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# Contents

Abbreviations	vi
Acknowledgments	vii
Introduction	ix
George Frederick Bristow: Musical Polymath	x
Bristow's Compositions of the 1870s	xi
The Arcadian Symphony	xi
After the Arcadian	xv
The Music	xv
Plates	xviii
Symphony No. 4 in E Minor, Op. 50 ("Arcadian")	
I. Allegro appassionato	3
II. Adagio	103
III. Indian War Dance: Allegro ma non troppo	135
IV. Finale: Allegro con spirito	190
Critical Report	269
Sources	269
Editorial Methods	271
Critical Notes	271
Appendix: Facsimile Pages	274

# Introduction

George Frederick Bristow (1825–98) was a pillar of the New York musical community for much of the second half of the nineteenth century. A performer on violin, organ, and piano, an educator, and an advocate for American music and musicians, he was also considered by many of his contemporaries to be among the best American composers from the 1850s until well into the 1880s. He composed prolifically, writing oratorios, odes, cantatas, and numerous other sacred and secular choral works; an opera, *Rip van Winkle*; songs; pieces for organ and piano; chamber compositions; and numerous orchestral works, including six overtures and five symphonies.<sup>1</sup> His Symphony no. 4 in E minor, op. 50 (“Arcadian”) was commissioned by the Philharmonic Society of Brooklyn in 1872 and premiered under the direction of Carl Bergmann on 8 February 1873; it was performed again a year later on 14 February 1874 by the Philharmonic Society of New York, again under Bergmann.<sup>2</sup> Written when Bristow was forty-six years old, the Arcadian Symphony is the work of a mature composer at the height of his abilities. Contemporary critics described it as a “magnificent work” with a “wealth of melodic beauty”<sup>3</sup> and featuring some sections that are “exquisite in point of variety and originality.”<sup>4</sup> Previously unpublished, it joins Bristow’s 1853 Second Symphony (“Jullien”)<sup>5</sup> as one

of the few representatives of the composer’s orchestral works available in a modern edition.<sup>6</sup>

The Arcadian Symphony differs markedly from the Jullien: it was written by a much more mature musician and exemplifies the compositional skills Bristow had honed through two additional decades of consistent practice. Although still influenced by the developmental techniques of Beethoven, of whom Bristow was a lifelong admirer, the Arcadian Symphony’s more sophisticated musical language and its overtly programmatic inspiration reflect compositional trends of the second half of the century in both Europe and the United States. In fact, the programmatic nature of the Arcadian is of particular importance: although Americanist music historians have long agreed that Bristow was an ardent and vocal supporter of American composers and compositional styles, many have faulted him for writing “Europeanist” works like the abstract Jullien Symphony.<sup>7</sup> The Arcadian, in contrast, follows an overtly American extramusical program depicting pioneers’ trek across the plains, clearly illustrating that Bristow was an Americanist in deed as well as in word.

The past decade has seen an increased interest in both instrumental music in the United States during the nineteenth century<sup>8</sup> and in the career and compositions of

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1. For more information on the composer, see Katherine K. Preston, *George Frederick Bristow* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2020).

2. The first known reference to a commission is an announcement in “Philharmonic,” *BDE*, 16 July 1872, 3. The Philharmonic Society of New York was the name by which today’s New York Philharmonic was known during Bristow’s lifetime. H. Earle Johnson erroneously lists the conductor of both performances as Theodore Thomas; see Johnson, *First Performances in America to 1900: Works with Orchestra* (Detroit: Information Coordinators, 1979), 92.

3. [Myron Cooney], “Amusements,” *NYH*, 7 February 1874, 7. Cooney served as critic for the *NYH* from 1865 to 1884. See “Dramatic and Musical,” *Daily Inter Ocean* (Chicago), 4 December 1877, 8.

4. “Musical Correspondence,” *DJM*, 8 March 1873, 399.

