

= God Help the Outcasts =

" God Help the Outcasts " is a song written by composer Alan Menken and lyricist Stephen Schwartz for Walt Disney Pictures ' 34th animated feature film The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1996) . A pop ballad , the song is performed by American singer Heidi Mollenhauer as the singing voice of Esmeralda on American actress Demi Moore 's behalf , who provides the character 's speaking voice . A prayer , " God Help the Outcasts " is a somber hymn in which a beset Esmeralda asks God to shield outcasts and gypsies like herself against racism and discrimination at the hands of Paris and Judge Claude Frollo . The song also establishes Esmeralda as a selfless , empathetic character with whom Quasimodo falls in love .

After Menken and Schwartz wrote " God Help the Outcasts " , directors Kirk Wise and Gary Trousdale and Disney CEO Jeffrey Katzenberg debated whether or not the film required a more uplifting song ; Menken and Schwartz wrote the inspirational " Someday " with which to replace " God Help the Outcasts " at the behest of Katzenberg . However , Wise and Trousdale ultimately decided that " God Help the Outcasts " , a religious ballad , was more suitable for the scene .

American singer Bette Midler recorded a pop rendition of " God Help the Outcasts " for the film 's soundtrack . " God Help the Outcasts " has garnered generally positive reviews from both film and music critics , who enjoyed the song 's lyrics and music , as well as Mollenhauer 's performance . Others , however , felt that the song was too sentimental and overwrought , specifically Midler 's rendition . In addition to Midler , " God Help the Outcasts " has since been covered several artists , including singer Lara Fabian in Canadian French and The Little Mermaid 's Jodi Benson , also appearing in the stage musical adaptation of the film , performed by Ciara Renée .

= = Background = =

" God Help the Outcasts " was written by composer Alan Menken and lyricist Stephen Schwartz , both songwriters who had just recently collaborated on writing the music for Disney 's Pocahontas (1995) . Upon completing " God Help the Outcasts " , Menken and Schwartz composed " Someday " at the behest of Disney CEO Jeffrey Katzenberg ; the filmmaker suggested that the dark , somber film required " a more liftable song of inspiration . " Also a ballad , " Someday " was to have served " as an energetic alternative to ' God Help the Outcasts ' . " Ultimately , directors Kirk Wise and Gary Trousdale decided that " God Help the Outcasts " fit the tone of the scene more effectively . "

According to the Deseret News , " Someday " was excluded from The Hunchback of Notre Dame " because it was ... too powerful " , while " God Help the Outcasts " is " a more humble , personal song for Esmeralda to sing as she prayed for God 's help . " Although both " God Help the Outcasts " and " Someday " are similar , " God Help the Outcasts " specifically mentions outcasts while the latter " is about all people coming to together ... for the betterment of everyone . " In addition to this , while " God Help the Outcasts " is religious , " Someday " is , according to The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz : From Godspell to Wicked and Beyond , " more of an anthem of hope than a prayer . "

Dubbing " God Help the Outcasts " one of the highlights of her career , singer Heidi Mollenhauer described the experience in an interview with South Pasadena High School as " very exciting , a little terrifying , and sometimes overwhelming " . On recording the song , Mollenhauer said , " The challenge really was to be able to release all that this song made me feel . I get choked up every time I talk about it because I think it 's such a beautiful moment . " Because Esmeralda is voiced by two different actresses , it was mandatory that Mollenhauer 's singing voice blend with actress Demi Moore 's husky speaking voice " seamlessly . " Mollenhauer 's performance of " Someday " is featured on the re @-@ release of The Hunchback of Notre Dame .

