

# 30 Christmas-tide

RESOURCES ▶ CD track 33 ▶ Warm ups: Nos. 10a, 11a, 15a, 17, 18b

## Information

This carol, another masterpiece by Bob Chilcott, has the most exquisite words, which repay reading before attempting to learn the music. They blend the human and divine, with the message that Mary's love for her child could not be any stronger, even though he was prophesied a king. It has some real 'close harmony' in parts, and although it is written for SATB, the men's parts would suit young baritone voices as the range is sympathetic, and the tenor parts manageable. The piano accompaniment supports the voices very well.

## Starting

- Begin with smooth slow scales and long-held notes for breath control.
- Sing the first exercise below smoothly, with supporting chords if possible. Modulate to higher keys, taking the voices as high as you like. At the very least, sing the exercise in the key of the piece, E $\flat$  major (as in the second exercise below), before moving on.

1

I(C) VI(Am) IV(F) I(C)

Lul-lee, lul-lay lul-lee lul-lee, lul-lay

2

I(E $\flat$ ) VI(Cm) IV(A $\flat$ ) I(E $\flat$ )

Lul-lee, lul-lay lul-lee lul-lee, lul-lay

## Teaching and rehearsing

- Learn the melody of bars 5–8 with everyone. Look at bars 21–5: this is the same melody plus a bar, with different words.
- Stay with this chunk of melody and try the harmony parts in bars 13–15. They are simple and move very little, and are relatively open chords compared with other passages.
- Some sectional work would help at this point unless singers can read and learn quite easily all together. Focus on the passages at bars 9 to 10, 25 (end) to 27, and 30 to 32.
- Tenor and baritone will need to practise their solo in bars 15–19. Support from the piano will make this easier, although the C $\flat$  in bar 17 has to come from the

singers first! Likewise the G $\flat$  in bar 18.

- Put the sections together, not worrying too much about very quiet singing or ritenuos and tempo changes just now—go for continuity.

## Ideas

- In the early stages of rehearsing a piece like this, particularly for a young or less experienced choir taking on new challenges, continuity and a sense of achievement can be accomplished by singing it through with just the main melody. For example, the sopranos and altos could sing bars 5–12; possibly add the harmony in bars 13–15; boys/men take their solo in bars 15–19; then everyone sings the melody from bar 21; soprano bars 26–7; then tutti (everyone) the last five bars. Variations on this idea are possible to suit your situation.

## Listen out

- If the sopranos are finding the top F too high, build in some gentle exercises such as 'sirening' (see notes to song No. 11 or warm up No. 35), which will encourage voices into the head voice. Also try some scales which gradually go up high enough.
- With such close harmony, less experienced singers lose confidence in holding their notes. Revisit some sectional work and piece the parts together gradually so that the singers can hear where they are in the collective sound.
- The boys/men may need to work on tone production to give their solo some strength. Don't force voices but encourage singers to project them. Improve the tone by using the finger-squeezing technique (see song No. 5, Ideas).
- In bar 24, make sure the two phrases feel as though they join, despite the rest and large interval. This is only a matter of thinking and intention by the singers!

## Performing

- The performance may be helped by increasing the tempo a little so that longer phrases don't run out of energy. Whatever the tempo, the words must be very clear and as expressive as possible.
- Follow what's in the music, and let it speak for itself.

# 30 Christmas-tide

for Joanne Hart

Words: Janet Lewis

Bob Chilcott

**Tender and legato** ♩ = c.63

Piano

*mp espress.*

The piano introduction is in 4/4 time, starting with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The piece concludes with a sustained chord in the right hand.

S/(A) *mp dolce cantabile*

The vocal line (Soprano/Alto) begins at measure 4. The lyrics are: "Lul - lee, lul-lay, I could not love thee more if". The piano accompaniment continues with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The tempo and mood are marked *mp dolce cantabile*.

The vocal line (Soprano/Alto) continues at measure 7. The lyrics are: "thou \_\_\_ wast Christ \_\_\_ the King. Now tell me, how did Ma-ry know that". The piano accompaniment features a more active bass line. The tempo and mood are marked *p cresc.*. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

10 the Lord of ev - ery - thing? —  
 in her womb should sleep and grow oo —

12 *mp cresc.*  
 Lul - lee, lul-lay, an an - gel stood with her who

*mp cresc.*

*p*

15 said,  
*unis. mf cantabile*  
 "That which doth stir like sum - mer in thy side shall

*mp cresc.*

mp cresc.) dynamic marking in measure 15."/>

Piano part bars 13-14 *ad lib.*

17

save the world from sin. Then sta - ble, hall and inn shall che - rish

*cresc.*

19

**rit.** **slower** **a tempo**

*unis. p dolce*

Christ-mas-tide.'

*unis. p dolce* Lul - lee, lul-lay, and

**rit.** **slower** **a tempo**

*p dolce*

22

so it was that Day. And did she love Him more be - cause an

24 *p poco cresc.*

an-gel came to pro-phet-sy His name? Ah no, not so, she

*p poco cresc.*

*p poco cresc.*

27 *p*

could not love Him more, but loved Him just the same.

*p*

*p*

30 *p dolce* **rit.** *pp* **slower**

Lul - lee, lul - lee, lul - lee, lul - lay.

*p dolce* **rit.** *pp* **slower**

Piano part bar 31 *ad lib.*

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Words: Janet Lewis

Bob Chilcott

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S/(A) *mp dolce cantabile*

4

Lul - lee, lul - lay, I could not love thee more if

7

*p cresc.*

thou \_\_\_ wast Christ \_\_\_ the King. Now tell me, how did Ma - ry know that

T. B.

*p cresc.*

10

the Lord of ev - ery - thing? \_\_\_

in her womb should sleep and grow oo

13

*mp cresc.*

Lul - lee, lul - lay, an an - gel stood with her who said,

*mp cresc.*

*unis. mf cantabile*

'That which doth stir like

16

sum - mer in thy side shall save the world from sin. Then

18

*rit.* *slower* *unis.* *p dolce*

*cresc.* *unis.* *p dolce*

sta-ble, hall and inn shall che-rish Christ-mas-tide.' Lul - lee, lul-lay, and

22

so it was that Day. And did she love Him more be-cause an an-gel came to

25

*p poco cresc.* *p*

*p poco cresc.* *p*

pro-phe-sy His name? Ah no, not so, she could not love Him more, but

28

*p dolce* *rit.* *pp* *slower*

*p dolce* *rit.* *pp* *slower*

loved Him just the same. Lul-lee, lul-lee, lul-lee, lul - lay.

*p dolce* *pp*