



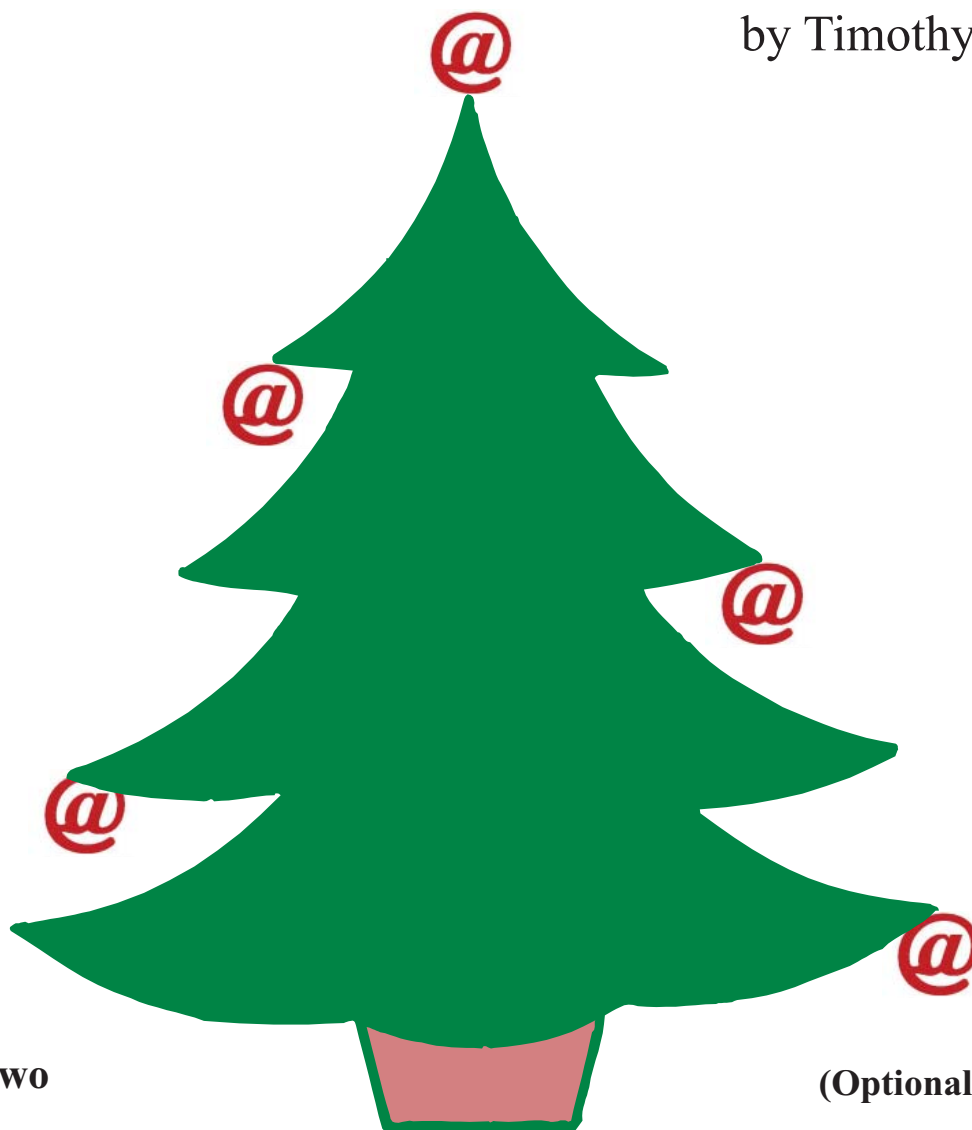
Azalea Circle

Christmas Collection

southern

*A dozen handbell arrangements
for use in teaching and performing*

by Timothy Shepard



Level One & Two

**2 Octaves
(Optional 3+ Octaves)**

CONTENTS

Introduction: What you can teach using this book

Rhythmic Exercises

Angels We Have Heard on High (GLORIA)

