp, are “Invitation” and “Parting Friends.”

Dorian tunes cannot be accommodated by the musical style and notation because the tenor would end a fourth above the bass. A few


Example 1b. “Condescension,” in Ananias Davissón, Kentucky Harmony, 2d ed. (Harrisonburg, Va.: Ananias Davissón, [1817]), 40. From the Collection of Special Collections and Archives, King Library, University of Kentucky.
tunes are notated in Dorian mode by means of accidentals, but with no changes in the shapes; examples include some versions of “Bangor,” “Landaff,” and “Eden of Love.” Most Dorian tunes, however,


Example 2b. “Reflection,” in Ananias Davisson, Kentucky Harmony, 2d ed. (Harrisonburg, Va.: Ananias Davisson, [1817]), 42. From the Collection of Special Collections and Archives, King Library, University of Kentucky.

Table 1. List of Mixolydian Tunes in Selected Four-Shape Tunebooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tune Name</th>
<th>KH2</th>
<th>MoHm</th>
<th>SoHm</th>
<th>SaHm</th>
<th>SoHp</th>
<th>JaA</th>
<th>JaD</th>
<th>JaS</th>
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<td>Midnight Cry</td>
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<td>p. 32</td>
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<td>p. 114</td>
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<td>Christian Warfare</td>
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<td>p. 179</td>
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<td>Heavenly Armour</td>
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<td>p. 93</td>
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<td>p. 129</td>
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<td>An Address for All</td>
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<td>Hallelujah</td>
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<td>Bound for Canaan</td>
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<td>Tender Care, or Soda</td>
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Key to sigla:

- **JaA**: George Pullen Jackson, *Another Sheaf of White Spirituals* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1952)
- **JaD**: George Pullen Jackson, *Down-East Spirituals and Others: Three Hundred Songs Supplementary to the Author's "Spiritual Folk-Songs of Early America"* (New York: J. J. Augustin, [1939])
- **KH2**: Ananias Davisson, *Kentucky Harmony*, 2d ed. (Harrisonburg, Va: Ananias Davisson, [1817])
- **MoHm**: Allen D. Carden, *The Missouri Harmony* (Cincinnati: Morgan and Sanxay, 1836; rpt. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1975)
are written in the Aeolian mode but performed in Dorian mode by introducing an unwritten raised sixth degree, without changing the solmization syllable. A well-known example is “Wondrous Love” (ex. 4). Table 2 presents a list of tunes commonly performed in Dorian mode, according to George Pullen Jackson and Dorothy D. Horn. Evidence for the performance of Aeolian tunes in Dorian mode is derived mostly from listening to twentieth-century Sacred Harp singers. The only other long-term four-shape singing tradition is found at Benton, Kentucky, where The Southern Harmony is used. Deborah C. Loftis studied the core repertory of Southern Harmony singers at Benton in her dissertation, “Big Singing Day,” and found that the only tune from the Dorian list still in use was “Wondrous Love.”

Buell E. Cobb goes so far as to say that Sacred Harp singers always raise the sixth scale degree, and Horn comments that current East Tennessee “Old Harp” singers often transform clearly Aeolian tunes into the Dorian mode. This raises the question of whether all these tunes were always performed in Dorian mode. Three of the five so-called Dorian tunes that appear in the early four-shape books were composed during the late eighteenth century by the American composer Daniel Read (1757–1836), whose versions of the pieces differ little from those printed in the later tunebooks. Since the greatest number of tunes on the Dorian list came into the repertory later, how were the earlier pieces originally performed? Britton says that eighteenth-century tunebooks give no evidence of modal alteration. Were these

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<th>EI14</th>
<th>WR1</th>
<th>WR2</th>
<th>KH1</th>
<th>MoHm</th>
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Key to sigla:
EI14  William Little and William Smith, *The Easy Instructor* (Albany: Websters & Skinners and Daniel Steele, [1814])
JaA   George Pullen Jackson, *Another Sheaf of White Spirituals*
JaD   George Pullen Jackson, *Down-East Spirituals and Others*
JaS   George Pullen Jackson, *Spiritual Folk-Songs of Early America*
<table>
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<td>KH1</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoHm</td>
<td>Allen D. Carden, <em>The Missouri Harmony</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>SoHm</td>
<td>William Walker, <em>The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>SoHp</td>
<td>John G. McCurry, <em>The Social Harp</em></td>
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earlier pieces originally performed in Aeolian mode and later inflected to Dorian mode as a result of folk tune influence? This seems plausible, since lack of uniformity characterizes the use of accidentals during the period, and variants are characteristic of folk hymns, like other oral traditions. Thus, in response to the question of whether a coordinated look at theory, music, and contemporary shape-note practice can illuminate historical performance, the answer is a guarded yes.

