

2023

# A SONG FOR THE WATER

Music & Words by  
PAT MAYBERRY

Arranged by  
JANE BEST

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**Text:**

Nibì wabo running deep  
Nibì wabo flowing free  
Don précieux qui donne la vie  
Sacred sister healing me  
Rivers stretch across the land  
The oceans brush the ancient sands  
Pray bless this earth on which we stand,  
Creator God

**Program notes:** A Song for the Water was written in response to a competition and call from the Hymn Society of Canada and the United States for a text and melody on the theme of land, language and liberation. The piece subsequently won the competition. Although written primarily in English, A Song for the Water includes French, an official language of Canada, and, from one of the many indigenous languages spoken in North America, the Omàmiwininimowin words nibì wabo (water womb). This is Pat's first collaboration with Jane Best and she is thrilled with the resulting arrangement.

**Duration:** 3 minutes

# A Song for the Water

With thanks to the Anishinabeg, who as Omàmiwinini bring us the  
Omàmiwininimowin words ni-bì / water and wabo / womb.

Pat Mayberry

arr. Jane Best

flowing ♩ = 96

S  
A

*mp* Ni - bì wa - bo

flowing ♩ = 96

*mp*

7

run - ning deep, Ni - bì wa - bo

7

13

S  
A

flow - ing free, *mf* Don prē - cieux qui donne la

T  
B

Oo, oo,

13

*mf*

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19

vic,  
oo.

Sa - cred sis - ter heal - ing

19

*mp*

*mp*

25

*mp* me.

*mf* Ri - vers stretch a -

25

(8va) - - - -

*mp*

*p*

The image displays a musical score for a song titled "A Song for the Water". It consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 19-24) features a vocal line with lyrics "vic, oo. Sa - cred sis - ter heal - ing" and a piano accompaniment. The second system (measures 25-28) continues the vocal line with lyrics "me. Ri - vers stretch a -" and the piano accompaniment. The third system (measures 29-32) shows the vocal line with a high note marked "(8va)" and the piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). A large red watermark "Perusal Copy" is overlaid diagonally across the page. The logo "ECM EAST CHAMBER MUSIC" is visible in the background of the first system.



31

cross the land, the o - ceans brush the an - cient sands, *f*

31

*f*

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37

*mp* Pray bless this earth on which we stand, Cre - a -

37

*mp*

43

tor God. *mp* Ni - bī

43

*mp* *p*

49

wa - bo run - ning deep, Ni - bī

49

piano stops, or supports  
singers very quietly

*p*

The image displays a musical score for a song titled 'A Song for the Water'. It is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 43-48) features a vocal line with lyrics 'tor God. Ni - bī' and a piano accompaniment. The piano part has a dynamic marking of *mp* and includes a large, stylized 'ECM' watermark. The second system (measures 49-54) continues the vocal line with lyrics 'wa - bo run - ning deep, Ni - bī'. The piano accompaniment has a dynamic marking of *p*. The third system (measures 55-60) shows the piano part with a dynamic marking of *p* and a note that says 'piano stops, or supports singers very quietly'. The piano part includes a large, stylized 'Perusal Only' watermark.

54

wa - bo flow - ing free, *mf* Don pré - cieux qui

54

*mp*

60

donne la vie, Sa - cred sis - ter heal -

60

piano returns *mp*



66

ing me.

*mp* Oo

*f* Ri - vers

66

8va

*mf*

72

oo oo oo. Oo oo oo

stretch a - cross the land, the o - ceans brush the an - cient

72

The image displays a musical score for the song 'A Song for the Water'. It is divided into two systems. The first system, starting at measure 66, features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics 'ing me.' and 'Oo' with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The piano accompaniment includes a section marked '8va' and a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The second system, starting at measure 72, continues the vocal line with lyrics 'stretch a - cross the land, the o - ceans brush the an - cient' and the piano accompaniment. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'Perusal Copy Only' is overlaid across the center of the page.

