



Handbell Musicians
OF AMERICA

QUAVERS

AREA 8: ILLINOIS, IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA
JULY, 2012

Captions from the Chair

As I write this article the emails are flying fast and frequently as last minute details and decisions are put into place for the Missouri River Ring Area 8 Festival in St. Charles, Missouri. I am eager to get to the festival and learn as much as I can from the faculty and clinicians. By the time this issue of *Quavers* is published, you will have missed exciting concerts, fabulous classes, and excellent ringing experiences. So, as your Area 8 board evaluates this festival and begins planning for the 2014 festival to be held in Davenport, Iowa, I want you to make a commitment now to put these dates on your calendar so that you will not miss it. Dates of the festival are June 27-29, 2014. We are using the RiverCenter-Adler Theater as our venue with housing in the Radisson Quad City Plaza hotel. By my calendar that is one week later than this year, trying to respect all of the Father's Day travels and cookouts.

I invite you again to give us your ideas of what classes and ringing experiences will meet your needs in your schools, churches, and communities. If you attend the 2012 Missouri River Ring, I beg you to complete an evaluation and send it to me. Your thoughts and ideas are important to us!

The topic for this issue of *Quavers* is **Creative Use of Handbells**. I am thrilled that our *Quavers* discuss topics that teach and enlighten. After working with handbells for more than three decades, I still am learning from articles that are well-written by our local people. How much more can you learn? Your Area 8 board wants to know where you need help in learning. Often I hear directors say "Oh, I don't need to read a professional journal or go to a seminar, because I have directed bells for a long time." When we stop our quest for learning, those that we direct stop learning. And, I am very sorry to say to you that none of us have learned everything there is to learn about bells, chimes, or the music that we ring. It is reflected in our new name: *Handbell Musicians of America*. Are you a musician or are you just a ringer? Are you a musician or are you volunteer director? Are you learning? Are you improving your skills?

Explore the ideas in this issue. Grow your groups to be creative! Let us hear from you as to what skills you and your groups need as we develop the Handbell Musicians of America in Area 8. Please contact the *Quavers* editor if you have a topic you would like researched and discussed: NewsletterEditor@Area8.handbellmusicians.org. You may also reach me at: Chair@Area8.handbellmusicians.org.

Dolan Bayless ~ Area 8 Chair

www.area8iii.org



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Music for Fewer Ringers

Over the years, the numbers in my adult ensemble at church have fluctuated from a terrifying six, seven, or eight to a thrilling 15. Even with a full house, there are occasions when some are unavailable and we don't have 11 or 13 for 3-5 octaves. What's a director to do?

The very first option that comes to mind is the various collections designed for a limited bell range (often C6 to G6 or C7) with few or no bell changes. Look for the series by Patricia Sanders Cota (*Twelve Bells*), Bob Burroughs (*Five or Less*), Linda Lamb (*Less than a Full Choir*), Martha Lynn Thompson (*Ring with 6*), and D. Barker and Guy Ratcliffe (various from Mayola Music.) Since these are usually in the same key, you can combine two to provide a longer selection, if needed.

Some 3-octave music can be assigned to fit fewer than 11 ringers. Look for selections with linear, rather than chordal structure, perhaps where the C4-F4 bells could be covered by one ringer and the B6/C7 position can be reassigned. Often, the E6/F6 person can take the B6, and the C7 can go to the C6/D6 position. That spreads the load over two ringers, rather than assigning G6 through C7 to one person. Nancy Powell's *Impossible Ringing Made Possible* provides specific assignments for a number of selections.

Music written specifically for ensembles is a good starting point, too. Just because a quartet was written for four ringers, doesn't mean that you can't play it with more! Someone has already done the work of creating the linear structure mentioned above, as well as assigning the parts, which you can spread out over more ringers. Sonology Music has ensemble music (duet through sextet) available online (www.sonologymusic.com). Also look for titles by Cantabile Press.

Another option is to have keyboard take over for part of the ensemble; perhaps the bass in that middle passage you just can't assign for the number of ringers available. Or have a treble instrument provide the melody or obbligato while the bells ring the harmony. This last provides a good opportunity for ringers to figure out when they are *not* melody!

