



# Quarternotes

The newsletter of the BC Guild of English Handbell Ringers

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## BCGEHR EXECUTIVE



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## Why join BCGEHR?

Together, we're better

By Nikki Attwell

**guild** /noun/ an association of people for mutual aid or the pursuit of a common goal.

That's the Canadian Oxford Dictionary's definition of a guild, and it's a good one. But what that rather matter-of-fact description can't convey is the warmth of friendships made, the incredible experiences enjoyed, and the satisfaction that comes from rising to a challenge and growing musically through being a part of a larger family of bell ringers and participating in Guild events.

Churchgoers know that personal study and solitary worship are important parts of our faith journey, but that corporate worship and involvement in a church community broadens our scope of experience and growth, and enriches our lives as people of faith.

So it is within the handbell community. No doubt as individual ringers and choirs, whether in schools, churches or our communities, we have made wonderful music, contributed to our home environments, and grown as musicians. But so much more, and the opportunity for so many wonderful experiences, exist when we are members of a guild.

Simply put, together, we're better. We can do so much more corporately than we can on our own. Playing under different conductors, learning from other ringers and ringing *en masse* at workshops and festivals are wonderful ways to stretch ourselves



**Quarternotes** is the newsletter of the British Columbia Guild of English Handbell Ringers, Nikki Attwell, editor. Published quarterly — September, December, March, June — submissions can be sent to the editor at any time or by each issue's deadline, the 15th day of the month preceding publication. **Quarternotes** seeks to reflect the interests and activities of all Guild members, and to be a tool to foster and facilitate communication and cooperation among bell ringers in BC. To contact the editor or to forward material:

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**BCGEHR**  
*members pay a  
reduced rate to  
attend the  
Ringers'  
Workshop on  
Saturday,  
September 30  
in New  
Westminster.  
(see page 5)*

and grow as musicians. And as the Guild grows, the more we can offer to our members. If you or your handbell choir is not a member of BCGEHR, we extend a warm invitation to join. Some immediate benefits await new members.

Right now, individuals or choirs that join will pay one year's fee for the remainder of 2006 and all of 2007 — 16 months membership for the price of 12. This is offered to any ringer or choir who is not currently a member of the Guild, whether or not you have been a member in the past.

BCGEHR's objectives are to bring together handbell choirs from all parts of British Columbia, to encourage the formation of new choirs on an inter-generational basis, to sponsor workshops for ringers and directors, and to publish a regular newsletter, *Quarternotes*.

Members of the Guild receive this newsletter quarterly and can publicize their own events in it. We attempt to fill it with helpful and interesting information. Members receive an annual roster and membership card, and have one vote at the Annual General Meeting. They receive notice of, and are entitled to special member rates for, all Guild events. And they have the opportunity to participate in all Handbell Guilds of Canada and International Handbell Symposium events. You can read reports on some of those events on page 6 in this issue.

Just as importantly, members become part of a group of British Columbians diverse in location, interests, skill sets and experiences, but who share a common love of handbell ringing. Networking with those people, drawing on their expertise, and sharing information is one of those intangible benefits that membership in BCGEHR offers.

#### **Lending Library soon to be established.**

There are tangible benefits as well. BCGEHR is in the process of establishing a music lending library. Check out the article on page 4 for

more information and see how your choir can take full advantage of this new program.

#### **A bit of history**

The British Columbia Guild of English Handbell Ringers had its beginning in 1993. Our Constitution and By-laws were approved in 1994 and we were incorporated as a non-profit organization under the BC Societies Act on January 18, 1995.

BCGEHR is one of five provincial guilds in Canada (BC, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario), which together come under the umbrella of our national organization, Handbell Guilds of Canada. HGC sponsors Ringing Link, Canada's national festival (hosted by BC in 2005).

Further enlarging the circle, HGC is one of six members of the International Handbell Committee (which also includes America, Japan, Korea, Australia and the United Kingdom.) This year, Canada's Alison Wood of Edmonton chairs the IHC.

Since that first Symposium, every two years ringers from around the world meet at a venue in one of the six IHC member nations. Canada has been host twice, most recently 2004 in Toronto. Ringers from BC who traveled to the 2004 Symposium formed an advanced choir, BC Bronze, which has remained together and actively rehearses and performs.

To our non-member friends, we hope you will consider joining BCGEHR. You can download a membership form from our website ([www.bcgehr.com](http://www.bcgehr.com)), or contact the Area Representative for your area (see list on page 1. A warm welcome awaits you!

