

# Cary Belling

## Acrobatic Overture

for

**Orchestra**

Full Score

Letter sized score and parts can be ordered from [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com).  
Ledger sized (11" by 17") score is available from the publisher.

This edition has been published in 2016, and is an  
unabridged replication of the original ©1992 edition.

**Please report all performances to Cary Belling Music (626-797-7664),  
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(Frances Richard, 212-621-6329, concertmusic@ascap.com) or via  
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## Acrobatic Overture

for

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### **Piece Description**

Acrobatic Overture was inspired by my childhood memories of attending the magnificent three ring circuses that came through western Iowa every spring. When the Ringling Bros circus tent was open it seemed that everyone in town was there! I was particularly fascinated by the amazing technique of flying trapeze and high wire artists. So when I wrote this piece I had in mind equally masterful musicians who are ready to demonstrate incredible bravura, eloquence, and virtuosity!

I based the piece on two fundamental ideas, an elongated leaping melody, played by the woodwinds, and undulating ostinato introduced by the french horns. With the opening fanfare I imagined exquisitely costumed performers entering the arena to great applause! Ascending woodwind flourishes accompany them as they scale very tall and dangerous ladders to the swings and tightropes. The leaping melody begins as the aerialists start their dazzling maneuvers. Solo woodwinds and percussion enter with a chuckling staccato as clowns in the ring below taunt the fearless acrobats. The star performer is dramatically announced with majestic bravado from the brass section. As a daring funambulist steps on to the high wire, the music resolves to a pivotal pedal tone at the pitch of D in the middle register (letter C). Oboes, flutes, and bassoons hover and suspense builds as very difficult stunts are attempted! With matchless poise the amazing feats are accomplished as the leaping melody returns. Trumpets herald a glorious fanfare and the overture rushes to celebrate the acrobats grand finale!

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## Analysis

Acrobatic Overture was written to showcase the virtuosity of instrumentalists. The performer's artistry is displayed by both solo and sectional playing, sometimes in a call and response pattern and sometimes with instrumental sections in layers. The opening fanfare displays the grandiose potential of the brass section while an interlude at bar 67 calls for brilliant staccato from the woodwinds. A second interlude at bar 101 features the brass section in an expressive cantabile. The percussion instruments highlight and punctuate various passages.

Composition of the piece began with the idea of parallel fourths oscillating up and down by half step so as to suggest the motion of an aerialist on a trapeze. This background motif provides the harmonic foundation for much of the piece. The interval of the fourth also plays a prominent role in the succession of melodic themes.

The form is loosely a ternary structure common to nineteenth century overtures. The piece embodies a broad introduction, a series of themes and transitions, a canorous middle section, and a brief return to the themes in new keys followed by a fast coda. Cohesion is maintained by the regeneration of motives and fragments in the supporting passages. The last series of transitions before the coda are derived from themes and the opening fanfare.

The overture could be considered appropriate for either "serious" or "pops" programming with a number of novel effects and surprises for the audience. For example an agogic placement of the bass line at bar 206 in the final transition creates a disorienting moment of tension before the final push of the coda (Presto at bar 216). In its final bars the overture concludes with a jolting harmonic twist to the original key of the first theme.

## Form

Fanfare	Opening
Exposition: Theme I in D major, Theme II in C major	Bar 27 (letter B)
Interlude I (featuring woodwinds)	Bar 67
Interlude II (featuring brass)	Bar 101
Transition	Bar 122
Canorous Episode	Bar 132
Recapitulation: Theme I in G major, Theme II in Db major Three	Bar 162 (letter J)
Transitional Episodes	Bar 196
Coda	Bar 216

## Performance Notes

The opening is a very broad and unhurried fanfare where the half note is approximately at 56 beats per minute. At letter B the ensemble should shape their dynamics in conjunction with the rise and fall of the undulating melodic background figures so as to suggest the swinging motion of a great trapeze.

First trumpet in bars 22 to 24 is marked optional ottava and in bars 118 through 121 ottava bassa. The piece was originally written for a player with an exceptionally well controlled high range. These passages should be played at the higher octave only with a bit of discretion.

At letter E the woodwinds are to play the staccato as crisply as possible. Also I would prefer the woodwinds to tongue the unslurred sixteenth note runs such as in bars 85, 95, 96, and 100. The brass should play as warmly and expressively as possible in the passages marked cantabile beginning at bar 100 to bring out a sharp contrast in articulation between instrumental sections.

In the transitional passage from bars 126 to 162 the mallet player will need to hold both soft and hard mallets in order to get the subito forte effect desired in bar 157.

For performances out-of-doors or at large amphitheaters it would be appropriate for the players to raise the dynamics by one level in softer passages such as canorous episode at letter F (bar 129), in order to facilitate sufficient volume. In such case the dynamic and textural contrast will still be sufficient.

The Poco meno passage at bar 202 should be held at steady tempo until the accelerando marked at bar 213. At the Presto assai (bar 232) the tempo instantly moves forward to approximately a half note at 90 bpm. At bar 235 (Molto prestissimo) the tempo jumps to a half note at 96 bpm.

