

# Where the Prairies Meet the Pines

*Dedicated to the Indigenous Peoples who have gathered at kistahpinanihk for thousands of years*

**Storytellers:** Plains, Woodland and Swampy Cree, Dakota, Dene and Metis  
**Musical Retelling:** Tyrone A. McKenzie

## **Instrumentation:**

Metis Fiddle

Flute 1

Flute 2

Oboe

Clarinet 1

Clarinet 2

Bass Clarinet

Alto Sax 1

Alto Sax 2

Tenor Sax

Baritone Sax

Trumpet 1

Trumpet 2

Horn in F

Trombone

Euphonium

Bassoon

Tuba

Percussion\*:

Timpani

Bells

Snare Drum

Bass Drum

Hand Drum

Mark Tree

Whirly Tubes

Spoons or Metis Spoons - See youtube video - "Metis Musical Spoons" -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVkMtHWv9hE>

"Singing Sticks" - See Leah Dorion's Book "Metis Singing Sticks" and her video "Four Directions" -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P96oPFPrMJ8&t=267s>

\*Percussion Instruction on Page 2

*Where the Prairies Meet the Pines is a confluence of gratitude, appreciation and acknowledgement. This composition attempts to honour the gathering of not only two major rivers, but also the people who have met there for centuries.*

*This musical retelling of the Prince Albert region is meant to pay respect to the generations of Cree, Dakota, Dene, Metis and European Settlers who have called this place their home. I am grateful to the elders and knowledge keepers who provided their insight and understanding of this region.*

*I am grateful to Amy Klippenstein and Nicole Webb for their initial encouragement to begin this project.*

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*Thank you to John and Vicki Arcand for allowing me to adapt the "Isbister Jig" from their recording.*

*I am extremely grateful to Indigenous artists Leah Dorion and Kevin Peeace for the murals they painted at the PA Museum which ultimately served as the inspiration for this work.*

*Thank you Kevin and Leah, for your knowledge, background information, connections, and friendship.*

*Thank you to the Creator who formed this beautiful part of the world and the people who have celebrated family, faith and culture in this region.*

### **Background and Inspiration:**

- The piece begins with a seven-note motif. This phrase represents the seven Grandfather Teachings or Humility, Respect, Truth, Knowledge, Wisdom, Courage and Love. These qualities, given by the Creator to the First Peoples, are the basis and ultimate hope that we all share for unity and peace.

- The four elements of the medicine wheel show up numerous times - Earth (Hand drum throughout), Wind (mm.10,21-Whirly Tubes), Fire (mm. 10,17,21 - Singing Sticks), Water (mm. 10,17,21 - basses)

- Three sections, seven measures each (Grandfather Teachings), represent the Dakota, Dene and Cree people.

In the Wahpeton section (mm. 3-11), "God Save the King" is highlighted to signify the important role that Dakota peoples played in the War of 1812.

In the Dene section (mm. 12-18) the peacemaker Thanadelthur is highlighted for her courage, mystery and the bridge building she forged between the Dene, Cree and Settler communities.

In the Cree section, the Plains, Swampy and Woodland Cree are highlighted through the sounds of wind as well as the geese and bison that were in abundance for this region prior to first contact.

In the Metis section we pay respect to James Isbister, the remarkable founder of the first settlement in this area. The fiddle, "singing sticks" and Metis spoons provide some authentic sounds for the jig.

The sound of the bison abruptly stops here, which represents the bison being wiped out and with it, the valuable role that Metis people played in guiding European settlers who came to the region.

In the Prebyterian Mission section, we pay respect to James Nisbet who named the settlement Prince Albert, after Queen Victoria's consort. In this arrangement of a hymn tune, we also hear Cree numbers spoken to represent Nisbet's English and Cree teaching for Indigenous children in the area. The numbers in Cree are written phonetically for ease of pronunciation. Consult a knowledge keeper if you are unsure.

The eighth note patterns in the basses (mm. 10,17,21) represent the rivers which come from a piece of piano music written by the original Prince Albert.