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	<b>Winfield, BC</b> (Central Okanagan)
	250-766-2649 <a href="mailto:Ind@cablelan.net">Ind@cablelan.net</a>

# President's Report

## Challenges for Fall 2006

Margaret Ormond

**G**reetings Handbell Friends! At the time of writing, I am only three days away from our editor's deadline and four days from flying (I hope) off to Europe for six weeks and I'm still procrastinating over penning this "President's Message"! I have delayed by doing everything I could invent including deadheading all the flowers and cleaning the car mats! But yesterday I was reminded of the significance of handbell ringing when friends of Carol Harris presented the Angelus Ringers with funds to purchase five bass bells in her memory. Carol succumbed to cancer a few months ago after a two-year battle. She had a great love of life and all styles of music and was an enthusiastic and graceful ringer of those big bass bells. To watch her weave was poetry in motion accompanied by sparkling eyes and a smiling face.



Carol's commitment to this musical form and now a lasting memorial by her friends remind me of the ongoing dedication of all who practice the art of handbell ringing. We are an interdependent musical instrument sharing with humor and camaraderie the ups and downs of rehearsals and performance and celebrating when "it has all come together."

The Guild sponsored workshops and Spring Ring provide an opportunity to improve our skills, share experiences and perhaps ring more challenging music, while blending into a larger ringing camaraderie than our "home" choir. A unique experience.

As we commence a new season of ringing I challenge you to the adventure of thinking flexibly, learning new and different techniques, more challenging musical scores, striving for excellence and being energized by the whole process. Nothing is impossible – especially with handbells!

Happy Ringing!

## Useful things

There is no shortage of websites full of useful information on handbells, some of which this column will introduce. If you have a favourite site or have come across one that would be interesting for other ringers, please pass the information along to *Quarternotes'* editor at [nattwell@telus.net](mailto:nattwell@telus.net).

### [www.ringinpraise.org.uk](http://www.ringinpraise.org.uk)

A resource which provides information and links specifically to support church handbell groups, with texts that have been used in the magazines of various churches to provide historical justification or background information on the benefits of handbells in a church music ministry. There are also ideas for using handbells in various parts of a church service, bell-themed socialization activities for developing the team spirit of a handbell group, and links to many other related resources.

### [www.musicnotes.com](http://www.musicnotes.com)

You can print free staff paper from this site. From the home page, click on "Free Sheet Music" and scroll to the bottom of that page.

### Bell Prayers

A book of weekly devotionals for handbell choirs. It is a spiral bound book with a piece of "prayer" music that your choir can sight read and "pray" at the beginning or end of each rehearsal. There is one for each week from September through May, and you need purchase only one copy, as permission is granted to copy whatever you need for your choir. You can order Bell Prayers in three ways:

Through Lakeside Press, PO Box 1075, Willmar, MN 56201, USA.

From The Ultimate Ringbinder. Go to [www.myURB.com](http://www.myURB.com).

From Jeffers Handbell Supplies. Go to [www.handbellworld.com](http://www.handbellworld.com).

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# Music Lending Library coming soon!

## A new benefit for Guild members

*Information from BCGEHR's Board of Directors*

Perhaps you are the director of a choir that has improved over the years and learned to handle more difficult repertoire, and that now has many titles in its library, sitting unused in a filing cabinet. Perhaps you lead a new choir that is just getting established, has limited resources, and would really appreciate the loan of some easy music. Perhaps you have some copies of a particular work but not enough for everyone in your choir.

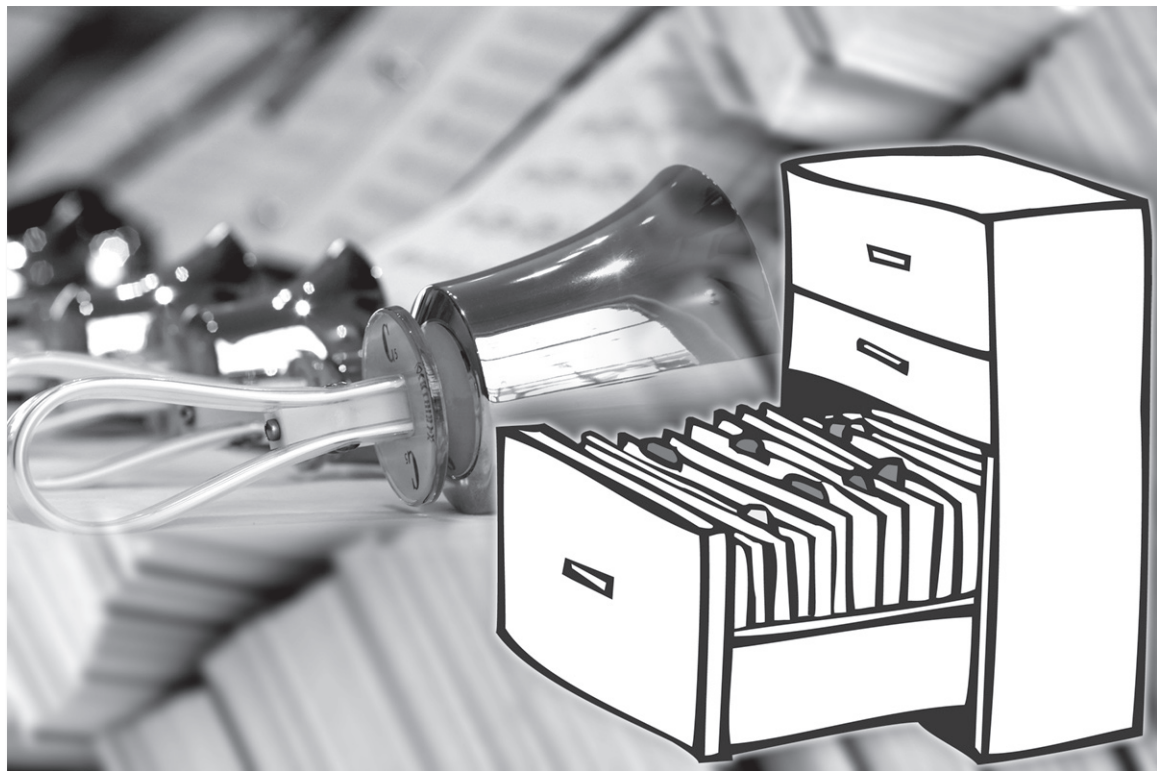
BCGEHR is setting up a virtual Music Lending Library that may provide solutions for all those scenarios, and more! It will serve our members by

