

# *Solitary Freedom*

piano music inspired  
by Bible passages



*Peter B. Allen*



Dear Listener,

I am pleased to share with you my recording, *Solitary Freedom*. It is my first recording of solo piano music and brings out the inspiration I feel when writing and playing music. Completing this project was more of a challenge than I anticipated. I wrote and re-wrote the music many times and put in lots of practice time, but I am very happy with the final result. Some pieces are rhythmic and hard driving, others are lyrical and introspective and others are jazzy and fun. If you are interested in playing *Solitary Freedom*, it is also published in print form.

Solitary confinement can be one of the worst forms of punishment with no chance of expressing oneself or communicating with others. To me, the opposite of solitary confinement is the feeling of freedom one gets when receiving fresh ideas from God. Thus, the title of this CD comes from my interpretation of **solitary** (solo piano) and **freedom** (full expression).

Sometimes I memorize a verse from the Bible that I find helpful in dealing with a situation in my life. As I live with these verses they become familiar friends and teach me many lessons. These Bible verses are the basis for *Solitary Freedom*. Each piece is a reflection on a specific verse which also serves as the title. I hope that as you read the short Bible passages, and listen to the music, you will feel some of the same inspiration, joy, tenderness, and life that I have felt in pondering these wonderful words.

With love,

Peter B. Allen

## *1. thy light shall break forth as the morning*

This piece is a musical representation of a sunrise, from the first faint glow in the eastern sky to the full brightness of the morning. From a small beginning, the music grows into a bright full statement of splashy musical colors. I love the experience of being awake to usher in a new day and the music reflects this uplifting, positive feeling. It is also a reminder that we are renewed each day and that we always get a fresh chance with the rising of the sun. (Isaiah 58:08)

## *2. my times are in Thy hands*

I wrote this piece during a time when I was praying for direction and purpose. The word "times" also means future. So the passage is telling us that our future is in God's hands. Knowing that your past, present and future belong to God enables you to enjoy the present moment. The introduction has a feeling of introspective waiting and quiet listening for direction. Then, the main melody comes as a relief and an answer. My then, my now, my when and all my times are in God's hands. (Psalms 31:15)



### *3. the trees of the field shall clap their hands*

I have always loved the image of the trees clapping their hands. When I think of Aspen trees, I see them shimmering in the clear blue skies, moved by strong mountain winds. The beautiful leaves of the Aspen tree have light green on one side and dark green on the other. So, when they blow in the wind you see the quickly alternating colors of light and dark green, and you can hear the sounds of the leaves gently flapping against each other; it really does look and sound like the trees are clapping their hands. When there are several trees together it's a joyful sound and image. This piece captures that bright, clean feeling of being outdoors and seeing nature in its glory. (Isaiah 55:12)

#### *4. blessed are the pure in heart*

The opening chords and melody are built on the interval of a perfect fifth which has a spacious, pure and open sound. The melody rises and falls several times before building to a dramatic climax. After this momentary dissonance, the opening melody emerges cleansed and purified. To be "pure in heart" is to have a character that has been washed clean through trials. Like gold, our hearts must be cleansed to remove the dross until they shine with a pure love. This is to be blessed. (Matthew 5:08)

#### *5. it is the spirit that quickeneth*

To quicken means to make alive. I tried to write a small, showy piece that gives you a jolt of lively energy, but is also "tongue in cheek" since the tempo is very quick. The Jazz sound comes from the fast left hand "stride" and a Blues harmonic outline. I hope this piece gives you a lift and quickens your step. (John 6:63)



### *6. in the morning i will lift my prayer unto Thee*

This piece, a prayerful, holy experience, starts quietly and progresses to sections that use harmonic tension to signify struggle with oneself. An ethereal calm section follows the dramatic victory. The piece ends with a quiet restatement of the main theme. (Psalms 5:03)

