

Kubla Khan

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure dome decree,
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So various were the sights I saw
In plates of jasper and rose-red ground
With water and flowers in profusion round,
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree,
And here were woods ancient as the hills
Enfolding sunny spots of green,
But so let us not go wrong, it slanted
Down a hill, the next was over
A narrow place, a bog, and mud too
To sit in, with water up to the middle, I wanted
By the side of the stream, to stand alone,
And then this stream with hidden furrowed swelling,
As of the earth in fast thick rents were breaking,
It might have been suddenly used for I
walked over it, it was like a broad
Huge mountainous rock, the ground that
Or chaffy dust, to stand on the sheer bank,
And now we are in the hollow of the stream
It flung up suddenly the sacred river
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through land and lake the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man
And sank in Tumult to a sunless ocean;
And said this tumult better heard from afar
Accidental voices prophesying war.

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floats midway on the waves
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the dome
It was a music of some hidden

poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

music by Philip Legge

for harp (or keyboard), 2 flutes, mixed-voice choir, and soprano solo

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Kubla Khan

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem *Kubla Khan* is an unsettling glimpse of the poet's unconscious as well as a vivid and evocative set of dreamlike images. The story of how it came to be written is well-known; the visions in a dream inspired by reading a passage of *Purchas's Pilgrimage* relating the construction of the Khan's palace (and possibly influenced by laudanum) might have resulted in a poem of two or three hundred lines had not Coleridge been interrupted by the infamous "man from Porlock". We are left instead with a fleeting spiral of fragmentary images and ideas that never seem to connect. A fragment of Coleridge's Fragment appears on the cover (Add. MS 50847, f. 1v).

The obvious inspiration for the harp accompaniment is the first line of the final stanza, "A damsel with a dulcimer", and the instrumental trio of a harp and two flutes is not completely unknown. The keyboard part is a transcription of the harp part suitable for rehearsal with piano. A proper orchestral double harp is preferred for performance, however an electronic keyboard with a full set of octaves and capable of producing a decent harp-like timbre may prove adequate (as well as overcoming the harp's limitations in rapid changes of tuning), especially if the choir is comparatively large.

Programme Notes by the composer:

"The poem '*Kubla Khan*' by Coleridge has been a favourite of mine for many years, but the inspiration to set it to music – originally for female voices with harp accompaniment – came to me on a holiday a couple of years ago, when I scribbled down a fragmentary page or two.

"Coleridge had been in self-imposed retreat at a country farm-house when he wrote the poem, and had been taking opium purportedly as a relief for some illness, so after reading a travel book with an exotic description of Kublai Khan's palace, he had an extremely vivid poetic dream. Unfortunately after he awoke he was interrupted while in the middle of writing it all down, and later on he couldn't remember the poem or the dream; so what little of the poem that remains is very evocative.

"Unlike Coleridge I can't claim to have been inspired by an opium-influenced dream, but most of that musical fragment I wrote has found its way into the current composition in one form or another. The poem – and my music as well – consists of a dreamy and kaleidoscopic series of images and motifs, some of which recur and connect overtly or subliminally. The impetus of a performance led me to expand the work to incorporate two flutes as well as full mixed-voice choir, and a small solo for soprano."

Kubla Khan received its première at the Kaleide Theatre, RMIT University, Melbourne, on June 4, 2004.

Flutes: Karl Billeter, Nick Adler

Soprano solo: Sarah Chan

Keyboard (quasi arpa): Michael Winikoff

The RMIT Occasional Choral Society (ROCS), conducted by Philip Legge

Kubla Khan

(Or, a vision in a dream. A fragment)

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
 Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedar cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced;
Amid whose swift half-intermittent burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves:
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
 Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1798

Kubla Khan

Samuel Taylor Coleridge
(1772–1834)

Loud harp flourish

With a slow swing, about $\text{♩} = 54$

Philip Legge
(*1972)

2 Flutes

Soprano solo

Sopranos

Altos

Tenors

Basses

Harp

Loud harp flourish

With a slow swing, about $\text{♩} = 54$

sfz *B_b* *mf* *F A* *p*

December 16 2003, revised March 2005



Fl.

