

**“The American Fuging Tune: ‘Marks of Distinction’”<sup>1</sup>**

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Early American composers of psalmody used as their prototypes and compass the compositions by British composers, whose works flourished in the parish churches of England during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The repertory was comprised of a variety of text settings, including plain tunes, extended tunes, fuging tunes, set-pieces, and anthems. Fuging tunes, three- or four-part polyphonic choral settings of metered sacred texts, were adopted by American composers and embraced by singers with particular zeal.

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase “Marks of Distinction” is used here in a general sense to convey this author’s intent to explore the distinguishing features of fuging tunes composed by American tunesmiths. The phrase, however, is also a specific musical term used by American psalmidists and singing masters in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. “Marks of Distinction,” small triangular symbols above the notes, indicated a “marked” or *marcato* articulation, in other words, the application of stress and particular emphasis. (Note: Marks of Distinction should not be confused with staccato symbols which sometimes appear in traditional notation utilizing the same type of triangular marking, but indicate a reduction in the written duration of the note.)

During the years that marked its greatest popularity in America (1770-1820), the fugal tune was transformed from an imitation of British models to a music uniquely adapted to the needs and tastes of its particular cultural environment. As in England, fugal tunes were part of an answer to a call for improved congregational singing. They developed from a religious tradition, however, that once relocated to the New World, found its musical options and resources tenuous and extremely limited. For Americans wanting to compose music of this sort, there was no indigenous precedent. There was no already established cathedral or urban parish musical tradition to provide patronage or attract trained professional musicians who could provide models and instruct others.<sup>2</sup> In America, composers were basically starting “from scratch.” Even as small settlements evolved into thriving cities, the frontier nature of America was ever-present, as people moved further south, north, and west from the New England seaboard into isolated and unsettled areas. The spread or transplantation of the fugal tune and its perpetuation in the United States, in fact, can be traced largely through that migration.

This paper explores the American fugal tune tradition and its British counterpart with focus on the technical aspects of the compositions. A sampling of the British tunes that were disseminated most widely in America during the formative years was examined, to delineate the status of the repertory when it was first adopted by American composers.<sup>3</sup> These compositions were then compared with the nearly 1,300 American fugal tunes<sup>4</sup> from the period by over 200 composers, in order to discern the constants,

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<sup>2</sup> In England, country psalmists were never too far from a fairly major town and had access to other musics, both sacred and secular. This urban influence, which certainly included an awareness of continental European developments, provided a constant influx of new musical ideas and certainly broadened the scope of the rural tunesmith’s musical knowledge.

<sup>3</sup> The following volume was an invaluable resource for this facet of the study: Nicholas Temperley and Charles Manns, *Fugal Tunes in the Eighteenth Century* (Detroit: Information Coordinators, 1983).

<sup>4</sup> I am indebted to the indefatigable work of Karl Kroeger whose cataloguing efforts provided a framework for my research. Karl Kroeger, *American Fugal Tunes, 1770-1820: A Descriptive Catalog* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994).

variables, and innovations that characterized the American output.<sup>5</sup> Differences that appear to be most significant include the imaginative formal, contrapuntal, harmonic, and textual approaches that will be discussed here today.

**Form** The basic formal patterns of American fusing tunes remain consistent with British predecessors, with examples of both the fusing chorus and the integrated design found in the works of British composers. DORCHESTER by William Tansu'r (See Example #1) [Musical Examples are found below.] and PSALM 50 by Robert King (See Example #2) provide illustrative points of reference. DORCHESTER illustrates the fusing-chorus type, where the psalm text is completely declaimed in an initial homophonic section, followed by a reiteration of the last two lines of text in polyphonic fashion. PSALM 50 is constructed in the integrated format, where the fuge is an integral part of the initial statement of the psalm (rather than a repetition of lines that have already been sung). Both of these formats were adopted by American tunesmiths. Likewise were the various placements of the fuge within a piece and varying numbers of fuges in a piece employed by American psalmodists.

