

DEREK HEALEY

Two Christina Rossetti Carols

for SATB Chorus (divisi) and Piano (ad lib.)

- 1. Before the paling of the stars No. 7441
- 2. Christmas hath a darkness No. 7442

Before the Paling of the Stars

Before the paling of the stars
Before the winter morn
Before the earliest cockcrow
Jesus Christ was born:
Born in a stable
Cradled in a manger,
In the world His Hands had made
Born a Stranger.

Priest and King lay fast asleep
In Jerusalem,
Young and Old lay fast asleep
In crowded Bethlehem:
Saint and Angel
Ox and Ass
Kept a watch together
Before the Christmas daybreak
In the winter weather.

Jesus on His Mother's breast
In the stable cold,
Spotless Lamb of God was He
Shepherd of the Fold:
Let us kneel with Mary Maid
With Joseph bent and hoary
With Saint and Angel
Ox and Ass
To hail the King of Glory.

—Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)

To Donald Kendrick

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A Christmas Carol
Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)

Derek Healey

1. Before the paling of the stars

Gently flowing
♩ = 58 *in relief* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Soprano
1. Be - fore the pal - ing of the stars Be - fore the win - ter morn Be -

Alto
pp
Ah, _____

Piano
(ad lib.)
p

7 *mp* *mf* *mp* *normal* *mf*

fore the ear - liest cock - crow - Je - sus Christ was born: Born in a sta - ble Cra - dled

mp *p* *mp* *mf*

Je - sus Christ was born: Born in a sta - ble Cra - dled

mp *p* *mp*

15 *mp* *mf* *mp* *p*

in a man - ger, In a world His hands _ had made Born _ a strang - er. _____

mp *mf* *mp* *p*

in a man - ger, In a world His hands had ___ made Born a strang - er.

p *mp* *p* *pp*

24 *mp* *mf* *mp*

S 2. Priest ___ and King lay fast a - sleep ___ in Je - ru - sa - lem, ___ Young and Old lay

A *mp* *mf* *mp*

A 2. Priest ___ and King lay fast a - sleep ___ in Je - ru - sa - lem, Young and Old lay

T *mp* *mf* *mp*

T 2. Priest ___ and King lay fast a - sleep in Je - ru - sa - lem, ___ Young and Old lay

p *mp* *p*

30 *mf* $\text{mf} > \text{mp}$ $< \text{mf}$ mp

S fast a-sleep In crowd - ed Beth - le - hem: Saint and An-gel Ox and Ass

A *mf* $\text{mf} > \text{mp}$ $< \text{mf}$ mp

A fast a - sleep - In crowd - ed Beth - le - hem: Saint and An-gel Ox and Ass -

T *mf* $\text{mf} > \text{mp}$ $< \text{mf}$ mp

T fast a-sleep In crowd - ed Beth - le - hem: Saint and An-gel Ox and Ass

B *mp*

B Saint and An-gel Ox and Ass -

mp $\text{mp} > \text{p}$ $< \text{mp}$ p *mp*

36 *mf* $\text{mf} > \text{mp}$ $\text{mf} > \text{mp}$ $\text{mp} > \text{p}$ mp

S Kept_ a watch to-geth - er Be-fore the Christ - mas day - break In the win-ter weath -

A *mf* $\text{mf} > \text{mp}$ $\text{mf} > \text{mp}$ $\text{mp} > \text{p}$ mp

A Kept_ a watch to-geth - er Be-fore the Christ - mas day - break In the win-ter weath -

T *mf* $\text{mf} > \text{mp}$ $\text{mf} > \text{mp}$ $\text{mp} > \text{p}$ mp

T Kept_ a watch to-geth - er Be-fore the Christ - mas day - break In the win-ter weath -

B *mf* $\text{mf} > \text{mp}$ $\text{mf} > \text{mp}$ $\text{mp} > \text{p}$ mp

B Kept_ a watch to-geth - er Be-fore the Christ - mas day - break In the win-ter weath -

mf $\text{mf} > \text{mp}$ $\text{mf} > \text{mp}$ $\text{mp} > \text{p}$ mp

56

Slower ♩ = 54

normal *p*

With Saint and An - gel

Mar - y Maid With Jo - seph bent and hoar - y With Saint and An - gel

Mar - y Maid With Jo - seph bent and hoar - y With Saint and An - gel

Mar - y Maid With Jo - seph bent and hoar - y With Saint and An - gel

Slower ♩ = 54

8^{va} 8^{va}

61

Slowing

Broadly ♩ = 44

Ox and Ass To hail the King of Glo - ry.

Ox and Ass To hail the King of Glo - ry.

Ox and Ass To hail the King of Glo - ry.

Ox and Ass To hail the King of Glo - ry.

Slowing

Broadly ♩ = 44

(8^{va})

8^{va}

Composer's Notes

The original ideas for these two carols first came to me during Christmas of 2005 while visiting Oxford, Mississippi. However, they were not completed until the early Spring of 2009 in Brooklyn, New York. Like many other composers, I am often drawn to Christina Rossetti's fresh and imaginative religious and secular poetry.

