

BREAKING POINT

Brian Balmages

Instrumentation

1 - Conductor's Full Score	3 - B♭ Trumpet 2	2 - Mallet Percussion 2
1 - Piccolo	3 - B♭ Trumpet 3	Vibraphone
4 - Flute 1	2 - F Horn 1	Crotales
4 - Flute 2	2 - F Horn 2	Chimes
2 - Oboe	2 - Trombone 1	Xylophone
2 - Bassoon	2 - Trombone 2	3 - Percussion 1
4 - B♭ Clarinet 1	2 - Trombone 3	Snare Drum
4 - B♭ Clarinet 2	2 - Baritone / Euphonium	Bass Drum
4 - B♭ Clarinet 3	2 - Baritone T.C.	4 Tom-toms
2 - B♭ Bass Clarinet	4 - Tuba	Large Tam-tam
1 - E♭ Contra Alto Clarinet	1 - String Bass	3 - Percussion 2
1 - B♭ Contrabass Clarinet	1 - Timpani	Crash Cymbals
2 - E♭ Alto Saxophone 1	2 - Mallet Percussion 1	Suspended Cymbal
2 - E♭ Alto Saxophone 2	Bells	Tam-tam
2 - B♭ Tenor Saxophone	Chimes	Triangle
2 - E♭ Baritone Saxophone	Marimba	Bar Chimes
3 - B♭ Trumpet 1		

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. The music he has written for winds, brass, and orchestra has been performed throughout the world with commissions ranging from elementary schools to professional orchestras. World premieres include prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and Meyerhoff Symphony Hall. 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. He received his bachelor's degree in music from James Madison University and his master's degree from the University of Miami in Florida. He is a recipient of the prestigious A. Austin Harding Award from the American School Band Directors Association and in 2016 was awarded the James Madison University Distinguished Alumni Award from the School of Visual and Performing Arts (the first year the award was given). 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.

As a conductor, Mr. Balmages enjoys regular engagements with all-state and region bands and orchestras, as well as university and professional ensembles throughout the world. Notable guest conducting appearances have included the Midwest Clinic, Western International Band Clinic, College Band Directors Conference, American School Band Directors Association National Conference and others. Additional conducting appearances have included the Kennedy Center and Meyerhoff Symphony Hall as well as engagements in Australia, Canada and Italy. Currently, he is Director of Instrumental Publications for The FJH Music Company and Assistant Director of Bands and Orchestras at Towson University.

About the Music

This piece was never meant to be written. In fact, I was working on a different piece altogether (and was over halfway through it) when my entire interest, desire, and investment in "that" piece simply caved. I had been fighting with it for weeks and was making some progress, but everything about the piece felt so ordinary. There was a massive disconnect between that piece and my life, and I finally understood that this piece is the one I needed to write. The piece that I so desperately did NOT want to write. Perhaps my email to Daniel Hopkins, the commissioning director at Cumberland High School in Wisconsin, best conveys everything:

"Now to throw everything on its end... I spent endless amounts of time working on [your piece] and was struggling with it a ton. The piece wasn't going anywhere. It just felt like regular "band music" that I was trying to make fun, but I just didn't feel anything behind it. The underlying story is that throughout the [writing of that] piece, my father has been extremely sick – suffering from liver and kidney failure. As I write this email, he is back in the hospital waiting to see if an obstruction clears that just occurred the other day. If it does clear, he may go home tomorrow or the next day. If not, he may not be with us by the end of the week. It's been a mess. For over a month, he has been at the University of Maryland Medical Center being evaluated to see if he was strong enough for a liver and kidney transplant. It has been a rollercoaster. One day everyone believes he is going to be listed the following day. Hours later, his heart levels tank and we're not sure he is a candidate at all. A day later he has an incredible heart scan putting us back on track. A week later we find out that his heart has not recovered as they had hoped, so still no transplant. I canceled a conducting engagement in Ireland not knowing how much time we have together and hoping he would get a transplant. And with this new complication, I may be cancelling a trip to Oklahoma because I do not know if he will need surgery tomorrow or Monday - and if so, it is highly likely he will not survive it. He is a trumpet player. I am a trumpet player. And today I brought my 9-year-old son to the hospital so he could play his trumpet for my dad. Right now, I'm not sure if that is the last time he will see my father or not.

Throughout this entire experience, I have reached my own breaking point. Over and over again. So I fall apart, put myself together, and am then broken all over again. And again.

