David Guthrie
DMA candidate, Choral Conducting

**Shape-Note Hymnody as Source Material for Modern and Post-Modern Choral Art Music**

**Abstract**

The musical repertoire known as shape-note hymns constitutes some of the oldest indigenous music still in use in America. This body of works has been studied for its origins and history, its continuing use in social and pedagogical functions, and its use in settings of worship. However, its use as the basis for performance-oriented, concert music has been far less explored. This present study seeks to examine the ways in which composers have arranged and adapted these hymns into choral art forms throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In particular, the study will examine the use of this music in large-scale forms and choral collections, as such works are distinguished from the typical arrangements of shape-note hymns one may encounter in settings of worship. This study will include a brief history of American shape-note music, the context and origins of twentieth-century shape-note adaptations, as well as a general history of the adaptation practice. The study will then focus on specific works by representative composers in an attempt to illustrate the various techniques composers employ when borrowing from the original works.