

James M. Stephenson
Symphony for Brass

for Frank L. Battisti

II. Just B



Symphony for Brass:

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for brass ensemble/timpani

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Instrumentation:

3 C trumpets + 3 or 6 (preferred) offstage trumpets. ***NOTE: If only three offstage trumpets are available, place them centered (balcony)**

4 F Horns

2 Tenor trombones

1 Bass trombone

Euphonium

Tuba

Timpani

Duration: approx. 8 min.

Program Notes:

Like so many others, I had the distinct pleasure of playing under the baton of Frank Battisti; for me, while a trumpet performance major at the New England Conservatory. Of course, like some others who have told me the same, I didn't know the wisdom I was hearing until years later, when I would be reminded of him, and think to myself: "Wow. He was so right."

I am so thrilled at the opportunity to write the 2nd movement of my Symphony for Brass, especially entitled "Just B", in his honor. I am grateful to Bill Drury and Wei-Pin Shen for making it possible. Their support of this endeavor is tremendously appreciated.

Once I had become a full-time composer, and had put a bit of music out there, I ran into "Mr. B." (as we all know him) at a conference, and he offered some advice to me: "Write something slow." And so I knew that my first responsibility was to make sure that this piece followed that order.

The rest of the piece is, in some ways, a description of my experiences with Frank. Of course, the trumpet (me) gets a bit of a solo work... At the onset, it is set amongst some trepidatious harmonies, like a freshman in college, meeting new colleagues, and directors, and nervously feeling his way through the scenario. Rhythms that echo "Mis-ter B.", and a hinted quote from Dahl's "Music for Brass" (which we played endlessly in his conducting class) permeate the texture, as they were a constant throughout my four years there.

Climaxes and pedal-points all focus throughout on the note of B, for obvious reasons, until we finally arrive at the coda. Here the original solo trumpet returns, this time under more beautiful harmonies, representing that now, the wealth of knowledge gained from Mr. B is a bit more understood, and appreciated.

It is important to note that the climaxes are always followed by a decrescendo, for fear of being "too loud" - an oft-cited problem with Frank!

Finally, all of the brass players echo the same sentiments as the solo trumpet, resulting in a rapturous acknowledgment of the beauty of studying under Mr. B, and the joyous thankfulness we all have for having been blessed by such a wonderful opportunity.

In the final bars, the last antiphonal trumpets and Gabrieli quote in the onstage trumpets ("Canzona à 12 in echo") represent some of my strongest memories of playing under Mr. B - mostly because I was always scared to death of playing TOO LOUD. The last chord is, of course, finally, B Major.

The title has several meanings, slightly different than what one might assume:

In this case "Just B" means that if we can follow Mr. B's advice and live by his metaphors for music and life (of which there are hundreds!) - then we will have a solid and productive career, while setting good examples as citizens, for others to follow.

Furthermore, I recall Frank being very fair: if you put in the hard work, and always did your best, he always treated you equitably; meaning he was a "just" B.

Basically, I just wanted this piece to be beautiful. That's the most important thing I can try to do to honor this man who has meant so much to me, and to so many.

P.S. - for those that don't know, the blue windbreaker was a constant for Frank, worn daily. Hence the use on the cover for this publication.

Jim Stephenson
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Stephenson
Music

ComposerJim.com

Commissioned by Bill Drury and Wei-Pin Shen/Motif Music in honor of Frank L. Battisti, in celebration of his devoted life in music, and because of his inspiration to thousands who have worked with, under, and for him.
Premiered at the New England Conservatory of Music on February 25, 2020.

Score

Symphony for Brass

II. Just B

James M. Stephenson

Andante sentimentale ♩ = 69

C Trumpet 1
C Trumpet 2
C Trumpet 3
Horn 1
Horn 2
Horn 3
Horn 4
Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Bass Trombone
Euphonium
Tuba
Timpani

solo
pp
mp
pp
pp
pp
pp
pp
pp
pp

10 **A**

10 **A**

Trpt. 1 *solo* *p* *poco* *mp* *p*

Trpt. 2 *con sord.* *pp* *mp* *pp*

Trpt. 3 *con sord.* *pp* *mp* *pp*

Hn. 1 *con sord.* *pp* *mp* *pp*

Hn. 2 *con sord.* *pp* *mp* *pp* *p*

Hn. 3 *con sord.* *pp* *mp* *pp* *p*

Hn. 4 *con sord.* *pp* *mp* *pp* *p*

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2 *pp*

B. Tbn. *pp*

Euph. *pp*

Tuba *pp*

10

Timp.

20 **B**

Score for brass instruments (Trumpets, Horns, Trombones, Euphonium, Tuba) in 4/4 time, key of D major. The score is marked with a rehearsal sign 'B' and the number '20'. The music features various dynamics including *pp*, *mf*, *p*, and *ppp*, along with performance instructions like 'open' and 'harmon - stem out'. The score is divided into two systems, with the second system starting at measure 20.

Instrument parts shown:

- Tpt. 1
- Tpt. 2
- Tpt. 3
- Hn. 1
- Hn. 2
- Hn. 3
- Hn. 4
- Tbn. 1
- Tbn. 2
- B. Tbn.
- Euph.
- Tuba
- Timp.

Measure numbers: 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.

rall. **C** *a tempo* *rall.* **D** *a tempo*

29

Tpt. 1 *p* *mf* *p* *pp*

Tpt. 2 *mp* *pp* *p*

Tpt. 3 open *p* *mp* *p*

Hn. 1 *mp*

Hn. 2 *p*

Hn. 3 *p* open *mf*

Hn. 4 *p*

Tbn. 1 *p* *pp* *mp*

Tbn. 2 *mp* *pp* *p* *pp* *pp*

B. Tbn. *mp* *pp* *pp*

Euph. *mp* *pp* *pp*

Tuba *mp* *pp* *pp*

29

Timp.