making available a greater variety of repertoire to prepare and perform than they could otherwise afford. It will be an incentive for bell choirs that are currently not members of the Guild to join, and it will discourage the photocopying of music, which as we know, is prohibited by law.

The Board intends for the Library to encourage, rather than discourage, the purchase of music and the support of composers and arrangers and our traditional music suppliers, by encouraging fledgling or semi-active groups to become active and thereby purchase other music, and also by introducing works that choirs may later wish to purchase and add to their permanent libraries.

Here's how it will work. The Library will be open to choir directors who are members in good standing of the Guild, or directors of choirs that are member choirs in good stand-

ing. We ask directors or choirs to submit at least five titles to the Library in order to borrow from it, but choirs that have been in existence less than two years are exempt from this rule.



Directors and choir reps, watch for an inventory form to come shortly from Nikki Attwell, who will act as the "virtual librarian." Please note that participation in the library is completely voluntary! If you do not wish to submit titles, you are under no obligation to do so!

Directors/ reps should decide on the titles they wish to submit and return the form to Nikki. While we ask that you submit a minimum of five titles, the more titles each choir can offer, the greater the resource will be for all BCGEHR members. The form will include information such as the title, composer/arranger, number of octaves, sacred/secular/seasonal, level of difficulty, other instruments included, number of copies available. (The inventory form will come to you in two formats, a Word document and an Excel docu-

*Directors and  
choir reps:  
watch for  
your library  
inventory form  
to arrive  
before the  
end of  
September!*

ment. Use either one, and if you can fill it out electronically and return it by email, you will save the virtual librarian virtually hours of work, but a hard copy mailed or faxed back is also acceptable.)

When the inventory catalogue is complete, our Webmaster Joe Defries will post it on the website ([www.bcgehr.com](http://www.bcgehr.com)) and you will be able to download and peruse it. You can also request a hard copy by mail if you don't have internet access. Complete instructions for borrowing and returning music will also be on the website, but in brief, it will work this way:

Requests to borrow will be routed through the librarian, who will forward the pertinent information to the lending choir. The lending choir will send the music to the borrowing choir. At the end of the loan period (four months), the borrowing choir will return the music to the lending choir, who will inform the librarian of its return.

For everyone's protection, all music must be sent by Express Post or other courier, and must be insured for the replacement value of the music. While participation in the library is free, the borrowing choir will bear the full cost of shipping both ways. So if you borrow music, when you return it, you must reimburse the lending choir for the initial shipping costs.

While we want use of the Library to be easy and convenient for both borrowers and lenders, there will be strict protocols in place to protect the music and its owners, and to make sure it operates within the confines of the law. Your board of directors adopted the following policies regarding the Music Lending Library in June 2006 (you can request a complete copy of the policy from any board member.)

- Only original music is to be included in the Library, and music on loan is **NOT TO BE PHOTOCOPIED**.
- Borrowed music must be treated carefully and with respect, and must be returned in the condition it was received. (**Lost, destroyed or stolen music will be replaced by the borrowing choir at its expense.**)
- All copies must be stamped or otherwise identified with the name of the lending choir.
- Markings added to the music are to be in pencil only and should be erased prior to return.
- Borrowed music must not be loaned to anyone else or any other group.
- Borrowed music will be returned within the timeframe specified (four month loan period).
- Performance fees, if applicable, are payable by the borrowing choir.