Fl.

S.

A.

T.

B.

Hp

mp

p

p

In Xa - na - du,

in Xa - na - du,

In

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10

Fl.

Fl.

S. du, in cresc. Xa - na - du did

A. du, in cresc. Xa - na - du did

T. 8 in cresc. Xa - na - du did

B. ① Xa - na - du, in Xa - na - du did

Hp

=

13

Fl.

Fl.

S. Ku - bla Khan A state - ly plea - sure - dome de -

A. Ku - bla Khan A state - ly plea - sure - dome de -

T. 8 Ku - bla Khan A state - ly plea - sure - dome de -

B. Ku - bla Khan A state - ly plea - sure - dome de -

Hp

G \sharp D \sharp E \flat C \flat G \flat

f f f f f f

gliss.

$8^{\text{va}} - 1$

17

(2)

Fl.

Fl.

S. *mf* cree: Where Alph, the sa - cred ri - ver, ran Through ca - verns mea - sure - less to man

A. *mf* cree: Where Alph, the sa - cred ri - ver, ran Through ca - verns mea - sure - less to man

T. *mf* cree: Where Alph, the sa - cred ri - ver, ran Through ca - verns mea - sure - less to man

B. *mf* cree: Where Alph, the sa - cred ri - ver, ran Through ca - verns mea - sure - less to man

Hp arpége (2)
 [E, then C] [D, *mp* F, then G] [F#, then C] [G#, then C]



22

Fl. *mf*

Fl. *mf*

S. *mp*

Down to a sun - less sea. So twice five miles of fer - tile ground With

A. *mp*

Down to a sun - less sea. So twice five miles of fer - tile ground With

T. *mp*

8 Down to a sun - less sea. So twice five miles of fer - tile ground With

B. *mp*

Down to a sun - less sea. So twice five miles ground With

Hp *F#* *G#*

27

Fl. Fl. S. A. T. B. Hp.

walls and tow'rs were gird - dled round: And here were gar - dens bright with sin -

walls and tow'rs were gird - dled round:

walls and tow'rs were gird - dled round:

walls and tow'rs were gird - dled round:

(3)

p *cresc.*

p

p

C♯ *G♯, C♯, then D♯* *D♯*



31

Fl. Fl. S. A. T. B. Hp.

- - uous rills Where blos - somed ma - ny an in - cense - bear - ing tree;

Where blos - somed ma - ny an in - cense - bear - ing tree;

Where blos - somed ma - ny an in - cense - bear - ing tree;

(pp) **p** **pp** **pp** **pp**

div. And pp

And

G♯ *G♯* *G♯* *G♯* *F♯*

36

S. En *mp* fol - ding sun - ny spots of green - e -
A. En - fol - ding sun - ny spots of green - e -
T. *cresc.* div. En - fol - ding sun - ny spots of green - e -
here were fo - rests an - cient as the hills, En - fol - ding sun - ny spots of green - e -
B. here were fo - rests an - cien as the hills, En - fol - ding sun - ny spots of green - e -
Hp { *cresc.* En - fol - ding sun - ny spots of green - e -
[C#, then D#] [D#, then G#]

41 Allegro, broad in feeling, about $\text{♩} = 108$

Fl. *f* Fl. *f*
S. ry.
A. ry.
T. ry.
B. ry.
Allegro, broad in feeling, about $\text{♩} = 108$
Hp { *f* Hp { *f*

accel.

45 Fl. *poco a poco cresc.* Fl. *poco a poco cresc.* accel.
Hp { *poco a poco cresc.* [G#] [E#]

Vivace, about $\text{d} = 132$

(5)

Fl.

Fl.

S.

But o! that deep ro - man - tic cha - sm which

A.

But o! that deep ro - man - tic cha - sm which

T.

But o! that deep ro - man - tic cha - sm which

B.

