

Pilgrim on Earth

Well-Loved Hymns

Arranged for Piano & Orchestra

by Peter B. Allen





John Perry

Peter B. Allen



Pilgrim on Earth is a collection of ten pieces for piano and orchestra. These pieces are based on hymns that I grew up with and love the most. I have tried to convey the depth of feeling I have for these hymns by giving each hymn a unique mood and setting. Most pieces feature the piano, but several give the solo to other instruments in the orchestra. A hymn generally takes only about thirty seconds to sing. These pieces are from six to twelve minutes long; thus, they have become full length compositions based on the tune of each hymn, and I have used a lot of variety in style, form, and orchestration.

It has been a great joy to write music based on my favorite hymns and to collaborate with exceptional musicians and engineers. I hope you enjoy listening to this recording as much as I enjoyed making it.

Peter B. Allen



1. Pilgrim on Earth (7:52)

*Pilgrim on earth, home and heaven are within thee,
Heir of the ages and child of the day.
Cared for, watched over, beloved and protected,
Walk thou with courage each step of the way.*

The music of this hymn is by Sir Walford Davies, although the author of the words remains unknown. The piece starts slowly and quietly and grows into a joyful musical adventure. We hear the melody played for the first time by clarinetist Laurel Hall who also has a playful solo in the middle of the piece. Then the melody is traded off between every instrument in the orchestra. In this piece I tried to capture the feeling of being on a great adventure knowing that we are loved and protected each step of the way.



2. Amazing Grace (9:19)

*Amazing grace! how sweet the sound—
That saved a wretch like me!*

The words of this hymn were written by John Newton around 1760. Newton was an ex-slave trader turned minister who became a very popular preacher. The origin of the melody is unknown, although it is usually thought to have come from an early American folk tune. This version, featuring Tom Kesecker on vibes and Dawn Harms on violin, expresses the purity of that “sweet sound” which brings lasting comfort and the grace that saves.

3. Only God Can Bring Us Gladness (8:27)

*Only God can bring us gladness,
Only God can give us peace ;
Joys are vain that end in sadness,
Joy divine shall never cease.*

This piece is about trusting God as our source of gladness despite all the distractions the world presents. To illustrate this idea, I took the simple hymn tune by Gustaf Düben and contrasted it with unrelated new music. Several times throughout the piece the hymn tune veers off into unfamiliar territory and comes to a crashing stop. And each time, as if to dust itself off and begin again, the music returns to the familiar hymn tune, reminding us that no matter how pleasing life's distractions may seem, "only God can bring us gladness."



4. An Understanding Heart (6:49)

*Give me, O Lord, a gentle, loving heart,
That I may learn to be more tender, kind*

I was drawn to these words by James Rome because they form a simple prayer asking God to help us be more loving and kind. And I like the hymn tune by Edward Dearle because of its gentle melodic line. The graceful and fresh flute solo, played by Janet Ketchum, serves as an introduction to the main melody played by the strings. This is followed by a piano solo and a violin solo by Dawn Harms. The piece finishes with a shortened version of the opening flute solo.



5. Love* (12:50)

*Brood o'er us with Thy shelt'ring wing,
'Neath which our spirits blend
Like brother birds, that soar and sing,
And on the same branch bend.*

These words are from the first stanza of Mary Baker Eddy's poem "Love" which was set to music by Walter Young. I wrote a long introduction for the oboe and bassoon where each instrument soars and sings with the same weightless inspiration as a bird in flight. Oboist Roger Wiesmeyer and bassoonist Carolyn Lockhart have captured this feeling perfectly in their interpretation. The piano then enters with a gentle statement of the hymn followed by a long development section in which the music reaches new heights of inspiration or draws you into moments of quiet reflection. The piece ends with the oboe and bassoon alternating phrases as if to say *goodbye*, and each instrument in the words of the hymn, "Speaks kindly when we meet and part."

** Music by Walter Young © 1960 by The Christian Science Board of Directors.*



6. A Glorious Day Is Dawning (5:33)

*A glorious day is dawning,
And o'er the waking earth
The heralds of the morning
Are springing into birth.
In dark and hidden places
There shines the blessed light;
The beam of Truth displaces
The darkness of the night.*

The words of this hymn were written in the 1850's by an American woman named Mrs. N. T. Munroe, and the hymn tune is by the American composer Lowell Mason. In my arrangement the music begins as gently as the dawn of day and builds as the day brightens. A rhythmic, gospel-influenced middle section features piano and the driving rhythm of percussionist Tom Kesecker. This leads to a rousing finale with exciting horn flourishes by Eric Achen and a double octave sweep in the piano. Truly the light and inspiration expressed in the words of this hymn can be felt in the music where "The beam of Truth displaces the darkness of the night."



7. Christ My Refuge (6:39)

*O'er waiting harpstrings of the mind
There sweeps a strain,
Low, sad, and sweet, whose measures bind
The power of pain,*

*And wake a white-winged angel throng
Of thoughts, illumed
By faith, and breathed in raptured song,
With love perfumed.*

The beautiful melody by Basil Harwood and the profound words from the first two stanzas of Mary Baker Eddy's poem, with its many references to music, have drawn me to this hymn since the first time I heard it. For this arrangement, I reharmonized the melody to give it a more soulful flavor and introduced a slow, rocking rhythm in the accompaniment. Thalia Moore plays a heartfelt interpretation of the cello solo.



