



# ...Not Afraid to Dream

Brian Balmages  
FJH Publication - Grade 3

## Music Selection - Broad Description

- A great tribute piece for this level (similar to Boysen's "I AM")
- Unique low brass and percussion solis - difficult tuba duet at end.
- Wonderful embedding of "Lift High the Cross" within the work.
- Great piece to teach layering, texture and timbre.
- Allows students express feelings about death or loss.



## Brian Balmages



Brian Balmages (b. 1975) is an active composer, conductor, producer, and performer. He received his bachelor's degree in music from James Madison University and his master's degree from the University of Miami in Florida. Mr. Balmages' works for symphonic band, orchestra, and brass have been performed throughout the world, including the College Band Directors National and Regional Conferences, the Midwest Clinic, the International Tuba/Euphonium Conference, the International Trombone Festival, and the International Trumpet Guild Conference. His active schedule of commissions has included groups ranging from elementary schools to professional ensembles, including the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Miami Symphony Orchestra, the University of Miami Wind Ensemble, Dominion Brass, and others. He has also enjoyed world premieres in prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall.

As a conductor, Mr. Balmages enjoys engagements with numerous honor bands and orchestras, university groups, and professional ensembles throughout the country. Notable guest conducting appearances have included the Midwest Clinic, College Band Directors Regional Conference, Mid-Atlantic Wind Conductors Conference, the Atlantic Classical Orchestra Brass Ensemble, and Meyerhoff Symphony Hall in Baltimore. He has also served as an adjunct professor of instrumental conducting and acting director of the symphonic band at Towson University in Maryland.

Currently, Mr. Balmages is the Director of Instrumental Publications for The FJH Music Company Inc. in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He resides in Baltimore with his wife, Lisa, and their sons, Jacob and Collin.

*As a composer, I used to write music only for advanced level ensembles. However, after marrying an elementary band director, and with the support of numerous friends, colleagues, and directors, I have found great joy and challenge in writing music for younger students along with my more difficult works. After all, the youngest of musicians are equally deserving of good literature and I can only hope that my music will inspire them the way I am inspired by a Mahler symphony."*

— Brian Balmages

## Background Information

*...Not Afraid to Dream* is written in memory of Kevin Langlie, a high school senior who tragically passed away. At the request of his school, it is designed to serve two purposes: to help bring closure to everyone at the school, and to celebrate his life, both the serious and "not-so-serious" moments. The title comes from the eulogy delivered by his band director, Christopher W. Jarvis: "His focus on the positive and the possible left no room in his life for negative attitudes and excuses....He wasn't afraid to dream and share those dreams...."

The work opens with the sounds of various chimes, almost mimicking the sounds of church bells. This somber beginning is reflective in nature and is a musical "moment of silence." As the melodies and harmonies grow out of this silence, it is almost as though a ray of sunshine beams through the sound of the band to counter the earlier passages. A solo trumpet hints at the opening of *Lift High the Cross*, one of the hymns that was sung at Kevin's wake.

Eventually, the tone of the piece turns to a much lighter note, picking up in both mood and tempo. A lighthearted melody intertwines with changing meters as it begins to reflect Kevin's sense of humor and enthusiasm. The piece then falls into a groove beginning with low brass (Kevin's instrument was tuba) and eventually spreading throughout the entire ensemble, much like his personality tended to do.

As the piece drives forward, a full refrain of *Lift High the Cross* appears, undergoing several changes in harmony as it competes with the main rhythmic motif for the spotlight. Eventually, the undeniable spirit of the opening theme of this section comes back in triumph as the piece builds to one final climax. A brief tuba duet reminds everyone that Kevin is still in the band; then the ensemble joins in for a whirlwind of harmonies that eventually finds its way home.

