

Sacred Harp Colorado

February 2010

Who We Are and What We Do

The Rocky Mountain shape note singers exist to preserve and promote the music and the traditions of American shape note harmony along the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. We sing principally from the 1991 Denson revision of the Sacred Harp (Red Book), but use some songs from the Cooper Book (Blue Book). From time to time we will sing from other traditional books such as the Missouri Harmony and Norembega Harmony depending upon the spirit and the occasion. We welcome any and all to join us at our monthly singings held in the cities along the Front Range. Loaner books are available for use or purchase. Our monthly singings are usually held to the schedule supplied at the end of this newsletter, but holidays or special circumstance may dictate that we move a singing date. If you are new to us, please contact one of our members listed below for current location, day/date and time of a singing in your area.

Editorially Speaking

First, I need to note that there was an error in the dates listed for this year's Tucson singing. They have lost the services of their webmaster and I wound up copying out last year's dates. The correct dates are first Sunday and Saturday before in March [March 6 – 7]. Then, my article on Original Research concerns a young grad student at Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland doing research related to Sacred Harp. I came to know Sean in an extended internet conversation concerning his difficulties in completing a Master's thesis in the origins of four shape solmization and the extension of that notation into Sacred Harp music as sung here in America. I suppose that I am sensitive to Sean's problem because of a traumatic experience I had in the completion of my thesis lo these many years back. My thesis had nothing to do with music, but like Sean's, everything to do with, "Am I about to throw away a year of my life and a lot of research". My problem was unforeseen flaw in methodology and Sean's is financial. Mine got fixed because someone took an interest in helping me see thru the stress of perceived failure. So look thru the article and see if there is a way in which you might help him in finishing the work he has started. If you have due diligence questions concerning this please feel free to ask me.

Quote of the Month

"This kind of music here, it comes out of you. There aren't any guitars or musical instruments, it comes from within you." -- Sam Craig, President, East Texas Sacred Harp Convention

Wesley at Warrington

"Friday 6, [1781] I went to Alpringham, and preached the funeral sermon of good old sister

Cawley. She has been indeed a mother in Israel; a pattern of all good works. Saturday 7, at noon, I preached at Preston-on-the-Hill, and in the evening at Warrington. Sunday 8, the service was at the usual hours. I came just in time to put a stop to a bad custom, which was creeping in here. A few men who had fine voices sang a psalm which no one knew, in a tune fit for an Opera, wherein three, four, or five persons sung different words at the same time! What an insult upon common sense! What a burlesque upon public worship! No custom can excuse such a mixture of profaneness and absurdity." -- *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, Volume 5*, By John Wesley, London: Conference Office, 1810, pp. 330-331

I guess Wesley didn't like fudging tunes – Robert Vaughn from his website
I wouldn't go to the extent of calling them the work of the devil, but they can be devilishly difficult – Your editor

Pikes Peak Sacred Harp Singing

Its coming up very shortly and it should be a good one. Mo Morrow has once again secured the parish hall of The Chapel Of Our Saviour in the Broadmoor as our venue. In the past year we have added singers to both the Colorado Springs and Arkansas Valley singing communities which should raise our attendance nicely. See the attached flyer for details and more information concerning the planned singing school and various social activities will be coming in next month's newsletter.

Camp Fasola

Registration is now open for Camp Fasola 2010. Complete information is available at <http://fasola.org/camp>.

Session 1: Adult Emphasis

Sunday, June 13th/4pm – Thursday, June 17th/8:30am

Camp McDowell (<http://campmcdowell.com>) – Between Jasper and Double Springs, Alabama off Ala 195

Session 2: Youth (Age 10 and up) Emphasis

Monday, July 5th/4pm – Friday, July 9th/9am

Camp Lee (<http://camplee.org>) – Anniston, Alabama

The Sacred Harp Musical Heritage Association will hold Camp Fasola in 2010 for the eighth consecutive year. Camp Fasola provides an immersive experience for learning and singing Sacred Harp music as well as fellowship with other singers. Registration is available on a first come / first served basis. The registration form is available at: <http://fasola.org/camp/ApplicationForm.pdf>

The camp is open to youth and adults with instruction provided for both beginning and experienced singers. Multiple tracks of classes suited to different experience levels will be taught. Traditional summer camp activities will be provided that contribute to building and extending friendships of singers.

For additional information, see <http://fasola.org/camp>, email camp@fasola.org or telephone

Jeannette DePoy at 404.237.1246 or David Ivey at 256.922.8090.

