

In the Bleak Midwinter

Gustav Holst

GUSTAV HOLST, ARR. HUGH LEVEY



SAX QUARTET

SCORE & PARTS

In The Bleak Midwinter

GUSTAV HOLST

The words for this famous carol were written by English poet Christina Rossetti in 1872, and were set to music by Gustav Holst in 1906. The Holst setting was written for the English Hymnal which is widely used in English speaking countries. Indeed, its preface grandly referred to itself as, “a collection of the best hymns in the English language”.

Three years after Holst, the English composer Harold Darke wrote an anthem based on the same words. Both versions are widely performed at Christmas time - the Holst often used for communal singing during services and the Darke sung by church choirs. Both are beautiful settings of the words and have melodic similarities. The arranger chose to arrange the Holst version for the simple practical reason that it is no longer in copyright, unlike the Darke version.

Duration: 3 minutes 30 seconds

PERFORMANCE NOTES

This is a through-composed instrumental arrangement that explores the melody and harmonies of the Holst hymn in 3 differently arranged verses. After a short introduction the first verse uses Holst’s original 4-part harmonisation in its beautiful simplicity. In verse 2, the Tenor Sax presents the tune in a lower register while the Baritone has a Baroque style ‘walking bass’. Soprano and Alto weave countermelodies above them, introducing new material for a Pachelbel-like interlude of an ascending sequence - bringing the music to a climax before subsiding into verse 3. Here a slightly ornamented version of the tune returns to the Soprano with the new material continuing in the bass line. After another smaller climax we return to the original Holst as the work ends quietly and thoughtfully. This can be played by SATB or AATB Saxophone Quartet formations.

Cover images: (1) *L'Avenue de Neuilly on a Winter Day* by Luigi Loir, 1874, PD, via Wikimedia Commons, (2) *Saxophone*, Yamaha Corporation, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

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In the Bleak Mid-Winter

Christina Rossetti

Gustav Holst arr. Hugh Levey

Adagietto (dolce) ♩ = 70 Melody

Soprano Saxophone

Alto Saxophone

Tenor Saxophone

Baritone Saxophone

PREVIEW ONLY

6

S. Sax.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

The image displays a musical score for saxophones, titled "In the Bleak Mid-Winter" by Christina Rossetti, arranged by Hugh Levey. The score is in 4/4 time, marked "Adagietto (dolce)" with a tempo of 70 beats per minute. It features four staves for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Baritone saxophones. The Soprano part is labeled "Melody" and starts with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic. The Alto and Tenor parts begin with mezzo-forte (mf) dynamics and transition to piano (p) dynamics. The Baritone part starts piano (p). A large, semi-transparent watermark logo is centered over the score. Below the first system, a second system of staves is shown, starting at measure 6, with parts for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Baritone saxophones.

12

S. Sax.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

18

S. Sax.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tenor Lead

Melody

mp *mf* *mp* *mp* *mp*

23

S. Sax.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

mp

PREVIEW ONLY

28

S. Sax.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

33

S. Sax.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

p

p

Mel. ends

p

p

37

S. Sax.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

mf

mf

mf

mf