## Musical Elements

**Form:** Intro ABACADA

Measures	What?
1-3	Wind Chimes, Outdoor Chimes, Chimes - separate entrances.
4-10	Low Brass "mournful" motif centered on d minor triad
11	Chimes- extended range g minor with seconds added (church bells)
12-16	Low Brass "mournful" motif with upper woodwinds responding "beam of light?"
17-22	A tempo - full ensemble plays establishing Bb Major but a tritone is used in the upper voices.
23-24	Ab major chord established with <i>Lift High</i> motif introduced by solo trumpet in Bb major.
25-30	<i>Lift High</i> motif altered and used with a call and response between tpt/cl and horn/altos/euph "beam of light" in measure 27 on Eb Major then settling on unison F at 30.
31-36	Return of Low Brass "mournful" motif with fl/cl countermelody.
37-38	Fl/Ob/Bsn motif in F major counter the dark sounds of the low brass.
39-41	Low Brass "mournful" motif
42	Chimes - same as measure 11
43	Bb Major chord marked "dolce"
44-52	Bb Major continues by clarinets and low brass while horn and marimba perform Theme 1A on unison Bb.
52-60	[A Section] Theme 2 is introduced in the flute and oboe, while Theme 1A is in cl 1, horn, and mallet 2
60-68	[B Section] Theme 3 is introduced by the alto saxes with Theme 1B is in the tenor sax. Ride Cymbal is added. At 64 Cl 2 & 3 join in Theme 1B and tpt 2& 3 join with Theme 3.
68-76	Cl 2&3, tsax, tbone 1 continue Theme 1B while the altos, tpt 2/3, horns, and cl 1 (in 72) play Theme 3 together. Beat 2 is emphasized in Theme 3 by the low brass, perc, and tpt 1 by means of bell tones.
76-84	[A Section] Theme 2 returns in upper woodwinds and mlt perc 1. Theme 1A is in tpt 2/3 and mlt perc 2 and a new Theme 4 is introduced by altos and tpt 1. Low brass/ww emphasize beats 2 and 3 with staccato notes.
84-92	[C Section] Theme 5 is introduced by the tubas and euphs while Theme 1C (steady eighth notes) are being played by the altos and horns. motif 6 is introduced in 99 by tpt 2/3.
92-100	Everything above continues but in 94 tpt 1 plays Theme 4.
100-108	Full ensemble playing. Theme 1C by altos and horns. Theme 3 - picc, fl, ob, cl 1, mlt 1, Theme 4 - t.sax, tpt 1, tbone 1/2, Theme 5 - tuba, euph, tbone 3, bsax, bcl, bsn, Theme 6 - cl 2/3, tpt 2/3.
108-116	[A Section] Big sound. Theme 1A in tpt 2/3, Theme 2 in upper woodwinds, and Theme 4 in altos and tpt 1. Low brass/ww/perc emphasizing beat 2 and 3 again.
116-124	Energy decreasing w/ Theme 3 in cl 2/3 and horns then to alto 1/2 only.
124-132	[D Section] Hn and tbones play open 5ths while timp and mlt perc 2 play theme 3 in unison. In 128 it is just tuba and euph and the vibes play eighth notes alternating on octave Bb.
132-146	Full use of the hymn <i>Lift High the Cross</i> performed by clarinet choir, then joined by saxes and horn and tuba.
146-162	Theme 3 in tpts and percussion leads to a restatement of <i>Lift High</i> by woodwind choir now in C Major. New theme introduced (Theme 7) by tsax and horns. Builds in intensity.
162-170	Call and response of theme 7 between upper ww and upper brass.
170-End	[A Section] Triumphant return of theme 2 in alto, tpt, horns with theme 1A played in upper woodwinds. Low brass chord leading ear to C Major at 178. Following tuba duet in 178-179 (theme 2) is a final statement by the entire ensemble of variation of theme 2 ending in C Major.

## **Rhythm**

Rhythm is a major component to this piece. Slow section uses just quarter, half, whole, eighth, and a few triplets. The faster section is based off of eighth note subdivisions. Very few sixteenth runs exist in the piece. Students will need help on rhythms that utilize ties. See the attached rhythm worksheet to see the various rhythms used in each of the themes throughout the piece. The music has lots of energy due to the syncopation and quickly changing meters.

## **Melody**

The melody for much of this work revolves around the intervals heard in *Lift High the Cross*. This melody appears in the slow introduction. Theme 1 is primarily used as a percussive device keeping energy and consistency throughout the work. Theme 2 is very syncopated and has small leaps of a third. Theme 3 usually starts on the 5th of the chord and descends. Theme 4 is marked by the same leap of a fourth found in *Lift High*. Theme 5 is used in the infectious low brass groove that is in arch form and syncopated. Theme 6 is used again like a percussive device usually in unison. Theme 7 is derived from Theme 3 and is used at the end of the piece. It starts on the tonic and descends to the dominant which helps to propel the music forward to the end.

## **Harmony**

The key signature throughout the composition is Bb Concert. The beginning section appears to be modal centering on a d minor triad (Phrygian). When the fast section begins it is clearly in Bb Concert until measure 150 when it transitions to C Major until the end. Balmages careful use of dissonance help propel this work forward. Moreover, Balmages layers themes to keep interest as the tonal center does not change that often.

## **Texture**

The texture is homophonic in the beginning suggesting a chorale "moment of silence". The faster section representing the boys energy and spirit is polyphonic. In fact, it is this great use of polyphony that creates the energy and spirit of the music.

## **Timbre**

The timbre in the slow section is very dark. The sounds of the chimes is haunting and beautiful. The low brass need to sustain their sounds and keep them rich and dark while the woodwinds offer glimpses of the sun. The fast section by contrast is bright in color. Ending is C Major also gives a bright quality to the sound. The orchestration and syncopated rhythms also help secure the light feeling in the sound.