While these basic formats remained consistent, American composers tended to expand the fugal section to lengths far beyond those found in the British models. Furthermore, American composers sometimes utilized a modular concept in constructing their compositions, as observed in CREATION (See Example #3) by William Billings, one of America's most prolific composers of fusing tunes. CREATION is Billings's most extensive work in this genre, representing several different stages of endeavor. The first 15 measures are based upon a plain tune originally published in one of Billings's

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<sup>5</sup> The British models that initially made their way into circulation in America were essentially a distillation of the wider repertory that circulated throughout Britain—with representative samples composed by both professional and country psalmodists. Among the early British influences in America were Robert King, a professional composer and organist, connected with the royal household and employed at St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London, and William Tans'ur, a country psalmodist whose other vocations included stationer and bookseller.

earlier tunebooks.<sup>6</sup> Measures 16-22 are an extension of that psalm tune, set at a quicker tempo. Measure 23 through the end of the piece is an integrated fusing tune on a completely different text, drawn from another source.<sup>7</sup> The content of the homophonic section of this integrated fusing tune, mm. 23-30, however, is a variant of the initial psalm tune.<sup>8</sup> In short, CREATION is a pastiche of ideas.

**Contrapuntal Approaches** Imitation, sequence, and the rudimentary spinning-out of musical motives are procedures present in the early British models that find their way to varying degrees into the American repertory.<sup>9</sup> However, in the absence of orthodox formal training in counterpoint or harmonic practices (until the availability of *The Massachusetts Compiler* tunebook of 1795), American composers ventured into some rather uncharted territory when writing their fugal counterpoint. The alternatives they devised reveal, for the most part, a pragmatic approach to the contrapuntal challenges of the fusing tune.<sup>10</sup>

For example, imitation is a prominent feature in many British and American tunes. Voices traditionally proceed from one to the next at the outset of most fuges imitating a simple head motive for roughly two measures. This procedure provides the catalyst for the rest of the fuge, which is usually comprised of free counterpoint. The

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<sup>6</sup> William Billings, *Music in Miniature* (Boston: William Billings, 1779), 3.

<sup>7</sup> The text for mm. 1-22 is from Isaac Watts's *The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament*, Psalm 139, Part 2, C.M. version. The text for the remainder of the piece is from Watts's *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, Book 2, No. 19:3.

<sup>8</sup> For more information on the Billings practice of ornamental and compositional variants, see Karl Kroeger, "William Billings's Music in Manuscript and Some Notes on Variant Versions of His Pieces," *MLA Notes* 39/2 (December 1982): 316-345.

<sup>9</sup> Imitation is by far the device most readily adopted on this side of the Atlantic. Sequence, perhaps because of its more complex tonal implications, was employed less frequently by American psalmists. Motivic development occasionally finds its way into some of the more extended works of William Billings, Daniel Read, and Jacob French.

<sup>10</sup> In the British tunes examined for this study, the verbal conflict at the onset of the fuge was consistently the result of successive vocal entries of some configuration or, less frequently, the elision or overlapping of phrases. While these techniques were regularly used by American psalmists as well, American composers would also on occasion circumvent the traditional mode of producing verbal conflict by combining differing rates of declamation among the voices or through simultaneous juxtaposition of different lines of text immediately and abruptly at the outset of the fuge.

extent to which imitation is used in some American futing tunes is noteworthy. While canonic imitation was certainly not unusual in the music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was apparently no precedent for it in the futing tunes coming out of England at the time.<sup>11</sup> Systematically adopting it into the futing tune seems to have been the innovation of Massachusetts psalmodist Amariah Hall.<sup>12</sup>

In Hall's ALL SAINTS NEW (See Example #4), canonic imitation at times involves entire phrases of text and is sustained for as many as five measures at a time. It first appears between the tenor and treble beginning with the tenor's fugal entrance in m. 15. The treble follows at the interval of an octave and at the distance of one measure. The imitation is exact, with one exception, the B-flat for the treble on the fourth quarter note of m. 18, which well may be a typographical error in the original tunebook. To be exact canon, the treble should have a C at this point, as later printed versions of the tune indicate.<sup>13</sup> The second canon ensues with the treble entrance on the last quarter note of m. 23. The tenor follows. In this canon, lasting for five measures, the melodic interval is the octave, while the distance between the two voices is two measures.<sup>14</sup>