### **Some thoughts on the percussion sounds:**

- The **Hand Drum** beat should be without accents to represent the heart beat of Mother Earth.

- **Bass Drum** rolls represent the herd of Bison that roamed throughout the prairies. This abruptly stops during the jig.

- **Whirly tubes** - In measures 10 and 21, the whirling should be randomly fast and slow, representing gusts of wind.

During the Dene section, there are three distinct speeds (slow, medium and fast) which represent the three distinct groups that Thanadelthur brought together - the medium speed represents Thanadelthur and the Dene people, the fast speed represents the Cree, and the slow speed represents the Settlers.

During the Metis section (mm 29-44), the Whirly tube should swirl in dotted quarter notes in the pattern of an infinity circle, the symbol of the Metis people.

- The **mark tree** symbolizes the mystery of Thanadelthur beginning and ending the Dene section.

- **Singing sticks and spoons** are Metis instruments. The singing sticks are used to resemble fire with an improvised roll. They are also part of the Metis jig. Spoons can also be used during this section instead of, or in addition to the singing sticks.

- At the beginning of the Metis jig (m.27) a "Whoop" or "Yee-haw" should be given to a student at the discretion of the director.

# Where the Prairies Meet the Pines

Story Tellers: Cree, Dakota, Dene and Metis people

Musical Retelling: Tyrone A. McKenzie

Spanning between 12,000 and 7,500 years ago, this period represents the first archaeological evidence for human occupation in North America. The area was named "kistahpinanikh", meaning "sitting pretty place, or meeting place. It became a gathering place for Dakota Oyate, Dene and Cree peoples.

Metis leader James Isbister was the first to settle and farm in the area in 1862 - an ideal spot to build a life where the prairies meet the pines. In 1866, Reverend James Nisbet arrived and named the new settlement Prince Albert, in honour of the Prince Consort to Queen Victoria.

*Where the prairies Meet the Pines* is dedicated to the First Peoples and Settlers who gathered together in this beautiful area. The retelling of their story stands on the shoulders of Indigenous storytellers and is meant to honour and represent their contribution and commitment to the land that has been a gathering place for centuries.

**Steady and Strong** ♩=88

3 *Wahpeton Dakota Nation*

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with 15 staves. The instruments listed on the left are: Metis Fiddle, Flute Oboe, Clarinet in B $\flat$  1,2, Bass Clarinet, Alto Sax 1,2, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax, Trumpet in B $\flat$  1,2, Horn in F, Trombone Euphonium Bassoon, Tuba, Timpani, Bells, Snare Drum Bass Drum, and Aux Percussion. The score begins with a tempo of 88 bpm and a 'Steady and Strong' character. It features a 3-measure rest for the Wahpeton Dakota Nation. Dynamic markings include *f* (forte), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *p* (piano). The percussion parts include a hand drum pattern.

1

2

*mf*  
3

5

6

Where the Prairies Meet the Pines Score

*God Save the King*

Fiddle *f*

Fl. Ob. *f*

B $\flat$  Cl. 1,2 *mf*

B. Cl. *mf*

A. Sx. 1,2 *mf*

T. Sx. *mf*

B. Sx. *mf*

B $\flat$  Tpt. 1,2 *mf*

Hn. *mf*

Tbn. Euph. Bassoon *mf*

Tuba *mf*

Timp. *mf*

Bells *f*

S.D. B.D. *mf*

Aux.Perc.

*Singing sticks*

*Whirly Tubes*





Plains, Woodland and Swampy Cree

19

Fiddle *mf*

Fl. Ob. *mf*

B♭ Cl. 1,2 *mf*

B. Cl. *mf*

A. Sx. 1,2 *mf*

T. Sx. *mf*

B. Sx. *mf*

B♭ Tpt. 1,2 *mf*

Hn. *mf*

Tbn. Euph. Bassoon *mf*

Tuba *mf*

Timp. *mf*

Bells

S.D. B.D. *Singing sticks*

Whirly Tubes

Aux. Perc. *Hand Drum*