## **Expression**

A significant challenge in this work is the contrast from slow and sustained introduction and the very upbeat fast section. Articulations are important in clarity and unity. Dynamic contrast is marked, but shaping of the melodic line can also be done especially within the chorale. Long complete phrases and continuity between sections make this piece effective.

## **The Heart**

The heart of this piece is its artful use of rhythmic and melodic themes that capture the transition and journey from despair and somberness to jubilation.

## **Introducing the Piece**

"Apollo 13 Activity" Using an Anticipation/Reaction Guide have the student anticipate the music that will be performed in the background of the movie "Apollo 13" as the rocket launches. Tell the students about the unsuccessful launches of the past, the uncertainty of this launch, the "unlucky" numbers attached to this, the fear in the families, the excitement of the moment, etc. Have them anticipate how the composer will capture all of those emotions and set up the visual elements in the film. At the end of the activity, tell them that we will begin the study of a composer who was asked to capture the mood surrounding an unfortunate death in a high school.

## **Objective 1 Psycho-Motor (Skill Focused)**

**The students will be able to accurately perform independently and with others rhythms that contain ties.**

### **Strategies**

1. "Definition Time" - Students will define a musical "tie".

2. "Move the Tie Game" - a simple rhythm will be written on the board. The students will first be asked to count, hiss and then play the rhythm. A student will then come to the board to move the tie to a new location. The band will then count, hiss and play the rhythm, etc. To make this more advanced multiple rhythms can be added as well.
3. "Smart Warm-up" Use Smart Music to practice ties in warm-ups and various pitches.
4. "Not Afraid to be Rhythmic" Using the "Not Afraid to Be Rhythmic" worksheet, first count, hiss and then play each example.

#### Assessment

1. In band lessons, each student will need to be able to accurately count, hiss and perform each rhythm on the worksheet.
2. In groups of two, students will create two different rhythms by adding ties in different places on a series of differentiated rhythm examples. The students will show the class where they placed the ties and then demonstrate the two rhythms alone and then together.

## Objective #2 Cognitive (Knowledge Focused)

**The students will identify and examine how various compositional techniques/choices can create various moods within a piece.**

#### Strategies

1. "You Are The Composer Activity" - You are asked to write a piece in memory of a high school senior who has passed away tragically while hiking. What questions would you ask the family before you started composing the music?
2. "Anticipate/Reaction Guide" Identify the important aspects about Kevin that needed to be displayed in the music. Anticipate what the music would sound like then identify and analyze the techniques used by Balmages and then react to the results. Did it achieve the goal or idea it was aiming for?
3. "Identify the Theme" - copy the score and hand out one page to every two people or so. Using the "Not Afraid to be Rhythmic" worksheet, have the students identify the themes on the page by drawing the symbols located on the worksheet onto the page of the score. The students will then tape the score on the wall in order. Ask the students to go up by sections to see how the piece is constructed and creates a create mood or emotion. (review pieces of this each day) - have on website as well.
4. "Match that Mood" List the following "moods" on the board. Play in any order portions of the music and ask the kids to identify the mood. Follow up by asking what techniques the composer used to create this affect.
  - a. Noble and Mystical- Lord of the Rings
  - b. Urgent - Mars
  - c. Joyful - Joy
  - d. Restful - Clair De Lune
  - e. Sneaky/playful - Midnight Mission
  - f. Anguish - Come, Sweet Death
5. "Venn Diagram" Using a Venn Diagram, compare and contrast "I AM" with "...Not Afraid". Examine the similarities and differences and discuss.

#### Assessment

1. Using the portfolio, check to see that the Anticipation/Reaction guide and Venn diagram have been filled out accurately.
2. Students will select a piece of paper with a unique and specific mood on it. They will then compose an 8 or more measure solo for their instrument expressing that mood. Students will be graded based on the rubric.

## Objective #3 Affective (Feeling Focused)

**The students will explore their thoughts and emotions about fear, courage, optimism, pessimism and the effects it has on us and others.**

#### Strategies

1. **Journal entry questions:**
  - a. How could fear prevent you from dreaming and trying to reach for your goals?
  - b. Is it possible that fear can be good? If so when and why?
  - c. Is it possible to control fear? If so how?
  - d. When was a time when you were fearful, but overcame it? What was the result?
  - e. Is it possible that courage can be bad? If so when and why?
  - f. Why is optimism powerful?
  - g. Why is pessimism destructive?
  - h. In what ways can we use courage and optimism to help our band?

**Assessment** I will read the journal entries to check for depth of thought and understanding.