



IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER

poem by
Christina Rossetti

set to music by
Benjamin J. Dale

VOCAL SCORE



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Cover Image: "Beneath the Snow Encumbered Branches" by Joseph Farquharson, 1903



ENGLISH HERITAGE

MUSIC SERIES

The “renaissance” in English music is generally agreed to have started in the late Victorian period, beginning roughly in 1880, and was most notable for compositions by C.V. Stanford, C. Hubert H. Parry, Edward Elgar, Henry Walford Davies, Harold Darke and others. Public demand for major works in support of the annual choral festivals held throughout England at that time was considerable which led to the creation of many large scale works for orchestra with soloists and chorus. Although a number of those works found their way into print and are regularly performed today, a considerable number of compositions, both large-scale and more intimate works, are not available. These works either were never published or were published but are no longer available in the publishers’ catalogues. While the existence of these works is documented in biographies of the composers, the ability to study and, most importantly, to perform these compositions is not possible.

Changes in the International copyright laws in the mid-1970’s played a pivotal role in creating this void, opening a significant number of musical compositions to public access. As a result, music publishers lost the ability to generate revenue from the sale/rental of such music. Performance score inventories of these works were eliminated. In addition, for many compositions, the only published material were vocal scores - full scores and orchestra parts were hand notated for the premiere of a work and then were ‘recycled’ for future performances. While full score autograph manuscripts are now accessible through the major music libraries in the UK, the hand-notated parts have long since been lost. These autograph full score manuscripts along with copies of the published vocal scores are now the only resources available for studying and performing these works.

The English Heritage Music Series has been created to ensure that these compositions are preserved, are accessible for scholarly research and, most importantly, are available for performance by future generations. Its mission is to:

- Source unpublished/out-of-print English composer compositions that are in the U.S. public domain
- Preserve these compositions through the preparation of performance scores using notation software
- Provide open Internet access to the scores to facilitate study, performance and sharing of performance material (program notes, audio, reviews, etc.)

In preparing the English Heritage Music Series editions, every effort has been made to adhere strictly to the notation contained in the manuscripts. Because of the passage of time and its effect on the condition of the manuscript, the absence of clear information often times by the composer in notating divided instruments, and with emendations in the composer and other hands resulting from use of the manuscript in performance, there were numerous circumstances which required interpretation and decisions for notes, accidentals, dynamics, articulations and tempi. Should questions arise in the use of these editions, the composers’ autograph manuscripts and the Novello vocal scores should be consulted for clarification.

Matthew W. Mehaffey

Editor

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Source Information

Autograph Manuscript:

Royal Academy of Music, London MS 3042

Vocal Score:

Unpublished

Royal College of Music Library

Ass’t. Librarian - library@rcm.ac.uk

Oxford University, Bodleian Music Section, Weston Library

Martin Holmes, Curator of Music - martin.holmes@bodleian.ox.ac.uk

Royal Academy of Music Library

lib.ram.ac.uk

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Reference Material and Software

Notation Software: Finale v. 26 *Audio Software:* Garritan Personal Orchestra 5 *Graphic Software:* Adobe Photoshop CS5

Document Software: Adobe In Design CS5 *Music Notation Reference:* Behind Bars by Elaine Gould, Faber Music © 2011

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan;
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold Him
Nor earth sustain,
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty —
Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim
Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk
And a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, whom Angels
Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
Which adore.

Angels and Archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air;
But only His Mother
In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am? —
If I were a Shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man
I would do my part, —
Yet what I can I give Him, —
Give my heart.

“In the Bleak Midwinter” is a poem by the English poet Christina Rossetti, commonly performed as a Christmas carol. The poem was published, under the title “A Christmas Carol”, in the January 1872 issue of Scribner’s Monthly, and was first collected in book form in *Goblin Market, The Prince’s Progress and Other Poems* (Macmillan, 1875).

In verse one, Rossetti describes the physical circumstances of the Incarnation in Bethlehem. In verse two, she contrasts Christ’s first and second coming. The third verse dwells on Christ’s birth and describes the simple surroundings, in a humble stable and watched by beasts of burden. Rossetti achieves another contrast in the fourth verse, this time between the incorporeal angels attendant at Christ’s birth with Mary’s ability to render Jesus physical affection. The final verse shifts the description to a more introspective thought process.

In the Bleak Midwinter

Poem by
Christina Rossetti
1872

Carol for Christmas

Music by
Benjamin J. Dale
1938



Benjamin James Dale (1885 – 1943) was an English composer and academic who had a long association with the Royal Academy of Music. Dale showed compositional talent from an early age and went on to write a small but notable corpus of works. Dale left school at the age of 15 to enroll as a student at the Royal Academy of Music. He started at the RAM in September 1900, on the same day as Arnold Bax who became a lifelong friend. There he reunited with an early playground companion, the concert pianist and composer York Bowen, who also remained an especially close friend for the rest of Dale's life. Like the others, Dale studied composition under Frederick Corder, a supporter of Wagner and biographer of Liszt who epitomised the progressive musical climate of the RAM under the direction of Alexander Mackenzie.

