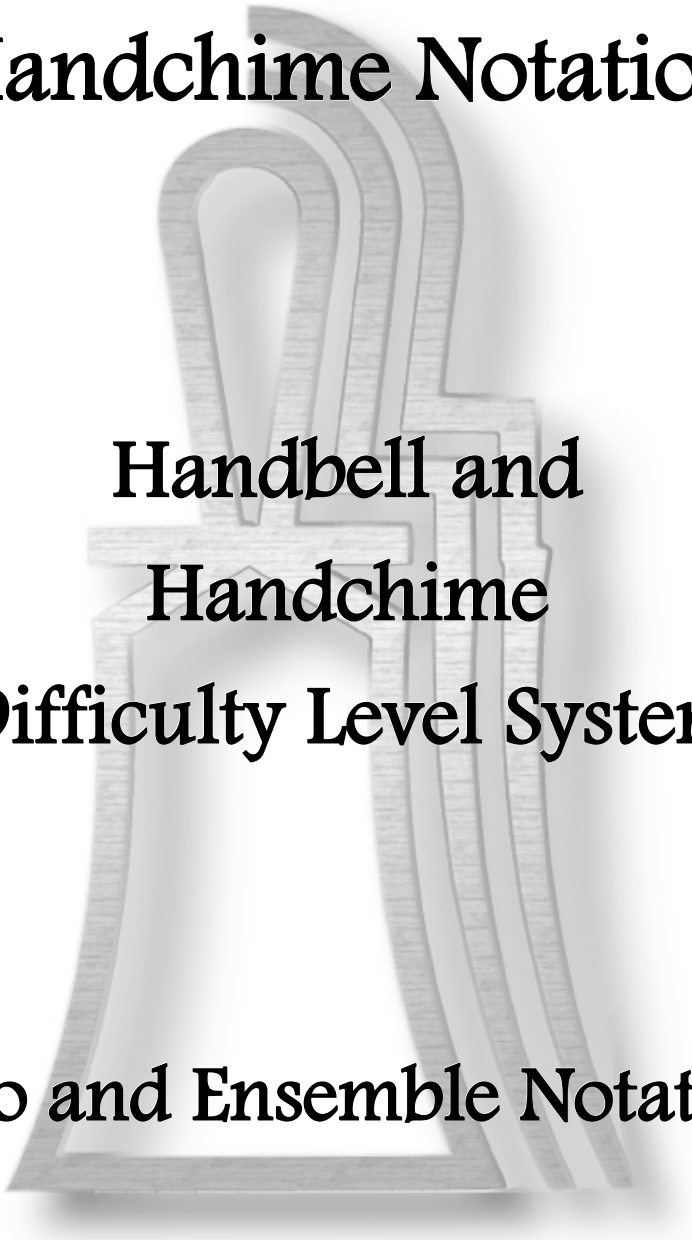
Handbell and Handchime Notation



Handbell and Handchime Difficulty Level System

Solo and Ensemble Notation

The American Guild of English Handbell Ringers, Inc.
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2017 Edition

The guidelines presented in this booklet are a product of national conferences whose participants have included composers, arrangers, editors, engravers, publishers, and performers of handbell music. The Ninth Conference was convened in Rochester, New York, on July 17, 2016, following the Handbell Musicians of America National Seminar. The conference was open to anyone interested in handbell and handchime notation.

This booklet is divided into three sections:

Part A (pages 10-26) is the *Handbell and Handchime Notation* section.

Part B (pages 27-29) is an explanation of
Assigning Difficulty Levels to Handbell and Handchime Music.

Part C (pages 30-35) deals with *Solo and Ensemble Notation.*

Part A

The *Handbell and Handchime Notation* is a summary of the July 17, 2016, meeting and was compiled by the following committee: Dr. John A. Behnke, Sue Garton, Martha Lynn Thompson, and David Weck.

Part B

The *Handbell and Handchime Difficulty Level System* is a summary of the July 29, 1999, meeting and was compiled by the following committee: William H. Griffin (Chair), David Ruder, Susan Ullom-Hungerford, and David Weck. The Ninth Notation Conference in Rochester, NY made only a slight modification to Part B.

Part C

The *Solo and Ensemble Notation* is a summary of the July 19, 2009, meeting and was compiled by the following committee: Dr. John A. Behnke, Sueda Luttrell, Arnold Sherman, Martha Lynn Thompson, and David Weck. No changes were adopted from the 2016 Rochester Conference.

The English Handbell

A musically tuned bell with a handle made of leather or plastic which allows it to be held in the hand. The inclusion of the word “English” is based upon the history of the handbell itself and pertains to the clapper suspension. The modern tuned handbell is English in origin. Its clapper is mounted and hinged so that it will strike both forward and back in a single plane. Restraining springs prevent the clapper from laying against the handbell when it is held with its mouth upright. The English handbell is made of bell bronze (ca. 80% copper and 20% tin) and is tuned in such a way that the fundamental and the 12th overtone are dominant.

The Handchime

The handchime is a metal tube, most commonly an aluminum extrusion, slotted and cut to produce a musical tone. The length of the slot in the tubing determines the fundamental pitch which is the clearly dominant tonal element. The length of the unslotted portion (that which is held in the hand) is fitted with a plug to provide substantial reinforcement of the pitch produced by the slotted portion (the tines). The clapper mechanism is externally mounted and strikes the tube at a predetermined point to produce the desired pitch.

Table of Contents

Part B—Handbell and Handchime Music Difficulty Level System

Part C—Solo and Ensemble Notation

Sizes of Handbell and Handchime Sets and Octave Designations

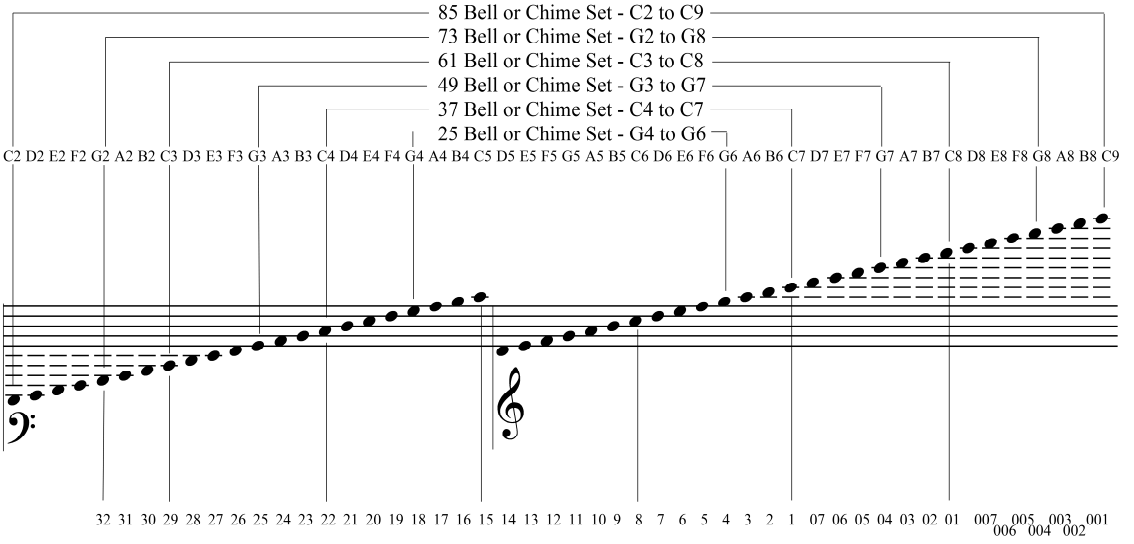
Handbells

2 Octaves G4 to G6
3 Octaves C4 to C7
4 Octaves G3 to G7
5 Octaves C3 to C8
6 Octaves G2 to G8
7 Octaves C2 to C9
G1 and B1 are also available

Handchimes

2 Octaves G4 to G6
3 Octaves C4 to C7
4 Octaves G3 to G7
5 Octaves C3 to C8
6 Octaves G2 to G8
7 Octaves C2 to C9

American Numbering System



Traditional English Numbering System

Note: Handbells and Handchimes are transposing instruments and sound an octave higher than their written pitch.

