



QUAVERS

AREA VIII: ILLINOIS, IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA
JANUARY, 2006

PREPARING FOR FESTIVALS

Happy New Year!

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas and a successful holiday concert season. Now it's time to look to 2006, map out your concert music and make your summer conference plans. The theme of this issue of *Quavers* is "How To Prepare For a Festival." Each of our five states features tips on this topic so be sure to read this issue thoroughly. I know you will find it enlightening and encouraging. I always enjoy hearing what other directors have experienced. We can learn a lot from each other.

I urge you to purchase the Council Bluffs Conference music now to begin rehearsals in January. You will find the music challenging but beautiful, varied and usable. I believe that several of our states are featuring ringing and reading sessions using our summer conference selections. Look at the schedule of upcoming events and see if there is one of these sessions close to your location. It would give you a real "jump start" on the music.

You will want to be well prepared and know the music well. The more comfortable you and your ringers are with the music, the more they will be able to concentrate on the other aspects of massed ringing. Any time there is a tempo change, eyes must move to the conductor.

One of our 2006 Conference Conductors, Jason Wells, has a theory I have put to use. In his classes he says that rather than spend a few minutes on a lot of songs, he would rather spend more time on one piece, accomplishing more with that one song – even to the point of being able to memorize small sections of it. We watched him work with a group learning *Capriccio* and in one session they had most of the main theme worked out and memorized.

The energy and excitement of the Council Bluffs conference repertoire should give your ringers something to be excited about in your rehearsals.

Attending a Festival fosters enthusiasm for what has been seen, heard and learned. The concentrated practice both before and during the Festival will demonstrate that the ringers are capable of learning more rigorous repertoire and whet their appetites for more ringing experiences.

Be prepared to have fun!

See you in Council Bluffs in June!

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FESTIVAL FACTS

Young Ringers Mini-Festival Notes from Michael Joy

Here are some thoughts on preparing for a festival. While my ideas aren't very original, they are IMPORTANT!

1. You will be working with a brand new conductor. This takes some getting used to. Come to the festival well-rested and ready to work hard toward the final performance.
2. KNOW YOUR PART! This seems like a 'no brainer' but too many times choirs come to festivals without adequate preparation. You need to know your music well enough so that you can look up and watch the conductor.
3. Make sure that you can play the pieces up to tempo. It is very frustrating when most choirs can play the piece up to tempo while a few choirs are always behind.
4. Be flexible. The guest conductor might do things a little differently. That's the fun of making music with a new conductor. It's OK if the conductor does things that are not 'what you are used to'.
5. Before you come to the festival, ask your director to try some different things. She or he could try something like taking the pieces faster or slower than usual. Your conductor could get faster in some sections and slower in others, even when it's not marked that way in the music. This will help to prepare you for doing things a little differently at the festival.
6. Practice transitions. These are things like key changes, moving from bells to chimes, putting down bells so that you can mallet them on the table, changes in tempo, etc. These are often trouble spots for any group, no matter how experienced they are and will take some extra work.
7. Practice page turns. It seems like they are ALWAYS in the wrong places! You need to practice these over and over so that you don't miss notes at the top of the next page or slow down the momentum of the piece.
8. If you do all the above, you will be well prepared for the festival. If all groups come with this kind of preparation then we can all relax and have fun with the music. That's really the point – making music with other people is a lot of hard work, but it's also a lot of FUN!

Spring Ring Notes from John Behnke

The goal of the music selection is to choose pieces, which can work in your services as well as in a festival. In that regard, I would encourage you to program some of the pieces into your services before the festival. *Come Thou Fount* could be used already this fall. *Mary Had a Baby* could be played at Christmas time. *Within the Darkest Night* in the first weeks of Lent. Probably I would wait on *Halle, Halle* and *The Promise* for Easter and Pentecost.

If you can come with the notes under your belt, that allows us to delve into really "making music" at the festival. We can work on interpretation and we can go beyond the notes as a group. I can even suggest some creative things, which are not in the music. And you all know, that in festivals it can be difficult to stay together as you are spread out over a large area. Having the notes somewhat established, allows you to better watch the director. Scary thought, but necessary! The fun with festival music comes when we put all our resources together and we work through the day as a team to make the most "effective" music we can; music which moves us and the audience.

