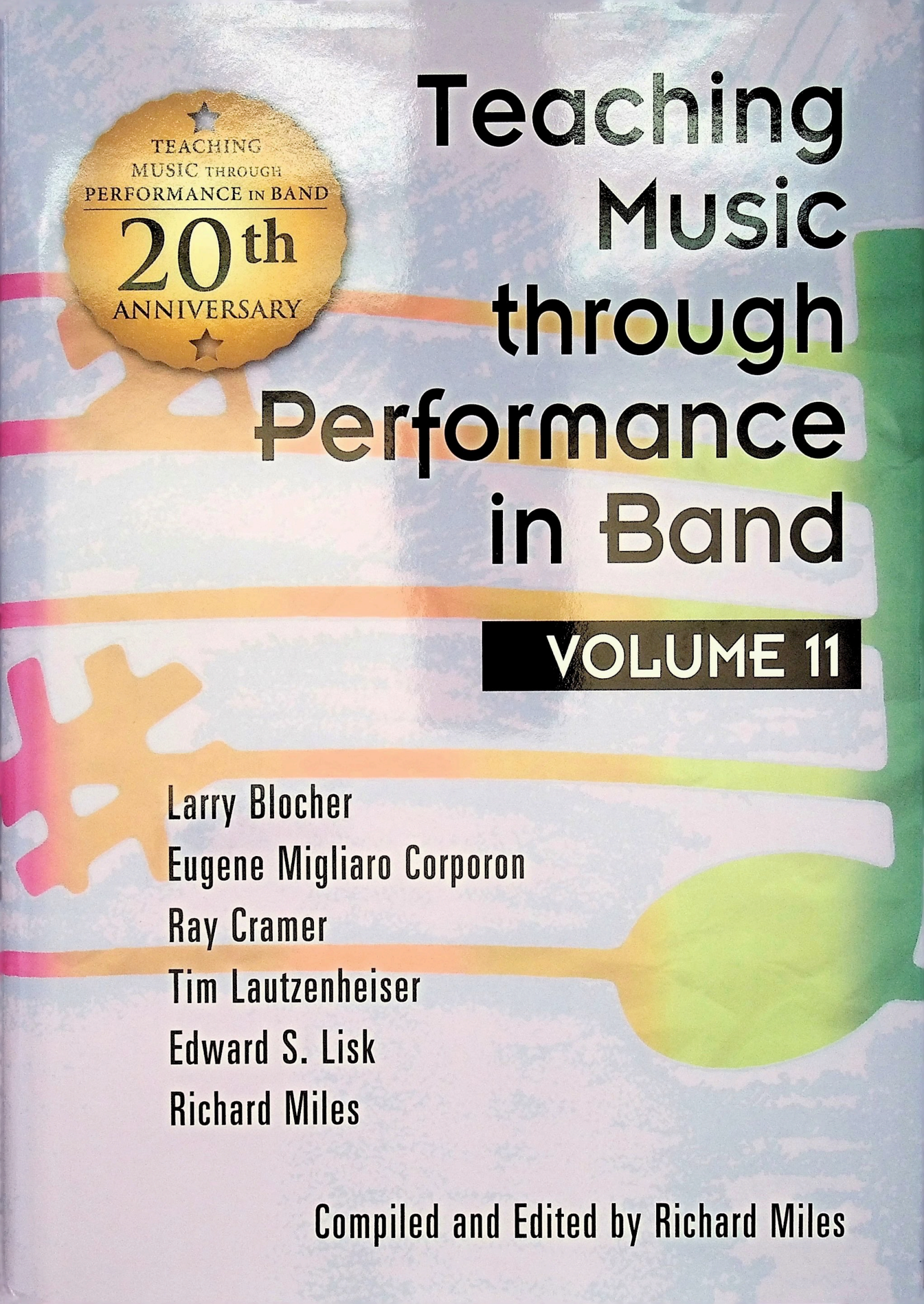


TEACHING  
MUSIC THROUGH  
PERFORMANCE IN BAND

20<sup>th</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY

# Teaching Music through Performance in Band

**VOLUME 11**



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# Teacher Resource Guide

## Jungle Dance

### Brian Balmages

(b. 1975)