8. Heavenward (6:10)

*I love Thy way of freedom, Lord,
To serve Thee is my choice,
In Thy clear light of Truth I rise
And, listening for Thy voice,
I hear Thy promise old and new,
That bids all fear to cease:
My presence still shall go with thee
And I will give thee peace.*

These words by Violet Hay fit perfectly with this soaring Irish folk melody which has been sung for centuries. In this version I begin with a cheerful rhythmic accompaniment, then each section of the orchestra has an opportunity to carry the melody beginning with strings in unison. The middle section features the piano and woodwinds, playfully trading phrases, and a french horn solo played by Eric Achen.



9. All Power (7:32)

*All power is given unto our Lord,
On Him we place reliance;
With truth from out His sacred word
We bid our foes defiance.
With Him we shall prevail,
Whatever may assail;
He is our shield and tower,
Almighty is His power;
His kingdom is forever.*

Composed by Martin Luther, this hymn tune is also known as “Ein’ feste Burg” or “A Mighty Fortress.” The words of the hymn by Frederic Root spoke to me of God’s awesome power, and I have tried to capture this musically. The main melody is played first by the high strings and then the woodwinds. The graceful counter melody is carried by the cellos. The piece gains momentum and energy with the addition of percussion and leads to an ending of overwhelming power and conviction.



10. Abide with Me (6:18)

*Abide with me ; fast falls the eventide ;
The darkness deepens ; Lord , with me abide .
When other helpers fail , and comforts flee ,
Help of the helpless , O abide with me .*

The last hymn, written for strings alone, including a violin solo by Dawn Harms, is a quiet epilogue to this collection. With melody by William Monk and words by Henry Lyte, who wrote them three weeks before passing on, “Abide with Me” is a heartfelt acknowledgment of mankind’s need for God’s loving support—and the fact that God always answers our prayers.

The full text to every hymn except “Amazing Grace” can be found in the Christian Science Hymnal, published by The Christian Science Publishing Society, Boston, Massachusetts, USA.



From Left to Right

Blake Davis

FRONT: Dawn Harms, Sara Usher, Janet Ketchum, Jonna Hervig, Anna Presler, Anna Kruger, Leslie Ludena, Thalia Moore, Julie Kim, Barbara Riccardi, Mary Chun

MIDDLE: Natalia Vershilova, Emily Onderdonk, Leslie Ann Jones, Kayo Miki, Roger Wiesmeyer, Laurel Hall, Emil Miland, Peter B. Allen, Carolyn Lockhart, Michel Taddei, Eric Achen

BACK: Dann Thompson, Barbara Christmann, Tom Kesecker



Blake Davis

Mary Chun



Blake Davis

Peter B. Allen

Composer/Pianist

Peter B. Allen

Conductor

Mary Chun

1st Violin

Dawn Harms

Sara Usher

Julie Kim

Barbara Riccardi

2nd Violin

Leslie Ludena

Anna Presler

Kayo Miki

Jonna Hervig

Viola

Emily Onderdonk

Natalia Vershilova

Anna Kruger

Cello

Thalia Moore

Emil Miland

Bass

Michel Taddei

Flute/Piccolo

Janet Ketchum

Oboe

Roger Wiesmeyer

Clarinet

Laurel Hall

Bassoon

Carolyn Lockhart

Horn

Eric Achen

Percussion

Tom Kesecker



...home and heaven
are within thee,

Heir of the ages
and child of the day.

Cared for, watched over,
beloved and protected,

Walk thou with courage
each step of the way.

1. Pilgrim on Earth (7:52)
2. Amazing Grace (9:19)
3. Only God Can Bring Us Gladness (8:27)
4. An Understanding Heart (6:49)
5. Love (12:50)
6. A Glorious Day Is Dawning (5:33)
7. Christ My Refuge (6:39)
8. Heavenward (6:10)
9. All Power *Ein' feste Burg* (7:32)
10. Abide with Me (6:18)

All music arranged by Peter B. Allen
© 2000 by Peter B. Allen

Recorded and mixed by
Leslie Ann Jones
at Skywalker Sound,
Marin County, CA,
July 27-August 10, 2000

Mastered and edited by
Mark Willsher
Score reader
Barbara Christmann
Artwork and cover design
Laura Murphy
Program notes by
Peter B. Allen

Produced by
Peter B. Allen

PBA Music Publishing
3130 20th Street, Suite 311
San Francisco, CA 94110

888-332-9588
www.pbamusic.com

HDCD® and High Definition
Compatible Digital® are registered
trademarks of Pacific Microsonics,
Inc., Patent No. 5,479,168





Pilgrim on Earth • Amazing Grace • Only God Can Bring Us Gladness
An Understanding Heart • Love • A Glorious Day Is Dawning
Christ My Refuge • Heavenward
All Power *Ein' feste Burg* • Abide with Me