

Big Sky Festival

Ellie's Director's Notes

As you work on this repertoire, I offer a few suggestions that will help you feel successful early.

Learn how to watch the director.

1. When you are practicing, purposefully look at a spot in your space that could represent where the director will stand—say, your refrigerator. Look up periodically (aka, often!).
2. If you teach yourself to look away from your score, it will be easier with a new director.

Shakes

1. Assume that every shake is played with a crescendo. Start softer and then get louder.
2. Assume every shake is shorter than the note value. That means if the shake is a half note that you will shake the bell for 1½ to 2 beats then stop shaking and lift the bell. When you perform a shake in this manner, you create a space before the next note, and it will sound distinct.

Stopped Sounds

1. Marts, mart lifts, mallets, TD's, and other stopped sounds are type of short sounds.
2. Be aware of beating the table with your marts!
3. Always circle when playing TD, just as you would if the line were rung.

Specific Pieces

Milele

1. I will direct this in two. Half notes are the unit of beats.
2. Honor the accents. They are important.
3. Honor the dynamics. M.1 says *mp*—medium soft. The dynamics do not increase until pg. 4!
4. Look under the chimes used chart to see which—if any—bells you omit.
5. Be ready with chimes. They can be hard to find in the sea of note stems!
6. Be ready with switch from chimes to bells and vv as PN 6, F/G5 in m.44.
7. NO ritard at the end. Honest!
8. Last note=very short and dead out!!

Peace in Our Time

1. Parts 1 and 3 are pretty straight-forward.
 - a. Practice gentle hands. If you avoid clutching the bells, you will be able to make a lovely, legato sound.

Part 1, Compassion

2. Think of your notes belonging to a line. If this were scored for piano, this would look differently,
3. M.10, each note follows the previous as if played by a single instrument. Same for much of the piece.

4. The melody for bells/chimes is the exception (starts m. 18, stems up on beat 2). This is “on top of
“ the moving part” underneath.
5. Watch for and honor doublings in the treble.
6. Cathy is a master at making more than one part important as in m. 34.
7. when chimes come in the line needs to play as one instrument in the hands of one person. Notes should touch.
8. Watch the last line. There will be a ritard to the end. No, I cannot tell you how much until we do it in the concert! The room will dictate to me, and I’ll guide us all.
9. M. 64 only the C7 is heard. All else is damped gently but on the downbeat of 1 in 65.

Part 2, Satyagraha

1. This is the section with beaucoup challenges! Practice slowly. Know where your hand need to go to move to and from accidentals.
2. Clean marts
 - a. I prefer no hinge marts. Instead, slip your thumb and pointer finer up onto the hand guard and “bury” your knuckles into the foam.
 - b. Marts are a sound type. Avoid “hitting” the table with the casting.
3. Aim for quarter at 152 knowing we will go at the speed we can play this musically and successfully. It’s good to have a goal but better to perform well.
4. Mallet People (don’t ya want that t-shirt?!) keep the drive! No rushing or slowing
Memorize the places where you have multiple accidentals and also the page turns.
5. Practice going from mallets/marts to ringing and back to mallets/marts. The piece often loses energy here so, practice the switch so you can confidently do this.
6. Crescendo the shakes
7. Watch for the *molto rall.* at m. 78. There will be a slight lift/pause as we move to the new mood at m. 79.
8. Up to m. 79 we are talking about despair, tyrants, murderers who “for a time seem invincible.” But, at m. 79 we get to experience hope—“in the end they always fall—think of it, always.”
- 9.

If you are considering sitting this one out, I offer you that it is worth your time to try. I will be over the moon if you can learn to play whatever you would have on beat one, on time and in the character of the piece. That will teach your tons about holding your own, knowing where you should be even if it feels as if you are lost and will leave you with a huge sense of accomplishment. Yes, it’s hard and, also, it is possible for each of you.

Part 3, Tribute

1. Our Civil War was long, bloody and tore apart families.
2. This movement is restrained, measured and purposeful. Practice keeping a steady beat at quarter=52. It’s surprisingly hard!
3. There’s a rising intensity throughout. You can “hear” the not quite triumphant march home and to families—the war was over but hard.
4. There will be a complete cutoff at m. 64. Please be as stealth and quiet moving from bells to chimes here.

5. The last section at m. 65 returns to the opening tempo of 52
6. Last note will be long with a slow return to the table.

