

The Sound of Dove: Singing in Appalachian Primitive Baptist Churches (Music in American Life)

By Beverly Patterson

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In "The Sound of the Dove", Beverly Bush Patterson explores one of the oldest traditions of American religious folksong: unaccompanied congregational singing in Appalachian Primitive Baptist churches. Using interviews, field observations, historical research, song transcriptions, and musical analysis, Patterson explores the dynamic relationship between singing and theology in these churches, the genesis of their musical practices, and the unexpectedly significant role of women in their conservative congregations. An hour-long audio recording of Primitive Baptist singing is available separately.

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Review
"Patterson's thorough knowledge of Primitive Baptist song and life allows her to demonstrate how music (sound) and culture are each so perfectly the expressions of the other that one can see in musical changes broader transformations... [T]his book is a model of how to study music in a religious context. In addition, the book reminds us of how knowledge of people such as Primitive Baptists is necessary for understanding broader and more inclusive faith communities." -- Donald G. Mathews, Church History "[The Sound of the Dove] enables the reader to form a very clear understanding of Primitive Baptist singing today and of the historical and cultural forces that have molded it into its present form... This insightful study fills a great gap in American folk music scholarship and demonstrates ways that sensitive feminist scholarship can illuminate surprising corners of traditional culture." -- William Bernard McCarthy, Journal of American Folklore "The first book-length study in ethnomusicology of a specific genre of mountain religious music; [Patterson] does not abstract it from but places it squarely in the context of the mountain church tradition which gives it life -- and to which it gives life, as this important study makes eloquently clear." -- Southern Cultures.

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