

### **About the composer**

Joan Szymko (b.1957) is also a choral conductor, having led choirs in the Pacific Northwest for over twenty-five years. Abundant lyricism, rhythmic intensity and vigorous attention to text are hallmarks of her diverse and distinctive choral writing. Especially noteworthy is Szymko's significant contribution to the body of literature for women's voices. With over thirty-five octavos in print, her music is performed frequently by distinguished choral ensembles across the country and increasingly, abroad. Szymko also writes for the stage and has been a resident composer with Do Jump! Extremely Physical Theater since 1995, performing her music with the company at their home theater in Portland, Oregon and on tour, including runs on Broadway and the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. Her CD recording of original works, "Openings," is available through Santa Barbara Music Publishing.

Scores of additional titles by Joan Szymko can be viewed and heard at [www.sbmp.com](http://www.sbmp.com).

### **About the poet**

Amy Lawrence Lowell (1874-1925) was an American poet of the imagist school. She posthumously won the Pulitzer prize for Poetry in 1926. Imagism was a movement in early

20th century Anglo-American poetry that favored precision of imagery, and clear, sharp language. The Imagists rejected the sentimentality typical of much Romantic and Victorian poetry of the day. The Imagists featured a number of women writers among their major figures, which was quite unusual for the day. Lowell was also an early adherent to the "free verse" method of poetry. (information culled from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

"Listening," the title of the poem set in "You are the Song" appeared in her first published collection of poetry, "A Dome of Many-Coloured Glass."

It is a highly structured sonnet (a lyric poem of 14 lines, following a rhyme scheme) and yet its sounds remarkably modern, retaining an almost conversational, free verse feeling.

### **Listening**

'Tis you that are the music, not your song.  
The song is but a door which, opening wide,  
Lets forth the pent-up melody inside,  
Your spirit's harmony, which clear and strong  
Sings but of you. Throughout your whole life long  
Your songs, your thoughts, your doings, each divide  
This perfect beauty; waves within a tide,  
Or single notes amid a glorious throng.  
The song of earth has many different chords;  
Ocean has many moods and many tones  
Yet always ocean. In the damp Spring woods  
The painted trillium smiles, while crisp pine cones  
Autumn alone can ripen. So is this  
One music with a thousand cadences.