<b>Publisher</b>	FJH Music Company
<b>Date of Publication</b>	2011
<b>Duration</b>	3:00

#### Unit 1: Composer

Brian Balmages was born in Baltimore, MD, on January 24, 1975. His parents were both musicians (father played trumpet; mother was a vocalist) who graduated with degrees in music education from Johns Hopkins Peabody Conservatory of Music. His formative music training took place in public school band and orchestra ensembles, where he played trumpet. This training was supplemented with private lessons on trumpet throughout high school, as well as piano lessons for a short period of time. His interest led him to pursue conducting and composing opportunities as a college undergraduate student. Balmages received his bachelor of music in music industry from James Madison University and his master of music in media writing and production from the University of Miami. He never majored in composition while at James Madison University or the University of Miami, but he did have a few composition lessons with John Hilliard while at James Madison University. After graduating from the University of Miami, he played trumpet professionally as second trumpet in the Miami Symphony Orchestra. Outside of his numerous compositions for band, Balmages has also composed music for string and full orchestra, as well as chamber music. World premieres of his works have been performed in prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and Meyerhoff Symphony Hall. Balmages is assistant director of bands and orchestras at Towson University, and he enjoys regular guest conducting appearances with honor bands and orchestras, as well as university and professional ensembles, throughout the world. In addition to



his professional appointment at Towson University, he serves as director of instrumental publications for The FJH Music Company. Balmages has received a number of awards, including the Distinguished Alumni Award in 2016 from James Madison University, the A. Austin Harding Award in 2012 (awarded by the American School Band Directors Association), and the Harvey Phillips Compositional Award in 2010, to name a few.

## Unit 2: Composition

*Jungle Dance* was commissioned by the Lawton C. Johnson Summit Middle School Bands in Summit, NJ, and their director, Michelle Brick. The idea to commission the piece was inspired by a sixth grade class project on contemporary band composers. This assignment motivated the middle school students to pursue commissioning a piece of music for their own band to perform. The director applied for and received a grant to fund the project. The middle school students were instrumental in generating ideas for the new composition, including the inclusion of a short percussion feature. Balmages was the person selected to fulfill the commission using the ideas the students generated. The students in the sixth grade class who started the commission project were able to perform the world premiere of their commissioned composition on their eighth grade spring concert in May of 2011.

The composer writes in the performance notes that:

*Jungle Dance* is a new type piece for me. It depicts a celebration in the middle of a jungle. It's not specific to people—it actually represents the celebration of all living things—animals, plants, and people—all coming together in a high energy celebration of life and nature. The melody itself is quite infectious and is treated as a passacaglia. With the exception of one measure (which separates the brief coda from the rest of the work), the melody repeats constantly while the textures, rhythms, and harmonies around it change and develop.

## Unit 3: Historical Perspective

A passacaglia is a courtly dance and musical form that traces its origins to the early seventeenth century in Spain. The term is derived from *pasar* (to walk) and *calle* (street) and is possibly used to describe the movement of musicians during the performance of outdoor interludes. Passacaglias and the more contemporary chaconne are defined almost identically. Both were normally written in triple time with regular phrases of two, four, or eight measures. If any distinction can be made between the two forms it is that a chaconne typically will have an ostinato in the bass line implying harmonic repetition, while the repetition of a passacaglia, normally in the bass, might appear in



any voice. *Jungle Dance* adheres to the passacaglia form through the repeated melodic theme passed from instrument to instrument, its dance quality, and its regular eight-measure phrases. It departs from the traditional form by using duple instead of triple meter.

## Unit 4: Technical Considerations

Ensembles wishing to perform *Jungle Dance* will find a very accessible work classified at the Grade 2 level. E-flat is the main tonal center established by the two melodic themes, but musicians should also be familiar with the F-natural minor scale to be prepared to play concert D-flats.

Ranges for second- or third-year performers are reasonable, with first trumpets expected to play up to a written E-flat2, horn up to a written D2, and trombone up to a written D-flat2. Woodwind ranges require first clarinets to cross the break and play up to a written A2, while second clarinets are not required to cross the break at any time. First flutes are expected to play a written G3 above the staff, with the opportunity to play written C3 if the division is too challenging. First alto saxophones are expected to play a written A2.