Working with fewer ringers has the advantage of allowing you to have a better view of each person, and perhaps focus on specific skills or problems.

No matter which music you choose for your small ensemble, honor the music. Don't cheat the note values or lose the fluidity of the line with too many bells assigned to any one person. With fewer ringers (and fewer bells) you can explore assignment options, work on memorization, perfect striking of chords together, and expand your dynamic range to create music that touches the listener's heart and soul.

Sharon Schmidt ~ Illinois State Chair

www.il-agehr.org



Alternate Assignments

One of the best ways to figure out any problematic bells versus people is to look at what others have done in the past to solve similar dilemmas. These problems could be organized into a few categories: too many bells and not enough ringers; too much difference in ringer ability; plenty of people and bells, but a non-musical ringing result.

Too many bells and not enough ringers

I think I have encountered this more than the other problems listed here. One thing I have found helpful is the development of each ringer's skill set. Teach *every* ringer to weave, and to ring multiple bells (4-i-h/ Shelley) so that everyone in your choir can take on more than their usual duties. If Kiriku can ring 6-octaves with six people, surely your group can manage 2-octaves, maybe even 3-octaves, with six brave souls.

Let's try: Ringer #1) C4-G4; #2) A4-C5; #3) D5/E5; #4) F5/G5; #5) A5/6 B5/6; #6) C6/7 D6; #7) E6-G6. Well, nearly-one extra person. Perhaps Ringer #1's job is too busy for some pieces. However, if everyone can weave with ease, has no fear about picking up a second bell with each hand, and can share well with others, then this is a possible solution for your 3-octave group.

Check out Karen Thompson's *Holy Manna* published by Choristers' Guild. [Click Here](#) She has created assignments for this 3-octave piece for five, six, or seven ringers, and there is a great thought process behind these decisions.

Difference in ringer ability

The first thing that comes to mind here is skill building! Make time in your rehearsals for technique development; from basic ringing and damping to weaving and multiple bell techniques. Make this something that **each** ringer gets to practice and encourage those who can't to try some! Even two or three semi-failures are better than zero attempts. Each exercise needs to be seen as a seed planted which might take a bit to grow.

The second thing to consider is how the traditional assignments might be altered to make them more difficult for some, and less difficult for others. Consider removing accidentals from less capable ringers, and re-assigning those bells to a nearby ringer who is capable of 4-i-h or Shelley. This could also happen with a chime or malleted bell—take away the change from the less able ringer and assign it as a challenge to a more capable neighbor.

Something that can be successful for those lucky enough to have access to multiple bell sets is to double-up on a few positions. For example, a new ringer could be assigned at A5/B5, but would stand next to a veteran ringer who would be mirroring everything at the same position.

Plenty of people and plenty of bells, but a non-musical ringing result

Do your ringers play the same positions from year to year . . . from season to season . . . from song to song? If so, please embark upon a pattern of regular reassignment in your bell choir. Until you truly achieve a musically successful result, it might be that you have a ringer who has not found her/his bell "home base." For some people this is not where they may enjoy ringing most. Your best E4/F4 ringer, for example, might not enjoy the position or the things normally expected of that ringer, but it might simply be in the best interest of the choir. While you would certainly continue to build that ringer's skill "toolbox," until one can, one possibly shouldn't.

Finally, for those with a 5-octave choir, and two ringers covering the octave between C3 and B3, consider "the jumble." Ringer #1 – C3F3A3 (and accidentals), Ringer #2 D3G3B3 (and accidentals), both ringers share E3. This can be an effective way to avoid having one bass ringer having to ring more than two bells in a row in scalar passages.

A great book for your summer reading is Robert Ivey's *Handbell Assignment Book*, which is available from Hope Publishing, **and** from our excellent Area 8 Lending Library! Email Kathy Harrison (Kathy917@aol.com) and request your copy today.

