

Arranging for Non-Arrangers: Steps to Success!

Handbell Musicians of America

National Seminar, Arizona

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• Overview

- Macro Components
 - Melody
 - Form
 - Harmony
- Mezzo Components
 - Texture/ Accompaniment
 - Bass Line
 - Intro, Ending, Variety
- Micro Components
 - Dynamics
 - Articulation
 - Special Moments

1. In the Beginning

- a. Select Instrumentation
- b. *Handbell & Handchime Notation: Difficulty Level System, Solo and Ensemble Notation*
- c. How many bells or octaves?
- d. Limitations

2. Select your Melody

- a. Finding a "legal" melody
 - i. Public Domain – created 95 years ago (1925 or prior) in the U. S.
 - ii. Most International laws are different (year of death from last surviving author).
 - iii. Hymnary.org
 - iv. PDinfo.com
 - v. Internet Search
 - vi. Copyright info is located on the bottom of the first page
- b. Consider the range
 - i. Mary Had a Little Lamb (C–G)
 - ii. Joy to the World (one octave)
 - iii. The Star-Spangled Banner (1.5 octaves)

3. Define the Mood

- a. Emotions (simple to complex)
 - i. Level 1 – Happy, Sad, Angry, Mysterious, Triumphant, Serene
 - ii. Level 2 – Frightened, Flirtatious, Confused, Disruptive, Reassuring, Betrayed
 - iii. Level 3 – Inevitability, Guilt, Forgiveness, Closure
- b. Other Elements
 - i. Tempo (slow, moderate, fast)
 - ii. Time – 3/4, 4/4, 5/4...
 - iii. Heavy or Light?
 - iv. Busy or Idle?

4. Form: Design a Roadmap

- a. Introduction – 2, 4, or 8 bars (new material or existing material)
- b. Main Theme
- c. Main Theme again, but slightly different (*optional*)
- d. Transition/ linking material (*optional*)
- e. Secondary Theme (contrasting)
- f. Transition/ linking material (*optional*)
- g. Main Theme (again)
- h. Ending

5. Harmony: Chords and Movement

- a. Chord Characteristics
 - i. Major (C, E, G) – happy, optimistic
 - ii. Minor (C, E^b, G) – sad, gloomy
 - iii. Augmented (C, E, G[#]) – mystical, unsettled
 - iv. Diminished (C, E^b, G^b) – turbulent, unsettled
 - v. Extensions – added notes used to create more complexities
 - vi. Polychords – (G, B^b, D, / C, E, G) more complex
- b. Chord Movement
 - i. I (C) – home, idle
 - ii. IV (F) – like I, it can be idle, close to home
 - iii. V (G) – wants to go home to (I)
 - iv. ii (Dm) – typically wants to move to V
 - v. iii (Em) and vi (Am) – somber in nature, several blocks from home
 - vi. vii^o (B^{dim}) – a V⁷ chord but missing the root
 - vii. ^bIII (E^b), ^bVI (A^b), ^bVII (B^b) – examples of "further from home" and unexpected "leaps in progression."
- c. Chord Progressions
 - i. Folk – I, IV, V (C, F, G)
 - ii. Jazz – ii, V⁷, I (Dm, G⁷, C)
 - iii. Pop Progression (major) – I, V, vi, IV (C, G, Am, F)
 1. Let it Be (The Beatles)
 2. Take Me Home Country Road (John Denver)
 3. Don't Stop Believing (Journey)
 4. Can You Feel the Love Tonight (Elton John)
 - iv. Pop Progression (minor) – i, VI, III, VII (Am, F, C, G)
 1. Africa (Toto)
 2. It's My Life (Bon Jovi)
 3. Complicated (Avril Lavigne)
- d. Cadences (resting zone at the end of a phrase, sounds finished or unfinished)
 - i. Authentic – V, I (G, C) sounds like a musical answer (finished)
 - ii. Plagal – IV, I (F, C), think "A-men" (finished)
 - iii. Half – any chord to V (G) sound like a musical question (unfinished)
 - iv. Deceptive/ Interrupted – V, vi (G, Am) (unfinished)

6. Texture/ Accompaniment Patterns

- a. Thick, Thin, Other?
- b. Busy, Calm, Other?
- c. Repeated Rhythmic Patterns
- d. Arpeggios – broken chords (C-E-G)
 - i. Ascending/ Descending
 - ii. Alberti Bass

- e. Block Chords
 - i. Sustained
 - ii. Punctuated
 - iii. Close Voicing
 - iv. Open Voicing (spread)
- f. Imitative melodic material
- g. Tone Clusters – C, D, E

7. Bass Lines

- a. Function
 - i. Creates forward momentum
 - ii. Defines the Chord
 - iii. Creates interest against the melody
- b. Types of Bass Lines
 - i. Root of chord only – folk
 - ii. Root and fifth – polka
 - iii. Walking Bass Line – jazz

8. Intro, Ending, and Variety

- a. Introductions set up the theme
 - i. 2, 4, or 8 bars
 - ii. Grab the listener's attention.
 - iii. Use existing melodic, harmonic, texture, or new material.
- b. Endings give closure
 - i. Example 1: a restatement of the last four bars of melodic material
 - ii. Example 2: accompaniment alone
 - iii. Example 3: gradually slowing chords
- c. To add variety, consider alternate chords, changing textures, adjusting the bass line, and duplicating sections.
 - i. Example 1: verse two could use different chords than verse one.
 - ii. Example 2: the verse uses arpeggios, and the chorus uses block chords.
 - iii. Example 3: the bass line is different in the contrasting theme.
 - iv. Example 4: the introduction is also the ending.

9. The Beauty is in the Details

- a. Dynamics (volume) – *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *f*, *ff*
- b. Articulation – brings more detail to your notes
 - i. Ring, LV, Damp
- c. Special Moments
 - i. Mallet, Martellato, Pluck, Shake, Vibrato, Echo, Swing, Gyro

10. Now what?

- a. Don't forget about a title; a clever title is engaging.
- b. Get someone to look over your piece.
- c. Get your music played by musicians and request their feedback.
- d. Consider revising your piece if necessary.