I look forward to being with you and "making such music" with you. Best wishes...

KC Congdon, Illinois State Chair



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IOWA INSIGHTS

From Cathy Moklebust, Iowa's own clinician and composer:

Please read and employ any conductor's performance notes. Sometimes these notes detail possible mistakes in the music, or special interpretive ideas by the conductor that are not written in the music. Be able to play the music well enough so that you can look up at the conductor most of the time. Try to memorize tough passages and page turns. Any words printed in italics are totally up to the conductor. Get used to looking at your director before each one. "Anything in italics means 'look at the conductor.'" "Exaggerate" softer dynamics when practicing. A whole room full of bells playing "p" will sound like "mf". Do not talk or count out loud when practicing at home, and make sure you condition yourselves to stop playing immediately when your conductor stops conducting to give verbal instructions. Doing otherwise is highly distracting and most disrespectful to other choirs as well as the conductor. Invite a guest conductor to come in and conduct a rehearsal—this will give you a great idea of what it will be like to have to follow someone else's conducting style after you have already learned the music. **Be flexible.** Musical interpretation is up to the conductor, not the choir. A massed ringing conductor will very likely do many things differently than your own director. Don't argue—just do it. Be prepared for anything by practicing the music a little slower or a little faster. **Be flexible.** Set bells on medium (if possible)—no matter how you have them set when at home. Make sure you are using appropriate mallets. Arrive to the rehearsal a bit early in order to get ready. It is terribly distracting and disrespectful to everyone else when a choir walks into a rehearsal late. "Early" is on time. "On time" is late! No photocopied music will be allowed on the ringing floor. Just don't do it.

From Janet Carter, Iowa Spring Ring 2006 Clinician; Cedar Falls, IA

Massed ringing can be wonderful or frustrating—exciting or disappointing. Many times the massed director gets blamed when things don't go well and occasionally with good reason!!! However, there are some things that directors and ringers can do to help the massed ringing event be a positive and exciting experience. PREPARE WELL, be flexible, PREPARE WELL, buy the music early and practice it often, PREPARE WELL, bring your enthusiasm, PREPARE WELL. Oh, and yes, PREPARE WELL! The most important thing is adequate and accurate preparation. When directors and ringers have had the music for enough time to prepare well, their massed ringing experience is greatly enhanced. Before we get to a ringing event we need to have taken the time to address such issues as note accuracy, speed, dynamics and interpretation. We need to understand the structure of the music; know who has the melody and when; understand when we are accompaniment and need to "back off" vs. when we have the melody and need to "bring it out." We need to know the music well enough that our eyes can come up out of the music, allowing us to respond to the director! One of the major difficulties at a large ringing event is the time delay factor. In our smaller ringing settings ringers can often rely on their ears. At large venues this is dangerous since distance and echo can greatly disrupt the aural picture. The finished product in a massed ringing setting is greatly enhanced when ringers are encouraged to ring when they "see" the beat rather than relying on what they hear. Again this takes practice and requires knowing the music well enough to be able to look up frequently." When asked what are you, as a director, looking for at the event?" Janet responded, "1. Ringers who know the music well and LOOK UP! 2. Ringers who don't talk every time the music stops. 3. Ringers who are willing to try a different way of doing things. 4. Ringers who keep trying even if they can't hear or see the massed director very well! 5. Directors who get involved and ring along with their ringers—who indicate by example that they are still listening and learning."

Chris Peck ~ Iowa State Chair



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BE PREPARED TO HAVE FUN

Wear comfortable clothes and shoes...bring carpet squares to stand on, if that makes you feel better. Chairs are always provided.

Kansas City Youth Handbell and Hand Chime Festival

Saturday, February 11, 2006 JASON WELLS, Clinician
Wheatridge Middle School, Gardner, KS (just south of the Kansas City area)
Kipp Willnauer, Festival Chair willnauk@hotmail.com

Please prepare the following pieces:

5th – 8th grade choirs

Arise by Bill Ingram MHP2200 (Level 3)

With a Joyful Heart by Susan Geschke HP2319 (Level 2)

Bell Song by Arnold Sherman MCGB368 (Level 2)

HS and College choirs:

Capriccio by McChesney MAG35131 (Level 5)

From a Distant Home by Helman MCGB272 (Level 3)