Vivace, about $\text{d} = 132$ But o! that deep ro - man - tic cha - sm which

Hp

glissando mp

f

glissando mp

f



53

Fl.

Fl.

S.

slant - ed Down the green hill a-thwart a ce - darn co - ver! A

A.

slan - ted Down the green hill a-thwart a ce - darn co - ver! A

T.

slan - ted Down the green hill a-thwart a ce - darn co - ver! A

B.

slan - ted Down the green hill a - thwart a ce - darn co - ver! A

Hp

E \sharp

E \sharp

57

(6)

Fl.

Fl.

S. *sa - vage place! as ho - ly and en - chant - ed As*

A. *sa - vage place! as ho - ly and en - chant - ed As*

T. *sa - vage place! as ho - ly and en - chant - ed As*

B. *sa - vage place!*

Hp *glissando mp* *mp* *mp*

f

=

61

Fl.

Fl.

S. *e'er be - neath a wa - ning moon was haunt - - ed By*

A. *e'er be - neath a wa - ning moon was haunt - - ed By*

T. *e'er be - neath a wa - ning moon was haunt - ed By*

B. *- - - - - By*

Hp *E#* *A#* *G#* *G#* *D#* *F#*

64

Fl.

Fl.

S. wo - - man wail - ing for her de - - mon lo - - ver!

A. wo - man wail - ing for her de - - mon lo - - ver!

T. wo - man wail - ing for her de - - mon lo - - ver!

B. wo - man wail - ing for her de - - mon lo - - ver!

Hp G# 8: f [G#, D#, F#] dim.



68 (7) Flutter.

Fl. mf dim. p

Fl. mp dim. p

S. And from this chasm, with cease - less tur - - moil seeth - ing, As if this

A. And from this chasm, with cease - less tur - - moil seeth - ing, As if this

T. - - - - -

B. - - - - -

Hp p

72

Fl. Flutter.

Fl.

S. earth in fast thick pants were breath - ing, A migh-ty foun - tain mo - ment - ly was forced;

A. earth in fast thick pants were breath - ing, A migh-ty foun - tain mo - ment - ly was forced;

T. A migh-ty foun - tain mo - ment - ly was forced;

B. A migh-ty foun - tain mo - ment - ly was forced;

Hp *mf* [F \sharp] *p subito* [D \sharp] [G \sharp] [G \sharp]

77 1. (8)

Fl.

SOPRANOS *mf*

S. A - mid whose swift half - in - ter - mit - ted burst Huge frag - ments vault-ed like re-bound-ing

Hp *mf*

82

Fl.

Fl.

S. hail, And 'mid these danc - ing rocks at once and *mf*

A.

T. And 'mid these danc - ing rocks at once and *mf*

8 Or chaff - y grain be -neath the thresh - er's flail:

B. Or chaff - y grain be -neath the thresh - er's flail:

Hp [G \sharp] [G \sharp]

poco rit.

Meno allegro, about $\text{♩} = 120$ (9)

Fl.
Fl.
S.
A.
T.
B.
Horn

e - ver It flung up mo - ment - ly the sa - cred ri - ver.
e - ver It flung up mo - ment - ly the sa - cred ri - ver.
It flung up mo - ment - ly the sa - cred ri - ver.
It flung up mo - ment - ly the sa - cred ri - ver.

poco rit.

Meno allegro, about $\text{♩} = 120$ (9)

Horn

cresc.
f



91

Fl.
Fl.
S.
A.
T.
B.
Horn

Five miles me - an - der-ing with a ma - - zy mo - tion Through
Through
Through
Through
Through
Through

p

p

p

p

p

F#

95

Fl.

S. wood and dale the sa - cred ri - ver ran, Then

A. wood and dale the sa - cred ri - ver ran, Then

T. wood and dale the sa - cred ri - ver ran, Then

B. wood and dale the sa - cred ri - ver ran,

Hp

C♯ D♯ C♯

=

(10)

100

Fl. *p*

Fl. *p*

S. reached the ca - - verns mea - sure - less to man,

A. reached the ca - - verns mea - sure - less to man,

T. reached the ca - - verns mea - sure - less to man, T. II *mf*

B. And sank in B. II *mf*

Hp F♯ *mf*

And sank in

106

Fl. *tr* *tr* *tr*

Fl. *tr* *tr* *tr*

S.

