

# Moscow, 1941

by Brian Balmages  
FJH Music Company - Grade 2



## Broad Description:

- Programmatic work exploring painting the picture of Moscow in 1941
- Utilizes a common Russian Folk Tune "Meadowlands" or "Cossack Patrol"
- Great use of percussive effects to imitate bombs, horn glissandos and woodwind figures to represent warning sirens
- Great piece to explore timbre and overcoming great odds.

## 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."*

*Balmages*

— Brian





## Background Information


Piece was written in 2003. Mostly minor tonality, with extensive yet playable percussion parts for middle schoolers.

Moscow, 1941 was commissioned by the Perry Hall Middle School Band and funded by the PTA. Piece was dedicated to Larry Bondar, a well liked and respected music teacher in the Baltimore area. Mr. Bondar is of Russian descent, which was inspiration for the piece to be based on the famous Russian song, *Meadowlands*

- This piece is a setting of the Russian folk tune *Meadowlands*. The song's lyrics are about the glory and honor of the Red Army, which was a nickname for the Soviet Union's armed forces. Specifically it is about the event that took place in October 1941 where the Red Army held off the German army, which was only 15 miles outside of Moscow. Over the next 3 months, the Red Army was able to push the Germans back nearly 200 miles
- The Meadowland was from Symphony No. 4 "Poem for the Komsomol Fighters" in D major after Guseyev for soloists, chorus and orchestra opus 41 (1933–1934) composed by Lev Knipper
- Lev Knipper was a prolific Russian composer writing 20 symphonies, 5 operas, and more. Although he wrote this song for the Red army, during the Russian civil war, he fought with the White army. When he returned to the Soviet Union he worked on the Soviet Secret service
- The words to *the Meadowlands* were written by Victor Gusev. He wrote lyrics to several Russian military songs
- The words of the song tell of the glory and praise one receives by serving in the Red army. It may be hard if you have loved one's left behind, but it will all for the better when the men return home. There are also hints of bragging to the women, 'hey look at us, we're fighting for you, keeping you safe'
- Technical challenges: 2nd clarinet part doesn't go over the break. Independent percussion parts. Accelerandi and ritardandi. Loud sustained phrases = air support. Passing of 8th notes.

## Elements of Music

Meas.	BIG Form	Form	Melody	Rhythm	Harmony	Timbre	Texture	Expression
1-4	Intro	Intro. Military funeral march.	Percussion only		None	Subdued	Thin and transparent to set the stage of cold and stark.	Very quiet all piano to set the "scene"
5-10		Intro - Fragmented melody in clarinet unison.	Meadowlands melody - starts on third of g minor end on fifth.		Unison - Based on pedal D (fifth of g minor scale)	Low register of clarinet - dark tone.	Thin - still perc. and clarinets only.	

Meas.	BIG Form	Form	Melody	Rhythm	Harmony	Timbre	Texture	Expression
11-13		Intro - Fragmented melody continues in horns and euphonium.	Third section of melody changed to end on fifth.	Similar to above.	First harmony in music - open 5th (still based on fifth)	Low brass - warm and dark sounds.	Thicker with addition of low brass	Dynamics make a small excursion to mp.
14-17	Trans	Transition from dominant to tonic with first "reveal" of full melodic material	Motivic development of the eighth notes.	Passing eighth notes. 	Still based on fifth with moving eighth notes in g minor pushing toward tonic.	Starts dark but progressively gets brighter and brighter leading to 18.	Gradually thickening. Starts with clarinets and saxes, but adds flutes/oboe and trumpets	Transition is made harmonically, but also with the addition of instruments and the ritardano and crescendo toward 18.
18-25	A	A Theme	Full <i>Meadowlands</i> melody. The first half of 8 bar phrase is played by Fl, Ob, Cl 1, AS, TS, Bells. The second half of the phrase by Bsn, AS, Tpt, Euph.	Half, quarter and eighth notes.	g minor is established - melody is harmonized in this fashion: i-v-i-v-VI-V-iv-V The use of major tonal centers in a minor key adds to the heroic feeling created by the melody. Neighboring tones in 25 -bring out as suggest "pain".	The dynamic changes to forte, however the timbre remains dark.	Woodwinds have the melody with brass chords beneath it then changing to mostly brass to end the phrase. Percussion fills in with continued light scoring.	First forte dynamic with full scoring to begin 18. Melodic material needs to remain lyrical and connected and "Powerful" as stated in the score. Sustain - especially through the poco rit. in m 25.
26-33	A'	A Theme with countermelody	Melody is heard by Fl, Ob, Cl 1, Tpt, Euph, however this time with countermelody in Cl 2, AS, TS, HN. Countermelody suggests growing anxiety and tension.	More moving eighth note passages in the countermelody.	Same harmonic progression as in first A statement.	The countermelody in the "middle voices" is heroic and passionate, but should not get too bright.	Balance must be achieved between melody, countermelody, and supporting low brass notes and percussion.	Still legato and sustained. No breath needs to be added from 29-30 as the phrase continues and should crescendo then fade back to 34.

