HALL OF HEROES

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, the International Outstanding Contributor Award from Phi Beta Mu, won the 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 bands and orchestras as well as university and professional groups throughout the world. He has appeared in nearly all 50 states, with notable guest conducting appearances including "The President's Own" United States Marine Band, United States Air Force Band, the Midwest Clinic, Western International Band Clinic, Maryborough Music Conference (Australia), Teatro dell'Aquila (Italy), and others. Currently, he is Director of MakeMusic Publications and Digital Education for Alfred and MakeMusic.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Based on a four-measure fanfare, this work for beginning string musicians only utilizes notes in the D major scale, quarter and half notes. Specifically, violin 1 uses the full D major scale while all other instruments use only five notes (D through A). String crossings in every part always involve an open string (with the one exception being double bass going from A to F# in measures 13–14), so this is an ideal way to bridge the method book with more sophisticated music. Despite the work's technical simplicity, the music has a natural development and uses canonic devices throughout. Although written in three-part harmony, there is a subtle depth of harmonic sophistication throughout.

Encourage students to play with a big sound to bring out the heroic nature of the piece. At measure 17, make sure all three canonic entrances are balanced and that everyone is matching style. To help make this their own, ask students to consider what kind of heroes this piece is about, and how they can musically represent these heroes beyond what is notated in the music.

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