A.

T. tu - mult to a life - less o - cean: And 'mid this
T.I. And 'mid this

B. tu - mult to a life - less o - cean: And 'mid this
B.I. And 'mid this

Hp *p* *G* *p* *p* tremolo rap.

2

11

110

Fl. cresc.

Fl. cresc.

S. tu - - mult Ku - - bla heard from far An - cest - ral

A. tu - - mult Ku - - bla heard from far An - cest - ral

T. tu - - mult Ku - - bla heard from far An - cest - ral

B. tu - - mult Ku - - bla heard from far An - cest - ral

11

Hp cresc. G# C# F# A# A# C# f F#

2

Alla marcia (metronomic and slower) **12**

Losing momentum

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is for Flute (Fl.) and the bottom staff is for Bassoon (B.). Both staves are in treble clef. Measure 118 starts with eighth-note patterns. Measure 12 begins with sixteenth-note patterns. The bassoon part ends with a dynamic marking of *f*. The flute part continues with sixteenth-note patterns. The bassoon part returns in measure 13 with sixteenth-note patterns, ending with a dynamic marking of *f*. The flute part continues with sixteenth-note patterns.

123

Slower, languid, about $\text{♩} = 80$

Fl.

Fl.

SOPRANOS

S.

Hp

dim. [D \sharp] [G \sharp] [F \sharp]

The

127

(13)

Fl.

Fl.

S.

sha - - dow of the dome of plea - sure

Hp

[C \sharp] [F \sharp] [C \sharp]

131

Fl.

Fl.

S.

Float - - ed mid - way on the waves:

A.

ALTOS

Hp

[C \sharp] [F \sharp] [F \sharp] [A \sharp] [E \sharp]

Where was

135

Fl.

Fl.

A. heard the ming - led mea - sure From the foun - tain and the caves.

Hp { A \sharp

=

139 (14)

Fl.

Fl.

SOPRANOS

S. It was a mi - ra - cle of rare de - vice, A

Hp { 14 C \sharp C \sharp

=

143

Fl.

Fl.

S. sun - ny plea - sure dome with caves of ice!

Hp { G \sharp

1. p

147 1.

Moderate,
about $\text{♩} = 120$

(15)

Fl. SOPRANO SOLO

S. solo

Hp p [D \sharp] A

Moderate,
about $\text{♩} = 120$

(15) A

=

152

S. solo

dam-sel with a dul-ci-mer In a vi-sion once I saw: It was an A - bys-si - ni-an hemiola

Hp [C \sharp] [F \sharp] [F \sharp]

=

158

S. solo

maid, And on her dul-ci-mer she played, Sing - ing of Mount A - bo - ra.

Hp [G \sharp] [F \sharp] [F \sharp]

(16)

=

165

Hp [C \sharp] [C \sharp] [F \sharp] [G \sharp]

poco rit.

* Abora: the composer suggests the first syllable is sung with a long "A", as in "arbor" (but with as little or no hint of an "r" before the next syllable).

(17)

170 A little slower, $\text{♩} = 100$

Fl. *p*

Fl.

S. solo Could I re - vive with-in me Her sym - pho-ny and song,

TUTTI

S. TUTTI

A. TUTTI

T. Could I re-vive with-in me Her sym-

B. TUTTI Could I re-vive

(17)

A little slower, $\text{♩} = 100$

Slower again, $\text{♩} = 80$

p

Hp

====

(18)

176

Fl.

Fl.

S. solo win me

S. Could I re - vive with-in me

A. Could I re-vive with-in me Her sym - pho-ny and song,

T. pho-ny and song, To such a deep de - light 'twould win me, Could I re -

B. with-in me Her sym - pho-ny and song, To such a deep de - light 'twould win me,

(18)

Hp

181

Fl.

