

OVERTONES

Fall 2025

The Official Journal of Handbell Musicians of America



**Annual
Business
Members
Buyers Guide
Issue**

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LIFE

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for Honorary Life Award**



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HANDBELL MUSICIANS OF AMERICA

Uniting People Through a Musical Art

The American Guild of English Handbell Ringers, Inc., dba Handbell Musicians of America, is a nonprofit organization established in 1954 to promote the art of English handbell ringing.

OUR MISSION

Handbell Musicians of America is dedicated to advancing the musical art of handbell/handchime ringing through education, community, and communication.

OUR VISION

Uniting people to create a diverse community in which handbell musicians of all skill levels realize their full potential through a musically-respected art form.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Greig Ashurst, President, gashurst@handbellmusicians.org
Kathryn Jurado, President-Elect, kjurado@handbellmusicians.org
Lynn Atkins, latkins@handbellmusicians.org
Tracey Bowers, tbowers@handbellmusicians.org
Gillian Erlenborn, gerlenborn@handbellmusicians.org
David Harris, dharris@handbellmusicians.org
Kathleen Wissinger, kwissinger@handbellmusicians.org
Karen Eggert, Secretary

NATIONAL STAFF

Executive Director • Linda Onorevole
linda@handbellmusicians.org
Publications Director • J.R. Smith
jrsmith@handbellmusicians.org
Director of National Events • Marie Clyatt-Larson
mclyatt@handbellmusicians.org
West Regional Membership Coordinator/Operations Assistant
Kim Braswell (West) - kbraswell@handbellmusicians.org
East Regional Membership Coordinator
Mya Dundzila (East) - mdundzila@handbellmusicians.org
Area Event Coordinator/Administrative Assistant • Vickie Iverson
viverson@handbellmusicians.org
Music Advisor • Brian Childers
bchilders@handbellmusicians.org
Copy Editor, Webmaster • Michèle Sharik
websupport@handbellmusicians.org

OVERTONES IS PUBLISHED BY

Handbell Musicians of America
201 E. Fifth St. • Suite 1900-1025 • Cincinnati, OH 45202
Phone: 937-438-0085
Web: www.HandbellMusicians.org

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Members Buyers
Guide



J.R. Smith
Publications Director

jrsmith@
handbellmusicians.org

937-438-0085 ext. 810

Ringling Close to Home

Discover Area, State, and Local Events

Now that our summer national event, Pinnacle, has wrapped up, it's time to start looking ahead—not just to next year's national gathering, but also to the many Area and local events happening in the meantime.

I've written about this before, and you may already know I'm a big fan of the smaller events close to home, whether they're in my own Area or a neighboring one.

In addition to the larger, multi-day Area Festival/Conferences, there are plenty of one-day events that are more accessible in terms of cost, lodging, and travel. These often include ringing opportunities, educational workshops, and even music reading sessions with various publishers.

Although I'm not currently part of an ensemble, I still get my handbell fix by attending these shorter, nearby events. And since I love exploring new towns, I often tack on an extra day to see the local sights.

Area, state, and local events are also a fantastic way to make new friends. Many attendees are regulars, and one of my favorite things to do is attend as an individual and ring with a different ensemble. I always enjoy meeting the people on either side of me.

Not especially into ringing but still love handbells? There are concerts happening all across the country throughout the year.

To find events and performances near you, visit handbellmusicians.org/events. If you're a member, you can submit your own events and concerts for inclusion in the online calendar. Just click on "Submit an Event" under the Events menu.

You can also find events on the various Area websites. On our national site, go to the "Who We Are" menu and click on "Regional Areas" to explore Area-specific pages.

And don't forget about the Area Spotlights section in each issue of *Overtones* (page 26),

where you'll find highlights from around the country.

Speaking of special sections, the fall issue always includes our annual HMA Business Members Buyers Guide (page 18). It's a great resource for finding music, supplies, and other items you may need to participate in an Area, state, or local event.

We hope to see you at an event or concert soon!

ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW CONTENT

INSTRUCTIONAL ARTICLES

- Rehearsal & Teaching Techniques
- Building & Organizing a Program
- Marketing & Communication
- Building/Using Equipment

MUSIC

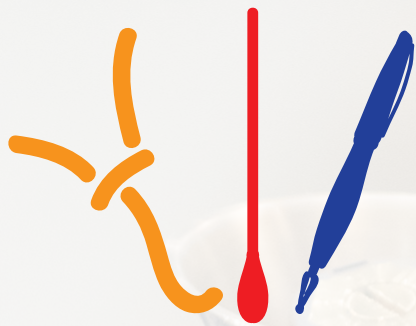
- Processionals & Fanfares
- Hymn Accompaniments
- Arrangements for Less than a Full Choir
- Instructional Pieces

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

- Music Lesson Plans
- Rehearsal Exercises

FEATURES

- Human interest stories about the people who make handbells special
- Articles about especially unique handbell events or programs from which someone else could gain ideas



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Kathleen Wissinger*



Linda Onorevole
Executive Director

linda@
handbellmusicians.org
937-438-0085 ext. 803

Ringling in Varied Styles

Pinnacle Performances: Something for Everyone

While sitting in the Mary Jane Teall Theater in Wichita a few weeks ago listening to the Pinnacle performances, I felt an array of emotions. These feelings were not just caused by the music itself, but also by recognizing that there were 400+ people sharing these musical experiences.

In an article entitled “How Music Resonates in the Brain*” by Allison Eck in a 2024 *Harvard Medicine Magazine*, Patrick Whelan, a Harvard Medical School lecturer in pediatrics at Massachusetts General Hospital, has observed that sitting in a concert audience “can be a profound, prosocial experience...the music takes over the mental faculties of all the people who are attending.” He continues, “it puts everyone in the same emotional place.”

I don’t 100% agree with Dr. Whelan’s opinion that we are all transported to the same emotional place. However, I do believe that we each go to our emotional place. In Ms. Eck’s article (which I encourage you to read), she talks about how sound is related to emotional and physical response. “The valence of the music, which signals whether the music feels positive, negative, or somewhere in between, influences the autonomic nervous systems.”

I’m sure we can all think of compositions that increase our heart rates or cause the hair on our arms to stand up when they are heard. Ms. Eck mentions the suspenseful *Jaws* theme in her article, and I counter that with the wonderfully positive “You Can’t Stop the Beat” from the finale of *Hairspray*.

During the week of performances in Kansas, some of the music performed was familiar to me, which brought back memories of past concerts or feelings that I have experienced previously. Other compositions were completely new to me, which I believe inspired my ears and mind to listen differently. I happen to enjoy this kind of listening experience,

though not everyone does. Some people relate unknown to uncomfortable, which is mentioned in the article.

My enthusiasm may come from years of working with visionary artistic directors who were champions of new music, or by having had access to a rich variety of artistic experiences in the New York area for most of my life. No matter the reason, I value opportunities to experience new music personally.

Music that is composed and arranged for handbells is still relatively new. Recently, on an HMA event meeting call, one of our committee members talked about how fortunate we are to have access to so many prolific handbell composers and arrangers who are open to meeting people and talking about their processes and gifts. I concur and encourage you to take the time to speak with them at events.

The music at Pinnacle varied in so many ways; there were classical handbell pieces, new compositions, folk songs, Latin dances, and more. The performers themselves were diverse—small ensembles, full choirs, soloists, young ringers, ensembles with decades of experience, musicians from rural areas, musicians from cities, and from around the world. There was something for everyone within those ten performances.

Handbell Musicians of America is proud to have presented such a wide range of music. Thank you for being part of the event, either in-person, or by watching the livestream performances.

Linda Onorevole
Executive Director

***Article link:** <https://magazine.hms.harvard.edu/articles/how-music-resonates-brain>

****Livestream link:** <https://pinnacle.handbellmusicians.org/musician-showcases/>

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Membership Matters

Thoughts from Your **Regional Membership Coordinators**



Mya Dundzila
East Regional
Membership Coordinator

mdundzila@
handbellmusicians.org

A Wonderful Thing Happened on the Way to Pinnacle

The final leg of my journey to Pinnacle this summer was a 90-minute flight from Chicago to Wichita. The last two passengers to board were a father and his adult son, who had an intellectual disability. The son was yelling, spewing profanity, and clearly upset. The pair was seated two rows behind me. As soon as they were seated, the son started kicking the seat in front of him.

The father was patiently trying to calm his son, but nothing seemed to be working. At that point, the young woman in front of them (and immediately behind me) turned around and very cheerily started up a conversation. “Hi, my name’s Janey! Do you live in Wichita?” The father answered for both of them. The son’s name was John and soon, he and Janey were talking about the Chiefs’ quarterback and the best hamburger joint in Wichita.

This situation could have been a huge disaster. I was uncomfortable and already thinking about changing seats. Janey reached out to John with deliberate kindness and compassion, seeking to help. It turns out she was a teacher and probably had the superpower of redirecting people. As I listened to the ongoing conversation, I finally set aside my own personal concerns and began feeling immense gratitude and awe at how Janey responded.

This was an unusual occurrence, yet I think we all face less dramatic situations where it is easy to get irritated at something or someone. While there is always room for the random acts of kindness, sometimes intentional intervention (and risk!) is what’s needed.

I can remember rehearsals where another ringer was struggling to get a difficult rhythm pattern. Instead of glaring at the struggling ringer, I should have asked the director to go over the difficult measure on behalf of my part. This may have taken the pressure off one person and likely benefited many in the group.

“

This situation could have been a huge disaster. I was uncomfortable and already thinking about changing seats. Janey reached out to John with deliberate kindness and compassion, seeking to help. Turns out she was a teacher and probably had the superpower of redirecting people.

”

Sometimes a lot of friendly chatter can feel disruptive at rehearsal. Even the chattiest of groups will eventually have to focus on the director. I bet if Janey rang handbells, she would have a great technique for redirecting her neighbor, like “I would love to see your new kitten—could you show me the pictures after rehearsal?” or “You found the blueberry flavored M&Ms? Awesome! Could I get the link after rehearsal?”

Fortunately, I did not need Janey on my flight home from Pinnacle—no disruptions or conflicts, and no opportunity to emulate the kind and courageous young woman who made an enormous impact on me and John.

PS: There aren’t blueberry flavored M&Ms yet, but there should be.



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Greig Ashurst
HMA National Board
President

[gashurst@
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Fulfilling HMA's Mission as a National Board

As president of Handbell Musicians of America (HMA), I reflect quite often on how the organization is fulfilling its promise to elevate the art of handbell ringing. At the heart of this work is our National Board of Directors, which serves not as a managerial body but as a visioning board, embracing the Carver Governance Model to lead HMA into the future.

