

Reviews of Hymn-Based Compositions

Evangeline G. Keeley

All prices in U. S. dollars.

New Music

Easy Hymns for the Church Pianist, Volume 2

Timothy Shaw. Augsburg Fortress, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-4514-9411-2. \$19.00.

This is a versatile collection of 13 hymn-tune settings for the church year, most of which can be sight-read by an accomplished pianist. Five pieces (HYFRYDOL, GLORIA, ASSURANCE, FOUNDATION, and THE ASH GROVE) include repeats – a useful feature if you are using them as service music since the length is easily varied.

Particularly enjoyable are Shaw's free harmonizations of DIX and STILLE NACHT, the latter being presented in both A and B^b major. The jazzy chords give a whole new texture to these familiar tunes; both could be used for congregational singing. Other treatments include simple two-part arrangements (CRUSADER'S HYMN and THE ASH GROVE), chant-like meter changes (DIVINUM MYSTERIUM), and four one-page settings of WONDROUS LOVE with these descriptors: Bell-like, Freely, Contemplatively, and Transcendent. Special attention is needed to bring out the melody in ASSURANCE, and the unusual 8/8 meter in CRUSADER'S HYMN was a personal challenge. The remaining three tunes in this useful volume are: GIVE ME JESUS, ELLACOMBE and RESIGNATION.

Come Gather and Worship, Volume 1: 10 Piano Solos by Mark Hayes based on GIA Classics

Mark Hayes. GIA Publications, Inc., G-8793, 2014. \$25.00.

This collection of worship music from the Roman Catholic tradition is a welcome addition for any pianist wanting to diversify their library. Ten pieces of moderate difficulty are included, each reflecting Hayes' unique style and flair for arranging.

BLEST ARE THEY is given a joyful setting (including the 3/4 to 6/8 shift in the refrain) and some good harmonic twists. Hayes' arrangement of the Scottish tune, KELVINGROVE, varies from Celtic embellishments in verse 1 to jazzy chords in verse 2 and a hint of the minor in verse 3 – most enjoyable! BREAD OF LIFE contains many four-note chords and octave jumps which may be too robust for some, depending on usage. The beautiful, flowing refrain of TASTE AND SEE definitely met this reviewer's expectations, although only one verse was included in the five-page setting. The remaining tunes, all worth exploring, are: ALL ARE WELCOME, HEALER OF OUR EVERY ILL, NOW WE REMAIN, TAKE AND EAT, THE LOVE OF THE LORD, and WE ARE CALLED.

One of My "Old" Favourites

Hymns for a Jazzy Sunday Morning

Larry Shackley. Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 00-22481, 2004. \$12.95. Solo piano.

This collection represents one of my first ventures into a jazzier approach to worship music. The ten hymns included range from traditional (LASST UNS ERFREUEN) to gospel (SOLID ROCK) and even folk tunes (O WALY WALY). The style of the settings varies from

Latin to gospel, swing to ballad, and will bring you back to play them over and over. Many titles have multiple performance dates in my copy! These arrangements would be a good introduction to jazz in worship for a more traditional congregation as the melodies are easily recognizable in the midst of creative harmonic treatment.

Evangeline G. Keeley lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba and is the music director at Prairie Presbyterian Church—a recently amalgamated congregation. She has recorded two piano albums of sacred music and maintains a private teaching studio in the city.