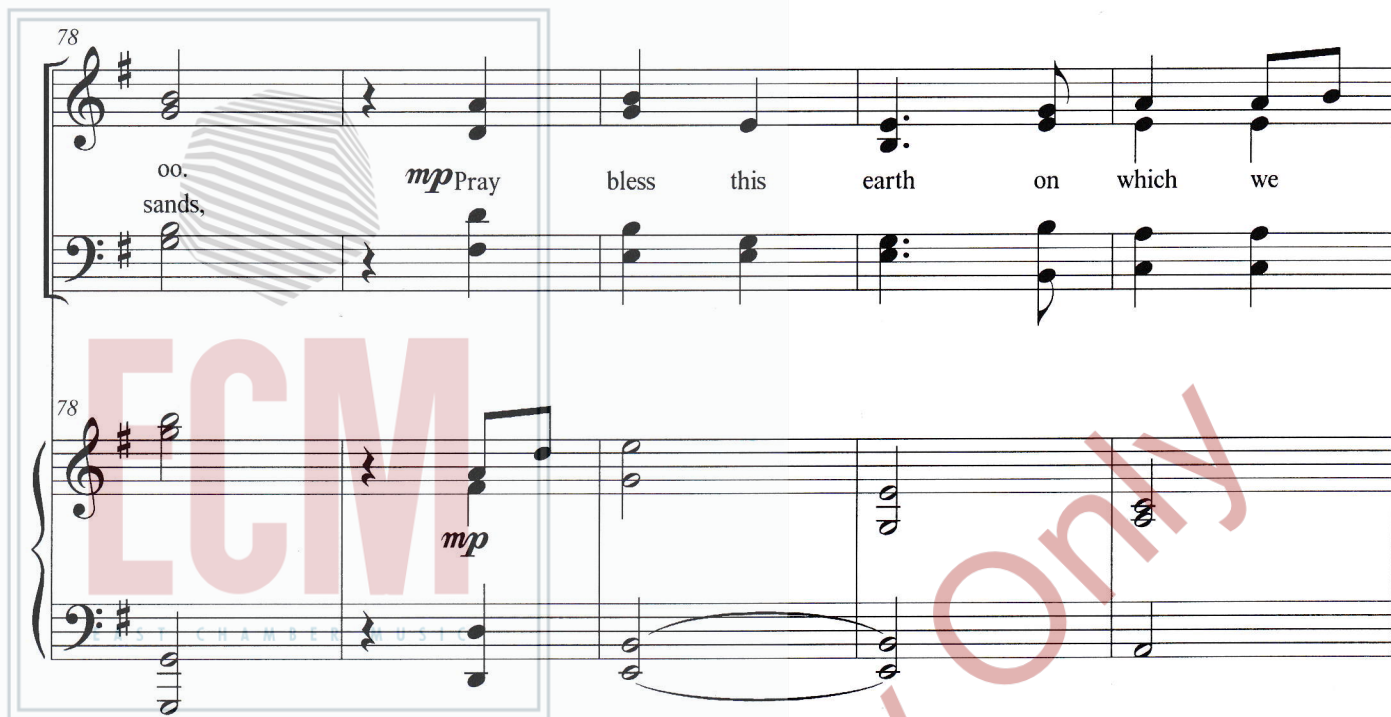


78

oo. sands, *mp* Pray bless this earth on which we

78

*mp*



83

stand, Cre - a - tor God.

83



88 *f* Ri - vers stretch a - cross the land, the

88 *mf*

93 o - ceans brush the an - cient sands, *mp* Pray

93 *f* *mp*

The image displays a musical score for a song titled "A Song for the Water". It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins at measure 88 with the lyrics "Ri - vers stretch a - cross the land, the" and continues at measure 93 with "o - ceans brush the an - cient sands, Pray". The piano accompaniment starts at measure 88 and continues at measure 93. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f* (forte), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *mp* (mezzo-piano). A large, semi-transparent watermark "ECM" is visible across the middle of the page, and a "Perusal Copy Only" watermark is also present. The page number "8" is in the top left corner, and the title "A Song for the Water" is at the top center.

98

bless this earth on which we stand Cre - a

98

103

tor God, Cre - a - tor

103



108 *mf* Cre - a - A tor God. *a few voices*

God,

108 *mf*

113 *mp*

113 *rit.* *mp*

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "A Song for the Water". It consists of four systems of staves. The first system (measures 108-112) features a vocal line with lyrics "Cre - a - A tor God." and a piano accompaniment. The second system (measures 113-117) continues the piano accompaniment. The third system (measures 118-122) shows the piano accompaniment with a "rit." (ritardando) marking. The fourth system (measures 123-127) concludes the piece. Dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *mp* (mezzo-piano). A large, diagonal watermark "Perusal Copy Only" is overlaid across the score. A blue box highlights the first system. The page number "10" is in the top left, and the title "A Song for the Water" is at the top center.