Away in a Manger (MUELLER, CRADLE SONG)

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (HYFRYDOL)

Comfort, Comfort You My People (WERDE MUNTER)

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (MENDELSSOHN)

Joy to the World (ANTIOCH)

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming (ES IST EIN ROSE)

Love Came Down at Christmas (GARTON)

O Come, All Ye Faithful (ADESTES FIDELES)

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (VENI EMANUEL)

O Little Town of Bethlehem (FOREST GREEN, ST LOUIS)

Silent Night (STILLE NACHT)

Watchman, Tell Us of the Night (ST GEORGE'S WINDSOR)

We Three Kings (WE THREE KINGS)

INTRODUCTION: WHAT YOU CAN TEACH USING THIS BOOK

RHYTHM

In this collection you will find meters of 3/4 and 4/4 . You will find very simple rhythmic configurations (level one and level two) of quarter notes, half notes, dotted half notes and whole notes, two eighth notes together, and lastly dotted quarter and eighth notes. That's it. If your choir can ring these pieces with comprehension and rhythmic accuracy, they are well on their way!

There are three pieces with simple mixed meters. In two cases -- "Comfort, Comfort" and "Lo, How a Rose" -- I decided not to use time signatures. Students in these cases should count the value of each individual note -- 1, 2, 3 or 4. In the case of "Love Came Down", the meter is predominantly in 4/4 with an occasional measure of 5/4. It made more sense to include the time signature.

To teach rhythm is to teach pulse or a VERY strong sense of the beat. If the sense of beat is timid, everything that follows will be timid and weak. I am all for bringing back dancing and marching to choir rehearsals -- morning, afternoon and evening rehearsals, young AND old included! When you really feel the beat, then you just want to dance. This is the first step to understanding rhythm.

Secret Tip #1: Make sure EVERY ringer gets it! A handbell choir is only as good as its weakest ringer.

To help conquer the various rhythmic patterns, I have included in this collection is a sheet of rhythm exercises. Each exercise corresponds to a specific arrangement in the book (They're in the same order as the book). Feel free to copy it if you'd like. My suggestion, however, would be not to hand the entire sheet out to your choir. That would be B-O-A (Boring On Arrival) Instead, use the white dry-erase board (we used to call them black boards, even though they were green) and write the exercise that pertains to the piece you are about to practice. Then use your imagination and practice them in wild and crazy ways: one ringer clapping the rhythm, all ringers clapping, some marching some clapping; some clapping some ringing; stems up/right hand bell and stems down/left hand bell; think dancing, think fun, think STRONG BEAT. You are done when all achieve correctness. And when they get it right, give them a reward!

Secret Tip #2: Figure out how to reward what is really correct. Rewarding mediocrity or incorrectness for the sake of affirming your student's self-esteem is anathema to real learning.

NOTATION

A question that I hear quite frequently among handbell directors is "do you circle the notes to help your ringers"? My answer is "No I don't circle the notes, but ringers will circle their own notes if they need it." And here is my suggestion to directors with ringers just learning to read music (and they are out there, coming out of the womb as such): You can make as many copies of any piece in this book for your organization. Make enough copies of a selection for all the ringers in your group, clearly indicate on each copy the assigned bells and then have each ringer circle his notes, collect and correct the the circle notes. Discard or use. Repeat as necessary. Eventually your ringers' eye will find the note without having to circle them. Guaranteed; it will come to them eventually.

Another common question is whether to move ringers to different positions. The answer is yes, ringers should be exposed to different clefs, different notes, different size bells. Move them around. Let me qualify that: if you are planning to perform one of the pieces, it is best that the ringer stay with the same position and practice the same bells and not ring different bells for that piece. Unless you enjoy chaos in your rehearsal, for each piece a ringer should stay in the same position. Second: When moving a ringer from one position to another, try to make that move several positions away. It will be less confusing to move from a position that reads notes on the top of the staff to one reading notes at the bottom of the staff than moving to the position one over. Even better would be a move to a different clef altogether.