This model entrusts the board with a singular purpose: to define long-term outcomes, uphold values, and ensure the organization remains aligned with its mission. By maintaining a strong bond with a shared interest, the board empowers our incredible staff, led by our wonderful executive director Linda Onorevole, to execute operations while remaining firmly rooted in our broader vision. Our vision revolves around four foundational pillars that represent the diverse interests in which handbells thrive:

- Community Ensembles
- Handbells in Sacred Spaces
- Handbells in Schools
- Solo, Bell Tree, and Small Ensembles

Each pillar holds unique needs, traditions, and opportunities for our members. The board, through its strategic direction, ensures we support all corners of the handbell world with meaningful events, resources, and outreach.

One example of the board's vision and the staff's tireless work in action was Pinnacle 2025, held in Wichita, Kansas, at the Century II Performing Arts and Convention Center. The venue was a perfect stage for showcasing some of the finest handbell musicians from across the United States.

A special highlight was our hosting of the Arsis Ensemble from Estonia, whose artistry and cultural exchange added a powerful dimension

to the week. Under the leadership of Linda and the HMA staff, and thanks to countless sponsors and supporters, Pinnacle became much more than a handbell event—it was a celebration of our vision, mission, and love of this beautiful instrument.

The board meets regularly to discuss the needs of the handbell community, check in with the staff to support their work, and collaborate to keep HMA on the right path. In response to the evolving needs of our members, HMA is proud to introduce a new initiative: adjudication for handbell ensembles.

While this program was designed for our ensembles in schools, it will be open to any community or faith-based ensembles who would like feedback. Ensembles will submit performance videos for evaluation by a panel of three distinguished adjudicators. The feedback will support growth in musicality and technique while also helping groups showcase their progress to stakeholders, such as parents and administrators in the case of ensembles in schools.

This program represents our dedication to advancing the musical art of handbell/handchime ringing while trying to bridge accessibility with expert guidance. Every initiative, event, and resource is grounded in one truth: HMA is shaped by its community. Through continual dialogue and reflection, the board and staff work in tandem to amplify what matters most to our members. The national board invites you to contact us to tell us your thoughts and vision for Handbell Musicians of America. We also invite you to help our HMA family grow. Share the good news about HMA with your friends. Invite them to join our organization and share in the joy of the handbell community.

HONORARY LIFE

We are now accepting nominations for the most prestigious designation Handbell Musicians of America bestows, that of Honorary Life Membership.

This distinction is reserved for individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the art of handbell ringing. In HMA's 70-year history, only 41 people have received this honor to date.

HONORARY LIFE POLICY

(as reviewed and approved by the national board of directors, October 2017)

SELECTION CRITERIA

The granting of an Honorary Life Membership in Handbell Musicians of America is reserved for those who have made outstanding contributions to the art of handbell ringing. This status is to be deemed the highest honor which the Guild can bestow, and is to be reserved for individuals of the highest caliber.

The criteria to be used for the selection of Honorary Life recipients include:

1. A nominee should have contributed service both to Handbell Musicians of America and to the art of handbell ringing in general. These contributions should reflect an extended time commitment to the Guild and to handbell ringing. The nominee should be a current member of the Guild; however, exceptions may be approved by the board of directors. Outstanding service is defined as activities that greatly exceed normal expectations or that are generally perceived as significant.

The ideal recipient will have made contributions in each of the following two categories. However, an overwhelming contribution in only one category may be deemed acceptable.

- a. Service to Handbell Musicians of America
 - Service to Handbell Musicians of America at

local, area, and national levels.

- Achievement of national recognition for his/her contributions to the Guild.
 - If service was as an elected officer, the contribution should exceed the normal expectation of the office.
- b. Service to handbell ringing in general
 - Development of a body of teaching methods/ materials specific to handbells.
 - Extended teaching/conducting that has raised the musical standard for handbell ringing.
 - Composition of a substantial body of repertoire that has expanded the handbell idiom.
 - Significant contributions to the invention, design, or development of instruments associated with handbell ringing.
 - Authorship of a substantial body of published written work that expands the knowledge of handbells.
 - Significant efforts to extend the art of handbell ringing into new arenas, such as educational institutions, community programs, churches, and international populations.
 2. No person shall be considered either while employed by Handbell Musicians of America or currently serving on its board of directors.
 3. National board members shall not be eligible for Honorary Life consideration for a period of two years following the end of their term.

Continued next page

You can nominate someone in one of two ways:

At handbellmusicians.org/honorarylif

- 1. Fill out the ONLINE FORM and upload supporting documents.**
 - 2. Download and print a PDF FORM and mail it with supporting documents.**
- Deadline for nominations is December 1, 2025.**

BENEFITS TO RECIPIENTS

1. Honorary Life members shall continue to be recognized by Handbell Musicians of America for the significance of their contributions to handbell ringing.
2. Honorary Life members shall be exempt from annual membership dues.
3. Honorary Life members shall have full membership privileges.
4. Honorary Life members will receive a complimentary registration fee for the National Seminar.

SELECTION PROCESS

1. The chair of the Honorary Life Committee shall be appointed by the national board of directors of Handbell Musicians of America.
2. The Honorary Life Committee shall be an anonymous committee comprised of five people in addition to the chair who are appointed by the national board of directors. Committee members should be chosen from five different Areas of the Guild. If an Honorary Life committee member is nominated, the Honorary Life chair will keep this information confidential and contact the national board of directors.
3. Any member of Handbell Musicians of America may nominate persons to be considered for this award. Supporting materials, resumes, and letters of recommendation must be included with the nomination.
4. In each year that nominations are invited, the selection criteria and current roster of award recipients shall be printed in *Overtones*, posted on the HMA website, and sent to all Areas.
5. The Honorary Life Committee will screen candidates based on the selection criteria. It will be the responsibility of the committee to select candidates who have either a balance of service between the two categories (but not necessarily equal) or who have overwhelming service in one.
6. Initially, the committee members shall remain anonymous to each other and communicate only through the chair to prepare a list of candidates. The final meeting of the committee will be via conference call and all members will be known to one another. At that time, candidates will be discussed and a final recommendation will be approved.
7. Following the approval of the board, the Honorary Life committee chair will immediately contact the recipients by telephone and report to the board.
8. Those being granted Honorary Life Membership will be featured in the next available issue of *Overtones*, posted on the website, and will be introduced at the National Seminar of the same year.
9. All correspondence concerning nominees and candidates will be destroyed following the vote of the board.
10. There shall be no more than 20 (twenty) living Honorary Life members.



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Community Connections

Coordinated by **Lauran Delancy**

Making the Music Speak

Mastering the Two Types of Score Study

by **Henry Huber**

There are many articles written about rehearsal planning and conducting techniques. At many area festivals and National Seminars there are classes that cover these topics. These are very important and usually assume that, at some point, the director is going to conduct a score study. However, there are not many classes that cover the topic of score study.

As a director, you need to review a piece before presenting it to the group, anticipate where problems might occur, and have a plan to address these problem areas or identify what areas of the piece might require extra work, and also determine if you, as a member of a community group or a director, need to do some work before getting the music out to the group for the first rehearsal!

As a ringer, you need to do a detailed study of your position and be familiar with key changes, techniques used, and any rhythms that you may need to practice.

A director has a lot of work to do leading up to rehearsal planning and directing. "There is no more important aspect for a conductor than score study," says Robert Reynolds, a former director of bands at the University of Michigan and the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California. The purpose of a score study is to develop an opinion about the composition and to get a personal expression of the piece. This gives the director a perception of the piece's character, meaning, and spirit. What is the piece about?

A score study should answer the questions: who, what, when, and why.

- Who wrote it? Handbell composers/arrangers sometimes have a "style or composition trait."
- What is the composition about? What is the style and/or mood of the piece?

- When was it written? Sometimes older "classics" can bring back good memories.
- Why was it written? Is the piece dedicated to a person, a group, or a specific time of the year? Sometimes composers/arrangers will state that at the beginning of the piece. Or, if you go to a National Seminar, you might be able to talk to the composer and ask them. Composers will be glad to talk to you.

There are two types of score study: macro and micro. The macro stage has questions like: what is the mood of the piece? Is it the same throughout? Are there any key changes? What does the title suggest? Is the piece a hymn tune or some other familiar tune?

The micro analysis gets more involved and more specific; it covers topics like melody, form, tempo, dynamics, rhythms, or special techniques used. There are many questions to answer in each topic. For example: Where is the melody? Does it stay in the same voice throughout? What is the form; is it verse/refrain, ABA, theme and variations, etc.? Does the tempo stay the same throughout, or are there tempo changes? Are there any tricky rhythm patterns? What special techniques are used?

After the micro analysis, go back to the macro stage and see how the composer/arranger moves from one key to another or one section to another. If need be, mark your score for potential problems, key changes, ritards, fermatas, etc.

YOU, as the director, need to memorize the score. That doesn't mean you have to memorize every measure or every position. However, you need to get your eyes out of the music for things like ritards, fermatas, and meter changes, so you can focus on the group or a specific area of the group that needs the most attention.

Continued on page 25



Henry Huber is a retired music teacher from the Northwest Local School District in Ohio. During his career, he taught Band, Chorus, and General Music at various levels and was responsible for starting Handchime groups in two elementary schools. In 1992, Henry was selected to be included in "Who's Who Among America's Teachers". After retiring, he spent several years at Xavier University as Adjunct Faculty in the Music Department and was Supervisor of Student Teachers. Henry was Ohio Education Coordinator for many years, served as Chair of Area 5 (2003-05), is a Nationally Certified Handbell Director by Handbell Musicians of America, and has been a clinician at festivals in all five states of Area 5. Henry is the director of an instrumental wind ensemble at church, the handbell choir, and associate director of the adult choir.



Soloists, Ensembles, Bell Trees

Coordinated by **Linda Krantz**

Solo Handbell Artist Linda Krantz has been wowing audiences with her artistry and skill since 2005. Linda combines the fluidity of a dancer with her virtuosity, creating an emotional, musical journey through grace and elegance. Across the country, Linda teaches the techniques and skills necessary for a solo handbell musician, encouraging young handbell musicians along the way. She is considered the leading expert in traveling 4iH, upholding the legacy of her mentor, Nancy Hascall. Linda is the founding member of L.A. Bronze, which is a regular guest artist of the Pasadena Symphony's Holiday Candlelight Concert, and performs throughout the Southern California area.

