

Pacific NW Handbell Directors/Musicians Forum

October 10, 2020

Presented by Pacific Ringers
Ellie Hodder, Artistic Director, Sharon Ross, cohost

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Agenda

- ▶ 9:00 Introductions and review of goals for day
- ▶ 9:10 Best Practices for ringing bells during pandemic with Q&A
- ▶ 10:00 Bell Techniques and musical examples
 - ▶ Basic belltree skills using Barbara Brocker's Keyboard system
 - ▶ Basic 4-in-Hand for ensemble musicians
 - ▶ Shelley ringing
 - ▶ Ring/Push
- ▶ 11:15 Questions and review

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A Quick Guide to Handbells and Handchimes during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Special thanks to Linnette Rodriguez-Figueroa, PhD for her collaboration with the Handbell Industry Council in offering guidelines for good health and safety while ringing.

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Caring for your Ringers

Before Rehearsal

- Try to limit the number of ringers present at rehearsal. Consider sectionals or rehearsing music for smaller ensembles.
- Encourage ringers to stay at home if they are feeling unwell.
- If possible, ringers should be tested for COVID-19 before resuming rehearsals.
- Monitor each ringer's temperature before rehearsal.
- Each ringer should wash their hands for 20 seconds. If soap is not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

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Caring for your Ringers

During Rehearsal

- Rehearse in a large space or outdoors, if possible.
- Everyone should wear a mask.
- Maintain a six foot distance from each other. Assign one ringer per table.
- Ringers should wear gloves at all times.
- Each ringer should stay on the same position for the entire rehearsal.
- Select repertoire that does not require shared or borrowed handbells or handchimes.
- Sneeze and cough into elbows.
- Ringers should behave as though they all might be infected with the virus.
- Try to limit special techniques which require touching the casting or clapperhead.

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Caring for your Ringers

After Rehearsal

- Each ringer should wash their hands for 20 seconds. If soap is not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Disinfect all equipment and surfaces.
- Gloves should be removed and put into a sealed plastic bag to carry home to launder.
- Once home, disinfect or discard masks.
- If someone at the rehearsal is later identified as a suspected COVID-19 case, the Director/Conductor should inform all ringers.

They should all quarantine themselves for 14 days..

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Equipment

Tables and Pads

- Each ringer should be assigned to one table.
- Even if your foam is covered With fabric, it should be covered during rehearsal with additional fabric which can be laundered after each rehearsal (i.e., an old bed sheet) or a plastic table cover which will be disposed of after rehearsal. Fabric should be sealed in a plastic bag to carry home to launder.

Binders, Risers and Music Scores

- Each ringer should be assigned to one binder and riser. The binder and riser should be disinfected with a disposable disinfectant wipe before and after rehearsal. If music must be shared, it should be covered with sheet protectors which should be disinfected before and after rehearsal.
- Ringers should wear gloves at all times while touching music.

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Handbells and Handchimes

- Disinfect instruments before and after rehearsal. Handchime tubes, aluminum handbell castings and handbell handles should be wiped with disposable disinfectant wipes. The outside of bronze handbell castings may be wiped with disposable disinfectant wipes and then dried with a clean, soft cloth like an old t-shirt or a microfiber cloth. These cloths should be sealed in a plastic bag to carry home to launder after each use. If bronze castings begin to stain or discolor, they should be polished immediately with handbell polish.
- Caution your ringers not to handle the clapperheads of the instruments if possible as they are difficult to disinfect.

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Mallets and Singing Bell Sticks

- Mallet shafts and singing bell sticks should be disinfected before and after rehearsal with disposable disinfectant wipes.
- Caution ringers not to touch the mallet head as the yarn will be difficult to disinfect.