Part A – Handbell and Handchime Notation

I. Notation Symbol Chart

Terminology

BD	Brush Damp
CD	Controlled Diminuendo
	Damp Sign
	Echo
	Gyro
	Handbell Tree
HB	Handbell
HC	Handchime
HD	Hand Damp
	Notehead shape used for a handchime part to distinguish it from a handbell part
LV	Let Vibrate or *Laissez Vibrer*
Mal.	Mallet
	Mallet on suspended handbell
	Mallet with handbell on table
	Mallet Lift
	Mallet Roll on suspended handbell
	Mallet Roll with handbell on table

Martellato	▼
Martellato Lift	▼↑
Optional Notes	***optional*** ***opt.***
Enclosures for optional notes	( ) [ ] < > { }
Pluck	**Pl**
Pluck Lift	**Pl**•↑
Ring	**R**
Ring then immediately go into Singing Bell	**RSB**
Ring Touch	**RT**
Rolled Chord	
Selective Damp for chord notes	
Selective Damp for single note	
Shake	**Sk** and/or
Singing Bell	**SB**
Swing	**Sw**↓↑
Voice-Leading Lines	／＼
Thumb Damp	**TD**
Table Land Damp	**TLD**
Tap Pluck	**TPl**
Trill	***tr***
Vibrato	***vib.***
The Voicer's Mark or Strikepoint is a permanently scribed line inside the handbell casting applied by the voicing technician to identify the point of optimum tonal response at which the clapper is aligned in the striking plane.	**Voicer's Mark or Strikepoint**

II. Layout

Music should be limited to eight staves per page.

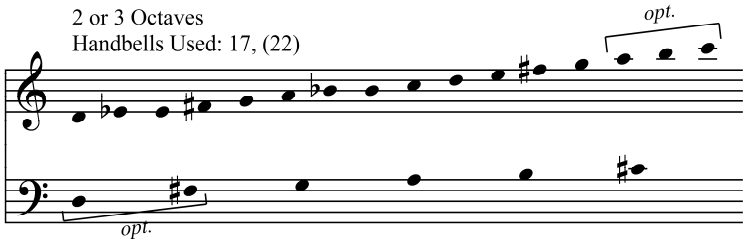
Black ink on white paper is most desirable.

Use the largest practical-sized notes for greatest legibility.

Optional notes should be full-sized and enclosed in parentheses ( ), square brackets [ ], angled brackets < >, or braces { }.

Music for sets of 25 or more handbells (2-3 octave set, *Example 1*) should be printed on two staves, one treble and one bass. The bass staff includes all notes through C♯5, first ledger line above the bass staff, as shown below:

Example 1



There are situations where only one staff need be used, such as when music begins with a single, extended melodic line.

It may be desirable that a handbell part be printed separately when handbells are used with other instruments or voices.

Composers should suggest a tempo indication (e.g., ♩ = ca. 72). Dynamic markings and other standard notational practices should be used as guidelines for performance.

The cover or title page usually lists the range of handbells in this manner:

Example 2

Inventory Number Level Number	Title	Composer/Arranger	Octaves	Price
AG20091 L2	Fanfare	Handel/arr. Smith	2 Octaves	$4.95

All measures should be numbered consecutively; numbers should be placed above the barline and in large enough type to be readily legible at arm's length.

III. Paperstock

Paper stock should be of a weight sufficient to permit hard usage in the three-ring easel-type binders in common use, or to stand upright on a music stand. It is suggested that not less than 60 lb. paper stock in bound collections and not less than 70 lb. paper stock in single compositions be used. 8 ½ x 11" non-coated, non-glare finish paper is recommended.

IV. Handbells or Handchimes Used Chart

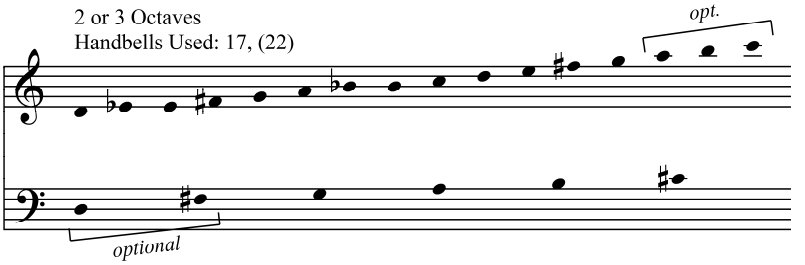
The Handbells Used Chart is placed between the title and the first system or line of music. A smaller size staff with stemless, solid notes for all pitches may be used. The staff may or may not be indented.

The use of a grand staff (two staves) is preferable for all Handbells Used Charts, including those for two-octave music.

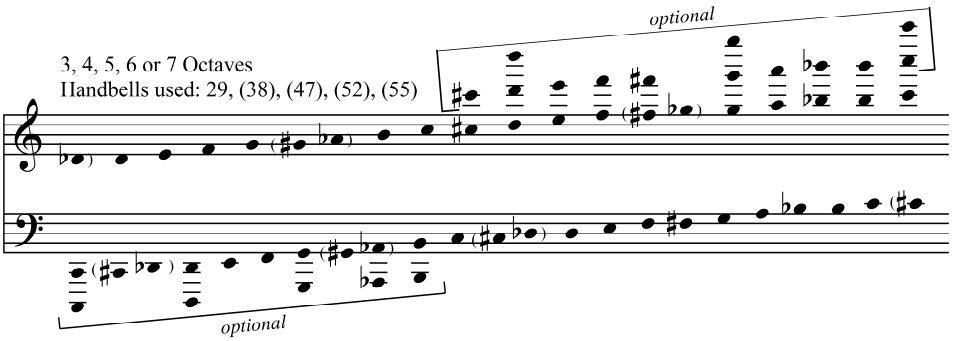
Place all notes from C♯5 downward on the bass staff and all notes from D♭5 upward on the treble staff. (*Examples 3 and 4*)

Start treble staff notes adjacent to the treble clef sign, directly over the lowest note in the bass staff, as in the examples below:

Example 3



Example 4



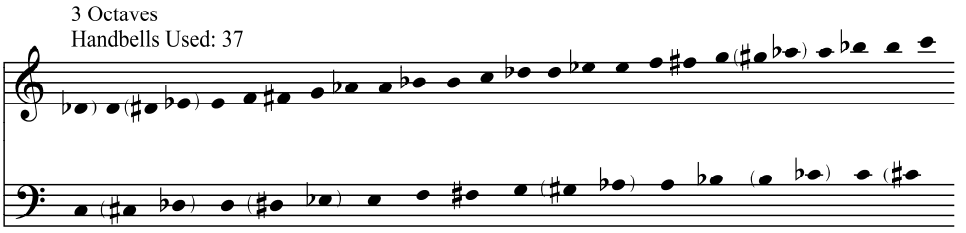
When enharmonic pitches are called for, enclose both notes in one set of parentheses. See how the C♯5/D♭5 enharmonic is printed in *Example 4*.

It is preferable to have the notes in one line without doubling back. However, when there are too many notes to go on the bass staff in a continuous line, the notes for which there is insufficient space are placed directly below the note which is an octave higher. In the treble clef, they are placed directly above the note which is an octave lower. (*Example 4*)

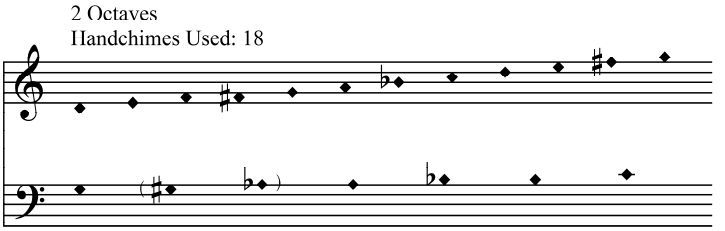
Optional notes are also written as stemless solid notes in the same size as the required notes. They are designated by a longitudinal bracket and the word *optional* or *opt*., as in *Examples 3 and 4.*

When handchimes are used in addition to or in conjunction with handbells, it is strongly recommended that the handchime notes be placed on a separate Handchimes Used Chart below the Handbells Used Chart. The notes on the Handchimes Used Chart should be written as diamond-shaped notes i.e., ◆ (Additional explanation of Handchime Notation may be found below.)

Example 5a



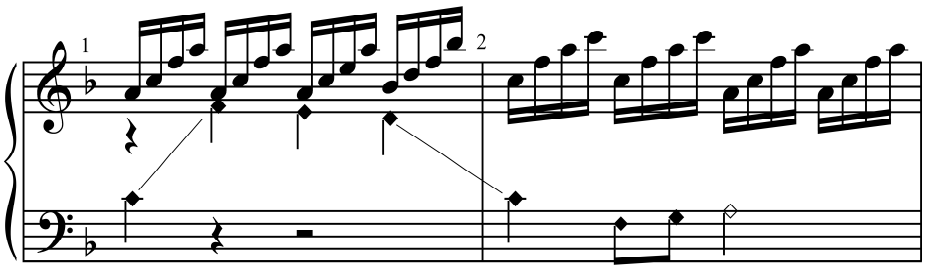
Example 5b



V. Handchimes Notation

Within a composition, diamond-shaped notes should be used to differentiate between handchime and handbell notes. (*Example 6*)

Example 6



When sections of music are to be rung entirely on handchimes, it is preferable to notate them in the traditional way, rather than with diamond-shaped notes, and to set off the entire section in square brackets with an indication that all the notes within the bracketed sections are to be rung on handchimes rather than handbells.