This is the piece I have written for you: *Breaking Point*.

It is one of the most emotional and powerful pieces I have ever written. It has moments of untamed beauty and other moments of intense aggression. You told me a strength of your group is their ability to bring a ton of energy to their music. They are going to need it. Emotional energy. Raw energy. Anger. Rage. Hope. False hope. Desperation. It's all there."

This email was written on Saturday March 2, 2019. On Sunday morning, I spoke with the doctors who told me that it appeared my father would be able to avoid the surgery for his obstruction. So I decided I would fly to Oklahoma at my father's request ("Brian, stop cancelling everything because of me. I want you to keep doing everything. I'm fine."). It seemed likely he would be discharged in a few days, although again - with a failing liver and kidneys, getting discharged was not really a blessing. Since I was only going to be gone for a couple days, my dad wanted me to go. And so I did. On the way to Oklahoma, I continued writing at a feverish pace, trying to keep up with all the notes, emotions, phrases and textures running through my mind. I thought I finished the piece by noon on Monday, ahead of my band and orchestra rehearsals at Oklahoma State University later that day.

That evening, my mother called me as did some of the doctors. The obstruction wound up not being any better at all. In fact, it was getting worse. It was that night that my dad called me and told me he was tired. Tired of being in the hospital. Tired of exploring a bunch of surgeries that he likely would not survive. Tired of subjecting himself to so much when it was still highly unlikely that he would ever be put on the transplant list due to his heart condition. I'll never forget what he said and can still hear his voice. "Brian, it's okay. I really am at peace. I'm ready for whatever comes next."

Up until that point, I had such a mix of emotions, and it is easy to hear them throughout the piece. Sadness. Heartbreak. Anger (a lot of anger). Frustration. Overwhelming despair. The listener can hear passive dissonance and much more aggressive dissonance. Moments when you feel like you can catch your breath, but it is cut short because you suddenly want to scream. Or cry. Or just sit there and do completely nothing despite the fact that a million people are trying to reach you. All of this finally boiled over into the loud, powerful chorale near the end of the piece (a variation of the chorale first introduced in the low brass near the beginning) that constantly moves between major and minor tonalities while a driving line in the woodwinds and mallets moves between both tonalities and also spends time in its own harmonic world. All of this was designed to reflect the chaos of getting pulled in different directions - hope versus despair. Constantly. And so, I began to scream (musically) for it all to stop and wrote the last powerful moments of instability, with everything leading to a unison concert F. That was the end of the piece.

Or so I thought.

Rewind to my dad's phone call on Monday night. "Brian, it's okay. I really am at peace. I'm ready for whatever comes next."

Suddenly, I realized that the piece was not over. Not at all. I had to express that moment of peace. And that is why I extended the work with a soft Bach-style chorale. It is original (my dad always preferred my original music), but symbolizes that moment when I realized my dad did not want to fight anymore. He just wanted to be comfortable. As the chorale continues, phrases begin to lengthen. And then the silence enters. Those moments between phrases when you just don't know what to say. And so you let the silence say it for you. The length of silence between phrases stretches as the chorale continues. Until everything is reduced to an octave in a single section. That is how the piece needed to end. No major chord. No minor chord. Just an octave. I finished the piece on Tuesday while flying home early from Oklahoma to see my dad. I have never cried so much while writing a piece of music. I was a total disaster on the plane, but powered through and people around me kindly gave me some space. At the hospital on Tuesday, Dad, Mom and I had a wonderful day. We talked about all kinds of things. Laughed. Remembered. Hugged. Smiled. It was lovely. He was all irritated that he kept dropping his phone, so he asked me to buy him a new phone case with a better grip. I did and brought it Wednesday morning. He was unresponsive when I got there and would never wake up. The following day, just two days after I finished *Breaking Point*, my world shattered when my father passed away with my mom, me, and friends by his side.

My heartfelt thanks to Daniel Hopkins at Cumberland High School in Wisconsin. He understood my need to switch gears completely on this commission, and welcomed it with open arms. I will always miss my dad, but finally found my peace in the closing measures of this music.