5. George Frederick Bristow, *Symphony No. 2 in D Minor, Op. 24* (“Jullien”), ed. Katherine K. Preston, *Music of the United States of America*, vol. 23 / *Recent Researches in American Music*, vol. 72 (Middleton, Wis.: A-R Editions, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.31022/A072>. For a recent recording of the same work, see George Frederick Bristow, *Symphony No. 2* (“Jullien”), *Overture to Rip van Winkle, Winter’s Tale Overture*, Royal Northern Sinfonia conducted by Rebecca Miller, New World Records 80768-2, 2016, compact disc.

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6. For other recent editions of Bristow’s works, see Brian Keith Bailey, “George Bristow’s Mass in C for Choir and Orchestra (1885): Critical Edition and Commentary” (DMA diss., University of Iowa, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.17077/etd.nr8mk6uf>; and Timothy J. Cloeter, “A Performance Edition of the Fourth Movement of the *Niagara Symphony*, Op. 62, by George Frederick Bristow (1825–1898)” (DMA diss., University of Arizona, 2016).

7. For example, Gilbert Chase mentioned Bristow’s compositional “adherence to the European Romantic tradition” in *America’s Music*, 3rd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 310. More recent Americanist music historians barely mention Bristow at all, and almost always exclusively in relation to his participation in the so-called “musical battle of the century,” a journalistic altercation that pitted Bristow and his fellow composer (and critic) William Henry Fry (1813–64) against critic Richard Storrs Willis (1819–1900), the Boston critic John Sullivan Dwight (1813–93), and some members of the Philharmonic; the general topic was the perceived lack of support for American composers by American critics in general and by the Philharmonic in particular. For more information, see Bristow, *Symphony No. 2*, ed. Preston, lxx–lxxxiii.

8. See, for example, John Spitzer, ed., *American Orchestras in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); and Douglas W. Shadle, *Orchestrating the Nation: The*

# I

**Allegro appassionato**

Flute 1, 2

Oboe 1, 2

Clarinet 1, 2  
in A

Bassoon 1, 2

Horn 1, 2  
in E

Horn 3, 4  
in G

Trumpet 1, 2  
in E

Trombone 1, 2

Trombone 3

Tuba

Timpani  
in E, B

**Allegro appassionato**

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola  
*solo*  
*p con espressione*

Violoncello

Contrabass

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va. *mp* *dim.*

Vc.

Cb.

Fl. 1, 2 *p*

Ob. 1, 2 *p*

Bn. 1, 2 *p*

Hn. 1, 2 in E *p* 1 2 *p*

Timp. *pp*

Vn. 1 *p* *divisi*

Vn. 2 *pp*

Va. *pp* [tutti]

Vc. *pp*

Cb. *pp*

# II

## Tallis's Evening Hymn

**Adagio**

Flute 1, 2

Oboe 1, 2

Clarinet 1, 2  
in A

Bassoon 1, 2

Horn 1, 2  
in E

Horn 3, 4  
in G

Trumpet 1, 2  
in C/E

Trombone 1, 2

Trombone 3

Tuba

Timpani

**Adagio**

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass



### III. Indian War Dance

**Allegro ma non troppo**

**Allegro ma non troppo**

Piccolo

Flute 1, 2  
a 2

Oboe 1, 2  
ff

Clarinet 1, 2 in C  
ff  
a 2

Bassoon 1, 2  
ff

Horn 1, 2 in D  
ff con furia

Horn 3, 4 in A  
ff

Trumpet 1, 2 in D  
ff

Trombone 1, 2

Trombone 3

Tuba

Timpani  
in E, A

Cymbals  
ff

Triangle

**Allegro ma non troppo**

Violin 1  
ff  
pizz.

Violin 2  
ff

Viola  
ff con furia

Violoncello  
ff con furia

Contrabass  
ff con furia



12

Picc.

Fl. 1, 2

Ob. 1, 2

Cl. 1, 2  
in C

Bn. 1, 2

Hn. 1, 2  
in D

Hn. 3, 4  
in A

Cym.

Trgl.