Spirit in Our Midst

1. The all caps melodies under Sandy's name are the hymn tunes she used. IVERSON is often a hymn called "Spirit of the Living God" and TRENTHAM is "Breathe on me Breath of God." Look them up in your hymnal. Often there is more than one hymn set to that tune.
2. What's a cesura? There's one at the end of m.12!
3. Who can double 3's in m. 42-43? G/A4 has a hand free as does C/D4, B4/C5. That will unload the C3 bell person's arm and make this clean. What's possible for your choir?
4. Generally, watch dynamics, LV's (when does an LV end?), doubling in the treble and be prepared for tempo changes.

Bound for the Promised Land

1. I will take liberties with the tempo at m. 1
2. Suspended mallets for stem up treble at start (no dot), played off the table.
3. Singing bells for D5 down.
4. PN 5, D/E5, if you flip your E5 up from the start, you can have it in your hand in m.9 (see that the singing bells stops on beat one of m. 9?) During the fermata, you should have enough time to put down your mallet so that you are ready to ring on beat 4 of m. 10.
5. Note that m. 11 is still soft.
6. Echos m. 14
7. TD for chimes as marked (I believe G6 is TD at m. 19
8. Work on vibrato. With smaller chimes, try your finger tip tapping at the base of the slot.
9. GIRO is a slow rotation of the wrist rather than a lassoooo motion
10. Remember the marts, mart lifts and mallets offer texture. The upper bells have the melody.
11. Tower swings (i.e., m. 61) with a bent elbow. This will make the doppler effect more audible in front of the tables than a full-arm swing.

America

1. This is a really old piece for handbell musicians (nearly 50 years old! Enjoy how carefully Betty scored the shakes so we clearly know who the shakers should be. Also watch the LV's and "bullseyes."
2. Add cesura at m. 9.
3. Can we add chimes to the melody m. 16-19 and 29-32?

Change Ring Prelude on *Divinum Mysterium*

1. Change ringing derives from the patterns for ringing tower bells in churches with a large collection in their bell tower. They are based on mathematical sorting of the bells, by number, into unique combinations.
2. In this case, the bells are C (1), D (2), F (3), G (4)
3. M. 1 is the first round: 1, 2, 3, 4.
4. m. 2 is the next: 2, 1, 4, 3.

5. m. 3 is the next, 2, 5, 1, 4.
6. and so on.
7. In this case it takes 8 measures to complete the possibilities.
8. Can you count how many times the full change is used in this piece?
9. Eighth notes are at a constant pace in this piece. If you count the eighth notes throughout, you'll fare well. The first 24 measures are a cakewalk!
10. Then, keep the eighth note constant. M.25 is 1-2-3-4-5-6-7, m.25-28 are 1 & 2 & 3 & (six eighth notes), m. 29 is 1-2-3-4-5-6-7 followed by 1 & 2 & 3& (twice) and then a measure of 5 eighth notes. Go slowly keeping eighth notes constant in your head and your hands moving confidently to the correct bell. You'll be fine before you know it.
11. Notice the echo of the melody line. M.44 in the treble is echoed by the bass in the next measure. Similarly, m. 46-47 in 3/4
12. m. 49 is the one and only 6/8 measure.
13. Spend some time on pg. 7:
14. m. 66 is the only 4/4 bar in the piece.
15. m. 70 is the only 7/8 measure organized as a group of 2-3-2
16. Then you're home free! Last page is big and grand and full of big gestures!

In the Bleak Midwinter

1. Karen Lakey Buckwalter is a fine organist. This piece is a wonderful opportunity to allow handbells to be as big and grand as a pipe organ!
2. Notice that most of the extra flats/sharps in the BUC are key changes. Whew!
3. Look for the melody and when it's in your hands, ring it with confidence. Starts in the upper bass at m. 10.
4. Dynamics matter!
5. Bass, work to be precisely on time. It's an art to move a big bell through space and be accurate. You matter.
6. Note the "noodling" as the piece transitions each time to the newer key. Let measures lead us somewhere.
7. Note to trebles: you need a mallet in the last measure!

Despacito

1. This piece looks scary. It's not. The sections repeat.
2. Take a careful look at all of Damien's notes as in the malleting instruction in m. 4!
3. The unfilled diamond shaped notes are in fact, for chimes. Chime parts are throughout and sometimes tough to see. Go hunting!
4. Look for the spoken parts. Yes, we will!
5. Tenutos in m.23 will be slightly longer.
6. D.S is at the 2/4 measure at 56. Goes back to letter D.
7. Skip to CODA at m.38.
8. It will be worth your time to listen to this piece by various vocalists. It'll give you a sense of the whole.
9. Who are the Montana cajonists?