

LEARNING AND TEACHING NEW TUNES

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A. WHY USE NEW TUNES?

1. Part of the Creation mandate – we have a rich heritage of tunes from many sources suitable for Reformed psalmody.
2. Necessity – the words of *Sing Psalms* employ a wide variety of metres.
3. Variety makes our services more attractive to our own people as well as to outsiders.

B. LEARNING NEW TUNES

Many of us learned our tunes by hearing the singing of other people, and from them we picked up “old” versions of the tunes as well as variations – regional, local and even personal – on what is actually printed in the tune books.

1. Learn to read music – sol-fa or staff. (Most of us already know the rudiments of sol-fa.)

Why? Sing “known” tunes correctly.

Learn new tunes (correctly.)

Sing in parts. (Harmony is also a gift from God for use in his worship.)

Be able to teach others both music and tunes.

How? Get somebody to teach you.

Use the excellent *Manual for Precentors* – by yourself or with others.

Join a psalm-singing group such as Highland Harmony Singers.

2. Have the right books – *Sing Psalms* and *The Scottish Psalmody* (1977 and later.)
3. Learn the tunes as printed.
4. Join a psalm-singing group.
5. Listen to reliable recordings – in the house, in the car or in any convenient place:-

MP3 files of all tunes in *Sing Psalms*

Tutor CDs

CDs and tapes of festivals etc. (Caution! The singing on some of these recordings needs to be checked for accuracy against the tune books.)

C. TEACHING/

C. TEACHING NEW TUNES

A Vicious Circle. We don't sing new tunes because we don't know them; we don't know new tunes because we don't sing them.

On the Lord's Day the Lord's people gather to worship Him and do not need distractions such as that of the precentor trying to introduce, on his own, new tunes in which he himself may not be entirely confident. The congregation therefore needs to find ways of ensuring that at least some of the people are familiar with new tunes before they are introduced into the services.

1. Get the minister and the other leaders of the congregation on board. They should impress on the congregation the importance of good and improving congregational singing. Without their informed support and co-operation, teaching the congregation new tunes will be much more difficult.
2. Tell the people what you are planning to do – either directly or via the minister.
3. What tunes? Those in *Sing Psalms* (324 tunes) and *The Scottish Psalmody* (60 other tunes.) If you must go outside the Free Church books, you should question whether the tunes you fancy are suitable for Reformed psalmody. The characteristics of a suitable tune include, "singability, simplicity, suitability to the words and sympathy with Reformed theology" (Evan Macdonald.) Remember also that any continued use of versions from the old (red) pre-1977 *Psalmody*, or the use of versions from the tune books of other Churches, will only cause confusion.
4. Consider your resources If you feel ill-equipped to teach your congregation, there may be somebody else in your congregation, or in a neighbouring one, or in your community, who could help. Learning to improve the praise is a good area for co-operation between congregations and denominations.
5. Have a psalm singing group on a dedicated evening, or before or after the midweek meeting or one of the Sunday services. In St Vincent Street-Milton, Glasgow, the Singing Group meets twice-monthly, alternately after the midweek meeting and before the evening service. This arrangement allows people to fit attendance around their other commitments.
6. Have a time set aside during the midweek meeting for learning new tunes. While probably only one tune could be learned each week, having a "captive audience" would probably guarantee much better attendances than in (4)!
7. Arrange with the minister to have the learned tunes introduced at the Sunday services, and preferably repeated over a few weeks.
8. Be Sensitive. Don't abandon the "old" tunes. Many of them are musically worth preserving while *French, Kilmarnock, Martyrdom, York* etc represent worship with which many of our people, especially our older people, were familiar and in which they were comfortable.
9. A long-term investment – train and encourage the children (and others) to go in for the Psalmody Awards.

APPENDIX 1

INSPECTING A TUNE

Before attempting to sing even a familiar tune, the following should be noted from the music:

Key

Time – how many beats in the bar. Some tunes use more than one time.