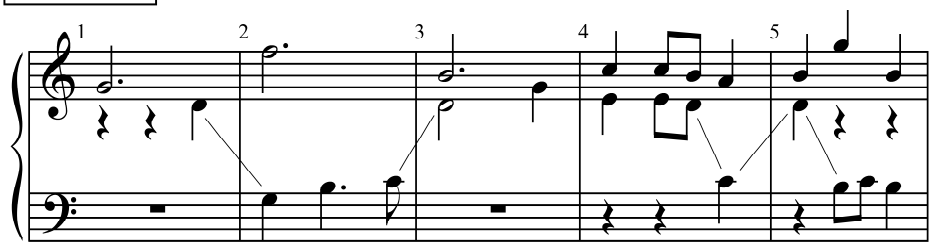
VI. Voice-Leading

The movement of any voice, melody or other line from one staff to another may be clarified by the use of **Voice-Leading Lines**.

When possible, the **Voice-Leading Lines** should extend from notehead to notehead. For additional clarity, rests may be added. (*Examples 7 & 8*)

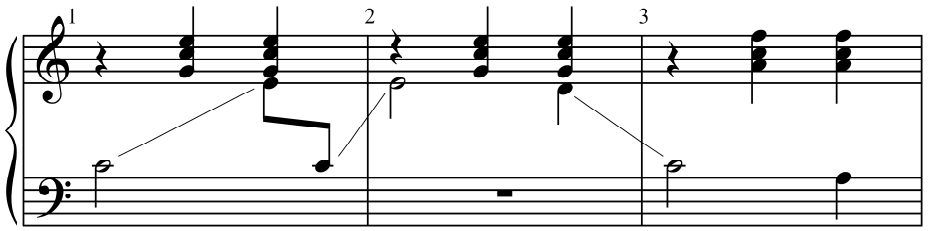
1. Voice-Leading Lines with rests

Example 7



2. **Voice-Leading Lines** without rests

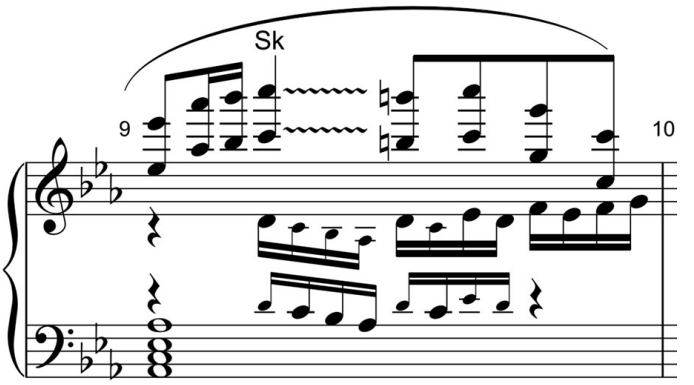
Example 8



3. **Voice-Leading Lines** with cue-sized notes

When a musical line moves between the staves, it may be engraved on both. Notes in the non-traditional staff are shown as cue-sized notes.

Example 9

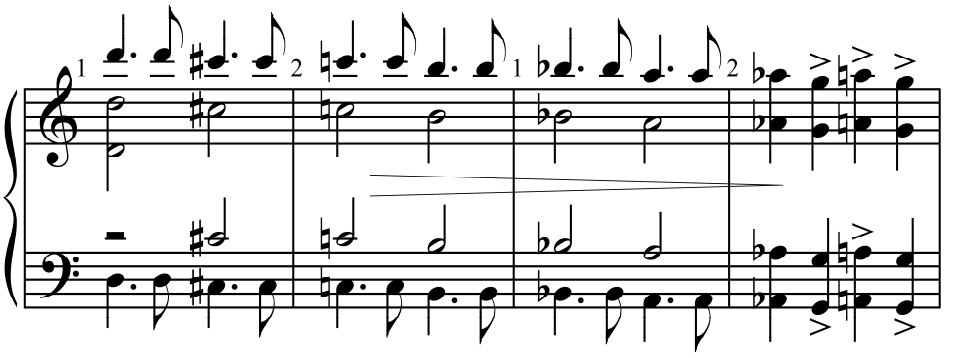


Aria, William Payn, Choristers Guild CGB804

VII. Cautionary Accidentals

A cautionary accidental is customarily used as a reminder that an accidental from the previous measure has been cancelled. The use of parentheses on cautionary accidentals is not recommended. (*Example 10*)

Example 10



VIII. Notational Devices for Handbell and Handchime Techniques

Ring or **R**

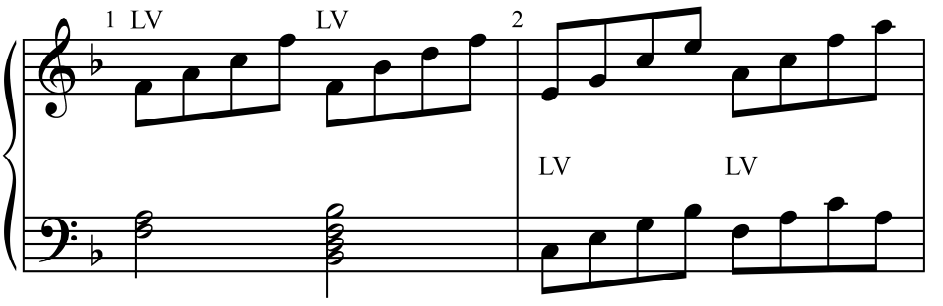
R indicates the normal manner of ringing and damping according to note values. Also the use of **R** indicates a return to the normal ringing and damping technique after a passage when another style or technique, such as **LV** or Pluck, has been used. (*See page 19*) It is understood that handbells are to be rung in normal fashion at the beginning of a piece without the use of the symbol **R**.

LV

LV is a term meaning "Let Vibrate" (*laissez vibrer*), allowing handbells to resonate, regardless of note values or rests, until damping is indicated. **LV**, if placed above the treble staff (*Example 11a*) or below the bass staff (*Example 12*), applies to that staff only. An **LV** centered between staves (*Example 13*) applies to both staves. **LV** markings are used as follows:

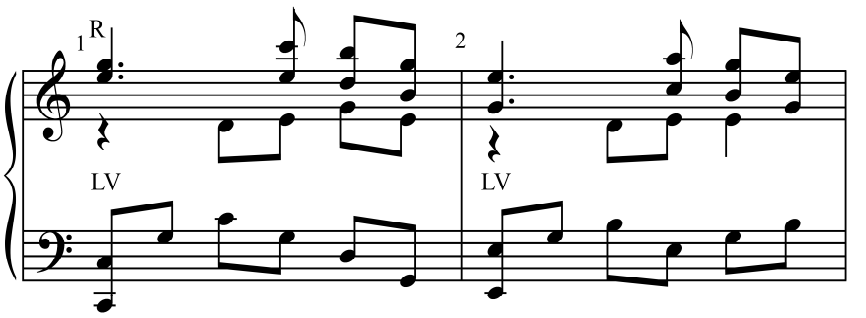
1. Successive **LV** marks signify that all previously sustained notes damp precisely where the new **LV** begins. (*Example 11a*)

Example 11a



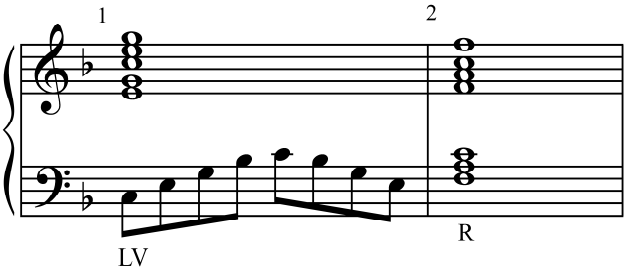
The **LV** is for bass staff and lower voices of the treble staff. (*Example 11b*)
The **R** indicates that the up-stemmed treble notes are rung. (*Example 11b*)

Example 11b



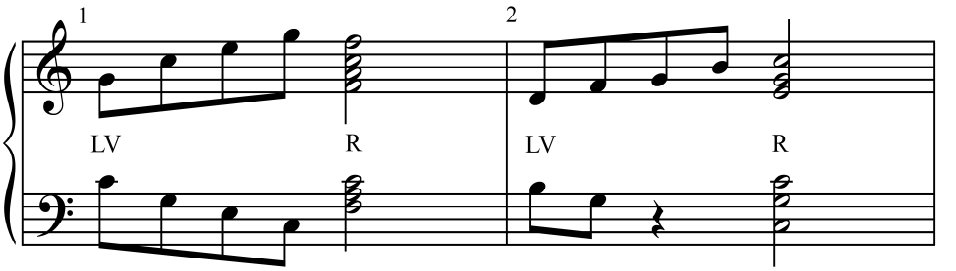
2. The **LV** effect is terminated by one of the following:
   a. The letter **R** (*Example 12*)