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

*p*

*pp*

*pizz.*

*tr*

# Critical Report

## Sources

### *Primary Source*

The edition is based on the composer's autograph score, which is preserved in the George Frederick Bristow Collection in the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts along with a set of hand-copied orchestral parts (shelfmark JPB 82-48 no. 112).<sup>1</sup> The paper manuscript score measures 10  $\frac{1}{16}$  inches  $\times$  13  $\frac{7}{8}$  inches and is notated in brown ink. An ornate marbled cardboard cover has a nameplate that reads "ARCADIAN SYMPHONY | G<sup>EO</sup>. F. BRISTOW | OP. 50." The flyleaves and endpapers are all blank. There are twenty-three unbound performance parts in the composer's hand labeled " 'The Arcadian' | Symphonie for Grand Orchestra | by | Geo. F. Bristow | Op. 49," as well as extra copies of the string performance parts (eight each for Vn. 1 and 2, six for Va., and thirteen for Vc. and Cb.), some in the hand of the composer and others by an unknown copyist.

The score consists of 192 pages occupying forty-nine folios. Each folio is numbered in pencil in the upper left-hand corner of the first leaf, possibly by the composer. Smaller numbers in pencil have been added, perhaps by a librarian, in the upper outer corners of each page throughout the entire symphony. Notation appears on both sides of each page. Each page contains twenty-two to twenty-six staves drawn with a rastrum; those at the top and bottom of the page are usually left blank. In some places, blank staves appear above the brass and string staff groups and often begin with two diagonal slashes. Instruments are arranged in modern score order, with woodwind and trumpet parts divided onto grand staves and trombone 3 and tuba notated together on a

single staff. Bristow frequently uses notational shorthand including  $\times$  for repeated measures and markings such as "col basso" and "col vn pmo 8va lower" to indicate doubling.

The score reveals some notational idiosyncrasies, the most ubiquitous of which is an unconventional sforzando marking  $sf>$ , which is much smaller than the usual  $sf$  dynamic and typically seems to be used as an accent mark. This interpretation is supported by the occasional simultaneous appearance of accents ( $>$ ) and the  $sf>$  mark in passages of otherwise identical material shared among multiple instruments (for example, in movement 2, measures 13–14, bassoons and low strings), which have been standardized in this edition. There is also occasional ambiguity between regular accents and short diminuendo hairpins, which in this edition have been tacitly interpreted based on their context: for example, in movement 4, measure 286, Bristow's marking in the strings is treated as a hairpin, but in measures 326–27 (flutes), 330–31 (oboes), and 334–35 (violins), nearly identical marks are interpreted as accents. Another notational quirk is Bristow's occasional use of what looks like a grace note eighth ( $\text{♯}$ ) in place of a sixteenth note anacrusis (see critical notes). Bristow also occasionally uses ties where modern notation conventions would typically opt for a combined note value, such as in movement 2, measures 25–28 and 94–97, where the horn 1 and 2 parts have tied dotted half notes instead of dotted whole notes, and in movement 3, measures 57–63, where the clarinets and bassoons have quarters tied to eighths instead of dotted quarters.

These idiosyncrasies aside, the notation of the score is clear and generally unproblematic, although the presence of a few annotations and alterations in the hands of multiple scribes causes some interpretive complications. These markings, mostly in lead and red or blue colored pencil, include some enharmonic respellings in the brass staves and a cut in the first movement, described below. Most of these markings (especially those in colored pencil, which match those in the performance parts) were probably added in rehearsal, perhaps by Bergmann, presumably with the consent of the composer, who was present; some, however, may have been added for the Peabody performance in 1875. Ultimately, the chronology of these markings cannot be determined. Other markings include pencil check marks (sometimes very faint) and occasional dynamics in an unknown hand, especially in the first movement.

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1. The George Frederick Bristow Collection is part of the American Music Collection in the Music Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations. According to acquisition information contained in the Bristow Collection, the composer's manuscripts were passed along to his daughter, Estelle Dearborn. When she died in 1946, her daughter, Violet Latham, inherited the materials. The New York Public Library purchased the musical manuscripts in the collection (but no other materials) from Latham in 1948. Other materials added later to the collection include letters, photographs, and miscellaneous documents from the family. At time of publication these materials are still unprocessed but will be known after processing as the Bristow Collection, Additions.