

In the Bleak Midwinter

for SATB mixed choir (with divisions)

Words: Christina Rossetti

Music: Mark Gotham

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First performances: Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge (dir. Sarah MacDonald), Advent 2014.

Dedicated to my parents.

A note on the piece

I was drawn to set this text particularly in light of the recurring types of imagery (pastoral, angelic ...) and the oppositions among them. This is connected to the musical strategy of guiding a single theme through a variety of different tonal and textural guises. In this piece, I have sought to strike a balance between setting this carol in the traditional strophic form, while also varying the musical content (and the pacing) to much greater extent than is usually possible in that idiom.

To the performer

- The opening soprano part may be sung as a solo or by a few voices if desired.
- Tenuto marking (e.g. bar 1) indicate a pesante approach with the weight in the centre of the note (not an accent at the beginning).
- Hairpins are used to indicate local textual phrasing as well as longer-range dynamic changes. Occasionally these are in conflict. For instance, there is a general crescendo for ATB in bb.51ff., but the word 'sanctus' is obviously trochaic.
- The *meno mosso* bars are brief moments of hiatus followed by calm fluidity. The performer may prefer to think of these in terms of rubato rather than tempo, but in any case the result should be slightly slower than the prevailing tempo.

Dedicated to my parents.

First performances: December 2014; Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge; Sarah MacDonald, conductor

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Semplice ♩ = c.90

S. *p pesante* *legato* (quasi gliss)

1. In the bleak mid - win - ter, fros - ty wind made moan, Earth stood hard as

6 *mf* *p*

i - ron, wa - ter like a stone; Snow had fal - len, snow on snow,

11 *p pesante*

— snow on snow, In the bleak mid - win - ter, long a -

A *p warmer, legato*

S. go. 2. Our God, Heav'n can - not hold Him, nor earth sus - tain;

p warmer, legato

A. 2. Our God, Heav'n can - not hold Him, nor earth sus - tain;

pp *p*

T. Heav'n can - not hold Him, nor earth sus - tain;

pp *p*

B. 2. Our God, Heav'n can - not hold Him, nor earth sus - tain;

22 *mf* *p*

Heav'n and earth shall flee a - way, in the bleak mid -

mf *mp* *p*

Heav'n and earth shall flee when He comes to reign. in

mp *pp*

when He comes to reign.

27

Poco meno mosso *A tempo*

mp *p*

win - ter a sta-ble place suf - ficed the Lord God Al - migh - ty,

p *p*

the bleak mid - win - ter the Lord God Je -

mp en dehors

in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta-ble place suf - ficed

mp en dehors *p*

in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta-ble place suf - ficed Je -

32

Je - sus Christ.

pp lontano

sus Christ. San - ctus, San -

pp lontano

San - ctus, San - ctus, San - ctus, San -

mp

- sus Christ. 3. En -

B

37

p *mp*

San - ctus, San - ctus, San - ctus En - ough for him, a

p *mp*

ctus, San - ctus, San - ctus En - ough for him, whom che - ru - bim

p *mp*

- ctus, En - ough for him, whom che - ru - bim wor - ship night and

ough for him, whom che - ru - bim wor - ship night and day,

41 **Poco meno mosso A tempo**

breast-ful of milk and a man-ger-ful of hay; En-ough for him, whom
wor-ship San-ctus, San-ctus, San-ctus E -
day, San-ctus San-ctus San-ctus San-ctus

accel. - - - - -

46

an-gels fall down be-fore,
ough for him, the ox the ox and ass and ca-mel which a -
-ctus En-ough for him, the ox and ass and ca-mel
-ctus San-ctus ox and ass and ca-mel which a -

C **Poco più mosso** (♩ = c.108)

51

4. An-gels and ar-chan-gels May have ga-thered there, Che-ru-bim and
dore, Sanc-tus, sanc-tus Sanc-tus, sanc-tus
Sanc-tus, sanc-tus Sanc-tus, sanc-tus sanc-tus
dore, sanc-

56 *ff* *f* *mf*

se - ra - phim Thronged the air A - ve, A - ve,

f *f* *ff* *f* *mf*

sanc - tus sanc - tus A - ve, A - ve,

f *f* *ff* *f* *mf*

tus sanc - tus A - ve, A - ve,

f *f* *ff* *(ff) dim.*

tus sanc - tus But on - ly His mo - ther

61 *mf* *rall.*

A - ve,

mf *mp* *p*

A - ve, A - ve, A - ve, Sanc - tus A - ve,

mf *mp* *p*

A - ve, A - ve, A - ve, Sanc - tus A -

f *mf*

In her mai - den bliss Wor - shipped the Be - lov - ed with a kiss.

D Poco meno mosso Tempo primo (c.90)

66 *p*

5. What can I give Him, Poor as I am? If I were a

p

— If I

pp

ve, give Him, Poor as I am?

pp

give Him, Poor as I am?

71 *poco* *p*

shep - herd I would bring a lamb; If I were a wise man I

poco *p*

were a shep - herd If I were a

ppp *mp* 3

Sanc - tus, Sanc - tus, If I were a

ppp *mp* 3

Sanc - tus, Sanc - tus, If I were a

76 *Poco meno mosso* *A tempo* *p*

- would do my part; Yet what I can, I give him,

wise_ man I'd do my part give him,

wise_ man I would do my part;

wise_ man I would do my part; give him,

E *Meno mosso* *rall.* *mf* *p*

80 *p* *mf* *p*

give, give, give my heart.

p *mf* *p*

give, give give my heart.

p *mf* *p* solo voice

give, give give my heart. Sanc - tus

p *mf* *p*

give, give give my heart.