

## **in the key of cree**

- 1) Wild Lilies to Wheat Fields (3:11)**  
(Music: E. Peekeekoot  
Lyrics: E. & G. Peekeekoot & T. Rysstad)

This song tells about the time of transition for my people when they had to move onto reservations and learn a new way of providing for their families – farming. This changed their relationship with the land and with themselves, and people still know who they are.

- 2) Jiggin' (3:16)**  
(Music: E. Peekeekoot  
Lyrics E. & G. Peekeekoot)

I come from a family of fiddlers. My grandmother was a little Métis woman who would do a jig around the kitchen while my uncles played. Prairie dances were a highlight of the summer. Fiddler Nolan Murray makes this song with his great performance.

- 3) Dance of the Northern Lights (2:37)**  
(E. Peekeekoot)  
Guitar: Ed Peekeekoot

Cree legends say that the northern lights are the Spirits of the Ancestors. If you whistle, they will circle around you. Try it, but *be prepared*. Like the northern lights, the music comes and goes and isn't over 'til it's over.

- 4) Beat of the Drum (5:07)**  
(Music: S. Peekeekoot/E. Peekeekoot  
Lyrics: G. Peekeekoot /E. Peekeekoot)

When I was growing up, the traditional Cree ways had been put down for so long that they were almost forgotten. On a visit back home [a few years](#) ago, I was surprised and happy to see sweat lodges and the Sun Dance being openly honoured again. This song speaks to the spirit of renewal that the new generation of children and youth are bringing into the Earth. Thanks to Reay for his sweet harmonica on this one. Thanks to the children who added so much to this song, to Deborah Sumner for working with the children and to the parents of the children. Most of all, thanks to Sam for his BIG spirit and gifts of music.

- 5) Kokum's Lullaby (3:55)**  
(Traditional/E & G. Peekeekoot)  
Vocal: Gail Peekeekoot

When there is nothing else to comfort a baby, there is always a lullaby. My mother and grandmother and maybe my great grandmother sang this song to all the little ones in our family through many long and cold nights.

- 6) **Song for the Little People (2:55)**  
(E. Peekeekoot)  
Flute/Hand Drum: Ed Peekeekoot

Some of my people believe in the presence of Little People on our land. If you give them gifts (they like shiny things), and if you are lucky, they will share their teachings with you. If you're wondering, this tradition is said to have been here a lot longer than the Irish.

- 7) **Prairie Indian Ways (3:19)**  
(E. Peekeekoot/G. Peekeekoot)

OK, it's not PC but just try to sing "Prairie Aboriginal Way" or "Prairie First Nations Way". So I stuck with "Indian" which wasn't out of line back in the early '80's when this was written. Anyway, it's a good song about hoping that children still learn about our heritage and feel pride in it – no matter what they call themselves.

- 8) **Hastings & Main (3:05)**  
(E. Peekeekoot)

This is the most infamous corner of Vancouver. It draws First Nations youth from all over the country. I hope they remember who they are and I want to tell them they are never as alone as they feel. I saw this place for the first time when I was 18 and am thankful I didn't get caught up in it but had someplace else to go. I dedicate this song to all the women who have gone missing from there. Big thanks to Matt on sax, Terri on upright bass, and Zak on slide guitar. Sweet!

- 9) **Land of the Raven (5:15)**  
(E. Peekeekoot)

This piece is based on a Northwest Coast legend of a greedy chief who had stolen the Sun and kept it for himself in a cedar chest. All life was dying. Raven, the Trickster, freed the Sun and life returned to Earth. We live in a time of greedy chiefs. Thankfully, there are also a few Tricksters around to set things right now and then. (Natural sounds & Box Drum recorded in the Nass Valley in northern BC by Al Rempel.)

- 10) **Harvest on the Rez (2:37)**  
(E. Peekeekoot)  
Guitar: Ed Peekeekoot

Picture me as a rough and tumble 6 year old finding a table in a field just *full* of pie and cakes waiting to be tasted! Leftovers from the harvesting crew! Heaven!

- 11) **Full Moon Song (2:18)**  
(E. Peekeekoot)

This is played on a Lakota Sioux love flute. Tunes like this were played beside streams and in canyons by young men who were courting – and hoping to court. It must have worked because the people are still here.

**12) Warrior of Mystery (5:08)**  
(E. Peekeekoot /S. Peekeekoot/J. Yuzon)

My very talented friend Jerry Yuzon played his heart out on this one. This piece is based on stories that were told after the Battle of the Little Big Horn about a warrior who had shown up time and time again in the heat of the battle. When it was all over, he was nowhere to be found. Some say that he came from the Spirit World. I need to credit artist Michael Gentry for his painting called “Warrior of Mystery” which is where I first heard about the story.

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