Another imitative device in futing tunes that appears to be a distinctly American innovation is the use of imitative exits from the fuge. Imitative exit motives as seen in WESTERN by Abijah Forbush (See Example #5) offered a logical mirroring of the process that typically produced the fuge. The imitative exit motive in WESTERN is

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<sup>11</sup> The use of prolonged imitation is not present in the British models identified in this author's larger study upon which this current paper is based, nor does immediate evidence suggest its presence in the rest of the British futing tune repertory. See Chapter 2 of Maxine Fawcett-Yeske, "The Futing Tune in America, 1770-1820: An Analytical Study" (Ph.D. diss., University of Colorado at Boulder, 1997), 19-61.

<sup>12</sup> For additional analysis of Amariah Hall's ALL SAINTS NEW [1], refer to Chapter 5 and Chapter 9 in "The Futing Tune in America, 1770-1820: An Analytical Study," 185-189, 403-408. Chapter 9 examines ALL SAINTS NEW in variant versions that appear in later printings of the tune found in *The Sacred Harp* shape-note tunebook, among others.

<sup>13</sup> Several later versions of ALL SAINTS NEW indicate the B-flat was replaced by a C. The second and fourth editions of *The Village Harmony* (Exeter: Henry Ranlet, 1796, 1798) and Joseph Stone and Abraham Wood's *The Columbian Harmony* (Worcester: n.p., 1793) were consulted.

<sup>14</sup> Other Americans, notably Daniel Read, Supply Belcher, Oliver Holden, Daniel Belknap, Jeremiah Ingalls, Samuel Babcock, and Elkanah Kelsey Dare, also employed this technique in some of their compositions.

suggested in the tenor at m. 17, with a stepwise eighth-note descent that finally comes to rest on a half note. The melodic contour of that motive remains consistent in the bass, treble, and counter, but a dotted half and quarter note placed in front of the descending line expands the phrase into a two-measure gesture which is imitated among them on the text, “And all the earth shall hear.” Just as imitation at the beginning of a fuge provided a framework of continuity as the voices entered into the counterpoint, these exit motives draw similar aural attention as the voices make their departure from the verbal interplay.<sup>15</sup>

**Harmony** Because thoroughbass principles were outside the usual musical vocabulary of the American psalmist, the harmonic idiom of American fusing tunes is one of their most distinguishing features. Certainly, characteristics such as incomplete chords, parallel fifths and octaves, root movement characterized by seconds and thirds (rather than fourths and fifths), the absence of the raised leading tone in minor, and the presence of dissonances that are best explained melodically were features of some of the British models. However, as the genre developed in England, these elements were supplanted by more orthodox voice leading and chord progressions. On the other hand, because he was largely unaware of such musical refinements and therefore not equipped to master them, the American tunesmith continued to compose in the harmonic style that was most accessible to him. As time passed, American fusing tunes possessed an archaic flavor—one to which Americans, in fact, had grown quite accustomed. American tunesmith Abraham Maxim observed, “European music is less agreeable to the American ear than her own.”<sup>16</sup> What was viewed as “common practice” in Europe and England was all but uncommon practice in America at this time.

Another aspect of the harmony that is quite distinct in American psalmody is the depth of some of the chords. Refer to the fugal portion of William Billings’s tune

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<sup>15</sup> This same technique can be observed in the works of Stephen Jenks and other tunesmiths as well.

<sup>16</sup> Abraham Maxim, *The Northern Harmony*, 2d ed. (Exeter: Norris and Sawyer, 1808), [2].

EUROPE (See Example #6) looking particularly at m. 27 through the end of the piece. Chords with “choosing notes,” as they were called, where several pitches were provided for each of the voice parts (except the tenor which carried the melody), created full-bodied vertical sonorities clearly rivaling the dominant sevenths and secondary dominants of British fusing tunes in their aural effect, though not as propulsive in harmonic effect.<sup>17</sup> What the American tunesmith lacked in common practice orthodoxy, he seems to have made up for in great measure with his practical and imaginative alternatives.

