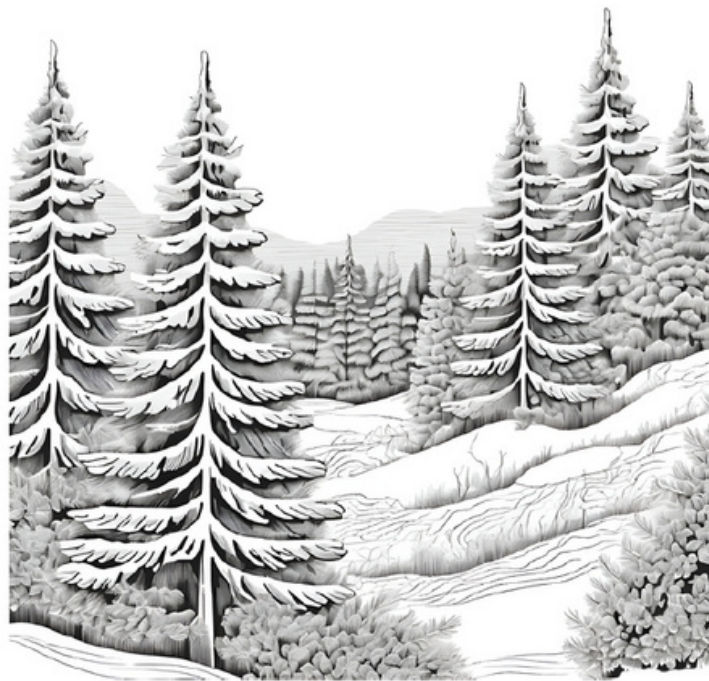


Wintersongs

for SATB voices (divisi)

Christopher Churcher

(2024)



There is no Rose

text: 15th-century English

There is no rose of such virtue
As is the rose that bare Jesu;
Alleluia.

For in this rose contained was
Heaven and earth in little space;
Res miranda.

By that rose we may well see
That he is God in persons three;
Pares forma.

The angels sungen the shepherds to:
"Gloria in excelsis Deo":
Gaudeamus.

Now leave we all this worldly mirth
And follow we this joyful birth;
Transeamus.

Away in a Manger

text: 19th-century American

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head;
the stars in the heavens looked down where He lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven, to live with Thee there.

In the Bleak Midwinter

poem by Christina Rossetti

In the bleak midwinter, 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 midwinter, 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 midwinter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
But His mother only, 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.

Composed September - December 2024.

Wintersongs

a choral cycle for SATB voices (divisi)

i - There is no Rose (5')

ii - Away in a Manger (4')

iii - In the Bleak Midwinter (6')

Total duration: ca.15'

Wintersongs is a short cycle of carol settings, born of restorative nostalgia: returning to familiar and much-loved Christmas texts, each already carrying a rich history. In setting them, I responded to these texts through the lens of my own musical language and impulses. While the three movements are harmonically interwoven and conceived as a cycle, they can also be performed independently.

The first movement sets the medieval text 'There is No Rose', taken from the Trinity Carol Roll (c. 1420). Ever since singing Britten's setting as a chorister, I have been struck by the carol's mystical, enigmatic quality, lent in part, perhaps, by its macaronic text. My setting seeks to evoke that sense of mystery, alternating shimmering, augmented harmonies with simple, chant-like Latin refrains.

The second is a setting of 'Away in a Manger', an American Lutheran text which is cherished across the world at Christmas. What drew me to the text is the sense of vulnerability it gives to Mary, portraying her as a new mother filled with wonder gazing at her newborn child. In that moment, the universal human story that lies at the heart of Christmas comes vividly into focus.

The final setting is Christina Rossetti's nativity poem 'In the Bleak Midwinter'. Her poetry evokes a bleak, chilling winter landscape, and my setting reflects this through simple, stark textures and a deliberately austere sound world. In the second verse, a small semi-chorus sings above a cloud of hummed harmonies provided by the tutti choir. My intention is for roughly one-third of the choir to perform the semi-chorus. In a chamber choir of, say, 24 singers, this would mean 8 voices for the semi-chorus, with the remaining 16 gently singing the tutti parts.

Taken together, I hope these three texts provide the cycle with a sense of proportion: from the transcendental mystery of the Virgin Mary, the intimate focus on the Christ-child, and Rossetti's personal reflection on faith.

