



HANDBELL MUSICIANS OF AMERICA

ILLINOIS, IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA

QUAVERS NEWSLETTER

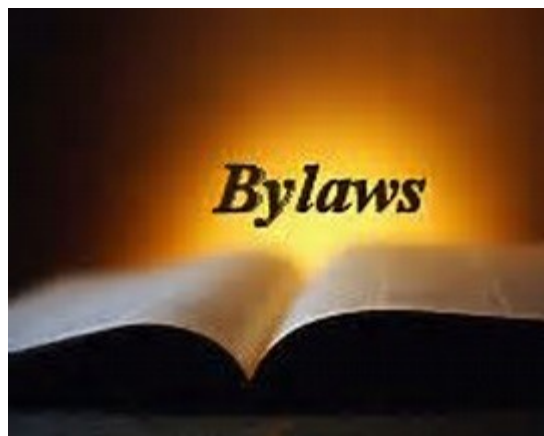
SEPTEMBER, 2017

Handbell Musicians
OF AMERICA

The 2017 Bylaws
Revision has
passed with a
majority vote.

Thank you for
participating!

Area 8 Board



ASSIGNING BASS BELLS

Ads	2 , 5
CHAIR	3
Events	11
Festival	3
Repertoire	4
Registration	3
Officers	2

FESTIVAL FESTIVAL ISSUE

IOWA	7
KANSAS	9
NEBRASKA	10
PAST CHAIR	6

ELECTED	ELECTED	APPOINTED
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The Raleigh Ringers

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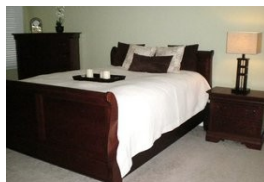


[@RaleighRingers](#)

Kristin Kalitowski-Kowal**~Area 8 Chair**

Happy Fall, Handbell Friends! I know, I can't believe summer is at an end, but I am excited for handbell rehearsals to start again. In this issue of *Quavers*, you'll find tips on assigning bass bells to help out those rehearsals.

Since we know we will miss summer at some point, let's talk about next summer. Look ahead to find information you'll find useful for budgeting for your trip to the **Bring It! Ring It!** Area 8 Festival next summer in Omaha. Registration costs and hotel rates are included in this edition. The Area 8 Board has worked hard to keep costs down as much as possible so that all of you can join us June 27-30, 2018. This fall is a great time to get you and your ringers excited about three (3) days full of handbells. Keep watching the Area 8 [website](#) as we update it with more detailed information throughout the fall.



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- Waterpark 1x fee for event of \$15
- \$115/night + taxes
- **Code:** *Handbell Musicians of America* Must call to get discount, online won't work.

REGISTRATION INFO

Opens January 1, 2018 [online](#)

Super Early Bird *3/1/18 \$285

(You read that right! Area 8 has held costs to a minimum to give our Super Early Birds a lower rate than the previous festival – Register Super Early!)

Early Bird *4/15/18 \$310

Regular *after 4/15/18 \$330

*(Deposits are \$75 per person and are applied to the final balance.)

Final balance due 5/1/18

(Full Registration includes 3 days of massed ringing, division ringing, classes, concerts, HIC vendor exhibits, and more! 4 meals and a reception are also included. Hotel not included.)

Chaperones \$115

Daily registration \$125/day

(Daily registration does not include massed/division ringing but does include all classes, concerts, HIC vendor exhibits, and meals offered on the day registered.)

Table rental \$15/table

Non-member fee \$95/group

(includes 1-year membership to Handbell Musicians of America)

YOUTHFEST REGISTRATION

Deadline 4/15/18 \$85

(Registration includes 2.5 days of massed ringing, division ringing, classes, concerts, waterpark admission, t-shirt, gloves, and more! 2 meals are also included. Hotel is not included.)

Chaperones \$70

Non-member fee \$95

(includes 1-year membership to Handbell Musicians of America)

JAPANESE AND TAIWANESE MUSIC?

As a director, one of the things that I refuse to do is buy a piece of music sight-unseen or unheard. So, what can be done if it has been put on a festival list?

- First, there is YouTube: [UTAGE](#).
- Second, some publishers/distributors will send you a copy “on approval”.

Now analyze how to teach it.