**Text Considerations** Nowhere did American psalmists find a more distinct voice than in their text settings. Even critics who later devalued the quality of American psalmody on other grounds could not deny the flair that someone like William Billings had for setting a text. Nathaniel Gould in 1853 observed:

[Billings] was not void of the *spirit* of poetry. He had a vivid imagination; and though, through his ignorance of language, his poetry, . . . will be found sometimes ludicrous or amusing, . . . now and then he approached the solemn or the sublime.<sup>18</sup>

Vivid, meaningful, and relevant text choices were central to accomplishing such results. While the majority of British fusing tunes set either “Old Version”<sup>19</sup> or “New Version”<sup>20</sup> texts (respectively the versions of psalms officially approved for use in the Anglican church), Americans were drawn to the personal and powerful images expressed in Isaac Watts’s versifications of the *Psalms*.<sup>21</sup> In addition, the other poets whose texts

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<sup>17</sup> For further discussion of Billings’s EUROPE and additional information on choosing notes, see “The Fusing Tune in America, 1770-1820: An Analytical Study,” 70-74.

<sup>18</sup> Nathaniel D. Gould, *Church Music in America* (Boston: A.N. Johnson, 1853; reprint, New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1972), 43.

<sup>19</sup> “Old Version” refers to *The Whole Book of Psalmes, Collected Into English Meter by T[homas] Sternhold and J[ohn] Hopkins & Others* (London: John Day, 1562, and later editions).

<sup>20</sup> “New Version” refers to Nicholas Brady and Nahum Tate, *A New Version of the Psalms of David*. (London: M. Clark for the Company of Stationers 1696, and later editions).

<sup>21</sup> Watts, after all, was an independent, and it appears his poetry found particular favor among the like-minded in America. Isaac Watts, *The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament* (London: Printed for J. Clark, R. Ford, and R. Cruttenden, 1719; Boston: Thomas and John Fleet, 1767, and later editions).

were set in American fusing tunes comprised a rather diverse collection—Philip Doddridge, Charles Wesley, Joel Barlow, Samuel Stennett, Joseph Hart, Joseph Addison, John Newton, and Anne Steele, among others—the variety in itself markedly different from the British choices. Some American psalmodists, like William Billings, Walter Janes, and Jacob Kimball, even wrote their own texts, which the evidence available for this study indicates was not done by British psalmodists. Moreover, the topical texts by individual tunesmiths, often expressing revolutionary sentiment were certainly unique to America.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, the flexibility with which American composers handled the text, i.e., the free license they took with it, was unmatched in British fusing-tune practice. Many British examples steadfastly maintain the integrity of the poetry. In other words, the stanzaic structure and the poetic line are rarely interrupted or tampered with. The tune begins with the first line of the text and proceeds straight through the stanza, with very little fragmentation of poetic lines or repetition of words. (For example, refer back to Example #2, PSALM 50 by Robert King.)<sup>23</sup> When the poetic structure is altered, it is usually through repetition of an entire line or a significant contextual phrase. On the other hand, American composers did not hesitate to omit entirely a line of text (in a particular voice's part) if the need arose, and, on other occasions, they repeated or isolated particularly meaningful words, placing them completely out of proportion with the rest of the poetic context.<sup>24</sup> Granted, there are instances in the works of American psalmodists where difficulties with prosody arise, but with experience they developed

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<sup>22</sup> Daniel Read's fusing tune, NEW ENGLAND (See "The Fusing Tune in America, 1770-1820: An Analytical Study," 456-57), for example, sets the memorable Billings text, "Let tyrants shake their iron rod," which Billings himself set in the plain tune CHESTER. Stephen Jenks commemorates the death of noteworthy patriot George Washington writing both music and text for the fusing tune, MOUNT VERNON, which begins, "What solemn sounds the ear invade!"

<sup>23</sup> John Arnold's LAINDON is another example of a British composer's adherence to the poetic line and structure. (See "The Fusing Tune in America, 1770-1820: An Analytical Study," 41-42).

