

Where the Prairies Meet the Pines (a piece for jr. high band by Tyrone A. McKenzie)

Inspired by the history of Prince Albert and area

Intro: 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 "kistahpinanihk", meaning "sitting pretty place, or meeting place. It became a gathering place for Dakota Oyate, Dene and Cree peoples.

Prince Albert is one of the oldest settlements in the province and has enjoyed a rich and celebrated history. 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 the broad valley of the North Saskatchewan River that divides the rich agricultural land of the south, from the broad band of mixed forest to the north, the possibilities seemed endless. In 1866, Reverend James Nisbet arrived and named the new settlement Prince Albert, in honour of the Prince Consort to England's Queen Victoria.

Where the prairies Meet the Pines is dedicated to the First Peoples and Settlers who gathered together in this beautiful area. This music is meant to honour and represent their contribution and commitment to the land that has been a gathering place for centuries.

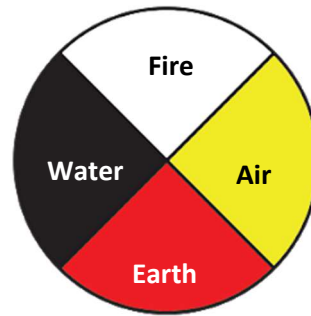
1. Seven Sacred Teachings (Measures [mm] 1,2)

These teachings honour the basic virtues intrinsic to a full and healthy life. "Where the Prairies Meet the Pines" begins with a 7-note motif that runs throughout the piece. The 3 Indigenous sections are also 7 measures in length. This is meant to pay respect to the Creator who gave these teachings to the First Peoples who inhabited the land long before settlers arrived.

These teachings are:



**Humility
Respect
Truth
Honesty
Wisdom
Courage
Love**



The first section of the piece [mm3-27], highlights the Indigenous groups who gathered at "kistahpinanihk". The four elements of the Medicine Wheel (Fire, Water, Earth and Wind) are represented in each of the 3 sections representing the 5 distinct Indigenous Peoples (Dakota, Dene and Plains, Woodland and Swampy Cree). Murals in the Prince Albert Historical Museum line the walls reminding us of those who gathered where the city of Prince Albert now stands.

Wahpeton Dakota Nation [mm3-11]



The Dakota Oyate people settled north of what is now Prince Albert. Their history highlights a strong connection to the plains bison, and a connection to in the War of 1812 between U.S.A. and the British Crown, the Dakota Oyate held the land from the Mississippi River moving west into the interior of Central North America on behalf of the British Crown. This is when Chief Flying Thunder (whose descendants are now Members of the Wahpeton Dakota Nation) was given an 1812 King George III British Pre-Confederation Treaty Medal, having "saved the life of a [British] government officer when he was shot and wounded by a Yankee officer" (Pritchard to MacDowall 01/27/1890 PAC RG10 3602 65933; as cited in Elias, 1988, p. 204; p. 243).

Taken from: Wahpeton Dakota Nation: An Ethno-Historical Connection to the Prince Albert Region from Pre-contact to Present by Dr. Leo Omani, PhD./Member of Wahpeton Dakota Nation, 2018

A Dakota Prayer Song is heard, along with "God save the King" and reference to river, fire and air.

Dene



The *Dene* section [mm 12-17] - pays tribute to the Dene people of the north who would come to "kistahpinanihk" to trade. The Dene round dance and references to the river are heard. The mysterious sounds that are represented by the wind chimes and whirly tubes, pay tribute to the great woman, Thanadelthur.

Thanadelthur (1697–1717) Peacemaker, guide and interpreter for the Hudson's Bay Company. Thanadelthur was a member of the Chipewyan (Dene) nation who, as a young woman, was captured by the Cree in 1713 and enslaved. After a year, she escaped, and eventually came across the HBC York Factory post, governed by James Knight. Thanadelthur stayed to work for Knight, who needed a translator to help make peace between the Cree and the Chipewyan for trading purposes. Accompanied by an HBC servant and a group of friendly Cree, she went on a year-long mission into Chipewyan territory. She brought the two groups together and — alternately encouraging and scolding them — brought about a peace agreement. This bringing together is represented by whirly tubes with Thanadelthur as mediator between the Cree and Settlers.

<https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/women/canada-s-great-women>

Plains, Woodland and Swampy Cree [mm 19-26]

Plains Cree



Woodland Cree



Swampee Cree



The Plains, Woodland and Swampee Cree [mm19-26] are recognized by two different Cree song fragments as well as a connection to the river, to geese (being represented by the saxes), and a drum roll in the Bass Drum to represent the bison.

2. Metis [mm26-38]

The Metis are known for many things, including their music and the Metis section is highlighted by the Isbister Jig, as recorded by John Arcand - [Isbister Jig](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5jTqW3ZJfw>

The first recorded permanent settler to the area is **John Isbister, who came to the area in 1862**. Previously working for the Hudson's Bay Company, with his last position as postmaster at Fort Carlton, his first home was recorded as being near the site of the Historical Museum located near the river in Prince Albert! Later he moved to River Lot 62 near the current penitentiary. Although moving from the area in 1866, **the region was known as Isbister's Settlement until the arrival of James Nisbet that same year.**

During this section of the piece, the bison, represented by the bass drum roll, stops abruptly, indicating how the bison were wiped out, which signaled the end of the settlers need for metis guides.

3. Settlers [mm39-53]

The hymn tune *Praise My Soul the King of Heaven*, is one of the hymns found in the Presbyterian hymnal during the time that James Nisbet ministered in Prince Albert.

In 1866, Reverend James Nisbet arrived and named the new settlement Prince Albert, in honour of the Prince Consort to England's Queen Victoria.

Early settlers were drawn to the abundance of timber and fertile land in the late 1860s and early 1870s.

One of the first buildings in Prince Albert built by Nisbet still exists today - the **First Presbyterian Church** which now sits at the north end of Kinsmen Park, and was moved to that site for the Prince Albert Historical Society in 1932. The early missionaries held services in English and Cree, and began a school where children learned to read in Cree through a primer that was prepared by Nisbet himself.

4. Ending [mm 54-60]

The piece ends as it began, focussing on the sacred teachings that Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples strive to uphold as a high value.

Acknowledgments:

I would like to thank Michelle Taylor and the staff at The Prince Albert Historical Museum for their assistance. Having access to articles in their vast data base was extremely helpful. As well, they were able to give me a tour and connect me to leaders in the community.

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Thank you as well to Leah Dorion who gave me a tour through the Metis section of the Museum and explained her artwork and the deep connection of Metis people to the Prince Albert Region. The Metis people have a rich heritage connecting to the very first settlement in the area.

I am also grateful to Kevin Peeace who was involved with the community in putting together murals that depict the history of the region from Pre-Contact and include the Indigenous peoples – Dakota, Dene, Plains Cree, Woodland Cree and Swampy Cree.

Each one of you provided important and crucial insight. I would not have had the information to complete this project without your help! Thank you!

Sources include:

<http://www.princealberttourism.com/history>

http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/nisbet_james_10E.html

<https://www.csph.ca/assets/2015-jamesnisbetandtheforiegmissionscommittee.pdf>

<https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/women/canada-s-great-women>

Wahpeton Dakota Nation: An Ethno-Historical Connection to the Prince Albert Region from Pre-contact to Present by Dr. Leo Omani, PhD./Member of Wahpeton Dakota Nation, 2018

http://www.historypa.com/dr_c_h_and_lenore_andrews.html