Rhythm – whether, in part(s) of the tune, the accent falls elsewhere than on the first beat of the bar.

Part-beats – half beats, quarter beats, third beats, combinations of part-beats or of whole beats and part-beats.

Notes with more than one beat, including at the ends of lines.

Tied notes

Rests – silent beats.

Pauses – lengthened notes.

Accidentals in the melody

Unusual intervals in the melody.

Whether any part of the melody is repeated.

Then try out the words to see how they fit the notes!

Think about it: we expect the minister to prepare himself for his ministry (preaching); is it not therefore reasonable for the precentor also to prepare for his/her ministry (leading the praise)?

APPENDIX 2

SOME TUNES WHICH REQUIRE ATTENTION

SP – *Sing Psalms*; Pdy – *Scottish Psalmody* 1977 and later.

Tune	SP/Pdy	Notes	Rhythms
Amazing Grace	24/-	<u>s</u> ₁ . <u>d</u> beginning lines 1, 2, 4; <u>r</u> . <u>s</u> line 2, <u>m</u> . <u>s</u> line 3 Only 1 m in middle of line 3	<u>m</u> . <u>r</u> . <u>d</u> are 1/3 notes Full 5 beats ends lines 2, 4
Arnold	-/23	No extra note, end line 2	3/4 + 1/4 beats lines 2 and 3, <u>not</u> line 4
Austrian Hymn	227/-		No 1 1/2 + 1/2 beats at beginning of line 6.
Bays of Harris	30/-	No extra notes. Second-last note is d.	Full 5 beats ends lines 2, 4.
Bedford	31/31		2 beats on first note of each bar, except second last bar of each line. Tricky!
Before the Throne	178/-		3/4 + 1/4 beats line 4 but <u>not</u> line 8 or repeat
Binney's	200/-		3 beats ends lines 2, 5
Bishopthorpe	34/34	No extra note between d and l ₁ , line 4	3/4 + 1/4 beats lines 1 and 4, 1 1/2 + 1/2 beats lines 1, 2, 4.
Bloxham	35/36		No 3/4 + 1/4 beats, line 1.
Caithness	37/38		2 beats on first and last note of each line.
Cannock	138/-	Fe, end line 2, f, beginning line 3	
Coleshill	41/42	No extra notes between l and m, lines 1 and 3, and between d ¹ and s and l and <u>r</u> ¹ . <u>d</u> ¹ , line 4	Pauses, lines 1 and 3, 3 beats ends lines 2 and 4.
Contemplation	42/44		5 beats, ends lines 2 and 4; 1 1/2 + 1/2 beats middle of last line
Creator	43/-		5 beats end line 3; 6 beats end line 4
Crimond	45/46		3/4 + 1/4 beats followed by 1/2 beats, line 1
Diademata	22/-		1 1/2 + 1/2 beats line 7 only; 4 beats end.
Duke Street	146/3	No extra note, end line 3	1 1/2 + 1/2 beats middle of last line.
Doversdale	145/4		3/4 + 1/4 beats line 1 only; 1 1/2 beats line 2; 1/2 beats lines 3, 4; 2 beats only line 4 - misprint in sol-fa Psalmody.
Dunfermline	49/51		2 beats on first and last note of each line.
Eastgate	-/53	No extra note between f and l, line 4, but s between l and s	
Evan	53/59		3 beats, ends lines 2 and 4
Farrant	54/61	fe twice, line 2	2 beats, beginning lines 1 and 3 and ends lines 2 and 4; 1 1/2 + 1/2 beats, line 1.
French	55/64		2 beats on first and last note of each line
Gainsborough	56/65	No note between m and s, line 2; <u>m</u> . <u>f</u> lines 1, 3; <u>s</u> . <u>f</u> . <u>m</u> lines 1-3; <u>l</u> . <u>s</u> . <u>f</u> line 4	Mixture of 3/4 + 1/4 beats and half beats
Glasgow	57/66		3/4 + 1/4 beats lines 1 and 2, pauses ends lines 2 and 4
Grafenberg	61/70		3 beats, ends lines 2 and 4
Hamilton	-/71	f between s and m; s between l and s; f between m and m, line 1	Mixture of 3/4 + 1/4 beats, half beats and 1 1/2 + 1/2 beats
Harington	62/73	<u>r</u> . <u>s</u> , line 3; <u>s</u> . <u>d</u> ¹ and <u>r</u> . <u>m</u> . <u>f</u> , line 4	Mixture of 3/4 + 1/4 beats and half beats
Hereford	153/6		3/4 + 1/4 beats end line 4 <u>only</u> .
Howard	63/75	fe, line 2	Half beats, line 2
Huddersfield	64/76		Half beats, line 2, 3/4 + 1/4 beats line 3
Invocation	-/192	f between s and m, end line 2; t between l and d ¹ , line 4	Combinations of half and quarter notes; pauses and rests as printed