Developing autonomy for ensemble performers should be another consideration for producing a successful performance of *Jungle Dance*. The composer's use of canons and competing themes at the same time require performers to be independent counters. Low brass players are also expected to be independent performers since there are four distinct parts (trombone 1, trombone 2, euphonium, tuba) with no doubling of the low brass parts throughout most of *Jungle Dance*. Other technical demands that could prove challenging at this grade level include syncopated rhythms, brisk tempo (quarter note = 160), and light articulations by clarinets and saxophones.

## Unit 5: Stylistic Considerations

In the performance notes, Balmages indicates that *Jungle Dance* was composed to "depict a celebration in the middle of a jungle." Therefore, the mood should remain lively and upbeat throughout the piece. Accented articulations are clearly marked in the accompaniment line. Notes with accents require more weight and should be played full value with space. House top accents should be crisply articulated and played shortly. In the two melodic themes, there are no articulation markings present except for occasional slurs. Stylistically, performers should play every eighth note as if it had a staccato, spaced with light articulations. Quarter notes in each theme should be performed as if tenuto markings were present, using a bit of weight for the full value of the note but also with separation (see added articulations in Figure 1 and Figure 2). Performers should take care not to use the tongue to stop notes with shorter durations. Ensembles can produce an authentic performance by maintaining a steady tempo (quarter note = 160), proper note spacing, and light articulations



(especially in the clarinet and saxophone sections). Since every instrument has the opportunity to play all or part of the “A” or “B” themes in *Jungle Dance*, one possible way to efficiently teach style would be to use notation software to prepare transposed parts for every instrument to rehearse each theme at the same time. While *Jungle Dance* is a contemporary work, its lightness of articulations and regular eight-measure phrases align it most closely with music from the classical period.

## Unit 6: Musical Elements

### MELODY:

*Jungle Dance* has two primary themes (see Figure 1 and Figure 2) repeated throughout the composition.

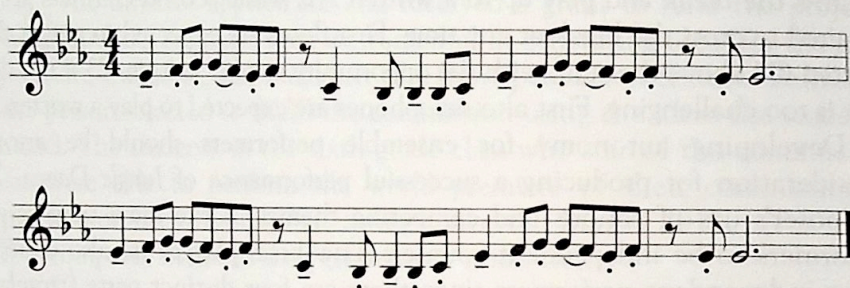


FIGURE 1. “A” THEME.



FIGURE 2. “B” THEME.

Both themes make use of the E-flat Major pentatonic scale for the creation their melodies. Performers can prepare to play the pentatonic scale by learn the corresponding Major scale first and then practicing that scale by omit the fourth and seventh scale degrees (in the case of E-flat pentatonic, the and the “D”).



**HARMONY:**

The structure of chords in *Jungle Dance* are primarily tertian. Open fourths and fifths do occur over the course of the composition, but they appear naturally through omitted chord tones or inversion rather than in an attempt to create quartal or quintal harmony. Extended chords are present, and performers should be prepared to play seventh and ninth chords. Chord progressions are traditional and should not cause any performance concerns, even for novice musicians.

**RHYTHM:**

*Jungle Dance* begins in 4/4 time and remains in that meter throughout, with the quarter note receiving the beat. The most difficult rhythmic challenge performers will have is the eighth rest/quarter note/eighth note syncopation pattern. Other rhythmic challenges for novice performers include a traditional eighth note/quarter note/eighth note syncopation, dotted-quarter note/eighth note tied to quarter note/quarter note pattern, and eighth rest/eighth note/eighth rest/eighth note pattern. The difficulty level of the aforementioned offbeat patterns is increased when scored against other voices playing straight eighth notes. Care should be given not to allow performers to rush any time the two themes occur simultaneously. One efficient approach to help performers overcome this tendency would be to use the previously mentioned transposed themes and have the full band play each theme with a metronome to stabilize the pulse. As the performers become comfortable performing one theme in tempo, they can move to perform the two themes simultaneously, assigning various instrument combinations to each theme to simulate the challenges they will face when performing the piece as written.

