

Exploring Handbells Book 2

Techniques & Repertoire for Handbells and Handchimes

by Betty B. Radford, with Technical Advice by Deborah Rice

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Exploring Handbells Book 2

Exploring Handbells Book 2 is a follow-up to *Exploring Handbells Book 1*. The music in this publication will use the technical requirements from *Book 1*. *Book 1* provides music for ringing, damping, vibrato, let vibrate (LV), shake (Sk), staccato, martellato, and tower swing. *Exploring Handbells Book 2* proceeds to the next level of techniques that ringers will encounter in handbell music.

The music in this collection is written for two and three octave ringing ensembles ranging from level 1 - 2. This collection features all original compositions other than the Huron Carol, which is an arrangement. These pieces were created as companion pieces, e.g. **Siamese Cats** and **Calico Cats**, based on the same music but written in different keys to enable the best result for an individual two octave and three octave ensemble. Since there are no tempo markings, the director may choose a tempo that best works for his/her ensemble. The music in this collection may be played on either handbells or handchimes, though not all techniques are applicable for handchimes. Many of the pieces will feature several techniques from *Exploring Handbells Book 1* as well as those featured in this collection.

Techniques included in Exploring Handbells Book 2

- Repeated notes *
- Echo
- Hand Damp (HD)
- Home Placement *
- Adding a third handbell/handchime *
- Martellato lift (Mart lift)
- Singing Bell (SB & RSB)
- Weaving three handbells/handchimes *
- Silent ring *
- Ring Touch (RT)
- Table Land Damp (TLD)
- Table Damp *
- Mallet roll on the table
- Suspended Mallet
- Gyro

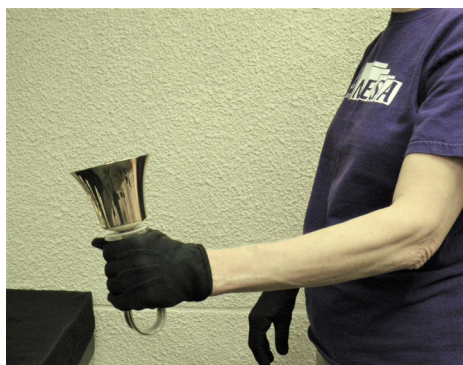
Not all handbell techniques are marked in a handbell score. The techniques above with an * are not indicated in the score, but are considered to be good practice.

The next few pages will provide general information about the handbell/handchime music.

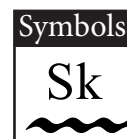



Ring Repeated Notes in a Circle

When a ringer has repeated notes where regular ringing is required, he/she may ring the notes as part of a continuous circle. This is particularly useful when notes are repeated quickly one after another. Ring each repeated note as if each one is taking a step up a ladder. Visually, this is similar to the progression of hand signs of an ascending scale in solfege. While “moving up the ladder” continue giving more/less emphasis to a particular note depending upon where the phrase is moving with strong and weak beats within the musical line. This is quite easy to do if you ring the handbell/handchime in different parts of the circle. This occurs in **Paint a Rainbow** and **Painting Rainbows** and several other pieces.



Shake



A shake is achieved by moving the handbell quickly back and forth so that the clapper strikes both sides of the handbell for the duration of the note value. Continue the circular motion during the shake. The squiggly line  to the right of a note indicates a shake for that note only. SK above a chord means that all the notes in the chord in that clef will shake. A bracket to the left of a chord indicates which notes in a chord shake. Shakes on lower handbells (C4 - A4) are done much slower than on higher handbells. Ringers may use two hands to hold the lower handbells. Shakes are seldom used on handchimes. Vibrato may be used instead.

Vibrato on Handchimes

Vibrato is used on longer notes to give a shimmering effect. To create vibrato on a handchime, ring the chime normally and then gently touch the tuned tine with your index finger with a fairly swift quivering movement. Be careful not to damp the handchime with the finger movement. Damp the note by pressing the handchime against your upper body or on the table foam. Vibrato is very effective on handchimes.

Silent Ring

Silent ring (sometimes called a “fake” ring) occurs when an ensemble wishes to create the visual effect of every ringer moving his/her handbell/handchime in unison. If a particular ringer does not have a note to ring in a chord, he/she may perform a ringing motion with the other ringers without actually ringing the handbell/handchime. This is often effective for the final chord of a piece.

Performance Notes

Paint a Rainbow (C+) - 2 octave;

Painting Rainbows (F+) - 3 octave

In **Paint a Rainbow** and **Painting Rainbows**, clean damping is particularly important in order to prevent the sound from merging with the following chord. If note value damping is not used when indicated the music becomes blurred. This is different from LV (let vibrate, which is covered in more detail in *Exploring Handbells Book 1*). For note value damping each individual ringer must be vigilant about stopping the sound according to its note value. For shorter note values, eg. quarter and 8th notes, ring close to the shoulder so that damping can be easily executed to completely stop the sound.

Paint a Rainbow and **Painting Rainbows** introduces voice leading lines. This occurs in several pieces in this book. A voice leading line will show where the melody or a musical element moves between the treble and bass clef. This usually happens between B₄/C₅ and D₅/E₅.

Paint a Rainbow and **Painting Rainbows** may be performed successfully on both handbells and handchimes. Practise this music initially at a slow tempo so that note value damping can be achieved before increasing the tempo. Remember to use shakes when ringing handbells and substitute vibrato for handchimes.

