LESSON #2

Burl Faywood
Gospel Keyboard Studies

Dear Student:

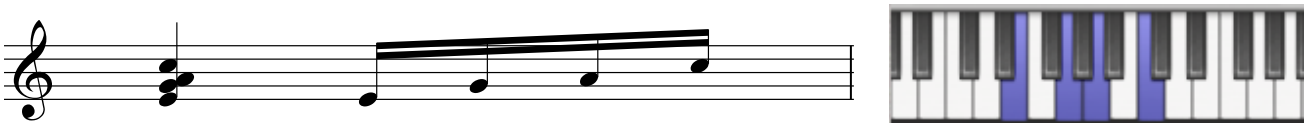
As we begin this lesson, permit me to remind you that we are in a learning process. We will not learn it all at once, but as we continue, the principles will become increasingly clear. It we gain only an idea here or there, one at a time, the net result will eventually be a lovely style of playing. That is the way we learned to speak or do most other things at which we eventually become efficient. So stay with us. It becomes increasingly exciting. I believe this lesson will dramatically illustrate that fact.

CREATING BEAUTIFUL "RUNS".

The basic idea here is quite simple, and the effects are delightful. It will take a little time to become smooth and proficient, so let us begin.

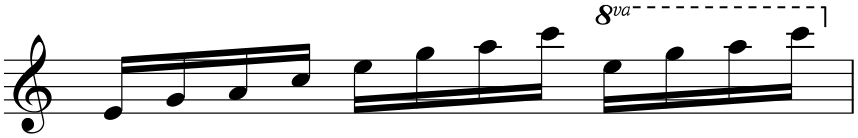
RUNS ARE CREATED FROM CHORDS. If we repeat the same notes in each ascending octave, using the same fingering pattern each tile, we will create an attractive run. Let us begin with a chord comprising the notes of E, G, A, C. (This is a form of C6 chord.) On a staff and in diagram, it will look like this:

Basic Chord Arpeggio Style On the Keyboard



Now, let us create a run from the above chord.

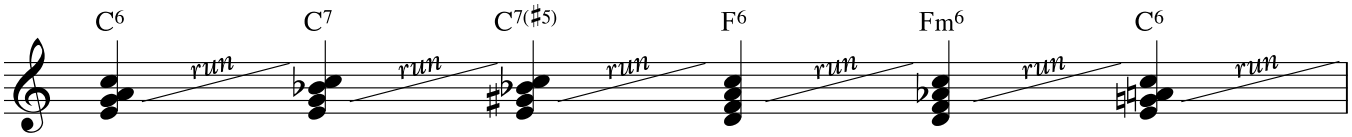
C6 Run (1st Inversion)



The following exercise will provide some sounds you will thoroughly enjoy. Just as we made a run from the notes of our C6 chord t we will play the following 1n "runs". Carry each run out to three or four octaves. Hold the sustain pedal down throughout each run, briefly letting it up before starting the next. Do not pause between runs.

1. Learn to picture in your mind the chord being used, as a pattern on the keyboard, rather than just a series of notes on a staff. This is important.

2. Play as slowly as necessary in order to become smooth, passing evenly from one octave to another. This is an absolute essential!



