



It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Easy Piano Sheet Music

Richard Storrs Willis (1850)

Level 2 | Full score, fingering, practice tips

Door 16 of the Free Piano Advent Calendar

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It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Key	Time Signature	Tempo	Difficulty	Measures
C major	6/8	Andante, dotted q. 56	Beginner - Level 2	16

About This Piece

The tune is CAROL by Richard Storrs Willis (d. 1900), from his Church Chorals and Choir Studies (New York, 1850), where it is Study No. 23. The 6/8 hymn form is credited either to Willis or to U. C. Burnap, who also died in 1900. The words are by Edmund H. Sears (d. 1876) and are not printed here. We read the melody from The Church Hymnal edited by C. L. Hutchins (Boston, 1894), No. 59, which prints it in B-flat. Our arrangement moves it up a whole tone to C major and leaves the melody unchanged. The eighth note right after the opening E5 (D5 here) follows Hutchins; some later prints have a lower note there.

Notes and Hand Positions

Fingering Guide

Right Hand: E4, F#4, G4, G#4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5

Thumb (1) on G4, index (2) on A4, middle (3) on C5, ring (4) on D5 and pinky (5) on E5 for the opening, a stretched hand from G4 to E5. In measure 3 the middle takes B4 and the ring C5, then the thumb passes under on the repeated C5 so fingers 2 and 3 play D5 and E5. Measure 9 drops an octave to the thumb on E4, with F#4 on 2 and G#4 on 3, and measure 10 restarts on the thumb on A4.

Left Hand: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3 (single notes, two per measure)

C position: pinky (5) on C3, middle (3) on E3, index (2) on F3, ring (4) on D3 and thumb (1) on G3, one note per dotted-quarter beat. In measures 9-12 the hand walks down: E3 (2) to B2 (5), A2 (5) to E3 (1), D3 (1) to C3 (2), then B2 (3) to G2 (5).

Notes Used in This Piece

Right Hand

Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
E4	Bottom line of treble staff	Right of the two black keys	Thumb (1)
F#4	First space, treble (sharp)	First of the three black keys	Index (2)
G4	Second line of treble staff	Between first two of 3 black keys	Thumb (1)
G#4	Second line, treble (sharp)	Middle of the three black keys	Middle (3)
A4	Second space of treble staff	Between last two of 3 black keys	Index (2)
B4	Middle line of treble staff	Right of the three black keys	Middle (3)
C5	Third space of treble staff	One octave above middle C	Middle (3)
D5	Fourth line of treble staff	Between the two black keys	Ring (4)
E5	Fourth space of treble staff	Right of the two black keys	Pinky (5)

Left Hand

Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
G2	Bottom line of bass staff	Between first two of 3 black keys	Pinky (5)
A2	First space of bass staff	Between last two of 3 black keys	Pinky (5)
B2	Second line of bass staff	Right of the three black keys	Pinky (5)
C3	Second space of bass staff	One octave below middle C	Pinky (5)
D3	Third line of bass staff	Between the two black keys	Ring (4)
E3	Third space of bass staff	Right of the two black keys	Middle (3)
F3	Fourth line of bass staff	Left of the three black keys	Index (2)
G3	Fourth space of bass staff	Between first two of 3 black keys	Thumb (1)

Section A - The First Half (Measures 1-8)

The pickup and the first half of the tune. A thumb pickup on G4 jumps to E5, the line steps down to G4, and measure 3 climbs back to E5 with the thumb passing under on C5. Measures 5-8 answer the opening and settle on a long C5. The left hand stays near C3, two dotted quarters per bar.

Andante (♩ = 56)



It Came Upon the Midnight Clear - Section A - The First Half

How to Practice This Section

Play measure 3 alone at x0.5: 2-3-4 on A4, B4, C5, then the thumb takes the second C5 so 2 and 3 can play D5 and E5. Keep the wrist level as the thumb passes under.

Section B - The E Major Turn (Measures 9-16)

The middle of the tune at *mf*. The right hand drops an octave to E4 and climbs with two sharps, F#4 and G#4, while the left hand walks down to B2, A2 and G2. Measures 13-16 bring back the answer phrase at *mp* and close on C5 and C3 under a fermata.

