

Hear My Prayer

Composed by Felix Mendelssohn

Arranged By David Childs for solo euphonium, piano or organ, & optional harp

Duration: c. 5 minutes

About the music... The lyrical simplicity of its melodic line, combined with the plea of the title makes this one of the most intimate of Mendelssohn's works. Originally composed for soprano voice, chorus and organ, the music is always a dialogue between the individual and the Creator. In its original form *Hear My Prayer* is approximately twelve minutes in duration, but using material from the early and latter parts of the work I have arranged this shorter version for solo euphonium.

The music is in two sections: the first (bars 1-40) I feel is passionate and represents the plea of the title. In bars 36 & 37 the words from Mendelssohn's original, '*Lord hear me call! Lord hear me call!*' can be heard rhythmically punctuated in the piano part before the final section (bar 40 - end) of the music begins. This part of the work is serenely beautiful and known by many as the popular melody, '*O for the wings of a dove*'. I consider the music here to represent a gentle prayer and at this point chose to include an optional accompaniment part for that most heavenly of instruments, the harp. This arrangement can be heard on my third solo album, *Hear My Prayer* (Doyen CD166).

Performance tips... My father always taught me, '*music begins where perfection ends*'. The idea behind this being that when a performance is prepared to a level at which all the notes are in the right place, in tune and played with a good sound, a performer's work is not always complete. In order to present a performance of true musical worth, a performance that can communicate with an ability to move an audience, we must take the music to a higher level than technical perfection. I am referring to playing with feeling, playing from the heart as if the music really matters to you. This is something that comes more naturally to some, but an aspect of performance that is essential in order to do justice to music of this nature. Consider subtle dynamic variation, rubato, variation in vibrato, changes in mood and care in phrasing.

Although this work looks relatively simple, there is so much more to it than playing 'perfectly', but until it can be played 'perfectly' there is little point in getting too carried away with your musical interpretation – nobody wants to hear an out of tune, ill sounding performance with wrong notes, even if it is played musically!

About the composer... Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) was born in Hamburg and studied the piano with his mother at an early age, later taking formal lessons from Carl Zelter in Berlin.



Whilst still only a child, he began to compose chamber works - his family often held chamber soirées in their home, and young Felix had ample opportunity to hone his craft on these impromptu ensembles.

In 1833, he was appointed Music Director of the town of Düsseldorf; two years later Leipzig's legendary Gewandhaus Orchestra offered him the conductor's post, before further career developments included a post at Berlin's Academy of the Arts and the origination of the Leipzig Conservatory in 1843. In 1846 Mendelssohn became unwell and compounded by the death of his beloved sister, his depression and decline proceeded until the next year, when he died at the tender age of thirty-eight.

Mendelssohn was a composer with traditional classical values, but to the rules of the trade he brought a delightful lyricism and a power of melody-crafting that must be heard to be appreciated.

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Hear My Prayer

Felix Mendelssohn

Arr. David Childs

Andante

Soloist

Piano/Organ

p

mp

4

8

12

mf *cresc.* *f*

cresc.