**TIMBRE:**

Scoring for *Jungle Dance* uses traditional concert band instrumentation. The only sections requiring multiple parts include clarinet 1/2, alto saxophone 1/2, trumpet 1/2, and trombone 1/2. Percussion writing is extensive, requiring eight performers and a number of different percussion instruments, including vibraphone, temple blocks, marimba, agogo bells, tom-toms, cabasa, cowbell, claves, congas, crash cymbals, shaker, china cymbal, suspended cymbal, and güiro. Scoring of parts allows ensembles without double reeds and bass clarinets to perform *Jungle Dance* without important parts being omitted. The oboe parts double flutes in unison or at the octave, bassoons double trombone 2 and baritone in unison or tuba an octave higher, and bass clarinet is covered in various low brass parts. Unlike many other compositions at this grade level where there is one low brass line doubled in unison or octaves, *Jungle Dance* requires enough performers to be able to cover four separate low brass parts (trombone 1, trombone 2, baritone, and tuba). Due to the passacaglia-like treatment of the melodic line, there are few balance challenges for ensembles.



programming *Jungle Dance*. If imbalance occurs, it will most likely be due to canonic entrances or juxtaposition of the two themes. There is also a short eight-measure percussion break where members of the percussion section must be sensitive to the presentation of the “A” theme by temple blocks.

## Unit 7: Form and Structure

SECTION	MEASURE	EVENT AND SCORING
A theme	1–8	Clarinets in unison.
B theme	9–16	Clarinets in parts.
A theme	17–24	Trumpets in unison.
B theme	25–32	Flute, oboe, clarinet 1, alto saxophone 1, trumpet 1.
A theme	33–40	Flute, oboe, clarinet in octaves.
A theme	41–48	Flute, oboe, clarinet in octaves.
A theme	49–56	Clarinet 2, trumpet, and horn over the B theme in flute, oboe, and clarinet 1.
A theme	57–64	Percussion break; A theme represented in temple blocks; wind players clap.
A theme	65–72	Alto saxophone.
A theme	73–80	Flute and oboe over B theme fragments in alto saxophone 1, passed to trumpet.
A theme	81–88	Clarinets in unison.
A theme	89–96	Alto saxophone with B theme canon with clarinet 1 as the leader and flute and oboe as the followers.
A theme	97–104	A theme canon with trumpet as the leader and horn, euphonium, and tenor saxophone as the followers, versus the B theme canon with alto saxophone as the leader and clarinet as the follower.
A theme	105–112	A theme canon with flute and oboe as the leaders and clarinet and euphonium as the followers, versus the B theme presented in alto saxophone with accompanying brass chorale.
A theme	113–117	Start with trumpets and horns adding all upper woodwinds at the coda.



## Unit 8: Suggested Listening

Brian Balmages:

*Chaconne (Live)*. Antoinette Reading Junior High School Honors Band. [Video file]. NAXOS of America (April 29, 2015). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlgEau5u2z8>

*Blue Ridge Reel*. Lockport High School Wind Symphony. [Video file]. NAXOS of America (March 20, 2014). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsAtQyNgXJQ>

*Jungle Dance*. Springdale Har-Ber High School Wind Symphony. [Video file]. NAXOS of America (January 22, 2015). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwYRAoAZIL0>

Gustav Holst:

*Suite No. 1 in E-flat: Chaconne*. "The President's Own" U. S. Marine Band (1997). United States Marine Band. [Video file]. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-TPBH\\_dFj0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-TPBH_dFj0)

Ron Nelson:

*Passacaglia (Homeage on B-A-C-H)*. "The President's Own" U. S. Marine Band (1994). United States Marine Band. [Video file]. (May 16, 2016). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyNUG18uNoA>

## Unit 9: Additional References and Resource

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Passacaglia. (2007). In *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. (2007). Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/art/passacaglia-musical-form-and-dance>

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