

Hear My Prayer

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 - 1847)

Though he is chiefly remembered for his large-scale works, such as the *Violin Concerto*, the *Italian Symphony* and *Elijah*, Mendelssohn also wrote some very fine church music, of which *Hear My Prayer* is by far the most well-known. As with all Mendelssohn's music, it is beautifully crafted, so that the interplay between accompaniment, choir and soloist provides great dramatic contrast and yet the piece remains an integrated whole. The text, a paraphrase of Psalm 55, was written by William Bartholomew, who provided the English translations or adaptations for most of Mendelssohn's vocal and choral music, including *Elijah*. *Hear My Prayer* was first performed in 1845 and became immensely popular following the 1927 recording made by Ernest Lough and the Temple Church Choir.

programme notes by John Bawden

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*Hear my prayer, O God, incline Thine ear!
Thyself from my petition do not hide!
Take heed to me!
Hear how in prayer I mourn to Thee!
Without Thee all is dark,
I have no guide.
The enemy shouteth,
The godless come fast!
Iniquity, hatred, upon me they cast!
The wicked oppress me,
Ah, where shall I fly?
Perplex'd and bewilder'd. O God hear my cry!
My heart is sorely pain'd within my breast,
My soul with deadly terror is oppress'd,
Trembling and fearfulness upon me fall,
With horror overwhelm'd,
Lord, hear me call!*

*O for the wings of a dove!
Far away would I rove!
In the wilderness build me a nest,
And remain there for ever at rest.*