

Area 8 Festival June 18-20, 2020

Blue Division

Conductors' Notes

Clarion Call, Michael Joy
Alex Guebert, Conductor

- Whenever the main theme is playing (m.1-8, 18-25, 69-76, 86-93), place pulse accents on beats 1, 2, 3, 4, and if there is a tied note on the & of 3, place one there too.
- In the "B" theme sections (m.9-17, 77-85), place pulse accents on beats 1 and 3.
- In the middle section (m.29-68), the rule is this: bring out notes on beat 1 and bring out quarter note chords that change. For instance, bring out only beat 1 on m.29-30, then bring out all notes in m.31, then go back to accenting just beat 1 again. It follows, then, that treble ringers should strike a little harder on beat 1 and 3 of m.37-38, leaving the repeated notes softer. In m.39, since each chord is a chord change, all notes can be played out strongly.
- M.86 write "Slower" above the treble staff
- M.89 write "accel." between the staves
- M.90 write "Tempo I" above the treble staff
- M.96 wait to break the end of the shake until I give the prep for the downbeat of m.97

A Merry Heart, Cynthia Dobrinski

Alex Guebert, Conductor

- I will conduct this in 2. **Everyone, please place a bit of a pulse accent on each beat 1 and 3.**
- Careful attention to dynamics will go a long way here. In mallet technique, **stick height = volume**. This means that the higher you prep the mallet head, the louder it sounds upon arrival to the bell. Promote good mallet technique by using a "pinch grip" between the thumb and forefinger, leaving open space in the hand, and never throwing the forearm up and down. (Bass ringers do need to use a bit more forearm, though.) Your starting position should have the mallet head close to the bell, with the stick parallel to the table. Then, to prep, flick the wrist up to get the mallet head to fly upward, then gently but firmly pull it down with the tip of the forefinger. The head should then bounce off the strikepoint area of the outside of the casting and return to the starting position. **We'll do more work on mallet technique at the festival**, so don't worry if you don't master all of this during your preparations.
- Remember, **stick height = volume**.

Behold a Host, John A. Behnke
John Behnke, Conductor

Have you ever been to Norway? I wrote this piece for my college bell choir when we made a tour of Norway. We actually played a joint concert with the Markusklokke (The St. Markus Ringers) from Oslo. A group of four talented four-in-hand ringers directed by Burghard Wellmann. It begins with the SB bass chord. Once that chord is developed, then the stems up treble bells can provide some sparse random notes. To me, it should sound like birds chirping. After some time, then the middle melody begins. Measures 16 and 17 provide a snapshot of the rise and fall of the inner melodic idea. There is not a crescendo and decrescendo marked in these measures but we will attempt to swell the sound and provide a slight accent on the downbeat of m. 17. This idea should continue through the section. And do not be deceived, the middle bells have to really keep their concentration for this section. The patterns change slightly and can be challenging. Finally at m. 58-65 we grow together as an ensemble until the bell peals begin in m. 66. When the melody begins in the stems up treble notes in m. 74, then the bell peals move to the middle bells which again demands concentration. Most churches in Norway, and for that manner Europe, have real bells in bell towers and the sound of these bells pealing forth over the town is a memory that I will forever remember. In m. 121-124, let the dynamic of the shakes increase. Each measure a bit louder as we go. There will be a grand ritard in m. 123.

Exultation, Matthew Compton
John Behnke, Conductor

The tempo marking is appropriate when it says "Spirited." The mart-lift and mallet-lift notes of the bass clef should be limited in distance for precision. Don't rise up too far off the table. The sections of this piece are clearly defined and should express different characters. M. 1-10 is strong and vigorous, while m. 11-18 is "mf" with the top stems up treble melody featured. I would suggest that upper melody be played "f". Then the section beginning in m. 19 is "p" with the "mp" top melody. The main melody returns at m. 28. Do not play each of the similar chords in this section in the same way. Rather accent main beats and enjoy the changing harmony. The hardest part is actually m. 36-48. This is all mallet work. And do not let the upper notes on the third and fourth beats become too loud in m. 36 and 37. They can be louder in m. 40-43. The sections reoccur with the final section being that "spirited" one we began with. Again dynamics should increase and bass players need to be careful not to mart-lift or mallet-lift too high. And let's see how clean and precise we can get the final RT, mart, and malleted note. Bass ringers will need to hand damp to achieve that precision.