### *7. they are as chaff before the wind*

This piece is about the impermanence of evil. Wickedness may seem to succeed for a time, but the winds of change wipe it out. The music portrays God's ability to sweep away all evil. Starting with a stark warning, the music proceeds to the fearful motion of the wind. Confusion and disorientation caused by the wind's upheaval is heard in the blurred, dissonant accompaniment and the angular, jarring melody. The piece ends with a repeat of the opening warning which is to build your foundation on God's goodness, a goodness that will last through any storm. (Job 21:18)

### *8. things hoped for*

This piece is the exact opposite of what the title implies. The full Bible quote says: “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” But because the music is unsettled and fleeting, it brings out the fact that sometimes our best laid plans vanish before our eyes when they aren’t built on the solid foundation of faith. Sometimes what we want just seems to slip away leaving us with only the memory of things hoped for. (Psalms 29:02)

### *9. we walk by faith*

Solid, real, committed—those are some of the feelings embodied in this song. Sometimes our faith meets resistance and you can hear this struggle in this piece. The music builds in volume and tension until it falls to a low point and comes to a stop. Then, as if by an act of faith, the music picks itself up and starts over again. This happens two times before the piece resolves quietly. (II Corinthians 5:07)





### *10. i shall not die, but live*

The full Bible quote says: "I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord." This piece is a direct response to the desire to give up on a dream or give in to the emptiness of death. So, it rouses you with wave after wave of positive, strong musical statements that build in emphasis and intensity. The rhythm is strong and persistent, which is how we must be in order to claim our right to life when challenged with a desire to give up or die. The music is a decisive affirmation of life and is constantly moving forward, leading to a very powerful and emphatic ending: "I shall not die, but live." (Psalms 118:17)

### *11. underneath are the everlasting arms*

I think of this piece as a tender, comforting lullaby. God is often referred to as "mother" in the Bible and I had an image of a mother holding her child in her arms when I wrote this song. God's everlasting arms are full of love and comfort and She will always be there to hold us up. This loving support brings rest and comfort to one's heart and mind. (Deuteronomy 33:27)

## *contacts*

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## *credits*

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## *recording notes*

*Solitary Freedom* was recorded by Peter B. Allen during the month of September, 2003 in San Francisco on his Steinway B Grand Piano.

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## *other recordings by Peter B. Allen*



**Pilgrim On Earth**

Pilgrim on Earth will bring you a new appreciation of your favorite hymns. It contains ten arrangements of well-known hymn melodies for piano and 24-piece orchestra. The musical style is classical with a Jazz influence, sometimes sweet and lyrical, sometimes rhythmic and joyful, but always spiritually uplifting.



**Still with Thee**

Soprano Tanya K. Perkins and composer Peter B. Allen beautifully transform the words of ten beloved hymns from the Christian Science Hymnal into new songs on this album. The songs are accompanied by piano, bass, and light percussion. Also includes settings of the Lord's Prayer and Psalm 23.



**The Greatest Thing  
In the World**

This recording is a musical exploration of the qualities that make up love, for voice, and orchestra. Soaring vocal melodies without words are sung by Julia Wade and accompanied by a chamber orchestra. Includes Henry Drummonds entire sermon in a 32 page booklet, plus the music CD.

*about the composer*

## *biography*

Peter B. Allen is a composer and pianist whose music has been described as “fresh, lyrical and rhythmic,” blending the best aspects of classical and Jazz influences. Holding a B.A. in Piano Performance & Composition from Principia College (1981) and diplomas in Arranging and Film Scoring from the Grove School of Music (1984), Peter has composed music for orchestra, chorus, chamber ensembles and Jazz groups, and has recorded three albums under his own name. He has also written several books of music which are used in worship services nationwide. Peter performs regularly throughout the United States as a soloist and with larger ensembles.

For more information or to obtain recordings and print music by Peter B. Allen, visit [www.pbamusic.com](http://www.pbamusic.com), or call PBA Music Publishing toll free, at: 888-332-9588.