Meas.	BIG Form	Form	Melody	Rhythm	Harmony	Timbre	Texture	Expression
34-43	Trans	Transition	Open fifths, then another melodic motif at 38 and 41 similar to the beginning in the Clar and AS	Whole notes, then the eighth note passages from the beginning.	Low brass establish open fifths based on tonic g minor. Melodic motifs in unison followed by the outlining of a g minor 7 chord before 44 propelling us to the new section	Very dark again.	Becomes much more transparent and thin again.	Much more quiet returning to the previous piano dynamic markings. poco rit. before 44 is important to set up the new section.
44-47		4 measures - percussion	5ths in timpani	Syncopated eighth note figures	g minor tonic	Brighter and we move toward 56	Thin to begin with. Toms add accents on "and" of beat 2	Starts quietly and builds until forte at 56.
48-51	4 measures - sequenced melodic motif Low Brass	Melody based on first three notes of melody then sequenced	Rhythm based on melodic motif	g minor tonic	Low Brass layer			
52-55	Dev	4 measures - sequenced melodic alt. material in upper brass & ww.	Opposing eighth note melodic material creating tension as we move toward 56.	Contrasting eighth notes create a steady eighth note "battle"	g minor dominant		Upper ww and Upper Brass added	
56-63		8 measures - of a 4 bar "intense" phrase.	56-59 AS, TS, HN, TB only (no perc). Ascending stepwise motion.	Quarter and eighth note phrase that is repeated.	Based on tonic of g minor but added dissonance of Ab and C then full g minor chord.		Aggressive and brighter.	

Meas.	BIG Form	Form	Melody	Rhythm	Harmony	Timbre	Texture	Expression
64-67		4 bar meadowland theme returns	Flute and clarinet play harmonized melodic phrase.	Rhythm found in melody with syncopated figures in percussion	Melody in C minor - performed over root in BS, BCl	Suddenly Dark	Thin with marimba and timpani sustaining pulse	Melody is slurred.
68-71		4 measure sequenced brass figure.	Sequenced melodic material	Brass accents are syncopated giving a feeling of unexpectedness	Ab Major (relative to C minor)	Aggressive .	Tpt melody with punctuated brass accents.	Marcato growing in intensity
72-79		Melody in Fl & CL Countermelody in AS, TS Fanfare-like Statements in brass	First half of <i>Meadowland</i> theme heard in harmony. Countermelody taken from sequenced melodic material. Fanfare is basic chords in F minor.	Melody is Augmented using whole notes, half notes, etc. Countermelody in eighth notes and fanfare utilizing dotted figures making it more abrupt	F minor then C major	Bright and aggressive with brass versus smooth and dark ww.	Shifting groups of sounds within families of instruments.	Balance needs to be achieved between “calming, dark ww theme” and Countermelody. Percussion must be careful.
80-84		Transition	Second half of melody used as material for this transition. AS leads then Upper brass add on.	Syncopated TS, BS, BSN, BCl figures need to be clean and exact.	Ab Major going to an E pedal point (minor 6th away). Very unsettled.	Light, almost playful, but E pedal creates much tension.	Starts very thin (basically sax choir, then thickens)	A building figure that needs to build tension toward 85.
85-95		“Battle” Scene	Alternating woodwind 5ths layered with melody in low brass but ending on 6th scale degree not 5th as in the original. Upper brass effects add to the drama.	Trading eighth note passages, sharply accented eighth note pairs, horn/sax glisses, and slower melodic material.	Woodwinds in competing open 5ths (Eb-Bb vs F-C), Melody in g minor (but ending on 6th). Cadence point ii, VI, V, i into 95.	Dark and sustained melodic material contrasted by punctuated muted brass and “chaotic” ww.	Texture begins thin and then grows with layers as we approach 95.	“Eminent Danger” Woodwinds figures. Bombs - BD/Timp hit in center. Warning Siren -horn and sax glisses. Building to 95