Asking the Masses

Thoughts from Solo Handbell Musicians

by **Linda Krantz**

This issue's column will be a collective response from soloists to some of the eight questions I posted on the Handbell Soloist page on Facebook. Their answers were varied and interesting, and I wish I could have included every single one of them here. This is a sampling.

WHO/WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO TRY SOLO RINGING?

Cheryl Onesky — After I'd been ringing for about a year, I attended a workshop hosted by the Stow Heritage Ringers (the community group I am playing with now) to boost my skills and knowledge of various techniques. Handbell soloist Cordetta Valthausen taught a class on solo ringing and I was intrigued.

Ronnie Tang — My teacher Emily Li inspired me the most to try solo ringing. I also saw a video of *Parade of the Tin Soldiers* back when I was little, and I was like "I wanna play that!"

Allie McGuire — I saw a random video on Facebook of a woman (Linda Krantz) ringing *Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee*. She had four bells, picking up and setting down bells though the entire piece. I bet I watched that video 20 times in a row and still had no idea HOW! From that point on, it was a mission to find out her name and how it was played. I felt her joy as she began and ended, as well as her sorrow in the middle. It was achingly beautiful.

Heather Nicholson — I saw Ontario soloist Susan Carscadden-Mifsud play a solo at the Ontario festival in 1997.

Natalia Paruz — I was a solo cowbell ringer so when I joined a handbell choir, it was a no

brainer when the existence of solo ringing reached our choir, that I would be the one to learn to do it.

WHAT WAS IT ABOUT SOLO RINGING THAT INSPIRED YOU?

Barbara Peaker — I loved ringing, so the idea of being able to ring more often and bring more joy to listeners was enticing to me.

Gayle Sack Drinkard — I fell into trying it because my mother-in-law asked if I could do something at her church when the family was getting together for a holiday weekend. Having played glockenspiel and orchestral bells in high school, and having to memorize music to play the hammer dulcimer, I thought "why not try?"

Tammera Missel — Solo ringing looks challenging and fun. I also couldn't wrap my mind around one person playing an entire piece.

Leah Guiser Martin — Wow! You can do that with one person!

WHAT WAS THE FIRST PIECE YOU LEARNED?

These answers included *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee* (Krug); *Joshua!* (Hascall); *Jesus, Lover of My Soul* (Anderson); *Christmas Medley* (Anderson); "whatever hymns were being played that Sunday;" *Be Thou My Vision* (Brockner/belltree); *The Lord's Prayer* (Anderson); *O Holy Night* (Kastner); *America the Beautiful*; *His Eye Is on the Sparrow*; *Be Still My Soul* (Anderson); *The Palms* (Haddox); *Great is Thy Faithfulness* (Anderson).

WHAT IS YOUR MOST FAVORITE SOLO THAT YOU'VE RUNG SO FAR, AND WHY?

Allie McGuire — Joshua! (Hascall). It's wickedly difficult with the T4H but also has a fun expressiveness when rung syncopated. I live in the South...you must swing a Spiritual!

Nikki Evans — A Million Dreams (Jason Krug), because I love the song, and because he kindly arranged it for me.

Leah Guiser Martin — This is a hard one because I have so many favorites but for different reasons. *Joyful, Joyful* (Krug) because that was the piece where I learned that I have the skills to ring difficult pieces and *Now the Green Blade Riseth* (Krug) because it's such a fun piece to play and the table is a mess when you're done.

Natalia Paruz — Dream of Redemption (a piece my husband composed for a ghost project I did (<https://youtu.be/D2c-CzHDCCI>)).

Heather Nicholson — Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah* in the style of k.d. lang. The melody just sings through me.

Gail Drinkard — Little Drummer Boy (Frank Buttler, unpublished). I have both accompanied him (hammer dulcimer) and rung it myself. With flute/recorder with it, the blend of the instruments to me is just amazing! (Even when we had to substitute piano for the guitar part.) My recent *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* (Krug) and *Great is Thy Faithfulness* (Childers) are right on its heels!

Barbara Peaker — You Raise Me Up. Technically not a published handbell solo, but I arranged a vocal solo version to work and it's by far my favorite piece and always captures the audience.

Michael Kastner — Current repertoire includes my very favorite piece: *From Everlasting to Everlasting* by Julie Turner, originally written as a 3-5 octave full choir piece.

Ronnie Tang — Too many! but one of them will be *Parade of the Tin Soldiers*, always so fun to play and the audience likes it!

WHAT IS THE MOST DIFFICULT SOLO YOU'VE LEARNED, AND WHY?

Cheryl Onesky — Compassion, by Jason Krug. You've really got to move to get to all the bells on the table and it is tough. I still don't have it at the speed I want. (On the other hand, Jason has arranged many solos that are very accessible, even to beginning ringers. I have many of these arrangements that I can learn for service in just a few practice sessions).

Sara Sowa — Reverie, the technical aspects to play the song

Barbara Peaker — Not necessarily the most difficult, but I recently played *Praise His Name* and was challenged to learn 6ih to do so.

Allie McGuire — While on medical restriction from shoulder surgery, I couldn't pick up bells so I decided to work on mallet-only pieces. I began working on *Flight of the Bumblebee* by Rimsy-Korsakov. To my knowledge, it doesn't exist for bells so I used an arrangement for clarinet. Why? Working on something really challenging kept me from picking up bells and possibly re-injuring my shoulder.

Tammera Missel — Symphonia On Hyfrydol (iykyk). Remembering the choreography and the transition to bell tree.

Sue Garton — Maple Leaf Rag and *Claire de Lune*, both Nancy Hascall arr.

HAVE YOU TAKEN LESSONS OR ATTENDED WORKSHOPS TO ADVANCE YOUR SOLO RINGING? IF SO, WHAT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU LEARNED?

Ronnie Tang — The most important thing I learned (from my teacher, Emily Li) is to touch the audience with your music, you need to feel and let the music you play touch you first!

Barbara Peaker — In my early solo days I took a lesson and a workshop by fellow soloists in my area. It got me started. The most important thing I learned was it doesn't have to be ABSOLUTELY perfect to move your audience, but there is always room for growth no matter how well you played it.

Sue Garton — When I began solo ringing I took advantage of solo tracks at festivals, went to all the SEEs and Handbell Explorations when I could, and spent a weekend with Nancy Hascall at her home. I am still learning!

Heather Nicholson — I attended every SEE event and did workshops with Nancy Hascall and Christine Anderson. I learned that it doesn't have to be perfect to be excellent.

Allie McGuire — I've been taking lessons for the last 18 months with Linda Krantz. The most important lesson I've learned is that an emotive ringer must be willing to break your heart open and lay it on the table for the listener. Are you willing to truly do that, and if not, why ring at all? A ringer's playing should be just as visually beautiful as it is pleasing to the ear.

Suzanne Neafus — Lessons Learned:

- Practice Slowly.
- Look for patterns, both to help memorize and also for traveling 4-in-hand.
- Pick a song you like. Not only will you spend a lot of time with it, but knowing the lyrics will also help emote the meaning.

Continued on page 25



Kathleen Wissinger, a director, composer, educator, clinician, publisher, and ringer—is all about the bells... and the bell people! Known for her creative teaching style, clear directing, and engaging compositions, she has led events across the United States as well as in Canada and Japan. She currently directs Mosaic Handbell Ensemble (a community group) and Gloria Dei Ringers (a church ensemble). Her publishing company, ringTrue, offers a wide range of well-crafted handbell music. Kath has served in many roles for Area 3 and currently serves on the Handbell Musicians of America Board.

Drawing on 18 years of classroom experience teaching 4th–8th graders to read music and ring, along with over 30 years as a piano teacher, Kath developed *Square One*, a Level 1 ringing curriculum.

Her Class Ring series of pedagogical pieces—written for her students—explores all phases of learning notation, music theory, and ringing technique, with many works focusing on eighth-note skills. Most of these pieces can be found by searching the catalog prefix RE3.

You can reach Kath at Longwalk3@aol.com.

Handbells in Education

Coordinated by **Kathleen Wissinger**

Let's Talk 8th Notes! The Basics

The First in a Series on 8th-note Pedagogy

by **Kathleen Wissinger**

Recently a conversation in an online Handbell group centered on ringers' difficulties playing a Level 2 piece with 8th notes: basic 4/4 meter, no techniques, nothing fancy — just the usual selection of random 8th notes throughout. The ringers were clueless; the director was frustrated. So, what was the problem? In pedagogical parlance, random 8th notes are near the top of the 8th note skill hierarchy, so a simple-looking Level 2 piece might not be so simple to ring. You probably already know this from experience.

Moving from whole/half notes to quarter notes is a significant step for beginning ringers, but the shift from quarter notes to 8th notes requires a huge leap in skill and understanding. And while there are many resources to facilitate the journey through Level 1 skills, there are fewer systematic, focused resources in Level 2- territory for the quarter note to 8th note jump.

Let's explore 8th note pedagogy to help our ringers boldly take on this new skill. In the first lesson, 8th notes using the primal skill of *repeated 8th notes* (rung by the *same hand*) and then *position-sensitive 8th notes* (both 8ths within a beat rung by the same person) —while paying attention to their patterns within a measure—help assure ringers have a solid footing in beat subdivision.

QUARTER NOTES IN HALF

Counting 8th notes means subdividing a single quarter note beat into two equal pieces of time. To physically experience this relationship, I like to use Tim Waugh's method of patting knees (or tapping the pad) with both hands while counting quarter notes: "1, 2, 3, 4" — each number count involves a downward strike and an upward rebound. Try this yourself! Now insert a clap on the

rebound in between each tap: "1-and, 2-and, 3-and, 4-and." Use rote "call and response" with your ringers: tap/clap this first example then ringers repeat it. *Everyone counts out loud* in their turn. Performing different patterns of 8ths and quarters will get them comfortable with the concept of subdividing the beat while still being grounded in the quarter note count, such as "1-and, 2, 3-and, 4" (which requires a silent but full quarter count rebound, equal in height to the 8th note "ands" on beats 2 and 4) and "1, 2, 3-and, 4-and." I use 4/4 meter without rests or half notes in the patterns for these introductory lessons so the quarter note numeric count is always present in these examples.

USING LEFT AND RIGHT HANDS

Moving to bells or chimes poses a unique challenge because now there is a left hand (L) /right hand (R) component in the mix. Ringers again echo what the leader demonstrates and narrates, internalizing the feel of quarters and 8ths, counting cadence, and coordination of ringing and damping in rhythm. The leader does not need to use bells. Just a ringing motion, mirroring left and right hands works.

