

= Fly Like a Bird =

" Fly Like a Bird " is a song by American singer and songwriter Mariah Carey , first released on February 13 , 2006 by Island Records as the sixth single from her tenth studio album , The Emancipation of Mimi (2005) . Written and produced by Carey and James " Big Jim " Wright , the song is influenced by Gospel , soul , and R & B music genres . Its arrangement is built on piano chords and guitar melodies , and features Carey 's pastor Clarence Keaton , who recites two Biblical verses during the song 's introduction and bridge . Carey described " Fly Like a Bird " as the most personal and religious track from The Emancipation of Mimi , with its lyrics featuring a veritable prayer to God : " Fly like a bird , take to the sky , I need you now Lord , carry me high ! " .

At the time of its release , " Fly Like a Bird " received acclaim from music critics . While many praised Carey 's strong vocal performance throughout its climax , many pinpointed on its lyrical content and compared it to Carey 's debut song , " Vision of Love " . Released as the final single from its parent album , the song was only sent to adult contemporary and gospel radio stations , during the same time " Say Somethin ' " was commissioned to mainstream channels . Carey performed the song on several high profile industry events , including the 48th annual Grammy Awards , the Shelter from the Storm : A Concert for the Gulf Coast concert charity benefit , and Idol Gives Back . Additionally , Carey included the song on the set @-@ lists for all her succeeding tours since its release .

= = Background and recording = =

Following record @-@ breaking success throughout the 1990s , Carey departed from Columbia Records after the release of Rainbow (1999) . Almost a year later , she signed an unprecedented \$ 100 million five @-@ album record contract with Virgin Records , and began work on a film and soundtrack project titled Glitter . Prior to its release on September 11 , 2001 , Carey suffered an " emotional and physical breakdown " , and was subsequently hospitalized over a period of several weeks . Glitter became a box @-@ office bomb , earning less than eight million dollars , and receiving scathing reviews . The soundtrack , while faring slightly better , failed to reach the critical or commercial heights of Carey 's previous releases , and eventually lead to the annulment of her record contract with Virgin .

Following the events , as well as the release of Carey 's succeeding album , Charmbracelet (2002) , she began working on new material for The Emancipation of Mimi (2005) . Aside from the dance @-@ influenced tracks and the ballads , Carey created a concept , in which a song 's lyrics would reach out to God . She created the song 's choral lyrics , melody and main instrumentation , before calling James " Big Jim " Wright for a collaboration . During their meeting , Wright helped Carey arrange the song 's chord structure , as well as produce the introduction , while Carey finished the rest of the lyrics . Once completing " Fly Like a Bird " , Carey had her pastor , Clarence Keaton , read two verses from the Bible on the song , " Weeping may endure for the night , but joy comes in the morning " during the introduction , and " He said ' He 'll never forsake you , or leave you alone ' Trust him " . According to Carey , the song , as well as the Biblical verses , were included on her " comeback album " because they helped her get through many difficult situations in the past . She described moments that were difficult growing up , during which she reached out to God , as well as during her breakdown , when she used such verses to give her faith . Carey explained how although the verses helped her greatly , no one had ever said them to her . For this reason , she wanted to make sure they were there for fans and listeners to hear , in order to give them faith and assurance lest they be in a grave situation .

= = = Release = = =

Following the extended chart success of The Emancipation of Mimi , " Fly Like a Bird " was released as a promotional single from the project . Simultaneously promoted alongside " Say Somethin ' , the song was released on March 13 , 2006 to urban , urban AC and gospel stations ,

while the latter to mainstream Top 40 channels . Tom Ferguson from Billboard did not agree with releasing both singles concurrently , as he had given " Say Somethin ' " a negative review . According to Ferguson , while the latter had radio appeal , its " scantily produced drum 'n'bass " only distracted , concluding " ' Fly Like A Bird ' is a classic : why muddy the water with this release . "

= = Composition = =

" Fly Like a Bird " is a mid @-@ tempo ballad , drawing influence from Gospel , soul and R & B music genres . It incorporates music from several musical instruments , including the organ , bass drum and trumpet . According to the sheet music published at Musicnotes.com by EMI Music Publishing , the song is set in common time with a moderate tempo of 54 beats per minute . It is composed in the key of B minor with Carey 's vocal range spanning from the low @-@ note of B2 in a background note to the high @-@ note of A6 . The song 's chorus has a chord progression of F ? m7 @-@ Bm @-@ G / A @-@ Bmaj7 in the verses , while changing into Gmaj7 during the bridge . Lyrically , " Fly Like a Bird " boasts a prayer in which the protagonist asks God for help during difficult times , and to carry them " higher and higher " . Cintra Wilson from LA Weekly described the song 's lyrics in depth , as well as where she felt the yearning lyrics stemmed from :

'Fly Like A Bird ' , is a kitchen @-@ sink , hyper @-@ produced gospel number , but is really quite moving . There is a real , human yearning for mercy in it ? Mariah ? s true cry for help from a place of near @-@ suicidal despair : ' Sometimes this life can be so cold / (Lord) I pray you 'll come and carry me home ' . But there ? s a lot of hope and faith in this wounded voice : Carey keeps , with touching conviction , a firm grip on the idea that some higher , divine intelligence out there loves her , even if nobody else does ; even if she is lost to herself . It comes across emotionally , because her heart is fully in it ? Mimi has been beaten , humiliated , heartbroken ; joys have been slapped out of her hands quicker than she could appreciate them . She ? s deeply confused , and God , she really needs help . Hell : We ? ve all been there .