- What about those 16th notes that choirs are so afraid of? Well, rewrite them rhythmically so that the 16th notes become 8th notes and 8th notes become quarter notes and quarter notes become half notes. When you put the note values into more commonly seen note values, it takes away the fear factor for the ringers. Also, 16th notes don’t seem like 16th notes once you compare them to the *Andante* tempo. Why panic when the 16th notes are to be played lightly like pixie dust, rather than stronger than the melody?
- Use the scariest passage as a warm-up through the year. The more you practice it correctly over and over again, the faster it becomes—automatically!
- Have sectionals or special rehearsals. 15 minutes before or after the regular rehearsal works wonders over several weeks.
- Make up lyrics to go with the difficult rhythm.

Next, see if it would fit into a service during the church year.

- World Communion Sunday is October 1 in 2017 but that might be a bit early. However, now you’ve got one piece already picked out for 2018!
- Ecumenical Sunday is January 21.
- Racial Justice Sunday is February 11.
- Asian American Ministries Sunday is April 29.

- Hiroshima Day of Remembrance is August 6 (which you could celebrate on Sunday, August 5.)
- Offer to play for an Asian church service or invite your Asian church neighbors to your own service when you could play this piece for them.

Tin O O (The Dark Sky) {Div 3} is based on a well-known Taiwanese nursery rhyme. The song tells a humorous anecdote of a farmer’s family on a rainy day. The husband went out to dig the taro (root vegetable) for dinner but instead digs up something else. The couple start fighting over whether it should be more salty or less salty.

This piece can also be used on the same Sundays as *Utage*.

Many times we see a piece with percussion, handchimes and handbells only to wonder how are we going to pull all this off with only 11-14 ringers?

- While it calls for handchimes, why not use an alternate instrument such as the melodica, marimba or flute? A bell tree would also work but you might need to borrow some bells from a neighboring church. What are your fellow guild members for but to help each other out?
- Teach it to a children’s choir of 7 ringers and have them play along with the adults.
- How about offering a couple of ringers a challenge by having them play the hand-chime part as a duet or trio?

While both of these songs are a stretch beyond what Midwesterners normally listen to or learn, it’s a fun way to broaden the ringers’ horizons about other cultures.



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Sure wish I could teach at the Area 8 Festival....

Click [here](#) to fill out an application.



Pre-Conference Director's Track

Start early!

On Wednesday night and Thursday morning, Area 8 will be hosting a Pre-Conference Director's Track for those individuals that would like four additional hours of intimate director topics that are critical to being successful.



Bring it! Ring it!

Handbell Musicians of America Area 8
Omaha, Nebraska June 27-30, 2018



Worship with us!

Worship track opportunity at Bring It! Ring It!

Patrick Gagnon**~Past Chair**

Assigning and playing bass handbells has been a huge part of my musical life. I find it interesting and extremely satisfying, especially when it is done well. As with other things I have written in this publication, these are only my ideas and are definitely not the only way to manage the lower octaves. As Bill Mathis, one of our clinicians for the 2014 Festival/Conference in Davenport has often said, "There are a LOT of ways to do this right!"

Often when we are assigning "bass bells," we are referring to the instruments from C3 to B3, or the lower fourth and fifth octaves of a 5-octave handbell choir. I will deal with this first, then discuss ideas for the bells in the bottom of the third octave (C4-A4), and for those in the lower sixth and seventh octaves.

My perfect assignment: imagine two "second-inversion" triads:



Ringer #1 - C3, F3, A3; Ringer #2 - D3, G3, B3; E3 is shared. With this being the case, scalar passages, for example, can be played with ease, especially if the two ringers can negotiate the E3 sharing in an equitable manner. Accidentals are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, especially if they are only played once during the piece. For example, although the Gb3 is technically assigned to Ringer #2, it might be far easier for Ringer #1 to play it, especially if it was notated as F#3 earlier in the piece. An alternative here would be adding a third ringer, which can be heavenly, especially in busier pieces with chimes, but this can often result in bored bass bell ringers, which is not a good plan for any choir.

Bass ringers should practice good "ringing hygiene," including a ringing stroke that does not involve any wrist motion, but rather involves the *bell* doing the work. For me, my bass bells "rock" back and forth as the hand guard sits on, you know, my hand. I ring the bell by squeezing the handle with my middle, ring, and pinky finger, as the bell is supported by my thumb and index finger in a "V" formation. This would be for a forward ringing stroke. I feel that bass ringers should also practice a safe and healthy "back ring," which allows for a quicker "contact-to-sound" time, and allows for the bell to be upright when the clapper strikes. It also allows for the strongest muscles in the arm to support the weight of the bell, rather than having the heavy casting so far in front of the body. Think of the "Arm & Hammer" logo the next time you scour your sink.

