This piece was written for and premiered at the 2004 Calgary Stampede Showband Winter Holiday Chamber Ensemble Concert.

It starts with a vocalist solo at the beginning of the piece, chanting the melody from “Creator of the stars of night” (which is the title of the English translation that John Mason Neale did from the Latin of an old Sarum plainsong). Alternatively, it may be (and has been) performed with any other Advent/Christmas melody being sung live (or even with a recording of Christmas choral music). The intent is to create an “otherworldly” or “out of time” feel. When the marimba starts, ignore the tempo of the vocalist and plays the melody rubato as well. It is not until the 5/8 that a strict tempo is set.

The fermatas at measure 76 end the first section. When it was originally performed, a sequenced hip-hop track started during the rolls – and continued to the end of the piece (doing a fade at the end, after the last note is struck). I would recommend starting the track during the fermatas so that tempo can be established before the next phrase starts. Alternatively, a drum set playing any funk/hip-hop groove (any heavy groove that would not normally be considered appropriate for Christmas Carols would be perfect).

When performing, take great care to bring out all the various melodies – so that they can all be heard clearly and recognized by the audience, even when occurring simultaneously.

I hope you enjoy performing “’Tis the Season”!

Complete List of Instruments Needed:
- 2 Bells
- 2 Octaves of Crotales
- 2 Vibraphones
- Xylophone
- 2 Marimbas
- Chimes
- 2 Triangles
- Sleigh Bells
- Tambourine
- Floor Tom

Dwayne Engh has been blessed with a wide range of opportunities throughout the world as a composer, conductor, percussionist, and educator. He recently had the opportunity to participate in a residency as a composer at the Banff Centre for the Arts, where he also played for the Banff Festival Orchestra. He holds a Bachelor of Music and a Bachelor of Education (Masters of Teaching) from the University of Calgary.

Dwayne has written for chamber ensembles, choirs, dance, film and theatre. His original compositions have been performed on CBC Television. He has written for dance groups including the Alberta Ballet School of Dance, Corps Bara Dance Company and Providence Catholic Winterguard (Chicago). His most recent works for theatre include Sam Shepard’s savage love (2004) and Daniel MacIvor’s The Soldier Dreams (2001). He has written percussion ensemble pieces for many ensembles, most notably Move to Strike, the Calgary Stampede Showband, the Sizu-City Elementary School Marching Band (Japan) and the Central Kitsap High School Percussion Ensemble (Washington).

An accomplished percussionist, he has performed with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and the National Ballet Orchestra, recorded for CBC Radio and performed with pit orchestras in both Toronto and Calgary. Mr. Engh is a founding member of the “Move to Strike Percussion Group” and of the saxophone-marimba duo “Saximba.” He has worked as a modern, Flamenco and West African dance percussion accompanist for the University of Calgary Dance Program and for the DJD School of Dance. He is an active freelance percussionist and drummer around Calgary.

Mr. Engh is the Director of Bands for the Calgary Exhibition & Stampede and the Music Director of the community choir Cum Vino Cantus. As well, he was formally an Off-Campus Teacher Representative and a high school English and Music educator for the Calgary Board of Education.