Start with the easiest category: *repeated 8th notes* where one hand plays both 8ths. Using now-familiar rhythm 8th note patterns you can demonstrate a measure saying Left and Right in rhythm to have them ring and echo: L-L, R Then repeat the same pattern *counting this time* "1-and, 2," and ringers echo and count. Keep the tempo slow and steady, even if they catch on, because every new level of 8ths requires a new skill.

Here's an example lesson sequence:

Play and narrate a two-beat pattern (like L-L, L) twice across the measure (L-L, L, L-L, L),

play that same pattern again - counting this time, then use the other hand:

Leader: L-L, L, L-L, L **Ringers echo:** L-L, L, L-L, L
Leader: 1-and, 2, 3-and, 4 **Ringers echo:** 1-and, 2, 3-and, 4
Leader: R-R, R, R-R, R **Ringers echo:** R-R, R, R-R, R
Leader: 1-and, 2, 3-and, 4 **Ringers echo:** 1-and, 2, 3-and, 4

Now employ some simple two-beat patterns, changing on beat 3. Because 4/4 meter is felt in 2 strong pulses (on 1 and 3) it's easier to manage the hand and rhythmic changes on beat 3 at first. Remember this halves the response time for your new 8th note lovers:

Leader: L-L, L, R-R, R **Ringers echo:**
Leader: 1-and, 2, 3-and, 4 **Ringers echo:**

Now they are ready for some one-beat patterns, continuing the rote responses. Once again you have halved the response time for changes:

Leader: L-L, R-R, L-L, R **Ringers echo:**

TWO DIFFERENT 8TH NOTES

Now they are ready to play 8th notes with alternating hands (L-R). Start again with two-beat repeated patterns:

Leader: L-R, L, L-R, L **Ringers echo:**
Leader: R, R-L, R, R-L **Ringers echo:**

Then some easy two-beat patterns changing on beat 3:

Leader: R-L, L, R-L, R **Ringers echo:**
Leader: R-L, R-L, L-R, R-L **Ringers echo:**

And finally, less predictable patterns:

Leader: R, R-L, L-R, R **Ringers echo:**

All of these exercises take about 3 minutes.

WRITTEN 8TH NOTES

Up to now, your ringers may not have seen a written 8th note. Now's the time to introduce the symbols of what they already have experienced. Show them the patterns they have just tapped/clapped/rung/counted, rewinding to repeated 8th note skills. (Fig. 1)

Fig. 1 - No Staff Line



Fig. 2

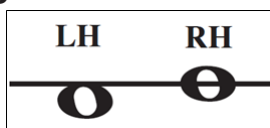


Fig. 3a - Repeated 8ths

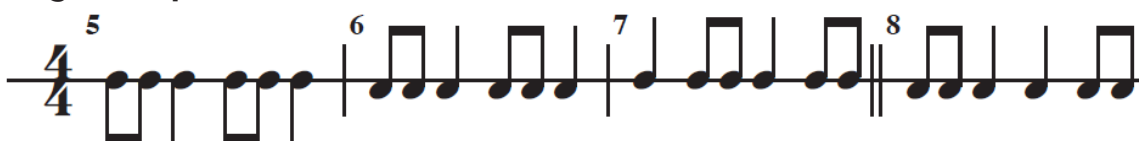


Fig. 3b - Repeated 8ths/changing patterns



Fig. 4 - Alternating 8ths



Point out that two 8th notes luckily are grouped together in a beat with a beam. “The beams are our best friends!” The first of the two notes is the numeric count, and the second note is the “and.” Now they can “read” across the line, executing patterns they’ve already experienced. They can tap and clap these patterns.

UNISON EXERCISES

To keep everyone engaged, I practice new skills using “Unison Exercises” in which every ringer reads and plays from the same example. I prefer a single line staff with the line note representing the R note — and the space note below it representing the L note (Fig. 2).

There are many ways to assign bells for “UE” exercises. Everyone can simply pick up their assigned diatonic L and R notes. This works but sounds pretty dissonant, and it’s hard to discern by ear if someone makes a mistake. If everyone picks up a sharp in their RH, it sounds a little better. My go-to option is to have ringers pick up a C, E, G or B in the LH (everyone has one of these notes in their position) and any sharp in the RH (again, everyone has a sharp available).

REPEATED AND ALTERNATING 8TH NOTES

Work through the skills in the same order they were first introduced by rote, starting with the most basic skill of repeated 8th notes across a measure (Fig.3a). Mm. 5 and 6 practice the same skill with each hand, m.7 reverses the rhythm, and m.8 changes it up.

Revisit the methodical coverage of two beat patterns; first repeated in a measure, and then changing on beat 3, then random, allowing ringers to stack these new skills without extra frills to worry about (Fig.3b). M.10 has a slight change. Mm.11 and 12 have some easy changes.

Finish up this lesson with two 8th notes played on two different notes (R-L and L-R). Once again, the response time between hand changes has been halved, so make sure this skill is carefully explored and fully mastered before moving on (Fig. 4). This example moves more quickly, since your ringers are now seasoned 8th note ringers, but you might need to simplify their first alternating experience if you see them faltering.

Note that each 8th note pair is still played by a single person. Sharing 8th notes within a beat (playing only the “1” or the “and”) is a step-up skill to be addressed later.

And we’re only about 10 minutes into the lesson!

Now we are ready to use our new 8th note skills in a real piece. Again, I was challenged to find actual pedagogical music with tight restrictions on 8th note variety for my budding maestros, so I wrote one, *Accolade**. A repetitive

quarter note-8th note pattern is established that every ringer plays somewhere in the piece, both ascending (L, L-R) and descending (R, R-L) seen in m.16 Fig. 4, as well as some repeated 8th note chords. I used some echoed half note chords in the introduction to make sure everyone was feeling the pulse together. We worked quickly through the Unison Exercises (which are included in the score) and then played through the piece almost perfectly. The first time! Their first ever 8th note music! I was gobsmacked!

This experience convinced me the value of a new skill carefully taught in sequence and context and of music that applies this new skill without exceptions. It can be mastered quickly by ringers and used as a solid stepping stone for their next skill. I continued to learn right along with my students, writing music for each new skill. See the included score for *Rock Climbing* — 2 which uses a specific pattern of 8th notes for every ringer, ascending and descending.

Listen carefully to clean damping between the alternating 8th notes while running through the Unison Exercise line. It’s a good time to fix them.

While you may not be a composer, you can certainly work up Unison Exercises to help your ringers master 8th notes and also to prepare for a piece you’ve selected for them. By first practicing 8th note skills in repetitive “no-frills” exercises, then experiencing slight variations and, finally, dealing with random patterns and more clutter, your ringers will proudly graduate from Clueless to Confident!

**Accolade*, by Kathleen Wissinger. L2- 2-3 oct. HP2391 Hope Publishing

**Use the practice score
on the facing page,
“Rock Climbing - 2,” which uses a
specific pattern of 8th notes for every
ringer, ascending and descending.**

**You can also download a printable PDF
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Rock Climbing - 2

Introduction to 8th notes: Repeated and Alternating

2-3 octaves
Bells Used: 15-22 (23)

opt. G3

opt.

opt.

Largo ♩ = 70 * *mf* - 8th Notes

Kathleen Wissinger (ASCAP)

mp

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

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Michael J. Glasgow's work is legendary in music and supermarket-food-demonstrations (it was a dark time for him, but little old ladies still talk about his pioneer efforts with then-cutting-edge bagged salad and flavored water).

Having retired from full-time music ministry after 23 years, Michael works as a freelance composer and conductor, without the distractions of a church job or a school job. (Yup, someone who actually *answers the phone and returns e-mails*: what you need, when you need it.)

Michael has completed more than 70 commissions, and his 170+ conducting engagements have brought him to three dozen states (including two appearances at Carnegie Hall, with a third scheduled for June 2026!), England, Hong Kong, Singapore, Canada, Iceland, and a cruise ship in the Eastern Caribbean.

He's not on Facebook, but Michael invites you to subscribe to @MichaelJGlasgow on YouTube.

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816-2298-6161; www.kccostume.com



Since the 1920s, Kansas City Costume Company has proudly catered to our city's evolving needs. With over 90 years of experience, we've become a cornerstone supplier of top-quality musical theatre rental wardrobes. From our expansive facility in Kansas City, Missouri, we extend our services coast-to-coast across the United States. Our mission is simple: to offer comprehensive support for your production company, theater, or school. From a full ensemble for *Les Miserables* or the perfect accessories to complete your actors' looks, we aim to be your ultimate resource. By partnering with top suppliers, designers, and artists, we deliver unparalleled costume apparel and accessories.

Explore our range of costume rentals or inquire about our design and fabrication services—simply reach out to our knowledgeable staff! Can't make it during business hours? No problem! Our new online store is accessible 24/7. If you don't find what you're looking for, inquire about in-store availability.

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LDM Embroidery offers custom embroidery work from just a couple of pieces to 100. Digitizing services are available to turn your design into an embroidery format. I am the official apparel supplier to HMA, I have worked with many handbell choirs and am now doing the apparel for the Bay View Week of Handbells. Let me outfit your bell choir! Now located in Texas.

MALMARK BELLS, INC.

5712 Easton Road; PO Box 1200 • Plumsteadville, PA 18949
800-HANDBEL (800-426-3235); 215-766-7200
malmark.com; info@malmark.com



Malmark Bells, Inc., founded in 1973, is devoted to the production of handbells, Choirchime® instruments, ringing accessories, and percussion instruments. With dedication to providing the highest degree of musical quality and customer service, Malmark is a leader in the industry today. Our instruments are in demand by discerning musicians around the globe making us the largest handbell manufacturer in the world. Look to Malmark for the largest range of bronze handbells, Basso Profundo aluminum handbells, and Choirchimes to the world as well as CymBells®, ringing accessories, cajons, and refurbishing services for our instruments. We also offer educational resources.

MUSIC CITY BRONZE

musiccitybronze.org; jandjturner@comcast.net



Music City Bronze is Nashville's premier advanced community handbell ensemble currently under the direction of Julie Turner. The group was founded in 2006 by former Principal Conductor and Artistic Director John Pfeiffer, and by former organization President and ringing member Susan Nance. The group's mission statement is: "To reach for higher levels of musicianship in handbells/handchimes, and to promote, educate, and share the passion of handbell/handchime music with the community." Music City Bronze is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization fully affiliated with Handbell Musicians of America. All donations to the group are tax deductible. Music City Bronze is available to perform at weddings, parties, and other private events. For more information, go to www.musiccitybronze.org.

