

UNKNOWN

(Medium Level Version)

Brian Balmages

Instrumentation

1 - Full Score	2 - Trombone 1
4 - Flute 1	2 - Trombone 2
4 - Flute 2	2 - Trombone 3
2 - Oboe	2 - Baritone / Euphonium
2 - Bassoon	2 - Baritone T.C.
4 - B \flat Clarinet 1	4 - Tuba
4 - B \flat Clarinet 2	1 - String Bass
4 - B \flat Clarinet 3	1 - Timpani
2 - B \flat Bass Clarinet	1 - Mallet Percussion 1 Bells
1 - E \flat Contra Alto Clarinet	2 - Mallet Percussion 2 Chimes Marimba Vibraphone
1 - B \flat Contrabass Clarinet	2 - Percussion 1 Snare Drum Bass Drum Triangle
2 - E \flat Alto Saxophone 1	3 - Percussion 2 Crash Cymbals Suspended Cymbal Tam-tam
2 - E \flat Alto Saxophone 2	
2 - B \flat Tenor Saxophone	
2 - E \flat Baritone Saxophone	
3 - B \flat Trumpet 1	
3 - B \flat Trumpet 2	
3 - B \flat Trumpet 3	
2 - F Horn 1	
2 - F Horn 2	

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

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The Composer

Brian Balmages (b. 1975) is an award-winning composer and conductor. His music 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 is a recipient of the prestigious 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 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

Unknown is the first band piece I wrote after the pandemic began, and it showed me the way out of a creative void I had experienced for nearly 3 months. During those three months, I wrote virtually nothing due to a "creative paralysis" that I experienced like many of my colleagues. In many ways, this piece jumpstarted my creativity after so much time away, and I owe Darcy Vogt Williams a huge debt of gratitude for her patience, enthusiasm, and honesty about what we were all experiencing. This piece, originally commissioned for her band's performance at the 2020 Midwest Clinic, was composed with full knowledge that we did not know if the clinic would happen (it did not). It was composed not knowing whether she would have full band, a hybrid band, or a completely virtual modality. It was composed not knowing how her younger players would adapt and progress on their instruments in a non-traditional band setting. It was composed not knowing whether her backup premiere date in the Spring would happen, and if so, whether all of her kids would be able to reach the technical level necessary to participate. It was composed in the midst of chaos. The perfect storm of a worldwide pandemic, racial injustice, and a political firestorm (to put it lightly). As we began discussing the direction of this piece, the only thing we knew for certain was one thing – that everything was "unknown." And that became my way out of a 3 month lapse in creativity.

The first inspiration for this piece is anger. Pure, unadulterated anger at Covid and its ravaging effects on our physical and mental health. The opening, growling unison D makes it obvious that I had been waiting to release it for months. This anger gives way to loneliness, something that the world experienced on so many different levels. The music continues to alternate between these emotions while also exploring brief moments of beauty and hope. Eventually, the orchestration thins out considerably and the foundation becomes a soft series of cluster chords. On top of this, one can hear excerpts of *America (My Country, 'Tis of Thee)*; however, I only use a 2-measure excerpt, which is repeated and altered as the music progresses. That excerpt quotes the lyric "Land where my fathers died." (Enough said.)

After revisiting some of the opening material, the music moves at a quicker pace and takes on the energy of music that could be identified with a protest march. The world saw a lot of demonstrations, marches and protests (some peaceful, and some not so peaceful). This section captures the intensity that has fueled these protests, whether about social justice, racial justice, gender equality, transgender rights, freedom over fear, and more. Regardless of where anyone stands on any of these issues, these protests have been highly visible, and even more so during the pandemic.

Finally, the music begins to fade away, with various elements from throughout the piece surfacing for a moment here and there. The listener is left with nothing but the sound of bells and chimes. The piece intentionally closes in a way that makes the ending feel slightly uncertain – a final testament to the unknown.

Unknown was commissioned by the Stiles Middle School Band Program (Leander, Texas) and band directors Darcy Vogt Williams, Jenna Yee, and TJ West.

- Brian Balmages

To The Conductor

Darcy had an interesting idea about the functionality of the piece – she was hoping for something that would work well for her advanced kids, yet also allow some of her younger students to play as well (mainly because she did not know how her younger players would progress throughout the year with so many variables). Her hope was to not only have the core piece that her honors band students could play, but a secondary “accessible” version that could stand completely on its own. Essentially, something like Frank Ticheli’s *Joy and Joy Revisited*, yet also be playable together at the same time. I wasn’t sure if it was possible, but after a lot of challenging evenings, I figured it out (at least for this piece!).

The piece can be played in one of three “configurations” – the medium level version (grade 3.5), the medium easy version (grade 2.5), or a combination of the two. The only catch in a combination setting is that one of the versions must include all parts of that version (so if you do the medium level version, you would not be able to just swap out the harder trombone part for an easier part – you would need all 3 advanced parts covered, but could then add the easier trombone parts as well). A full score that includes both versions is available as an online download at www.fjhmusic.com.

