

# **The Wisdom of the Rock** *from Cardinal Elements*

Kenley Kristofferson (b. 1983)

PREVIEW ONLY

Flute - 8  
Piccolo - 1  
Oboe - 2  
Bb Clarinet 1 - 4  
Eb Clarinet 2,3 - 8  
Bb Bass Clarinet - 2  
Bassoon - 2  
Eb Alto Saxophone 1 - 2  
Eb Alto Saxophone 2 - 2  
Bb Tenor Saxophone - 2  
Eb Baritone Saxophone - 1  
Bb Trumpet 1 - 2  
Bb Trumpet 2,3 - 4  
F Horn 1,2 - 4  
Trombone 1,2 - 4  
Baritone - 2  
Baritone Treble Clef - 1  
Tuba - 2  
String Bass - 1  
Timpani - 1  
Chimes, Bells - 2  
Bass Drum - 1

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*Wisdom of the Rock* as a standalone piece is meant as a scaffold to programming the *Cardinal Elements* suite. While the suite has four separate ensemble transitions between concert band and drumming, this piece only has one and it's very clear: The drumming and singing begins, the band enters near the end, and the band continues after the drumming stops. In the premiere version, the drummers performed their song and rumbled at its end, then the band transitioned in with its percussion rolling and the drummers faded out.

Watching the premiere recording (found on my website and YouTube channel) is a tremendous resource to how to perform this piece.

*Wisdom of the Rock* (which is movement III from the suite) begins a troubled and haunted musical story. When I was researching this piece and talking to Treaty One Indigenous folks about their tradition of the elements, I expected them to talk about the “strength” of earth and rock; to my surprise, they said something quite different. They spoke of the *wisdom* of the rock and that it had been present for ages, seeing the First Peoples on the land, then the coming of the settlers, and the difficult relationship we’ve been navigating for the last few centuries. We are connected to the earth and need its wisdom, perhaps now more than ever. Like the end of the second movement, m21 reveals a more hopeful side of the music – perhaps by listening to the rock and forming a stronger connection with the earth, we may forge a better relationship with one another.

PREVIEW ONLY K.K.

Kenley Kristofferson is a composer for concert band, concert choir, symphony orchestra and video games. Growing up as a euphonium player in Gimli, Manitoba, he later went on to complete his B. Mus and B. Ed degrees from the University of Manitoba and became one of the music teachers at Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School in Selkirk, MB. In 2019, he completed his Master of Music in Composition from Brandon University, studying under Dr. T. Patrick Carrabré.

His work *The Meeting Place* won the 2016 Canadian Band Association Composition Competition (now the Howard Cable Memorial Prize in Composition). His music has been performed at the Midwest Band Convention in Chicago and the Manitoba Music Educators' Association Conference (TEMPO), among others. It has been recorded by the Arizona State University Wind Orchestra, Barrett Choir, and Choral Union, the University of Northern Colorado Wind Ensemble, the Cleveland Winds, the University of Manitoba Wind Ensemble, and the Winnipeg Wind Ensemble.

He has written commercial work for video game franchises such as Betty Boop, Disney's DuckTales, KRE-O and Warhammer 40,000. The score for his short film on the early life of astronomer Carl Sagan, *Star Stuff*, was nominated for Best Original Score in the “Short” category in the 2016 International Sound and Film Music Festival in Croatia.

He currently lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba

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### Background:

In 2019, I was commissioned by the bands of the Seven Oaks School Division in Winnipeg, MB to write a piece for Concert Band and Indigenous Drummers and Singers as an act of reconciliation from their organization and students. The commissioning body had diverse staff on the project and we had many conversations and discussions, including meeting with an elder more than once. I wrote the concert band sections and drummer "Coco" Ray Stevenson wrote the drumming and singing, so that both the Settler and Indigenous musicians each had autonomy over their own art for the project. We both wanted to ensure that neither artistic party was appropriating the other during this process. Through our meetings and collaboration, we settled on the four elements as a common ground to base our pieces. While both Settler and Indigenous cultures have a common history of them, they share a different context, which is a crucial part of the conversation. That piece is called *Cardinal Elements* and *Wisdom of the Rock* is the third of four movements.

These pieces are vehicles to get Indigenous musicians into the band room, not only to teach about the drum and the songs of the region, but of the tradition and function of Indigenous music as a whole. Both *Cardinal Elements* and *Wisdom of the Rock* are as much a framework for bringing these two ensembles together as they are pieces of music. It cannot just be about "playing the song" – there is teaching to be done. The instructions for drumming are only what we did for our performance and are just a guide. They don't need to be followed exactly. Because of the nature of each band connecting with Indigenous musicians using their own songs, every performance of this piece will be different. As said earlier, the concert band parts are fixed, but the singing and drumming is not. The drummers could use songs from their own treaty area, their own traditions, and their own First Nations heritage to work with the band piece – it is up to them.