Example 12



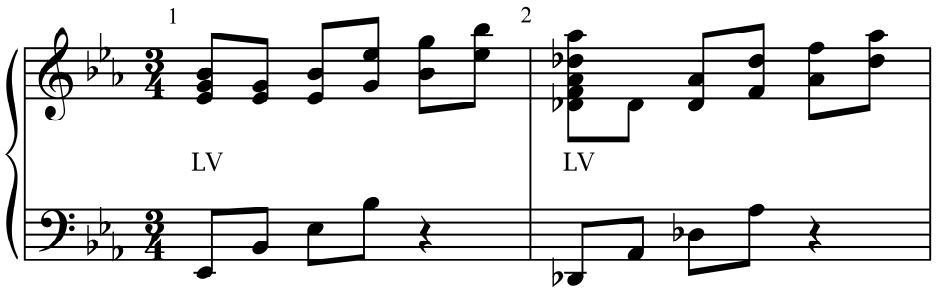
An **LV** centered between staves applies to both staves. (*Example 13*)

Example 13



When **LV** passages include a rest, the notes continue to sound through the rest. (*Example 14*)

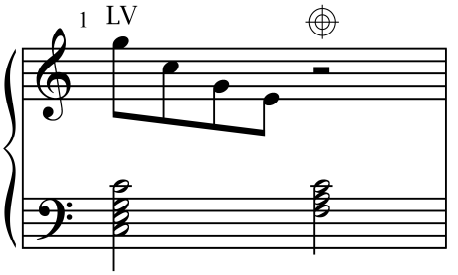
Example 14



Damp Sign

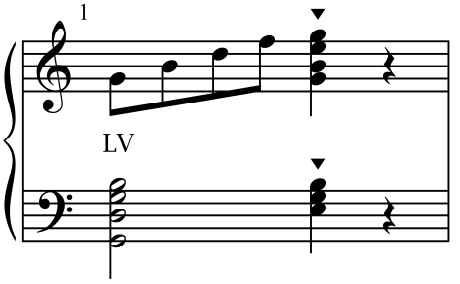
b. The **Damp Sign**
The **Damp Sign** indicates the cessation of sound in **LV** passages.

Example 15



c. The designation of any stopped sound technique.

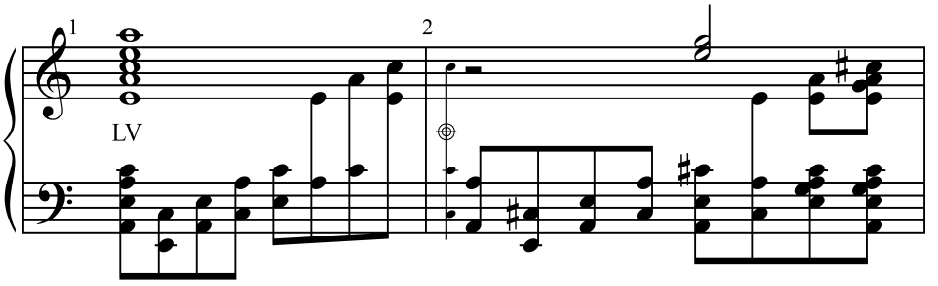
Example 16



Selective Damp

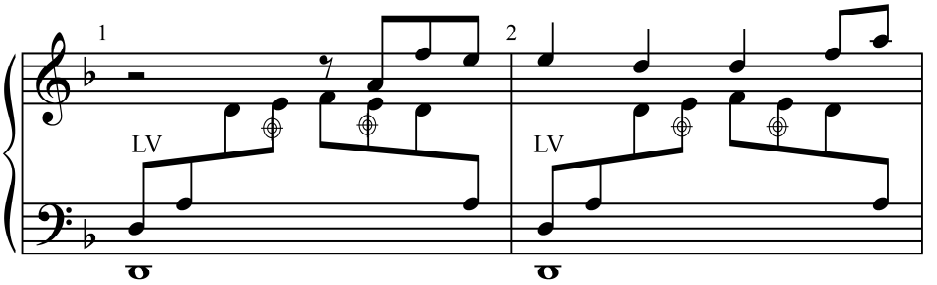
The **Selective Damp** symbol indicates that only the handbells represented by the cue-size notes should be damped.

Example 17



A **Damp Sign** ( ) incorporated on the stem of a single full-size note (or chord) indicates the selective damping of that note or chord.

Example 18

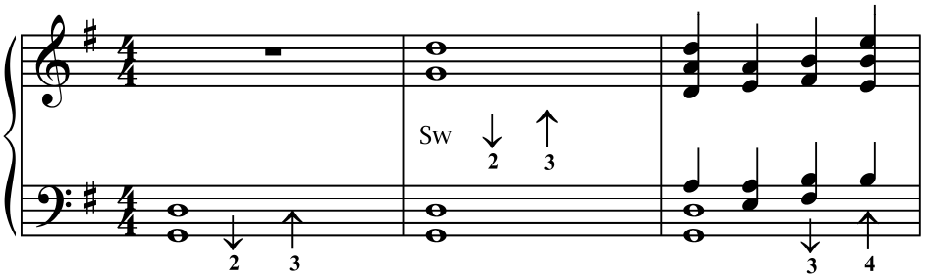


Selective damping may also be footnoted.

Sw ↓↑ indicates a full-arm swing after ringing the handbell. **Sw** and/or arrows are used to indicate swings. Arrows should be synchronized with the beats on which the swings occur. Numbers may be used to specify the beats on which the swings are made, as in the following example: (*Example 19*)

Sw ↓↑

Example 19



Stopped Sounds Indicated by the Staccato Dot

The staccato dot applies to all notes on a common stem and only to those notes. When using the information in this section, composers should specify which stopped sound effect(s) the staccato dots represent.

•

Pl indicates the "plucking" technique. Handbells are placed on a padded table and sounded by moving the clapper manually. (*Example 21*, page 20)

Pluck or PL

TPl indicates that the handbells are placed on a padded table and sounded by tapping the clapper downward with the thumb.

Tap Pluck or **TPl**

TD indicates that the thumb of the hand holding the handbell is placed on the outside of the handbell casting, producing a stopped sound when the clapper strikes the handbell. The addition of one or more fingers on the casting for all but the smallest handbells may be necessary to achieve a completely stopped sound.

Thumb Damp or **TD**

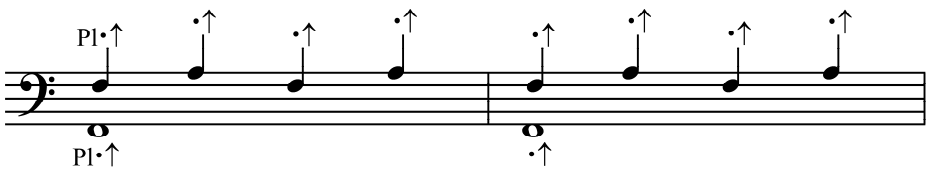
HD is used with large handbells. When more than one or more fingers on the casting are insufficient to produce the desired staccato effect, either hand may be placed on the outside of the handbell casting as the handbell is rung. This technique is also useful when a staccato note quickly follows a rung note or vice-versa.

Hand Damp or **HD**

To execute a **Pl**•↑, pluck the handbell in normal fashion and immediately lift it from the padded table so it continues to sound. A series of **Pluck Lifts** is indicated as follows:

Pluck Lift or **Pl**•↑

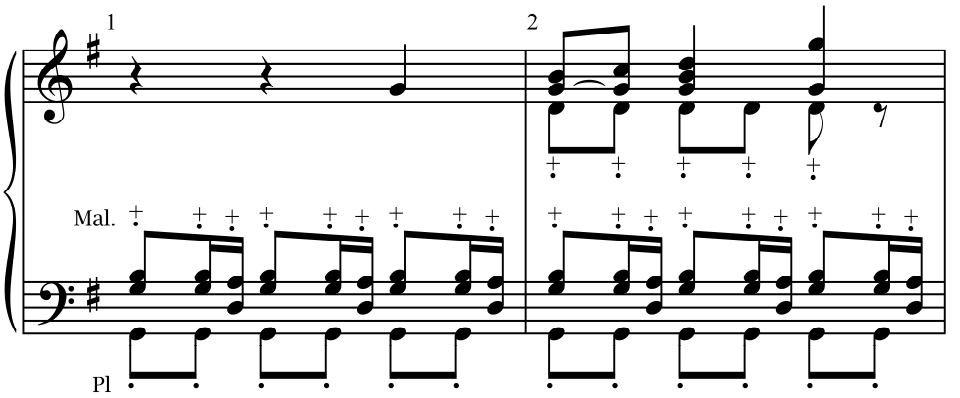
Example 20



Mallet or Mal.

