

Mary Montgomery Koppel
LE001
SSAA voices

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A la lune

for SSAA voices



Lorelei
ensemble

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2011, ca. 4'45"

When choosing a text, I am drawn to works in which I already sense color and, therefore, music. William Carlos Williams's poetry often combines vivid imagery with an expressive and human element, and I find myself time and again coming back to his work. When I read many of his poems, I hear music already; in a sense, the pieces begin to write themselves.

As I wrote *A la lune*, I sought to enhance both the human narrative element and the colors within the words themselves. Certain words of this poem—slow, moon, aye, O, high, you—resonate so purely within the voice, and I chose sonorities to take full advantage. Additionally, the plaintive narrative of the poem, calling out to the moon to calm the unquiet mind, guided the larger-scale structure of the music. At times, I weave together individual lines using diatonic, whole tone, and octatonic materials. At others, homophonic harmonies swell and ebb to mirror the text.

M. M. K.

A la lune

Slowly rising, slowly strengthening moon,
Pardon us our fear in pride:
Pardon us our troubled quietnesses!

Aye, pardon us, O moon,
Round, bright upon the darkening!
Pardon us our little journeys endlessly repeated!

All halting tendernesses pardon us,
O high moon!
For you, nooning by night,
You having crept to the full,
You, O moon, must have understanding of these things.

William Carlos Williams (1883–1963)

A la lune

William Carlos Williams

Mary Montgomery Koppel

♩. = 48 *mp* *mf* *mp* *f*

Soprano Slow - ly ris - ing moon, slow - ly strength - en - ing moon, Par - don us our

Soprano moon, slow - ly strength - en - ing moon, Par - don us our

Alto moon, strength - en - ing moon, Par - don us our

Alto *mp* *mf* *mp* *f*
Moon, slow - ly ris - ing moon, slow - ly, Par - don us our

9 *mp* *p* *pp*

S. fear in pride: Par - don us our troub - led qui - et - ness - es! qui - et - ness - es!

S. fear in pride: Par - don us our troub - led qui - et - ness - es! qui - et - ness - es!

A. *mf* *mp* *p* *pp*
fear in pride: O strength - en - ing moon! Par - don our troub - led qui - et - ness - es! qui - et - ness - es!

A. *mp* *p* *pp*
fear our fear in pride: Par - don us our troub - led qui - et - ness - es! qui - et - ness - es!

18 *ppp* *p* *mf* *p*

S. our troub - led qui - et... Aye, par - don us, O moon, Aye, O

S. *ppp* *p* *mf* *p*
our troub - led qui - et... Aye, par - don us, O moon, Aye, O

A. *ppp* *p* *mf* *p*
our troub - led qui - et... Aye, O moon, Aye, par - don us, O moon, Aye, O

A. *ppp* *p* *mf* *p*
our troub - led qui - et... Aye, O moon, O moon, Aye, O

27 *mf* *ff*

S. moon, moon, bright up - on the dark - ness, Moon! Par - don us our

S. moon, round up - on the dark - ness, Moon! Par - don us our

A. moon, O moon, moon, moon O moon! Par - don us our

A. moon, moon, O moon, moon, O moon! Par - don us our

35 *mf* *mp*

S. lit - tle jour neys end-less-ly re-peat-ed! All halt-ing ten-der-ness-es par - - don

S. lit - tle jour neys end-less-ly re-peat-ed! All halt-ing ten-der-ness-es par - don

A. lit - tle jour - neys end-less-ly re-peat-ed! All halt-ing ten-der-ness-es par - don

A. lit - tle jour - neys end-less-ly re-peat-ed! All halt-ing ten-der-ness-es par - - don

43 *p* *pp* *f*

S. us par - don us par - don us par - don us, O high moon!

S. us par-don us par - don us par - don us, moon!

A. us par-don us par - don us par - don us, moon!

A. us par - don us par - - don us par - don us, moon!

52

S. *fp* High moon! O moon! For you, you,

S. *mf* High moon! O high O moon! you, noon-ing by night, you, *fp*

A. *mf* O high moon! moon! O high moon! moon! by night, you hav-ing crept to the

A. *mf* O high moon! moon! O high moon! moon! by night. *f* crept to the

60

S. *fp* you, O moon, *mp* O moon, *p* O moon,

S. *fp* you, O moon, *mp* O moon, *p* O moon,

A. *mf* full, you, O moon, *mp* you, O moon, *p* you, O moon,

A. *mf* full, you, O moon, *mp* You, O moon, *p* You, O moon,

72

S. *pp* O moon, *ppp* must have un-der - stand-ing of these things. *niente* You, O moon...

S. *pp* O moon, *ppp* must have un-der - stand-ing of these things. *niente* You, O moon.

A. *pp* you, O moon, *ppp* must have un-der - stand-ing of these things. *niente* You, O moon.

A. *pp* You, O moon, *ppp* must have un-der - stand-ing of these things. *niente* You, O moon.

About the Composer

Mary Montgomery Koppel (b. 1982) is a highly sought-after composer of choral, vocal, chamber, and orchestral works. Praised for her “luxuriant choral writing” and “myriad coloristic sonorities,” she writes in a compositional language that is both richly complex and contrapuntally refined, while remaining both aurally accessible and challenging. Recent commissions include *Stabat Mater Speciosa*, written for the Harvard University Choir, and *Horizons* for Su Lian Tan and John McDonald, released on the album *GRAND THEFT and other felonies* (ARSIS Audio.) Dr. Montgomery Koppel was the first composer-in-residence (2007–14) for Lorelei Ensemble, a Boston-based women’s vocal group specializing in new and early music and engaged in commissioning composers from around the world. Since Lorelei’s founding in 2007, Dr. MK has contributed seven new works to the repertoire for women’s voices. Performers praise Dr. MK for her understanding of the voice, utilizing the full capacity of the instrument in “idiomatic lines of surprising yet natural contour.”

Dr. MK is also an educator, music director, and soprano. She teaches at Gordon College and Boston University. Before moving to the Boston area in 2006, she taught at Bennington College, where she founded and conducted the Bennington College Chamber Singers. Her music direction includes work at MASSMoCA and HERE in New York.

About Lorelei Ensemble

Lorelei Ensemble advances the women’s vocal ensemble through passionate, engaging artistry and creative collaboration. Committed to a fresh and culturally relevant repertoire, Lorelei reimagines and cultivates bold compositional voices in performances that transform audience perspectives and expectations.

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