



Hear and download this piece at [www.fjhmusic.com](http://www.fjhmusic.com)

# HYPNOTIC FIREFLIES

## Brian Balmages

### Instrumentation

1 - Conductor's Full Score	2 - Baritone T.C.
4 - Flute 1	4 - Tuba
4 - Flute 2	1 - Piano
2 - Oboe	2 - Mallet Percussion 1
2 - Bassoon	Bells
5 - B $\flat$ Clarinet 1	Chimes
5 - B $\flat$ Clarinet 2	3 - Mallet Percussion 2
2 - B $\flat$ Bass Clarinet	Vibraphone
1 - E $\flat$ Contra Alto Clarinet	Marimba
2 - E $\flat$ Alto Saxophone 1	Xylophone
2 - E $\flat$ Alto Saxophone 2	4 - Percussion 1
2 - B $\flat$ Tenor Saxophone	Snare Drum
2 - E $\flat$ Baritone Saxophone	Bass Drum
4 - B $\flat$ Trumpet 1	Triangle
4 - B $\flat$ Trumpet 2	Bar Chimes
4 - F Horn	Finger Cymbals
2 - Trombone 1	4 - Percussion 2
2 - Trombone 2	Crash Cymbals
2 - Baritone/ Euphonium	China Cymbal
	Suspended Cymbal
	Amplified Metal Slinky

FJH is now using a high-speed sorting system for parts.  
As a result, all single page parts are collated before multiple page parts.





## The Composer

Brian Balmages (b. 1975) is an award-winning 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' compositions have been performed worldwide at conferences including the College Band Directors National Conference, the Midwest Clinic, American String Teachers Association National Conference, and the international trumpet, horn, trombone and tuba/euphonium conferences. His active schedule of commissions and premieres has incorporated groups ranging from elementary schools to professional ensembles, including the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Miami Symphony Orchestra, the University of Miami Wind Ensemble, Boston Brass, members of the United States Marine Band, and the Dominion Brass Ensemble. His music has been performed by members of leading orchestras throughout the country and he has enjoyed world premieres and performances in prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center, as well as performances at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

As a conductor, Mr. Balmages enjoys engagements with numerous all-state and regional honor bands and orchestras along with university and professional groups. Notable guest conducting appearances have included the Midwest Clinic, Western International Band Clinic, College Band Directors Eastern Regional Conference, and MENC. Additional conducting appearances have included the Kennedy Center and Meyerhoff Symphony Hall. He has also served as an adjunct professor of instrumental conducting and Acting Symphonic Band Director 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.

## About the Music

This piece was inspired by my vision of an open field on a summer night, with thousands of fireflies lighting up the darkness. The music envisions someone being “hypnotized” by the flashing lights and then waking in the middle of the field, completely engulfed in their magnificent glow. The piece takes the listener on a metaphorical journey. It begins with a soft, steady rhythm surrounded by light metallic sounds that creates the canvas on which the entire work is “painted”. The soft introduction represents the view of the open field from far away — perhaps from a hill, looking down, and watching the twinkling lights appear in various patterns and locations.

The initial material continues for some time (contributing to the hypnotic state that the listener is entering) and then slowly builds into measure 35, where we snap back into consciousness to find ourselves in the middle of the field, surrounded by the peaceful glow of fireflies everywhere. One can feel the steadily increasing intensity of music as the lights grow ever brighter, and the listener can imagine the visual perception of weightlessness as the lights hover around — almost as though they were stars.

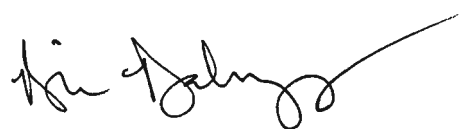
As the lights reach their peak, so does the music. A final explosive series of rhythms and thick textures emanates from the ensemble before the glow (and musical energy) begins to fade. Once more, the hypnotic movement of the fireflies takes over and the listener is transported back to the hill, watching the fireflies from afar. As the music fades, so do the lights. Finally there is only darkness and silence, leaving the listener wishing for the warm lights to come once more, but they never do.