<sup>24</sup> Oliver Holden, for example, omits a line of the poetry from the counter's part in CONTRITION, and singular word repetition pervades Daniel Read's BARRINGTON. (See "The Fusing Tune in America, 1770-1820: An Analytical Study," 218-219 and 453-54, respectively).

facility for musically depicting and inflecting the English language. Through musical emphasis, text painting, and declamatory manipulation, the metrical psalms and hymns acquired a special vibrancy and immediacy in the hands of American tunesmiths—the cohesion between poetry and music was foremost.

Rarely does a word such as “praise,” “joy,” or “roll” (as in “rolling billows”) pass from an American tunesmith’s pen without some type of musical emphasis or illustration.<sup>25</sup> Ornamental figures for verbal emphasis and musical illustration of text also graced the works of English parish composers.<sup>26</sup> However, the sheer degree to which this union pervades American fusing tunes far surpasses that in the British repertory.

There is perhaps no more vivid example of melding music to text than Timothy Swan’s work, RAINBOW, setting an Isaac Watts version of Psalm 65. (See Example #7) The fuge subject, introduced by the treble, is characterized by a dotted rhythm, and an upper-neighbor melodic construction. As the other voices follow suit, with the bass entering the verbal conflict last (at the end of m. 9), the successive recurrence of the head motive suggests the rolling seas in the text, “The sea grows calm.” The fuge continues through the fourth line of text, “And tempests cease to roar.” Eventually the voices drop out of the fuge, in the order of their original entry—first the treble, next the counter, then the tenor—finally leaving only the bass, completely exposed on “roar,” the technique itself depicting the cessation of sound described by the text, and bringing this fugal passage to a memorable close. There is probably no more obvious yet ingenious attempt

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<sup>25</sup> Richard Crawford comments, with reference to the increasing synergy between text and music, “*Urania* [James Lyon, Philadelphia: n.p., 1761] and its successors, by printing the texts with suitable tunes, helped to foster the idea that sacred music could be more than a stock of practical formulas, that by exercising artistry and taste, psalmists could provide music expressing specific texts and hence increase the devotional aspects of singing. *Urania* represents an important step toward establishing sacred music-making as an artistic process, as opposed to a somewhat mechanical earlier procedure of matching a tune, a piece of musical whole-cloth, with almost any text of similar form.” Richard Crawford, “Watts for Singing: Metrical Poetry in American Sacred Tunebooks, 1761-1785,” *Early American Literature* 11 (Fall 1976): 141.

<sup>26</sup> For example, refer to the melismatic setting of “sweetly” in LAINDON, “salvation” in PENBURY, and “joy” in KEEN. (See “The Fuging Tune in America, 1770-1820: An Analytical Study,” 42, 47, and 54, respectively).

to paint a text in the entire American fusing-tune repertory than the singular “roar” of the basses at the close of this phrase. Though the levity engendered by such music and its delivery would later come under strong criticism by the reformers, the fact that it did only reinforces the assertion that this fascination with words and how they were expressed is ultimately the very essence of American fusing tunes.

A side-by-side comparison further highlights distinctions between British and American fusing tunes. Here, one tune from each repertory has been chosen for comparison on the basis that each seems to represent an aesthetic ideal: Joseph Stephenson’s MILFORD (See Example #8) and William Billings’s WAREHAM (See Example 9). Each tune is by a popular and widely-published composer and appears to embody traits that were prized in each tradition—British and American—during the establishment and development of the genre in its respective milieu. The styles diverge most noticeably in form, contrapuntal technique, motivic activity, and prosody. Formally, the tunes represent two different structures. MILFORD is an integrated fusing tune, while WAREHAM is one of Billings’s hallmark fusing choruses. While WAREHAM is longer than MILFORD by 13 measures, MILFORD involves three fuses to WAREHAM’s one rather extended fuge of 15 measures.