Find the complete document at:

www.handbellindustryCouncil.org

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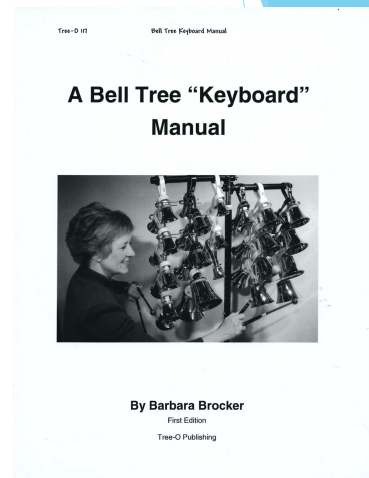
Bell Techniques & Musical examples

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Basic Belltree Skills *Barbara Brocker's Keyboard System*



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Q: What are belltrees?

A: The ultimate musical expression of the suspended mallet technique.

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What is the “keyboard” method?:
A system of organizing the suspended bells that offers a consistent method of suspended bells such that the musician knows where the bell will be at any give time.

Are there other methods?:
Yes. If you learn this one, it will free you to either keep it, make modifications to fit a particular need or, to “throw the bells up in the air” and find your own path.

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Building the first tree C6-C7



Lay out bells C6 to C7, lowest to highest . . .

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Creating the Tree

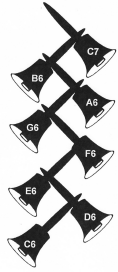


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Tree #1 Built



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BT Clips



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Mallets

- Handbell manufacturers have mallets ranging from “hard” to “medium” that work.
- Pitched percussion mallets also work.
- Pay attention to the length of the shaft. It should be long enough that you can comfortably hold it and reach for trees behind the front but short enough so that you avoid catching on clothing.
- Hardness is the one that gives the best sound in the space.
- It is challenging to find the perfect mallet for recording which is very much affect by the space you are in.
- **Experiment!!**

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A Sampling of One Octave Sacred Songs

- Joy to the World: starts decending scale, C7 down to C6
- The First Noel: starts “mi” or E6
- Jesus Loves Me: starts “sol” of G6
- Away in a Manger: Starts C (sol) to F (do) . . . no Bb used
- Silent Night: Sol-la-sol-me . . . G6-A6-G6-E6
- Hark the Herald Angels Sing
- This Little Light of Mine

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A Sampling of One Octave Secular Songs

- London Bridge: Sol-la-sol, G6, A6, G6...
- Twinkle, Twinkle: Do, do, sol, sol, la, la, sol,
C6-C6-G6-G6-A6-A6-G6...
- Ode to Joy: E6-E6-F6-G6-G6-F6-ER-D6-C6
- Star Wars Theme: G6-G6-G6-C6-G6-F6-E6-D6-C7
G6-F6-E6-D6-C7-G6
- Eeensy, weensy spider . . .
- I'm a Little Teapot
- Happy Birthday
- The Lion Sleeps Tonight

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BUILDING the 2nd Tree

The second tree using the Keyboard System includes C5-B5 (remember C6 starts at the lower left of The first tree.

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A diagram on the left shows six bells arranged in a vertical line, each with a note label: A5, B5, F5, G5, D6, E5, and C5. Below the diagram is the text "Second String, C5-B5". To the right is a photograph of a bell tree with many brass bells hanging from a black frame. A small number "21" is visible in the bottom right corner of the photo area.

Second String, C5-B5

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Playing both trees



The slide features the title "Playing both trees" in blue text at the top left. Below the title is a large black rectangular area, likely representing a video that has been redacted or is a placeholder. At the bottom left, there is a copyright notice, and at the bottom right, a small number "22".

Playing both trees

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Every Time I Feel the Spirit, arr. Barbara Blocker Maggie Dickerson, belltree



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Beginning Belltree Pieces

*Some Bell Tree Music
Easy to Medium Level for
Bell Tree Class Attendees
HMA Virtual Seminar July 2020*

Compiled by
Barbara Blocker

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Basic 4-in-Hand for Ensemble Musicians

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Less Than a Full Choir Music for 8-16+ Bells


- ▶ Look for music for your ensemble.
 - ▶ How many musicians do you have?
 - ▶ Do any either have 4-in-hand skills or,
 - ▶ Do any want to learn/get better at 4-i-H?
 - ▶ Do you have enough music stands?
 - ▶ Is your space large enough and well enough ventilated for this group?