= = Context , scene and analysis = =

One of The Hunchback of Notre Dame 's most poignant moments , " God Help the Outcasts " is Esmeralda 's only song . Identified as the film 's " prettiest " musical number , the song occurs

immediately after Esmeralda , relentlessly pursued by Judge Frollo , claims sanctuary in the Notre Dame Cathedral upon " see [ing] how ... Quasimodo , and her people are treated by others " , according to *Defying Gravity : The Creative Career of Stephen Schwartz , from Godspell to Wicked* " bring [ing] with her a bitter and acute awareness of the injustice of her situation . " Preceded by a brief exchange between Esmeralda and the Archdeacon , the latter ultimately suggests that Esmeralda approach God for help , explaining , " You can 't right all the wrongs of this world by yourself , perhaps there 's someone in here who can . " During the " heartwarming " musical sequence , Esmeralda " pray [s] selflessly on behalf of the world 's outcasts . " " [F] illed with religious imagery , " the song " sum [s] up everything that [Esmeralda] stands for " . Meanwhile , an earnest Quasimodo , enamored with Esmeralda 's beauty and sincerity , hides in the bell tower , " overhearing her prayer " and " being drawn down to her . "

In terms of character development , " God Help the Outcasts " establishes Esmeralda as a " thoughtful , empathetic " character , " worthy of our compassion , " " developing Esmeralda 's character " while " depict [ing] the rest of the Paris commonfolk as simple and selfish , asking for wealth and fame for themselves while Esmeralda prays for the salvation of the Gypsy race . " In *Tinker Belles and Evil Queens : The Walt Disney Company from the Inside Out* , author Sean Griffin observed that " the more respectable parishioners pray for wealth , fame and glory . " According to Annalee R. Ward , author of *Mouse Morality : The Rhetoric of Disney Animated Film* , " God Help the Outcasts " is a " tender prayer @-@ song " in which " Esmeralda expresses a heart full of concern for others , which ultimately Quasimodo mistakes as a heart for him . " Esmeralda is " bathed in colored light from the stained glass window " as " God 's light shines down upon Esmeralda " via a rose window . Initially , the song does not specify to whom the prayer is being recited ? Mary , Jesus or God . It does , however , does suggest that both Mary and Jesus are former outcasts , much like Esmeralda herself . In *The Disney Middle Ages : A Fairy @-@ Tale and Fantasy Past* , author Tison Pugh described Esmeralda as " latently or innately Christian . "

" ' God Help the Outcasts ' is sung by Esmeralda as an intercessory prayer on the behalf of Quasimodo and her people , the gypsies , whom are treated as outcasts by the rest of their society . Esmeralda begins her prayer by realizing that Jesus Christ must have also known what it was like to be treated as an outcast , for his own people crucified him on the Cross at Calvary . The heart of her prayer can be summed up in this statement , ' I thought we all were the children of God . ' "

In *Mickey Mouse Monopoly : Disney , Childhood , and Corporate Power* , Dr. Robert B. Pettit identified " God Help the Outcasts " as " a plea on behalf of all minorities ? not only by ethnicity , but also by race , class , gender , or sexual orientation . " Additionally , Pettit feels that the song " might have been a jab at the homophobic religious right who were organizing a boycott of Disney . " A somber song , " God Help the Outcasts " also " underlines the theme of Victor Hugo 's novel " : " At one point in the song , we have a group of rich , well @-@ off Christians asking God for wealth , fame , and love " while " Esmeralda , a penniless gypsy who confessed that she didn 't know if God was there , prays for her people and asks that they be shown mercy and love , " additionally " pointing out that Jesus was also an outcast when he walked on this Earth , and that we 're all children of God no matter who we are or what we 've done . " The scene additionally suggests " a more positive view of the Church than found in Hugo 's novel " as it provides outcasts such as Esmeralda with both shelter and sanctuary .

= = Music and lyrics = =

According to the song 's official sheet music , published at Musicnotes.com by Walt Disney Music Publishing , " God Help the Outcasts " is a pop power ballad , written in the key of B ? major at a slow tempo of 63 beats per minute in triple 3/4 time . The vocal range of singer Heidi Mollenhauer , who provided Esmeralda 's singing voice in lieu of actress Demi Moore , spans two octaves , from F3 to C5 . Transposed to the higher key of E ? major , Midler 's vocal range also spans two octaves , from B ? 3 to F5 . While Mollenhauer 's version spans three minutes and forty @-@ five seconds , Midler 's rendition of " God Help the Outcasts " lasts a shorter length of three minutes and twenty @-@ six seconds .