### Performance Notes:

I want to begin by thanking you for programming this piece. This is a bit of an undertaking, but it's one that pays off in spades. You are exposing your students to exploring a cultural narrative beyond something that much traditional band music can offer. If you are Canadian and performing this piece, you probably understand the difficult dialogue that has existed (and continues to exist) between Settler and Indigenous Canadians throughout history, and now you're doing your part to change it. Excellent job.

Now for the hard stuff, and this can't be understated: While one could conceivably play this piece without the Indigenous drumming and singing, that really undermines the integrity and intent of the work. The conductor should, at all costs, ensure that the Indigenous musical aspects of the piece (singing and drumming) remain intact. If a band were working with Indigenous musicians in the classroom in preparation for a concert where they performed together but couldn't secure them for a festival or travel performance, that might be acceptable, but the student learning and engagement with real Indigenous musicians is paramount. Also, the visual and performance aspects of both ensembles (band and drummers) sharing equal roles on stage sends a very powerful message about reconciliation to both the audience and the performers.

This musical work is my personal act of reconciliation.

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### Connecting With Indigenous Musicians:

This piece involves some non-musical legwork, but the effect is authentic and powerful. It involves connecting with Indigenous teachers and musicians in your community or school division and working together to teach one another about their arts and culture. You may have Indigenous students in your school who are active in traditional drumming and singing and this is an excellent opportunity to bring them into the band room and teach the other students about what music means to them, about their community's songs, and about what the drum has meant to their people. It also gives them a platform to speak their truth about their history and experience in school and Settler communities.

If your school division has an Indigenous lead teacher, this is an excellent opportunity to bring them in and share information and history with your students.

If your school division has a drum group – either in your school or a different one – this is a great time to have them connect meaningfully with one another.

If you need to reach out to an Indigenous musician outside of your immediate community, we've included a sample letter that can be revised to fit your needs and explains not only what this piece is, but how it functions pedagogically and educationally.

There is an example recording on my website, as well as other resources, if you require more guidance with the rehearsal and organization of this work.

Again, thank you for engaging our youth in making a difference through music.

*Kenley Kristofferson*

[www.kenleykristofferson.com](http://www.kenleykristofferson.com)  
[kenley@kenleykristofferson.com](mailto:kenley@kenleykristofferson.com)  
@kenley\_k on Twitter

# THE WISDOM OF THE ROCK

*alto solo enters after  
8 bars of drums*

*from* CARDINAL ELEMENTS

Kenley Kristofferson  
*with* Ray Stevenson

Pensively ♩ = 68

Flute  
Piccolo

Oboe

B♭ Clarinet 1

B♭ Clarinet 2,3

B♭ Bass Clarinet

Bassoon

E♭ Alto Saxophone 1  
*1 player*  
*p*

E♭ Alto Saxophone 2

B♭ Tenor Saxophone

E♭ Baritone Saxophone

B♭ Trumpet 1

B♭ Trumpet 2,3

F Horn 1,2

Trombone 1,2

Baritone

Tuba

Timpani  
G-B♭-C-D

Chimes

*p*

PREVIEW ONLY

7

8

9

10

11

12

*drums out*

Fl Picc

Ob

Cl 1

Cl 2,3

B Cl

Bsn

A Sax 1

A Sax 2

T Sax

B Sax

Tpt 1

Tpt 2,3

Hn 1,2

Trbn 1,2

Bari

Tuba

Timp

Chimes

*p*

*mp*

*tutti*

**PREVIEW ONLY**

13

14

15

16

17

18

Fl Picc *mf* + Picc.

Ob *mf*

Cl 1 *mf*

Cl 2,3 *mf*

B Cl *mf*

Bsn *mf*

A Sax 1 *mf*

A Sax 2 *mf*

T Sax *mf*

B Sax *mf*

Tpt 1 *mf*

Tpt 2,3 *mf* a2

Hn 1,2 *mf*

Trbn 1,2 *mf*

Bari *mf*

Tuba *mf*

Timp *mp* *mf*

Chimes *Bells*

**PREVIEW ONLY**



19

20

21

22

23

24

Fl Picc *div.* *f*

Ob *f*

Cl 1 *f*

Cl 2,3 *f*

B Cl *f*

Bsn *f*

A Sax 1 *f*

A Sax 2 *f*

T Sax *f*

B Sax *f*

Tpt 1 *f*

Tpt 2,3 *a2* *f*

Hn 1,2 *f*

Trbn 1,2 *a2* *8* *2.* *1.* *f*

Bari *f*

Tuba *f*

Timp *D to Eb* *mp* *f*

Chimes *Chimes*

**PREVIEW ONLY**



30

PREVIEW ONLY



37

38

39

*rall.*

Fl Picc

Ob

Cl 1

Cl 2,3

B Cl

Bsn

A Sax 1

A Sax 2

T Sax

B Sax

Tpt 1

Tpt 2,3

Hn 1,2

Trbn 1,2

Bari

Tuba

Timp

Chimes

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[www.cjg-music.com](http://www.cjg-music.com)

Fon: +49 (0) 8231 / 99 34 22

Mail: [info@cjb-music.com](mailto:info@cjb-music.com)