- Brian Balmages

BREAKING POINT**BRIAN BALMAGES**
(ASCAP)**Adagio** (♩ = 52)

Piccolo

Flutes 1 2

Oboe

Bassoon

B♭ Clarinets 1 2 3

B♭ Bass Clarinet

B♭ Contrabass Clarinet

E♭ Alto Saxophones 1 2

B♭ Tenor Saxophone

E♭ Baritone Saxophone

B♭ Trumpets 1 2 3

F Horns 1 2

Trombones 1 2 3

Baritone / Euphonium

Tuba String Bass

Timpani

Mallet Percussion 1
(Bells, Chimes, Marimba)

Mallet Percussion 2
(Vibraphone, Crotales, Chimes, Xylophone)

Percussion 1
(Snare Drum, Bass Drum, 4 Tom-toms, Large Tam-tam)

Percussion 2
(Crash Cymbals, Suspended Cymbal, Tam-tam, Triangle, Bar Chimes)

Adagio (♩ = 52)

1 player

(2nd) - 1 player

Solo

2. Solo

B.D.

(G, A♭, C, G♭)

Bells (plastic mallets)

Chimes w/ triangle beaters on top of chimes

B.D.

2 3 4 5 6



Picc.

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

2 players

p

Solo

p

tutti

p

3. div.

(lower 8ve if available)

p

8^{vb}

(lower 8ve if available)

p

8^{vb}

A. Saxes 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

Hn.

Bsn. Solo

p

play

p

9

harmon mute – stem out

Ob. Solo (st. mute)

p

2. harmon mute – stem out

p

Bsn. Solo (st. mute)

p

1 player

p

Cb. Cl.

play

p

8^{vb}

Timp.

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Bowed Crotales

p < *mp*

Large Tam-tam

p

Bar Chimes

Tri.

7

8

9 *p*

10

11

12

(C to E^b)

musical score for a concert band, showing staves for Bsn., Cls. (1, 2, 3), B. Cl., C.B. Cl., A. Saxes (1, 2), T. Sax., B. Sax., Tpts. (1, 2, 3), Hns. (1, 2), Tbns. (1, 2, 3), Bar./Euph., Tuba, St. Bass, Timp., and Mlt. Perc. 1. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'p', 'mp', 'mf', and 'f'. A large red watermark 'Preview Only' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

18

18

B1788

B1788

B1788

B1788

48

Solo *p*

Picc.

Fls. 1
2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cls. 1
2
3

B. Cl.

C.B. Cl.

A. Saxes 1
2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

Tpts. 1
2
3

Hns. 1
2

Tbns. 1
2
3

Bar. / Euph.

Tuba / St. Bass

Timp.

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Fl. 1 / 2 (section) *p*

Fl. 2 div.

Fl. 1 div.

Solo *p*

Solo *p*

Solo *p*

mp > *p*

(A, B^b, D, F)

Mar. *p*

mp

58 Agitato, marcato (♩. = 144)

Picc.

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cls. 1 2 3

B. Cl.

C.B. Cl.

A. Saxes 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

Hn.

mp

mp

mp

58 Agitato, marcato (♩. = 144)

Tpts. 1 2 3

Hns. 1 2

Tbns. 1 2 3

Bar. / Euph.

Tuba St. Bass

Timp.

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

p

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp

B1788

82

Picc. *mf* *f*

Fls. 1 *mf* *f*
2

Ob. *mf* *f*

Bsn. *mf* *f*

Cl. 1 *mf* *f*
2
3

B. Cl. *mf* *f*

C.B. Cl. *mf* *f*

A. Sax. 1 *mf* *f*
2

T. Sax. *mf* *f*

B. Sax. *mf* *f*

Hn. *mf* *f*

Tpts. 1 *mf* *f*
2
3

Hns. 1 *mf* *f*
2

Tbns. 1 *mf* *f*
2
3

Bar. / Euph. *mf* *f*

Tuba St. Bass *mf* *f*

Timp. *mf* *f*

Mlt. Perc. 1 *mf* *f*

Mlt. Perc. 2 *mf* *f*

Perc. 1 *mf* *f*

Perc. 2 *mf* *f*

Tri. *mf* *f*

80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87

B1788

Picc.
 Fls. 1
 2
 Ob.
 Bsn.
 Cls. 1
 2
 3
 B. Cl.
 C.B. Cl.
 A. Sax. 1
 2
 T. Sax.
 B. Sax.
 Tpts. 1
 2
 3
 Hns. 1
 2
 Tbns. 1
 2
 3
 Bar. / Euph.
 Tuba
 St. Bass
 Timp.
 Mlt. Perc. 1
 Mlt. Perc. 2
 Perc. 1
 Perc. 2