And speaking of consistency...

Secret Tip #3: (You can skip this if yours is one of those rare choirs that has 100% perfect attendance.) When a ringer is missing from rehearsal, it certainly is unpleasant, harder to rehearse, frustrating, etc. etc. etc.. But don't make a bad situation worse. Here's the Secret Tip -- When Jane says that her part is easy and she can easily grab absentee Bobby's bells without any problem, don't believe her. JUST SAY NO. Jane is not going to be practicing her bells consistently, she will be practicing an entirely different part. She will no doubt mess up not just one part, but now two parts are wrong. The rehearsal has gone from an unpleasant situation into bell hell. It's better to learn to count through the silences of Bobby's part and get all of the other parts right. I do perfectly understand the temptation of trying to cover, but it is in the end a losing rehearsal technique. Don't do it. JUST SAY NO.

TECHNIQUE

This book contains the following bell techniques: Ring, D, Pluck, TD, Swing, Echo, Gyro, Martellato, Malleting (bells on the table and suspended) and Shake. If you do not know how to perform these techniques, join the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers. Note: The technique of "Ring" involves damping after the notated number of beats. Thank you.

In this book you will find three dynamic markings: soft (p), medium (mf), and loud (f). If your choir can actually achieve three dynamic levels, then they are better than 67% of the bell choirs in existence. After they get an understanding of soft, medium and loud, they will then be ready to master the infinite gradations between those three basic levels. Good dynamics help us to connect to the passion in music. You only learn and achieve good dynamics by demanding, insisting, constantly cajoling. It would seem that dynamics just don't come naturally to homo sapiens.

As a learning tool, I encourage you to use different techniques on the same piece. For example, a note with a staccato can potentially use the following techniques: Pluck, Thumb Damp, Mallet (bell on table), Martellato (although this has a different notational marking, but why not learn the technique). As you are learning a piece, try different techniques. Keep it simple and stay away from trying to incorporate two different techniques at the same time!

PERFORMANCE

People learn things by DOING. And they learn them even better by doing them under pressure. Bell choirs are like people.... they learn to ring better when they have the chance to perform in front of the gazing eyes and attentive ears of family and friends. I am all for bell choirs -- beginning, intermediate

and advanced -- preparing a piece thoroughly and then performing it (under pressure) to see just how thoroughly they really did prepare it. Performing in front of people (and especially after the sermon) is always a different ball game, and bell choirs should get used to it sooner rather than later.

The arrangements herein are short by design. A few may be served well by playing through it twice. Most arrangements are around two minutes. I figure at this stage in the game two minutes is plenty long for both your newbie ringers and your congregation who want to remain supportive.

If you need four minutes for your offertory, put two pieces together, or for a six minute postlude (which I heartily discourage as folks have Roasts in the oven), put three pieces together.

Two of the arrangements, titled in this collection "Watchman, Tell Us Of the Night" and "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus" can be played at other times of the year with different titles such as "Come, Ye Thankful People Come" or "Alleluia, Sing to Jesus". Feel free, you might as well get some mileage out of the book.

Here's another idea for performing these pieces: as a quartet. If you have four good ringers that are looking for a challenge, these pieces might work for that purpose. Azalea Circle Christmas Collection a Christmas concert in a nutshell.

If your imagination or your needs see fit, feel free to add an extra bell here or there if Johnny is looking bored. Let me qualify that... as long as it fits the harmony I have written and it doesn't ruin the piece. Please don't email me to ask permission, but I still do want the credit for the arrangement.

WHAT IS A SOUTHERN DOZEN?

