

An American Thanksgiving was commissioned by the Dale Warland Singers for their final season, and premiered on November 1, 2003. The concert had a Thanksgiving theme, so I picked the three hymns for their compatible texts and above all their compelling melodies. I have tried to stay close to the wonderful spirited rhythms and elemental, forthright harmonies of the original settings found in the Sacred Harp collection.

total duration: c. 7:00
Webster: c. 1:15
McKay: c. 2:30
Ninety-Third Psalm: c. 3:00

Webster

*Come, we who love the Lord,
And let our joys be known:
Join in a song with sweet accord
And thus surround the throne.*

*Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God;
But servants of the heav'nly King
May speak their joys abroad.*

*The God that rules on high,
That all the earth surveys,
That rides upon the stormy sky
And calms the roaring sea.*

Isaac Watts, 1707

McKay

*O the transporting, rapturous scene
That rises to my sight!
Sweet fields arrayed in living green,
And rivers of delight.*

*There gen'rous fruits that never fail
On trees immortal grow,
There rocks and hills and brooks and vales
With milk and honey flow.*

Samuel Stennett, 1787

Ninety-Third Psalm

*Grace! 'Tis a charming sound,
Harmonious to the ear;
Heav'n with the echo shall resound,
And all the earth shall hear.*

*Grace first contrived the way
To save rebellious man;
And all the steps that grace display,
Which drew the wondrous plan.*

*Grace taught my wand'ring feet
To tread the heav'nly road;
And new supplies each hour I meet,
While pressing on to God.*

*Grace all the work shall crown
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heav'n the topmost stone.
And well deserves our praise.*

Philip Doddridge, 1755