# Winning Selection of our 2023 Hymn Search: "A Chant for the Water" by Pat Mayberry

The selection that stood out for each of us as the strongest submission was "A Chant for the Water." We felt that it was very clever of the writer to include various languages that are spoken in Québec. As a committee, we also found it helpful that the writer included context behind their connection to the indigenous language. Not only did the text tie in to the theme of the conference well, but the tune is also very singable!

To ensure our process was not biased, the name of the author and/or composer did not appear on the hymn copies submitted for judging. It was then later revealed to our committee that Pat Mayberry was the writer of "A Chant for the Water." She is a Canadian singer-songwriter within the United Church of Canada. Mayberry explains more about her hymn:

"When I saw the themes and location for this year's hymn search, my mind immediately turned to the land and particularly to water, essential to all living things. I have become much more aware as the years have passed of how precious water is in all our lives. Water is sacred to Indigenous peoples and is treated with respect as a living entity. In this chant, I wanted to use an Indigenous language, as well as French and English. The Indigenous words come first as they are



THE HYMN • 9

p. 11

A Chant for the Water

Words and Music:  
Pat Mayberry 2023

quarter note = 103

Dm C Dm Dm Dm Dm

Ni - bi \*wa - bo ru - ning deep. Ni - bi

C A Gm Dm Bb Bb

wa - bo flow - ing free. Don pre - cieus qui donne la vie. Sa - cred

C Dm Dm Dm Bb C

sis - ter heal - ing me. Ri - vers stretch a - cross the

F Bb C F Am Dm Bb C

land, the o - ceans brush the an - cient sands. Pray bless this earth on which we stand Cre -

Bb C Dm 1. Dm Bb C Dm Bb C Dm

a - tor God. God, Cre - a - tor God, Cre - a - tor God!

51

Repeat the chant or a section of it as many times as wished

\*With thanks to the Anishinabeg,  
who as Omāmiwinini bring us the Omāmiwinimowin  
words nibi/water and wabo/womb

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from one of the original peoples of this land. I had the privilege some years ago of participating in a water ceremony, led by an Indigenous Anishinabeg woman, where we sang The Water Song. The first words of the song are "Nibi wabo" (water womb), words which have always stuck with me as much as the very sacredness of the ceremony. When acknowledging these words on the score, I wanted to be certain I was doing it respectfully, so I spoke with an Indigenous friend, who then spoke to others, resulting in the acknowledgement you will see at the bottom of the score. This acknowledgement is one which looks very different from one I

might have written myself. I do hope you enjoy this chant as much as I enjoyed writing it."

At the Annual Conference in Montréal this year, our theme centered around "Land, Language, and Liberation"

As a committee, we would like to thank all of those who have submitted for this hymn search. We hope that you will continue to write and refine your craft!

Submitted by Matthew Boutda,  
Member-at-Large on the Executive  
Committee, Chair of the 2023  
Hymn Search Committee

### About the composer

Pat Mayberry is a Canadian singer-songwriter and hymn writer. Beginning as a more lyrical folk singer, Pat has increasingly included themes of spirituality and our relationship with nature in her music. She has released 6 CDs of original songs. In the past 20 years, Pat has also found her place as a beloved hymn writer and creator of music for worship within the United Church of Canada and beyond. Her worship music has been widely used across Canada and internationally. She has hymns in the More Voices and Then Let Us Sing hymnbooks of the United Church of Canada, the Mennonite hymnbook Voices Together and the Methodist Singing the Faith Plus hymnbook in the UK. Pat's lyrics are often described as poetry and she strives at all times to use language which is both inclusive and accessible with melodies that open the heart. You can see more of Pat's music at <https://sites.google.com/view/musicbydavidwkai/home/pat-mayberry-music> or at [patmayberrymusic.com](http://patmayberrymusic.com). You can listen to her music on Spotify and iTunes .

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### About the Arranger

Jane Best is a musician on Manitoulin Island. She grew up in Kingston and Toronto, singing in a children's choir and studying piano through the Royal Conservatory. She studied music at the University of Toronto, and in 1989 moved north to Manitoulin Island where she teaches private music lessons. Over the years she has directed several choirs and singing groups, and she has been the director of the Manitoulin Community Choir since its inception in 2006. She has been a Girl Guide leader, a school music volunteer, and served on the board of the Summer Institute of Church Music for many years. Several of her choir pieces are in print, and her hymns are found in recent hymn books as well as in two volumes from the Leupold Foundation..