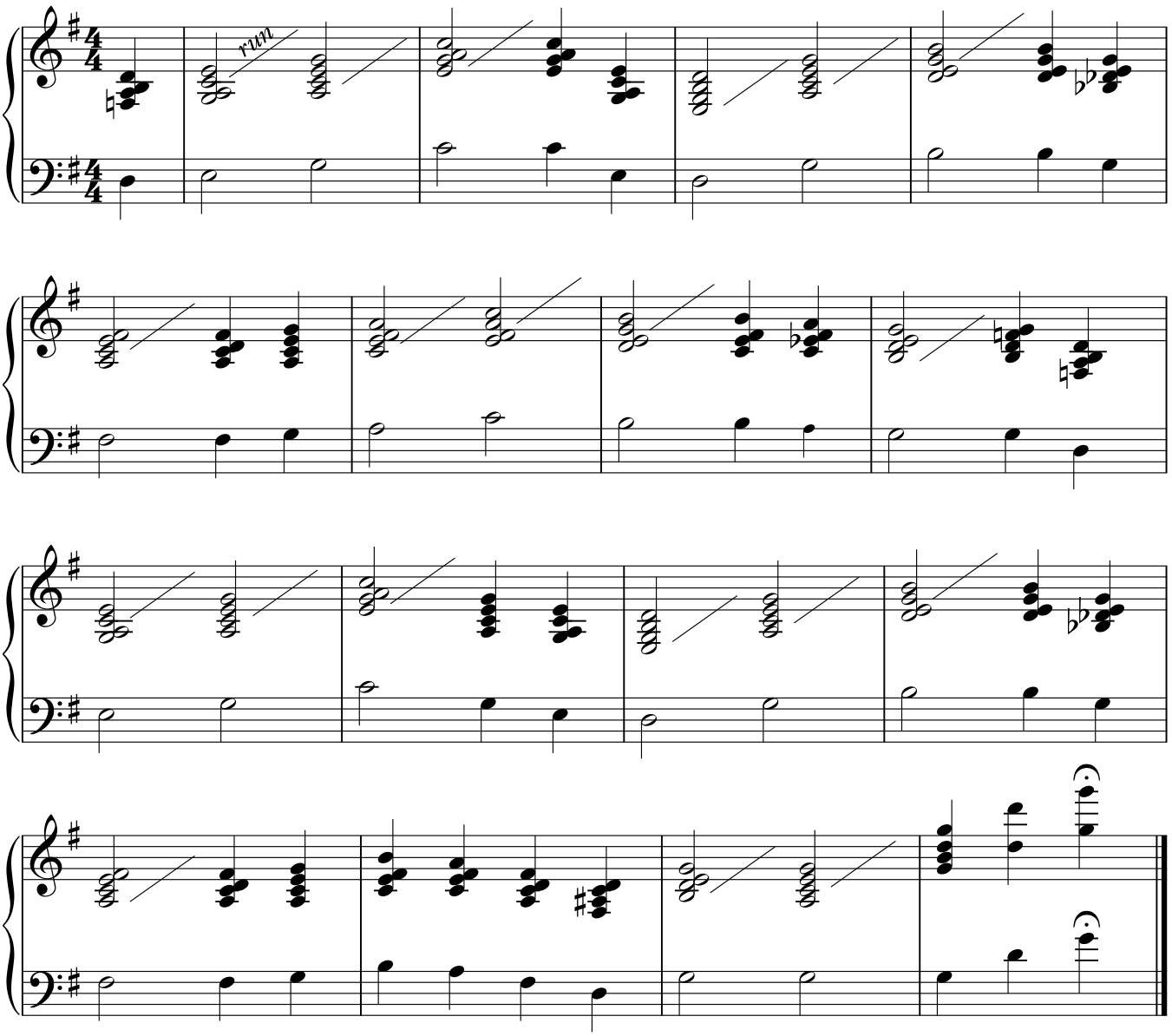
c. 1980 Burl Faywood, Alcester, South Dakota

RUNS (Continued)