" [A] n intercessory prayer , " " God Help the Outcasts " is both " a powerfully quiet song " and a " heart @-@ rending aria " performed with " agony and beauty . " Musically , the " heart @-@ wrenching ballad " " has a Broadway and choral feel to it , " distinct from the majority of The Hunchback of Notre Dame 's songs due in large to its " tenderness . " A " haunting prayer " and a " simple hymn , " " God Help the Outcasts " is " the most spiritual and transcendent [sic] tune to emerge from an animated feature . " The ballad , " plain in structure , " is a " hopeful and sweet anthem " and " lilting plea " accompanied by " syrupy production . " According to The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz : From Godspell to Wicked and Beyond , " Menken 's melody is mostly a descending , stepwise line in triple meter with constantly moving eighth notes accompanying , " while " Schwartz wrote four dignified , rhymed couplets for the main tune . "

According to the book Film Genre 2000 : New Critical Essays , " God Help the Outcasts " has an " unusually somber tone " for an animated Disney film . Performed " as a prayer for deliverance from [the gypsies '] pain and suffering , " lyrically , " God Help the Outcasts , " a song about faith , explores themes such as discrimination . Additionally , ? God Help the Outcasts ? " touches on a basic idea behind most faiths . " Asking " was Jesus [God] not an outcast , too , as [Esmeralda] sees firsthand how her people , are persecuted for their differences , " the first verse of the song reads , " I don 't know if You can hear me / Or if You 're even there / I don 't know if You would listen / To a gypsy 's prayer . " Teen Ink observed , " This part is about how it seems like God doesn 't listen to you or help you , no matter how much you pray or talk to him . " Finally , asking people to be kind and unselfish , Esmeralda sings , " Please help my people , the poor and downtrodden / I thought we all were the children of God . ? In The Gospel According to Disney , author Mark I. Pinsky drew similarities between " God Help the Outcasts " and the Christian hymn " His Eye Is on the Sparrow , " as both songs explore " the love of God that knows no bounds . " Midler 's shorter rendition , considered a reprise of Mollenhauer 's original , features modified lyrics , replacing " to a gypsy 's prayer " with " to a humble prayer . "

= = Other languages = =

Belgo @-@ Canadian artist Lara Fabian released the official Canadian French @-@ language single " Que Dieu Aide Les Exclus " ; her version was added to the English @-@ language album release in Canada as an extra track . As she provided the singing voice for Esmerelda in the film , the French @-@ Canadian soundtrack contains two separate renditions sung by Fabian ; the film version and the single . Marketing coordinator for the Walt Disney Corporation (Canada) Todd Maki said " That hasn 't been done before . Originally , when we set up the deal with Lara , it was only to have her sing during the cathedral sequence of the film , but producer Javier Ponton heard her and asked us to do a single version as well " . Fabian said " I 'm really happy doing this particular character with this song , because it 's so touching ... The sincerity that comes across [Esmerelda 's] face and the intimacy was just amazing " .

Mietta , who voiced Esmeralda in the Italian version , won a prize as the best foreign version .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical reviews = = =

Critical reception towards " God Help the Outcasts " has been generally positive , with some critics dubbing the song the film 's " most memorable " and " best number . " Janet Maslin of The New York Times wrote very positively of " God Help the Outcasts " , saying , " The score ... soars to sanctimonious heights with the lilting , catchy power ballad ' God Help the Outcasts ' . " Maslin continued , " [the song is] a sure thing for next year 's Oscar show . " Deeming " God Help the Outcasts " " the primary song " of The Hunchback of Notre Dame , Filmtracks.com hailed it as " A truly lovely and inspirational piece . " Filmtracks.com went on to extol Mollenhauer 's " elegant " vocal performance , joking , " apparently Demi Moore couldn 't sing well enough to suffice . "

Similarly praising Mollenhauer 's delivery , Animation World Network wrote that the singer 's " voice timbre blends seamlessly with Demi Moore 's speaking voice . " Teen Ink described " God Help the Outcasts " as " a wonderful song , " while About.com 's Espie Estrella highlighted " God Help the Outcasts " as the film 's " Featured Song . " Hailing The Hunchback of Notre Dame as " my favorite soundtrack of any Disney movie , " Emerson College 's Entertainment Monthly extolled the film for " trad [ing] the traditional happy tunes for heartfelt and heart @-@ wrenching ballads like ... ' God Help the Outcasts . ' "