PORT-A-BELL, INC.

866-532-8222; bellcase.com



Port-A-Bell® bell cases are developed by a bell player/director who has 40 years of experience with bells. Through his performances and extensive travel with various bell choirs, he found that every case he carried either weighed too much, wasn't balanced in weight distribution, or just wasn't very portable!

THE RALEIGH RINGERS

8516 Sleepy Creek Drive • Raleigh, NC 27613; 919-847-7574
rr.org; rringer@rr.org



The Raleigh Ringers is an internationally acclaimed, Emmy-nominated, advanced community handbell choir based in Raleigh, North Carolina. Since its founding in 1990, the group has been dazzling concert audiences with unique interpretations of sacred, secular and popular music, including rock 'n' roll tunes arranged for handbells, along with original compositions written for The Raleigh Ringers. The group also presents a variety of festivals, workshops, classes, and reading sessions throughout the year. In its online store, The Raleigh Ringers offer a great selection of must-haves for bell ringers, including recordings, tie-dyed gloves, and t-shirts.

RESONATE TOURS

859-359-3000

resonatetours.com; info@resonatetours.com



Resonate Tours creates small-group European adventures designed for handbell musicians—and those who love to travel with purpose. Each journey blends musical connection with cultural exploration, inviting you to ring in historic spaces, share your craft with fellow musicians, and experience the rhythms of local life. With additional offerings including choral and fiber arts tours, we bring together curious, creative people for unforgettable experiences in Italy, Portugal, and Spain.

RINGTRUE MUSIC

facebook.com/ringTrueMusic; longwalk3@aol.com



ringTrue Handbell Music offers innovative compositions that grant the wishes so often voiced by ringers and directors: split-level pieces for different levels of ringers; flexible formats for variable numbers; compatible scores for double choirs; scores in different keys and variable ranges; quick presentations for children; reproducible options; songs with ringing options; focused pedagogical pieces; belltree pieces; small ensembles, and more.

RINGING RESTORATIONS

25405 US Highway 385 • Custer, SD 57730; 605.673.2333



ringingrestorations.com; monica@ringingrestorations.com

Ringing Restorations, owned by Monica McGowan is a fully equipped repair facility located in Custer, SD, just southwest of Rapid City, ready to provide the necessary services you require.

SCHULMERICH BELLS, LLC

11 Church Rd Suite 1A • Hatfield, PA 19440; 1-800-772-3557
schulmerichbells.com; info@schulmerichbells.com



SCHULMERICH

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Innovators since 1935, Schulmerich has a rich legacy of bringing the joy of musical excellence in bells, to people the world over. Whether it's the beautiful sound of our handcrafted handbells, the resonant timbre of our MelodyChime® Instruments, or the innovative designs of the Bell Matrix™ System or Silver Melody Bells™, you can count on us for support, quality, and groundbreaking ideas. With a wide range of uses from worship, to education, to performing arts in general, Schulmerich's versatile products offer the perfect blend of old-world craftsmanship and leading-edge technology which motivates and inspires, wherever people worship, work, or play.

THIRD BELL ON THE RIGHT

30800 W 95th St • DeSoto, KS 66018
816-805-3150; thirdbellontheright.com



Founded in 2010, we emerged from a simple idea: to craft unique t-shirt designs that celebrates the joy and fun of handbell ringing. What began as a small t-shirt printing venture has blossomed into a beloved business recognized for its innovative and diverse range of products catering to music enthusiasts and beyond.

TRULY HORRIBLE THINGS

1122 Persian Garden • San Antonio, TX 78260
info@trulyhorriblethings.com; www.trulyhorriblethings.com



Truly Horrible Things makes games and products that entertain with good humor and a bit of sarcasm. We are the creators of the "Crimes Against Handbells" game and our newest product, "Wheel of Handbell Hijinks". We believe everyone should have the experience of being the funniest one in the room, even if it's just for a minute. We believe games that put adults and kids on the same playing field establish trust. We believe band geeks, choir nerds, orch dorks, and handbell fanatics are deserving of their own horrible things.

VIRGINIA BRONZE

P.O. Box 565; Oakton, VA 22124; 908-892-7197
vabronze.org • info@vabronze.org



Virginia Bronze was formed in 2006. They have performed with the Cathedral Choral Society, Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, DC, Washington Chorus, Strathmore Children's Chorus and Alexandria Symphony, and at venues such as the Kennedy Center, Lisner Auditorium, and the Music Center at Strathmore. We have participated in First Night Alexandria, as artist-in-residence at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, and the American Guild of Organists National Convention. VAB was invited by the Handbell Musicians of America (HMA) to perform at its Pinnacle festival in Nashville, TN, in 2010 and as a feature concert at the HMA National Seminar in 2019 in St. Louis, MO.

VREANA

www.vreana.com; info@vreana.com



Vreana is your portal to independently published sheet music! We provide a marketing platform for self-publishers as well as resources to help further their hobby or career. With our newsletter, we introduce innovation into the handbell community by focusing on new, uncommon, or experimental works published independently by composers and arrangers.

WESTMINSTER RINGERS, INC.

737 Holland Lane • Westminster, MD 21158
410-259-5814; WestminsterRingers.org



The Corporation was formed in September of 1997 to provide gifted area musicians the opportunity to play advanced handbell repertoire at the highest possible level of musical sensitivity and technical clarity. In addition, Westminster Ringers seeks to advance the knowledge, awareness, and viability of the art of handbell ringing beyond that normally available to members of volunteer church and school groups. In 2010, The Corporation expanded the number of ringing ensembles to include an intermediate ensemble, Accelerando. Westminster Ringers, Inc. owns 122 Malmark Handbells (spanning 7 + 3 octaves) and 10 octaves of Malmark Choirchimes, 2 octaves of Malmark Cymbells, and assorted percussion instruments.

WITTE PERFORMANCE TOURS

3250 28th Street SE • Grand Rapids, MI 49512
800-GO-WITTE
wittetravel.com/group-tours/performance-tours



Performance Tours

At Witte Performance Tours, our goal is to make your performance and travel experience enjoyable, ensuring your concerts are well-received, meeting or exceeding your expectations for a memorable trip. Designing and operating customized performance tours since 1975, our repeat clients and their referrals demonstrate we are meeting our goals, time after time. Additionally, we are dedicated to making touring with handbells as easy an experience as possible. We've invested in tables, foam and table coverings for touring in Europe. Use our expertise to help you design your own future tour.

Community Connections...

Continued from page 11

Finally, YOU, as the director, are responsible for knowing the music long before you teach it to the ringers. Try to anticipate where problems might occur, know the techniques required, memorize key areas, and be consistent from week to week and from rehearsal to performance.

Alice Parker, who collaborated with Robert Shaw, began a graduate program in music at The Juilliard School, and composed and arranged many choral pieces, has a nice explanation about the circle of a song. She says:

"The composer/arranger makes up a song, writing it into being.

The conductor takes up the page, transposing back into mental sound.

The performer moves the mental image into physical sound.

The listener hears the song and joins the circle."

Perform what the music is "saying" rather than what it looks like on the page. Music, when played expressively, can elicit feelings in the listener, giving them something of value. It isn't really the specific notes, but the mood and feeling that matter. Leonard Bernstein once said, "Look at a score and make it come alive as if you were the composer. If you can do that, you're a conductor."

Solo, Ensemble, Bell-Tree...

Continued from page 13

- How you look matters. If you are at ease, the audience will be too.
- Record your practice. Seeing the video can be beneficial.
- Song choice is important. It doesn't matter how difficult it is; sometimes, being played beautifully is better, especially if it's a traditional hymn that my congregation loves.
- Practice messing up and finding where to come in. Things will happen, so how you react to it is very important.

AREA 1 (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)

Spotlight on Area 1 Community Ensembles

Giving Creatively Through Performance, Education and Outreach

A thriving, dedicated array of community handbell organizations are scattered throughout New England, many of which have been in existence for 20 years or more. Each group has a unique mission that rings out and chimes in for the betterment of the populations they serve. Many are registered 501(c)(3) organizations, with an emphasis on charitable and educational endeavors. Here are just a few examples of the good work being accomplished by Area 1 community ensembles:

- **Back Bay Ringers'** spring *Season of Giving Back* includes an annual donation of a set of Choirchimes® to a Boston area school music program, and donating concert proceeds to a community organization (LGBT Asylum Task Force).
- **Granite State Ringers** *Quilting for a Cause* initiative raises money for the New Hampshire Food Bank.
- **Merrimack Valley Ringers** supports *Best Buddies*, an organization working to end the isolation of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, in loving memory of a ringer who recently passed away.
- **New England Ringers** founded *Oktobellfest*, a fall weekend event held in Westerly, Rhode Island, that brings ringers together both musically and socially, culminating in a free, public concert.
- **Penobscot Bay Ringers'** *Handbells for Hope* concerts raise awareness and funds for various nonprofits providing essential services to people in Midcoast Maine.
- **Shoreline Ringers** *Education Program* brings handbell history, technique demonstration, performance, and audience participation to Southeastern Connecticut area libraries, assisted living, and community centers.



To learn more, visit area1.handbellmusicians.org/communication/area-1-ensembles.