Before the paling of the stars is gentle and penitential, similar to plainsong, whereas *Christmas bath a darkness* is by contrast both strong and joyful. In both carols, the melody often moves to an inner voice and the words "in relief" appear. The singers should make this voice louder than the surrounding parts. Performers should not exaggerate the *crescendi* and *diminuendi* in the first carol except those at the work's close.

In *Christmas bath a darkness*, singers should perform the verse which begins "Earth strike up your music" with conviction, while the piano part (particularly the right hand) should be strong and evocative of clanging bells. The gradual relaxation of tension in the final two pages should be carefully controlled. Both pieces may be performed unaccompanied, the piano parts being *ad lib*. However, in the second carol, the fast scales are important. All ascending scales should be brilliant and descending, harp-like. I composed these two carols with college choruses in mind, but they are also suitable for liturgical use.

—Derek Healey

Derek Healey (b. 1936)

For biographical information about the composer, please visit his Web site. <www.derekhealey.com>

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Two Christina Rossetti Carols

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Christmas Eve

Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)

Derek Healey

2. Christmas hath a darkness

Triumphantly ♩ = 56

Soprano *mf* Christ-mas hath a dark-ness

Alto *mf* Christ-mas hath a dark-ness

Tenor *mf* Christ-mas hath a dark-ness

Bass *mf* Christ-mas hath a dark-ness

Piano (*ad lib.*) *mp* *mf*

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3

Bright-er than the blaz - ing noon, Christ-mas hath a chill - ness

Bright-er than the blaz - ing noon, Christ-mas hath a chill - ness

Bright-er than the blaz - ing noon, Christ-mas hath a chill - ness

Bright-er than the blaz - ing noon, Christ-mas hath a chill - ness

f *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

6

Warm-er than the heat of June, Christ-mas hath a beau - ty

Warm-er than the heat of June, Christ-mas hath a beau - ty

Warm-er than the heat of June, Christ-mas hath a beau - ty

Warm-er than the heat of June, Christ - mas hath a

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

9

than the *mf* *mp* *mf*

Love-lier than the world can show: For Christ-mas bring - eth Je - sus, Brought for us so

Love-lier than the world can show: For Christ-mas bring-eth Je - sus, Brought for us - so

8 For Christ-mas bring-eth Je - sus, - Brought for us

mf *mp* *p*

beau - ty - - - - - Christ - mas bring-eth Je - sus, - - - - -

13 *mp* *mf* *mp* *p*

low, Christ-mas bring-eth Je - sus, Brought for us so low. - - -

mp *mf* *mp* *p*

low, Christ-mas bring - eth Je - sus, Brought - for us - - - so low. - - -

mf *mp*

8 Christ-mas bring - eth Je - sus, Brought - - - for us - - - so

mp *p* *mp*

- - - Je - - - sus, Brought for us so

16

f
Earth, strike up your mu - sic,

f
Earth, strike up your mu -

p low. *f* Earth, strike up your

p low. *f* Earth, strike

p *mf*

18

ff *f*
Birds that sing and bells that ring; Heav'n hath an - swering mu - sic

ff *f*
sic, Birds that sing and bells that ring; Heav'n hath an - swering mu -

ff *f*
mu - sic, Birds that sing and bells that ring; Heav'n hath an - swering

ff *f*
up your mu - sic, Birds that sing and bells that ring; Heav'n hath

21 *mf* *mp*

For all An - gels soon to sing:

mf *mp*

sic For all An - gels soon to sing:

mf *mp*

8 mu - sic For all An - gels soon to sing:

mf *mp*

an - swer - ing mu - sic For all An - gels soon to sing:

mf *mp*

24 *mp* *mp*

ah,

mp *mp*

ah,

mf in relief *f* *mf*

8 Earth, put on your whit - est Brid - al robe of spot - less snow: For

mp

p *mp*

27 ah, *p*

ah, *p*

ah *mp*

Christ-mas bring - eth Je - sus, Brought - for us so

p

Christ - - - - mas

29 *mp*

p *mp* *p*

Christ-mas bring - eth Je - sus, Brought - for us so low,

mp *p* *mp* *p*

Christ-mas bring-eth Je - sus, Brought - for us - so low,

mp normal *p* *mp* *p*

low, Christ-mas bring-eth Je - sus, Brought - for us,

mp *p* *mp* *p*

bring - eth Je - - - sus, Brought - for us so

32 *p* *pp* *n*

so low.

p *pp* *n*

so low.

mf in relief *p* *n*

Brought for us so low.

pp *n*

low.

p *mp* *p* *pp*

pp

2009
2'10"

Christmas Eve

Christmas hath a darkness
Brighter than the blazing noon,
Christmas hath a chillness
Warmer than the heat of June,
Christmas hath a beauty
Lovelier than the world can show:
For Christmas bringeth Jesus,
Brought for us so low.

Earth, strike up your music,
Birds that sing and bells that
ring;
Heaven hath answering music
For all Angels soon to sing:
Earth, put on your whitest
Bridal robe of spotless snow:
For Christmas bringeth Jesus,
Brought for us so low.

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