A ⁝ indicates that the handbell, resting on a padded table, is struck on the outside of the casting with a mallet (of the appropriate size, weight and hardness) at the same distance from the lip at which the clapper strikes. A staccato dot and the indication "**Mallet** or **Mal.**" may also be used. (*See Mallet Techniques*, page 21.)

Example 21



Mallet Lift
⁝↑

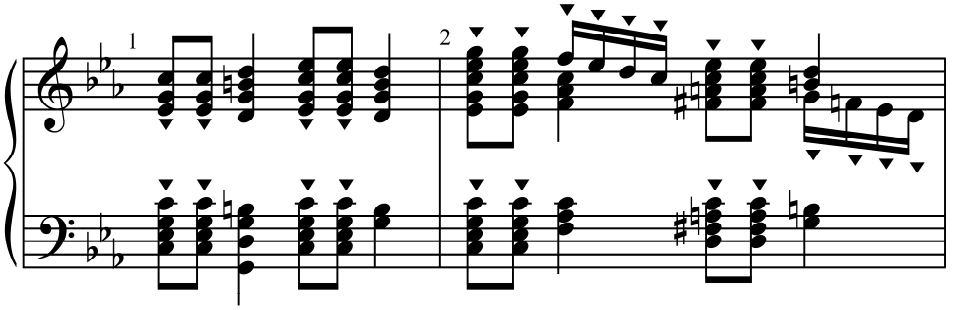
A ⁝↑ indicates a **Mallet Lift**
(*See Mallet Techniques and Example 23*, page 21.)

Martellato Techniques

Martellato
▼

▼ indicates that the handbell is sounded by holding it by the handle and gently striking the full body of the handbell horizontally on a properly padded table.

Example 22



Muted Martellato
⦿

A **Muted Martellato** is executed by placing one or more fingers on the casting of the handbell while gently striking it on a properly padded table.

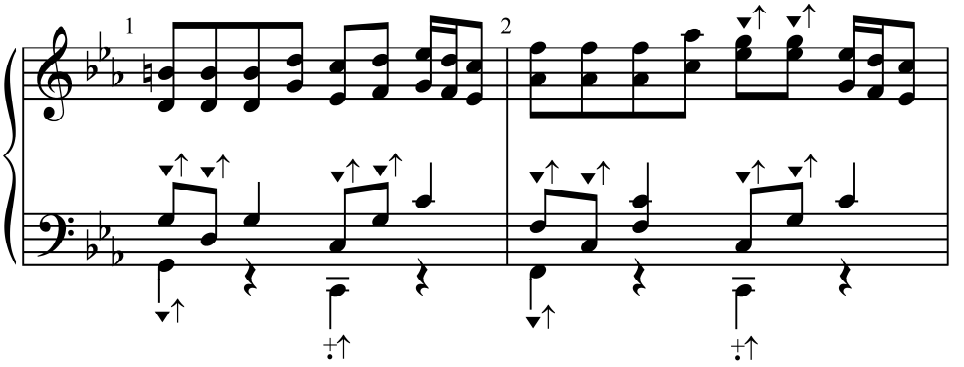
WARNING:

Improper use of martellato techniques may damage a handbell. Another stopped sound technique, such as *Pluck*, *Pluck Lift*, or *Mallet Lift*, is recommended for use on handbells below B3. The use of *Martellato* and *Martellato Lift* can damage a handchime and should not be used.

▼↑ indicates a Martellato followed by immediately lifting the handbell to allow the sound to continue.

Martellato Lift ▼↑

Example 23



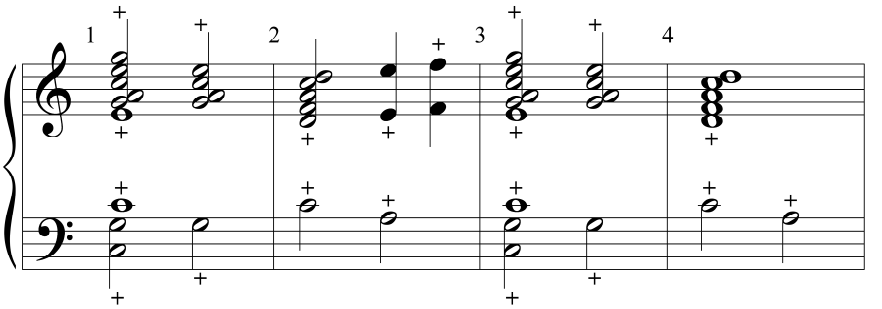
Mallet Techniques

Mallets are available in different weights and sizes. The mallet should produce approximately the same timbre as the clapper head does on the soft setting. It is extremely important that a mallet of the proper weight, size, and hardness be used to strike the handbell on the outside of the casting at the same distance from the lip at which the clapper strikes.

A + indicates that a suspended handbell is held by the handle and struck with a **mallet** as described above. Handbells struck in this manner are not damped.

Mallet +

Example 24



The ⧺ indicates that the handbell is resting on a padded table and is struck with a mallet as described on page 20. (*See Example 21*)

⧺

A **Mallet Lift** ⧺↑ is executed by lifting the handbell immediately after striking it as described above. (*Example 23*)

Mallet Lift ⧺↑

WARNING:

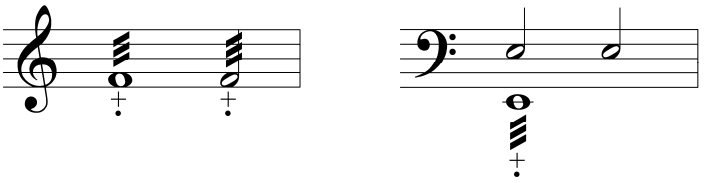
Improper use of mallet techniques may damage the handbell casting.

Mallet Roll

A **Mallet Roll** is similar in technique to a single stroke percussion roll. Holding a mallet in each hand with a matching grip, the ringer rapidly strikes the handbell at the strikepoint with single alternating strokes.

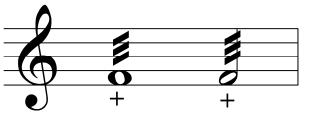
1. **Mallet roll** with handbell resting on padded table

Example 25



2. **Mallet roll** on a suspended handbell

Example 26



Handbell Tree

The **Handbell Tree** or **Bell Tree** is a series of interlocking handbells held by the handle of the top handbell and played with a mallet(s). The notational symbol used for Handbell Trees features a series of interlocking diagonal lines, one for each handbell used. In this example, the pitch of each bell is placed at the lowest point of each diagonal line.

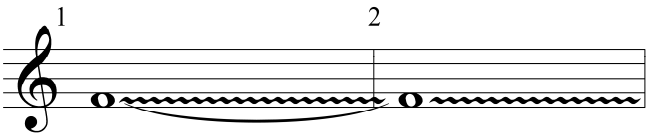
Shake, Sk

The **Sk** or indicates the rapid shaking of a handbell with the clapper striking both sides of the handbell.

Duration is shown by note value. The following examples illustrate the various ways to notate a **Shake**.

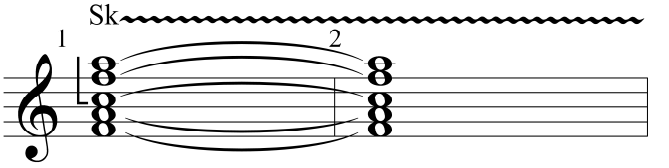
1. A continuous **Shake** for the value of both notes

Example 27



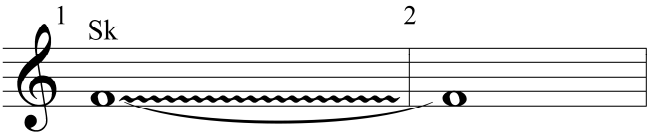
2. The vertical bracket indicates which notes are to be played with a **Shake** for the value of both chords. (C6, F6, A6) The shake does not affect the F5 or A5. These two notes are rung normally and tied to the next chord.

Example 28



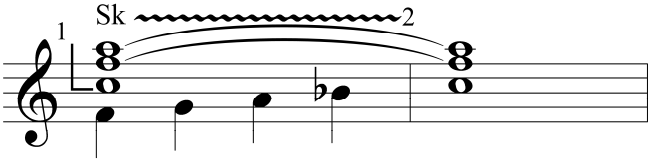
3. **Shake** the full value of the first note. Do not restrike the second note, but allow the handbell to continue to sound for the value of the second note.

Example 29



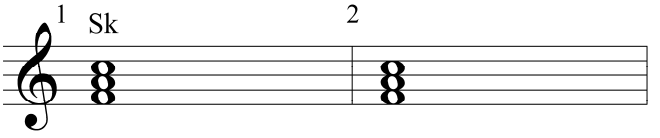
4. The vertical bracket indicates which notes are to be played with a **Shake** for their full value in the first measure. The F6 and A6 *are not* restruck in the second measure, but are allowed to sound for their full value in the second measure. The C6 is not tied and is to be restruck in the second measure.

