



2026 National Seminar Class Sessions

Class descriptions subject to change.

BASICS FOR HANDBELL DIRECTORS

Bells, Ringers, Rehearsal Room: What Now?

Linda Lamb

You found handbells in a closet at your church, you surveyed and found enough people interested in ringing, and the church has tasked you with organizing and leading a choir. How do you get started? When do you rehearse? How do you choose music? What do you do at your first rehearsal? What are your goals for performance? Let's get started!

Developing Young Choirs - Ringing for Today and Building for the Future

Mark Arnold

Children and youth can be a vital part of your handbell program, but they are definitely not the same as your adult ringers! This class, which could also be called "Care and Feeding of your Young Ringers," is based on the instructor's 30+ years of teaching young ringers. It will provide an overview of developmental stages for different age groups and ideas for how to develop a children's or youth bell group, including recruiting, group dynamics, music selection, and rehearsal strategies for various ages and situations, with examples from a variety of churches' handbell ministries.

Fear Not! Good News of Great Joy for Inexperienced Directors!

Jackie Stephenson

Whether you volunteered or were volun-told, you are now the handbell director at your church or school. Now what? We will explore and expound on ten recommendations to help you succeed, garnered from 41 years of experience. Topics include (but are not limited to): to mark or not to mark, musicality, teaching rhythms, conducting, assigning bells, rehearsal musts, special events, attendance challenges, teaching beginners of all ages and choosing music. This class is devoted to the participant becoming a confident, successful leader/director...with or without a music degree.

Gamify the Basics - from Newbie to Confident in Record Time

Taryn Davis

Have you ended up in a church or school that has a set of bells but no one that knows how to use them? Or do you have eager beginner ringers that you want to start with correct technique and help them learn to read music without bogging them down? Then this is the class for you! Based off of the Strikepoint Program Curriculum created by Stevie Berryman, this class will show you how to get your new program off the ground running. Within 8 sessions, your ringers will be ready to conquer level 1+1/2 music! Take the guesswork out of how to organize and scaffold new skills. Learn how to

teach proper ringing strokes, simple rhythms, score reading, and the all important conductor watching skill, all while having fun with the gamified lessons. Perfect for teachers wanting to incorporate bells into their school as well as community and church group leaders starting new groups or needing a way to quickly integrate new members into an already established group without scaring them away. Participants will receive a free pdf of the 8 lesson Strikepoint curriculum before its upcoming publication.

Organizing Your Ringing Year

Kathleen Wissinger

The joys of directing handbells: a continual juggling of people, equipment, schedules, repertoire, rehearsals, subs, venues, other people's schedules, performances. Keeping track of all these moving parts in a well-prepared and organized way keeps your ringers well-informed and saves time in rehearsals - producing better results from your ringers and more fun for everyone, including the director!! We'll discuss tips on how to get your ducks in a row for a season of ringing – and keep them there!!

Ready, Set, Ring! A Practical Guide for New Handbell Directors

Marie Loeffler

Based on the 2016 edition of the Back to Bells workbook, this workshop provides a practical, hands-on guide for starting or revitalizing a handbell choir. We will explore essential elements of a successful handbell program, including equipment, rehearsal space setup, basic ringing techniques (stroke, damping, and dynamics), bell assignments, score preparation, and strategies for incorporating novice ringers into worship. This interactive session invites you to actively contribute ideas, share best practices, and practice ringing and directing in a supportive setting. Everyone will receive a copy of the Back to Bells workbook (with updates), offering additional guidance on working with small choirs, repertoire selection, and creative ways to integrate handbells into worship services. By the end of the workshop, as a new handbell director, you will gain practical skills, fresh inspiration, and a wealth of resources to help start and support your program.

Take it Up a Notch

Jennifer Stack

This session is for directors who seek to understand how to raise the bar for their choirs. Participants will be led through reflective and cooperative exercises to evaluate the needs of their choir and the opportunities they have to select new music for their group. We discuss intentional selection of repertoire that will help the choir to advance in any number of ways-their understanding of rhythm, specific techniques, a new musical style. The instructor will dive into some rehearsal strategies, and ways to leverage otherwise wasted moments within the rehearsal in order to teach and reinforce techniques. By using these strategies throughout the year, any group is capable of growing to a new level.

COMMUNICATIONS

From Good to Great: Stage Presence for Everyone

Hillary Marotta

The public performance is the culmination of all that a handbell choir has learned. This class teaches the importance of and attention to details that allow performances to truly stand out and

communicate the unspoken messages and musicianship of the art of handbell ringing. From the way we as ringers and conductors get on stage through the final note of the last piece, this class covers all of the ways we communicate with our audiences and achieve the level of professional musicianship. This class is applicable to everyone on the stage including ringers, conductors, and other performers.