Entertainment Weekly 's Tom Sinclair described the song as a " veritable prayer that explicitly references God " , and highlighted the lines " Sometimes this life can be so cold / I pray you 'll come and carry me home , Carry me higher , higher , higher . " According to Carey , the song holds deep lyrical meaning for herself , as well as her fans . She compared it to older emotional ballads from her career , and described the sentiment they held for many fans " Usually , I 'll have an introspective bleak @-@ outlook @-@ on @-@ life song . In the past it 's been ' Petals ' or ' Close My Eyes ' . Those were the ones that the hard @-@ core fans related to most . But this has a hopefulness to it . That 's why it 's one of my favorites , too . " Additionally , Carey outed Keaton 's verse during the song 's introduction as her favorite part of the song , and included it as a guide for fans , due to the help it had given her in the past :

'To me the most important thing is the message he says in the beginning of the song , ' she notes . ' Weeping may endure for a night , but joy comes in the morning . ' I felt like a lot of people may not hear that message and a lot of people need to . It wasn 't to be preachy . A lot of times people will hear songs that I write that are not the typical songs people look at as ' Mariah Carey songs.'

= = Critical reception = =

" Fly Like a Bird " received acclaim from music critics , many of whom praised Carey 's gospel @-@ flavored vocal performance , as well as the song 's lyrical content . Critic Jim DeRogatis from the Chicago Sun @-@ Times called Carey 's voice as " one @-@ in @-@ a @-@ million " , and wrote " she 's never been shy about showing off with frequently annoying octave @-@ spanning trills ? and her instrument seems to be intact ; witness the display of bravado on ' Fly Like a Bird ' . " When describing the song , Dina Passaro from Newsday wrote " This songstress is back and better than ever ! " and claimed Carey " sounds awesome and tears it apart " . Tom Ferguson from Billboard called the track a " classic " , and wrote " the re @-@ crowned diva delivers a consummate vocal . " Similarly , in a separate review for the song , Ferguson went into detail regarding Carey 's performance in " Fly Like a Bird " :

The Emancipation of Mimi spawns yet another career @-@ redefining hit in the sweet , soulful " Fly Like a Bird " , an honest @-@ to @-@ God religious mantra about redemption . Set against a low @-@ key , organ @-@ spiced groove that recalls mid- ' 70s R & B , Carey opens with a pretty , wispy vocal and buoyant harmonies throughout the first chorus before she waves her arms , parts the clouds and wails to the heavens as a mile @-@ high wall of gospel background vocals joins in for the crescendo . The flight of ' Bird ' from humble call for deliverance into a frenzied ecclesiastic hymn is utterly spine @-@ tingling . A joyful noise .

Entertainment Weekly 's Tom Sinclair outed the song as a " heart @-@ on @-@ my @-@ sleeve number " , and called it the " crux of the album " . Sal Cinquemani from Slant Magazine felt the song " made Mariah likeable again " and wrote " [it 's] an inspirational ballad that 's equal parts ' Butterfly ' and ' Hero ' . " A writer from the Sarasota Herald @-@ Tribune compared it to Carey 's debut single , " Vision of Love " , and called it one of the best cuts from The Emancipation of Mimi . Stephen Thomas Erlewine from Allmusic gave the song a mixed review , criticizing the condition of Carey 's voice , " As good as those Wright @-@ helmed cuts are , they are also the times that the mixes slip and don 't hide the flaws in Mariah 's voice , and it sounds as airy , thin , and damaged as it did on Charmbracelet . "

= = Commercial performance = =

During April 2006 , " Fly Like a Bird " was released to US urban and adult contemporary radio stations , at the same time " Say Somethin ' " (featuring Snoop Dogg , the sixth single from The Emancipation of Mimi) , was released to pop and rhythmic radio stations . " Fly Like a Bird " failed to chart on the Billboard Hot 100 , instead reaching number four on Billboards Bubbling Under Hot 100 Singles chart , which represents the twenty @-@ five songs below the Hot 100 's number 100 position that have not yet appeared on the Hot 100 . It peaked at number nineteen on Billboard 's Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Songs chart and topped the Hot Adult R & B Airplay chart for six weeks . The song experienced longevity in the urban market , reaching its peak on the R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Songs chart in its twenty @-@ fourth week .

= = Music video = =

Following the radio premiere of " Say Somethin ' " , as well as the video release , MTV News reported that Carey would film a music video for " Fly Like a Bird " at the end of March 2006 . According to Carey , the video had already been conceptualized by mid @-@ March , with a script featuring Carey , Keaton and a church choir as the main focuses . In a later interview , Carey said , " We don 't have a lot of time to do it . It 's not a big @-@ budget thing . But it doesn 't need to be . It just needs to be about the song , capturing the song and the emotion of it . " While plans for the video 's filming were made , a final version was never released or commissioned .