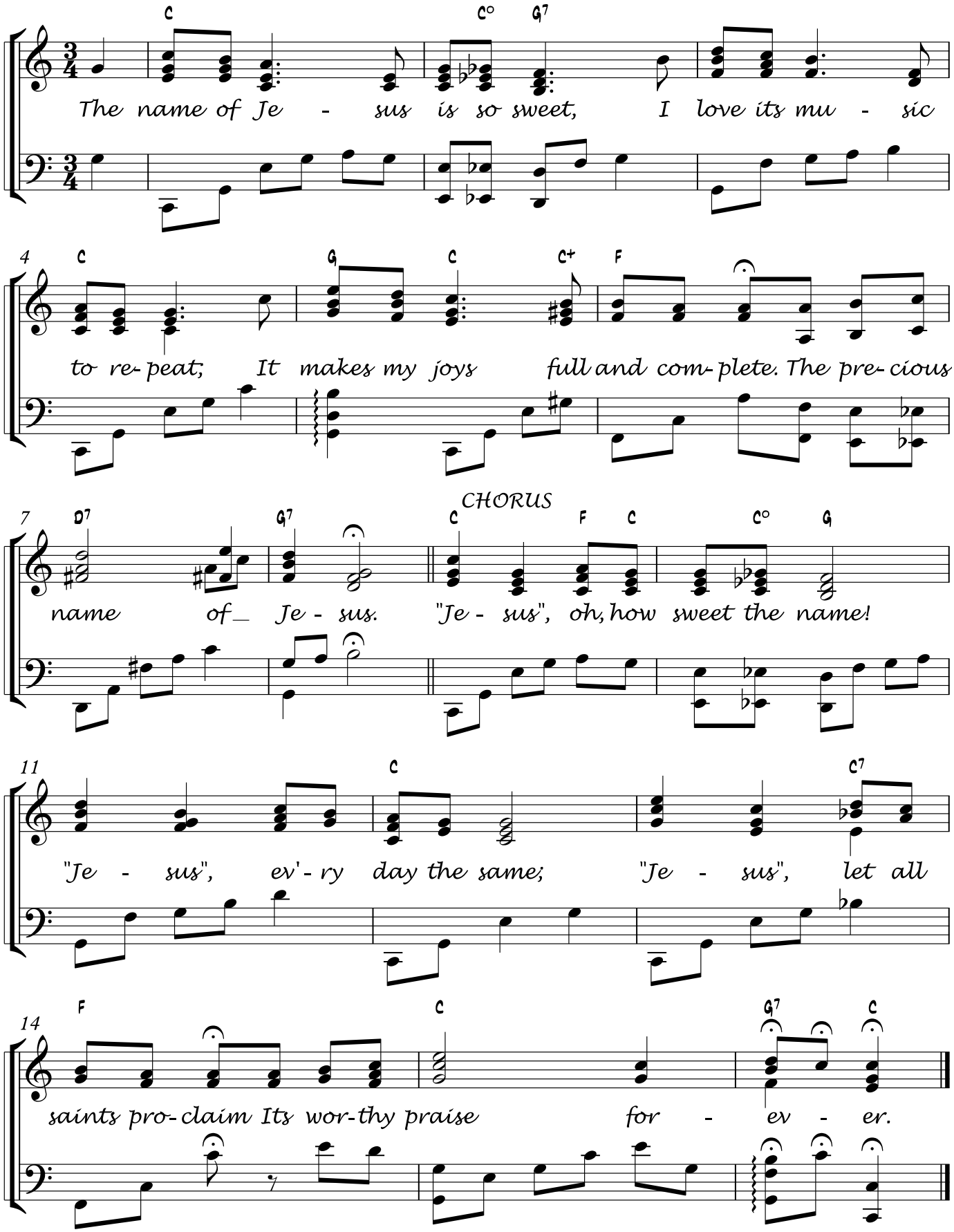
Now, let us proceed to an even more exciting exercise, using the song *Aloha*, sometimes known in religious circles as *He's Coming Soon*, also.

We will play the melody "lead" in our left hand. With the right hand we will also play the melody in rich, full chords. We will play some chords simply as written. Other chords, when the melody note holds for at least a couple beats, will be played in a run pattern. Chords followed by a diagonal mark are to be played as a run. Carry each run out for <u>at least</u> two octaves, and more, if you can. When playing the chord as a run, do <u>NOT</u> strike the chord before beginning the run. The chord will merely show us the notes to use in making the run. Also, to achieve a better effect, begin the run a split second <u>after</u> hitting the lead note in the left hand. This achieves the effect of making the left hand note an integral part of the run.