Contributing to Original Research – Pete Mathewson

Some few days back, I received an e-mail from a man I did not know proposing something I had never thought of before:

Dear Pete

Would it be at all possible to consider this email, or distribute among your group? It is a genuine and serious request, and I urge you to read to the end, if only for interesting information on shape-note history.

I would be eternally grateful

Faithfully

Sean Doherty

Sean then went on to describe his “genuine and serious” request:

I am writing a thesis on the origins of shape-note solmization syllables. I believe I am the first to combine research from the Sacred Harp tradition with academic musicology of the Early-Modern period. In doing so, I believe I have uncovered a sound academic foundation for the direct line of transmission for the method of four-syllable solmization.

I am a young academic historical musicologist, having graduated from St John's College, Cambridge, U.K. and now a postgraduate at Trinity College, Dublin. My thesis, which I believe is an important and thorough study of Sacred-Harp heritage, may never see the light of day, owing to an illness in my family. Consequently, I am unable to afford my college fees for my final year.

I would like to issue a plea for sponsorship in this, my last year of my postgraduate degree. Any donation, no matter how small, would be gratefully accepted. It would be such a shame for all my painstaking research to go to waste, and a shame also that the great tradition of Sacred Harp music not get the academic attention, historical foundation and aesthetic recognition it so richly deserves.

I write this remembering the overwhelming kindness and hospitality of the Sacred Harp groups with whom I sang last year in Virginia, a truly blessed initiation to the world of Sacred Harp.

Please find a 'brief introduction' to my thesis below.

On the Origin of the Four Shape-Note Syllables

The story of four-syllable solmization is one of the most fascinating, unlikely and yet untold stories in music history. It crosses centuries and continents, empires and faiths. Yet across these divides, the convention of four-syllable solmization has remained constant. In my thesis, I trace the subtle ways in which the conception of four-syllable solmization was altered and transformed during the long history of its transmission.

Nevertheless, what lies at the heart of this story is this astonishing fact: The method of four-syllable, non-hexachordal solmization proposed by William Bathe SJ (1564-1614) in his A Briefe Introduction to the Skill of Song is still used to this day.

Scholarship has not previously combined to accurately link the American tradition to its venerable heritage. It is possible, however, that with careful study of the theoretical sources, as well as the parallel

publications of hymn books and psalm books, to trace a direct line of transmission from Bathe's publication to the Sacred Harp revisions of today.

William Bathe wrote the first music textbook published in England. In this, he reformed the complex, unwieldy and imprecise rules regarding hexachordal mutation and music ficta, which had plagued singers for centuries. Bathe reformed the hexachordal system of six syllables to four syllables. Through a mixture of plagiarism, influence, borrowing and effectiveness, the method Bathe devised became standard in seventeenth-century England.

Aside from theoretical and meta-theoretical considerations, a parallel history is important to this narrative—that of the metrical psalms. The symbiotic relationship between these two practices propelled the system of four-syllable solmization across the Atlantic, where it may be seen in the ninth edition of the first book printed on American soil, the Bay Psalm Book.

The genius of the American publications is that music came with prescribed solmization syllables. Generation after generation of budding European singers had grappled with learning the gamut, or the scale of music, and then learning the manifold other rules in order to determine what syllable to sing. With common sense, clarity and practical mindedness of the New-World settlers, the Americans did what had evaded Europeans for centuries—they designated solmization syllables through shaped notes.

The syllables, however, did not remain static. To compensate to the change from the English 'modes' to the modern tonality of American hymnody, a new arrangement of the syllables was devised, giving the fasola tradition familiar with Sacred Harp singers today.

Though seminal as a publication in the study of Sacred-Harp music, G.P. Jackson's *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*, is filled with inaccuracies which are still being propagated in modern scholarship. This is not a slight on Jackson's ability as a scholar; it is simply that our contemporary resources and research enable us to more fully explore the historical evidence. I believe that my thesis would go a long way to informing scholars and singers of the Sacred Harp tradition, of a more accurate, but no less fascinating history of four-syllable solmization.