AREA 1 LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

BOARD

Chair: Jennifer Stack, chair.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Chair-Elect: Greg Urban, chairelect.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Past Chair: Lisa Arnold, pastchair.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Secretary: Harriet Forman, secretary.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Treasurer: Lauren Larson, treasurer.area1@handbellmusicians.org

STATE/SUB-AREA CHAIRS

Cape Cod & Islands: Abby Schoppe, ma.area1@handbellmusicians.org

CT: Vicki Moroski, ct.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Greater Boston/NH: Abby Schoppe, ma.area1@handbellmusicians.org or nh.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Western MA: Audrey Pierce, westernma.area1@handbellmusicians.org

ME: Dana Humphreys, me.area1@handbellmusicians.org

RI: Jill Boday, ri.area1@handbellmusicians.org

VT: TBD, vt.area1@handbellmusicians.org

APPOINTED POSITIONS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership Chair: Susan Schultz, membership.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Education Liaison: Kristen Russo, educationliaison.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Communications/Historian/Newsletter: Amy Rollins, communications.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Scholarships: scholarship.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Chime Loan Program: Meredith Gaines, chimeloaner.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Registrar: Susan Schultz, registrar.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Webmaster: Casey Spring, webmaster.area1@handbellmusicians.org

AREA 1 WEB DIRECTORY

Website: area1.handbellmusicians.org

Facebook: facebook.com/HMAarea1

Youtube: [@area1handbellmusiciansofam265](https://youtube.com/@area1handbellmusiciansofam265)

AREA 2 (NJ, NY, PA)

JOIN US

Area 2 Elections

Chair-Elect Secretary Treasurer

Email us!
chair.area2@handbellmusicians.org

area2.handbellmusicians.org [hmaarea2](https://www.facebook.com/hmaarea2)  

AREA 2 LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

BOARD

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Chair-Elect: Billy Mild, chairelect.area2@handbellmusicians.org
Past Chair: Elizabeth Nowik, pastchair.area2@handbellmusicians.org
Secretary/Registrar: Jean Coniber, secretary.area2@handbellmusicians.org
Treasurer: Shawn Gingrich, treasurer.area2@handbellmusicians.org

APPOINTED POSITIONS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership: Kathie Bittenbender, membership.area2@handbellmusicians.org
Education Chair: Lynn Morgan, education.area2@handbellmusicians.org
Historian: Nancy Moore, historian.area2@handbellmusicians.org
Workshops/Mentoring: Gail Posey, workshops.area2@handbellmusicians.org
Communications: Jordan Allen, communications.area2@handbellmusicians.org

AREA 2 WEB DIRECTORY

Website: area2.handbellmusicians.org
Facebook: [facebook.com/hmaarea2](https://www.facebook.com/hmaarea2)
Instagram: [instagram.com/hmaarea2](https://www.instagram.com/hmaarea2)

AREA 3 (DE, DC, MD, NC, VA)

AREA 3 2026 FESTIVALS

Learn more! Scan the QR code or visit
area3.handbellmusicians.org/events/spring-festivals/.



AREA 3 LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

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Chair-Elect: Debbie Henning, chairelect.area3@handbellmusicians.org
Interim Treasurer: Christine Hildebrand, treasurer.area3@handbellmusicians.org
Board Member: Teri Gregory, boardmember1.area3@handbellmusicians.org
Board Member: Patricia Lane, boardmember2.area3@handbellmusicians.org
Board Member: Dottie Tweedie, boardmember3.area3@handbellmusicians.org
Board Member: Alan Payne, boardmember4.area3@handbellmusicians.org
Board Member: Neesa Hart, boardmember5.area3@handbellmusicians.org

STATE/SUB-AREA CHAIRS

DE: TBD, de.area3@handbellmusicians.org
MD: TBD, md.area3@handbellmusicians.org
VA: Reggie Fox, va.area3@handbellmusicians.org
NC: Blaine Russell, nc.area3@handbellmusicians.org
DC: TBD, dc.area3@handbellmusicians.org

APPOINTED POSITIONS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Secretary: Marcia Payne Wooten, secretary.area3@handbellmusicians.org
Membership Chair: Sue Atkins, membership.area3@handbellmusicians.org
Chime Loan Coordinator: Kath Wissinger, chimeloan.area3@handbellmusicians.org
Composition Contest Chair: Kevin Quick, kevin@highlandumc.org
Community Ensemble Liaison: Sarah Sheffield, live2ring@gmail.com
Education Liaison: Brian Seemann, education.area3@handbellmusicians.org
Historian: Karen Eggert, historian.area3@handbellmusicians.org
Scholarship Chair: Laura Blauch, scholarship.area3@handbellmusicians.org
Registrar: Gail Williams, gailwilltoo@verizon.net
Webmaster: Debra LeBrun, webmaster.area3@handbellmusicians.org

AREA 3 WEB DIRECTORY

Website: area3.handbellmusicians.org
Facebook: facebook.com/groups/90491126540/

AREA 4 (FL, GA, SC, PR, BS, VI)

MAKE MUSIC & MEMORIES AT BELLS OF THE CARIBBEAN

November 7–8, 2025 • Registration Cost \$85

Join us for a vibrant handbell experience in a tropical setting! *Bells of the Caribbean* returns in 2025, featuring two dynamic clinicians—**Brian Childers** and **Meredith Alequin Fajardo**—who will lead massed ringing sessions designed to inspire, challenge, and connect ringers from near and far.

Whether you're traveling with your choir or ringing solo, this is your chance to enjoy two days of exciting repertoire, engaging instruction, and a relaxed, friendly atmosphere with an island flair.

Who Should Attend Bells of The Caribbean?

This event is for you! Individual ringers, full choirs, advanced musicians, or developing ensembles—everyone's welcome.

What's Included?

- Two days of clinician-led rehearsal and ringing
- Dynamic final group performance
- Time to explore and enjoy the island

Repertoire and registration info coming soon!

SAVE THE DATE!

The 2026 Florida Handbell Festival will be held on March 13-14, 2026, at Sun City Center United Methodist Church in Sun City Center, FL. Repertoire and Clinician coming soon!

AREA 4 LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

BOARD

Chair: William J. Murphy, chair.area4@handbellmusicians.org

Chair-Elect: Carlos Rivera-Aponte, chairelect.area4@handbellmusicians.org

Past Chair: Jenny Freeman, pastchair.area4@handbellmusicians.org

Secretary: Suzanne Holton, secretary.area4@handbellmusicians.org

Treasurer: Mike Lamb, treasurer.area4@handbellmusicians.org

STATE/SUB-AREA CHAIRS

FL: Katherine Lamb Chico, fl.area4@handbellmusicians.org

GA: Steve Coldiron, ga.area4@handbellmusicians.org

SC: TBD, sc.area4@handbellmusicians.org

Islands: Yaddira Molano Santiago, pr.area4@handbellmusicians.org

Bells of the Caribbean

Make Music & Memories at

Bells of the Caribbean

November 7-8, 2025

University of Puerto Rico – Carolina

2026

FLORIDA HANDBELL FESTIVAL

March 13-14, 2026

Sun City Center United Methodist Church

Sun City Center, FL

<https://Area4.HandbellMusicians.org>

APPOINTED POSITIONS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Education Chair: Kimberly Oppermann, education.area4@handbellmusicians.org

Communications Chair: Katy Ellis, communications.area4@handbellmusicians.org

AREA 4 WEB DIRECTORY

Website: area4.handbellmusicians.org

Facebook: facebook.com/area4handbells

YouTube: www.YouTube.com/@area4_HMA

AREA 5 (IN, KY, MI, OH, WV)

THE COLUMBUS SPRING RING

The Columbus Spring Ring was a tremendous success! More than 650 ringers gathered together to learn new techniques, make new friends, and play music together! Thank you to all the handbell musicians who attended, our wonderful audience who came to see the final concert, the class instructors, all of our Area 5 board members and staff who orchestrated the event, and to our maestro, Fred Gramann! The Columbus Spring Ring offered a myriad of class opportunities for our ringers to learn new techniques! These included how to properly ring treble and bass bells, having an effective rehearsal, learning bell tree techniques, and even learning to keep rhythm by dancing!

MUSIC OF MUNCIE

Our next Music festival is titled “Music of Muncie” and will take place in Muncie, Indiana on March 20-21 2026. Under the direction of Jason Krug, handbell musicians will have another chance to learn new music and perform together!



AREA 5 LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

BOARD

Chair: Jarod Ogier, chair.area5@handbellmusicians.org
Chair-Elect: Shannon Hardiek, chairelect.area5@handbellmusicians.org
Secretary: Jane Hicks Snow, secretary.area5@handbellmusicians.org
Treasurer: Sherri Stoffer, treasurer.area5@handbellmusicians.org

STATE/SUB-AREA CHAIRS

IN: Linda Haddix, in.area5@handbellmusicians.org
OH: Cheryl Onesky, oh.area5@handbellmusicians.org
KY: Abby Wentzel, ky.area5@handbellmusicians.org
MI: Hannah Wheaton, mi.area1@handbellmusicians.org
WV: TBD, wv.area5@handbellmusicians.org



PINNACLE 2025

Area 5 had a tremendous turnout at Pinnacle 2025! Several current officers, former officers, composers, and members were in attendance. We were grateful to have Jason and Kim Krug representing Area 5 and Grassy Meadow Music and Brenda Austin representing Hope Publishing Company. Embellish Handbell Ensemble from Grand Rapids also performed during Pinnacle. Under the direction of Brenda Austin, this talented group of ringers delighted attendees from across the globe with a myriad of amazing pieces, including musical hits “For Good” from *Wicked* and “Rewrite The Stars” from *The Greatest Showman*.

APPOINTED POSITIONS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Financial Administrator: Linda VanDenBerg, finance.area5@handbellmusicians.org
Education Chair: Brenda Hayden, education.area5@handbellmusicians.org
Membership Chair: Lora Lee Curren, membership.area5@handbellmusicians.org
Communications Chair: Jonathan Martz, communications.area5@handbellmusicians.org
Webmaster: Eleanor Coffin, webmaster.area5@handbellmusicians.org

AREA 5 WEB DIRECTORY

Website: area5.handbellmusicians.org
Facebook: facebook.com/area5HMA
Instagram: instagram.com/area5hma
Twitter (X): @area5hma

AREA 6 (AR, AL, MS, LA, TN)

UPCOMING 2026 HANDBELL FESTIVALS



28

FEBRUARY

**ARKANSAS HMA FESTIVAL
WITH TAMMY WALDROP**
arkansasbells.org

6-7

MARCH

**CENTRAL ALABAMA FESTIVAL
WITH MICHAEL GLASGOW**
cahandbells.com

6-7

MARCH

**CHATTANOOGA AREA FESTIVAL
WITH NICK HANSON**
area6.handbellmusicians.org

07

MARCH

**MIDDLE TENNESSEE FESTIVAL
WITH BRIAN CHILDERS**
tgbc.org

17-18

APRIL

**SMOKY MOUNTAIN RING
WITH GREIG ASHURST**
knoxareahandbellfestival.com

SPRING
2026

RIVER CITY RING
wtbells.org

SPRING
2026

**LOUISIANA SPRING RING
WITH GREIG ASHURST**
area6.handbellmusicians.org

SPRING
2026

MISSISSIPPI RINGING EVENT
area6.handbellmusicians.org



Handbell Musicians
OF AMERICA

| Area 6

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BOARD

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Chair-Elect: Les Beaver, chairelect.area6@handbellmusicians.org