There are a lot of unique effects and instruments used in the piece. Piano is an essential part of the texture, but the part is easy enough to be played by most school students. Pedal should be used throughout as noted in the music. Take specific note that, while the rest of the ensemble should slow down at the end of the piece, the piano player is specifically instructed to maintain tempo and ignore the *ritardando*. I would suggest that directors stop conducting once the ensemble reaches the open repeat and simply indicate that the musicians get softer and softer until there is no more sound. Once silence occurs, encourage the entire ensemble to stay still and take in the magic of the moment. The audience will be unsure if the piece is over, and that silence is as musically appropriate to the piece as all the notes on the page.

The piece also calls for an amplified metal slinky. The slinky does not necessarily need to be amplified by a microphone. Players can try to push a plastic bottle into the end and use the mouth of the bottle as an acoustic amplifier. A styrofoam cup can also be attached to act as an amplifier. Note that it is only used in delicate sections where volume is not an issue. The slinky should be stretched a decent amount (either between two players or hanging from something but not touching the ground). When striking it near the end with a stick or mallet, it should create what is popularly called the “Star Wars Laser Sound” (you’ll know it when you hear it). However, it should be very delicate in this piece. The idea here is not to have a “laser sound” — rather, the idea is to create an ethereal, “celestial” type of sound that is much more delicate. You will need to experiment with this a bit both in the rehearsal and concert halls to get the right sound and balance.

The strongest percussionists should cover the mallet percussion and percussion 2 parts (particularly the suspended cymbal). Mallet percussion 1 is playable by one player. Most likely, you will need 2 players to cover mallet percussion 2. If only one player is available, make sure that person leaves in plenty of time to get to the marimba’s first entrance, even if it is at the expense of the material preceding that entrance. Percussion 1 and 2 can be performed by 2 players on each part, though there are plenty of instruments to involve additional players if you have them available.

I truly hope you enjoy performing this piece as much as I enjoyed writing it. It will challenge your group, but I hope it will also reward them.



commissioned by the Hollidaysburg (PA) Area Music Parents Association  
for the Hollidaysburg Area Junior High Bands; Kris E. Laird, Director

# HYPNOTIC FIREFLIES

BRIAN BALMAGES  
(ASCAP)

Mesmerizing (♩ = 144)

Flutes 1 2

Oboe

Bassoon

B♭ Clarinets 1 2

B♭ Bass Clarinet

E♭ Contra Alto Clarinet

E♭ Alto Saxophones 1 2

B♭ Tenor Saxophone

E♭ Baritone Saxophone

Mesmerizing (♩ = 144)

B♭ Trumpets 1 2

F Horn

Trombones 1 2

Baritone/Euphonium

Tuba

Piano

Mallet Percussion 1 (Bells, Chimes)

Mallet Percussion 2 (Vibraphone, Marimba, Xylophone)

Percussion 1 (Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Triangle, Bar Chimes, Finger Cymbals)

Percussion 2 (Crash Cymbals, China Cymbal, Suspended Cymbal, Amplified Metal Slinky)

Vibraphone

Triangle

China Cymbal

8va

*p*

pedal always

*p*

*p*

*p*

2 3 4 5

Copyright © 2012 The FJH Music Company Inc. (ASCAP).  
International Copyright Secured. Made in U.S.A. All Rights Reserved.  
WARNING! The music, text, design, and graphics in this publication are protected by copyright law.  
Any duplication is an infringement of U.S. copyright law.



Hear and download this piece at [www.fjhmusic.com](http://www.fjhmusic.com)

8 <sup>1sts only</sup> *stagger breath*

*p*

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cls. 1 2

B. Cl.

C.A. Cl.

A. Saxes 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

8

Tpts. 1 2

Hn.

