



# **The Norumbega Harmony: Historic and Contemporary Hymn Tunes and Anthems from the New England Singing School Tradition (American Made Music Series)**

*Stephen A. Marini, Susan Mampre, Dennis O'Brien, Bruce Randall, Glen Wright, Jane Zanichkowsky, Nym Cooke*

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Norumbega Harmony is a Boston-area musical community that has been a leading force in the revival of the American singing-school tradition. *The Norumbega Harmony*, a songbook of the community, collects 135 early American tunes and 30 new tunes. Represented are works by America's earliest composers, the itinerant New England singing masters whose schools were the principal form of music education in the Early Republic.

This music is vigorous and strikingly original. From four-part hymns called "plain tunes" and lively "fuging tunes" with independent lines for each part, it ranges to complex and inventive anthems that achieve the highest expression of the New England singing-school style. These historic compositions, written for worship and for educational purposes, provided musical settings for Biblical texts and for the metrical psalms and hymns of the great Evangelical poets Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley.

*The Norumbega Harmony* includes 51 plain tunes, 49 fuging tunes, and 5 anthems, in addition to 30 new tunes written by members and friends of Norumbega Harmony. The community has reclaimed the historic tunes as part of the current renewal of the singing-school heritage, especially the traditional singing of *The Sacred Harp* of the Deep South.

*The Sacred Harp* was one of the last great singing-school books. Compiled in Georgia in 1844, it included a large core of early New England tunes. The Norumbega Harmony, compiled from the same sources, may be considered a companion or supplement to *The Sacred Harp* as well as a historic collection in its own right. The book follows *The Sacred Harp* in using shape-notes, a system of musical notation developed by singing masters around 1800 to facilitate music literacy and used since then as a hallmark of the singing-school tradition.

Designed for church musicians and music educators as well as for traditional singers, this collection has been prepared entirely from original scores and textual sources. It is divided into seven geographical and chronological sections and includes an introduction, instructions for shape-notes and performance, and detailed text and tune commentaries.

Stephen A. Marini, Elizabeth Luce Moore Professor of Religion at Wellesley College, is the author of *Radical Sects of Revolutionary New England* and *Sacred Song in America: Religion, Music, and Public Culture*.

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