In a mixed review , Kenneth E. Rathburn of Sputnikmusic commented , " Both versions of ' God Help the Outcasts ' offer a level of mid @-@ road quality that came to be expected after the Disney Renaissance , " writing of Mollenhauer 's , " The film version seems to limp around a bit while delivering more of that emotional punch needed as we transition to the second act , " while Midler 's " has that credits vibe we all know and love from Disney films " which " keeps us sticking around when we 'd otherwise abandon the theater . " However , Rathburn concluded , " said version is a little detached for the sake of thematic relevance . " Jack Smith of BBC Online gave the song a very unfavorable review , writing , " The sentiments of ' God Help The Outcasts ' ... are spoiled by syrupy production , " describing Midler 's rendition as " overwrought . " Plugged In observed , " One heartwarming scene finds Esmeralda praying selflessly on behalf of the world 's outcasts . " However , " such moments are overshadowed by simmering passions , a shapely heroine and dark elements likely to upset . "

= = = Accolades = = =

In spite of both The New York Times ' and Star @-@ News ' predictions that " God Help the Outcasts " would be nominated for the Academy Award for Best Original Song , with Star @-@ News ' Howard Cohen writing , " next year 's Best Song Oscar is sure to spring from this bunch (our guess is the sugary God Help the Outcasts) , " the song was ultimately denied an Academy Award nomination at the 1997 award ceremony , along with the rest of Hunchback 's original songs . Notably , prior to The Hunchback of Notre Dame , " Disney had been dominating the Original Song category at the Academy Awards , often claiming multiple nominations and a win , but Hunchback was shut out , receiving only a nod for Original Score . " Menken told HitFix , " The loss for the ' Hunchback of Notre Dame ' score in 1997 ... were ' disappointing . ' In spite of this , Mark A. Robinson , author of The World of Musicals , deemed " God Help the Outcasts " one of Menken 's most popular songs in 2014 .

Ranking " The Best Disney Soundtracks of the Past 25 Years , " Moviefone hailed " God Help the Outcasts " as a " hopeful and sweet anthem " in 2013 . Meanwhile , author Sandie Angulo Chen highlighted " God Help the Outcasts " as one of the film 's most " Notable Songs . " On BuzzFeed 's " Definitive Ranking Of The 102 Best Animated Disney Songs , " " God Help the Outcasts " was ranked fifty @-@ forth .

= = Cultural impact = =

= = = Live performances = = =

" God Help the Outcasts " was adapted for the stage version of The Hunchback of Notre Dame , which premiered in a 1999 German production entitled Der Glöckner von Notre Dame . Called Hilf den Verstoß 'nen in German , this rendition is a duet between Esmerelda and Quasimodo , and was originally performed by Judy Weiss and Drew Sarich respectively . Stephen Schwartz said " the scene ... with all its candles and projected re @-@ creation of Notre Dame , I thought was absolutely stunning " . Reviewer Edward R. Cox wrote " The addition of Quasi to this song adds such a world of unity to the pleas of Esmeralda and the parishoners [and] show [s] his pure compassion for other 's pain , unselfishly . A brilliant stage device and moment " . The Hunchblog noted turning this song into a duet means Esmerelda gets no solos in the musical . In the 2014

@-@ 5 La Jolla Playhouse / Paper Mill Playhouse English production , the song was reverted back to a solo .

American actress and singer Jodi Benson , best known for providing the voice of Ariel in Disney 's animated feature film The Little Mermaid (1989) , performed " God Help the Outcasts " during the Dis Unplugged Podcast Cruise 2 @.@ 0 in 2010 .

= = = Covers = = =

In 1996 , American singer and actress Debbie Gravitte recorded a medley of " God Help the Outcasts " and " Someday , " and included it on her Alan Menken @-@ themed cover album , Part of Your World : The Alan Menken Album (1996) . American theatre actress Kerry Butler " made a notable recording in 2008 , linked with ' It 's a Small World ' " . American gospel singer Cynthia Clawson covered the song on her 1999 album Broken : Healing the Heart .