p
p
mp
mp
f
mp
p
p
 Toms

harmon mute – stem out

96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103

B1788

Picc. *p*
 Fls. 1 *p*
 2
 Ob.
 Bsn. *p*
 Cls. 1
 2
 3
 B. Cl.
 C.B. Cl.
 A. Sax. 1 *p*
 2
 T. Sax. *p*
 B. Sax. *p*
 Hn. Solo *p*
 Bsn. *p*
 Tpts. 1
 2
 3
 Hns. 1 Solo *p*
 2
 Tbns. 1 *p*
 2 *p*
 3
 Bar. / Euph.
 Tuba St. Bass *p*
 Timp. *p*
 Mlt. Perc. 1 *p*
 Mlt. Perc. 2 *p*
 Perc. 1 *p*
 Perc. 2 *p*

112 *p* 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120

B1788

130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139

144

152

Picc.
 Fls. 1
 2
 Ob.
 Bsn.
 Cls. 1
 2
 3
 B. Cl.
 C.B. Cl.
 A. Saxes 1
 2
 T. Sax.
 B. Sax.
 Tpts. 1
 2
 3
 Hns. 1
 2
 Tbn. 1
 2
 3
 Bar. / Euph.
 Tuba
 St. Bass
 Timp.
 Mlt. Perc. 1
 Mlt. Perc. 2
 Perc. 1
 Perc. 2

149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156

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Picc.
 Fls. 1
 2
 Ob.
 Bsn.
 Cls. 1
 2
 3
 B. Cl.
 C.B. Cl.
 A. Saxes 1
 2
 T. Sax.
 B. Sax.
 Tpts. 1
 2
 3
 Hns. 1
 2
 Tbns. 1
 2
 3
 Bar. / Euph.
 Tuba
 St. Bass
 Timp.
 Mlt. Perc. 1
 Mlt. Perc. 2
 Perc. 1
 Perc. 2

Musical score for measures 157 to 164. The score includes parts for Piccolo, Flutes 1 and 2, Oboe, Bassoon, Clarinets 1, 2, and 3, Bass Clarinet, Contrabass Clarinet, Alto Saxophones 1 and 2, Tenor Saxophone, Bass Saxophone, Trumpets 1, 2, and 3, Horns 1 and 2, Trombones 1, 2, and 3, Baritone/Euphonium, Tuba, Snare Drum, and Timpani. The score features various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo) and *f* (forte). A large red watermark "Preview Only" is overlaid diagonally across the page.

157 158 159 160 *ff* 161 162 163 164

166

Picc.

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

1 2 3

Cls.

B. Cl.

C.B. Cl.

A. Saxes 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

1 2 3

Tpts.

Hns. 1 2

Tbns. 1 2 3

Bar. / Euph.

Tuba St. Bass

Timp.

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Toms

f *fp* *p* *ff*

165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173

181

186

Picc. *ff*

Fls. 1 *ff*

2 *ff*

Ob. *ff*

Bsn. *ff*

1 *ff*

Cl. 2 *ff*

3 *ff*

B. Cl. *ff*

C.B. Cl. *ff*

A. Sax. 1 *ff*

2 *ff*

T. Sax. *ff*

B. Sax. *ff*

186

Tpts. 1 *ff*

2 *ff*

3 *ff*

Hns. 1 *ff*

2 *ff*

Tbns. 1 *ff*

2 *ff*

3 *ff*

Bar. / Euph. *ff*

Tuba *ff*

St. Bass *ff*

Timp. *ff*

Mlt. Perc. 1 *ff*

Mlt. Perc. 2 *ff*

Perc. 1 *ff*

Perc. 2 *ff*

182 *mp* 183 184 185 186 *ff* 187 188 189

Picc.

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cls. 1 2 3

B. Cl.

C.B. Cl.

A. Saxes 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

Tpts. 1 2 3

Hns. 1 2

Tbns. 1 2 3

Bar. / Euph.

Tuba St. Bass

Timp.

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197

200

Picc.

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cl. 1 2 3

B. Cl.

C.B. Cl.

A. Sax. 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

200

Tpts. 1 2 3

Hns. 1 2

Tbns. 1 2 3

Bar. / Euph.

Tuba St. Bass

Timp.