Contrapuntally, MILFORD makes greater use of imitation. Each of the three disparate fuses utilizes some degree of imitation at the outset of a new line of the poetry. Furthermore, the onset of each fuge coincides with the introduction of another new line of text from the stanza being set. Stanzaic structure, more specifically, the poetic line, acts as a modular building block in the compositional design of the piece. In WAREHAM, the counterpoint is much freer, with each voice largely possessing a character of its own. The treble imitates the bass for slightly more than a measure at the outset of the fuge (which begins at m. 12), the tenor’s subject is a roughly inverted variant, and the counter’s subject is more staid or subdued.

The procedures of imitation and sequence, in the hands of Billings, appear to be motivated more by the text than generated by the counterpoint, associated not so much with the onset or sustenance of counterpoint but with the reiteration of specific words of the text. For example, in the bass part at m. 15, a dotted-eighth, sixteenth-, dotted-eighth, sixteenth-note gesture emerges in an upper and lower neighbor tone melodic configuration. That same motive occurs consistently on the word “thou” throughout the fuge. As the text, “For thou art all in all,” is sung asynchronously by the other voices in the fuge, variously, in m. 17 sung by the bass and the counter, m. 18 in the tenor, m. 19 in the bass, m. 20 in the tenor, m. 21 in the bass and treble, and so forth, imitation among the voices and “gapped” sequence within voices result.

A similar coupling of text and gesture is present in the “all in all” motive, which is usually set off by marks of distinction, the triangular marks above it that serve to set it off from the rest of the text. The “all in all” motive comes to dominate the fuge as it is fragmented from the poetic line and eventually repeated numerous times in succession, most emphatically in the bass in mm. 24-26. The motive appears again outside the context of the fuge at m. 31 in a homorhythmic exclamation by all the voices.

Billings fragments the motive even further. In mm. 32-34, the word “All” is isolated, and its repetitions are separated by rests. At this, the musical climax, the piece assumes the character of an anthem—declamation and dramatic effect taking precedence over poetic meter or integrity of a poetic line. The piece is then brought to a close with a reiteration of the entire phrase, “For thou art all in all,” with marks of distinction again emphasizing the message of the entire stanza, that the Lord is “all in all.” To convey this, the essence of the verse, Billings went from one declamatory extreme to the other—having established “all in all” as a significant textual and musical entity, he proceeded from emphatic and elaborate repetition of the motive to the other end of the spectrum where, reduced to a single word, the fragment is separated by dramatic pauses, which starkly highlight its compelling imperative.

This highly synergistic relationship of text and music is quite different from the practice observed in Stephenson's MILFORD. In MILFORD, unity, motivic connections, and momentum are fostered within the musical components (melody, rhythm, counterpoint, harmony) rather than through the collaboration of music and text. For example, the contours of the subjects for the last two fugues are related—the contour of the third fuge being a partial inversion of the second's subject. Moreover, both subjects are largely characterized by quarter-note motion—the declamatory duple style—which sends each fuge on a relentless drive to the cadence.<sup>27</sup>

Additional momentum is created in MILFORD by Stephenson's harmonic choices. While several of the vertical sonorities involve the characteristic open fifths, two of the interior cadences feature secondary dominants, which momentarily tonicize the supertonic (at mm. 10-11) and the dominant (at mm. 16-17). Thus Stephenson provides forward propulsion, but does so in a way that is not tied to or dependent upon the text—a text that, in fact, often times was not printed along with the tune in British tunebooks.<sup>28</sup>

Though not entirely absent from British tunes, the cohesion between tune and text is much stronger in American compositions. On the other hand, while American fusing

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<sup>27</sup> Richard Crawford describes the declamatory-duple style with reference to another one of Joseph Stephenson's fusing tunes, PSALM 34, stating, "Immediately after a whole-note beginning that allows them to gather themselves and tune their voices, the singers launch out in quarter-note motion to the first cadence. After a brief second phrase, mostly in half-notes, quarter-note motion begins again, this time through fusing, with the voices entering successively. The fusing lasts some six measures, with each quarter-note beat articulated by at least one of the voices singing one syllable per note. The forward march of the fusing section is further intensified by its melody, which consists almost entirely of repeated notes. Much has been made of the fusing tune as the musical form that brought counterpoint to English parish psalmody and thereafter to American music. However true that may be, the fundamental fact remains that in fusing sections the voices often declaim quarter notes syllabically and frequently sing a subject that involves repeated notes as well. The result was a newly aggressive kind of rhythmic movement. (The idea that fusing involves a kind of motion as well as a kind of texture may be implicit in the Latin word *fugere*—to fly—from which *fugue* is derived.)" Richard Crawford, ed., *The Core Repertory of Early American Psalmody* (Madison: A-R Editions, 1984), xv.