Patrick Gagnon ~ Acting Iowa Chair



Other Instruments

Accordions, harps, and fiddles—OH MY! Who would have ever thought that handbells and handchimes could be paired with such diverse instruments as those? In a quick search on any handbell music web-site, you will likely find more than 500 titles that include other instruments along with handbells or handchimes. We all have had great success ringing with voices and ringing with piano or organ. Many times, and this past festival in St. Charles was no exception, we experienced handbells with various percussion instruments and drums. But have you tried some more obscure instruments? What instruments are lurking in the closets and attics of your parishioners? What instruments do your young ringers learn to play at their schools?

So you need for your choir to learn to ring with sensitivity and musicality? Try *The Water Is Wide* arranged by Linda Warren for handchimes and **harp**. Elementary school handchime choirs could easily ring this piece, even with all of the eighth notes!

Or you have an entire ORFF Instrumentarium (glockenspiels, xylophones, metalophones, etc.) that the children of your church use frequently and you are trying to find a way for ALL God's children to participate in worship on a given Sunday? Try *Cinquenta* by Tim Waugh.

Then there is the **oboe** player who sits in the front pew and he just needs to be asked. Then you should try a fan-favorite: *Ave Maria*—the one you enjoy so much by Gounod and J.S. Bach—and this one is arranged for handbells and oboe by J. McFadden.

What about another moldy-oldie hymn, and this time you are interested in combining the musicians from your more contemporary service with your traditional service. You should ring *Amazing Grace* for **guitar** and **flute** arranged by John Behnke. Just beautiful!

Not to be outdone however, Hart Morris holds the crown for *funky instrument* pairings. If you happen to have one (or more) **accordion** players in your midst, then you must ring *I'm Going Home*, a Sacred Harp tune most recently heard on the movie soundtrack for *Cold Mountain*. Hart includes a **fiddle** as well, and the effect is striking!

All of these pieces only scratch the surface of the different instruments that go well with handbells. From my stand point I see that we hold in our hands not only a beautiful instrument that when rung together creates a glorious sound, but we also have the ability to include so many other instruments and their performers into our fellowship. The more the merrier! Let me know when you find a piece for handbells and kazoo!

Marilyn Lake ~ Past-Chair



www.agghehr-kss.org



Processionals and Peals

www.agetherm.org

A processional is an impressive opening for any concert or service. Processionals will build your ringers' confidence and musicianship, and enhance many services and concerts. I am always looking for new processionals because I find myself recycling the same ones every four or five years and occasionally finding a new one. When the processional has organ, trumpet or brass, and possibly timpani with the bells, it is even more festive. Our first processional for youth choir trips years ago was Mary McCleary's 4-octave *Fanfare for Bells*, which we still enjoy. For our first Christmas bell concert I used Zabel's *Procession*—Flammer HP-5070, with organ and trumpet, a very stately opener. Other favorites I keep repeating include *Festival Procession*—Strauss/Wagner, Agape 1368, with organ, brass, and timpani; *Processional on All Glory, Laud, and Honor*—Dobrinski, Agape 1230, with organ and brass for procession of the palms and hymn accompaniment on Palm Sunday; and *Processional Alleluia*—Causey, Beckenhorst BP1074. We memorized the whole thing and rang it from the church float in the fall festival parade!

People are always amazed to hear a bell choir singing! I love Dobrinski's *Seasonal Procession*—Agape 1394, with alternate Christmas or Easter texts for unison melody and descant. See also *Processionals for Bells and Voices*—Finke, Concordia 98-3573. A free ring with bells and unique vocal parts. Other processionals include:

- | | | |
|--|------------|--------------------------|
| • <i>Procession of Praise</i> | Sherman | Agape 1518 |
| • <i>Processional on an Opening Bell</i> | Mazzatenta | From the Top 20136 |
| • <i>Processional</i> | Sherman | Agape 2196 |
| • <i>Procession and Hymn</i> | Handley | Red River BL5008 |
| • <i>Processions Plus</i> | Mckechnie | Jeffers JHS9070FS |
| • <i>Christmas Processional and Medley</i> | Hall | Jeffers JHS9278 |
| • <i>Advent Celebrations</i> | Kirk | Laurendale Assoc. HP1101 |

Yes, your choir can memorize a processional. Start with one of the many that use a four measure pattern that combines to sound quite impressive but are really quite easy. Start with Barbara Semmann's *Processionals for Handbells*—Broadman 4578-09. You will find processionals quite rewarding and effective.

