

Montgomery Philharmonic

Intersecting with the Community

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Montgomery Philharmonic 2016 - 17 Our 11th Season – Inspired by...

Concert 3, February 2, 2017– Inspired by Youth

Williams | Meyer | Balmages | Newbold | Stalter | Swearingen | Márquez | Gershwin | Diemer

Ice Sculptures – Brian Balmages (WMHS and MP strings combined)

Instrumentation – Strings

Premiered at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic, this predominantly lyrical work draws its inspiration from ice hotels—temporary hotels made entirely of ice and snow. Strong elements of film scoring prevail throughout the work as it tells the story of the hotel’s construction, visitors, and eventual melting. There are extensive opportunities to feature both your cello soloist and cello section in this piece.

Brian Balmages provided some background for writing the piece. “The original concept of this work was centered around the magnificent ice sculptures that I had seen at various venues throughout my life. It was to reflect everything from simple platters of food to elaborate works of art. As I began researching the topic, I stumbled upon the incredible concept of ice hotels—temporary hotels made entirely of snow and sculpted blocks of ice. There are a handful of these amazing creations throughout the world, reconstructed each year because of their dependence on subzero temperatures during construction and operation. As I continued researching, the scope of the piece changed a bit. While still paying homage to ice sculptures, I incorporated the more dramatic concept of ice hotels as well as the many people who set out to visit these unique destinations. Thus, this work depicts both the construction of the ice hotel, the artwork that exists inside of it, and the spirit of the people who lodge within. It begins from nothing but blocks of ice and creative ideas. As the architecture begins to come together, the artwork soon comes to life, telling not only its own story but the story of the individuals who created it. It also reflects the adventure and heart of those who come to experience these amazing creations in extreme conditions. Toward the end of the work, the music becomes quite soft and reminiscent as the inevitable happens. The ice melts, taking all of its stories and memories with it until the following year, when new stories are told.”

Brian Balmages (b. 1975) is an award-winning composer, conductor, producer, and performer. He holds a Bachelor’s degree in Music from James Madison University, in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and Master’s degree from the University of Miami in Florida. His compositions have been performed worldwide at the state, national, and international levels. His active schedule of commissions and premieres has encompassed various groups, ranging from elementary schools to professional ensembles, including the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Miami Symphony Orchestra, University of Miami Wind Ensemble, Boston Brass, and the Dominion Brass Ensemble. In 2012, Mr. Balmages received the prestigious Albert Austin Harding Award from the American School Band Directors Association. He is also a 2010 winner of the Harvey G. Phillips Award for Compositional Excellence, presented by the International Tuba-Euphonium Association.

As a conductor, Mr. Balmages enjoys engagements with numerous all-state and regional honor bands and orchestras, along with university and professional groups. Notable guest conducting appearances have included the Midwest Clinic, Western International Band Clinic, National Association for Music Educators, American School Band Directors Association, CBDNA, the Kennedy Center, and Meyerhoff Symphony Hall. He has also served as an adjunct professor of instrumental conducting and Acting Symphonic Band Director at Towson University in Maryland.

Currently, Mr. Balmages is the Director of Instrumental Publications for The FJH Music Company Inc. in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He resides in Baltimore with his wife, Lisa, and their two sons.

YouTube Videos –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjJSC0fiL-M>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2bO0I2kq-Ms>