

Brian Blume

Unforced Rhythms

for solo marimba



Unforced Rhythms by Brian Blume

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Program Notes

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the **unforced rhythms** of grace (emphasis added). I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”
— Matthew 11:28-30 (MSG)

As a percussionist, these words of Jesus from the Message paraphrase have really stood out to me. I have thought about what unforced rhythms might feel or sound like, and while I do not claim to have any definitive answers, this certainly seems like something I would want to experience. The aim of this piece is to capture the idea of walking and working through life but “freely and lightly,” according to “the unforced rhythms of grace.”

— Brian Blume (2011)

Performance Notes

A **5-octave marimba** is preferred, if available, but the piece may be performed on a **4.3-octave** instrument as well. If performing on a 4.3-octave marimba, mm. 1-69 and mm. 158 (letter D)-208 should be played one octave above the written notes. Also, the low octave C-naturals in the final measure, beat two, must be played up one octave if on a 4.3-octave instrument.

The extra staff below the marimba part is for an **ankle or foot shaker** to be played by the soloist. These types of shakers may be purchased from several vendors or constructed at home, and it is up to the performer to decide exactly what type of shaker to use. Except where indicated by simultaneous markings, dynamics apply to both marimba and shaker.

In order for the piece to come across as intended, the performer should strive to play with a sense of confidence and ease (as marked in the score), almost dance-like, even if some parts may prove to be a bit challenging with coordination. After all, the goal is to create an experience of **Unforced Rhythms**.

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41

Example 10

47

mp

53

f

59

f

64

69

69

Sample Image

B Distant

74 *p*

80 *mp*

86

99

105

The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. It begins at measure 74 with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together in groups. A crescendo hairpin is shown between measures 80 and 86, leading to a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The score includes measure numbers 74, 80, 86, 99, and 105. A large, light gray abstract shape is overlaid on the lower half of the page, partially obscuring the musical notation. The bottom of the page features the text 'Sample Image' in a large, bold, black font.

111 **C** More present

mf

116 phrasing simile

122

126 *p*

130 *fp*

136

Sample
Image

142

mp

150

p *fp*

D With confidence & ease

phrasing simile

mf

170

f

Sample
Image

176

182

ff

188

mf *mp*

195

204

pp (*mp*)

Sample
Image