Andante (♩ = 56)



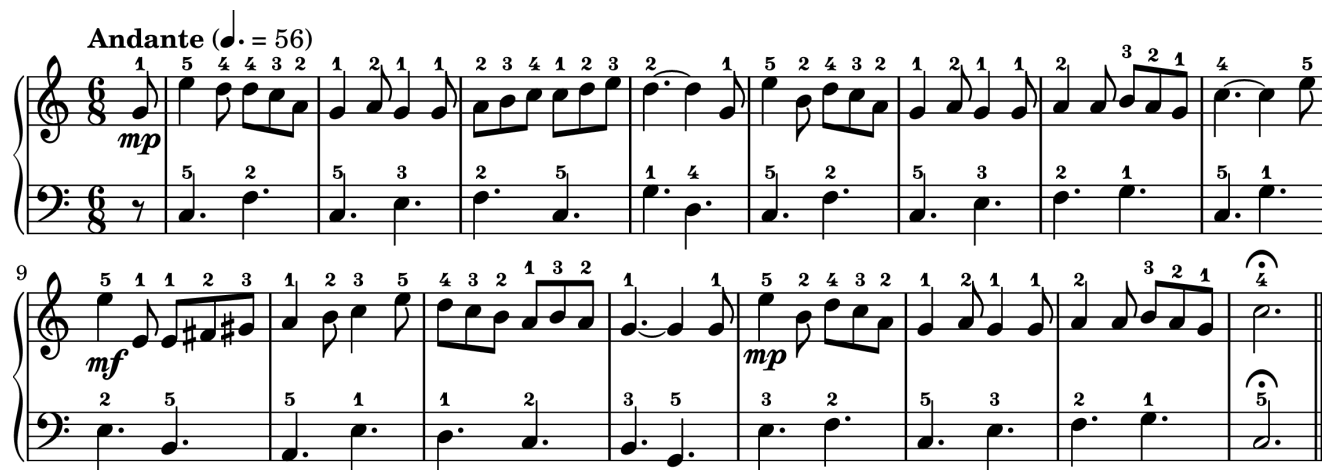
It Came Upon the Midnight Clear - Section B - The E Major Turn

How to Practice This Section

Practice the octave drop from E5 to E4 in measure 9 slowly: the pinky leaves E5 and the thumb lands on E4. Then add F#4 and G#4 with fingers 2 and 3.

Full Score

Here is the complete piece with all sections combined.



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Step-by-Step Practice Guide

Step 1: Right Hand Alone

1. Pickup: thumb on G4, then jump to the pinky on E5 for measure 1 and play 5-4-4-3-2 down to A4
2. Measure 3: A4, B4, C5 with 2-3-4, then the thumb takes the repeated C5 so 2 and 3 play D5 and E5
3. Measures 4, 8 and 12: hold the tied note for five eighths before the pickup
4. Measure 9: octave drop from E5 (5) to E4 (1), then E4, F#4, G#4 with 1-2-3; measure 10 starts with the thumb on A4
5. Measure 11: D5, C5, B4, A4 with 4-3-2-1, then the middle finger crosses over the thumb to B4

Step 2: Left Hand Alone

1. C position: pinky (5) on C3, middle (3) on E3, index (2) on F3, thumb (1) on G3, one note per dotted-quarter beat
2. Measure 4: thumb on G3, then ring (4) on D3
3. Measures 9-12: E3 (2) to B2 (5), A2 (5) to E3 (1), D3 (1) to C3 (2), B2 (3) to G2 (5)
4. Measure 16: pinky on C3, held under the fermata

Step 3: Hands Together

1. Count six eighths per bar and place the left-hand notes on 1 and 4
2. Start at x0.5 (28 to the dotted quarter) with the pickup and measures 1-4
3. Practice measures 9-12 hands together on their own before joining the whole piece
4. Target 56 to the dotted quarter: mp, mf for measures 9-12, mp for the return, and a full fermata at the end



Because true virtuosos deserve nothing less.

One carol and one short task a day, December 1 to 24.

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