If you or your choir rep doesn't receive an inventory form from Nikki by the end of September, please call 250.707.3375 or email her at [nattwell@telus.net](mailto:nattwell@telus.net). With everyone's participation, the BCGEHR Music Lending Library will be a tremendous asset to our members, and will be a great incentive for new groups to join.

## Events

### ***Don't miss this month's Ringers Workshop!***

**Saturday September 30, 2006  
Queens Avenue United Church,  
10 am – 2 pm**

**529 Queens Avenue, New Westminster  
(Registration at 9:30 am)**

**Fees:** \$15.00 BCGEHR members & Youth; \$20.00 Adults

**Registrar:** Barbara Harling  
604.465.4491, [mvharling@telus.net](mailto:mvharling@telus.net)

**Clinicians:** Nikki Attwell, Rosemary Bell and Janet Kyle.

Details and registration form are on the back cover of this issue of *Quarternotes*. Register today!

### ***Trinity Baptist Church – Kelowna***

#### ***A busy fall coming up***

Trinity's handbell season begins September 7. The group is already scheduled to play at one senior citizens' home in October, two seniors homes and one church in November, and in December it's five seniors homes, one community events program to raise funds for The Food Bank in Winfield, and also once for Hymn Sing at the Grace Baptist Church in Kelowna. Contact director **Dwight Holmberg at 250.766.2649** for details on any of these events.

### ***The Brockhouse Kerrisdale Handbell Ringers***

will be playing at Christmas at Hycroft on **Thursday, November 23, 2006** (time to be confirmed). Contact **Joanna Shephard at 604.261.1440** for details.

### ***9th Carols and Bells***

**Sunday December 3rd 7pm**

**Queens Avenue United Church**

**529 Queens Avenue, New Westminster**

Handbell choirs from Chilliwack, Langley, Burnaby and New Westminster. Solo and ensemble ringing with audience carol singing.

**Admission:** Adults \$15, Seniors \$12 and Children \$10

**Tickets:** Available at the door. Wheelchair accessible.

For more information, contact **Virginia Barteluk at 604.585.3894**.

# National and International Events

## Belonging to the Guild keeps you in the loop and offers opportunities

*Contributions by Barbara Harling, Joanne Harris & Nikki Attwell*

Symposia, festivals, camps, workshops, learning experiences: there are many different opportunities for those want to travel to a far away location, play under a different clinician, learn new skills, meet other ringers. Some of those events, like provincial and national festivals and the international symposia, are open only to members of a guild. BC ringers Barbara Harling, Jane Andrew and Sandra Trembly traveled to the other side of the world to attend the 12<sup>th</sup> International Symposium in Brisbane, Australia, and Barbara's report on that event follows. The opportunity to hear about and attend these events is a major reason for belonging to a handbell guild.

Other events, like the handbell workshop at the International Music Camp which straddles the Manitoba/North Dakota border, or Donald Allured's Week of Handbells in Bay View, Michigan, do not require guild membership, but generally, it is through one's guild contacts and networks that awareness of them is reached.

Joanna Harris has attended the IMC on several occasions, and she shares her thoughts on its value. This summer, Nikki Attwell traveled to Bay View and reports on that as well.

### **12<sup>th</sup> International Handbell Symposium, Brisbane Australia, August 2006, by Barbara Harling**

I was very fortunate to be able to attend the 12<sup>th</sup> International Symposium, which took place at the Brisbane Convention Centre, Australia, in August 2006.

There were around 600 ringers playing together and 2,500 bells laid out on the tables. This Symposium had a Youth Strand, over one hundred children from the age of ten and up. They had a different program, attended some mass ringing rehearsals and played several of the massed ringing pieces at the final concert. This was a novel idea to introduce youth to such a large event and I am sure they enjoyed themselves and had a wonderful time. Hopefully some of the youngsters will be future adult bell ringers.

The Opening Ceremony was held at the St. John's Cathedral in Brisbane City, and was so full that many had to stand at the back, myself included. The walk to the Cathedral took twice as long as I was led to believe so the seats were taken by the time I arrived! Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, AC Governor of Queensland and Mr Bryce

were in attendance. There was a very impressive welcome to Australia for the delegates. Organ music, voice choirs and handbells and of course the sounding of the Symposium Chord.

The next morning the rehearsals began. The sound of so many handbells just inspired me. The Convention Centre was the perfect venue, plenty of space for us all. The food was first class and the event ran like clockwork. The foams arrived late but it didn't matter as the symposium photo was taken while we were waiting so we still finished the morning in time for lunch.

The non-ringers had three day trips to participate in. Mike (my husband) thoroughly enjoyed them. They had an excellent tour of Brisbane, which included lunch at the Summit Restaurant with a panoramic view of the surrounding area. Another day was spent whale watching (reminds me of BC) and they did see whales, really large ones. Another day was spent visiting the crocodile hunter's conservation zoo, another great trip. The guides provided lots of information and made everyone feel most welcome in their city and Australia.