I grew up in New Jersey. After graduating from Westminster Choir College, I moved south and have lived my entire adult life in Georgia and South Carolina. Shortly after I arrived in my first small southern town, Miss Myrle, an angel in the Church I had just arrived to serve, sent me home with a "southern dozen" cookies. There were 14 cookies in the tin. Since then I assumed that everyone knew that a southern dozen meant 14, not Webster's dozen of 12 and even more generous than a baker's dozen (13). This, however, is not the case. "I think what she probably said was a dozen southern cookies," a friend points out. Just the same, I hope you enjoy this collection of Christmas arrangements, 14 in all (a southern dozen!). BTW, it didn't take a New York minute for me to finish those cookies. Happy Ringing!

Timothy Shepard
Atlanta, GA

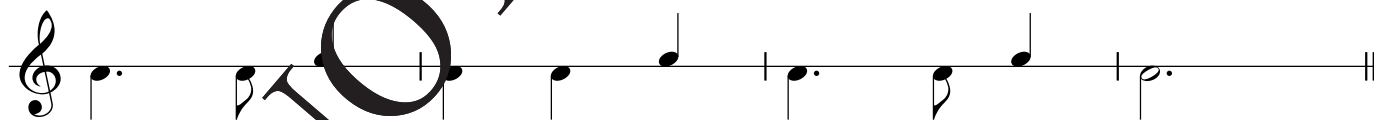
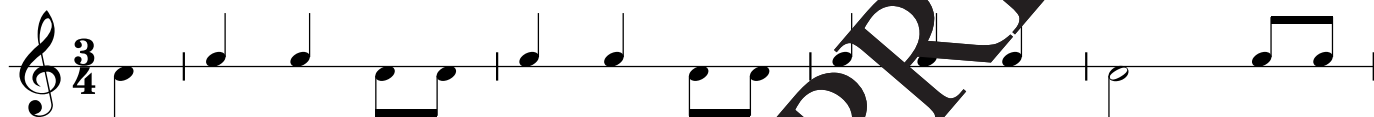
Rhythmic Exercises

Notes with stems down are played with the left hand and notes with stems up are played with the right hand.

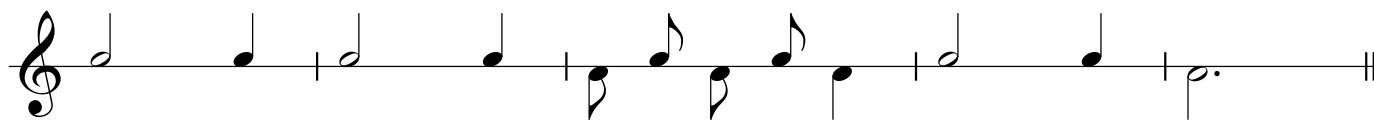
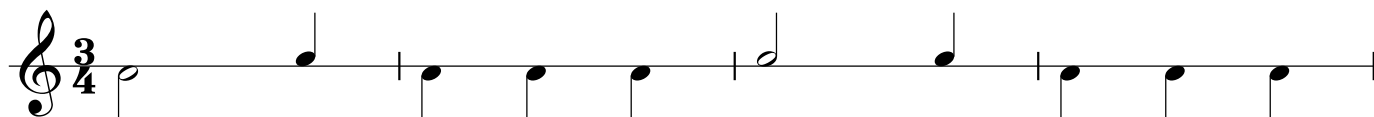
Angels We Have Heard



Away in a Manger

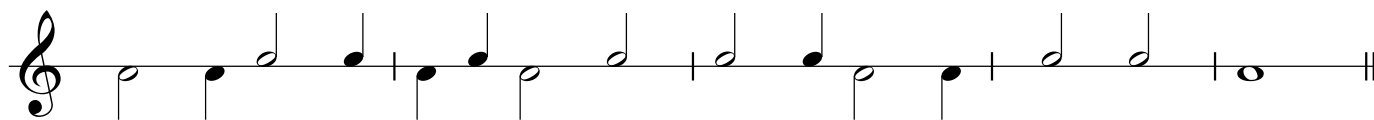


Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus



Rhythmic Exercises

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People



Joy to the World



Love Came Down at Christmas



Rhythmic Exercises

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The second staff continues the melody with quarter notes and a final whole note.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody features quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes. The second staff continues the melody with quarter notes and a final whole note.