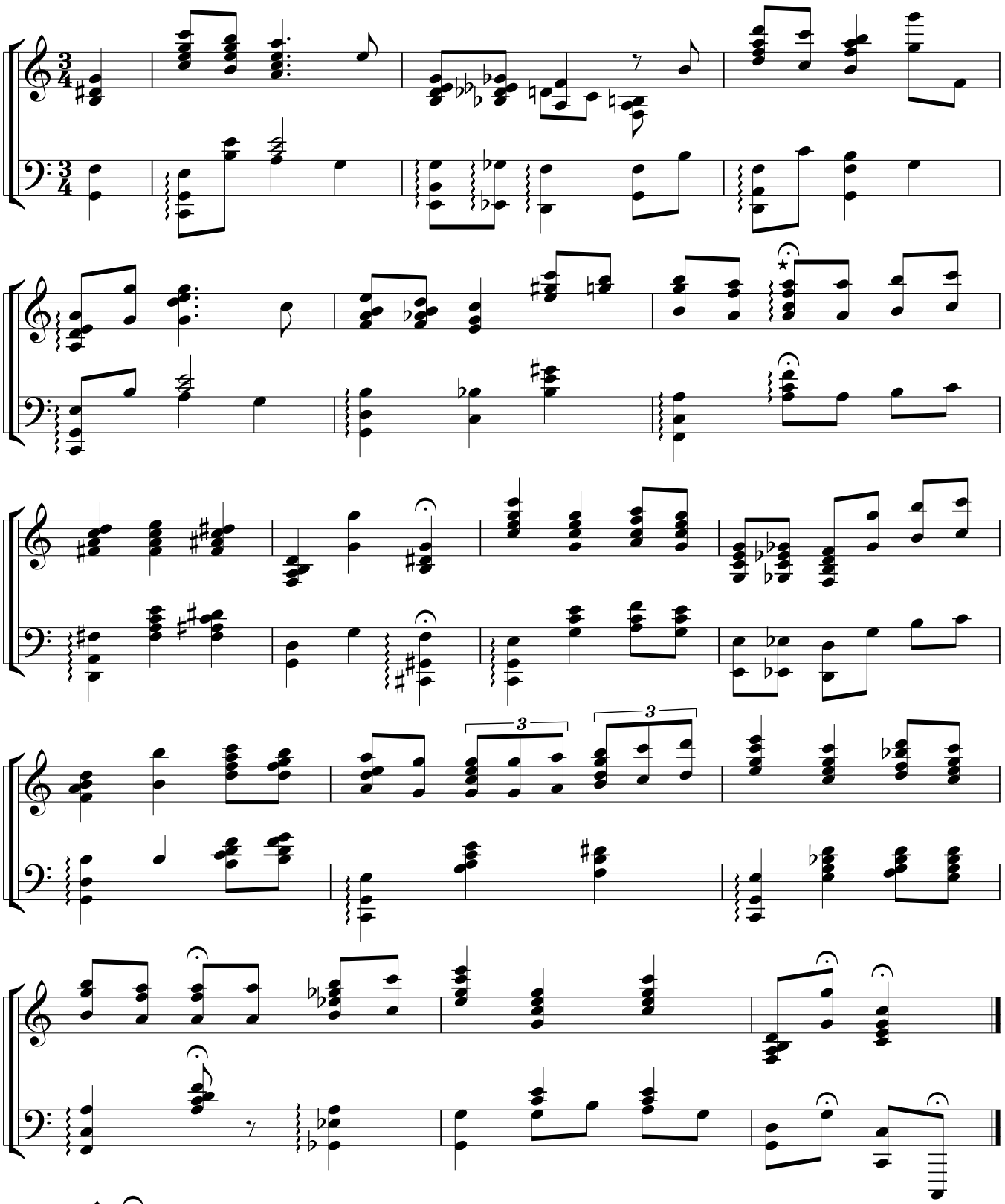
An important point here is that we not carry out a run to the point that we interfere with the time and counting of our left hand melody.