Our fun night was held at Dreamworld, about an hour from Brisbane. Dreamworld is a theme park with animals and lots to see and do. However, it was dark when we arrived and our group was at Dreamworld for the entertainment and meal and bush dancing only. It was a great evening though and the youngsters had a ball. They didn't appear to be tired at all, not like us seniors who took the first bus back to our hotels.

On the two remaining evenings mini concerts were held in the Great Hall. These concerts were open to the general public as well, hoping to whet their appetite to attend the final concert. The mini concerts were very enjoyable; there was lots of variety with the music chosen.

The young students also took part and did a great job with so much enthusiasm. It is very difficult to say which piece was my favourite as there was so much great music to choose from. The Hakuoh University Handbell Choir performed the Die Fledermaus Overture on seven octaves of bells. The music was arranged and conducted by Hirotaka Arai - absolutely stunning and the choir received a standing ovation that lasted several minutes. I would have liked to hear that piece again at the final concert, it was beautiful,



but J. Strauss is one of my favourite composers.

After the final concert, which was very successful, with a varied musical program, a didgeridoo, voice choir, brass and timpani, it was time to get ready for the banquet. Something different, which is very popular on such occasions, is alternating food choices. There are two choices for each course set on the table alternating at each place setting. If you don't like your choice you have to swap with someone if they are willing. I was lucky with my starter and dessert. A young lady from Brisbane told me that the convention centre meals have won awards, as the standard is so high. We had a wooden bell as a gift. It took someone a year to make them all, a huge task.

A great big thank you to Carmel Daveson, to the Handbell Society of Australasia, and to all the volunteers who have worked on this Symposium for so long. It was awesome.

#### **How I Spent My Summer Holidays 2005: International Music Camp, By Joanne Harris**

It was through BCGEHR connections that I learned about one of the best bell ringing experiences to be had: International Music Camp. July 10-16, 2005 was my third experience at IMC and it just keeps getting better. We ring bells from morning til night learning from first-rate teachers and having fun with other musicians of all ages.

The IMC campus is located in the International Peace Garden which straddles the Manitoba-North Dakota border. Handbell week is usually in early July. It attracts ringers from all over the United States and Canada, and sometimes other countries. The 20-50 ringers that attend IMC each year are usually adults, who stay in comfortable, air conditioned cottages, four to a room. Sometimes there are a few teenaged ringers, who live in the dorms where they can enjoy social time with their contemporaries.

Ringings begins after supper on the Sunday evening of arrival and continues for the next five days from about 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. interrupted

only by meals and coffee breaks. There are streams for ringers and directors and opportunities for solo and ensemble coaching. The "audition" process consists of filling out a questionnaire. This helps the director sort ringers into levels for two or three different choirs so that inexperienced ringers aren't intimidated and the hotshots aren't bored.

The instructors are the best I've experienced anywhere; they come to IMC for love, not money. Ringers come in infinite varieties, from classy performers who solo regularly and have recorded CDs to musicians who direct a bell choir, but have little or no actual ringing experience. Just another one of the benefits of IMC is all the great people you meet. One year, I roomed with three violists. Last year, two of my roommates had their own personal sets of bells at home; the other was an 80+ lady who had taken the bus from California to get some ideas for her senior ladies choir.

There are always plenty of bells at camp and lots of different ringing activities, from rhythm and reading exercises, to sight reading to learning several pieces for Saturday morning's public demonstration concert. There are opportunities to get expert coaching on a solo you've been working on or to get up an ensemble with some new partners.

By Tuesday, most people have recovered from the hectic pace and use their evening to visit the Peace Gardens rather than go to bed early. Wednesday evening is the faculty concert, Thursday the auditioned student concert (my personal favourite), and Friday a guest recital, all held in the 500-seat Quentin Burdick Theatre.

The best thing about bell camp is that there is no down time unless you want it. You don't have to stop to cook meals or do chores. You can't help but learn and improve under these circumstances! And you can't beat the price: \$300 US (\$25 discount for early registration). This includes instruction, music, instruments, meals and lodging (bring your own bedding). And as they say in the credit card commercial, the fun is priceless.

*Continued on page 10*

“It was through  
BCGEHR  
connections  
that I learned  
about one of  
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bell ringing  
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International  
Music  
Camp.”

# Feeling the Music

## Using mood to create a bond between composer, director, ringers and audience

By Nick Hanson

Is listening to music relaxing after a long day at work? Do songs at a sports stadium help fans cheer for their favorite team? Can music create a romantic mood when having dinner with a loved one? If so, the question becomes *why*? Multiple scientific studies and research have shown that music enhances brain activity, especially in the areas of emotion and deep feelings. With this concept in mind, I believe that we should challenge ourselves to better express the emotions found within the music we wish to perform.