Conclusion

A comparison of chant theory and practice with that of the shape-note books yields several ironies. First, modal theory before Glarean did not account for the Aeolian and Ionian modes, even though they appeared in chant. The introduction of B-flat converted modes 1 and 2 from the Dorian/Hypodorian modes to the Aeolian/Hypoaolian modes, and modes 5 and 6 from the Lydian/Hypolydian modes to the Ionian/Hypoionian modes. The key theory in the tunebooks did not account for modes other than major or minor, although the Mixolydian, Phrygian, and Dorian modes were used in the music (the latter was rarely notated as such, with Aeolian tunes being transformed to Dorian by means of a "musica-ficta" raising of the sixth). Thus, chant books altered the Dorian mode to the Aeolian mode, which is absent from chant theory, and the four-shape tunebooks recast the Aeolian mode to the Dorian mode, which is lacking in tunebook theory. Second, key theory emphasized harmony and the bass, where the tonic, or key note, is to be found. Pietro Aaron, in adapting modal theory to polyphony, equated the mode of the piece with the mode of the tenor, precisely where the modal folk tunes of the shape-note books are to be found.

It should be remembered that the plainchant primers where early scale theory was developed and the theoretical introductions of the shape-note books had a pedagogical purpose focused on conveying the rudiments of music to beginners as simply as possible. This accounted for imperfections, such as the difficulties in dealing with chromatic alterations, and for the impulses toward simplification, such as the invention of the scale and the shape notes.

In considering the inconsistencies in the notation of shape-note music, the limits of all notations should be borne in mind. Notation is a blueprint to which the performer adds, following the conventions of the style, as is the case with ornamentation in baroque music and in shape-note hymnody. The eighteenth-century American movement to sing by note did not entirely eliminate oral tradition, which is still evident in the continuing tradition of ornamentation and in the variant versions of folk tune melodies. When folk tunes from oral tradi-
tion were written down in shape-note books, written and oral traditions came to coexist side by side, each supporting the other.

The theory and practice of nineteenth-century four-shape tunebooks were partly in conflict. In a sense theory and shape-note music "evolved" in opposite directions. As theory more and more reflected the shift to a concept of key that was characteristic of the art music of written tradition, the music moved closer and closer to the older oral tradition of folk music, with its pentatonic, hexatonic, and modal scales, as well as major and minor scales.

NOTES

This article was developed during summer 1994 while I was a James Still Fellow at the University of Kentucky at Lexington. I wish to thank the Mary and Barry Bingham Sr. Fund, the University of Kentucky Faculty Scholars Program, and Ron Pen of the University of Kentucky faculty for their support of this project. An abridged version of this paper was presented at the Southern Chapter Meeting of the College Music Society at Austin Peay State University (Clarksville, Tenn.) on Feb. 25, 1995.


2. For a chronological list of tunebooks with four-character notation, see Perrin, "Theoretical Introductions," 210–13.


8. Ibid., 171–72.


A second version of the removes of mi through seven flats and seven sharps is found in Wyeth, Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second, 11; Carden, Missouri Harmony, 9; Walker, Southern Harmony, xxii; and White and King, Sacred Harp, 16.

Allen Britton maintains that the use of the spellings faw and law dates from the late eighteenth century and occurs especially in books that emphasize American music ("Theoretical Introductions," 195). Wyeth writes in the fifth edition of his Repository (1820), "Me is commonly wrote mi but I have called it me through the whole of this introduction, as it is sounded" (6).

12. For a bibliographical essay and a checklist of editions, see Lowens, Music and Musicians in Early America, 115–37, 292–310.

13. Little and Smith, Easy Instructor (1802), 3 and 12b; Little and Smith, Easy Instructor (1814), 3 and 9.

15. Wyeth, *Wyeth’s Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second*, 5; Davison, *Kentucky Harmony* (1816), v; Carden, *Missouri Harmony*, 4; Walker, *Southern Harmony*, xv; and White and King, *Sacred Harp*, 12. The term scale was used also in the following ways: (1) to indicate a “table” of rhythmic values (Little and Smith, *Easy Instructor* [1802], 13; Little and Smith, *Easy Instructor* [1814], 10; Wyeth, *Wyeth’s Repository of Sacred Music*, 8; Wyeth, *Wyeth’s Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second*, 14; Carden, *Missouri Harmony*, 13; Walker, *Southern Harmony*, vi; White and King, *Sacred Harp*, 5; and McCurry, *Social Harp*, 5); (2) to indicate a “table” of key signatures (Little and Smith, *Easy Instructor* [1802], 16; Little and Smith, *Easy Instructor* [1814], 12; Walker, *Southern Harmony*, xxii; and White and King, *Sacred Harp*, 16); (3) to indicate a “table” of half-step placements in various keys (Walker, *Southern Harmony*, xxiii; and White and King, *Sacred Harp*, 17); (4) to indicate a “table” of whole steps and half steps in major and minor scales (Walker, *Southern Harmony*, xxiii); and (5) to indicate a “table” of intervals (McCurry, *Social Harp*, 13).