In December 1938, employing the form of a little Christmas Carol, Dale composed his first complete original work in a decade as a Christmas offering for his wife, Margit. Although mentioned in the catalogue of Grove 1954, this work was never published nor performed. Dale sets the first four verses only of Christina Rossetti's poem (omitting the last verse "What can I give him?") in a through-composed setting, simple and unpretentious, and all the more endearing for that. It is direct and tuneful, achieving its effects with an economy of means and deft touches typical of Dale.

Christopher Foreman © 2011

Andante non troppo mosso ♩ = ca. 60

p

Soprano
In the bleak mid-winter, frost-y wind made moan, Earth stood hard as

Alto
In the bleak mid-win - ter, frost - y wind made moan, Earth stood hard as

Tenor
In the bleak mid-win - ter, frost - y wind made moan, Earth stood hard as

Bass
In the bleak mid-win - ter, frost - y wind made moan, Earth stood hard as

Andante non troppo mosso

p

for rehearsal only

6

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

A *pp*
i - ron, — wa - ter like a stone; — Snow had fal - len,

T *pp*
i - ron, — wa - ter like a stone; — Snow had fal - len

B *pp*
i - ron, — wa - ter like a stone; — Snow had fal - len

11

S *più p*
snow, — snow on snow, — In the bleak mid - win - ter

A *più p*
snow had fal - len, snow on snow, In the bleak — mid - win - ter

T *più p*
snow had fal - len, snow on snow, In the bleak mid - win - ter

B *più p*
snow had fal - len, snow on snow, In the bleak mid - win - ter

16 *pp* (A Few Voices Only) *p*

S long a-go. Our God, Heav'n can-not hold Him, nor earth sus-tain— Heav'n and earth shall

A long a-go.

T long a-go.

B long a-go.

21 *pp* (Tutti) *pp*

S flee a-way when He comes to reign: In the bleak mid-win-ter a

A In the bleak mid-win-ter a

T In the bleak mid-win-ter a

B In the bleak mid-win-ter a

26 *mf* *p*

S sta - ble place suf - ficed The Lord God Al - might - y Je - sus Christ.

A sta - ble place suf - ficed The Lord Al - might - y Je - sus Christ.

T sta - ble place suf - ficed The Lord Al - might - y Je - sus Christ.

B sta - ble place suf - ficed The Lord Al - might - y Je - sus Christ.

(A Few Voices Only)

31 *p* *pp*

S E - nough for Him, whom cher - u - bim wor - ship night and day, A breast - ful of

(A Few Voices Only)

A E - nough for Him whom cher - u - bim wor - ship night and day A breast - ful of

T

(Tenors & Bases tacet)

B

31

36 (Tutti) *p*

S milk and a man - ger - ful of hay; E - nough for Him whom an - gels

A milk and a man - ger - ful of hay; E - nough _____ for Him whom an - gels

T E - nough _____ for Him whom an - gels

B E - nough _____ for Him whom an - gels

41 *pp* *ppp*

S fall down be - fore, The ox and ass and cam - el _____ Which a - dore. _____

A fall down be - fore, The ox and ass and cam - el _____ Which a - dore. _____

T fall down be - fore, _____ The ox and ass and cam - el _____ Which a - dore. _____

B fall down be - fore, _____ The ox and ass and cam - el _____ Which a - dore. _____

46 *mf* *f*

S An - gels and arch - an - gels _____ may have gath - ered there, Cher - u - bim and

A An - gels and arch - an - gels may have gath - ered there, Cher - u - bim and

T An - gels and arch - an - gels may have gath - ered there, Cher - u - bim and

B An - gels and arch - an - gels may have gath - ered there, Cher - u - bim and

51 *dim.* *p* *mf* *p* *pp*

S ser - a - phim thronged _____ the air, _____ thronged the

A ser - a - phim thronged _____ the air, thronged the air, thronged the air, thronged the

T ser - a - phim thronged _____ the air, thronged the air, thronged the air, _____

B ser - a - phim thronged _____ the air, _____

56 *pp* (*pochiss. più lento*) *dolciss.*

S air. But on - ly His mo - ther in her mai - den bliss,

A air. But on - ly His mo - ther In her mai - den bliss, *dolciss.*

T *pp* But on - ly His mo - ther In her mai - den bliss, *dolciss.*

B *pp* But on - ly His mo - ther In her mai - den bliss, *dolciss.*

61 *ppp*

S Wor - shipped the Be - lov - ed with a kiss. *ppp*

A Wor - shipped the Be - lov - ed with a kiss. *ppp*

T *ppp* Wor - shipped the Be - lov - ed with a kiss. *ppp*

B *ppp* Wor - shipped the Be - lov - ed with a kiss. *ppp*



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PUBLISHING

ehms.lib.umn.edu

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