



Musings from the pen of Academician Mixie Lidyan...

Today a few pitfalls awaiting unwary singers will be revealed: a variant for #59, an archaic alto still sung today, and some word pronunciations.

Let's begin with #59 HOLY MANNA. In the 1991 edition, the first phrase (which is bracketed by repeat symbols) ends with a whole note, and one observes the opening half rest when going back on the repeat. But in *The Sacred Harp Revised Cooper Edition*, this opening phrase is rendered with two endings and one skips the opening rest when going back for the repeat. (example 1) This variant is encountered at not a few Denson book singings so it is well for singers to be alert to what the leader will do.

Our next pitfall is found in #99 GOSPEL TRUMPET. Earlier editions of our songbook

had the alto part tracking the basses in measure 3, as is still done in today's Cooper edition. (example 2) So altos need to be prepared to follow their neighbor if chance lands them next to someone who still adheres to the old ways. This can be heard on the recording **Sacred Harp Singing at the Old Country Church**.

The words for today can be found in #101 top and in the many songs where **Jerusalem** occurs. #101 top CANAAN'S LAND has two pitfall words: **waft** and **deign**. Close listening to the older field recordings and to traditional singers reveals that **waft** has an "a" pronounced as in the word "at," i.e. "waft" rhymes with "raft." **Deign** is given two syllables, something like "day-uhn" said quickly. (Another pitfall in this song is when singers sit too long on the half note just before going on to the second part of the song. This can be mitigated by "not breathing" there — something heard often.)

Most singers on the West Coast are accustomed to pronouncing **Jerusalem's** final syllable as "lem." Instead think and say "lum."

Ex. 1: tenor, 1st phrase of Holy Manna



Ex. 2: alto, 1st phrase of Gospel Trumpet