Example 30



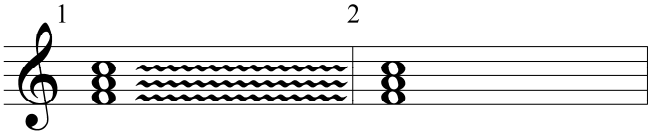
5. A **Shake** that is stopped just short of the full value of the first chord before restriking the second chord.

Example 31



6. An alternate way of indicating a **Shake** that is stopped just short of the full value of the first chord before restriking the second chord.

Example 32



Trill or **tr**

A ***tr*** indicates alternating the ringing of two handbells of adjacent pitches. The simultaneous shaking of two handbells of adjacent pitches is often used to simulate a **Trill**. In handbell notation, both pitches may be notated.

Brush
Damp
or **BD**

A **BD** indicates that a ringing handbell is brushed downward against the chest resulting in a sudden reduction in sound. This technique may be used when a soft Ring follows a loud Ring with the same handbell(s). The effect simulates a *forte-piano*.

Controlled
Diminuendo
or **CD**

The **CD** is executed after ringing a handbell, particularly a large handbell, by sliding a hand or finger(s) up the outside of the handbell toward the rim of the casting. Varying degrees of pressure will control the diminuendo. An explanatory footnote may be used.

Ring Touch
or **RT**

RT indicates that a handbell is damped as quickly as possible after ringing it; this means that the sound will last for a shorter time than the printed note value.

Gyro or ↺

To execute a **Gyro**, ring the handbell. While holding it in a vertical position, revolve the handbell in a horizontal plane.

Spiral Gyro or §

To execute a **Spiral Gyro**, ring the handbell and revolve it in a vertical plane.

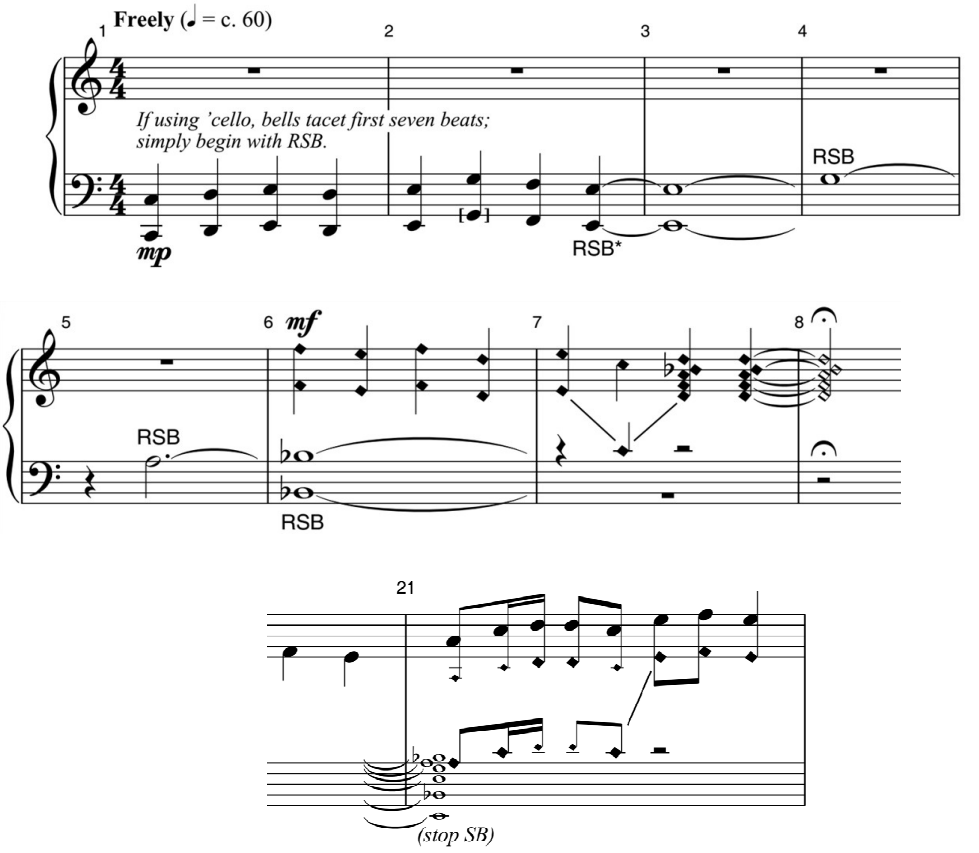
SB

The **Singing Bell (SB)** technique produces a drone by the application of a dowel in a circular motion around the outside rim of a handbell.

RSB

A **RSB** indicates the **SB** technique is begun immediately after ringing the bell. This notation generally includes an open-ended tie. At the cue-sized note with the backward tie (*See Example 33*, measure 21), the dowel is removed from the casting and the note is given its remaining value.

Example 33



Dies Irae, Michael J. Glasgow, Choristers Guild CGB681

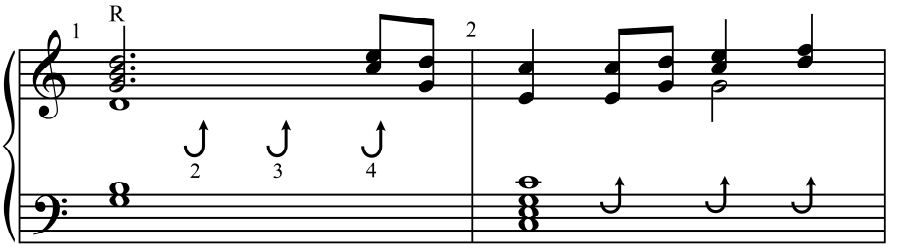
Echo or ⤴

To perform the **Echo** technique, the handbells are rung normally and lightly, but precisely touched to the padded table on the beats or subdivisions of the beats, as indicated by the echo signs.

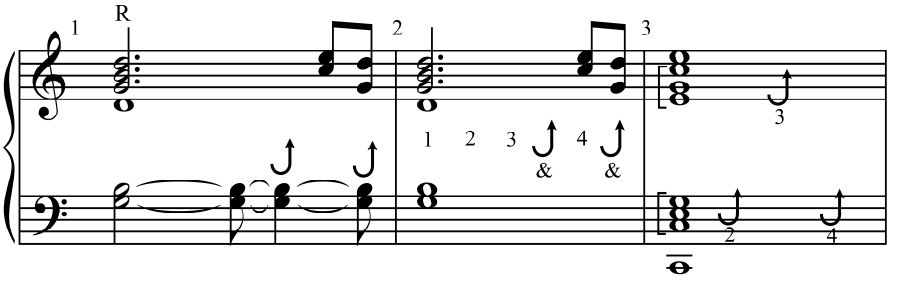
In *Example 34a* page 25, the **Echo** signs affect only the whole notes in both clefs. In Example 34b page 25, the **Echo** signs affect the whole notes as well as the tied notes in the bass clef. In measure 3, only the bracketed whole notes are affected.

To achieve the **Echo** on a handchime, hold the chime close to the tine (tuning slot), ring the handchime, and then touch the index finger or fingers lightly to the base of the slot on the beats indicated.

Example 34a



Example 34b

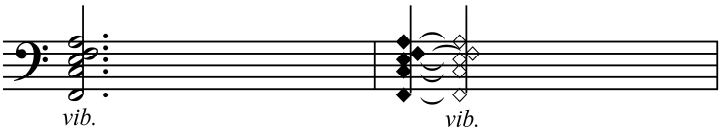


Vibrato or ***vib.***

To achieve the ***vib***. effect with a handbell, ring the handbell and gently move it from side to side using the wrist, not the arm, to produce the wavering sound.

To achieve the ***vib***. effect with a handchime, hold it close to the tine (tuning slot), ring the handchime, and rapidly and repeatedly touch the index finger or fingers lightly to the base of the slot.

Example 35



Chord is rung on beat 1. *Vib*. begins immediately and continues throughout measure.

Chord is rung on beat 1. *Vib*. begins on beat 2 and continues throughout measure.

Rolled Chord

A **Rolled Chord** is produced by ringing the notes of the chord in rapid succession from low to high or high to low rather than sounding the notes simultaneously.

Example 36

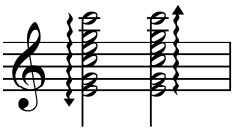


Table Land Damp or **TLD**

To achieve a **TLD**, damp the handbell by pressing it mouth-down into a padded table on a given beat. This technique may not be possible on handbells with clappers projecting beyond the lip of the handbell. An explanatory footnote should be used.

IX. Seldom-Used Symbols

BUC	Bells Used Chart. Now Referred to as HUC (Handbells Used Chart).
	Echo (See definition on page 24.)
	Hand Martellato
LVUHC	Let Vibrate Until Harmony Changes
	Muted Martellato (See definition on page 20.)
Toll	Toll (See definition for "Swing" on page 19.)
T or **TS**	Toll or Tower Swing (See definition for "Swing" on page 19.)

