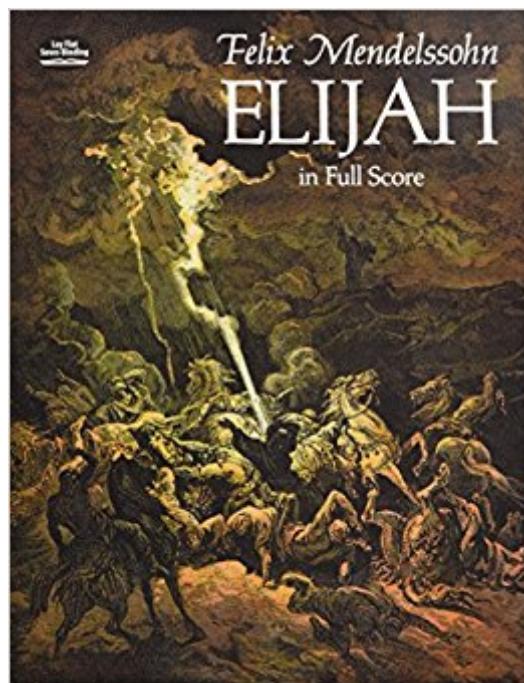


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Elijah In Full Score (Dover Vocal Scores)



Synopsis

One of the last works of German composer Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847), the oratorio *Elijah* was first performed at England's Birmingham Festival in August 1846. Elated by the audience's response, Mendelssohn wrote jubilantly to his brother: "Not less than four choruses and four airs were encored." Audiences still respond enthusiastically to this splendid oratorio. A century and a half later, *Elijah* is one of the most frequently performed of all choral works, a favorite of audiences everywhere. In the Old Testament, the story is told of how the Prophet Elijah vindicates the religion of the Israelites against the nature-worship of Baal. Mendelssohn imagined Elijah as "strong, zealous and, yes, even bad-tempered, angry and brooding yet borne aloft as if on angels' wings." His conception of Elijah comes immediately and vividly to life in an inspired series of solo and choral passages filled with compelling drama and rich musical symbolism. *Elijah* is reprinted here from the definitive German edition, with the text in both German and English.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Classical music has its fashion cycles as does every human endeavor. One is the periodic rediscovery and subsequent submersion of composer Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847). This sadly underrated composer is often denigrated for what some consider to be his tendency to write quasi-kitschy music without a firm stylistic basis. To make things worse, popular wisdom maintains that he did all of his best work as a teenager and then burned out. *Elijah*, first performed shortly

before the composer's death, proves wrong the "burnout" theory, for it is a masterpiece that was composed at the very end of Mendelssohn's brief life. The work combines classical discipline and romantic sweep in a dramatic format that owes at least as much to opera as to previous oratorios. It gives us splendid choruses in the style of Bach and Handel and memorable arias, as well as a dandy leading role for the bass who sings the prophet. Elijah's arrival led later composers to try to copy Mendelssohn's success with Biblical oratorios of their own, but their attempts stand out mostly as examples of the simpering excesses of Victorian slush. The saccharine efforts lacked the skill, power, and conviction of Elijah, and now languish in well-deserved obscurity. But Elijah holds the listener's ear with its music and its meaning. Elijah tells the story of the stern prophet who called the misbehaving people of Israel to repentance, and who clung to his resolve through a world of troubles until he was carried by a whirlwind into heaven as a reward. The subject enabled Mendelssohn to write a work that combined his ancestral Judaism with his own Lutheranism and to attempt to build a bridge from the Old Covenant to the New. You can explore how Mendelssohn achieved his inspiring goal in this complete orchestral score from Dover. The usual caveats for Dover's reprints of out-of-copyright editions prevail: the scores are not the most up-to-date, they usually lack English translations, and, because they're full scores, you will not be able to plunk them down on the music stand in front of the average organist and expect her to play it with any ease. That said, the scores are a tremendous bargain for anyone--students, professional musicians, amateur music lovers--with the urge to study a complete score of a fascinating work.

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This score is identical in every way to the Kalmus edition, which is considerably more expensive. The only caveat for conductors or students is that the Soprano and Alto staves use a C-clef and the Tenor staff uses a C4 clef. So does the Kalmus edition! Bass line and instrument clefs are normal. This is the one to purchase. A beatiful, easy-to-read score.

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