## INSTRUMENTATION

3 Flutes (Flute 3 doubling on Piccolo)

2 Oboes

2 Clarinets in Bb

Bass Clarinet in Bb

2 Bassoons

4 Horns in F

3 Trumpets in Bb

2 Tenor Trombones

Bass Trombone

Tuba

Timpani

Percussion: Suspended Cymbal, Piatti, Grand Casa, Snare Drum, Glockenspiel, Marimba, Xylophone, Triangle, Ratchet, Tambourine, Finger Cymbals or Crotales (A and Db)

Strings

Duration: approximately seven and a half minutes

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# ACROBATIC OVERTURE

1

2

3

4

**Maestoso**  $\text{♩} = 56$

The score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout. The top section includes woodwinds: Piccolo, Flute 1, Flute 2, Oboe 1, Oboe 2, Clarinet 1 in Bb, Clarinet 2 in Bb, Bass Clarinet in Bb, Bassoon 1, and Bassoon 2. The middle section includes brass: Horns 1 & 3 in F, Horns 2 & 4 in F, Trumpet 1 in Bb, Trumpet 2 in Bb, Trumpet 3 in Bb, Trombones 1 & 2, Bass Trombone, and Tuba. The bottom section includes Percussion (Perc. 1, Perc. 2, Timpani) and Strings (Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Cello, Double Bass). The score is divided into four measures, each marked with a boxed number (1, 2, 3, 4). The tempo is Maestoso with a quarter note equal to 56 beats per minute. The time signature is 3/4. The key signature has one flat (Bb). Dynamics include *poco f* and *mf*. Performance markings include *a2* and *Sus. Cym.*. The woodwind and brass parts feature triplets and slurs.

Acrobatic Overture - Cary Belling - Transposed Score

5 6 7 8

Hn. 1 & 3 in F  
Hn. 2 & 4 in F  
Trpt. 1  
Trpt. 2  
Trpt. 3  
*poco f*  
B. Tbn.  
Tuba  
Sus. Cym.  
*mf*  
Timp.  
*mf mp* *mf* *f*

Acrobatic Overture - Cary Belling - Transposed Score

Musical score for Acrobatic Overture - Cary Belling - Transposed Score, measures 9-12. The score is arranged for a full orchestra and includes the following parts:

- Fl. 1 and Fl. 2: *mf*
- Ob. 1 and Ob. 2: *mf*
- Hn. 1 & 3 in F and Hn. 2 & 4 in F: Rest
- Trpt. 1, 2, and 3: Rest
- Tib. 1 & 2: *poco f* to *f*
- B. Tbn. and Tuba: *poco f* to *f*
- Sus. Cym.: *f*
- Timp.: *f mf* to *f* to *mf* to *mf* to *f*
- Vln. 1: *mf*
- Vln. 2: *mf*

Measures 9, 10, 11, and 12 are marked with boxed numbers. The score features various dynamics, including *mf*, *poco f*, *f*, and *f mf*. It includes articulation marks such as accents (^) and breath marks (v). The woodwinds and strings play melodic lines, while the brass and percussion provide rhythmic support.

Acrobatic Overture - Cary Belling - Transposed Score

13 14 15 16

Fl. 1 *fp* *fp* *fp* *f*

Fl. 2 *fp* *fp* *fp* *f*

Ob. 1 *fp* *fp* *fp* *f*

Ob. 2 *fp* *fp* *fp* *f*

Hn. 1 & 3 in F *a2 sf* *fp* *f*

Hn. 2 & 4 in F *a2 sf* *fp* *f*

Trpt. 1 *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *f*

Trpt. 2 *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *f*

Trpt. 3 *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *f*

Timp. *fp* *mf* *fp* *mf* *fp* *f*

Vln. 1 *fp* *fp* *fp* *ff*

Vln. 2 *fp* *fp* *fp* *ff*

Vla. *mf* *fp* *fz* *fp* *fz* *mf* *fp* *ff*

Cello *mf* *fp* *fz* *fp* *fz* *mf* *fp* *ff*

D.B. *mf* *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fz* *ff*

*heavy brush at frog*

*non div.*



Acrobatic Overture - Cary Belling - Transposed Score

**A**      17      18      19      20

Picc. *f*

Fl. 2 *f*

Cl. 1 *mf* simile

Cl. 2 *mf* simile

Bsn. 2 *mf* simile

Hn. 1 & 3 in F *fz*  $\wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge$  *sub*

Hn. 2 & 4 in F *fz*  $\wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge$   
 optional lower voicing

Trpt. 1 *fz*  $\wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge$

Trpt. 2 *fz*  $\wedge \wedge \wedge \wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge \wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge \wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge \wedge \wedge \wedge$

Trpt. 3 *fz*  $\wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge$

Trb. 1 & 2 *fz*  $\wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge$   $\wedge \wedge \wedge$

B. Tbn. *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp*

Piatti *f*

Timp. *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp*

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2 *f* simile *fz* simile

Vla. *f* *fz* simile

Cello *f* *fz* simile

D.B. *f* *fp* *fp* *fp*

Acrobatic Overture - Cary Belling - Transposed Score

21 22 23

Picc. *f* *fz* *fz*

Fl. 1 *f* *fz* *fz*

Fl. 2 *f* *fz* *fz*

Ob. 1 *f* *fz* *fz*

Ob. 2 *f* *fz* *fz*

Cl. 1 *f* *fz* *fz*

Cl. 2 *f* *fz* *fz*

B. Cl. *fp* *fz* *fz*

Bsn. 1 *f* *fz* *fz*

Bsn. 2 *f* *fz* *fz*

Hn. 1 & 3 in F *mf* *fz* *fz*

Hn. 2 & 4 in F *sub mf* *fz* *fz*

Trpt. 1 *sub mf* *fz* *fz*

Trpt. 2 *sub mf* *fz* *fz*

Trpt. 3 *sub mf* *fz* *fz*

Tbn. 1 & 2 *mf p* *mf p* *fp*

B. Tbn. *mf* *mf p* *f* *f* *fp*

Tuba *mf* *mf p* *f* *f* *fp*

G. C. *f* *f* *fz*

Timp. *mf p* *mf p* *fz*

Vln. 1 *mf div.* *mf* *fz*

Vln. 2 *mf* *mf* *fz*

Vla. *mf* *mf* *fz*

Cello *mf* *mf* *fz*

D.B. *mf p* *fz* *mf p* *fz* *mf p*