Massed Choirs:

Brethren We Have Met To Worship HB233 (Level 3-)

Star Spangled Banner arr. John Bartsch JHS9040 (Level 2+)

Ring in the Spring

Saturday, March 4, 2006

United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, Leawood, KS (Kansas City area)

Gwen Gepford, Festival Chair ggepford@yahoo.com

Check out their web site for more information: www.cor.org/handbells

Please prepare the following pieces:

Level 1-2 KIPP WILLNAUER, Clinician

Simple Gifts by Valerie Stephenson MCGB347

Festive Praise by Susan Geschke MCGB376

Level 3 and above JEFFEREY HALL, Clinician

Sua Gan by Jefferey Hall #17536

Easter Processional and Medley arr. Jefferey Hall RW8190

When Johnny Comes Marching Home arr. Jefferey Hall #9361

All Festival participants will receive FREE:

This Is My Father's World arr. Jefferey Hall

Cruxcification arr. Jefferey Hall

Are You Ready For Some RINGIN'????

Saturday, April 22, 2006 JUDY SCHARMANN, Clinician

Location TBA (near Kansas City)

Marilyn Lake, Festival Chair LQRngLdr@kc.rr.com

Come with your Area 8 Festival music.

Massed will be rehearsed, as well as problematic measures in Tins, Silver and Copper music.

Bronze music performed by The Heartland Ringers

Music will be available for purchase.

Help get your choirs ready for the Area 8 Festival in Council Bluffs.

If your choir is unable to get to Council Bluffs, you can still participate!

Marilyn Lake ~ Kansas State Chair



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PARTICIPATING IN FESTIVALS

I have, over the past several years, participated in many handbell festivals. I have taken choirs to festivals, and I have helped plan festivals. In this issue, I want to share with you some things I have learned in preparing ringers for a festival.

Know your music. Unless the festival is specifically designed for the music to be learned on site, ringers are expected to know their music when they come to the event. Clinicians and ringers alike come to a festival wanting to create a satisfying musical experience, and this is not likely to happen if ringers are struggling with notes and rhythms, missing key signatures and musical markings.

You can skip a piece. Choosing repertoire that will appeal to a range of ringing and musical abilities is challenging at best for festival planners. If a piece is a little beyond the reach of a choir, there is nothing wrong with sitting one out.

Watch the director. A massed ringing room is a very different setting than your own rehearsal room. The clinician is usually a long way from the ringers, and some choirs often have a side view of the baton. Ringers must also be reminded that the festival conductor will do things differently than the director they follow every week. This is not a bad thing, but they will have to pay attention.

Success is in the details. Read the festival information carefully. Festival planners try to include all the information you will need to participate in the event. If something is not clear, contact the event planner or registrar. Festival planners design events for you and your ringers, and they want you to have a good experience.

Make a festival a regular event in your performance schedule. It will be a real boost to your handbell program.

Kathy Harrison, Missouri State Chair





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TAMMY'S WISH LIST

In 2005 Nebraska had the privilege of having Tammy Waldrop as the clinician for our state sponsored Spring Ring. When I posed the question to her about how to prepare for a festival this is what she wrote in her e-mail to me.

"I'll be glad to give you my clinician's "Wish List" for arriving at a festival or workshop:

- 1) **Openness**—A willingness to try new concepts and think about music in new ways, if only just for the festival. This includes the director and the ringers!
- 2) **Notes and Rhythms**—So much more can be accomplished with musicality and performance techniques if the ringers know their notes and rhythms. They many not have it down "perfect", but are familiar with the bell changes and the rhythms.
- 3) **Attentiveness**—Of course, there's going to be some chatter. That's natural, and a good conductor will build in places to let that happen. But, when the baton goes up, everyone should listen and work together.
- 4) **Heart, Mind, Soul, and Body**—I always hope that people will put their whole selves into their ringing. I remember being at a festival one time. The conductor was giving us all this good stuff! He stopped to tell us something important and the girl next to me said, "I wish he would quit talking and let us ring!" I knew she was only there for aerobic exercise and not to make music!"

The better prepared you are the more you will enjoy the workshop or festival and the more you will be able to learn from the experience. I hope to see all of you at the Area VIII Festival in Council Bluffs, IA in June.