Paint a Rainbow (C+) - 2 octave;
Painting Rainbows (F+) - 3 octave

Paint a Rainbow

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2 Octaves Handbells Used: 15

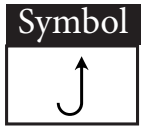
1 2 3 4 5

6 7 8 9 10


11 12 13 14 15



Echo



Echoes performed on Handbells

The echo technique is used primarily on whole notes, dotted half notes and half notes. Ring the handbell using a regular ringing technique. Then immediately move the handbell towards the foam on the table. For each echo symbol touch the lip of the handbell to the foam using a gentle down-up motion. This will lessen the sound coming from the handbell but should not damp the sound completely. The echoes produce a “wah-wah-wah” sound effect. Perform one echo per echo symbol . Echoes are almost always right on the beat. To establish the pattern, there may be numbers below each echo symbol to indicate on which beats the echo should occur.

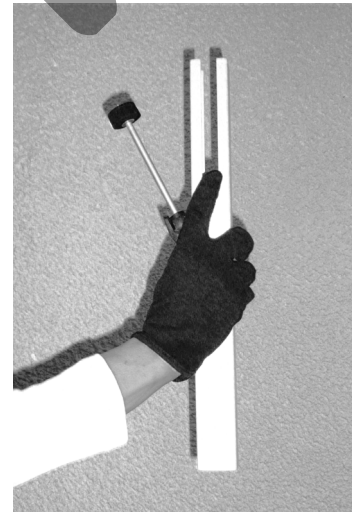
Echoes performed on Handchimes

As with handbells, the echo technique is used primarily on whole notes, dotted half notes and half notes. Ring the handchime in a regular ringing technique. Then touch the tine with your finger as you would for the vibrato technique. Touch the tine on the beat indicated by the echo symbol in the music. With larger handchimes you may use your opposite hand to touch the tine. This will also produce the “wah-wah-wah” sound effect. Careful practice may be needed to ensure the sound from the handchime doesn't completely stop when the tine is touched. The echo should lessen the sound coming from the handchime but not damp the sound completely. Echoes are almost always right on the beat with one echo per symbol. There may be numbers below each echo symbol to show on which beats the echo should occur.

See music example 2 on page 5.



Echo for Handbells



Echo for Handchimes

Practice echoes in the following music using handbells or handchimes.

Dreams (G+) - 2 octave music

Dreaming (C+) - 3 octave music

Calico Cats

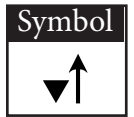
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3 Octaves Handbells Used: 27

*Ringers with small hands may substitute HD (hand damp) for RT (Ring Touch) in bass clef only.

Martellato Lift (Mart lift)

For Handbells Only



Review Martellato technique. It is another stopped sound for handbells only. Hold the handbell by the handle horizontal to the table about 5 - 10 cm (2 - 4 inches) above the foam. It is recommended to place your thumb on the casting as you would for a thumb damp. Press the casting of the handbell into the foam with a fairly quick movement. This will produce a stopped sound. Music for Martellato technique may be found in *Exploring Handbells Book 1*.

Body position is very important for martellato technique. Start with a good stance. Shoulders should be over the table with elbows back so that the forearm movement is almost vertical. Never slam a handbell into the foam from a position high above the foam as extreme force may damage the handbell and could cause injury to the ringer. Although handbells below C4 are not included in this book, it is highly recommended to not mart the lower bass handbells below C4.

A martellato lift (mart lift) will require the same stance and initial strike (think press not hit) as a mart. A mart lift begins with a martellato followed immediately by lifting the handbell from the foam so that the sound continues for the duration of the note value. This gives a percussive sound to the beginning of the note. Make sure you use the martellato stance.

For handchimes use a regular ring or finger damp. To finger damp a handchime, hold the handchime in its ready to ring position. Place your index finger on the tuned tine of the handchime and ring the handchime as you would normally. Handchimes should always use finger damp for staccato notation.

See music example 6 on page 6.



Martellato Lift



Martellato

Acknowledgements

Debbie Rice

Debbie Rice has been a major contributor to this publication as she was to *Exploring Handbells Book 1*. Debbie is extremely well versed in the pedagogy of handbell learning. Her expertise has helped with choosing which techniques to feature in *Exploring Handbells Book 2*. Debbie Rice is known throughout the international Handbell community for her technical knowledge, music leadership and outstanding skill on the podium. She is currently teaching music, including handbells, music theory and music education at Concordia University of Edmonton where she directs Jubiloso! Bells of Concordia and JuBELLation. Debbie Rice is very supportive of her fellow musicians and students. She readily provides individuals crucial opportunities to move forward in their musical endeavours. I have been immensely fortunate to have Debbie's support and enthusiasm for my compositional work.

Tammy-Jo Mortensen

Tammy-Jo Mortensen has been and continues to be an active participant in the handbell community both locally and globally. She directed the Robertson-Wesley Ringers for sixteen years and is a highly respected musician, music director, adjudicator and clinician. Tammy-Jo has reviewed and edited the material in *Exploring Handbells Book 2*. She has been extremely supportive and has directed several of my handbell compositions. I am truly grateful for the exceptional effort Tammy-Jo has made to bring my music to life.

Wendy Hoskin

Wendy continues to be a key supporter of handbell organizations and projects. She actively participates on committees and organizes the local youth handbell festival. Wendy currently directs handbell ensembles as well as ringing in large and small ensembles. She assisted with pictures for *Exploring Handbells Book 2*. She has reviewed several of the compositions with her ringers and has provided very positive feedback on the music.

Anne Hergott

Anne is a major thrust in promoting handbell music and excellent handbell practises. She continues her decade-long volunteering with the Alberta Guild of English Handbell Ringers. Her organizational skills were evident in the work she did with the International Handbell Symposium in Vancouver in 2016. Anne continues to be an encouraging handbell director with her many handbell ensembles. She is a positive, reassuring supporter of my handbell music. Anne has reviewed the music in *Exploring Handbells Book 2* with her ringers and has provided valuable feedback.

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Betty B. Radford

