RADIANT JOY

BRIAN BALMAGES







THE COMPOSER

Brian Balmages is known worldwide as a composer and conductor who equally spans the worlds of orchestral, band, and chamber music. His music has been performed by groups ranging from professional symphony orchestras to elementary schools in venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Sydney Opera House, Toronto Centre for the Arts, and many more. He is a recipient of the A. Austin Harding Award from the American School Band Directors Association, won the 2020 NBA William D. Revelli Composition Contest with his work *Love and Light*, and is an elected member of the prestigious American Bandmasters Association. Balmages was awarded the inaugural James Madison University Distinguished Alumni Award from the School of Visual and Performing Arts. In the same year,

he was commissioned by his other alma mater, the University of Miami, to compose music for the inauguration of the institution's 6th president, Dr. Julio Frenk. His music was also performed as part of the 2013 Presidential Inaugural Prayer Service, which was attended by both President Obama and Vice President Biden.

As a conductor, Mr. Balmages enjoys regular engagements with all-state and regional ensembles as well as university and professional groups throughout the world. Notable guest conducting appearances have included the Midwest Clinic, Western International Band Clinic, Maryborough Music Conference (Australia), College Band Directors Conference, American School Band Directors Association National Conference, numerous state ASTA conferences, Teatro dell'Aquila (Italy), and others. Currently, he is Director of MakeMusic Publications and Digital Education for Alfred and MakeMusic.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

"A piece that just radiates the joy of winning the Texas Honor Orchestra competition..."

This is the quote that stuck with me when I first received an email from Heather Davis, orchestra director at Sartartia Middle School in Sugar Land, Texas. They had recently discovered that they won this incredibly prestigious competition, and Heather was interested in premiering a work at their upcoming TMEA performance. Obviously, it did not take long to come up with a title.

Radiant Joy is a musical celebration of hard work and dedication. Those familiar with my music will almost immediately notice a nod to Forever Joyful, another orchestra work of mine inspired by the theme of joy. There is an underlying fiddle element throughout the work despite it never feeling like a full-blown fiddle tune. Heather's granny, who raised her from the age of 8, was her biggest fan and always cheered for her students. To quote Heather, "she loved anything fiddle." I decided to subtly incorporate elements of that style within the contemporary framework of the piece.

My hope is that everyone who hears this piece experiences the same joy I had in writing it; the same joy that Sartartia had when finding out they won TMEA honor orchestra; and the same joy felt by the audiences that get the privilege of hearing them perform live.

-Brian Balmages

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