To better understand different emotions within handbell music, I have provided two musical exercises to be played by your ensembles. Play through exercise 1 in this manner: loud and fast, loud and slow, soft and fast, soft and slow. After each method, ask the group what emotions and/or feelings that particular style creates in their minds. Some answers you will agree with, while others may surprise you. Now, continue with exercise 2 in the same manner. What moods are created now?

Compare these examples to music which you are currently rehearsing. Are there soft and slow sections? How about loud and fast sections? Is the music in a major key or minor key? Think of the emotions the ringers mentioned. Are any applicable to the choir's music? I believe there will be. The idea now is to plant those emotions into the ringers so that the music can be expressed even more.

Here is another experiment for the ensemble. Play through Exercise 1 in the slow and loud style. When finished, do it again but request the ringers to play boldly while keeping the same dynamic. When that exercise is completed, ring the example once more, this time requesting that the ringers play as if they were very angry. Again, keep the dynamic the same. Each result will be different based upon the emotions brought forth through their ringing. Try this same experiment with Exercise 2. Again, each requested emotion creates an entirely new mood.

Various tempi, dynamics, keys, technique and rhythmic passages will change the mood in any given piece. As a director, a main focus should be to analyze the music in order to determine what these moods are. There may be one particular mood being portrayed, or there may be many. Here are a few tips when researching what moods should be brought forth from a piece:

### Titles

The title of the piece is the best place to start. Titles such as "A Walk in the Park," by Karen Buckwalter, "Beside Still Waters," by Howard Starks, or "Dorian Dance," by Michael Joy generate an atmosphere before the ringers even pick up their bells. Explore the meaning of titles so that a general understanding can be shared among all the ringers.

### Musical Elements and Handbell Techniques

It is obvious that melodies, harmonies, rhythms, and different timbres change the characteristics of our music. Hymn arrangements are excellent examples of this since rhythms and harmonies are often changed, and multiple techniques added, based on the referenced text. Cynthia Dobrinski's "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise" arrangement does this exceedingly well. As for original compositions, the melody from Michael Helman's "Nocturne in C Minor," modulates to a major key before settling back in the original minor setting. As these melodies, harmonies, and rhythms change, so do the feelings associated with them.

### Tempo Markings

From *grave* (very slow and solemn) to *presto* (very quick), tempo markings tell us much in

The image shows two musical exercises for handbells. Exercise 1 is in C major, 4/4 time, and consists of two staves (treble and bass) with various chords and rhythms. Exercise 2 is in C minor, 4/4 time, and also consists of two staves (treble and bass) with various chords and rhythms. Both exercises are designed to be played by a group of ringers.

*Play through exercise 1 in this manner: loud and fast, loud and slow, soft and fast, soft and slow. After each method, ask the group what emotions and/or feelings that particular style creates in their minds. Some answers you will agree with, while others may surprise you. Now, continue with exercise 2 in the same manner. What moods are created now?*



just one word. With each new handbell piece added to your repertoire, look up the definition to the suggested tempo marking. This can become a very useful guideline when determining the overall emotions in a piece.

### Personal References

Most original compositions are written for a purpose. Some are written to create an image, as in Sondra Tucker's "Thorncrown Chapel Portrait;" some are written to define a word, as in Bill Payn's "Horizons;" and some are written to express the life of a loved one, such as Arnold Sherman's "Grazioso." When researching what emotions to convey in our music, there is no better reference than the source.

Through the composer, an idea becomes notes on a page. Through the ringer, the notes become sound. Through the ensemble, the sound becomes a story. Ultimately, handbell ensembles become the voice of the composer. But without emotion or feeling, a voice is nothing. Our goal should be for the audience to feel the "Tempest" brought forth from Kevin McChesney, to humble themselves with Julie Stitt in her "Prayer," or "To Praise Him with Cymbals and Drums" as Hart Morris does. The result not only enhances our music, it creates a bond between the composer, the director, the ringers and the audience.

### Resources on music and moods:

Harrar, Sari. "Got Pain? Got the Blues? Try the Music Cure." *Prevention* 51.8 (1999): 100-107.

"Music and the Mind." *Harvard Health Letter* 27.2 (2001): 4-5.

Steele, Kenneth M. "Arousal and Mood Factors in the 'Mozart Effect.'" *Perceptual & Motor Skills* 91.1 (2000): 188-190.

*Reprinted by permission. From Overtones (July/August 2006), the official journal of the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers. Nick Hanson is the newly appointed handbell director at The Potomac School, a private K-12 school in McLean, VA, where he directs the school's five handbell choirs. He has been an active ringer in church, community and professional ensembles for 16 years; and has directed for eight, and currently is the handbell editor for National Music Publishers. He holds a BA degree (Music major, handbell emphasis) from Concordia University Irvine, and is working for his Master's in Church Music (handbell emphasis) from Concordia University, Wisconsin.*

# Your ringing stance

## Some "Do"s and "Don't"s

*By Jason Tiller, of Sonos ([www.sonos.org](http://www.sonos.org))*

### **D**Os about stance

**DO** stand with one foot in front of the other to allow easy redistribution of your weight to relieve tension. Alternate which leg is forward to distribute the work.