Living in the world we do today, and having received an earlier "Help, I am in England and have lost my wallet" solicitation from someone identified as a Sacred Harp singer whom I knew was not in England, my mind immediately said SCAM !! But, upon a moment's reflection, I noted that no one was telling me how lucky I was to have won the Irish Lottery. Perhaps most compelling, there was no promise of reward beyond knowing that one was contributing to the advancement knowledge in a field related to one of the major interests in my life. In the name of "due diligence" I asked Sean for the name of his thesis professor at Trinity and then tracked down Mr. Andrew Johnstone, independently, thru Trinity College's online staff directory. When queried about Mr. Doherty, Mr. Johnstone relplied:

Dear Mr Mathewson,

In response to your enquiry, I am happy to confirm that Mr Seán Doherty is studying for the degree of M.Litt. at Trinity College Dublin, that I am his supervisor, and that his topic is the history of four-syllable solmization.

Currently, Mr Doherty's project amounts to a 50,000-word dissertation: whether or not it will lead to any publications or to a 100,000-word

doctoral dissertation remains to be seen. In the few months he has been working under my supervision, however, I have formed the strong impression that he is a diligent, committed and highly motivated student. Concerning the personal setback to which you refer, I suspect Mr Doherty might feel it would be inopportune for me to know about it, and I would be reluctant to question him about something he would prefer to keep confidential.

Clearly, though, you cannot respond to his request without first receiving some kind of guarantee. Please may I therefore suggest that you reply to him in those terms, so that he can choose whether to ask me or some other qualified person to write on his behalf.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely, Andrew Johnstone

Andrew Johnstone MA FRCO PGCE
Lecturer in Music
Trinity College Dublin
(353) (1) 896 2458

While I was gathering the foregoing from Trinity College, Sean sent additional information concerning his research and told of how he had come in contact with our Sacred Harp:

I will outline the story of how I came to be in the process of writing a thesis on the origin of four-syllable solmization. At St John's College, Cambridge, under the supervision of Edward Wickham, at St Catherine's College, I came to specialize in hexachordal theory, specifically, the use of manuscript accidentals in order to give a theoretical basis for decisions regarding musica ficta. At Trinity College, Dublin, I intended to write a thesis on four-syllable solmization and the breakdown of hexachordal theory in seventeenth-century English theoretical sources, especially the work of William Bathe SJ (1564-1614).

On arrival in Dublin, I began to sing as a vicar choral in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. The organ scholar there happened to be a Virginian native, who grew up near, where else? But Singer's Glen. It was he who informed me of the shape-note tradition. With increasing research, I realised that not only does the present day shape-note tradition share the solmization syllables with seventeenth-century England, but that there was a direct and traceable line of transmission, through theoretical treatises and metrical psalm books, across centuries and continents.

I gained valuable information and experience of the Sacred Harp tradition, when I visited the States last year to research this topic. I attended numerous singings, as well as availing of library and museum resources at Winchester, Charlottesville and Washington D.C. I stayed with my friend's kindly family and through their associations they put me in touch with a number of academics, who agreed to help with my researches through email. I must emphasise what little material on the subject exists in Dublin, and Ireland for that matter.

My thesis is in two parts, Old World and New World. Coming to the end of my first year of (hopefully), a two-part postgraduate degree, I have completed the 'Old World' section, which comprises of a study of systems of solmization, and more importantly, their reforms, from Guido onwards. Following this, a brief biography and analysis of the work of William Bathe, using previously unpublished research of manuscripts held at the Irish Jesuit Centre. Using Jessie Ann Owens' paper 'Concepts of Pitch in

English Music Theory, c.1560-1640' as a basis from which to start, I have analyzed the way in which four-syllable solmization altered and ossified over the seventeenth century, in the theoretical treatises of Morley, Campion, Ravenscroft and Butler.

This part contains two large surveys of two long-lived publications: Playford's Introduction and the Day publications of the Sternhold and Hopkins psalm book. In the many editions of Playford's Introduction, I have painstakingly tracked the changes regarding four-syllable solmization with the consultation of every extant copy available. It was mostly via these publications that the method of four-syllable solmization was to come to British America.

The parallel history of metrical psalms is also important to this narrative. Through a survey of the Day publications of the Sternhold and Hopkins psalm book, I have found numerous correspondences between the introductory prefaces and Bathe's work, which have not previously been recognized.

Through this research, I believe that I have given the history of four-syllable solmization a much more accurate and nuanced historical background. I would love to have it accepted, so that others may use my research with confidence, and build upon it. If I do not finish the course, the work will remain amateur conjecture, no matter how accurate or well research.