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Kingsfold
arr. Larry Sue

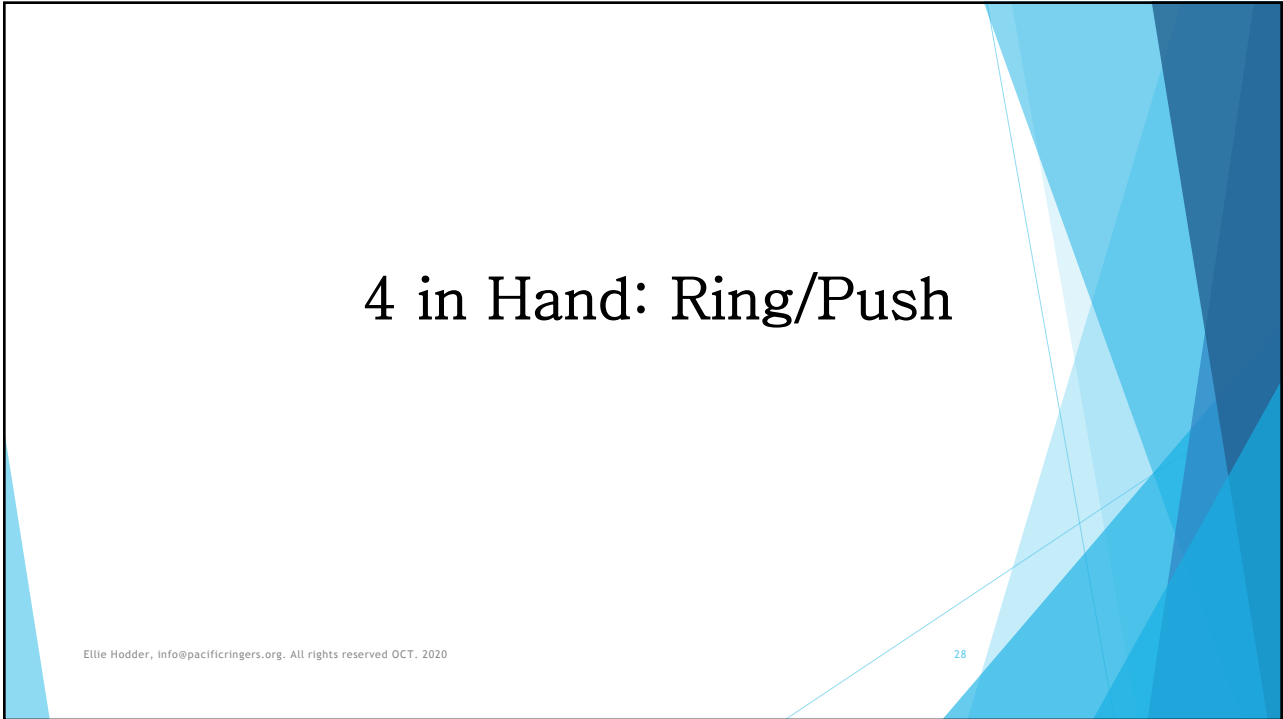


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4 in Hand: Ring/Push



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Primary and Secondary Bells

- PRIMARY will be the bell held between the thumb and index finger
- SECONDARY will be the “other” bell

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Which is which?

You'll determine which bells are primary based on how they are used in the piece. Often--as opposed to always—a good portion of the piece requires you to ring bells in thirds.

A useful “go to” is starting with the bells in thirds. If the piece flows differently, adjust accordingly.