Similar assignments can occur in the bottom of a 3-octave choir, especially if your ringers can hold more than one bell in each hand, at least for a short time. This is especially possible with the bells A4 and higher as the handles tend to be slightly slimmer starting with that bell. So: Ringer #1 - C4, D4, F4; Ringer #2 - D4, G4, A4; E4 is shared, and accidentals are negotiated. This is often how we roll in Eldora, Iowa, on Sunday mornings as I may or may not have a HS youth assigned at B4C5 who is perhaps not consistent in letting me know when he may or may not be able to ring with the choir on a given Sunday. I pretty much assume that I will be 4-in-handing G4-C5 (with a few F4's thrown in) and may or may not leave my organ postlude unrehearsed so that I can work out what is suddenly a thrilling bell assignment.

If your choir is fortunate to have access to instruments lower than C3, first I am extremely jealous of you, and second, you do need to think about these assignments first and foremost for the safety both of your instruments and your musicians! Simply

(Continued on page 7)

assigning your C3-F3 ringer all of the lower 6th octave bells and chimes is absolutely a way to destroy a handbell musician's elbows, shoulders, and spine, not necessarily in that order. Each piece must be analyzed individually and assigned such that the most difficult passage can be executed successfully by the number of ringers you have. It goes without saying that these larger instruments need more *space* on the table, more *preparation* to be lifted and rung, and more *practice* (no offense to battery and treble ringers and Those Who Love Them).

Malmark lower sixth and 7-octave bass chimes are often rung with the chimes resting on racks, and struck with mallets. Older 6-octave (G2-B2) chimes have a clapper affixed to the tine and I personally *greatly* prefer this to using a mallet as you can ring and damp the chime with the same hand while playing bells with the other. Also, having an extra piece of equipment at the bass position, especially the huge mallet suggested for those instruments, takes up crucial real estate on the table. Never, never, never ring those lower bass chimes aggressively. A little mallet goes a *long* way.

BRONZEFEST ENSEMBLE

So you've signed up for the massed ringing, you've signed up for the worship track, you've signed up for Division 3 (or 4) and you still want to ring MORE? Then how about signing up for the BronzeFest Ensemble also? Then you can go back and brag to your choir that you spent _____ hours ringing bells over the course of 3 days. You'll be their hero!

Lori Fenton

~Iowa State Chair

When it comes to assigning bass bells, there are as many strategies as there are ringers, directors, and bass captains. There is no magical chart out there that says, "for this many bells, with this many ringers, with this key signature... assignments are X, Y, and Z." Truth is, assignments are usually customized for each song. Factors include the number of bells used, the rhythmic complexity, the number of bass ringers available, and the ringers' abilities. One strategy that works for one song may not work at all for the next song.

For me, bass assignments are like solving a jig saw puzzle. I begin by looking at the music and "charting" out the assignments. If I have two ringers, I make two columns on a sheet of paper. Three ringers, three columns. Four ringers, four columns. I analyze the bass notes and their rhythms measure by measure. I assign each note to the ringer I think will be best to ring that note. Within a few measures, a logical pattern will emerge of how best to divvy up the bells between ringers.

Charting is an iterative process. I try to find a strategy that works for the majority of the notes in the song. I often shuffle some bells around to avoid one ringer from ringing too many bells in a row. I also try to even out the bell count so that one ringer is not working harder than the other(s). Charting also points out trouble spots where a ringer will need help ringing one or more bells.

I work on a system of "adds" and "drops". From the charting, each ringer is assigned primary bells to ring throughout the entire song. If I think a ringer won't be able to ring one of the primary bells (think three in a row), I will instruct that ringer to "drop" that bell temporarily. ("Measure 59: ring C3, F3, drop A3.") I will instruct the adjacent ringer to "add" that bell temporarily. ("Measure 59:

(Continued on page 8)

ring A3 for Billy.”) I find this system to be more flexible than the strict “your bells, my bells” assignments.