30. Ibid., 231–32.

31. Little and Smith, *Easy Instructor* (1802), 13; Little and Smith, *Easy Instructor* (1814), 10; Wyeth, *Wyeth’s Repository of Sacred Music*, 9; Wyeth, Wy-
eth's Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second, 13; Walker, Southern Harmony, x; White and King, Sacred Harp, 10; and McCurry, Social Harp, 8.

32. Walker, Southern Harmony, xxiv-xxvii; White and King, Sacred Harp, 19.

33. Ananias Davison, Kentucky Harmony, 2d ed. (Harrisonburg, Va.: Ananias Davison [1817]), 3-5. From the Collection of Special Collections and Archives, King Library, University of Kentucky. I quote this passage at length since the edition is unavailable in modern reprint or facsimile.

34. Lowens, Music and Musicians in Early America, 138-55, which is identical to his introduction to the facsimile edition of Wyeth, Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second, v-xiv; see also Lowens's introduction to the facsimile edition of Davison, Kentucky Harmony (1816), 8-9.


36. See George Pullen Jackson's studies (listed in n. 1) for general and specific discussions. Dorothy D. Horn gives a systematic presentation of the characteristics of folk hymns (Sing to Me of Heaven, 17-30, 178-82). There is a degree of ambiguity in classifying the mode of some tunes. Pentatonic and hexatonic tunes create "gaps" in the heptatonic modal scales that may obscure some of the identifying traits of a particular mode, making several different classifications possible. Furthermore, it is sometimes possible to read (and hear) a tune as major or minor but ending on a note other than the tonic. Hence, a tune might be classified as Mixolydian or as major ending on the fifth.

37. Carden, Missouri Harmony, 17; Walker, Southern Harmony, xii.

38. Wyeth, Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second, 101; Davison, Kentucky Harmony (1817), 40 and 42; see also Lowens's introduction to the facsimile edition of Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second, viii-ix, and his introduction to the facsimile edition of Davison, Kentucky Harmony (1816), 9.

39. Carden, Missouri Harmony, 44.

40. Songs that do not appear to be modal, despite the fact that the last note of the tenor (excluding the "choosing notes") differs from the bass, include the following:

1. "Delight," a fuging tune by Coan in E minor, with the tenor ending on B (Little and Smith, Easy Instructor [1802], 73-74; Little and Smith, Easy Instructor [1814], 45; Wyeth, Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, 59; Davison, Kentucky Harmony [1816], 53; Walker, Southern Harmony, 167; White and King, Sacred Harp, 216; and McCurry, Social Harp, 180-81);

2. "Psalm 119th," a fuging tune in E minor, with the tenor ending on B (Little and Smith, Easy Instructor [1802], 77-78);

3. "Martyrs," in the key of F minor, with the tenor ending on C (Little and Smith, Easy Instructor [1814], 16);

4. "Sherburne," a fuging tune by Daniel Read in D major, with the tenor ending on A (Little and Smith, Easy Instructor [1814], 33; Wyeth, Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, 21; Davison, Kentucky Harmony [1816], 70; Carden, Missouri Harmony, 98; and White and King, Sacred Harp, 186);

5. "Hundred and Forty-Eighth" by G. F. Handel, in G major, with the
tenor ending on B (Little and Smith, *Easy Instructor* [1814], 50–51; and Wyeth, *Wyeth’s Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second*, 70–71); and
6. “Sardis,” a fuging tune by Mitchel in G minor, with the tenor ending on D (Wyeth, *Wyeth’s Repository of Sacred Music*, 120).

42. White and King, *Sacred Harp*, 41 and 308.
43. “Bangor,” in Little and Smith, *Easy Instructor* (1814), 71, does not have the raised sixth in the key of E minor; *Wyeth’s Repository of Sacred Music* (94) has the raised sixth in the second phrase but the lowered sixth in the first and third phrases; McCurry’s *Social Harp* (218) introduces a “new arrangement” with the sixth raised consistently. “Landaff” (Little and Smith, *Easy Instructor* [1814], 111) has the sixth in the tenor raised consistently; a different “Landaff” by Findlay (*Wyeth’s Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second*, 71) is in the key of A minor and does not feature the raised sixth. “Eden of Love” (Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 309) consistently employs the raised sixth and usually the unaltered seventh.
47. Daniel Read, *The Columbia Harmonist No. 2* (New Haven: printed for and sold by the editor [1794]): “Greenwich” (18) and “Calvary” (10–11) are cast entirely in minor mode.