**DO** bend your knees to put the weight of your body on your thighs and calves which are strong and not your lower back, which is weak.

When playing in the bass, **DO** put the foot that is forward very close to the table or even under the table. Bass ringing demands a lot of lifting from the table, which can be dangerous on your lower back if you lean forward. By placing the foot under the table, you move your center of gravity closer to where the actual work is done (lifting the bell), which again allows you to do more work with your legs and less with your back.

**DO** occasionally rock slightly forward and backward as you're playing. Normally you would move slightly forward as you strike, literally "giving" your energy to the audience. This rocking also reduces the strain from standing for long periods of time.

**DO** try to be more forward in your stance than backward. By leaning backward and standing away from the table, you are unconsciously withdrawing your energy from the group and creating a hole. You want to project, not horde, your energy.

**DO** move your lower body while you play. The creation of the sound does not start at the clapper head but rather in your body, from your toes on up through your legs, your torso, your arms and only then out of your hands to the bell through the clapper. Handbells are the most physical instrument you can think of, demanding the full participation of all your muscles. Use your whole body.

**DO** treat yourself like a dancer when you play. Handbells have a vitally important visual component to their performance. Don't short-change this aspect by appearing stiff and unapproachable. Your body's movements directly affect what the audience perceives as the music.

### **D**ON'Ts about stance:

**DON'T** stand with your legs together. You're limiting the mobility of your body, which makes injuries more likely to occur.

**DON'T** lean forward from your lower back. This is a sure-fire way to hurt yourself.

**DON'T** lean back all the time from the table when you play. This withdraws your energy from the group as a whole.

The bottom line about stance: if it hurts, you're doing it wrong. An athlete knows that they must be as loose as possible at all times, else they will pull/tear/injure a muscle during strain. We have the same problems as bell ringers. **Always** be loose when you play.

*Reprinted by permission. Jason Tiller, of Sonos, the renowned handbell ensemble based in California, created this set of guidelines in 2001 for a Sonos teaching session.*

IMC caters mainly to high school age students who come from all over the world to participate in this highly rated musical experience. During Handbell Week, ringers only make up a small percentage of the approximately 400 students, who come to sing, dance, and play guitar, piano and organ.

Some of these kids are following in the footsteps of their parents and grandparents when they come to music camp. Excited squeals and hugs in the registration line herald the reunion of friends not seen since last year. The kids are all very polite and committed to their art; they wouldn't think of indulging in bad behaviour or profanity or sneaking a cigarette, because they would be sent home immediately.

It's a very inviting environment: dorms, classrooms, performance halls and tiny piano huts arranged prettily amongst the lawns and trees. It's safe and secure: valuable instruments, cameras, music portfolios or sweaters will still be wherever you left them or turn up at the evening assembly during the "Found" announcements. Did I mention there are mosquitoes? Well, nothing's perfect.

**Donald Allured's Week of Handbells, Bay View, Michigan, by Nikki Attwell**

Two of my former quartet mates in London, ON, have attended Bay View for many years. This year, I joined them for the first time, and I can guarantee it won't be my last. The week was a wonderful challenge and experience.

Donald E. Allured, one of North America's pre-eminent handbell authorities, founded the Bay View Week of Handbells 29 years ago. Health concerns forced him, figuratively and literally, to "pass the baton" to Carl Wiltse a few years ago, but he continues to conduct one piece each year, and in fact was present at every rehearsal. There is nothing wrong with this octogenarian's hearing, or musicianship! He demands, and receives, the highest technical standards and the most musical performance the ringers can deliver. This maestro can identify one incorrectly damped note from among

91 ringers! Humbling, indeed. It was a thrilling, if somewhat nervewracking, experience to ring under his direction.

Carl Wiltse is also an exacting and challenging director but with his gentle wit and ready laugh, created an easy rapport with the ringers.

Bay View attracts ringers from across North America. This year 23 states and two provinces, plus France and Germany, were represented. Many are directors who don't often have an opportunity to ring. Others are ringers who want to challenge themselves with difficult repertoire. Beginning Monday afternoon, we had an intensive week of rehearsals that culminated in a public concert Thursday evening. The 91

ringers played on several sets of bells which ranged from the enormous C1 to four "little shrieker" C9s. We

received our assignments and purchased our music months in advance and were expected to come well prepared.

The Bay View Association is a community within Petoskey, MI, founded in 1875 by the United Methodist Church. Lovely colonial-style cottages with huge verandas and porches, and sporting names like "Come On Inn," are clustered near the shore of Lake Michigan in an idyllic setting. The Association offers music, worship, lectures and educational seminars each summer. Many Week of Handbell ringers are repeat participants, some for as many 12 or 15 years. It's easy to understand why, and I intend to be one myself!



