

BLUE RIDGE REEL

for adaptable string ensemble

Brian Balmages

Instrumentation

Usage Guidelines

Full Score

Adaptable Parts

(includes part 1, 2, 3, and 4 for each instrument)

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

Accompaniment

Piano / Guitar

Percussion

(optional, but preferred)

Vibraphone

Percussion 1

Snare Drum

Percussion 2

Spoons / Castanets

Tambourine

Washboard / Guiro

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

T H E
F · J · H
MUSIC
COMPANY
I N C.

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About the Series

Originally designed to address the needs of small ensembles with exceptional instrumentation challenges, *The Reimagine Initiative* has grown into a series that not only offers great, functional music for ensembles of all sizes and instrumentation, but also includes a wealth of additional teaching opportunities that extend beyond performance. The following are just some examples of how this series can be used to deepen the musical understanding of students regardless of ability level.

Adaptable Parts

The primary goal of this series is to make sure every single musician has access to all the parts of a composition. Thus, if a piece is reimagined in 3 parts, a bass player is able to practice all 3 parts just like a violinist can. This becomes particularly valuable if students are in sectionals but still want to be able to hear all the elements of a piece. If an ensemble does not have a bass clef voice, directors can assign this part to another player with ease. So even if a director only has a group of violists, they can still perform the music without issue.

Accompaniment

An easy piano part is included to provide additional support. Further, chords are written above the part where appropriate, allowing for a guitar player to play along as well. This part is also available as an mp3 download for students to practice with at home.

Percussion

Optional percussion parts are included but are not necessary. Students have the option of playing along with background tracks (including piano and percussion) or just perform with piano / guitar accompaniment alone.

Teaching Opportunities Far Beyond Performance

This series offers many opportunities to dive deeper into the musical decisions that are made in bringing each piece to life — from composition to orchestration and more. For example, students themselves can make decisions about orchestration during rehearsal. What happens if the basses play part 1 and cellos play part 3? Does it sound good? This will undoubtedly lead to wonderful discussions about orchestration and arranging, with students participating in the orchestration of a piece and discovering new, exciting combinations of instruments that give a piece an entirely new sound. Teachers may also choose to flip their orchestra and have all low voices play part 1 while all high voices play the bass line. These situations make students increasingly aware of the various parts in a piece of music other than their own. Sight reading is yet another benefit, as ensembles can sight read a piece multiple times with members switching parts each time.

Reimagining Opportunities for Musicians

Born out of the need to address small ensembles with exceptional instrumentation challenges, *The Reimagine Initiative* also unlocks a wealth of opportunities for teaching music in both familiar and new ways. We hope you share the excitement for what this series has to offer, and how it can help you reimagine your rehearsals and your curriculum!

Recommended Part Assignments

While there are many options for students to participate in “orchestrating” these works (see above), the following are recommended “standard” part assignments and may be adapted as needed.

Three-Part Works:

- Part 1: Violin, Viola, Cello
- Part 2: Violin, Viola, Cello
- Part 3: Cello, Double Bass

Four-Part Works:

- Part 1: Violin, Viola
- Part 2: Violin, Viola, Cello
- Part 3: Violin, Viola, Cello
- Part 4: Cello, Double Bass

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

Blue Ridge Reel was inspired by a visit to Asheville for the National Convention of the American Band Directors Association. I was extremely taken with the fun vibe of the town, located in the mountains of North Carolina. During the trip, I had an opportunity to hear several bluegrass bands, including a great performance during a dinner and special tour of the Biltmore Estate. I love the rich heritage of the music in the mountains of the Eastern United States. Many influences in the region come from the rich cultures of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. This fiddle music eventually played a major role in the development of country and bluegrass music.

The title, *Blue Ridge Reel*, pays homage to the Blue Ridge Mountains. While influenced by the form and style of a traditional Irish reel, the music certainly heads in some contemporary directions as it seeks to mix the modern feel of a city like Asheville with its deeply engrained musical roots. It is also deeply influenced by the untimely passing of Davidson College mathematics professor, Robert Whitton, a music lover and major supporter of local musicians. Shortly after his passing, over 100 friends and family gathered in downtown Davidson to participate in a New Orleans-style march through the city. Thus, this piece ties together the spirit of that New Orleans march with my own personal bluegrass experiences in Asheville.

A number of traditional instruments are called for, especially in the percussion section. A washboard really adds to the authenticity of the piece, though a guiro is a suitable alternative. The piece also calls for spoons. Many instrument stores now sell "musical spoons" that are easy for students to pick up and play quickly (castanets are a suitable replacement if necessary).

- Brian Balmages

Duration: 2:45

* Parts 1-4 are provided for every instrument

BLUE RIDGE REEL

for adaptable string ensemble

BRIAN BALMAGES
(ASCAP)

With a spirited groove! (♩ = 108)

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 1-5) includes parts for four strings (1-4), Piano/Guitar, Vibraphone, Percussion 1 (Snare Drum), and Percussion 2 (Spoons/Castanets, Tambourine, Washboard/Guiro). The second system (measures 6-11) continues the arrangement with similar instrumentation. A large red watermark 'Preview Only' is overlaid diagonally across the score. A box containing the number '9' is placed above the first staff of the second system. The dynamic marking *mf* is used throughout. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

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Hear and download this piece at www.fjhmusic.com

Musical score for measures 12-16. The score includes staves for four vocal parts (1-4), Piano/Guitar (Pno. (Gtr.)), Vibraphone (Vib.), Percussion 1 (Perc. 1), and Percussion 2 (Perc. 2). Measure 17 is marked as 'Washboard (opt. Guiro)'. A large red watermark 'Preview Only' is overlaid on the score.