<sup>28</sup> Two instances where Stephenson may have been attempting to highlight the text through musical elaboration (given this particular text) are the rhythmically dotted melisma coupled with the word "sung" assigned to each of the voices in the subject of the first fuge, and the imitative entrances to the second fuge which coincide with the text, "We well may imitate their mirth." These sections, however, are general or universal enough that they work equally well regardless of the chosen text.

tunes are not devoid of motivic development, imitation, sequence, and an occasional secondary harmony, those features are much more prominent in the works of British composers. Technical aspects of the harmony and counterpoint prevail in the British tunes examined, while visceral and sonorous setting of the text reigns supreme in much of the American repertory.

In the Glossary found in Billings's tunebook, *The Singing Master's Assistant* of 1778,<sup>29</sup> "Marks of Distinction" (those triangular symbols we noted above in the piece WAREHAM), are described as an indication that "a note is to be struck distinct and emphatic." Clearly, what strikes one as "distinct" and "emphatic" about American fusing tunes is the degree to which psalmodists employed certain procedures that were found only in limited usage in the early British prototypes and the innovative ways Americans developed those attributes into significant stylistic features. It is the creative patchwork of contrapuntal alternatives, the harmonic procedures that become refreshingly anachronistic (compared to contemporary developments abroad), and the expressive partnership of word and music wherein the American voice so loudly resounds.

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<sup>29</sup> William Billings, *The Singing Master's Assistant* (Boston: Draper and Folsom, 1778), 7.

# The American Fuging Tune: "Marks of Distinction"

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DORCHESTER C.M. William Tans'ur

Example 1. DORCHESTER by William Tans'ur  
from *The Royal Melody Compleat* (1767), p. 13.

\* **Fuging Chorus:** Psalm text is completely declaimed in an initial homophonic section followed by a fugal reiteration of the last two lines of the text.

PSALM 50 P.M. Robert King

Example 2. PSALM 50 by Robert King  
from *A New and Complete Introduction* (1764), p. 22.

\* **Integrated Fuging Tune:** The fuge is an integral part of the initial statement of the psalm text.

Isaac Watts **CREATION** C.M. William Billings

When I with pleas - ing won - der stand, And all my

frame sur - - vey, Lord, 'tis thy work I own thy hand, Thus

built my hum - - ble clay, Lord, 'tis thy work, I own thy

hand, Thus built my hum - - ble clay. Our life con -

**Example 3. CREATION** by William Billings  
from *The Continental Harmony* (1794), pp. 52-54.

tains a thou - - sand springs, And dies if one be gone,

Strange that a harp of thou - sand strings, Should keep in tune so long,  
Strange that a harp of thou - sand strings, Should keep in tune so long,  
Strange that a harp of thou - sand strings, Should keep in tune so long,  
Strange that a harp of

long, Should keep in tune, Should keep in tune so long, Should  
Strange that a harp of thou - sand strings, Should keep in tune, should keep in  
Should keep in tune so long, Should keep in tune so  
thou - sand strings, Should keep in tune so long, Should keep in tune so

keep in tune so long, Should keep in tune so long, Strange that a  
tune so long,  
long, Should keep in tune so long, Strange that a harp of  
long, Should keep in tune so long,

**Example 3. CREATION**, continued.

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harp of thou - sand strings, Should keep in tune so long, so long,  
 Our life con - tains a thou - sand strings, And dies if one be gone,  
 thou - sand strings, Should keep in tune so long,  
 Strange that a harp of thou - sand strings, Should keep in tune so long,.