The Name of Jesus

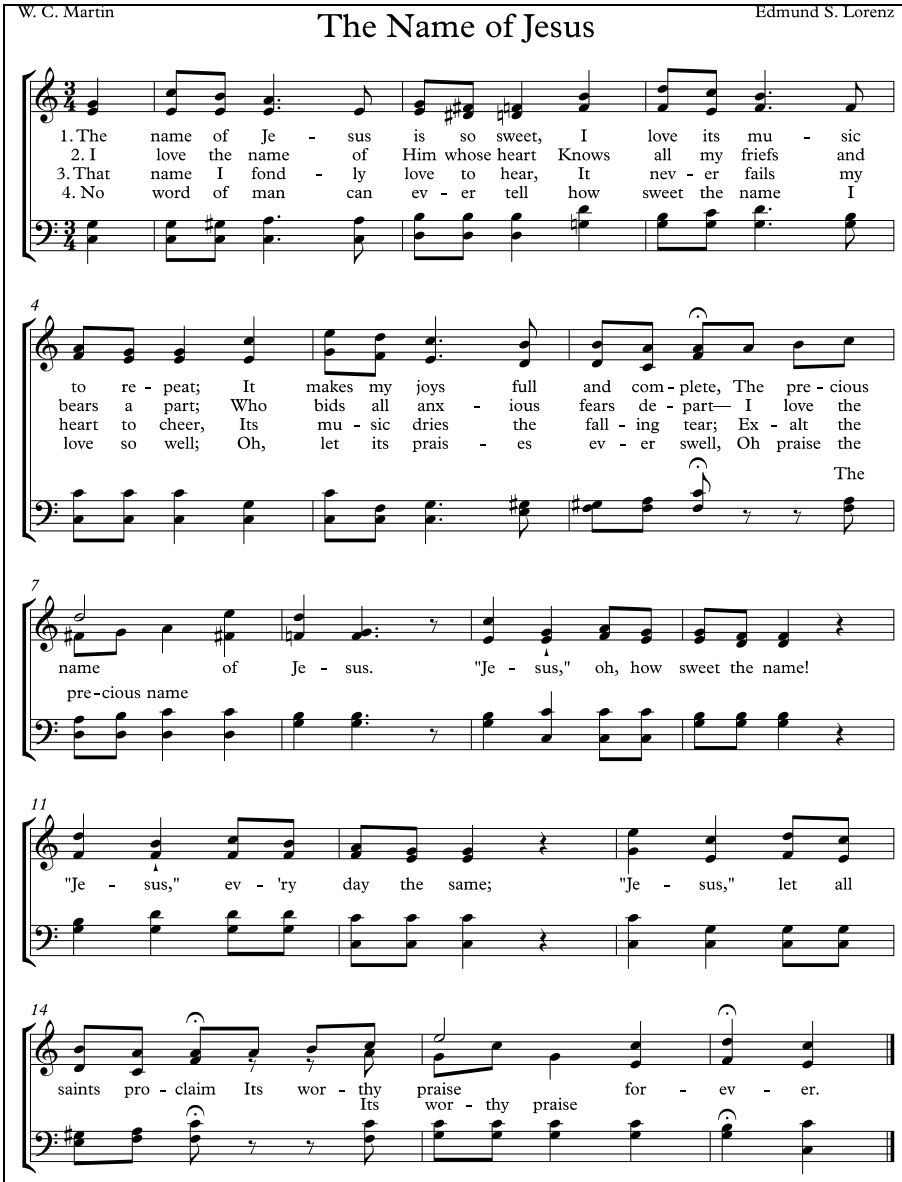


The Name of Jesus (Arr. #2)



(*)

As our first experiment in creating a "run" within a song, you may wish to try to example to the left. More in the next lesson.



PRACTICE SONG

The first thing to be said in regard to this song is that it would be difficult to find another which so uniquely provides us an opportunity to study "phrasing" and expression.

By phrasing, we mean that high degree of expression which does not slavishly follow a rigidly steady beat, but lends itself to somewhat a slowing of the tempo at points or emphasis; holding or "stretching" time values when it adds to dramatic effect; increasing or diminishing volume when it lends effect, etc.