Bell peals derive from the cascading sequences of change ringing tower bells in the UK. The basic peal begins and ends with an octave leap followed by a descending major scale, with a middle section of descending arpeggios in thirds. A basic peal can be seen in the Tips and Tools section of the May/June 2009 *Overtone*s. Wayne Bisbee uses the "Bell Peal in G" in his *Three Fanfares for Bells*, AG2026. This peal can be played as an easy bell tree introduction to hymns. It works well with many upbeat, joyful hymns, such as *Joy to the World* and *Jesus Christ is Risen Today*. It is a popular peal and has been used in several compositions. Margaret Cowen used it in her *Joy to the World*, which is written as a duet with two bell trees and flute—Psaltery BP-03.

Since bell peals use just one octave of bells, two or more peals can be rung from different locations in the room or from different levels for a stunning effect. William Payn uses the "Peal in G" with multiple octaves from different corners of the sanctuary for his *Ringling in of Christmas Morning*, printed in the July/August 2005 *Overtone*s. You may create your own peals for any celebratory occasion. When my church recently dedicated a new wing to the church, the congregation gathered in the welcoming space while four ringers with a D scale stood on each of two levels above them and rang antiphonal peals for a festive closing to the service. Use a peal to introduce a concert or a speaker or a special event, or as a prayer response.

To hear some authentic bell peals, go to www.changeringing.co.uk/handbells.htm. To see a video of a peal being rung, go to www.changeringing.co.uk/handbellvideo.htm.



Bells & Praise Bands

Can they really play nicely together? The short answer is yes! But the long answer is it may take some patience and persistence on your part to combine the two ensembles effectively.

There is not an overabundance of music arranged for both groups, but don't let that stop you from delving into the world of handbell/praise band performances. You may have to do a little detective work to find what is out there, but as with a lot of our newer music, there are more and more pieces being published all of the time to meet our *newer* needs!

One really nice piece is *Come Now is the Time to Worship*. Listen to this piece by Brian Doerksen and arranged for handbells and praise band by Arnold Sherman. This piece utilizes keyboards, guitars, bass, drums and alto sax, along with SATB choir and 3-5 octaves of handbells, level 3-. www.handbellworld.com/music/Recordings/12446.mp3.

Kevin McChesney has also put together some handbell arrangements that compliment a series of praise band music available at The Fred Bock Music Co., entitled *Seasons of Praise*. In particular, McChesney has a collection of advent music that is arranged to be used with the *Seasons of Praise Advent* collection. There are a lot of collections at the Bock website, and rather than try to decipher whether their music would work for you, I would urge you to call and discuss your interests with them and let them guide you in the proper music selection and they should be able to tell you if there are handbell arrangements that accompany those selections.

Another avenue to investigate is the Music Selection Assistant that is available at www.handbellworld.com. This is an advanced search engine provided by Jeffers that helps you search for titles, composers, voicing, instruments or styles of music, etc. If you have not used this feature, take some time to play with it. If you are looking for music that features handbells plus other instruments, you can plug in your requirements to what you are looking for and submit a query, and Jeffers will display what they have available that matches your requirements. For example, if you are looking for praise band styles of music you can check the praise band option under instruments, and see what hits you get back, but you can expand the search by checking additional instruments such guitar and piano, and the results increase quite a bit. You then need to scroll down the list and see what is available, with several selections having the option to listen to the piece to help you decide if this is right for you.

Thankfully, most praise bands have good rhythm sections so they can jam on most music and produce terrific results. If your music has chords listed throughout the music, this also makes it easier for guitarists, bass players, and beginning keyboardists to play along.

