

IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER

Gustav Holst
Arranged by Brendan McBrien

INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor Score	1
Violin I	8
Violin II	8
Viola	5
Cello	5
String Bass	5

From the composer of *The Planets* comes this beloved Christmas carol. Voted the “best carol” in a 2008 *BBC Music* magazine poll, this lesser-known tune is a touching and beautiful work by one of England’s greatest composers. This lush setting features all sections of the orchestra.

PROGRAM NOTES

Gustav Holst composed his Advent hymn “In the Bleak Midwinter” in 1905 at the request of Ralph Vaughan Williams for inclusion in the *English Hymnal* of 1906. The words were taken from a poem of the same name by the 19th-Century English poet Christina Rossetti. Rossetti wrote this poem in 1871 for a Christmas edition of *Scribner’s Monthly*. Holst’s tune is known as “Cranham,” after a village in Gloucestershire where he lived at the time, and it was there that he wrote the music. The house is now called “Midwinter Cottage” to commemorate that work. Since its creation it has become a cherished Christmas carol, performed and recorded by some of music’s greatest artists. In 2008, the *BBC Music* magazine polled the world’s 51 leading choir directors and experts to find the top 50 Christmas carols of all time. “In the Bleak Midwinter” came in at number 1, an enormous honor for this little-known holiday gem.

Not having entered the pantheon of carols like “Joy to the World” and “Silent Night,” this subtle offering, with its simple and humble character, can be summed up in the final verse of the hymn:

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.

The ending of this arrangement quotes “The First Noel” as a way to underscore Rossetti’s text and its description of the first Christmas. “The First Noel,” also an English carol, coincidentally was published the same year as Rossetti’s poem.



In the Bleak Midwinter

CONDUCTOR SCORE

Duration - 4:00

Gustav Holst

Arranged by Brendan McBrien

Affettuoso (♩ = 74)

Violins

Viola

Cello

String Bass

This block contains the musical notation for measures 1 through 3 of the piece. It features five staves: Violins I and II, Viola, Cello, and String Bass. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Affettuoso' with a quarter note equal to 74 beats per minute. The dynamic is marked 'mf' (mezzo-forte). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and slurs. A large red watermark 'Preview Only' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

Vlins.

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

This block contains the musical notation for measures 4 through 7 of the piece. It features five staves: Violins I and II, Viola, Cello, and String Bass. The notation continues from the previous block, with measures 4, 5, 6, and 7. Measure 7 includes a 'div.' (divisi) marking. The large red watermark 'Preview Only' is still present.

9

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

mp

8 9 10 11

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

mf

12 13 14 15 16

17

Vlns. I *mp*

Vlns. II *mp*

Vla. *mp*

Cello *mp*

Str. Bass

17 18 19 20

Vlns. I *p*

Vlns. II *p*

Vla. *p*

Cello *p*

Str. Bass

21 22 23 24

25

Vlns. I *pp*

Vlns. II *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Cello

Str. Bass

25 26 27 28 *mp* 29

33

Vlns. I *mf*

Vlns. II *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Cello

Str. Bass

30 31 32 33

Score for Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Cello, and String Bass (Str. Bass) from measures 34 to 37. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The score includes dynamic markings *mp* (mezzo-piano) and a crescendo hairpin.

Measures 34, 35, 36, and 37 are shown. The Violin I part has a crescendo hairpin starting in measure 35 and reaching *mp* in measure 37. The Violin II part has a crescendo hairpin starting in measure 35 and reaching *mp* in measure 37. The Viola part has a crescendo hairpin starting in measure 35 and reaching *mp* in measure 37. The Cello and String Bass parts have a crescendo hairpin starting in measure 35 and reaching *mp* in measure 37.

Score for Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Cello, and String Bass (Str. Bass) from measures 38 to 41. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The score includes dynamic markings *mf* (mezzo-forte) and a crescendo hairpin.

Measures 38, 39, 40, and 41 are shown. The Violin I part has a crescendo hairpin starting in measure 38 and reaching *mf* in measure 40. The Violin II part has a crescendo hairpin starting in measure 38 and reaching *mf* in measure 40. The Viola part has a crescendo hairpin starting in measure 38 and reaching *mf* in measure 40. The Cello and String Bass parts have a crescendo hairpin starting in measure 38 and reaching *mf* in measure 40.

44

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

f

f

f

f

42 43 44

48

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp

45 46 47 48

Score for Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Cello, and String Bass (Str. Bass).

Measures 49-52. Dynamics include *mf* and *pizz.* (pizzicato). The Viola and Cello parts include *arco* markings.

Score for Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Cello, and String Bass (Str. Bass).

Measures 53-57. Dynamics include *p* (piano). Measure 56 is marked with a box containing the number 56.

Vlns.
Vla.
Cello
Str. Bass

58 59 60 61

Vlns.
Vla.
Cello
Str. Bass

62 63 64 65

musical score for Vlns. I, Vlns. II, Vla., Cello, and Str. Bass, measures 66 to 70. The score includes dynamic markings *ff* and *f*, and a tempo marking *poco rall.* at measure 70. A large red watermark "Preview Requires Purchase" is overlaid on the score.

66 67 68 69 70

musical score for Vlns. I, Vlns. II, Vla., Cello, and Str. Bass, measures 71 to 74. The score includes dynamic markings *mf*, *mp*, and *p*. A large red watermark "Preview Requires Purchase" is overlaid on the score.

71 72 73 74

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