Medium Level Version (Grade 3.5) – B1864

Medium Easy Version (Grade 2.5) – B1865

Complete Score (both versions together) – Digital download only

Instrumentation

Medium Level Version

Flute 1-2
Oboe
Bassoon
B \flat Clarinet 1-3
Bass Clarinet
Alto Sax 1-2
Tenor Sax
Baritone Sax
B \flat Trumpet 1-3
F Horn 1-2
Trombone 1-3
Euphonium
Tuba
String Bass

Medium Easy Version (A Parts)

Flute 1-2
Oboe
Bassoon
B \flat Clarinet 1-2
Bass Clarinet
Alto Sax 1-2
Tenor Sax
Baritone Sax
B \flat Trumpet 1-2
F Horn
Trombone 1-2
Euphonium
Tuba
String Bass

Percussion (single level)

Timpani
Mallet Percussion 1
(Bells)
Mallet Percussion 2
(Chimes, Marimba, Vibraphone)
Percussion 1
(Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Triangle)
Percussion 2
(Crash Cymbals, Suspended Cymbal, Tam-tam)

UNKNOWN

(Medium Level Version)

BRIAN BALMAGES
(ASCAP)

With anguish (♩ = 60)

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

Timpani

Mallet Percussion 1 (Bells)

Mallet Percussion 2 (Chimes, Marimba, Vibraphone)

Percussion 1 (Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Triangle)

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

Sus. Cym. mp

ff p mp ff mf

tr

6

3 4

With anguish (♩ = 60)

2 3 4 5

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16 Solo

Solo (cued in Fl. 2)

16

mp *ff*

31 a tempo

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cls. 1 2 3

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Saxes. 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

p *mp* *p* *mp* *ff*

31 a tempo

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* *p* *mp* *ff*

mp *ff*

ff Chimes

ff Tam-tam

39

This page contains a musical score for a large ensemble, including woodwinds, brass, and percussion. The score is divided into several systems. The first system includes Flutes (1 and 2), Oboes, Bassoons, Clarinets (1, 2, and 3), B. Clarinet, C. Clarinet, A. Saxophones (1 and 2), T. Saxophone, and B. Saxophone. The second system includes Trumpets (1, 2, and 3), Horns (1 and 2), Trombones (1, 2, and 3), Baritone/Euphonium, Tuba/Euphonium, Timpani, Mlt. Perc. 1, Mlt. Perc. 2, Perc. 1 (with S.D. marking), and Perc. 2 (with Cr. Cym. marking). The score features various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *ff*, *mp*, and *ff*. A large red watermark reading "Preview Only Requires Purchase" is overlaid diagonally across the page. The page number "10" is in the top left, and the measure number "39" is in a box at the top center. Measure numbers 37, 38, 39, and 40 are indicated at the bottom of the page.

49

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cls. 1 2 3

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Saxes. 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

p

p

p

p

p

49

Hn. (st. mute)

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

stopped (opt.) +

p

p

p

p

p

p

p

scrape Tam-tam w/ coin

Fls. 1 2

Ob. *p*

Bsn. *p*

Cls. 1 2 3

B. Cl. *p*

Cb. Cl. *p*

A. Saxes. 1 2 *tutti*

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

Tpts. 1 2 3

Hns. 1 2

Tbns. 1 2 3

Bar. / Euph. *p*

Tuba St. Bass *p*

Timp. *p*

Mlt. Perc. 1 *p*

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1 *p*

Perc. 2 *Sus. Cym. w/ brushes* *p*

62 63 65 66 67

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75 Double time (♩ = 120)

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cls. 1 2 3

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Saxes. 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

75 Double time (♩ = 120)

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

S.D.

Cr. Cym.

Marimba (play 8vb)

Fls. 1 2
cresc. poco a poco

Ob.
cresc. poco a poco

Bsn.
cresc. poco a poco

Cls. 1 2 3
cresc. poco a poco

B. Cl.
cresc. poco a poco

Cb. Cl.
cresc. poco a poco **ff**

A. Saxes. 1 2
cresc. poco a poco

T. Sax.
cresc. poco a poco **ff**

B. Sax.
cresc. poco a poco

Tpts. 1 2 3
f *cresc. poco a poco* **ff**

Hns. 1 2
cresc. poco a poco **ff**

Tbns. 1 2 3
cresc. poco a poco

Bar. / Euph.
cresc. poco a poco

Tuba / St. Bass
cresc. poco a poco **ff**

Timp.
cresc. poco a poco

Mlt. Perc. 1
cresc. poco a poco

Mlt. Perc. 2
cresc. poco a poco

Perc. 1
cresc. poco a poco

Perc. 2

91 92 93 94 **mp**

This musical score is for a full orchestra, spanning measures 95 to 99. The instrumentation includes:

- Flutes (Fls.) 1 and 2
- Oboe (Ob.)
- Bassoon (Bsn.)
- Clarinets (Cls.) 1, 2, and 3
- Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.)
- Contrabass Clarinet (Cb. Cl.)
- Alto Saxophones (A. Saxes.) 1 and 2
- Tenor Saxophone (T. Sax.)
- Bass Saxophone (B. Sax.)
- Trumpets (Tpts.) 1, 2, and 3
- Horns (Hns.) 1 and 2
- Trombones (Tbns.) 1, 2, and 3
- Baritone/Euphonium (Bar. / Euph.)
- Tuba and Euphonium (Tuba St. Bass)
- Timpani (Timp.)
- Mallet Percussion 1 (Mlt. Perc. 1)
- Mallet Percussion 2 (Mlt. Perc. 2) with Chimes
- Percussion 1 (Perc. 1)
- Percussion 2 (Perc. 2)

The score is marked with *ff* (fortissimo) throughout. A large red watermark reading "Legal Use Requires Purchase" is overlaid diagonally across the page. At the bottom, there are dynamic markings: *ff* at measure 95, *mf* at measure 96, and *ff* at measure 98.

101 Half time (♩ = 60)

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cls. 1 2 3

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Saxes. 1 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

101 Half time (♩ = 60)

Tpts. 1 2 3

Hns. 1 2

Tbns. 1 2 3

Bar. / Euph.

Tuba / Str. Bass

Timp.

Mlt. Perc. 1

Mlt. Perc. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

100

mf

ff

102

mf

ff

104

Fls. 1 2

Ob.

Bsn.

Cls. 1 2 3

B. Cl.

Cb. 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

117 118 119 120 121 122 123

Solo

p

Preview Only

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