



Classical Hymns for Solo Piano

Ruben Gonzalez

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Classical Hymns for solo piano is a component of the Piano Companion series. The method books in the series provide instruction in the art of playing the piano while this book offers hymn arrangements for study and performance. The arrangements remind us of the hymns' poetry—encouraging us in our journey. Some of the arrangements use patterns from classical piano works by Chopin and Beethoven while the remainder have been shaped by my personal musical experience. The descriptions below give the player insight into each arrangement. "Sweet Hour of Prayer" is a reminder of the simplicity of prayer. The arrangement includes an accompaniment pattern found in Chopin's Nocturne in D-flat, Op. 27, No. 2. The ending is a transposed quote from that nocturne. "Blessed Assurance" is an ongoing conversation represented by the repeating notes at the beginning and leading into the main melody—the story to tell. The arrangement has influences from Chopin's Ballade No. 2, Op. 38 in F. "More About Jesus" is an expression of our desire to know more about Jesus throughout the monotony of our daily lives, represented in the accompanying rhythmic pattern. "I Need Thee Every Hour" is a demonstration of the various ways we declare our need for Jesus—initially through a single voice, then a two-voice declaration, followed by a melody with distinct harmonies, and finally a series of rolled chords in an extreme range. All of the expressions are paired with a return to a familiar refrain. "Theme and Variations on Rock of Ages" is a set of variations loosely modeled on the third movement from Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E, Op. 109, and a reminder of the many ways we hide in Jesus our Rock. "I Am Thine, O Lord" is an expression of our desire to be closer to Jesus.

Interrupting moments of agitation, represented by the repeating notes, are ultimately overcome by a peaceful declaration of our desire. "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" is an étude-like piece imitating Chopin's Étude Opus 25, No. 1, and a reminder of God's never-ending blessings. "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" is a reminder of our friendship with him as well as our need to take everything to him in prayer. It is a return to the simplicity of prayer that began with the first piece. As you play these arrangements, my hope is that you will be encouraged to persevere fulfilling God's calling as we await Christ's return. Soli Deo Gloria

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