Tbns. 1 2

Bar./ Euph.

Tuba

(8<sup>no</sup>)

Piano

Mlt. Perc. 1

Bells - plastic mallets

*p*

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1

Finger Cymbals

Perc. 2

6 7 8 9 10 11

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cls. 1 2

B. Cl.

C.A. Cl.

A. Saxes 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

Tpts. 1 2

Hn.

Tbns. 1 2

Bar./ Euph.

Tuba

Piano

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

12 13 14 *p* 15 16 17 *p*

1<sup>sts</sup> only  
*tr*  
*p*

stagger breath

(8va)

L.H. loco

Amplified Metal Slinky  
*p*











46

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cls. 1 2

B. Cl.

C.A. Cl.

A. Saxes 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

Tpts. 1 2

Hn.

Tbns. 1 2

Bar./ Euph.

Tuba

Piano

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

mf

mf

mf

mf

div.

mp

muffle

Slinky

mp

42 43 44 45 46 47

Fls. 1 2 *mp* *mp*

Ob.

Bsn. *mp*

Cls. 1 2 *1sts only* *mp* *2nds mp*

B. Cl.

C.A. Cl. *mp*

A. Saxes 1 2 *mp*

T. Sax. *mp*

B. Sax. *mp*

Tpts. 1 2 *1 player st. mute* *mp* *2 players*

Hn. *mp*

Tbns. 1 2 *mp*

Bar./ Euph. *mp*

Tuba *mp*

Piano

Mlt. Perc. 1 *mp* *mp*

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1 S.D. B.D. *mp*

Perc. 2

48 49 50 51 52 53

56

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn. *mp*

Cls. 1 2

B. Cl. *mp*

C.A. Cl. *mp*

A. Saxes 1 2 *mp*

T. Sax. *mp*

B. Sax. *mp*

56

Tpts. 1 2

Hn.

Tbns. 1 2 *mp*

Bar./ Euph. *mp*

Tuba *mp*

Piano *mp*

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1 *mp*

Perc. 2

54 55 56 *mp* 57 58 59

64

Fls. 1 2 *mp*

Ob. *mp*

Bsn.

Cls. 1 2 *mp*

B. Cl. *mp*

C.A. Cl. *mp*

A. Saxes 1 2

T. Sax. *mp*

B. Sax. *mp*

Tpts. 1 2 *mp* tutti open

Hn. *mp*

Tbns. 1 2 *mp*

Bar./ Euph. *mp*

Tuba *mp*

Piano

Mlt. Perc. 1 *mp*

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1 *mp* Tri. F. Cym.

Perc. 2

60 61 62 63 *mp* 64 65









86

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cls. 1 2

B. Cl.

C.A. Cl.

A. Saxes 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

Tpts. 1 2

Hn.

Tbns. 1 2

Bar./ Euph.

Tuba

Piano

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

83 84 85 86 87 88

*f*

*f*

Euph.

Sus. Cym. w/ sticks



94

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cls. 1 2

B. Cl.

C.A. Cl.

A. Saxes 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

94

Tpts. 1 2

Hn.

Tbns. 1 2

Bar./ Euph.

Tuba

Piano

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

94 95 96 97 98











Exactly half as fast (♩ = 72)

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cl. 1 2

B. Cl.

C.A. Cl.

A. Sax. 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

*p*

*p*

*p*

Exactly half as fast (♩ = 72)

Tpts. 1 2

Hn.

Tbns. 1 2

Bar./ Euph.

Tuba

Piano

(8va)

Bells - plastic mallets at random but not too fast (in any order)

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

*pp*

Vibra. at random but not too fast (in any order)

*pp* pedal always

Slinky



open repeat - fade to nothing

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cls. 1 2

B. Cl.

C.A. Cl.

A. Saxes 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

open repeat - fade to nothing

Tpts. 1 2

Hn.

Tbns. 1 2

Bar./ Euph.

Tuba

Piano

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2