Musical score for measures 18-23. The score includes staves for four vocal parts (1-4), Piano/Guitar (Pno. (Gtr.)), Vibraphone (Vib.), Percussion 1 (Perc. 1), and Percussion 2 (Perc. 2). A large red watermark 'Preview Only' is overlaid on the score.

25

Basses lower note only

G(no3)

S.D. w/ brushes

mf

24 25 26 27 28

33

Basses lower note only

mf

mf

mf

29 30 31 32 33

mf Tamb.

1

2

3

4

Pno. (Gtr.)

Vib.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

34 35 36 37 38 39

41

1

2

3

4

Pno. (Gtr.)

Vib.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

40 42 43 44 45

f

f

C G C G

49

Musical score for measures 46-51. The score includes staves for four strings (1-4), Piano/Guitar (Pno. (Gtr.)), Vibraphone (Vib.), Percussion 1 (Perc. 1), and Percussion 2 (Perc. 2). The key signature is one sharp (F#). Chords are indicated as C and G. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present at measure 50. A 'wshbd' (woodshed) marking is also present at measure 50. A large red watermark 'Preview Only - Legal Use Requires Purchase' is overlaid on the score.

57

Musical score for measures 52-57. The score includes staves for four strings (1-4), Piano/Guitar (Pno. (Gtr.)), Vibraphone (Vib.), Percussion 1 (Perc. 1), and Percussion 2 (Perc. 2). The key signature is one sharp (F#). Chords are indicated as C and G. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present at measure 57. A 'wshbd' (woodshed) marking is present at measure 57. A large red watermark 'Preview Only - Legal Use Requires Purchase' is overlaid on the score.

Musical score for measures 58-63. The score includes staves for four vocal parts (1-4), Piano/Guitar (Pno. (Gtr.)), Vibraphone (Vib.), Percussion 1 (Perc. 1), and Percussion 2 (Perc. 2). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The dynamic marking *mf* (mezzo-forte) is present in measures 61 and 62. The percussion parts feature a consistent rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents.

Musical score for measures 64-69. The score includes staves for four vocal parts (1-4), Piano/Guitar (Pno. (Gtr.)), Vibraphone (Vib.), Percussion 1 (Perc. 1), and Percussion 2 (Perc. 2). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The dynamic marking *mp* (mezzo-piano) is present in measures 65 and 66. The percussion parts continue with the eighth-note rhythmic pattern.

73

1
2
3
4

mp

Pno. (Gtr.)

Vib.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

70 71 72 73 74

Tamb *mp*

This block contains the first system of musical notation, spanning measures 70 to 74. It features four staves for strings (1-4), piano/guitar (Pno. (Gtr.)), vibraphone (Vib.), and two percussion parts (Perc. 1, Perc. 2). The key signature is one sharp (F#). A box containing the number '73' is positioned above the first staff at the start of measure 73. The dynamic marking *mp* (mezzo-piano) is placed below the first staff at the beginning of measure 73. A 'Tamb' (tambourine) part is introduced in measure 73, also marked *mp*. The percussion parts show rhythmic patterns: Perc. 1 has a steady eighth-note accompaniment, while Perc. 2 has a sparse pattern of quarter notes.

1
2
3
4

Pno. (Gtr.)

Vib.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

75 76 77 78 79

This block contains the second system of musical notation, spanning measures 75 to 79. It continues the instrumentation from the first system. The piano/guitar part consists of block chords. The vibraphone part features a melodic line with grace notes. The percussion parts maintain their respective rhythmic patterns. The dynamic marking *mp* is not explicitly repeated in this system but is implied from the previous system.

81

1 *mf*

2 *mf*

3 *mf*

4 *mf*

Pno. (Gtr.) *mf*

Vib. *mf*

Perc. 1 *mf*

Perc. 2 *mf*

80 *mf* 82 83 84

G

89

1 *f*

2 *f*

3 *f*

4 *f*

Pno. (Gtr.) *f*

Vib. *f*

Perc. 1 *f*

Perc. 2 *f*

85 86 87 88 89 90

G C G

105

Musical score for measures 103-107. The score includes staves for four vocal parts (1-4), Piano/Guitar (Pno. (Gtr.)), Vibraphone (Vib.), Percussion 1 (Perc. 1), and Percussion 2 (Perc. 2). The key signature is one sharp (F#). Measure 105 is marked with a box containing the number 105. Percussion 1 is marked with '(w/ sticks)' and 'mf'. Measure numbers 103, 104, 105, 106, and 107 are indicated at the bottom of the score.

Musical score for measures 108-111. The score includes staves for four vocal parts (1-4), Piano/Guitar (Pno. (Gtr.)), Vibraphone (Vib.), Percussion 1 (Perc. 1), and Percussion 2 (Perc. 2). The key signature is one sharp (F#). Measure numbers 108, 109, 110, and 111 are indicated at the bottom of the score.

113

1
2
3
4

Pno. (Gtr.)
A (no3)

Vib.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

113 *f* 114 115 116 117

121

Vlns. non-div.
other instruments lower note only

vocalize as written

ch ch k ch ch k ch ch k ch k

A (no3)

1
2
3
4

Pno. (Gtr.)
A (no3)

Vib.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

118 119 120 121 122

1
2
3
4

vocalize as written
ch ch k ch ch k ch ch k ch ch k

Pno. (Gtr.)

Vib.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

123 124 125 126 127 128

129

Vlns. non-div.
other instruments lower note only

1
2
3
4

f

A(no3)

Pno. (Gtr.)

Vib.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

129 130 131 132 133

137

1

2

3

4

Pno. (Gtr.)

Vib.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

134 135 136 137 138 139

A D/G A

1

2

3

4

Pno. (Gtr.)

Vib.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

140 141 142 143 144

D/G A D/G as written