I have some guidelines I follow when making assignments. Chromatic-order assignments usually don’t work except for malleted pieces. Shared bell assignments should be limited to reaching for the 1st or 2nd adjacent bells. Avoid long reaches to get third and fourth bells. Don’t assign more than three consecutive bells in a row. Malleted runs are best limited to a maximum of four bells. Take into account the time needed to lift the bells, to ring the bells, and to set them down onto the table. Arrange bells to avoid weaving and to solve hands issues. Don’t be afraid to move bells during the song. Don’t be afraid to mallet difficult bass runs instead of ringing.

The good news is nearly all C3-B3 bass can be successfully rung with two people using one of the strategies shown below. I’ve also included other popular strategies that I’ve picked up from other well-respected bass captains.

(Wayne Hicks is a 16-year ringer and bass captain with the Virginia Handbell Consort. He is also a 3-time selection and bass captain to the Virtuoso Ensemble. Please feel free to contact Wayne at cozy678@yahoo.com for questions and discussions.)

Bass Bell Assignment Strategies

**[brackets denote shared bells]

	Ringer 1		Ringer 2
Opt 1	C F A3	[B3]	D E G3
Opt 2	C F A3	[E3]	D G B3
Opt 3	C E G3	[B3]	D F A3
Opt 4	C F3	[A] [B] [G3]	D E3

Ringer 1	Ringer 2	Ringer 3
G A B2 [D3]	C E F3	A B3 [G3]

Distinctly Bronze

Ringer 1	Ringer 2	Ringer 3	Ringer 4
F2 D3 G3 [B2]	E2 C3 A3 [B2]	D2 G2 F3 [B3]	C2 A2 E3 [B3]

Bay View Week of Handbells

Ringer 1	B1 E2 G2 C3
Ringer 2	G1 C2 F2 A2
Ringer 3	Ab1 D2 G2 B2
Ringer 4	Bb1 C2 E2 A2
Ringer 5	A1 D2 F2 B2

Ringling More with Less

- If you find yourself short on ringers, there are strategies that push the bass bells to the battery ringers.
- Experiment with malleting more of the piece than written.
- Choose songs with slower tempos and with whole notes and half notes.

Other Options

Ringer C4D4 takes	E3 A3
Ringer E4F4 takes	G3 [B3] [C3]
Ringer G4A4 takes	[B3] [C3] [D3]
Ringer B4C5 takes	[D3] F3

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Staci Cunningham**~ Kansas State Chair**

Assigning bass bells can be tricky. Very rarely do we see bass bells set up in the traditional two note set-up like the treble bells. Once we get below the CD4 position, it can get fairly boring only being responsible for two notes. This is why you see most 4+ octave choirs have only two or three players responsible for all of those bells. How can they do that, you ask? It's all in how the bells are assigned and set up.

I have only had the privilege of directing a 2-octave and a 3-octave choir, so I have not had the chance to assign bass bells. However, I do play in a 3-5 octave choir, and do play bass bells on occasion. Now, if you are in a community choir, it's possible that the bass bells are pretty much rung by a small group of people that rotate. Most times, they will be given the music and will arrange assignments themselves. Other times, especially if you are part of a church choir, your director may take the time to review what notes are played when and assign them in the best possible way to keep the basses sane, yet satisfied. The director of my church choir will go through and assign two or three of us what she believes will work the best for what we are playing. For instance, on one piece I may play C3 D3 E3 G3 & B3 while the person next to me would play F3 A3 C4 & D4, then the next piece would have us trading the G3 A3 & B3 around. Another piece may have me playing all the lined notes while my bass partner would play the spaces. It's all in the busyness of the bass section. Sometimes the bass section is slow enough in a song that my director will have one of us play C3-G3 or A3. I do find that however she assigns us, I am pretty sure to have a nice, busy—if not challenging—piece to play.

Now, I have had directors set up a bass section and leave it in that position. One in

particular that I remember had us set up with one player playing C3F3B3, a second playing D3G3C4, and a third playing E3A3D4. This did work out fairly nicely when we were sure we had three at the bass table; however, we did have to remember which notes we were looking at and not play on our neighbors notes! I remember having to mark my music for a little bit until I got used to looking at the correct notes.

However your bass section is set up, just remember that playing in the bass is not at all like playing in the treble. And I'm not talking about the clefs or bell size! I have learned to play the bass bells by thinking outside the box and learning to place the bells not necessarily in keyboard order, but in an order that I can utilize the bells to the best of my ability. If I need to play the G3 and it is easier for my left hand to play it right after my C3 has played—and this happens several times—I may move the G3 next to my C3 so I don't have to reach so far. This also frees up my right hand to play whatever it may need. Or, you may only play a bell one or two times and it is right in the middle of your bell array. Move it to the outside and it frees up space for the bells that you play a lot to be moved in closer together. This applies not only to bells, but to chimes and mallets as well! Happy Ringing!