I have tried to incorporate Sacred Harp music in performances of my vocal group (www.stylusvocalensemble.co.uk), but to no avail. The visceral feeling of a Sacred Harp singing simply cannot be conveyed in a concert performance, no matter how good the singers.

At this point I was convinced that Sean was real and that others of you might also see value in what he was trying to accomplish. So that we might understand the why of his request for financial support, I asked him to explain the problem that was limiting his ability to pursue the research he had described:

Not from an affluent background, my mother and father supported me in my undergraduate years. In my final undergraduate year, after being accepted at Trinity, my Mother, hitherto an IT lecturer, was affected with a long-term illness, which has left her unable to work since. This illness strained the family financials and though I had been accepted into Trinity, I deferred entry for a year in order to work and earn the money for the entire course. As well as singing in St Patrick's Cathedral, I secured a well-paid job as a IT management consultant in Dublin, and was well on the way to have the entire amount for the two years. However, the recession hit Ireland six months into my year out, and I was made redundant, with only one years of fees saved for.

Despite this, my family encouraged me to immediately start my postgraduate degree, reasoning that I might as well be spending the recession in education rather than in the dispiriting search for a non-existent job. I was terrified of being left in the lurch regarding fees (as I now am), but I seen their logic.

The recession, however, showed no signs of stopping and four months ago, my father was made redundant from his place of work of forty years. This was the final nail in the coffin for my funding concerns and for the last few months, I have explored every avenue in funding at my University. To no avail: the recession had been just as thorough here as elsewhere.

As to the nature of my needs, it is my tuition fees only that I need. These total 5,000 euro for this year. The stipend from the Cathedral keeps a roof over my head. I refuse to buy books out of principle: my fees

were so hard earned, that the library should stock everything I need. My research trip last year was funded by the Taylor bursary in Trinity which supports promising musicology students in foreign study, but I believe that it has been discontinued this year.

As part of my earlier due diligence effort, I had asked I singer in Virginia who was a member of the Colorado Springs group if she had met Sean in his travels. She had not, but sent the following e-mail which had passed within their Sacred Harp community in Virginia. A .pdf file of this tune is sent with this newsletter.

Attached is a song composed (words by Edgar Allan Poe) by Sean Doherty, a student from Ireland who visited and sang with the Shenandoah and Rivanna groups late last fall. Please make a copy so we can sing at our next gathering.

Sean is working on his doctorate in a type of music that has Sacred Harp roots and was really inspired by the singings he attended here. While he was here and after spending some time with him, John and I dropped him at UVa, which has a wonderful collection of shape note hymnals in the special collections library, and which has the Range room where Edgar Allan Poe lived as a student on ≈ 93 (Hence the Poe words). He loved his experiences here and wanted to thank us with this gift.

So, what do I think ?? I think that this is a serious, well grounded, man doing serious research who has fallen victim to a recession in Ireland which is more severe even than our own [the two hardest hit in the Eurozone are Ireland and Greece]. Will he survive without our help ?? Of course he will, but I for one think that we should help if we can and I will. Sean's bank will process drafts in US funds into Euros and to that end you may mail your contributions directly to:

Sean Doherty
3 John Dillon Street
Dublin, Dublin 8
Ireland



If you prefer not to mess with bank drafts and overseas mailings, I will be collecting donations at the Pikes Peak Singing. Look for a donations jar there. Not attending the singing ?? Shame on you, but then mail a check made out to me and I will bundle them into a single payment and do the mailing. Thanks for your consideration of his request.

Looking Ahead

Tucson Annual Sacred Harp Singing Convention 6 - 7 March [Denson Book] Sonora Co-housing 501 E. Roger Road, Tucson, AZ 85705. For information contact: Paige Winslett [520]743-1268.

Pikes Peak Sacred Harp Singing 27 March [Denson and Cooper books]. Chapel of Our Saviour in the Broadmoor, Colorado Springs, CO 80906. For additional information, contact: Pete Mathewson [719]469-5241 or 71mgbgt41@gmail.com.

110th Annual Southwest Texas Convention 29 – 30 May [Cooper Book] Bethel Primitive Baptist Church, McMahan, TX. For additional information contact: Tom Owen, (512) 398-6075, or Curtis Owen, (512) 398-2017.

Camp Fasola - Sunday, June 13 (5:00pm) through Thursday, June 17 (8:30am) – Programmed for Adults – Camp McDowell near Double Springs, Alabama (<http://campmcdowell.com>).