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Set Up Four Bells on the table . . . *All yours!*



1 2 3 4

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Primary bells outside



1 3 4 2

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Ring/Push



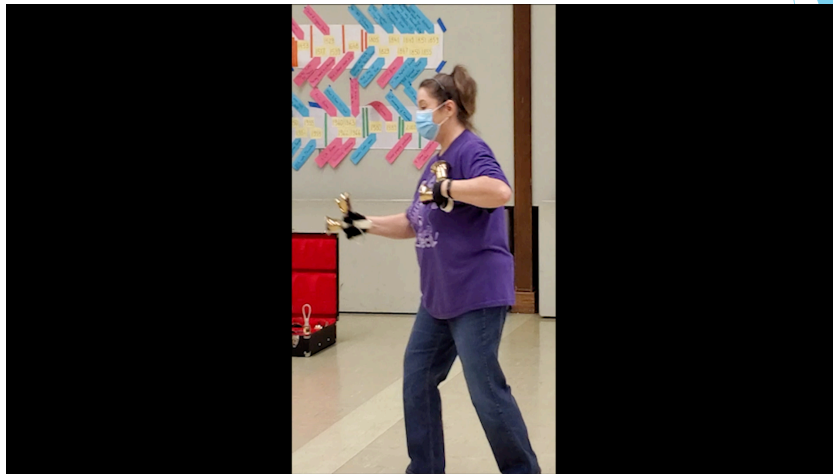
Note the position of primary and Secondary bells . . .

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A Snippet in action



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But we started with 2 bells each . . .



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8-16 Bell Resources

Refer to lists in AREA 10 Repository

Note: Some full choir pieces with no bell changes
May be found in reproducible collections. Check contents
against the list in this file.

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Additional web resources--Suppliers

Suppliers:

- Heitz Handbells
 - <https://heitzhandbells.com>
- Jeffers Handbell Supply
 - <https://www.handbellworld.com>
- Sonology Music
 - <https://sonologymusic.com>

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Composers

Composer/Publishers:

- Larry Sue
 - <https://www.choraegus.com>
- Sonology Music
 - <https://sonologymusic.com>
- Jason W. Krug
 - <https://grassymeadowmusic.com>

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A Taste of Shelley



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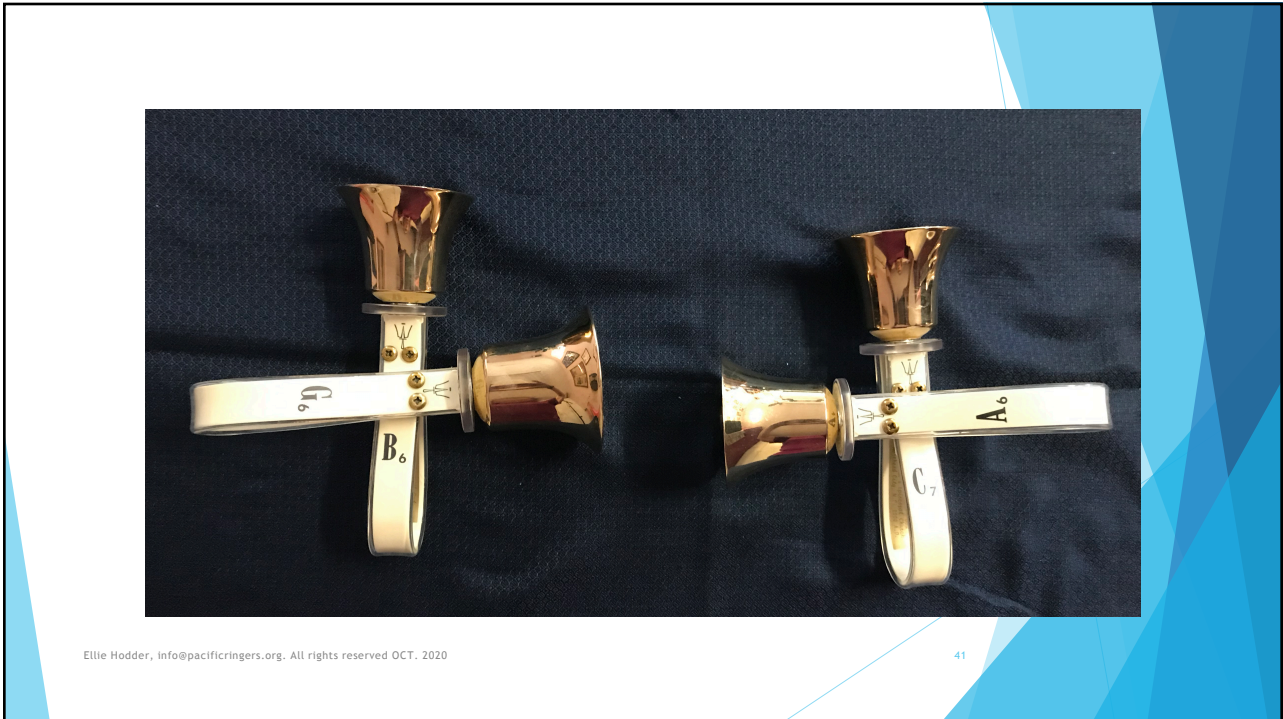
Shelley