Part B – Handbell and Handchime Music Difficulty Level System

Assigning Difficulty Levels to Handbell and Handchime Music

Rhythm, Articulation, Dexterity

The AGEHR, Inc.

As handbell and handchime repertoire and techniques have increased in number and complexity, the need for a method of assigning difficulty levels has become apparent. Having music available with an assigned difficulty level will:

- help directors select repertoire best suited for their choirs
- help directors select literature that requires specific skills and techniques
- assist teachers in creating a curriculum
- provide a framework for educational assessment
- serve as a motivational tool that encourages choirs to improve their skills
- help publishers select new releases for a balanced catalogue

The following system should be used only as a guide. Tempo, number of ringers, handbell assignments, etc. will have a dramatic effect on the difficulty of any music selected.

Comments for Directors, Publishers, and Editors

1. Key changes and accidentals ARE handbell and handchime changes.
2. Tempo is VERY IMPORTANT in assigning level of difficulty.
3. Handchimes should be considered as a special category. However, when used with handbells within the same piece, a handchime should be considered a "handbell" change.
4. When a piece contains a six-measure (or less) phrase of technical difficulty above the specific level assigned, the piece should not be raised to the next level of difficulty. That phrase should be treated as a "special practice" spot for learning.
5. Shelley, four-in-hand, grace notes, and sharing of handbells are directors' decisions based on the size of the group, number of handbells, and dexterity of the ringers.
6. Difficulty levels are assigned for "traditional size" handbell choirs, i.e., 11-13 ringers. All levels are cumulative.
7. Each difficulty level is described by eight criteria. They should be used to determine the level of the work before selection.
8. On multiple octave publications, different levels may be assigned to specific octave designations. Example: a 3-5 octave publication may have the following designations: 3 octaves L3, and 4-5 octaves L4.
9. A plus or minus may be added to any level designation when appropriate.

LEVEL 1

1. **Meters:** $\frac{4}{4}$, $\mathbf{C}$ (Common time), $\frac{3}{4}$, and $\frac{2}{4}$
2. **Notes and/or Rest Values:** whole, dotted-half, quarter
3. **Rhythmic Elements:** no subdivision of beats, simple use of ties
4. **Techniques:** Ring, Shoulder Damp, Sk, TD, Echo, Martellato, Sw, RT - all with adequate preparation time
5. **Handbell/Handchime Changes:** none (no accidentals)
6. **Articulation:** see *Techniques* as listed above
7. **Dynamic Levels:** all from ***pp*** to ***ff*** in homophonic style (all ringing at the same level) with limited use of *crescendo* or *diminuendo*
8. **Tempo:** slow to moderate

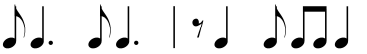
LEVEL 2

All the criteria of Level 1 and

1. **Meters:** $\frac{2}{2}$, $\mathbf{¢}$ (cut time), $\frac{3}{2}$ and simple mixed meters of $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$
2. **Notes and/or Rest Values:** eighths, the dotted-quarter followed by an eighth, simple combinations of eighths and quarters
3. **Rhythmic Elements:** syncopation - simple patterns such as eighth-quarter-eighth, anacrusis - pickup-notes or upbeats and their effect on the final measure
4. **Techniques:** Table Damp, Pl, Martellato Lift, Malleting, and any combination of two different techniques with adequate preparation time
5. **Handbell/Handchime Changes:** limited number of changes per ringer with adequate preparation time
6. **Articulation:** see *Techniques* as listed above
7. **Dynamic Levels:** *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, polyphonic style with simple dynamic contrasts (such as two voices having different dynamic levels)
8. **Tempo:** slow to moderate

LEVEL 3

All the criteria of Level 2 and

1. **Meters**: $\frac{6}{8}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ (in one pulse per measure), $\frac{3}{8}$, $\frac{9}{8}$, $\frac{12}{8}$, $\frac{6}{4}$ and mixed meters of $\frac{6}{8}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$
2. **Notes and/or Rest Values:** sixteenth, dotted-eighth and sixteenth-note patterns, triplet
3. **Rhythmic Elements:** syncopation such as 
4. **Techniques:** ring and damp sixteenth-note patterns
5. **Handbell/Handchime Changes:** moderate number of changes per ringer with adequate preparation
6. **Articulation:** combinations of techniques listed in Levels 1, 2, and 3, but not more than two per measure
7. **Dynamic Levels:** accents, more variety in dynamic levels
8. **Tempo:** slow to fast, some changes of tempo within the work

LEVEL 4

All the criteria of Level 3 and

1. **Meters:** $\frac{5}{4}$ and irregular meters
2. **Notes and/or Rest Values:** all of previous at faster tempo, triplet over two beats
3. **Rhythmic Elements:** syncopation - more complex, using sixteenth notes and ties
4. **Techniques:** Brush Damp
5. **Handbell/Handchime Changes:** extensive number of changes per ringer
6. **Articulation**: combinations of techniques in eighth-note patterns at moderate tempi
7. **Dynamic Levels:** *subito piano* or *subito forte* without rest, more complex polyphony with more than two independent voices, more rapid shifts of dynamic levels
8. **Tempo:** more changes of tempo within the work

LEVEL 5

All the criteria of Level 4 and

1. **Meters:** unlimited
2. **Notes and/or Rest Values:** dotted rhythms in compound meters at fast tempi, duples against triples
3. **Rhythmic Elements:** syncopation - more complex, mixed patterns

4. **Techniques:** ring-hook-damp sequences, handbell passes at moderate tempi
5. **Handbell/Handchime Changes:** unlimited
6. **Articulation:** any combination at faster tempi
7. **Dynamic Levels:** rapid shifts between levels with no preparation, more frequent use of *crescendo* and *decrescendo*
8. **Tempo:** more changes of tempo within the work, including abrupt shifts

LEVEL 6

All the criteria of Level 5 and

1. **Meters:** unlimited
2. **Notes and/or Rest Values:** more than four eighth or sixteenth notes to a pulse (such as five, six, or seven, etc.) thirty-second notes
3. **Rhythmic Elements:** complex rhythms at any tempo
4. **Techniques:** all, any tempo
5. **Handbell/Handchime Changes:** unlimited
6. **Articulation:** unlimited combinations at any tempo
7. **Dynamic Levels:** no limits on shifts (sudden or gradual) or accents
8. **Tempo:** only those imposed by the nature of the instrument, complex changes within a work

Part C – Solo and Ensemble Notation

I. General Notational Concerns Applicable to Both Solo and Small Ensemble Music

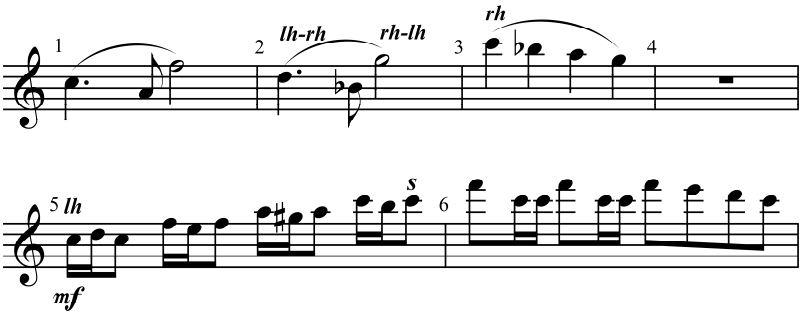
1. Notational symbols for handbell techniques as listed in the AGEHR *Handbell and Handchime Notation* booklet which are considered standards for large group handbell music shall also apply to solo and ensemble ringing.
2. Notational symbols should be kept simple and used sparingly to avoid overcrowding the page.
3. Performance suggestions may be indicated with footnotes or symbols in the score.
4. The AGEHR *Handbell and Handchime Music Difficulty Level System* does not apply to solo and ensemble music.

II. Symbols Common to Solo and Ensemble Music

The following designations should be printed in lower case, italic, bold print. (*See Example 37* below.)

r or ***rh***	***r*** or ***rh***	right hand
l or ***lh***	***l*** or ***lh***	left hand
r-l or ***rh-lh***	***r-l*** or ***rh-lh***	a handbell passed from the right hand to the left hand
l-r or ***lh-rh***	***l-r*** or ***lh-rh***	a handbell passed from the left hand to the right hand
s	***s***	shoulder damp
t	***t***	table damp

Example 37



III. Placement of Handbells on the Table

Definitions:

Home	The normal position of the handbell resting on the table in keyboard order
Preset	To place any handbell(s) out of keyboard order before beginning a piece
Displace	To move handbell(s) out of home or preset position during piece
Reset	To move handbell(s) back to home or preset position

Displacement:

When a handbell is to be displaced, its position may be indicated by a footnote, in the performance notes, or in the body of the score.

