



Kubla Khan

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 its composition, written while the author was in ill-health and self-imposed retreat at a country farm-house, 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 copy of the music currently in your possession is clearly a first installment, and will have a couple of extra sections successively stapled to the back! 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 here 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.

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 cedarn 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-intermitted 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)

(2003/4)

Philip Legge
(*1972)

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

2 Flutes
Soprano solo
Sopranos
Altos
Tenors
Basses

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

Keyboard
(quasi arpa)

sf *mf* *p*

Detailed description: This system contains the first four measures of the score. The vocal parts (2 Flutes, Soprano solo, Sopranos, Altos, Tenors, Basses) are shown with whole rests, indicating they are silent during this section. The keyboard part (quasi arpa) is active, starting with a fortissimo (*sf*) chord in the first measure, followed by a mezzo-forte (*mf*) chord in the second measure, and then a piano (*p*) accompaniment for the remainder of the system. The tempo/mood is marked 'With a slow swing, about ♩ = 54'.



5

1.

Fl.

S.

A.

T.

B.

Kb.

mp *p* *p*

In Xa - na - du,

In Xa - na - du, in

Detailed description: This system contains measures 5 through 8. Measure 5 is marked with a '5' above the Flute staff. Measure 6 is marked with a '1.' above the Flute staff. The vocal parts enter in measure 6. The Flute part has a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The Soprano solo part has a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Soprano, Alto, and Tenor parts have lyrics: 'In Xa - na - du,'. The Tenor part has the word 'in' at the end of the phrase. The keyboard part continues with a piano (*p*) accompaniment. The tempo/mood is consistent with the first system.

9 1

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

S. In Xa - na - du, in Xa - - - na -

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

T. Xa - na - du, in Xa - - - na -

B. In Xa - na - du, in Xa - - - na -

Kb.



12

Fl. *f*

Fl. *f*

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

A. du did Ku - bla Khan A state - ly plea - sure - dome

T. du did Ku - bla Khan A state - ly plea - sure - dome

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

Kb.

16

Fl. *ossia: μ*

S. *mf* de - - cree: Where Alph, the sa - cred

A. *mf* de - - cree: Where Alph, the sa - cred

T. *mf* de - - cree: Where Alph, the sa - cred

B. *mf* de - - cree: Where Alph, the sa - cred

Kb. *f* *8va* *arpège* *mp*



19

Fl. *mf*

Fl. *mf*

S. *mf* ri - ver, ran Through ca - verns mea - sure - less to man Down to a sun - less sea.

A. *mf* ri - ver, ran Through ca - verns mea - sure - less to man Down to a sun - less sea.

T. *mf* ri - ver, ran Through ca - verns mea - sure - less to man Down to a sun - less sea.

B. *mf* ri - ver, ran Through ca - verns mea - sure - less to man Down to a sun - less sea.

Kb. *mf*

24

Fl. *mp*

Fl. *mp*

S. *mp*

A. *mp*

T. *mp*

B. *mp*

Kb.

So twice five miles of fer - tile ground With walls and tow'rs were

So twice five miles of fer - tile ground With walls and tow'rs were

So twice five miles of fer - tile ground With walls and tow'rs were

So twice five miles ground With walls and tow'rs were



28

Fl. *p*

Fl. *p*

S. *p*

A. *p*

T. *p*

B. *p*

Kb. *p*

gird - dled round: And here were gar - dens bright with sin - - - u - ous

gird - dled round:

gird - dled round:

gird - dled round:

gird - dled round:

cresc.

p

p

32

Fl. *pp*

Fl. *pp*

S. *p*
rills Where blos - somed ma - ny an in - cense - bear - ing tree;

A. *ppp*
Where blos - somed ma - ny an in - cense - bear - ing tree;

T. *ppp* *pp*
Where blos - somed ma - ny an in - cense - bear - ing tree; And

B. *pp*
div. And

Kb.



36

S. *mp* ④
En - fol - ding sun - ny spots of green - e -

A. *mp*
En - fol - ding sun - ny spots of green - e -

T. *cresc.* *mp*
here were fo - rests an - cient as the hills, En - fol - ding sun - ny spots of green - e -

B. *cresc.* *mp*
here were fo - rests an - cient as the hills, En - fol - ding sun - ny spots of green - e -

Kb. ④

41 Allegro, broad in feeling, about $\text{♩} = 72$

Fl. *f*

Fl. *f*

S. ry.

A. ry.

T. ry.

B. ry.

Kb. *f*

Allegro, broad in feeling, about $\text{♩} = 72$



ac - - - - cel - - - - e - - - - ran - - - - do ... al ...

45 *poco a poco cresc.*

Fl. *poco a poco cresc.*

Fl. *poco a poco cresc.*

ac - - - - cel - - - - e - - - - ran - - - - do ... al ...

Kb. *poco a poco cresc.*