*The auditorium is set for rehearsal at Donald Allured's Week of Handbells, Bay View, Michigan*

# Cross-country

## News from other Canadian guilds and AGEHR

### Alberta Guild of English Handbell Ringers

The Edmonton Begin to Ring Workshop will be held on September 16. Handbell Discovery will be held in Lethbridge, Alberta on October 14. This will be the first Discovery held outside of Edmonton or Calgary in some time.



The results of the ALGEHR Composer Competition are as follows: Category A (2 octaves): *Five Four Fun* by Fred Merrett. Category B (3 octaves): *Naples* by Fred Merrett. Category C (solo, duet, ensemble, 2–4 octaves): *A Welsh Folk Song* by Fred Merrett. Category D (youth composer): *Pearls of Praise* by Robyn Tyrrell. The youth category was new this year!

### Ontario Guild of English Handbell Ringers

OGEHR will host the next Ringing Link festival, planned for July 2–5, 2008, in London, Ontario. The organizing committee has already been hard at work on initial planning. This festival will be held at the University of Western Ontario, in London, which has space for 500 ringers AND an audience of over 1,000! Keep an eye on the official website (<http://www.handbell.ca/RingingLink/>) for details as they emerge.



There will be no provincial festival in 2007 but some areas are making their own plans. The East Central Area (eastern Toronto & area) is planning a one-day Spring Ring for May 26, 2007 at Durham College in Oshawa, involving four massed pieces and solo performances by participating groups for a final concert. The North West Area (Barrie & all points north & west) is coordinating a one-day joint rehearsal and concert with Kampana Bells, Bells Ablaze, Bellissima Ringers and handbell soloist Susan Carscadden-Mifsud on May 11 and 12 in Sudbury.

### American Guild of English Handbell Ringers Area X

The Area X American Guild of English Handbell Ringers supplied a grant to the Richfield School District in Richfield, ID for the purchase of handchimes. The school's music program had been lost due to lack of funding, and this grant helped restore it.



Michael Joy will be the guest conductor at an AGEHR Area X Youth Handbell Festival on November 4, 2006 at Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church in Gig Harbor, WA. Event contact person is Sharon Kirry; she can be reached at 253.265.1466, 253.225.1823 (cell), or by email at [kirry@centurytel.net](mailto:kirry@centurytel.net).

## By Heart

*Safety lies (they say) in numbers  
or in measures duly read,  
Marching right across the pages  
With a reassuring tread.*

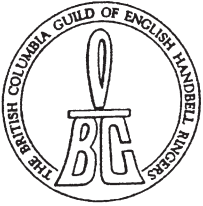
*Firmly we are bound to vision  
As a climber to his rope  
Terrified to do without and  
Cling instead to wispy hope!*

*Surely we have almost done it  
Thinking only of the art;  
Carved in memory by instinct,  
Notes we've almost got by heart.*

*What if we should lift our faces —  
What if we could memorize...  
Wouldn't it astound directors  
If they ever saw our eyes?!*

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# Ringers Workshop

(sponsored by BCGEHR)

**Saturday September 30, 2006      10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**  
@ Queens Avenue United Church,  
529 Queens Avenue, New Westminster

Schedule	9:30 a.m.	<b>Registration</b>
Opening	10:00 a.m.	<b>Basic Ringing Technique</b> ( <i>Everyone</i> )
Session I	10:15 a.m.	A. Nikki Attwell: <b>"Four-in-Hand, Weaving"</b> <i>An introduction to the various methods of Four-in-Hand ringing, and weaving, and their applications.</i> B. Janet Kyle: <b>"O – 60 in...AN HOUR"</b> <i>Come workshop a piece and take it from sightreading to playing musically in an hour.</i> C. Rosemary Bell: <b>"Playing as a Team"</b> <i>In this workshop we will explore in depth the working relationship a handbell choir must have with each other. Not for beginners.</i>
Session II	11:15 a.m.	A. repeat B. repeat C. repeat
Lunch	12:15 p.m.	
Session III	12:45 p.m.	A. repeat B. repeat C. repeat
Closing Cleanup	1:45 p.m.	



## What to bring?

- Your own bag lunch (coffee/tea/cold drink supplied)
- Registration fee: \$15.00 Students (K-12) and BCGEHR members  
\$20.00 for non-BCGEHR Adults.
- Gloves
- Bells, foam (if you can help, please contact the registrar)
- Circle which classes above you want to take part in

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

School District or Church \_\_\_\_\_

Please send registration form and cheque, payable to BCGEHR (BC Guild of English Handbell Ringers), to the Registrar: Barbara Harling 19766 Wildcrest Avenue, Pitt Meadows, V3Y 1M2 604-465-4491 MVHarling@telus.net