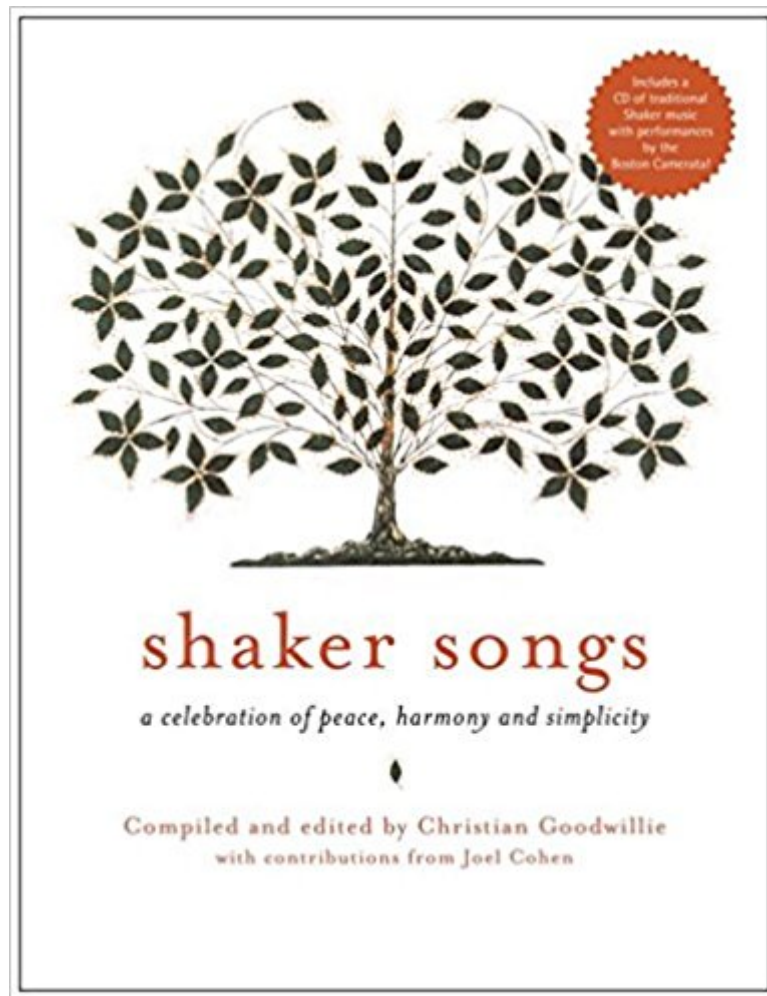




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# Shaker Songs: A Musical Celebration Of Peace, Harmony And Simplicity



## Synopsis

'Tis the gift to be simple, and the United Society of Believers, or Shakers, bestow this gift upon us in *Shaker Songs*, a compendium of radiant, heart-rousing hymns that comes with a beautiful full-length CD. Over the last 200 years, Shaker congregations have been wellsprings of remarkable creativity in many branches of human endeavor, including religion, architecture, agriculture, industry, art, social welfare, education, and, of course, music. Music has long played a central role in Shaker worship--from the early songs that expressed pure, wordless feeling, to the later hymns and anthems, which reflected some of the musical modes of the day. The Shaker sect was founded in 1774 by Ann Lee, a blacksmith's daughter who emigrated to America from England with a handful of followers. This communal, devout group celebrated their love of God in the stirring dance worship that gave the Shakers their popular name. At their peak in the mid-nineteenth century, the Shakers were the largest and most successful religious collective in existence. Some communities lasted for more than 150 years, others for only a few, and one, at Sabbathday Lake, Maine, still exists today. Because of the Shakers' longstanding commitment to the documentation of their songs, their musical tradition is very much alive and well. The Shakers at Sabbathday Lake--who annotated some of the music in this book and can be heard on the accompanying CD--continue to maintain this musical heritage as an important component of their everyday lives. *Shaker Songs* contains the distillation of more than two centuries of Shaker music and art--their remarkable power and quiet beauty is a testament to the Shaker vision of simplicity, proportion, and harmony.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Christian Goodwillie is a contributor for the following Black Dog & Leventhal Title: Shaker Songs  
Joel Cohen is a contributor for the following Black Dog & Leventhal Title: Shaker Songs

Wasn't familiar with Shaker songs-only melody, words, no chords, but gentle, peaceful songs.  
Would be easy to work with.for group singing.

A beautifully organized presentation of this piece of American experience. I spent the afternoon singing my favorite ones with all the words at hand.

"Shaker Songs" is a beautifully produced, meticulously researched, and creatively conceived volume that combines the most appealing aspects of musical collection, descriptive text, and artwork. As you'd expect from the curator of Hancock Shaker Village, the body of work as a collection of Shaker music is informative, entertaining, and thought-provoking. Short textual introductions give context and insight into how these selections fit into the greater body of Shaker music and society generally. It's all very nicely crafted, but this is to be expected, in such a volume. The CD, touched by the genius of the great Joel Cohen, is a recording to be cherished, and a delightful extra-special added bonus that brings this volume to a new level. But again, this is all to be expected in a book about Shaker music with this pedigree. The real surprise in this book is the extraordinary quality of the artwork that decorates its pages. These are some of the best reproductions of Shaker photographs, gift drawings, and various other pieces, that I've seen published. So, when you're not using this book to learn about Shaker music, it is a perfect art object, for just a quick look at something beautiful and Shaker, when you have a spare moment. It's relatively small, as coffee-table books go, so it's easy to handle. I'd say, whether you're a Shaker music buff or just a general Shaker buff, I think that you'll find this book to be a delight, through and through. I received it as a gift, and truly, in this price range, I can think of no better gift for a Shaker enthusiast.--Jonathan Feist, living in the Harvard Shaker Meetinghouse

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