

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

mf

mf

mf

mf

1 2 3

Vlins.

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

mf

mf

mf

mf

4 5 6 7

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. *V*

Cello *V*

Str. Bass

21 22 23 24

25

Vlns. I *pp*

Vlns. II *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Cello

Str. Bass

mp

25 26 27 28 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 34-37:

- Vlns. I:** Measures 34-35: Quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 36: Quarter note G4, half note A4. Measure 37: Quarter note G4, half note A4.
- Vlns. II:** Measures 34-35: Quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 36: Quarter note G4, half note A4. Measure 37: Quarter note G4, half note A4.
- Vla.:** Measures 34-35: Quarter notes G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 36: Quarter note G3, half note A3. Measure 37: Quarter note G3, half note A3.
- Cello:** Measures 34-35: Quarter notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Measure 36: Quarter note G2, half note A2. Measure 37: Quarter note G2, half note A2.
- Str. Bass:** Measures 34-35: Quarter notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Measure 36: Quarter note G2, half note A2. Measure 37: Quarter note G2, half note A2.

Measure numbers: 34, 35, 36, 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 38-41:

- Vlns. I:** Measures 38-39: Quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 40: Quarter note G4, half note A4. Measure 41: Quarter note G4, half note A4.
- Vlns. II:** Measures 38-39: Quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 40: Quarter note G4, half note A4. Measure 41: Quarter note G4, half note A4.
- Vla.:** Measures 38-39: Quarter notes G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 40: Quarter note G3, half note A3. Measure 41: Quarter note G3, half note A3.
- Cello:** Measures 38-39: Quarter notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Measure 40: Quarter note G2, half note A2. Measure 41: Quarter note G2, half note A2.
- Str. Bass:** Measures 38-39: Quarter notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Measure 40: Quarter note G2, half note A2. Measure 41: Quarter note G2, half note A2.

Measure numbers: 38, 39, 40, 41.

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:

- Vlns. I & II:** Play a melodic line starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5. Dynamics: *mf*.
- Vla.:** Play a melodic line starting on G3, moving to A3, B3, and C4. Dynamics: *mf*.
- Cello:** Play a melodic line starting on G2, moving to A2, B2, and C3. Dynamics: *mf*.
- Str. Bass:** Play a melodic line starting on G1, moving to A1, B1, and C2. Dynamics: *mf*. Includes a *pizz.* (pizzicato) marking at measure 49.

Rehearsal mark 56 is indicated above measure 51.

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

Measures 53-57:

- Vlns. I & II:** Play a melodic line starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5. Dynamics: *p*.
- Vla.:** Play a melodic line starting on G3, moving to A3, B3, and C4. Dynamics: *p*.
- Cello:** Play a melodic line starting on G2, moving to A2, B2, and C3. Dynamics: *p*.
- Str. Bass:** Play a melodic line starting on G1, moving to A1, B1, and C2. Dynamics: *p*.

Rehearsal mark 56 is indicated above measure 53.

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

mf *cresc.*

mf *cresc.*

mf *cresc.*

mf *cresc.*

mf *cresc.*

58 59 60 61

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

f

f

f

f

f

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

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 Only 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 Only Requires Purchase" is overlaid on the score.

71 72 73 74

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