

STUDY GUIDE



Pete Meechan (b. 1980)
Meechan Music
(2025)

MBA *manitoba band association*

In support of

 **CancerCare Manitoba**
FOUNDATION

Educational Resources:



Commission funded by:



STUDY GUIDE
Wave of Light
Pete Meechan (b. 1980)
Meechan Music
(2025)
5:00

Composed for
“Wave of Light” a project led by Manitoba Band Association in support of
CancerCare Manitoba Foundation

Composer:

Canadian-British composer [Dr. Pete Meechan](#) is an acclaimed composer whose works for wind and brass band, orchestra, and chamber ensemble are performed and recorded by professional and amateur ensembles around the globe. Dr. Meechan’s wind-band composition *Perpetua* was the winner of the Sousa-ABA-Ostwald Composition Contest (2021), and *Waves Towards the Pebbled Shore* was a finalist in the National Band Association William D. Revelli Memorial Composition Contest (2018).

Dr. Meechan composes music that is personal and relevant. Designed with craftsmanship and artistry, Dr. Meechan’s scores contain layers of complexity that, regardless of technical level, are artistically and emotionally accessible. He reveals, “I want to compose music that has emotional depth; music that allows space for people to be present, to hear, to consider, to feel; and I want to compose music that speaks to how I feel personally and what is happening in the world around us.”¹ Influenced by classical and popular genres, his music addresses social, historical, cultural, and emotional themes that resonate with diverse musicians and audiences.

Dr. Meechan received his Bachelor of Music at the Royal Northern College of Music (Manchester) and his Master of Arts and PhD (composition) from the University of Salford (Manchester). Subsequent residencies with the Black Dyke Brass band and The Band of the Coldstream Guards were completed before immigrating to Canada. In 2020, Dr. Meechan received the Canadian Band Association’s Canadian Composer Award for his significant contributions to high quality band repertoire.

Composition:

In 2025, Dr. Meechan was guest composer at a Louis Riel School Division Honour Band which raised funds for [CancerCare Manitoba Foundation](#). Sherelle Kwan, Manager of Community Events and Development, contacted Dr. Meechan following the performance.

¹ Meechan, Pete. <https://meechanmusic.com/why-i-compose/>

She encouraged him to explore his vision of creating a composition that achieved fundraising goals while serving as a medium for a participatory community experience. In turn, *Wave of Light* was composed with support from the [Manitoba Arts Council](#) and [Winnipeg Arts Council](#).

Dr. Meechan indicated that perhaps the most difficult aspect of composing *Wave of Light* was conceptualizing the ways to make the work accessible to instrumentalists of all levels and to connect the audience to the performance through the optional performance of a vocal line. Dr. Meechan reflected, “*Wave of Light* is a way to celebrate, commemorate, to be thankful, cry, and celebrate. Regardless of what divides us, the process will unite and connect us. Music is universal.”²

There are three versions of the work, but any part from any version can be combined for rehearsal and performance.³ Version B (Level 2) and version C (Flex - Level 1) have a piano accompaniment part which is available as a pre-recorded play-along. Version A (Level 3) does not require the piano accompaniment, but it can be used.

A single ensemble can utilize one version of *Wave of Light* or versions A, B, and/or C(flex) together; all scores and parts utilize identical rehearsal numbers and harmonies.

Optional vocal parts can be performed as a single melodic line or in two- or four-part harmony. Vocal parts can be prepared in advance in collaboration with school/community choir or taught to the audience with minimal time commitment before the performance during the concert event. (See supplemental guide and three-minute demonstration video <https://youtu.be/qxFw-xzJsAE> provided by Kendalyn Penner.)

Historical and Cultural Perspective:

Following initial collaborative discussions with the Manitoba Band Association and CancerCare Manitoba Foundation, the title *Wave of Light* represents beacons of light for the memories of those impacted by cancer – from loved ones gone and from those who have survived.

Dr. Meechan began the composition by conceptualizing version A (Level 3) at the piano, and the piano part was enhanced as the instrumental score emerged. His goal was to ensure that all three versions had validity both alone and in combination so that *Wave of Light* could be performed with reduced instrumentation, in a multi-level program, and in collaborations between community and school programs that include beginner instrumentalists.