Christopher Churcher

There is no Rose

Text: 15th Century English

Christopher Churcher
b.2004

Tranquil $\text{♩} = 42$
p molto legato *mp* *pp* *rit.* *p*

Soprano

1 There is no rose, there is no rose

2 There is no rose, there is no rose

Alto

There is no rose, there is no rose

Tenor

There is no rose, no rose

Bass

1 There is no rose

2 There is no rose

Serene, always flowing $\text{♩} = 72$

p dolcissimo

S.

There is no rose of such vir -

p dolcissimo

A.

There is no rose of such vir -

p dolcissimo

T.

There is no rose of such vir -

p

B.

vir -

10 *mp* rit.

S. *mp* - tue as is the rose that bare Je -

A. *mp* - tue as is the rose that bare Je -

T. *mp* *pp* tue as is the rose that bare

B. *mp* *pp* tue as is the rose that bare

as is the rose that bare

14 A Tempo

S. *p* *p semplice* *mp cresc.* - su; Al - le - lu - ia Al - le -

A. *p* *pp semplice* *p* su Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia

T. *pp semplice* *p* Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia

B. *pp semplice* *p* Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia

18 *mf* *p*

S. lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia

A. *mf* *p* Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia

T. *mf* *p* Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia

B. *mf* *p* Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia

Away in a Manger

Text: 19th Century North American

Christopher Churcher

b.2004

Gentle and sustained ♩ = 46

Soprano *pp* A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed, the *p* *pp*

Alto *pp* A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed, the *p* *pp*

Tenor *pp* A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed, the *p* *pp*

Bass *pp* A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed, the *p* *pp*

5 *rit.* *mp* lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down his sweet

mp lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down his sweet

mp lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down his sweet

pp *mp* lit - tle Lord Je - sus down his sweet

Moving forward a little ♩ = 56

9 *pp* *p dolce* head; the stars in the bright sky looked down where he

pp *p dolce* head; the stars in the bright sky looked down where he

pp *pp* head; the stars looked down where he

pp *p* head; looked down where he

13 *p molto semplice* *mf*

lay, the lit - tle Lord Je - sus, the lit - tle Lord

pp *p* *mf*

lay, n the lit - tle Lord

pp *p* *mf*

lay, n the lit - tle Lord

pp *p* *mf*

lay, n the lit - tle Lord

17 *p* *dim.* *rit.* *p* *hay.* *ah*

Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.

p *dim.* *p* *ah*

Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.

p *dim.* *p* *ah*

Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.

p *dim.* *p* *ah*

Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.

mp the cat - tle are

ah

Tempo 1 ♩ = 46

21 *mp* *p cresc.*

the ba - by a - wakes, but lit - tle Lord

mp *p cresc.*

the ba - by a - wakes, but lit - tle Lord

mp *p cresc.*

low - ing the ba - by a - wakes, but lit - tle Lord

p cresc.

the ba - by a - wakes, but lit - tle Lord

In the Bleak Midwinter

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

Christopher Churcher
b.2004

Gentle and sustained ♩ = 38

Soprano *pp*
In fro - sty wind made moan,

Alto A *pp semplice*
In the bleak mid - win - ter, fro - sty wind made moan,

Tenor *pp semplice*
In the bleak mid - win - ter, fro - sty wind made moan,

Bass *pp semplice*
In the bleak mid - win - ter, fro - sty wind made moan,

6

S. *ppp* , *pp*
earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone; snow had

A. *ppp* ,
earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;—

T. *ppp* , *pp*
earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone; snow had

B. *ppp*
earth stood hard as i - ron,

11 *accel.* *p* *mf* ♩ = 58

S. *pp* *mf*
fal - len snow on snow, snow on

A. *pp* *mf*
snow had fal - len, snow, snow on

T. *p* *mf*
fal - len snow on snow, snow on

B. *pp* *mf*
snow had fal - len, snow, snow on

16 *rit.* *p* Tempo 1 ♩ = 38

S. *sno(w), oh*

A. *snow* in the bleak mid - win - ter, long

T. *snow* in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a -

B. *snow* in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a -

21 *A Few Voices*

S. *mp* *hymnal, unadorned* Our God, heav'n can - not

A. *pp* *mm* *ah* *n*

T. *pp* *mm* *ah* *n*

B. *pp* *mm* *ah* *n*

26

S. hold him nor earth sus - tain

A. *p*

T. *p*

B. *sim.*

Perusal score
not for performance