Silent Night

One staff of musical notation in 3/4 time. It begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is composed of quarter and eighth notes, ending with a double bar line.

Watchman, Tell Us of the Night

One staff of musical notation in 4/4 time. It begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, ending with a double bar line.

We Three Kings

One staff of musical notation in 3/4 time. It begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is composed of quarter and eighth notes, ending with a double bar line.

Angels We Have Heard on High



2 Octaves (plus 1 optional bell)
Handbells Used: 15; (16)

arr. Timothy Shepard

Angels We Have Heard on High



3 Octaves
Handbells used: 22 bells

arr. Timothy Shepard

Away in a Manger



2 Octaves (plus 1 optional bell)
Handbells Used: 15; (16)

arr. Timothy Shepard

1 2 3 4

5 6 7 8 9

10 11 12 13 14

15 16 17 18 19

p

mf

Away in a Manger

(Consider using chimes instead of bells.)

3 Octaves

Handbells used: 22 bells used



arr. Timothy Shepard

Handbell notation for 'Away in a Manger' in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The score is divided into three systems of four measures each, numbered 1 through 14. The first system (measures 1-4) begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The notation includes treble and bass staves with various note values and rests. A large diagonal watermark 'NOT FOR PRINT' is overlaid across the entire score.

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

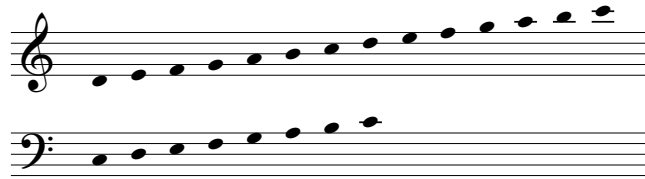
2 Octaves
Handbells Used: 15



arr. Timothy Shepard

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

3 Octaves
Handbells used: 22



arr. Timothy Shepard

1 2 3 4 5

6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15

A piano accompaniment for the hymn 'Come Thou Long Expected Jesus'. The score is written in 3/4 time and consists of 15 measures. The music is in a major key and features a steady, rhythmic accompaniment with chords in both the treble and bass staves. The first measure is marked with a forte 'f' dynamic. The piece is arranged for handbells, as indicated by the text at the top of the page. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'NOT FOR PRINT' is overlaid across the entire score.

Comfort, Comfort You My People

2 Octaves (plus 1 optional bell)
Handbells Used: 15 (16)



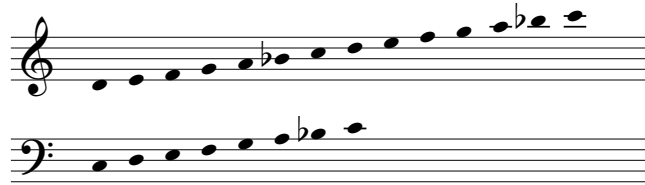
A musical staff showing two octaves of handbell notation. The top staff is a treble clef and the bottom is a bass clef. The notes are arranged in a sequence that spans two octaves, with a final note in parentheses indicating an optional bell.

arr. Timothy Shepard

The main handbell score, consisting of four systems of music. Each system has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is written in a style that uses many notes per measure, typical of handbell music. The score is numbered 1 through 18. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'NOT FOR PRINT' is overlaid across the entire score.

Comfort, Comfort You My People

3 Octaves
Handbells used: 22 bells



arr. Timothy Shepard

Handbell arrangement notation for 22 bells, spanning 13 measures. The notation is presented in three systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system contains measures 1-4, the second system contains measures 5-8, and the third system contains measures 9-13. The notation uses various rhythmic values and rests to indicate the sequence of bell strikes. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'NOT FOR PRINT' is overlaid across the entire arrangement.

