

Prospect

attr: "Graham"
(pre-1835)

Musical score for the hymn "Prospect" in G major, 3/4 time. The score consists of four staves of music with guitar chords indicated above the notes. The chords are: G, Am, Bm, C (measures 1-4); Em, Am, D, G (measures 5-8); Bm, G, Em, C (measures 9-12); Em, Am, G/D, D7, G (measures 13-16).

Prospect is a pentatonic American hymn tune collected by William Walker (1809-1875) and published in his "The Southern Harmony" shape-note collection of 1835. Walker attributed the tune to the composer "Graham" for whom no biographical information is available. Shape-note singing is a unique choral hymn singing method that flourished in the southern USA in the 18th and 19th centuries. The "shapes" refer to special note heads, thought to help singers sight-read and find their pitches in this unaccompanied singing style.

The first half of Prospect was originally notated like this:

Original shape-note notation for the first half of the hymn "Prospect". The notation uses square note heads to represent the pitches, characteristic of shape-note singing. The melody is in G major, 3/4 time, and consists of 16 measures.

The tune of Prospect has been used for a number of hymns, including "The Lone Wild Bird" and "The Hills are Bare at Bethlehem".