A number of different shape note traditions remain in common use in the shape note community. SMuFL encodes the noteheads required for four such systems: one four-shape system; and three seven-shape systems (Walker, Funk, and Aikin). All three seven-shape systems also use the four shapes of the four-shape system, each introducing three additional shapes.

The four-shape system, used in books such as William Walker’s *Southern Harmony* (1835), uses a form of solmization where the syllables *fa*, *so*, *la*, *fa*, *so*, *la*, *mi* are assigned to the seven notes of an ascending major scale. Each syllable has its own note shape:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Syllable* | *Half notes and longer* | *Quarter notes and shorter* |
| *fa* (or *faw*) | Stem down: noteShapeTriangleRightWhite  Stem up: noteShapeTriangleLeftWhite | Stem down: noteShapeTriangleRightBlack  Stem up: noteShapeTriangleLeftBlack |
| *so* (or *sol*) | noteShapeRoundWhite | noteShapeRoundBlack |
| *la* (or *law*) | noteShapeSquareWhite | noteShapeSquareBlack |
| *mi* | noteShapeDiamondWhite | noteShapeDiamondBlack |

Joseph Funk devised his seven-shape system, building upon the existing four-shape system, for his book *Harmonia Sacra* (1851), adding to the four-shape system by adding the syllables *do*, *re* and *ti* (sometimes *si*), so the ascending major scale would use the syllables *do*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *so*, *la*, *ti*. The note shapes for each syllable are as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Syllable* | *Half notes and longer* | *Quarter notes and shorter* |
| *do* | noteShapeMoonLeftWhite | noteShapeMoonLeftBlack |
| *re* | noteShapeArrowheadLeftWhite | noteShapeArrowheadLeftBlack |
| *mi* | noteShapeDiamondWhite | noteShapeDiamondBlack |
| *fa* (or *faw*) | Stem down: noteShapeTriangleRightWhite  Stem up: noteShapeTriangleLeftWhite | Stem down: noteShapeTriangleRightBlack  Stem up: noteShapeTriangleLeftBlack |
| *so* (or *sol*) | noteShapeRoundWhite | noteShapeRoundBlack |
| *la* (or *law*) | noteShapeSquareWhite | noteShapeSquareBlack |
| ti (or *si*) | noteShapeTriangleRoundLeftWhite | noteShapeTriangleRoundLeftBlack |

In addition to being the composer of *Southern Harmony*, William Walker also later devised his own seven-shape system for the book *Christian Harmony* (1867), using the same solmization as Funk. The note shapes for each syllable are as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Syllable* | *Half notes and longer* | *Quarter notes and shorter* |
| *do* | noteShapeKeystoneWhite | noteShapeKeystoneBlack |
| *re* | noteShapeQuarterMoonWhite | noteShapeQuarterMoonBlack |
| *mi* | noteShapeDiamondWhite | noteShapeDiamondBlack |
| *fa* (or *faw*) | Stem down: noteShapeTriangleRightWhite  Stem up: noteShapeTriangleLeftWhite | Stem down: noteShapeTriangleRightBlack  Stem up: noteShapeTriangleLeftBlack |
| *so* (or *sol*) | noteShapeRoundWhite | noteShapeRoundBlack |
| *la* (or *law*) | noteShapeSquareWhite | noteShapeSquareBlack |
| ti (or *si*) | noteShapeIsoscelesTriangleWhite | noteShapeIsoscelesTriangleBlack |

Perhaps the most commonly-used seven-shape system, however, is that devised by Jesse B. Aikin, though his system is sometimes incorrectly referred to as the “Aiken” system due to an error made by the musicologist George Pullen Jackson. Aikin introduced his system in *The Christian Minstrel* (1846), and after his shapes were adopted by the influential Ruebush & Kieffer Publishing Company in the late 19th century they have become increasingly widely used. Again using the same solmization as both Funk and Walker, the note shapes for each syllable are as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Syllable* | *Half notes and longer* | *Quarter notes and shorter* |
| *do* | noteShapeTriangleUpWhite | noteShapeTriangleUpBlack |
| *re* | noteShapeMoonWhite | noteShapeMoonBlack |
| *mi* | noteShapeDiamondWhite | noteShapeDiamondBlack |
| *fa* (or *faw*) | Stem down: noteShapeTriangleRightWhite  Stem up: noteShapeTriangleLeftWhite | Stem down: noteShapeTriangleRightBlack  Stem up: noteShapeTriangleLeftBlack |
| *so* (or *sol*) | noteShapeRoundWhite | noteShapeRoundBlack |
| *la* (or *law*) | noteShapeSquareWhite | noteShapeSquareBlack |
| ti (or *si*) | noteShapeTriangleRoundWhite | noteShapeTriangleRoundBlack |

For practical use, scoring applications should provide a means of automatically substituting regular noteheads for the appropriate shape note notehead glyph according to the pitch of each note.

*See also* the implementation notes for noteheads.