This is something which has to be "felt" to be effectively executed. Obviously, many songs simply are not adaptable to a high degree of phrasing, but a totally expressionless music, even it technically correct, is sterile and "dead."

ADDING "FEELING" TO OUR MUSIC.

It will be helpful to concentrate on the following while playing:

1. Learn to think in terms of the sound of the music rather than of merely reproducing notes from a page. The music should be in your mind rather than rely on a sheet or paper. The written score is merely to guide you in transferring the warmth; the feeling; the emotion which you feel in the song, to the keyboard. You can help develop this sense in your playing by "singing" the song in your mind with intense emotion and expression. As you do 50, play with the emotion and feeling you would want as an accompaniment to your singing of the song with this strong feeling. It will take time, but a continued practice or feeling a song in this way can be of great help.

2. Learn to play aggressively. This does NOT mean pounding the piano. or perhaps even playing with any more volume than you already do. It does mean playing with a flowing sense of authority. Many a pianist's music is lifeless because it is played in a timid, defensive attitude. On occasion I have advised pianists to sit down at the piano with the attitude of, "If you don't come through, I'll beat it out of you." This is over-reacting, of course, but it series to create the necessary awareness that "timid music" is dead music.

NOTES ON THE ARRANGEMENTS.

In studying the following, try to grasp as much as possible. Do not be discouraged if all is not fully understood. That will come in time. Get what you can.

Arrangement #1.

Note the chord line. C chord is comprised of C, E, and G notes. The harmonizing notes in such passages will utilize primarily C, E, or G notes. F chord is F, A, and C notes; G chord is G, B, D. The same principle regarding harmony applies to them also.

Note the left hand. We used a pattern of eighth notes giving a somewhat flowing, ongoing background to our right hand which played melody and chords. In many measures the first and second beats were played in eighth notes, with a quarter note as the third beat. In these measures, the right hand plays an eighth note as the last half of beat three, thus carrying on a sense of continuity. This type usage is especially adaptable to 3/4 time.

Notice the diminished, augmented and 7th chords. We will study these chords later.

Arrangement #2.

Note the continued use of 10th chords in the left hand. This gives one a real edge in playing. If you can play the notes simultaneously, do so. Otherwise play as written.

In many places, we moved the melody (top note of the treble clef) an octave higher, then played harmony notes below it, including a full octave. This doubles the melody note, giving additional emphasis, as well as a full, rich sounding chord. By frequently switching from one octave to another, we achieve additional effect.

Some specific points:

In the first full measure, following the first chord, our left hand used notes which paralleled the melody note briefly. The melody notes of the measure are C, then B, A and E. In the left hand we played a B, then A, at the same point in which a B then an A represented the melody notes of the right hand. Also notice that the lower notes of the left hand through the measure are C, B, A, G. This gives a pattern of going down the scale from C to G (even though the C was in a lower octave.)

While the melody line is different, we applied a similar left hand progression in the first measure of the second line. Play the left hand alone several times to get the feel.

Note right hand octaves with parallel single notes in the left at end of the second and third lines. This lends emphasis. We will work more with this idea in future lessons.

We altered the melody in the first measure of the third line. Repeat several times, listening to the natural flow of the sound. More of this later, as well.

We made an octave run of triplet eighth notes in the second measure of the fourth line. This created a “fill” for the last two beats of the measure (see original score) and gave us a “lead-in” to the first note of the next measure.

Also, note that we have ignored the counter melody notes at the beginning of the third line and toward the end of the last line. Unless they are being sung, they add little.

AT THIS POINT we are merely beginning to touch on some concepts which will be dealt with more thoroughly as we progress. Our need at this moment requires the developing of the “feel” of Gospel style. Faithful practice and continual review through the weeks ahead will give us both the foundation and the artistic ability which go hand in hand to create the beautiful sounds of sacred improvising.

COMING NEXT LESSON: Adding “runs” to a song; further chord studies (picking up where we left off in Lesson #1); harmony principles; and more. It is a pleasure to work with you. I trust you are finding it enjoyable, as well. See you then!