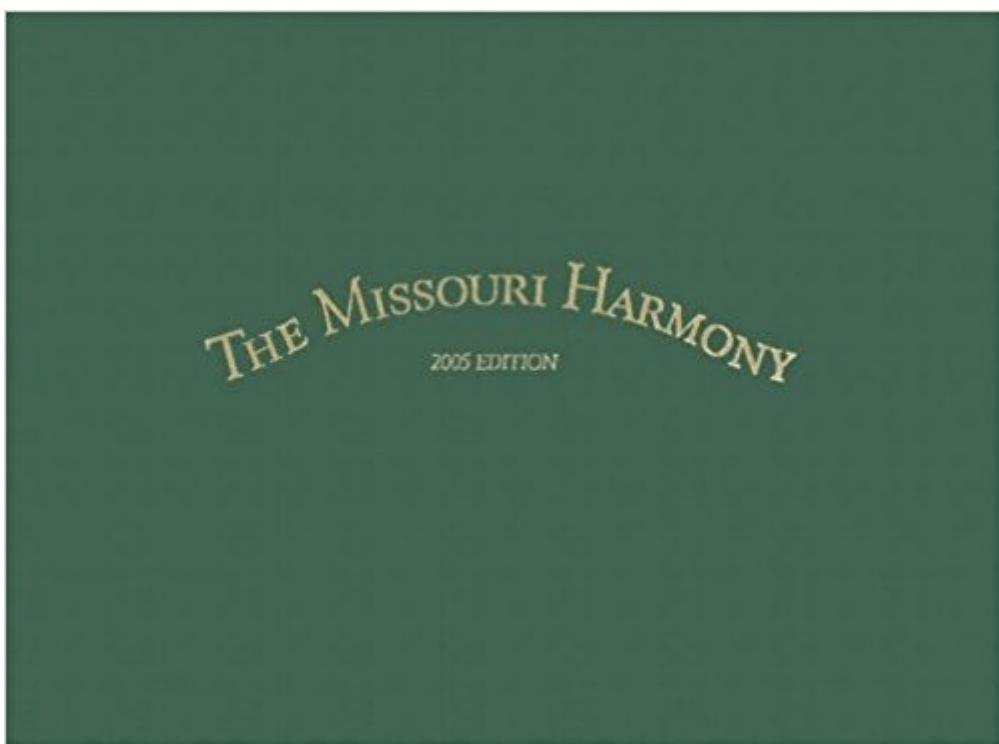


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The Missouri Harmony: Or A Choice Collection Of Psalm Tunes, Hymns, And Anthems



Synopsis

With a history dating back to 1820, The Missouri Harmony was the most popular of all frontier shape-note tune books. The 185 songs in the collection were favorites used in Protestant churches and singing schools, and many were already deeply rooted in American culture by the time of its first publication. The story of the book is the story of a burgeoning nation, with its origins in a St. Louis school (where it was introduced by singing master Allen Carden) and its spread along the Mississippi River and its tributaries. It's said that even Abraham Lincoln and his sweetheart Ann Rutledge sang from The Missouri Harmony at her father's tavern in Illinois. Compilations such as The Missouri Harmony not only helped teach midwesterners to read music but also carried a uniquely American heritage of shaped notes, a system of musical notation that grew out of the singing school movement in eighteenth-century New England. Furthermore, this heritage would be, according to composer Virgil Thomson, "the musical basis of almost everything we make, of Negro spirituals, of cowboy songs, of popular ballads, of blues, of hymns, of doggerel ditties, and all our operas and symphonies." Yet, despite its significance, the tune book was until now unavailable to contemporary choral and church music groups, including the thriving community of shape-note folksingers. This updated and expanded version of Allen D. Carden's 1820 volume now contains more than 300 pages of original and traditional music compositions collected by the St. Louis Shape Note Singers. An introductory text explains and illuminates the shape-note tradition and the history of the book. With this compilation, published nearly two hundred years after its inception, the heritage of a very different, yet ever influential, America thrives, and its songs, rich with our country's history, live on.

Book Information

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The nonprofit organization Wings of Song promotes and preserves a cappella shape-note singing in the traditional folk vernacular. It is the formal operating arm of the St. Louis Shape Note Singers and sponsors events such as singing schools and the annual Missouri Convention.

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