Meas.	BIG Form	Form	Melody	Rhythm	Harmony	Timbre	Texture	Expression
95-110	A'	A Theme with countermelody Augmented	Lyric full restatement of melody in Cl 2, Bcl, Bsn, Saxes, HN, Tb, Euph, Tuba Countermelody in Fl, Ob, Cl 1, Fanfare in Tpt, Percussion reprise of syncopation and 16th figures.	Similar to augmented melody before and countermelodies.	g minor as stated early in the work. With the melody moving slower, the countermelody helps to keep interest.	Full lush sounds needed to sound "Triumphant" as written.	Full scoring with saxophones and lower brass needed to sustain the melody against countermelody and fanfares.	Dynamic is FF, however a balance sound has to be created within the instruments playing melody. Overall balance needs to be considered as well.
111-End	Coda	"Intense phrase" used again.	Melodic material from 56 is used to propel the work to the conclusion. AS, TS, HN, TB get this phrase for 4 measures then it is found in nearly every voice for the final 4 ms.	Quarter and eighth note phrase that is repeated.	Based on tonic of g minor but added dissonance of Ab and C then full g minor chord. End on a G Major chord ... "triumphant"	Very full and bright.	Somewhat thin and exposed with only a few instruments playing the melody at 111. Trombones need to lead.	The pulse cannot slow down as the piece must keep moving to the exciting conclusion.

**The Heart Statement:** The heart of Moscow 1941 is the dark, haunting Meadowland melody and accompanying harmonic movement which creates a connection to the proud members of the Red Army who faced both bleakness and triumph.

**Introducing the Piece:** Play Youtube video of runner - falling down and still finishing. Ask questions like "did you anticipate that happening?" "What can we learn from this?"

**Affective Outcome:** Students will explore issues of group identity, pride and patriotism, both healthy and destructive.

### Strategies

#### I. INTRO TO GROUPS

- What do these images have in common?
- Which of these groups do you "identify" with the most and why?

#### II. GROUPS

- Why do groups form or come together?
  - "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." – African proverb
- What type of groups are there?

1. Citizen Action Groups
  - a) Single issue groups—NARAL, Right-to-Life, NRA, Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence
  - b) Multi-issue groups—AARP, Sierra Club, ACLU, ADA, People for the American Way, Townhall, NRDC, Consumers Union, American Taxpayers Union
2. Trade Associations—American Hardware Association, Many dairy cooperatives, Americans for Energy Independence, American Council on Renewable Energy, National Automotive Dealers Association, etc..
3. Professional Associations—Doctors, Dentists, Nurses, Professors, Lawyers, Real Estate Brokers, etc.
4. Unions, United Garment Workers of America, State and Municipal Employees Union, Teamsters, (Air Traffic Controllers), NEA, AFT, United Farm Workers.
5. Peak Associations—AFL-CIO, National Association of Manufacturers, National Chamber of Commerce. These are associations of associations.
6. Corporations—the most frequent type of lobbying effort comes from corporations. Sometimes they work with their trade association, sometimes they work against them. (Scrap tires and Goodyear).
7. Teams- many levels and types of sports
8. Music - within music we have “sections” and different types of ensembles.

C. Many times groups will create logos, banners, symbols or special names to represent themselves.

1. Show video of groups being selected at Hogwarts
2. Look at these examples and try to identify them...
3. Create a banner or symbol for your section.
4. Actionary

a) Actionary is a cross between pictictionary, sculptionary and charades.

- (1) Firstly come up with a list of pictictionary style words to use. Try to use words that might be easy enough to draw/sculpt/act.

Divide the group into 4 teams or by sections and give each team a tray of play-doh, some paper and some pens.

(2) The leader who is running the game stands in the centre of the room, situated in between all of the groups. Then each team sends a volunteer up to the leader and they then get each player to roll the giant dice in turn.

- (3) Either make your own dice with "act", "draw" and "sculpt" or just use a normal dice and designate two numbers to each type.

- (4) 1,2 = Charades 3,4 = Pictionary 5,6 = Sculptionary

Then give all the players the first word from the list. The players will then go back to their group and act, draw or sculpt out the word, depending on what number they rolled. Once someone in their group guesses the word correctly, they go up and roll the dice again and receive the next word. The first team to get through the complete list of words wins!

III. PRIDE - When a group you are associated with does something good or helpful people sometimes feel “pride”. What does “pride” mean?

A. Mind map --- What does the word “Pride” mean? Pride is an inwardly directed emotion that carries two common meanings. With a negative connotation, pride refers to an inflated sense of one's personal status or accomplishments, often used synonymously with hubris. With a positive connotation, pride refers to a satisfied sense of attachment toward one's own or another's choices and actions, or toward a whole group of people, and is a product of praise, independent self-reflection, or a fulfilled feeling of belonging.