Another option that might bring out the creative juices in you is to check out song books from various artists (such as Steven Curtis Chapman, or Michael W. Smith, et al.) available at Christian bookstores or music stores. You can utilize the charts listed for each song, which includes keyboard parts and chords, as well as the vocal line and sometimes vocal parts, but for the handbell accompaniment parts (this is where you can practice bringing out the Kevin McChesney or Cynthia Dobrinski in you) you can arrange simple handbell parts to go along with the piece. This may be as simple as having the handbells play along with the keyboard part with some adjustments as needed. If some sections are too difficult, try building some chords the bells can play during those sections. This is how we got along when my choir first started. We used our hymnals at church while the congregation sang and we played along with the piano/organ. The basic harmonies with easy articulations gave us a lot of easy practice.

In any event, do some experimentation with your music. You may already have some music in your library that lends itself well to an accompanying praise band, or at least drums, guitars, and keyboards. You will soon find that just some simple additions of other instruments really heightens your listener's senses and makes the music more enjoyable. You will also develop your musical talents as well as prove to yourself that both ensembles actually can play nicely together!

Michael Allen ~ Nebraska State Chair

www.agehr-ne.org



Upcoming Concerts

2012	CONCERT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Jul 12 7:00p	Intergenerational Handbell Camp Concert	Heartland Center Parkland, MO	www.handbellcamp.org
Jul 15 5:00p	Bells in Motion	Nelson Park Ampitheater Lakeshore Dr Decatur, IL	Angela Chase www.bellsinmotion.org
Sep 23 4:00p	The Agape Ringers \$10	Edison Park Lutheran Church 6624 N Oliphant Ave Chicago, IL	Phyllis Doyle 847.612.9197 www.edisonparklutheran.org
Oct 7 3:30p	Gateway Ringers <i>Concert for the Emmaus House</i>	St Peter's UCC 20 E 5th St Washington, MO	Andrew Eversole info@gatewayringers.org
Oct 14 4:00p	The Agape Ringers	Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church 149 W Brush Hill Elmhurst, IL	www.agaperingers.org
Dec 15 4:00p	The Agape Ringers <i>Sounds of the Season</i>	Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church 149 W Brush Hill Elmhurst, IL	www.agaperingers.org Tickets required

ORGANIST / HANDBELL DIRECTOR POSITION:

Direct the five graded handbell choirs (three adult, youth, children). Adults perform monthly in worship. 5-oct Schulmerich HB, 5-oct Malmark HC. Salary commensurate with education and experience. Organist position also available.

Grace United Methodist Church,
11485 S. Ridgeview Rd.,
Olathe, KS 66061.
Contact: Rick Fisher, director of music.
Cell: (816) 516-5111.



Upcoming Events

2012	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Jul 8-12	Intergenerational Handbell Camp	Heartland Presbyterian Center Parkville, MO	Kipp Willnauer www.handbellcamp.org
Jul 13 9a-3p	KC Rings! Reading Session	Heartland Presbyterian Center Parkville, MO	Kipp Willnauer willnauk@gmail.com
Jul 18-21	National Seminar	Duke Energy Convention Center Cincinnati, OH	www.handbellmusicians.org
Jul 31- Aug 4	International Symposium	BT Convention Center & Echo Arena Liverpool, England	www.symposium.hrgb.org. uk/
Sep 21-22	Flint Hills Handbell Festival	Camp Woods YMCA Elmdale, KS	www.handbellcamp.org

KANSAS BRONZE

is a new community handbell ensemble for the Greater Kansas City Area—South. Kansas Bronze will rehearse weekly each Tuesday from 6:00 -7:30pm at 306 E Madison, Gardner, KS. If you are interested in ringing in this new ensemble, please contact Kipp Willnauer at [913.884.6935](tel:913.884.6935) or willnauk@hotmail.com

THE AGAPE RINGERS

Saturday, Nov 3, 2012
OPEN AUDITIONS
for all positions!

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For more information about auditions, please visit our website at www.agaperingers.org or contact David Weck, musical director: 630-665-3200 ext. 120 or david@hopepublishing.com.