Notational Devices:

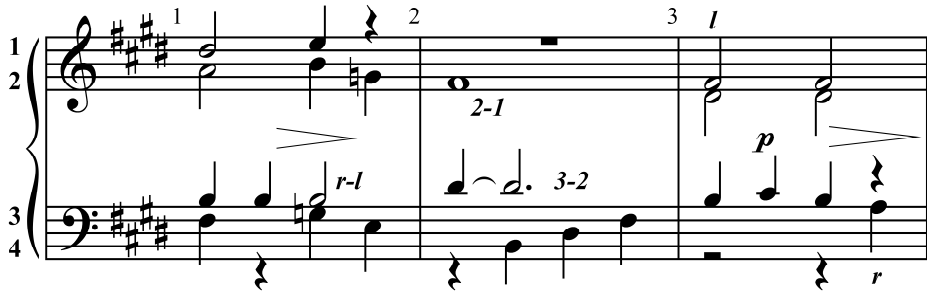
The following notations are suggested for use in the musical score to indicate preset or displacement of handbells:

~~B♭5~~	Remove B♭5 from the table	**~~B♭5~~**
C♯6 **~~B♭5~~**	Remove B♭5 from the table and put C♯6 in its place	**C♯6** **~~B♭5~~**
E6 **E5 F5**	Place E6 in the space above and between E5 and F5	**E6** **E5 F5**
E6 **E5**	Place E6 directly above E5	**E6** **E5**
C6 ↔ D6	Exchange positions of C6 and D6	**C6 ↔ D6**
C♯6 **↕** **C5**	Exchange positions of C♯5 and C5	**C♯6** **↕** **C5**

IV. Notation Specific to Small Ensembles (Duet, Trio, Quartet, etc.)

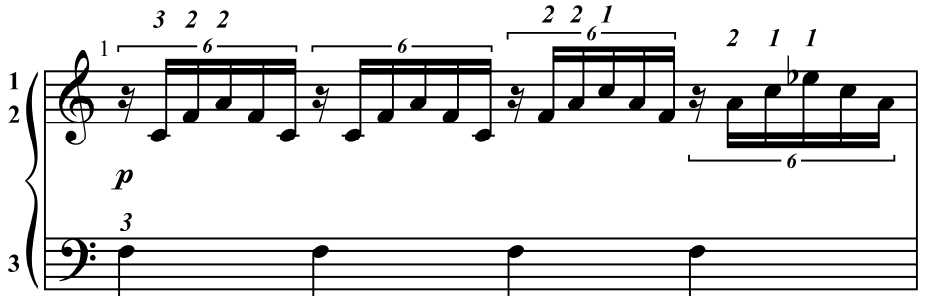
1. A grand staff or multiple staves should be used in ensemble music to avoid using excessive ledger lines.
2. Middle C and the notes around it may be moved to either staff to facilitate ease of reading parts and need not conform to the practice of keeping C5 on the bass staff.
3. Parts should be clearly labeled using Arabic numbers in ascending order from high (treble) to low (bass). (*Example 38*)

Example 38



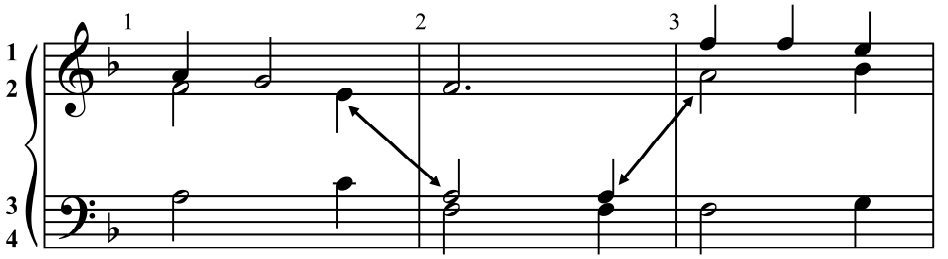
4. Whenever possible, no more than two parts should be notated per staff.
5. When ringers share the same staff, whenever possible stem direction should be used to indicate the part assigned to each ringer.
6. Position numbers may be used to designate pitches that are to be rung by a ringer other than the one who has been assigned those pitches. (*Example 39*)

Example 39



7. A handbell transfer from one ringer to another should be indicated by position numbers separated by a hyphen, the number on the left indicating the passer and the number on the right indicating the receiver of the handbell. ("**2-1**" or "**3-2**" - italic, bold print). (*See Example 38*)
8. A line with arrowheads on each end may be used to indicate a ringer's part moving from one staff to another. (*See Example 40,* page 33)

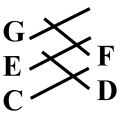
Example 40



V. Multiple Handbell Configurations

Definitions:

Primary Handbell	The handbell which is held between the thumb and the index finger in four-in-hand or Shelley ringing
Secondary Handbell	An additional handbell held in the same hand with a primary handbell
Interlocked Handbells	Ringing two handbells in one hand in such a way that the handle of one lies inside the handle of another
Shelley	Ringing two handbells in one hand in such a way that the clappers move in the same direction so the bells can be played simultaneously
Alternate Shelley	Ringing only one handbell at a time while holding two handbells in the Shelley position
Four-in-Hand (4iH)	Ringing two handbells in one hand in such a way that the clappers move in perpendicular planes so the bells can be played independently
Traveling Four-in-Hand	The technique of changing four-in-hand configurations continuously by keeping one primary handbell as a constant* in the hand while picking up and putting down various secondary handbells ***Constant** (*n.*) Any handbell that is kept in the hand to be rung again rather than returned to the table
Six-in-Hand (6iH)	Ringing three handbells in one hand
Handbell Tree (Bell Tree)	An interlocked series of handbells held by the handle of the top handbell and rung with mallet(s)



Symbols: (any combination of pitches may be used)

Four-in-Hand for the left hand

lh: **G6, B6**

OR

G6 / B6

lh: **G6, B6** Handbells are listed in the order they are to be picked up.
G6 is in the primary position; B6 is in the secondary position.
The handbells ring independently or simultaneously.

OR

G6 / B6
G6 is in the primary position.
B6 is in the secondary position.
The handbells ring independently or simultaneously.

Four-in Hand for the right hand:

rh: **A6, C7**

OR

C7 \ A6

rh: **A6, C7** Handbells are listed in the order they are to be picked up.
A6 is in the primary position; C7 is in the secondary position.
The handbells ring independently or simultaneously.

OR

C7 \ A6
A6 is in the primary position.
C7 is in the secondary position.
The handbells ring independently or simultaneously.

Shelley position for the left hand:

lh: **E6, E7**

OR

E6 // E7

lh: **E6, E7** Handbells are listed in the order they are to be picked up.
E6 is in the primary position; E7 is in the secondary position.
The handbells ring simultaneously or independently as alternate Shelley.

OR

E6 // E7
E6 is in the primary position.
E7 is in the secondary position.
The handbells ring simultaneously or independently as alternate Shelley.

Shelley position for the right hand:

rh: **G6, G7**

OR

G7 \\ G6

rh: **G6, G7** Handbells are listed in the order they are to be picked up.
G6 is in the primary position; G7 is in the secondary position.
The handbells ring simultaneously or independently as alternate Shelley.

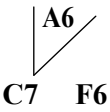
OR

G7 \\ G6
G6 is in the primary position.
G7 is in the secondary position.
The handbells ring simultaneously or independently as alternate Shelley.

Six-in-Hand for the left hand:

lh: **F6, A6, C7**

OR

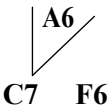


Handbells are listed in the order they are to be picked up.
F6 is in the primary position; A6 is in the secondary position.
C7 is in the tertiary position.

With F6 in the primary position

lh: **F6, A6, C7**

OR



Six-in-Hand for the right hand:

rh: **G6, B6, D7**

OR

Handbells are listed in the order they are to be picked up.
G6 is in the primary position; B6 is in the secondary position.
D7 is in the tertiary position.

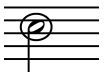
With G6 in the primary position

rh: **G6, B6, D7**

OR

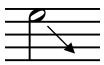
Traveling Four-in-Hand Symbols

Example 41



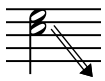
A circle around a note indicates that the handbell is to remain in the hand as a primary constant until further notice.

Example 42



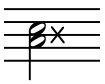
A downward arrow beside a note indicates that a handbell which has been held as a constant should be returned to the table at the end of the note value.

Example 43



A double arrow beside a note indicates that both handbells held in the same hand should be tabled together as a pair, in four-in-hand (or Shelley) configuration.

Example 44



An "X" beside a note or pair of notes indicates that both handbells that have been held as a pair should be returned to the table *separately*, each to its own position.

Handbell Tree (Bell Tree):

Graphic showing a Handbell Tree (or Bell Tree) using 5 handbells