

## Peter the Great

**Peter the Great** (2017) is a piece for a double-quartet of four amplified voices (soprano, alto, tenor, bass), and four flutes (piccolo, concert, alto, bass). The initial idea of the piece was a rhythmic chant of the numbers 1, 7, 2, and 5 which I saw on a license plate in front of me as I was traveling between Greensboro and Greenville. This chant grew into Peter the Great as I added other words and was challenged by my composition professor to find and portray some kind of overarching meaning.

Peter the Great explores unfulfilled expectations through Peter Alexeyevich's death and the fallout that comes as a result of dreams left unsatisfied. The first half is upbeat, representing the relative good times for Peter. The Second half is slow and reflective, relaying the anxiety of desires being unmet. Just as Peter's goals and policies faded, sometimes our goals and expectations fail to be satisfied.

Peter the Great

(1725)

Ephemeral hopes, once tangible dreams,  
lilting to the music of a place I've never been,

and the clock-tower is broken now,  
the bells have fallen, there is no sound,

Peter had heard them once before,  
in dawn's new light on a forgotten shore,

a dream was all he could be to them  
a long-lost tune, sung on a passing whim,

- Julian Ward -