Joy to the World

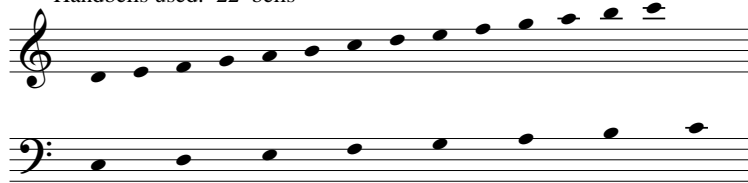


2 Octaves
Bells used: 15

arr. Timothy Shepard

Joy to the World

3 Octaves
Handbells used: 22 bells



arr. Timothy Shepard

NOT FOR PRINT

Piano accompaniment for 'Joy to the World' in 4/4 time. The score is divided into four systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system starts with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The second system starts with a forte (f) dynamic. The third system includes performance directions: a downward arrow (↓) above the first measure, an upward arrow (↑) above the second measure, a downward arrow (↓) above the third measure, and an upward arrow (↑) above the fourth measure. The piece concludes with a final chord in the fourth system.

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming



2 Octaves (plus 3 options bells)
Handbells used: 2 octaves (18 bells)

arr. Timothy Shepard

Performance Note:

Notes inside of parenthesis are to be played only if optional bells are used, even if they fall within the two octave range.

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming



3 Octaves
Handbells used: 32 bells

arr. Timothy Shepard

Love Came Down at Christmas

2 Octaves
Handbells used: 15 bells



♩ = 70

arr. Timothy Shepard

Love Came Down at Christmas

3 Octaves
Handbells used: 22 bells



arr. Timothy Shepard

$\text{♩} = 70$

1 2 3 4

p LV

5 R 6 7 8

mf

9 10 11 12 13

p

14 15 16 17 18

O Come, All Ye Faithful

3 Octaves
Handbells Used: 25 bells



arr. Timothy Shepard

The musical score is written for handbells in 4/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). It begins with a prelude consisting of two staves of music. The main body of the score consists of 15 numbered measures, each with a treble and bass staff. Dynamics include *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *f* (forte). A large, diagonal watermark reading "NOT FOR PRINT" is superimposed over the entire score.



O Come, O Come Emmanuel

2 Octaves
Handbells Used: 15

arr. Timothy Shepard

Note: The pertains to all whole notes in the measure. You are encouraged to experiment with other techniques to substitute such as swing or echo.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel



3 Octaves
Handbells used: 22 bells

arr. Timothy Shepard

Note: The \circ pertains to all whole notes in the measure. You are encouraged to experiment with other techniques to substitute such as swing or echo.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

2 Octaves
Handbells Used: 22



arr. Timothy Shepard

O Little Town of Bethlehem

3 Octaves
Handbells Used: 32 bells



Musical notation for the melody of 'O Little Town of Bethlehem', consisting of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in a simple, stepwise fashion.

arr. Timothy Shepard



Piano accompaniment for 'O Little Town of Bethlehem', consisting of three systems of two staves (treble and bass clef) in 4/4 time. The music is marked with a forte 'f' dynamic. The accompaniment features chords and rhythmic patterns that support the melody. A large diagonal watermark 'NOT FOR PRINT' is overlaid across the entire page.

Silent Night



2 Octaves
Handbells Used: 15

by Timothy Shepard

Watchman, Tell Us of the Night



2 Octaves
Handbells Used: 23



arr. Timothy Shepard

1 2 3 4

5 6 7 8

9 10 11 12

f

p

mf

Watchman, Tell Us of the Night



3 Octaves
Handbells used: 35 bells

arr. Timothy Shepard

We Three Kings



2 Octaves
Handbells Used: 15

arr. Timothy Shepard

We Three Kings



3 Octaves
Handbells used: 22 bells

arr. Timothy Shepard

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SUMMARY

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