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Irish	65/77		$\frac{3}{4} + \frac{1}{4}$ beats, lines 3 and 4
Jackson	66/78	No extra notes after first notes of lines 2, 3	3 beats, ends lines 2 and 4.
John Street	210/		$1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ beats lines 1, 2, 3, 4
Kerry	-/166		$\frac{3}{4} + \frac{1}{4}$ beats, then $\frac{1}{2}$ beats, line 4.
Kildonan	304/-		4 beats lines 2, 4.
Kilmarnock	67/79	<u>s.m</u> line 1	
Kinkell	312/-		$1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ beats line 2; 2 beats (3 times) line 3
Kinlochewe	123/-		5 beats lines 2, 4, 6, 8
Land of Rest	68/-		$1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ beats line 3; 5 beats ends lines 2, 4
Leuchars	-/181		2 beats on first and last note of each line
London New	70/82		2 beats on first and last note of each line;
Lord of the Years	306/-	<u>f.s</u> line 1	$1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ beats lines 3, 4; 4 beats lines 2, 4
Malan	-/167		$1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ beats middle line 3; $\frac{1}{2}$ beat beginning line 4; 3 beats lines 1, 2, 4
Martyrdom	71/85	No extra note between m and d, line 2	
Moravia	76/89		3 beats, ends lines 2 and 4
Morven	77/90	<u>s.m</u> line 2	$\frac{1}{3}$ beats line 4, with 3 beats at end
Nativity	78/-		$\frac{1}{2}$ beat beginning line 2; 4 beats line 4
Newington	79/93	No extra note between m and d, line 1	3 beats, ends lines 2 and 4
Old 44 th	124/152	1 st note of line 2 is s; 1 st note of line 4 is m	3 beats lines 2, 4, 6, 8
Old 124 th	298/191		Printed as half beats: full 4 half beats end of each long line.
Old 134 th	10/169		2 beats on first and last note of each line
Orlington	203/95		$\frac{3}{4} + \frac{1}{4}$ beats, no pause, line 3
Palestrina	-/98		3 beats, ends all lines; pauses, lines 2, 4
Pembroke	-/100		Mixture of $\frac{3}{4} + \frac{1}{4}$ beats and half beats
Petersham	125/154		$1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ beats lines 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 (twice).
Rachel	127/-	4 th note of line 5 is m	6 beats lines 4, 8
Resignation	128/-		Stress on second beat of middle bar, Lines 2, 4, 8. Full 5 beats lines 2, 4, 6, 8.
Richmond	81/103		Half beats, line 4
Rimington	164/-		2 beats ends lines 1, 4; 4 beats line 2; 3 beats line 3
Rockingham	166/12		Not $\frac{3}{4} + \frac{1}{4}$ beats, line 4
St Andrew (Tans)	82/105		$\frac{3}{4} + \frac{1}{4}$ beats, line 2.
St Anne	83/106		2 beats on first and last note of each line
St Bartholomew	167/	Last 4 notes line 4 are high	$1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ beats twice, line 3.
St Botolph	85/108	Second last note, line 1 is t ₁ Second last note, line 2 is f Second last note, line 4 is r	
St Columba	86/109		<u>f.s.l</u> , line 2 are $\frac{1}{3}$ beats
St David	87/110	Fourth note, line 1 is m; no note between f and r, line 4	2 beats on first and last note of each line
St Denio	318/-	No note after d, each half of line 3	
St Ethelwald	13/-		3 beats lines 1, 2, 4
St Flavian	89/112		2 beats on first and last note of each line
St George's, Edinburgh	322/193	<i>Sing Psalms</i> has the same notes for the first 2 lines of verse 10 of Ps 24 as for those for the first 2 lines of verse 8.	Full 4 beats where printed, especially on each syllable of the Amens; pause on "jah" rather than on "u" of last "hallelujah!"
St Gregory	91/114	Third note of line 3 is ta	No $\frac{1}{4}$ beats