² Meechan, Pete. Interview September 3, 2025.

³ The following is included in the score: “For reference, and in anticipation that there may be performances that will involve different players in the group playing from more than one scoring, each page of the score and each page of each part has a code in the footer to help you quickly identify which part belongs to which scoring. If the code begins PMM180A it belongs to Score A, PMM180B is Score B, and Score C is marked with PMM180C. Each footer also contains the part name and the page number.”

Sherelle Kwan, CancerCare Manitoba Foundation, provides the following program note:

Wave of Light is a deeply moving and reflective work that speaks to the universal impact of cancer on our lives. Whether through personal diagnosis, supporting a loved one, or working on the front lines of care, this shared human experience brings a wide range of emotions – grief, compassion, anger, sadness, and even moments of joy. This piece is a tribute to all of those emotions, offering space for remembrance, celebration, and connection. It acknowledges the pain of loss, the resilience of survivors, and the quiet strength of those who stand beside them.

Wave of Light was composed with the belief that music has the power to heal, unite, and bring light into the darkest moments. It is not only a piece of music, but a vessel for emotional expression and reflection. While every listener and performer brings their own story, this work provides a sense of unity and shared understanding. It is a wave of hope and light, reminding us that we are not alone. Each performance becomes a moment of connection – between people, memories, and the healing power of music.

Wave of Light is a vessel to encourage student leadership and community involvement in your program. Funds raised, regardless of significance, help students learn about service, volunteerism, and compassion. The work can also serve to unite schools and communities by joining together to serve a common cause through the indisputable power of music.

Fund raising efforts can be program- or divisional-based. Student ownership and engagement will be key to successful initiatives. Sample considerations could include:

- Chore Challenge (student completes chores and donates proceeds)
- Small ensemble dessert night
- Student recital
- Play-a-thon
- Teach your principal flex version part to perform if the school raises funds
- Raffle or silent auction of donated items
- Staff/student performance with your mayor co-conducting
- Thrift Sale

With the *Wave of Light* collaboration, we cannot predict or gauge the positive impact for individuals who are on a personal journey with cancer, but we can usher students and community through a successful fund-raising initiative and performance that create a supportive collective. On October 30, 2025, music educator and cancer survivor Jayna Kanton (Mountain View School Division) introduced the performance of *Wave of Light* (Brandon University Symphonic Band with Westman/Parkland Students and Directors, Dr. Pete Meechan guest conductor). She included the following remarks:

The question that I asked the most through treatment and recovery was “When will my life go back to normal?” The truth is it never did. I walked out of my cancer journey a different person than who started it. I truly believe that I was given a second chance at life, and I am determined to do some good with it. However, as I age, I am starting to realize that “doing some good” with my life isn’t necessarily a single grand gesture; rather, it’s in the little actions I take every day. It’s checking in with my students, it’s saying good morning to people in the hallway, it’s trying to be a positive role model and figure in my community, it’s raising a daughter who is kind and loving. I’m trying my best every day to be the kind and loving person that the world needs.

I am so lucky to get to teach, make, and share music every day with my students. That is something that 17-year-old Jayna only dreamed of doing. I like to think that these actions create a wave of light in my classroom, school and communities. I, like many of you here today, believe that music has the power to heal, connect, and bring light into the darkest moments and that we can use music to create our own Waves of Light.⁴

Ensembles can consider inviting health care professionals, community dignitaries, and family and friends impacted by cancer to performances. While fundraising and community building possibilities are endless, initiatives will be much more successful with the grassroots support of ensemble members and stakeholders.

In preparation for rehearsal and performance, each conductor should provide context for the ensemble and audience so that they are sensitive to and aware of the subject of the composition.⁵ Conductors should be proactive and acknowledge the possible reactions through the process; consider reading the “Awareness and Sensitivity Statement” provided or construct your own that is community appropriate.

Before the performance, take time to use bold markers (black or colored) to complete the 11x17 signs to fold over music stands stating “I’m playing for...” This is both a difficult and significant activity for participants and the conductor before the performance, and allotting time for this step in the rehearsal schedule is essential.