= = Live performances = =

Following the European promotional tour for The Emancipation of Mimi , Carey launched the stateside release of the album on Good Morning America , in the form of an interview and five @-@ piece outdoor concert . The concert , taking place in Times Square , and featuring the largest crowd in the plaza since the 2004 New Year 's Eve celebration , Carey performed the first three singles from the album , as well as " Fly Like a Bird " and " Make It Happen " (1991) . Months later , following the tragic events involving Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast throughout August 2005 , she was featured as a head @-@ lining performer at the Shelter from the Storm : A Concert for the Gulf Coast concert charity benefit . Carey , wearing a non @-@ formal ensemble of a pink tank @-@ top and blue jeans , performed " Fly Like a Bird " alongside a large church choir . According to Nielsen Media Research , the special was viewed by over twenty @-@ four million United States citizens , airing on over twelve different cable channels and in ninety @-@ five countries . Following the beginning of 2006 , and the continued charting of the album , Carey was nominated for eight

Grammy Awards , the most she had received in one night throughout her career . Due to the continued success of *The Emancipation of Mimi* , Carey decided to return to the Grammy stage for the 48th annual ceremony , held on February 8 , 2006 , for the first time since 1996 . The performance opened with a pre-taped video of Carey discussing the importance of religion and God in her life , and how it helped her get through difficult times as a child and adult . Following the video , she appeared on stage wearing a white Chanel evening gown , and began with a shortened version of " We Belong Together " . Following its completion , the spotlight focused on Carey 's now deceased pastor Clarence Keaton , who opened " Fly Like a Bird " with a passage from the Bible , also featured in the studio recording of the song . Mid-way through the song , a black temporary wall was removed , revealing a large choir , who joined Carey for the song 's gospel climax . After completing her performance , " Fly Like a Bird " induced the night 's only standing ovation , prompting Teri Hatcher , who was presenting the next award , to exclaim " It 's like we 've all just been saved . "

Critics raved about Carey performance following the completion of the ceremony , with Jon Pareles from *The New York Times* saying " once she was worked up , she moaned , growled and swooped to the high and low extremes of her voice in " Fly Like a Bird " . A writer from *USA Today* complimented her recital of both songs , writing " Carey certainly earned the right to savor the spotlight this year . But the diva made room for Walker 's booming baritone in ' Bird ' , her fluttering homage to Minnie Ripperton . " Gary Susman from *Entertainment Weekly* called Carey the " comeback queen " and wrote " Its what her voice did , soaring into the rafters like only Carey 's can . " Roger Friedman from *Fox News* outed the performance as " the number that sent the audience into a frenzy " . On April 9 , 2008 , reality competition *American Idol* aired its second annual charity event , titled *Idol Gives Back* . Backed up by Randy Jackson on the bass , Carey appeared on stage as the last headlining performer of the evening . Mid-way through the performance , a large church choir walked on stage in blue garbs , and provided the gospel climax for the song . Ann Powers from the *Los Angeles Times* called the song an " inspirational show stopper " and felt Carey 's vocal 's were " patented impossible notes " . In regards to the performance , Katie Byrne from *MTV News* wrote " Carey was at her over the top best , with a full gospel choir and the high notes that made her famous . " Aside from several televised performances , Carey included " Fly Like a Bird " on the setlists of all her tours following its release . During Carey 's *The Adventures of Mimi Tour* (2006) stop at Madison Square Garden , the song was dedicated to Ol ' Dirty Bastard , who died in 2004 from an accidental drug overdose . The performance had to be redone , as Carey 's pastor , Clarence Keaton , missed his cue for the Biblical verses , and was forced to be found backstage and ushered to the spotlight . Four years later , Carey performed the song throughout her *Angels Advocate Tour* , only dedicating it to Keaton , who died on July 3 , 2009 . Editor and journalist Thomas Kintner from the *Hartford Courant* felt that during her live recital of " Fly Like a Bird " , Carey " displayed power and sky-scraping pitch " .

= = Track listing = =

United States CD single (Promo)

" Fly Like a Bird " ? 3 : 53

" My Saving Grace " ? 4 : 10

= = Credits and personnel = =

Credits adapted from the *The Emancipation of Mimi* liner notes .

Vocals ? Mariah Carey

Songwriting ? Mariah Carey , James " Big Jim " Wright

Production ? Mariah Carey , James " Big Jim " Wright

Background vocals ? Mariah Carey , Mary Ann Tatum , Melonie Daniels , Trey Lorenz , Sherry Tatum , Courtney Bradley , Rev. Dr. Clarence Keaton

Engineers ? Brian Garten , Dana Jon Chapelle

Assistant engineer ? Jason Finkel , Michael Leedy , Manuel Farolfi , Riccardo Durante
Mixer ? Phil Tan (mixed at Right Track Studios , NYC)
Mastering ? Herb Powers
Additional keyboards ? Loris Holland

= = Charts = =