Fl.

S.

Her sym - pho-ny and song, To such a deep de - light, 'twould win

A.

To such a deep de - light 'twould win me, To such a deep de -

T.

vive with-in me Her sym - pho-ny and song, To such a deep de - light, to such de -

B.

Could I re - vive with-in me Her sym - pho-ny and

Hp

F# F# F#



185 Slightly faster, about $\text{♩} = 88$

Fl.

cresc.

Fl.

cresc.

S.

me, to such a deep de - light, to such a deep de - light, to such a deep de -

A.

light, to such a deep de - light, to such a deep de - light, to

T.

light, to such a deep de - light, to such a deep de - light, to

B.

song, to such a deep de - light, to such a deep de - light, to such a deep de -

Slightly faster, about $\text{♩} = 88$

accel.

Hp

mf D# D# C# cresc. D# G#

Allegro, about $\text{d} = 108$

(19)

Fl. *mf*
Fl. *mf*
S. light 'twould win me
A. such a deep de-light 'twould win me
T. such a deep de-light 'twould win me
B. light 'twould win me

Allegro, about $\text{d} = 108$

(19)

Hp *f* [B \sharp] [E \sharp]

191

Fl. *f*
Fl. *f*
S. solo That with mus - ic loud and long, I would build that dome in air,
S. That with mus - ic loud and long, I would build that dome in air,
A. That with mus - ic loud and long, I would build that dome in air,
T. That with mus - ic loud and long, I would build that dome in air,
B. *8va* [D \sharp] [E \sharp]

199 Vivace, about $\text{d} = 132^*$ 20

Fl. non cresc.

Fl. non cresc.

S. all who heard should see them there, And all should cry, Be - ware! Be - ware! His

A. all who heard should see them there, And all should cry, Be - ware! Be - ware! His

T. 8 all who heard should see them there, And all should cry, Be - ware! Be - ware! His

B. all who heard should see them there, And all should cry, Be - ware! Be - ware! His

Hp. gliss. 20 gliss. D \sharp

* Do not give in to the illusory appearance of the chain singing in 6

* Do not give in to the illusory appearance of the choir singing in **$\frac{6}{4}$**

203

Fl.

Fl.

S.

flash - ing eyes, his float - - ing hair!

A.

flash - ing eyes, his float - - ing hair!

T.

flash - ing eyes, his float - - ing hair!

B.

flash - ing eyes, his float - - ing hair!

Hp

B_b **E_b** **D_b, C_b** **G_b**

=

207

Fl.

p

Fl.

S.

Weave a cir - cle round him thrice, And close your eyes with ho - ly dread, For

A.

p Weave a cir - cle round him thrice, And close your eyes with ho - ly dread, For

T.

8 Weave a cir - cle round him thrice... with ho - ly dread, For

B.

p Weave a cir - cle round... with dread, For

(21)

Hp

p **A_b, F_b** **F_b** **E_b** **C_b**

211

Fl. *mp* *cresc.*
Fl. *mp* *cresc.*

S. he on ho - - ney - dew hath fed, and drunk
A. he on ho - - ney - dew hath fed, and drunk
T. he on ho - - ney - dew hath fed, and drunk
B. he on ho - - ney - dew hath fed, and drunk

Hp *E₅, B₅* *C₄* *A₂, D₂* *mf* *C₄* *A₂*

(22)

215

Fl. *p*
Fl. *pp*

S. — the milk of Pa - ra - dise. *niente*
A. — the milk of Pa - ra - dise. *niente*
T. — the milk of Pa - ra - dise. *niente*
B. — the milk of Pa - ra - dise. *niente*

Hp *C₄* *G₅, F₅* *#E₅:* *#E₅:* *#E₅:* *#E₅:* *#E₅:* *p*

(22)

221

Fl. *poco rit.* *Tempo*
Fl. *poco rit.* *Tempo*

Hp *pp* *ppp*