Shelley ringing—bell pictures both in same direction
 Combo ring to sound both=“push”
 Most useful in full choir settings where octaves are rung together.
 Clean sound together. Think about when it will be your best option.

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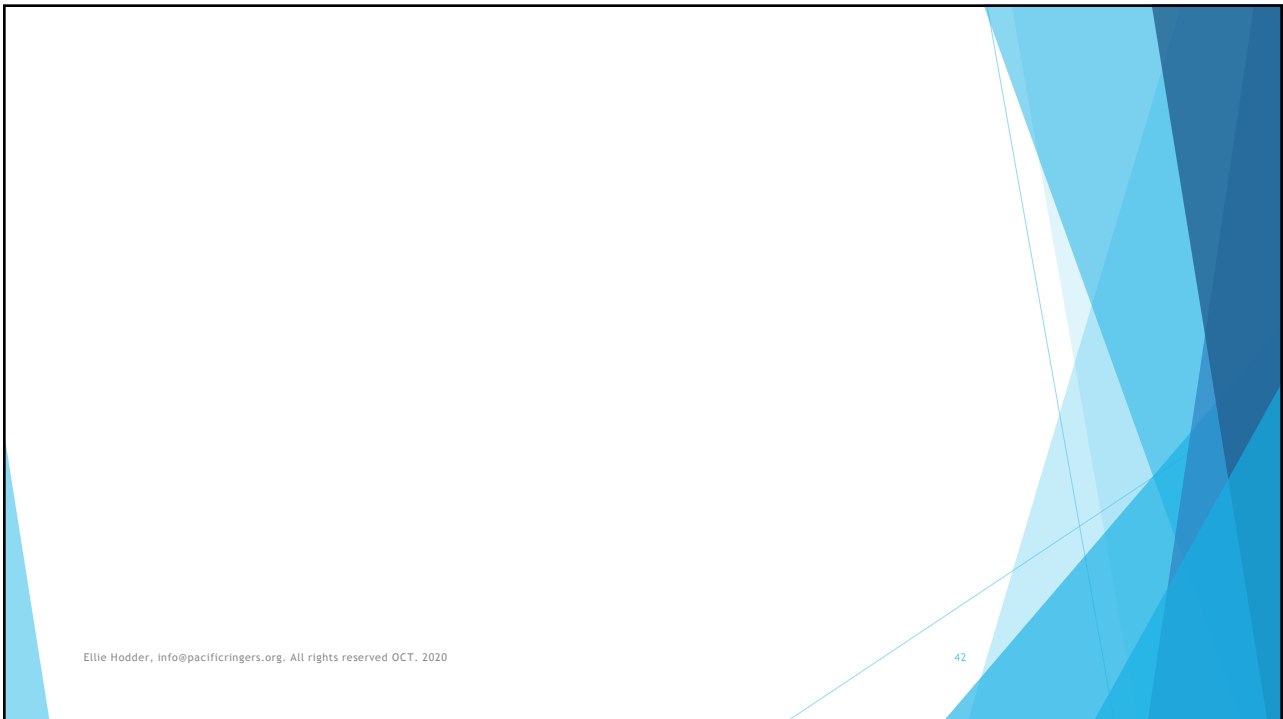
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Handbell Musicians of America

<https://handbellmusicians.org/membership/join-the-guild/>



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Q&A



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