Canp Fasola - Monday, July 5 (4:00pm) through Friday, July 9 (8:30am) - Programmed for Youth (ages 10 and up) and Adults under age 30 and families who wish to accompany their Youth – Youth will have priority – Camp Lee near Anniston, Alabama (<http://camplee.org>). Registration will begin January 1st.

Rocky Mountain Convention 25 – 26 September 2010 [Denson Book] New Mexico. Specific location and other details TBA.

Arkansas Valley Harvest Singing – Saturday 23 October 2010 [Denson and Cooper Books] Harmony Hall #13 5th Street, La Junta, CO 81050. 24 October singing from the Harp of Ages Location TBA. For additional information, contact: Pete Mathewson [719]469-5241 or 71mgbgt41@gmail.com.

Where We Sing and How to Find Us

Arkansas Valley Regular singings are 4th Mondays of each month from 6:30 – 8:30 pm at the home of Pete and Susie Mathewson 417 Carson Ave. La Junta. Contact Pete at 719/383-9056 or 71mgbgt41@gmail.com.

BOULDER Regular singings are 2nd Friday of each month 7-9 pm, at the home of Peter and Mary Lou Van Laanen. Contact Mary Lou for details at 303-447-9379 or e-mail her at vmarylou@indra.com

COLORADO SPRINGS - Sings regularly on the 2nd Sunday from 1:30 to 3:30 pm at the Pikes Peak Primitive Baptist Church 12th and Pikes Peak on the Westside. Please bring a dollar donation to the book fund. Pete Mathewson is the contact at 719-469-5241 or e-mail him at 71mgbgt41@gmail.com.

DENVER Sings weekly each Monday except the first Monday from 6:40 – 8:40PM at St. Mark's Orthodox, 1409 S. Vine, Denver. Special singings may be arranged [in addition to the regular Monday evening singings] for out of town visitors to the Denver/Boulder area.

Out of town singers should call Sharon Kermiet at 303-931-8445 or email her at skermiet@goodwilldenver.org and at coral96@indra.com to arrange a special singing. Bring a dollar as a contribution to the book fund. For the location of any specific singing, please contact Pat Dolan at 303-778-6297 or e-mail him at ruralplain@aol.com or Sharon Kermiet at skermiet@goodwilldenver.org.

FORT COLLINS - The singing is normally the first Monday of each month 7-8:30 pm at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 2000 Stover Street. Contact Hill Grimmett for specifics at 970-231-1197 or e-mail him at hill@sacredharpcolorado.org

Sacred Harp On The Web

Our local websites are Sacred Harp Colorado at www.sacredharpcolorado.org and the Rocky Mountain Shapenote Singers at <http://lamar.colostate.edu/~dakspk>. The national web site is www.fasola.org

Sacred Harp Colorado Newsletter Editor:

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Come Join Us At The Foot Of Pikes Peak For An All Day

Sacred Harp Singing

Saturday March 27th 2010

9:00AM to 3:00PM

Chapel of Our Savior

Episcopal Parish in the Broadmoor
#8, 4th Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80906

The Fifth Annual Pikes Peak Sacred Harp Singing is an opportunity for you to sing at the foot of the mountain that inspired Kathrine Lee Bates to pen the lyrics to one of our most beloved patriotic hymns – America The Beautiful. On Saturday the 27st of March 2010, we will again sing from both the Denson and Cooper books. Come share a great day of shape note singing and our fine Front Range hospitality including dinner on the grounds at noon.

Sacred Harp is four part a cappella harmony using a four shape notation. Since we sing for ourselves rather than an audience, new singers are always welcome and encouraged to participate. Interested listeners are equally welcome. Books are available for loan or purchase. Admission is free with donations accepted. Come and bring a friend.

Directions from Interstate 25 North or South: Take the Circle Drive exit [#138] and proceed West on Circle which becomes Lake. Continue on Lake toward the Broadmoor Hotel. Turn right on 4th Street to the Chapel.

For lodging information, please contact: Joyce Wood at 719/332-1162 or joycewood@q.com.

Other Activities: Saturday evening social with singing from the seven shape Harp of Ages. Sunday services at Pikes Peak Primitive Baptist Church 12th and Pikes Peak on the West side. Seven shape singing at 10:30AM, preaching at 11:00.

For additional information please contact: Pete Mathewson at 719/469-5241 or 71mgbgt41@gmail.com

Come Sound His Praise Abroad And Hymns Of Glory Sing