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

198 199 *mf* *ff* 201 202 203 204 205 206

(F, G^b, B^b, E^b)

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208

Picc.

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cls. 1 2 3

B. Cl.

C.B. Cl.

A. Saxes. 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

208

Tpts. 1 2 3

Hns. 1 2

Tbns. 1 2 3

Bar./Euph.

Tuba St. Bass

Timp.

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

207 208 209 *mf* 211 *ff* 212 213 214 215 *mf*

222

Picc.

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cl. 1 2 3

B. Cl.

C.B. Cl.

A. Sax. 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

222

Tpts. 1 2 3

Hns. 1 2

Tbns. 1 2 3

Bar. / Euph.

Tuba St. Bass

Timp.

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

216 **ff** 217 218 219 220 221 222 **ff** 223 224

bells up – MASSIVE (to end)

fff

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B1788

238 Brillante e doloroso (♩ = 64)

Picc. *sonare e sostenuto*
 Fls. 1 *sonare e sostenuto*
 2 *sonare e sostenuto*
 Ob. *sonare e sostenuto*
 Bsn. *sonare e sostenuto*
 Cls. 1 *sonare e sostenuto*
 2 *sonare e sostenuto*
 3 *sonare e sostenuto*
 B. Cl. *sonare e sostenuto*
 C.B. Cl. *sonare e sostenuto*
 8^{va} *sonare e sostenuto*
 A. Sax. 1 *sonare e sostenuto*
 2 *sonare e sostenuto*
 T. Sax. *sonare e sostenuto*
 B. Sax. *sonare e sostenuto*
 238 Brillante e doloroso (♩ = 64)
 Tpts. 1 *sonare e sostenuto*
 2 *sonare e sostenuto*
 3 *sonare e sostenuto*
 Hns. 1 *sonare e sostenuto*
 2 *sonare e sostenuto*
 Tbns. 1 *sonare e sostenuto*
 2 *sonare e sostenuto*
 3 *sonare e sostenuto*
 Bar. / Euph. *sonare e sostenuto*
 Tuba *sonare e sostenuto*
 St. Bass *sonare e sostenuto*
 Timp. *sonare e sostenuto*
 Mit. Perc. 1 *sonare e sostenuto*
 Mit. Perc. 2 *sonare e sostenuto*
 Perc. 1 *sonare e sostenuto*
 Perc. 2 *sonare e sostenuto*
 Chimes *ff*
 Vibra. *ff*
 Large Tam-tam *ff*
 234 235 236 237 *mf* *ff* 239 *ff* 240 *mf*

rit.

Picc.
 Fls. 1
 2
 Ob.
 Bsn.
 Cls. 1
 2
 3
 B. Cl.
 C.B. Cl.
 A. Sax. 1
 2
 T. Sax.
 B. Sax.
 Tpts. 1
 2
 3
 Hns. 1
 2
 1
 2
 Tbns.
 3
 Bar. /
 Euph.
 Tuba
 St. Bass
 Timp.
 Mlt. Perc. 1
 Mlt. Perc. 2
 Perc. 1
 Perc. 2

no vibrato
p
 rit.
ff
mf *ff*

241 242 244 245 246 247

249 Peaceful

Picc.
 Fls. 1
 2
 Ob.
 Bsn.
 Cls. 1
 2
 3
 B. Cl.
 C.B. Cl.
 A. Saxes 1
 2
 T. Sax.
 B. Sax.
 249 Peaceful
 Tpts. 1
 2
 3
 Hns. 1
 2
 Tbns. 1
 2
 3
 Bar./
 Euph.
 Tuba
 St. Bass
 Timp.
 Mlt. Perc. 1
 Mlt. Perc. 2
 Perc. 1
 Perc. 2

(no vibrato)
pp
p
p
p

248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256

258

Picc.

Fls. 1
2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cls. 1
2
3

B. Cl.

C.B. Cl.

A. Sax. 1
2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

258

Tpts. 1
2
3

Hns. 1
2

Tbns. 1
2
3

Bar. /
Euph.

Tuba
St. Bass

Timp.

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

pp
w/ vibrato

p

pp

p

pp

p

rit.

Picc.

Fls. 1
2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cl. 1
2
3

B. Cl.

C.B. Cl.

A. Sax. 1
2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

rit.

Tpts. 1
2
3

Hns. 1
2

Tbns. 1
2
3

Bar. /
Euph.

Tuba
St. Bass

Timp.

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273