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so long, Should keep in tune so long, Should  
 Strange that a harp of thou - sand strings, Should keep in tune so long, Should keep in tune so  
 Strange that a harp of thou - sand strings, Should keep in tune so long,  
 Strange that a harp of thou - sand strings, Should keep in tune, Should

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keep in tune so long,  
 long, so long, Strange that a harp of thou - sand strings, Should keep in tune so long,  
 keep in tune so long,

Example 3. CREATION, continued.

Isaac Watts **ALL SAINTS NEW [1]** L.M. Amariah Hall

Oh! If my Lord would come and meet, My soul should stretch her wings in haste, Fly fear-less thro' death's iron gate, Nor feel the terrors Je - sus can make a as she past. Je - sus can make a dy - ing bed, Feel Je - sus can make a dy - ing bed, Feel soft as down - y pil - lars are, While sus can make a dy - ing bed, Feel soft as down - y pil - lars soft as down - y pil - lars are, While on his breast I down - y pil - lars are, While on his breast I lean my

on his breast I lean my head, While on his breast I lean, I lean my are, While on his breast I lean my head, I lean my lean my head, And breathe my life out sweet - ly there, While on his breast I head, And breathe my life out sweet - ly there, While on his breast I head, And breathe, And breathe, And breathe, And lean, I lean my head, And breathe my life out lean, I lean my head, And breathe, And breathe, breathe, breathe my life, And breathe my life out sweet - ly there, there. sweet - ly there, breathe,

Example 4. ALL SAINTS NEW, continued.

**Example 4. ALL SAINTS NEW** by Amariah Hall  
from *The Worcester Collection of Sacred Harmony*, 3d ed.  
(1791), pp. 121-123.

WESTERN S.M.

Philip Doddridge

Abijah Forbush

Grace, 'tis a charm - ing sound, Har - mo - - - nious to the

Heav'n with the ech - o shall re - sound, And

ear; Heav'n with the ech - o shall re - sound, And all the earth shall

Heav'n with the ech - o shall re - sound, And all the earth shall

Heav'n with the ech - o shall re - sound, And all the earth shall

hear, And all the earth shall

all the earth shall hear, Heav'n with the ech - o shall re - sound, And all the

hear, Heav'n with the ech - o shall re - sound, And

hear, Heav'n with the ech - o shall re - sound, And all the earth shall hear,

hear, Heav'n with the ech - o shall re - sound, And all the earth shall hear,

earth shall hear,

all the earth shall hear, Heav'n with the ech - o shall re - sound, And all the earth shall hear.

**Example 5. WESTERN** by Abijah Forbush  
from *The Psalmist's Assistant* (1803), p. 50.



Isaac Watts **RAINBOW** C.M. Timothy Swan

7

12

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**Example 7. RAINBOW** by Timothy Swan from Brownson's *The Select Harmony*, 2d ed. (1785), p. 77.

Anonymous **MILFORD** C.M. Joseph Stephenson

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**Example 8. MILFORD** by Joseph Stephenson from *Select Harmony* (1779), p. 63.

Isaac Watts                      WAREHAM                      S. M.                      William Billings

My God, my life, my love: To thee, to thee I call;

can-not live if thou re-move, For thou art all in all, For thou art all in all.

I can - not live if  
I can - not live if thou re - move, For  
I can - not live, I can - not live, I can - not live if  
I can - not live if thou re - move, For thou art all in all,

thou re - move, For thou art all in all, in all, For thou art  
thou art all in all, all in all, all in all,  
thou re - move, For thou art all in all, thou art all in all,  
thou art all in all, thou art all in all, thou art

all in all, For thou art all in all, For thou art  
thou art all in all, all in all, thou art  
thou art all in all, thou art all in all,  
all in all, thou art all in all, all in all,

all in all,  
all in all, I can - not live if thou re - move, For thou art  
all in all,  
all in all,

all in all, All. All. All. For thou art all in all.

Example 9. WAREHAM, continued.

**Example 9. WAREHAM by William Billings**  
from *The Psalm Singer's Amusement* (1781), pp. 51-52.