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St Kilda	93/116		3 beats, ends lines 2 and 4
St Lawrence	-/117		Half beats and $1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ beats; no pause, end line 3; 3 beats end line 4.
St Magnus	95/119	No extra note between r and t, line 1 or between r and t, line 3; second last note of line 2 is fe	3 beats, ends lines 2 and 4
St Minver	97/122		$1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ and half beats, lines 2 and 4
St Paul	98/124		2 beats on first and last note of each line
St Stephen	100/126	Last line starts s/d ¹ :m	
St Thomas CM	-/127		$\frac{3}{4} + \frac{1}{4}$ beats, line 4
Selma	16/173	<u>s..l</u> / l line 2; <u>l.d¹</u> / d ¹ line 3	$\frac{3}{4} + \frac{1}{4}$ beats line 2; $\frac{1}{2}$ beats line 3; 3 beats lines 1, 2, 4
Sennen Cove	103/-		$1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ beats line 2
Sheffield	104/130		No $\frac{1}{4}$ beats; 3 beats, ends lines 2 and 4
Shere	17/175		5 beats ends lines 1, 2; 6 beats end line 6.
Song 22	292/-		2 beats end line 1; silent beat beginning line 2; 3 beats end lines 2, 3; $1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ beats 1 st bar line 4, 4 beats end line 4
Southwark	105/131		$1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ beats, lines 1 and 2; 3 beats, ends lines 2, 4
Stornoway	106/135	No extra note between m and t, line 1; first note of line 4 is se	3 beats, ends lines 2 and 4
Tarwathie	313/-		$1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ beats lines 1, 3.
Tiverton	110/139		No $\frac{1}{4}$ beats; 3 beats, ends lines 2 and 4
Torwood	111/140	No extra note between d and s ₁ , line 2, or between d and m, and s and r, line 3	No $\frac{1}{4}$ beats; 3 beats, ends lines 2 and 4
University	-/141	No extra note between s and d, line 3	$\frac{1}{2}$ beats start lines 2, 4; 3 beats ends lines 2 and 4.
Walton	175/17		Not $\frac{3}{4} + \frac{1}{4}$ beats, line 2
Warrington	177/19		$1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ beats line 3.
Warwick	113/143	Second note of line 2 is fe	No $\frac{1}{4}$ beats; 3 beats, ends lines 2 and 4
Wetherby	116/145		No $\frac{1}{4}$ beats
Weymouth	131/158	Line 2 f / m d Line 4 l / s d	$\frac{1}{2}$ beat start line 8.
Wigtown	117/146		2 beats on first note of every line; $1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ beats in first line; 4 beats at end of line 4
Wiltshire	118/147		$1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ beats line 4.
Winchester	119/148		2 beats on first and last note of each line
York	120/149		$1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ beats lines 1, 3. 2 beats on first and last note of each line

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