

Handbell Music Reviews  
Handbells etc  
Submitted by Camille Ream  
Edmonton, Alberta  
Fall 2011

## **Bell Tree Solos**

Handbells etc had the privilege of attending the AGEHR Seminar in Minneapolis this summer. We heard an absolutely amazing concert done with Bell Trees and piano. We searched for repertoire that we think that you might like for your selves. Bell Trees gives a new dimension to solo ringing! If you have not rung solos before, Bell Trees might be the place that you want to start. Remember, you will need to memorize the music to perform!

To get started, you need some kind of stand that you can hang the bells from as well as some way to link the handles so that the bells do not slip through or reposition. You also need mallets – likely ones that are a little harder than you would normally use.

**Children of Creation** – arr. Bocker and Geveshausen – this is for three or four octaves of handbells and 4 trees. Each tree has between six and eight bells. You can put two on each side of the stand. This is based on Holy Manna. The music starts with whole notes, moves to half and quarter notes and ends with eighth notes. There a few tempo and a few key changes as well! Loads of fun – are you ready for the challenge?

## **Handbell Solo Music**

**Red River Music Solo Collection** – this is a collection of music for a variety of seasons and from a variety of composers and arranged by Luttrell and Sherman. Likely my favourite is an original composition by Arnold Sherman called Grazioso. I am thrilled that it has been made into a handbell solo. Other selections in this book include Amazing Love (combined with My Saviour's Love), Catalonian Carol, Lauda Anima (Praise, My Soul, The King of Heaven) and Were You There.

**Songs for the Solo Ringer II** – arranged by Anderson and Page. This is interesting as it assigns levels to the solo pieces based on the AGEHR criteria. Pieces in this book are level 1 to 3. All selections are sacred (except for America's Flag). Each piece includes suggestions for bell set up as well as bell changes and piano accompaniment.

**Panis Angelicus** arr. Nelson – 2 octaves

This classical piece can be played by handbell soloist and a flute player or a handbell soloist and a Choirchime soloist along with piano or organ

accompaniment. This is a great way for a soloist to get started as the music is slow with the addition of the flute, some of the pressure is off for the first time soloist performer or it will add variety to a handbell solo concert. The slow tempo will allow the soloist to practice technique and form.

**Oh Little Town of Bethlehem** arr. Cheek – 2 octaves

This is one of my favourite Christmas carols. The melody is reflective but interesting to hear and to ring. This arrangement is written meditatively and would work especially well at a Christmas eve service. It would be classed as an easy level piece and although it is only one verse, it has great potential to played expressively that will touch people's hearts.

**Joshua!** Arr. Hascall – 3 octaves

This familiar spiritual will be loads of fun and challenge, even for the advanced solo ringer. The ringer will need to be able to do 4-in-hand well as they will need to use the "travelling four in hand" technique where each hand holds a primary bell constant and alternates between 2 secondary bells. There are extensive performance notes included in the score. Have fun!

**Fount of Blessings** arr. Anderson – 3 octaves

This great sacred piece is likely for the more advanced solo ringer. There are numerous tempo changes and may key changes as well the use of mallets and mallet rolls make this fun for the ringer as well as the audience. It is great to hear and see solo ringers playing this type of piece in a performance.

## **Quartet Music**

**The Entertainer** – arr. Kristenson – 3 octaves

This popular piece arranged by Scott Joplin will be great fun for any of your ringing quartets who are looking for something not sacred. You will recognize it as the theme song from the old movie "The Sting". It is classed as having medium difficulty. Please note that the arranger is Jane Kristenson from Nova Scotia!

**Go William, Tell It on the Mountain** arr. Moore – 3 or 4 octaves

This is a great piece for Christmas! I think that it is very clever of Moore to combine Rossini's William Tell Overture with the folk tune Go, Tell it on the Mountain! It is classed as a medium level quartet. It starts out quite simple with the traditional tune Go, Tell it on the Mountain. After the first verse, comes in the traditional William Tell rhythm. Add a little flair while playing, this piece will certainly be a crowd pleaser!

## **Trio Music**

**Mozart Allegretto** arr. Boude Moore – 3 or 4 octaves

There are not very many trio pieces printed for handbells. This new release is based on a traditional Mozart piece that you will all recognize. It is written in two

sections, each repeating once. No pages turns or complex bell changes. It is rated as easy to medium difficulty.

**Amazing Grace – Beach Spring** – arr. Boude Moore – 3 or 4 octaves

This is another new release written for a trio. This music starts out as a duet where only ringer 2 and 3 play for the first verse. In the second section, only ringers 1 and 3 ring. All ringers play in the last verse. If you have a new ringer in your ensemble, this is a great one to start with. Ringer 1 plays the same thing three times during the music! This leaves the new ringer a chance to learn their part while the more experienced ringers are getting a bit of a challenge. This music is rated as easy to medium.

**Song of Miriam** arr. Boude Moore – 4 octaves

This familiar tune, also known as Thanks Be to Thee by Handel, is written for a trio with a Vocal solo, C instrument, Bb instrument, A instrument, chime or bell solo. It would work well with a chime accompaniment and a bell soloist. Quarter notes throughout the entire piece for the ringers – so you will need to be sure that you play it musically and doesn't sound like a funeral dirge!

**Reproducible Music**

**Christmas Pieces for Young Ringers**

by Mitchell

3 octaves

Level 1 and 2

Teachers are always looking for music that can be used for children's choirs. This is from Kirtsy Mitchell's Busy Ringers series. Popular Christmas music in the book includes Jolly Old Saint Nicholas, O Come Little Children, Good King Wenceslas, Processional, Up On the Housetop, Jingle Bells, We Wish You a Merry Christmas and Joy to the World. All music has the counting printed in as well as instructional notes for both ringers and directors. Each piece is reproducible.