Natalie Radcliffe ~ Nebraska State Chair





AGEHR SPONSORED EVENTS

2006	EVENT	CLINICIAN	LOCATION
Feb 4 9:00-3:00	Illinois Young Ringers Mini-Festival	Michael Joy	St Patrick's Church 15000 W Wadsworth Wadsworth, IL KC Congdon 309-365-2910 Kc@stmatthew-ucc.org
Feb 11 9:00-4:00	Illinois State Ringers Workshop	The Agape Ringers	Glenview UMC 727 Harlem Ave Glenview, IL KC Congdon 309-365-2910 Kc@stmatthew-ucc.org
Feb 11	Kansas City Youth Handbell & Handchime Festival	Jason Wells	Wheatridge Middle School Gardner, KS Kipp Willnauer Willnauk@hotmail.com
Mar 4	Ring in the Spring	Jefferey Hall Kipp Willnauer	UMC of the Resurrection Leawood, KS Gwen Gepford Ggepford@yahoo.com
Mar 18 9:00-5:00	Illinois State Spring Ring	Dr. John Behnke	Elgin Community College 1700 Spartan Dr Elgin, IL KC Congdon 309-365-2910 Kc@stmatthew-ucc.org





UPCOMING CONCERTS

2006	CONCERT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Feb 26 7:00p	The Agape Ringers	St Mark's Lutheran 675 N Mulford Rockford, IL	Marti Bein 815.398.3557
Mar 18 7:30p	Bells in Motion	St John's Lutheran 600 Sixth Ave Des Moines, IA	Mark Babcock 515.243.7691
Mar 19 7:00p	Bells in Motion	Dundee Presbyterian 5312 Underwood Ave Omaha, NE	Paul Koenig 402.558.2330
Mar 20 7:00p	Bells in Motion	Woodland Baptist 6915 N Allen Rd Peoria, IL	Bill Smith 309.691.2096
Apr 30 tdb	The Agape Ringers	St John's Lutheran 4 N Brainard LaGrange, IL	Jerry Kuker 708.354.1690 x 222



Resource Library

The following materials are available to all Area VIII members and their choirs to be checked out. There is no rental fee; we just ask that you pay postage both ways and a small packaging charge. Materials should be returned within two weeks unless other arrangements are made or instructions sent. We hope that these materials will be another area of assistance for you and your Handbell Choir.

Videos

- **Advanced Solo Ringing and Handbell Techniques.** Demonstration by Erin Downey
- **Alive!** Featuring the Echo Handbell Ringers under the direction of Katsumi Kodama.
- **Area II Massed Ringing, 1991.** Wayne, NJ. Bill Goff and Dick Frey, organist. Howard Moser and Hart Morris conducting.
- **Area VIII Massed Ringing, 1992.** St. Joseph, MO. David Davidson conducting.
- **Area VIII Massed Ringing, 1994.** Cedar Rapids, IA. Hart and Marty Morris conducting.
- **Bell Basics.** David Weck and Susan Berry walk us through the ringing skill demonstrations. An excellent tape for the beginning ringer or director.
- **Bell Lore.** Ellen Jan Lorenz. Historical bell facts. (1986)
- **Celebration: The Story of Handbells.** (35 mm film strip with cassette)
- **Christine Anderson in Concert.** Solo ringing concert.
- **Developing Skills for Solo and Ensemble Ringing.** Jessup and Calkins.
- **Facing the Music: Seven minutes that will change the way you think about copyright laws.** Produced by the Church Music Publishers Association. This short video gives clear information about copyright laws in an entertaining format.
- **Intro to a Handbell Festival.** Produced by AGEHR, Inc. This video provides a glimpse of what a handbell festival is all about.
- **Masteringers Festival, 1988.** Allentown, PA. Filmed by PBS. Massed ringing and solo concerts plus commentary on techniques and history of handbells.
- **Music Makes the Difference: Action Kit for Music Education.** National Coalition for Music Education. Complete with booklets and two videos, this kit will assist the music educator with supportive material for the arts in education.
- **Ring of Fire.** Videotaped at the United Church of Christ in Claremont, CA. This tape will bring you to their May 2000 concert when they played 12 of their most popular songs.
- **Songs for the Solo Ringer.** Instructional with David Weck and Christine Anderson. Video with accompanying music text.
- **Songs for the Solo Ringer.** Christine Anderson in concert.
- **Sound Advice from Malmk.** Care for your Malmk handbells.
- **Tinkling Handbells.** A CBS/Sony, Inc. video production featuring the Echo Handbell Ringers under Katsumi Kodama's direction. Produced in Japan in 1987, this video, visually blended with pictorial settings of European culture and countryside, is a new experience in visual handbell performance.
- **Woodson Handbell Choir.** Demonstration of a program for special needs ringers.
- **Tempo Setter Videos.** Interviews of prominent handbell folks throughout handbell history.

