



# Traveling Home: Sacred Harp Singing and American Pluralism (Music in American Life)

*Kiri Miller*

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A compelling account of contemporary Sacred Harp singing, *Traveling Home* describes how this vibrant musical tradition brings together Americans of widely divergent religious and political beliefs. Named after the most popular of the nineteenth-century shape-note tunebooks--which employed an innovative notation system to teach singers to read music--Sacred Harp singing has been part of rural Southern life for more than 150 years.

In the wake of the folk revival of the 1950s and '60s, this participatory musical tradition attracted new singers from all over America. All-day "singings" from *The Sacred Harp* now take place across the country, creating a diverse and far-flung musical community. Meanwhile, the advent of internet discussion boards and increasing circulation of singer-produced recordings have changed the nature of traditional transmission and sharpened debates about Sacred Harp as an "authentic" form of southern musical expression. Blending historical scholarship with wide-ranging fieldwork, Kiri Miller presents an engagingly written study of a musical movement that some have christened "a quintessential expression of American democracy."

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