Past Chair: Mary Caldwell, pastchair.area6@handbellmusicians.org

Secretary: Beth Wilson, secretary.area6@handbellmusicians.org

Treasurer: Becky Price, treasurer.area6@handbellmusicians.org

STATE/SUB-AREA CHAIRS

AL: Heather Batchelor, al.area6@handbellmusicians.org

AR: Lisa Hester, ar.area6@handbellmusicians.org

LA: Barbara Williams, la.area6@handbellmusicians.org

MS: Paul McGahie, ms.area6@handbellmusicians.org

TN: Carole Millard, tn.area6@handbellmusicians.org

APPOINTED POSITIONS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership: Neri Beaver, membership.area6@handbellmusicians.org

Webmaster: Melissa Emerson: webmaster.area6@handbellmusicians.org

AREA 6 WEB DIRECTORY

Website: area6.handbellmusicians.org

Facebook: facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064537908533

Instagram: instagram.com/handbells.area6

AREA 7 (MN, ND, SD, WI)

DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE

Area 7 Festival Conference

June (25) 26-28, 2026

River's Edge Convention Center – St. Cloud, Minnesota

CLINICIANS



Carlos Rivera-Aponte from Puerto Rico

Conducting: Co-Massed Ringers, Bronze Division, Bronze Plus Ensemble



Jill Mahr from Northfield, Minnesota

Conducting: Co-Massed Ringers and Copper Division



Jennifer Cadwell from Maple Grove, Minnesota

Conducting: Conference Choir

**FOR ALL DETAILS INCLUDING REPERTOIRE, CLASSES, & REGISTRATION, VISIT
[HTTPS://AREA7.HANDBELLMUSICIANS.ORG/FESTIVAL-2026/](https://area7.handbellmusicians.org/festival-2026/)**

AREA 7 LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

BOARD

Chair: Paul McKenzie, chair.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Chair-Elect: Monica McGowan, chairelect.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Past Chair: Jennifer Cadwell, pastchair.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Secretary: Deb Madel, secretary.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Treasurer: Theresa Jacobson, treasurer.area7@handbellmusicians.org

STATE/SUB-AREA CHAIRS

ND: TBD, ndakota.area7@handbellmusicians.org

SD: Cheryl Ulmer, sdakota.area7@handbellmusicians.org

MN-North: Jordan Goodwater, minnesotanorth.area7@handbellmusicians.org

MN-Twin Cities: Akudo Omeoga, twincities.area7@handbellmusicians.org

MN-South: Paul Kingsbury, minnesotasouth.area7@handbellmusicians.org

WI-North: Denean Smith, wisconsinnorth.area7@handbellmusicians.org

WI-South: Lisa Bourget, wisconsin-south.area7@handbellmusicians.org

APPOINTED POSITIONS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership Chair: Christina Herold, membership.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Publications/Newsletter: Jen Welch, editor.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Website Administrator: Paul Weller, webadmin.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Events Coordinator: Alanna Teragawa, events.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Youth Events Planner: Jessica Haeder, youthevents.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Historian: Dan Ahlman, historian.area7@handbellmusicians.org

C.H.I.M.E. Representative: Michelle Finlon, chime.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Registrar: Trevor Lee, registrar.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Manitoba Representative: Ron Vert, manitoba.area7@handbellmusicians.org

AREA 7 WEB DIRECTORY

Website: area7.handbellmusicians.org

Facebook: facebook.com/HandbellMusiciansArea7

AREA 8 (IL, IA, KS, MO, NE)

BY LORI FENTON, AREA 8 CHAIR

There was just ONE STATE left!! My husband and I had visited 49 states, with only Alaska left on our bucket list. And, then, of course, there is my obsession with bells. Well, in 2024, when The Bells of the Cascades announced that their handbell cruise for 2025 would be to Alaska, with Matthew Compton and Alex Guebert as the guest conductors no less, it didn't take long to register, over a year ahead!! It didn't take much effort to convince some bell-loving friends to go along and we were set!

This was the 16th handbell cruise for the group, and they definitely have it down to a science. We were divided into two groups of approximately 50 ringers—The Orcas and The Belugas. We requested our favorite positions to play and were assigned from there. When the ship was sailing, we had rehearsals, but if we were in port, we got to enjoy the area. Each group had their own repertoire of four pieces to work on. The host choir furnished all the music, the bells, and all the other equipment. We only had to bring our gloves and a binder. They even had a “Baby Whales” class for beginners! Laurel Crusinberry, wife of Iowa State Chair Dick Crusinberry, decided to try out the bells, and had a great time. That group even played a piece for the final concert of the event!!

The Bells of the Cascades gave a wonderful concert on the ship's World Stage. When their director Matthew Compton asked the very large audience who had never heard a bell choir before, over half of the hands went up! Area 8's own Cynthia Seputis was honored to be asked to fill in for a ringer who was not able to come at the last minute, and she did a fantastic job, after only one practice, of playing the very difficult program. The cruise groups gave a program on the last day, each playing the four pieces they had prepared. The only disappointing thing

was that it was not on the World Stage, but in the rehearsal rooms, so there wasn't a lot of room for a large crowd. But, every seat they had for an audience was filled and there were lots of people listening in the hall.

The next cruise through The Bells of the Cascades will be in January 2027 to the eastern Caribbean. Brenda Austin has been announced as the guest clinician. If you visit their website, you can already sign up!! So, for all of you handbell lovers who can never get enough ringing in your lives, take advantage of this fun adventure!



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IL (Central/Southern): Chris Peck, ilcs.area8@handbellmusicians.org
IL (Chicago): TBD, ilno.area8@handbellmusicians.org
IL (Northern): Beth McFarland, ilno2.area8@handbellmusicians.org
KS: Amy Knudsen, ks.area8@handbellmusicians.org
TBD, ks2.area8@handbellmusicians.org
MO: TBD, mo.area8@handbellmusicians.org
NE: Byron Jensen, ne.area8@handbellmusicians.org

APPOINTED POSITIONS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership: Lori Fenton, membership.area8@handbellmusicians.org
Education: Lori Fenton, education.area8@handbellmusicians.org
Historian: Laurie Austin, historian.area8@handbellmusicians.org
Communications: Janelle Flory Schrock, communications.area8@handbellmusicians.org
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Registrars: Amy Knudsen, registrar.area8@handbellmusicians.org
Linda Ashley, registrar2.area8@handbellmusicians.org
Resource Librarian: Charleton Pendry, resource librarian.area8@handbellmusicians.org

AREA 8 WEB DIRECTORY

Website: area8.handbellmusicians.org
Facebook: [facebook.com/ Area8Handbells](https://facebook.com/Area8Handbells)

AREA 9 (OK, TX)

Spring Ring 2026

Saturday, March 7
Tulsa and San Antonio

Come join your fellow Area 9 ringers at this year's Spring Ring! With locations in Texas and Oklahoma, groups and ringers across the region will have the opportunity to share in ringing and fellowship under the direction of one of our fabulous Area 9 clinicians. In addition to preparing the selected repertoire, choirs, small ensembles, and soloists are invited to prepare one piece to present to the group at the final concert.

Registration will be available December 1, 2025.

\$25/person if received by February 21

\$35/person after February 21

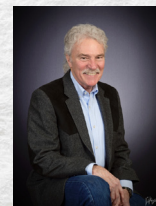
Additional charge for lunch (optional) \$12-15

(lunch orders must be received by February 28)

Table rental is \$10 per 6 foot table



San Antonio, TX
University Methodist Church
5084 De Zavala Road
San Antonio, TX 78249
Clinician: Bob Avant



Tulsa, OK
Asbury Church
6767 S Mingo Road
Tulsa, OK 74133
Clinician: Hart Morris

Area 9 HMA Spring Ring 2026 Repertoire

*The following repertoire is to be prepared
in advance of the Spring Ring event.*

Exploration on DEO GRACIAS – L2+

Jason Krug, 2-3 oct. (GMH230033) or 3-6 oct. – GMH350045

Give Me Jesus – Level 3-

arr. Hart Morris, 3-5 oct HB with opt 3-5 oct HC – BEHB768

Joyeuse – Level 3-

Karen Buckwalter, 3-5 oct HB – BEHB799

Morning Light – Level 3

arr. Stephanie Berryman

3-4 oct HB – FM203473; 5 oct HB – FM20347

Bell Peal on Lasst uns Erfreuen – Level 3

arr. Sondra Tucker, 2-5 oct HB with 2 oct HC – JMG1457

Schedule:

8:30 a.m. Load in/set up/registration
9:00 a.m. Ready to ring
12:00 p.m. Lunch on site
2:30 p.m. Concert



Spring Ring
EVENT PAGE

AREA 9 LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

BOARD

Chair: Stephanie Rhoades, chair.area9@handbellmusicians.org

Chair-Elect: Amy Epperson, chairelect.area9@handbellmusicians.org

Past Chair: Mark Arnold, pastchair.area9@handbellmusicians.org

Secretary: Stephen Wurst, secretary.area9@handbellmusicians.org

Treasurer: Jeanne Christopherson, treasurer.area9@handbellmusicians.org

STATE/SUB-AREA CHAIRS

OK: Sheryl "Bob" Martin, okrep.area9@handbellmusicians.org

TX-South: Cyndi Erp-Long, txrep1.area9@handbellmusicians.org

TX-North: Brittney Axton, txrep2.area9@handbellmusicians.org

APPOINTED POSITIONS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership: Cylinda Areno, membership.area9@handbellmusicians.org

Education Co-Chair: Barbie Senkow, education.area9@handbellmusicians.org

Education Co-Chair: Stacie Brown, education.area9@handbellmusicians.org

Communications: John Staton, communications.area9@handbellmusicians.org

Member At-Large: Kari Daelke, boardmember1.area9@handbellmusicians.org

AREA 9 WEB DIRECTORY

Website: area9.handbellmusicians.org

Facebook: facebook.com/HandbellMusiciansArea9

Instagram: instagram.com/area9handbells

Twitter (X): @Area9Handbells

AREA 10 (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA)

AREA 10's NEW 1-1/2 day event in the fall Fall Ringing Round Up—October 17-18, 2025

Locations: Bend Oregon, Great Falls Montana, Olympia Washington, Spokane Washington