Stylistic Considerations:

Wave of Light should be performed in a *legato* style. Understanding the structure of the piece (see below, **Form and Structure**) will assist in negotiating the pacing and dynamic intensity of each section. Slurred notes should be executed with care as written. Consider undertaking subdivision exercises during rehearsal to ensure that all rhythms are held for their full values.

⁴ Jayna Kanton’s full remarks can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7mdfpfZi74>

⁵ **Instructor Awareness and Sensitivity** for the project, created by the CancerCare Manitoba Foundation, is available at the conclusion of the study guide.

Version C (flex) includes a limited number of eighth notes, and version B includes isolated dotted quarter eighth patterns as well as sixteenth notes for flute and percussion.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The score(s) that you choose for your ensemble can be based on individual and/or ensemble level as well as available time for preparation. Note that all three levels have similar musical challenges in legato playing, tone, phrasing, balance, and blend. If you choose to utilize multiple versions to differentiate instruction, consider an individual's challenge of playing a part that may then not be doubled in the ensemble; when appropriate, consider assigning different versions to players in pairs to avoid creating unintended obstacles.

Version A (Level 3) includes the following instrumentation:

Piccolo, 2 Flutes, Oboe, Bassoon, Contra Bassoon (optional)

3 Clarinets, Bass Clarinet, Contrabass Clarinet (optional)

2 Alto Saxophones, Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone

3 Trumpets, 2 Horns, 2 Trombones, Bass Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba

String Bass

Piano (optional)

Harp (optional)

Percussion: Bass Drum Glockenspiel, Suspended Cymbal, Timpani, Vibraphone

Version A includes five percussion parts – timpani, glockenspiel, vibraphone, suspended cymbal, and bass drum. The glockenspiel part is slightly more challenging in version A than B; parts can be exchanged as necessary. If a vibraphone is unavailable, consider covering the part with a synthesizer or piano to replicate the desired resonance of the timbre.

The instrumentation for version B (Level 2) is provided below:

2 Flutes, Oboe (optional), Bassoon (optional)

2 Clarinets, Bass Clarinet

2 Alto Saxophones, Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone

2 Trumpets, Horn, 2 Trombones, Euphonium, Tuba

String Bass

Piano (preferred)

Percussion: Bass Drum, Glockenspiel, Suspended Cymbal, Timpani

Version B includes four percussion parts – timpani, glockenspiel, suspended cymbal and bass drum. If only one percussionist is available, cover the suspended cymbal, then bass

drum, glockenspiel and timpani. The timpani part includes four pitches with one tuning (D to E-flat); the E-flat is used in measures 47, 52, 55, and 57 before the D reappears in measure 63. (If the developing timpanist is unable to tune quickly and independently, consider adding rests in measure 47 and 52-57 of the part, and have the timpanist re-enter in measure 58 (sixteenth notes) at the peak of the crescendo.)

Version C (Flex - Level 1) provides the following instrumentation:

Part 1: Flute, Clarinet, Trumpet

Part 2: Flute, Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Horn, Trumpet

Part 3: Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Horn, Trumpet

Part 4: Bass Clarinet, Baritone Saxophone, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba
Piano

Percussion: Bass Drum, Suspended Cymbal

Because of the endurance required to play all notes in Version C (flex), Dr. Meechan has included a program note that indicates: “When using Score C not all instruments need to play all the notes all of the time. It is encouraged to experiment with creating your own version of the score that works best for the ensemble in front of you.” If an ensemble is performing version A and adding additional musicians on versions B and/or C, conductors are encouraged to pay attention to the colours created with the scoring. As an example, consider what instruments could perform at letter E in version B and C so that the saxophone choir in version A can be heard.

There are some slight differences between dynamics between version C (flex) and the other two versions as some dynamic ranges may not be reasonable for less experienced instrumentalists. In that case, adjust dynamics accordingly in versions A and B.

PEDAGOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The marked tempo for *Wave of Light* is significant (quarter equals 64-70). It is accessible for all musicians regardless of experience, but it is important to maintain the tempo early in the rehearsal process to ensure a smooth transition – especially if adding the recorded piano part.