B. When have you felt pride in something you accomplished personally?

C. What groups are you a part of?

1. When have you felt pride in something a group you were associated accomplished?

IV. MILITARY CONNECTION -

A. Is there a group that represents us as a country that makes you feel proud?

1. Watch the Marine video. Describe your emotions.
  2. How about this? (Independence Day...other videos out currently)
- B. What songs are associated with the armed forces?
1. Military Band Story - sense of pride.
  2. Video of me playing at Disney
- V. MOSCOW 1941
- A. Story of World War II, The Red Army, and Meadowlands.
1. What is the group in this story?
  2. Read the Lyrics
    - a) Where do you see pride in these lyrics?
    - b) Why were the soldiers proud?
- B. Imagine that you were a Russian soldier who successful defended his/her country - how proud would you be?
- VI. MAKING IT PERSONAL
- A. Have you had times that you found yourself with a group that wasn't doing good or helping others? What choices do you have?
- B. What "groups" are you a part of at school?
- C. Watch video - of school groups.

### Assessment

- I. Written and aural reflections
- II. Section group building projects
- III. Final Project Choice

**Skill Outcome:-** Students will perform with correct harmonic and melodic balance (horizontal and vertical)

### Strategies

- I. PHYSICAL BALANCE
  - A. Have students stand and balance on one leg. Then have them do it with both eyes closed.
  - B. Balance Beam - Using painters tape on the floor - make a standard sized (or relatively close) balance beam on the floor (16 feet X 3.9 inches) \*\*Note a real beam is about 4 feet off the ground too! Have students try to walk, skip, jump, and spin around on the beam.
  - C. Watch video of Gabby Douglas - balance uses many senses.
- II. HARMONIC (VERTICAL) BALANCE
  - A. What does balance in band mean? Fill out pyramid of sound in portfolios.
  - B. Build the pyramid - black and white. Do it right and wrong many times.
  - C. Find chords in music - play chords only - black and white. This is called "vertical balance".
- III. MELODIC (HORIZONTAL) BALANCE
  - A. Everyone play the melody.
  - B. At 26 - Who has melody, What does everyone else have?, Who needs to be the loudest? Use extendable ears...
- IV. Mix it up day - 4 members of the band can sit in any section (one from each level of the pyramid)
- V. Balance in Life - where else can we find balance? Show them pictures of Art, Architecture, compositions, poetry, nature.
- VI. Listen to recordings of other bands - what is the balance like in their ensembles?



## Assessment

- I. Balance in a small band - have the kids create small “bands” by gather 8-10 kids together. They must utilize one player from each level of the balance pyramid. Have the small bands practice from 26-36 being aware of both vertical and horizontal balance.
- II. Final Project Choice

**Knowledge Outcome:** Students will analyze, and describe the role and importance of harmonic progressions in music.

## Strategies

- I. PACHELBEL
  - A. Do you recognize this progression? (Pachelbel Canon) I-V-vi-iii-IV-I-IV-V
    1. Watch Pachelbel Rant
- II. DEFINITIONS
  - A. What is harmony? The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions.
  - B. Define Chords - Two or more pitches sounding simultaneously.
  - C. Major vs Minor
  - D. Major and Minor Scales
    1. Major = 1M 2m 3m 4M 5M 6m 7d
    2. Natural Minor = 1m 2d 3M 4m 5m 6M 7 M
  - E. What is a harmonic progression? It is a series of musical chords, or chord changes that "aims for a definite goal" of establishing (or contradicting) a tonality founded on a key.
    1. Keith Urban One Chord Song
- III. 12 BAR BLUES I-IV-I-I-IV-IV-I-I-V-IV-I-I
  - A. Stand up at the top of the form
  - B. Say the chords out loud
  - C. Stand on I chords, Sit on IV Chords, Super Hero Pose on V chord
- IV. MOSCOW 1941 HARMONIC PROGRESSION
  - A. Using document camera to analyze music and chords i-v-i-v-VI-v-iv7-V
  - B. Play melody with i Real B app.
  - C. Play melody with Bass line warm-up
  - D. Use a different style. Just because the style changes does the chord progressions change? Can you look up Meadowlands for me and see if we can find it in different styles? It has three names “Cossack Patrol”, “Meadowlands”, “Polyushka pole”
- V. FOUR CHORD SONG- A lot of pop music uses the following chords I-V-vi-IV

## Assessment

- I. Written work in portfolio
- II. Observation
- III. Final Project Choice