

Inland NW Handbell Festival 2018 - Rehearsal Notes



Hi all! I'm looking forward to working with you at the Inland Northwest Handbell Festival on March 23-24. Below are some things to think about as you prepare the music for this event. Please come with your notes learned, ready to try out some fun things in the mass choir setting. If you have questions about anything in the meantime, feel free to get in touch with me at ron@ronmallorymusic.com. -Ron

TINS

When Morning Gilds the Skies, arr. Ron Mallory

The melody starts out in the bass clef in this piece and gradually works its way up to the treble bells, symbolizing the sunrise as morning begins to dawn. Be sure to emphasize the melody throughout, especially when played on the chimes in measures 24-37 and 52-56. Keep the thumb damps in measures 25-29 light and delicate. In measures 39-41, be sure to damp the lower bells completely on beat 1 to make for a dramatic chord entrance on beat 2. At the end, note that the F6 and C7 are played with mallets on suspended bells, very gently at a piano dynamic.

A Time for Joy, by Cynthia Dobrinski

I'd like to conduct this in "2" (with a feel of two beats per measure, at a tempo of half note = 80) in spite of the 4/4 time signature. The indication at the beginning is for this piece to be played "with energy"; a lot of that energy will come from our use of dynamics, so be sure to observe the crescendos and decrescendos throughout. These often occur in two-measure pairs, to give a sense of musical phrasing. In measure 8, we'll have the tower swing go down on beat 2 and up on 3. In measures 25-28 and 33-36, let's play the staccato notes with mallets (on the table) rather than thumb damps. Note the many other techniques used throughout, including martellato, martellato lift, shake, echo, and ring touch—as well as a couple of less-common techniques. In measure 70, "TPI" is short for "tap pluck"; this technique is performed by tapping the clapper downward against the casting with the thumb. In measure 95, "BD" or "brush damp" is an indication to lightly brush the bells against your shoulder on beat 2, bringing the sound down to piano without stopping the sound of the bell completely. Be sure to build to a true triple forte at the end.

COPPERS

Compassion, by Jason Krug

I asked Jason about this piece; he said that he originally wrote it for the Raleigh Ringers, but that there was no special story behind the music beyond that. I encourage you to come up with your own story or description of what the piece is about, and we can share our respective ideas as we rehearse it together. This piece has tons of possibilities for emotional expressiveness; be ready to watch during the many dynamic and tempo changes, as I may do them a little differently than your regular conductor. We'll work on giving lots of shape to the chime melody where it enters in measure 14. Give careful attention to playing the duplets and triplets evenly when we have the two-against-three rhythms in measures 34-37 and 72-74. Note the spots for doubling the high bells 8va; if any of you have a 7-octave set, note that the bass is doubled down in measures 47-48 as well. See the footnote about the "random echo" effect in measure 62, and note the soft malleted notes on suspended bells at the end.

Fly Me to the Moon, arr. Ron Mallory

Recent years have seen more and more arrangements of pop, rock, and jazz music for handbells, and I've enjoyed the opportunity to add a few of my own arrangements to this repertoire. This arrangement of "Fly Me to the Moon" starts out in

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3/4, imitating the style of the original Kaye Ballard recording; note that the 8th notes are played "straight" in this section. At measure 32 it goes into a 4/4 swing feel, something like the sound of the famous Frank Sinatra recording (though this arrangement isn't specifically based on that recording). If you can find copies of these recordings to check out, you'll get a sense of the style of each section. I've tried to evoke the sound of a big band as much as possible; the rhythmic chords with ring touches are meant to sound like brass hits, so be sure to play them boldly and accented. The chimes in measure 65-76 imitate the sound of a saxophone section "soli." Note the footnote with ideas for alternate chime assignments in this section. Also, I know it's hard to damp chimes quickly, so don't worry if you need to be a bit "lazy" with the damping here. Play out the bass solo in measures 77-80, and bring the dynamic down to mezzo piano in measure 81 for a buildup into the ending section, which starts at measure 89. Let's do mallet clicks rather than finger snaps in measures 85-87 since I'm sure many of you will be wearing gloves (which make finger snaps a challenge!).

MASSED

Variations on "In Dulci Jubilo," arr. Julie Turner

I asked Julie about this arrangement, and she said her thoughts on interpretation are pretty well covered in her rehearsal notes on the first page, so be sure to read through those. She said she had pieces like Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf" in mind as she wrote this, using music to tell a story. 4-, 5-, and 6-octave groups, be sure to note the high shakes in measures 39-54. In measures 60-81, the cleanest way to play the grace notes is to play both bells simultaneously and treat the grace note as a ring touch. See also the footnote about the C5 in this section.

Resurrection!, arr. Lloyd Larson

This piece is fairly straightforward to perform but very dramatic if done well, and I'm looking forward to hearing it played by our mass choir. As always, be sure the melody predominates, and exaggerate all dynamic changes for maximum effect.