The piano part (an in-class performance by conductor/student or recorded version) is useful in teaching and learning all three versions of *Wave of Light* but is only *required* for the performance of version C (flex), recommended for version B and optional for version A. The piano should be used with version A in instances of reduced instrumentation. Consider not only listening to the piano part during rehearsal but also making the recording available for musicians for individual practice purposes. Strategies like counting

subdivision out loud, clapping rhythms, air banding⁶, and singing pitches with the recording will encourage enhanced awareness of pulse consistency and harmonic language.

The piano part could be performed by a member of the ensemble or by a guest, and if needed the recording could be used to support preparation for the performance until the guest arrives. Conductors using the recorded piano part are encouraged to carefully consider well in advance how the recording will be projected to the audience and still be heard by the entire ensemble. “In house” speakers positioned in front of the ensemble can be difficult to hear and may cause coordination challenges with live musicians.

Form and Structure:

SECTION	MEASURE	SCORE MARKING	DYNAMIC
a	mm 1-6		<i>mf</i>
b	mm 7-10	Letter A	<i>p</i>
b'	mm 11-15		<i>mf</i>
a	mm 16-21	Letter B	<i>mf</i>
b''	mm 22-26	Letter C	<i>p crescendo</i>
c	mm 27-35	Letter D	<i>poco f</i>
a'	mm 36-43	Letter E	<i>p crescendo</i>
a	mm 44-49	Letter F	<i>mf crescendo</i>
b	mm 50-54	Letter G	<i>p</i>
b	mm 55-59	Letter H	<i>mf crescendo</i>
c	mm 60-68	Letter I	<i>f crescendo</i>
c	mm 69-81	(rhythmic augmentation and repetition of tonic) Letter J and K	<i>ff</i>

Additional References, Resources, and Related Recordings:

Instructional and Performance Recording

Wave of Light piano

Scores

Wave of Light Score A Wind Band (Wave of Light Score A Wind Band parts)

Wave of Light Score B Wind Band (Wave of Light Score B Wind Band parts)

Wave of Light Flex Score (Wave of Light Flex Score Wind Band parts)

Wave of Light vocal melody optional harmony

Wave of Light SATB score

Wave of Light Full vocal score (lead voice, lead voice (low), voice 2, SATB, and piano)

⁶ “Air banding” is one of many terms used to indicate that musicians execute their part on their instrument without blowing into (or bowing/striking) the instrument. Additional expressions include “shadow playing” or “everything but air” that also encourages attention to posture and hand position.

Instructional Resource Recordings available

Wave of Light A band

Wave of Light A band with choir

Wave of Light B band

Wave of Light B band with choir

Wave of Light C band

Wave of Light C band with choir

www.meechanmusic.com

Meechan, Pete. *Wave of Light*. University of Manitoba Wind Ensemble. Jacquie Dawson.

Recorded Live October 24, 2025. *YouTube* video, 40:30--46:00.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDUf37ECFF4&t=2286s>

Meechan, Pete. *Wave of Light*. Brandon University Symphonic Band with Westman

Students and Directors. Pete Meechan. October 30, 2025. *YouTube* video, 5:44.

<https://youtu.be/CWlQllfjtdc>

Selected Works Composed by Pete Meechan

Forgotten Children

Hummingbird: The Angel's Messenger

Letters for Home

Song of Hope

Additional Works:

In Heaven's Air, Samuel Hazo

Gone, Scott McAllister

Lux Perpetua, Frank Ticheli

CONTRIBUTED BY:

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Instructor Awareness and Sensitivity

This piece is rooted in shared experiences of cancer—its challenges, uncertainties, and moments of resilience. As such, it may carry personal meaning for performers, instructors, and listeners alike. Individuals engaging with this music may have lived experience with cancer themselves, may be supporting someone who does, or may be remembering a loved one.

Band instructors are encouraged to approach the rehearsal and presentation of this work with sensitivity and awareness. Strong emotions may surface during rehearsal or performance, and for some, the experience may be unexpectedly powerful. Creating space for reflection, acknowledging the emotional weight of the piece, and allowing participants to engage at their own comfort level can help foster a supportive environment.

The intent of this work is not only musical expression, but also shared understanding, connection, and respect for the experiences it represents.