- ♦ **No One must bring bells and tables!**
The host venue is organizing that detail
- ♦ **No One must learn the music before the event!**
You will receive the event titles when you arrive—5 in total
- ♦ **The music list is shaping up to be the perfect mix of fun and beautiful!**
Conductors are putting together repertoire that offers teaching moments to help you grow as a Handbell Musician.
- ♦ **The titles will be between a L2 and a L3 difficulty level. This will allow for ease of learning the music and for putting new techniques and skills into practice on the day of massed ringing.**
- ♦ **There will be an informal performance at the end of day two.**
A chance to share with your friends and family what you have learned over the weekend
- ♦ **Registration fees begin at \$40*/ringer with the option to purchase a provided lunch for \$15**
Registration fee includes the music you will use at the event.
- ♦ **Venues are scattered around our AREA so our ringers would have *at most* a 2-3hr drive from “home”**

*This is the Early Bird registration fee for an HMA member; ALL ringers, regardless of membership, are encouraged and welcome to attend

<https://area10.handbellmusicians.org/fall-ringing-round-up/>

AREA 10 LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

BOARD

Chair: Tomi Kent, chair.area10@handbellmusicians.org

Chair-Elect: Corbin Rasmussen, chairelect.area10@handbellmusicians.org

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Treasurer: Ellie Hodder, treasurer.area10@handbellmusicians.org

STATE/SUB-AREA CHAIRS

AK: Caroline Valentine, ak.area10@handbellmusicians.org

ID: Jonathan Rose, id.area10@handbellmusicians.org

MT: Linda Hightower, mt.area10@handbellmusicians.org

OR: Heather Dixon, or.area10@handbellmusicians.org

WA: Julie Hunziker, wa.area10@handbellmusicians.org

APPOINTED POSITIONS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership Chair: Diane Hould, membership.area10@handbellmusicians.org

Communications: Joann Wallenburn, communications.area10@handbellmusicians.org

Newsletter: Debra Pankaskie, campanologist.area10@handbellmusicians.org

Events Chair: Diane Barnes, eventschair.area10@handbellmusicians.org

Education/Youth Chair: TBD, education_youth.area10@handbellmusicians.org

Webmaster: Joann Wallenburn, webmaster.area10@handbellmusicians.org

Social Media Editor: Sheri Roach, socialmedia.area10@handbellmusicians.org

AREA 10 WEB DIRECTORY

Website: area10.handbellmusicians.org

Facebook: [facebook.com/ HandbellMusiciansOfAmericaArea10](https://facebook.com/HandbellMusiciansOfAmericaArea10)

AREA 11 (AZ, CO, NM, UT, WY)



**Fall
Tune-Up**

September 20th, 2025
9am - 12pm

Join us for a fun-filled morning of “tuning up” bell techniques to get ready for a new season of ringing.

Locations in
Mesa, Arizona
Lakewood, Colorado
Thornton, Colorado
Albuquerque, New Mexico
Lehi, Utah
Kaysville, Utah
Cheyenne, Wyoming (Sept 27th)



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Sec/Treasurer: Jill Persichetti, treasurer.area11@handbellmusicians.org

SUB-AREA CHAIRS

Desert: Nancy Roberts-Small, desert.area11@handbellmusicians.org

Mountain: Andrew Smith, mountain.area11@handbellmusicians.org

APPOINTED POSITIONS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Events Chair: Anne Kleve, events.area11@handbellmusicians.org

Communications: Sara Oedekoven, communications.area11@handbellmusicians.org

C.H.I.M.E Chair: Shirley Culp, chime.area11@handbellmusicians.org

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Registrar: Lilly Hatch, registrar.area11@handbellmusicians.org

Camp Chair: Anne Kleve, camp.area11@handbellmusicians.org

Webmaster: Nikki Evans, webmaster.area11@handbellmusicians.org

AREA 11 WEB DIRECTORY

Website: area11.handbellmusicians.org

Facebook: facebook.com/area11handbells

AREA 12 (CA, HI, NV)

CALLING ALL COMPOSERS

The Area 12 invites all composers to participate in the Area 12 Composition Contest for our 2026 Area 12 Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. Prize: \$1500. Deadline: October 15, 2025.

The Handbell Musicians of America Area 12 Composition Contest strives to expand the handbell repertoire with interesting and accessible compositions while providing a tool for learning and enjoyment at the Area 12 conference. The winning submission will be appealing to a massed or divisional choir and may include percussion and/or vocal parts.

Composition contest applicants are not required to be a member of Handbell Musicians of America (the Guild), nor are they required to reside in Area 12 (California, Guam, Hawaii, and Nevada), but Guild and Area 12 members will be allotted additional points in the adjudication process.

Additional details can be found at: <https://area12.handbellmusicians.org/composition-contest/> or by contacting Marci Nuoffer at: pastchair.area12@handbellmusicians.org.



AREA 12 LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY BOARD

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Chair-Elect: Scott McGlasson, chairelect.area12@handbellmusicians.org
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CA-North: Cindy Ksiazek, norcal.area12@handbellmusicians.org
CA-South: Carol Pickford, socal.area12@handbellmusicians.org
CA-Far North: Nancy Schmitt, farnorcal.area12@handbellmusicians.org
HI: Karen Carlisle, hi.area12@handbellmusicians.org
LA-Metro: Erik Der, lametro.area12@handbellmusicians.org
NV-North: Barbara Walsh, nv.area12@handbellmusicians.org
NV-South: Alison Pruett, vegas.area12@handbellmusicians.org
SF-Bay: Marquise Usher, bayarea.area12@handbellmusicians.org

APPOINTED POSITIONS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership: TBD, membership.area12@handbellmusicians.org
Education: Elizabeth Loebig, education.area12@handbellmusicians.org
Events: TBD, events.area2@handbellmusicians.org
Communications: Cathryn Griggs, communications.area12@handbellmusicians.org
Vendor Liaison: Fran Sanders, vendorliaison.area12@handbellmusicianns.org
Historian: TBD, historian.area12@handbellmusicians.org
Social Media: Harley Glenn, media.area12@handbellmusicians.org
Webmaster: Gail Berg, webmaster.area12@handbellmusicians.org

AREA 12 WEB DIRECTORY

Website: area12.handbellmusicians.org
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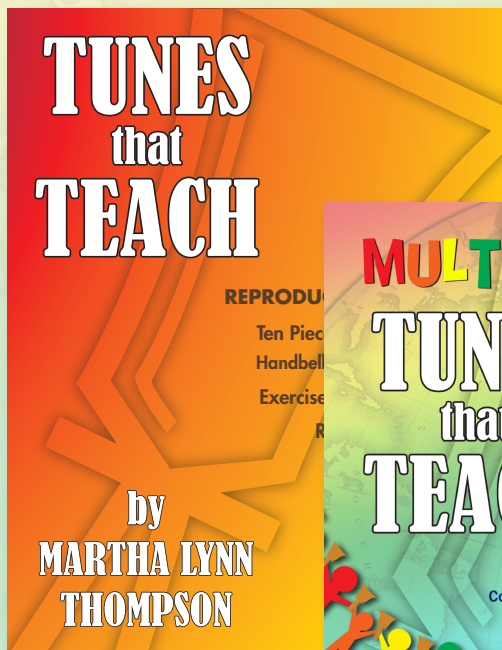
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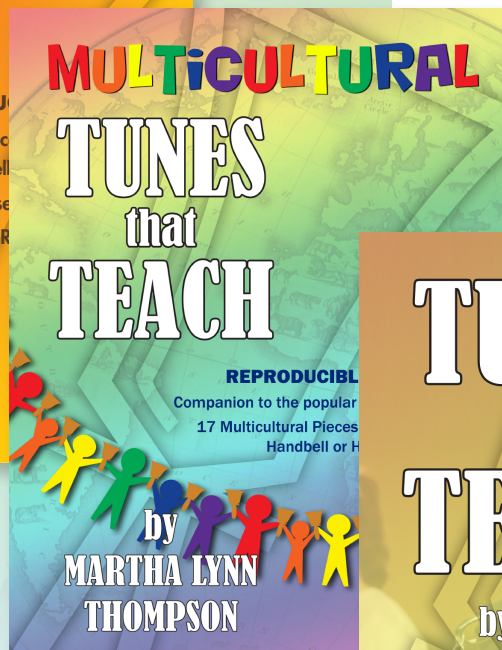
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info@handbellmusicians.org



This best-selling resource is based on tunes that are used in both secular and sacred settings. Its 112 pages contain 10 separate settings for 2-octave and 10 settings for 3-octave handbell or handchime choirs. The arrangements, exercises, director's teaching guides, and ringer activities give you the valuable tools you need for your school or other beginning handbell program.

AG009 - REPRODUCIBLE - \$39.95



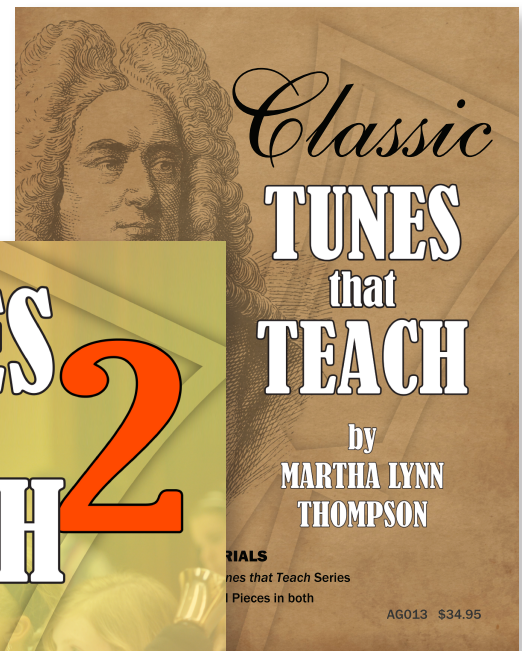
A sequel to the best selling *Tunes That Teach*, this volume contains 17 handbell selections with separate 2-octave and 3-octave arrangements. Tanzanian, Israeli, Afro-American, Brazilian, Swahili, Argentine, Hasidic, Cuban, Chinese, Bohemian, and Latin American tunes are represented in this collection which pedagogically moves from Level 1 to Level 2.

AG011 - REPRODUCIBLE - \$44.95



The third book in the series, *Tunes that Teach 2*, offers 22 creative arrangements of folk songs, music from other cultures, folk songs that have become well known hymns, and classical music. The music progresses through the book from easy to more challenging, making this an ideal teaching resource.

AG012 - REPRODUCIBLE - \$44.95



The latest offering in the popular series, *Classic Tunes That Teach* has arrangements by Handel, Purcell, Mouret, Corelli, Campra, and more. The pieces progress from simple to more difficult. 96 pages.

AG014 - REPRODUCIBLE - \$34.95

All are available at your favorite handbell music retailer