Books and Papers

- **Adaptive Notation for Handbells.** Letha McGrew
- **Bass Bells.** Various authors
- **Bell Lore.** Ellen Jane Lorenz
- **Conducting Technique for Beginners and Professionals.** Brock McElheran
- **Copyright: The Complete Guide for Music Educators.** Jay Althouse (1984)
- **Creative Use of Handbells in Worship.** Hal Hopson
- **Dalcroze Applications for Handbells.** Marilyn Kielnarz
- **Developing Conducting Skills.** Michael Keller
- **The Director as Teacher: Working with the Beginning Handbell Choir.** Venita Gorman
- **Director's Manual.** Janet Van Valey and Susan Berry
- **An Ear Training Course for Handbell Directors and Ringers.** Fred Merrett
- **The First Quarter Century.** Elizabeth Bradford (1979)
- **Focus on Participation: Alternative Methods for Special Groups.** Joe Pinson
- **Fundraising for Fun and Profit.** Marlene Anderson
- **A Guide to Handbell Assignments.** AGEHR
- **Handbell Assignment Book: The Eight-ten System.** Bob Ivey (1993)
- **Handbells in Education: A Guide to Learning.** Various authors (1990)
- **Handbells Making History: A Bell Tree.** Margaret O'Sullivan-Hillman
- **Handchimes in General Music: A Curriculum Guide Grades 1-3.** Janet Van Valey and Martha Avery
- **Handchimes in General Music: A Curriculum Guide Grades 4-6.** Janet Van Valey and Martha Avery
- **Mastering Musicianship in Handbells.** Don Allured (1992)
- **The Modern Conductor.** Elizabeth Green (1981)
- **Musical Elements: A Classroom Method for Handchimes.** Kenneth Liske
- **168 Non-musical Ways to Improve Your Band or Choral Program.** Jay Althouse (1986)
- **Overtones 1955-1986.** Joan Shull, editor
- **A Practical Handbook for Handbell Directors.** Valerie Stephenson
- **Quick Foundations.** Kirtsy Mitchell
- **Rehearsal Planning, Techniques and Procedures.** Michael Keller
- **Schulmerich Learning Package: A Complete Curriculum for Music Education and Performance.**
Dr James Fisher
- **Score Study Techniques.** Michael Keller
- **Songs for the Solo Ringer.** Christine D. Anderson
- **Solo Ringing Musically.** Michael Kastner and Kevin McChesney
- **Teaching Young Ringers.** Carolynne Mathis
- **We Can All Ring.** Aaron Champagne

Miscellaneous

- **Mallets.** From Jeffers, Malmark and Schulmerich

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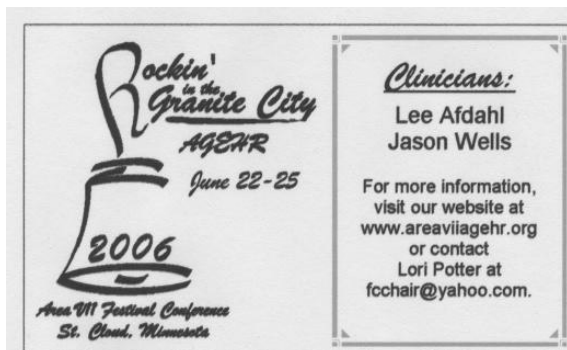
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First Presbyterian Church
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Calvary Baptist Church
Rev Louis Walthers
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Ann Gerdorn
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Visit our website to have
free access to our
resource library. Lots of
great tools available for
new members.

www.areaviii.org/rl.htm





*2006 Area VIII Conference
Council Bluffs*

Come One,
Come All
To The
Area VIII Conference
June 29—July 1, 2006

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