Do you have unanswered questions regarding YouthFest?
Contact [Beth Ann Edwards](#)

Linda Ashley
~ Nebraska State Chair

Assigning bass bells is usually a different process from the battery and treble positions. Sometimes it needs to go beyond the simple chromatic assignment of “you are responsible for these two notes and their accidentals”.

I have been making the bass assignments for our community choir, River City Ringers, for several years now. My process is fairly simple. I start with a basic assignment of CD3, EF3 and GAB3 across 3 ringers. I then look at each part to see if there are any problem spots. There are times where there is a chromatic run that can't be handled by one ringer. I look at sharing a note with a neighbor or assigning a seldom used bell to a different ringer who may have a spare hand at the time(s) that note is needed. If the bass part is fuller, I may have to use four ringers and spread the bells out more. We also have Malmrk aluminums in the lower 6th-octave. When those are needed, I will generally spread them out through these three or four ringers, looking at who can get which bell worked into their other notes.

I have seen other assignments more ‘out of the box’. I have heard of those that assign C3-F3-B3, D3-G3-C4, E3-A3-D4 when they have even fewer bass ringers available. At one of the National ringing events, Distinctly Bronze, there is access to a deeper range of the lowest bass bells. The assignments differ whether you are in the 6-octave or 7-octave bass. 6-octave bass ringers are assigned A2-C3, G2-D3, B2-E3, and they share the F3. The fourth ringer has GAB3. 7-octave ringers have C2-A2-E3, D2-G2-F3, E2-C3,

F2-D3, and the B2 is shared between these last two ringers, with a fifth ringer covering GAB3.

Another project of assigning bells is for each ringer to then decide how they are arranged within their space. There may be a bell that is seldom used that chromatically would be placed at your right hand. If you can only get it with your left hand, put it ‘out of place’ where you can reach it when you need it. Mark this at the top of your music for your setup for each piece of music, so you don't find yourself scrambling to get it in time.

There are as many ways to assign bass bells as there are ringers to play them. You find what works for you and it depends on the bells needed for each piece of music. I recall one DB event where we marked the end of each piece with what we needed to move for the next piece. I gave a bell to Larry, he gave a bell to Brian, etc.

I hope that you are all looking forward to bringing your full choirs, or at least several of your ringers to the festival next summer, where you may have a chance to share your assignment methods with others, or pick up new ideas from other choirs.

Ring S'More

RING S'MORE is a special feature for the 2018 Area 8 Festival. Watch upcoming issues to find out more details.

Upcoming Events

2017	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Sep/Oct	Back to Bells	See contact for a site near you	Area 8
9/15-16	Flint Hills Handbell Festival	Camp Wood YMCA Elmdale, KS	Kansas
10/21	Youth Handchime Festival	Knox Presbyterian Church Overland Park, KS	Marilyn Lake
10/21	2017 Mid-Iowa Handbell Festival	Memorial Lutheran Church Nevada, IA	Iowa
10/28	Show-Me Ring 2017 Rezound!	1st UMC Blue Springs, MO	Rezound!
11/4	Refining Your Ringing Dr. John Behnke	Trinity Lutheran Colombia, MO	Jeff White
2018	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Feb 17	Ring in the Spring 2018	Church of the Resurrection Leawood, KS	Spring Ring
Feb 23	How to be an Engaging Director (without really trying)	Gateway Convention Center Collingsville, IL	HAGSTL
Feb 24	spRingFest 2018	Gateway Convention Center Collinsville, IL	HAGSTL
Mar 8-11	Distinctly Bronze West Fred Gramman	Resort at the Mountain Welches, OR	National (details n/a yet)
Jun 27-30	Bring It! Ring It! Area 8 Festival	Hotel RL Omaha 3321 S 72nd St Omaha, NE	Area 8
Jun 28-30	Bring It! Ring It! Area 8 YouthFest	Hotel RL Omaha 3321 S 72nd St Omaha, NE	Area 8
Jul 17-21	National Seminar Various	Grand Rapids, MI	n/a
Jul 19-21	Distinctly Teen	Grand Rapids, MI	n/a