

In Xanadu

Peter Fribbins

One of Peter Fribbins' earliest mature works (written when the composer was 21), *In Xanadu* was inspired by Coleridge's poem *Kubla Khan*. Although not intended to be exactly programmatic, or to narrate the poem, each of the five short movements attempts to create different atmospheres or character from Coleridge's poem. The work was made runner-up in the *Royal Philharmonic Society Prize* in 1992.

The first movement, **Prologue**, is built upon a rather exotic sounding invented scale, which seems to conjure images of Kubla Khan's stately pleasure dome and the running water of Alph the sacred river.

Aria: Gardens bright with sinuous rills and incense-bearing trees. A much warmer, sunnier music contrasts with the concentrated austerity of the Prologue

Toccata: A savage chasm. A woman wails for her demon lover. Seething with ceaseless turmoil, a mighty fountain is momentarily forced, huge fragments vaulting like rebounding hail.

Elegy: Behold! A miracle of rare device, a sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice. This whole movement is built rather economically on only four notes, C,G,F#,B (the main motif from the Toccata movement).

Epilogue: 'Wave 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.'