Tuning Your Message: Strengthening Communication Within Your Group and With Your Audience

Marie Loeffler

Talking is easy, communicating takes intention. In this hands-on workshop, we will explore how to connect more effectively with both your ensemble and your audience. We will dive into speaking and listening skills, explore the four sides of communication, and discover how tone, body language, and words shape what people hear. Along the way, we will consider how to prevent common miscommunications and strengthen trust within a group. This interactive session mixes practical strategies with plenty of participation. You will leave with actionable tools to help you listen with purpose, speak with confidence, and communicate in ways that spark clarity, connection, and collaboration.

COMPOSING/ARRANGING/PUBLISHING

Conquering Copyrights

Nick Hanson

This class is for participants who have wondered how to start the journey of receiving permission to arrange copyrighted music for handbells. Topics to explore will include simple scenarios like seeking permission from handbell publishers for small edits/changes, up to tracking down ownership for songs from favorite artists, shows/movies, and performances. This class will also explore the concept of self-publishing, either as a sole entrepreneur or through an online service like Arrangeme.com.

Ringling with the Congregation - Arranging Hymns for Handbells

Christopher Boilesen

Incorporate your handbell ensembles into more of your service by accompanying the hymns. This course will introduce strategies for writing your very own hymn arrangements for handbells. Whether you have two ringers with 8 bells or a full 7-octave ensemble this course will have you writing arrangements for your ringers accompanying the congregation, choir and organ in no time. Music theory experience is not required.

The Art of Arranging Pop Music for Handbells

Nick Hanson

This class will explore various ways to bring popular music to the handbell medium. The class will take time to analyze different songs, discuss what pop music would or would not work on handbells (and the reasons why/why not), and ways to incorporate techniques and other musical ideas to best translate to the performer's intentions. One point of clarification is that this is not a copyright class! The goal for this class is to specifically research and analyze reasons some music works well for handbells and what steps to consider when considering and/or making arrangements.

The Art of Engraving (and the Chore of Proofing)

Michael J. Glasgow

Perhaps your piece has been accepted for publication and you've just received proofs. Maybe you've just finished writing a piece for your group at home. Or you work in the publishing industry as an editor or engraver and have to proof your work (or someone else's). How do you tackle the task at hand? This course isn't about working with engraving/notation software. It's about systematically proofreading a piece to ensure that what shows up on the page is accurate and legible (which are obviously critical), but also unambiguous and consistent (and many other positive adjectives), while balancing the broad-strokes objective information with the subtle nuances of more subjective edits. Michael will take you through a multi-step proofing methodology that's been shaped by his own unique blend of OCD and ADHD. He'll offer lots of tips to make the process efficient, prevent mistakes from slipping through the cracks, proactively address potential questions, communicate with editors/engravers...all of which help ensure that ringers and directors can be as successful as possible *from the very first read of your piece.* This course will benefit composers, arrangers, publishers, editors and engravers...whether you've never done this before or you've done it hundreds of times.

CONDUCTING

Basic Principles of Conducting

Stephanie Rhoades

This class is designed for anyone who wants to learn the basics of conducting. Whether you are a new director or a ringer who wants to be prepared to step on the conductor's podium when necessary, this class will provide you with basic techniques to proficiently lead an ensemble through a piece. By the end of the class, participants will know proper conducting posture, how to execute preparatory gestures, releases, and cutoffs, and how to conduct various patterns (two beat, three beat, and four beat), subdivide beats, and demonstrate tempo changes. Participants will also explore ways to use the left hand to provide cues, articulations, and dynamic changes.

Behind the Baton

Debbie Rice

The conductor's role is to provide leadership through conducting to communicate rhythmically accurate as well as musical interpretations for ringing performers. This session provides a check list for physical gestures beyond standard beat patterns including but not limited to the importance of prep beats, managing fermatas, cues, adding the left hand, and dynamics with practice as a group to explore these skills. We will also address the importance of learning styles which requires conducting to encourage ringers getting out of the score.

Beyond the Gesture: Conducting Past Basic Patterns

Billy Brandt

By learning the basic conducting gestures, we open a highway of communication between the directors musical intentions and the ensemble. However, basic beat patterns can quickly become limiting to advanced musical expression. Portraying the sound through your body and expanding your toolbox of gestures are all keys to moving past the basic conducting patterns. In this session we will dig deeper into the art of conducting and explore emotive gestures, macro vs micro meters, dynamic ranges, and more. One additional key area of study will be the role of conducting in a rehearsal setting and how to balance the tasks of teaching with appropriate conducting.

Conducting Creativity: Introduction to Conducting Gesture

Billy Brandt

Standing in front of a group of musicians and having to lead them in artistic performance using only body movements is an intimidating task for even the most tenured among us. But, what do we do if we have no background in the art of conducting? How can we approach conducting in a way that goes beyond basic patterns and evokes authentic expression for our ensemble? In this class, participants will work collaboratively to develop basic conducting gestures grounded in healthy kinesthetic movement, discuss score studying from a conductor's perspective, and analyze methods for being a creative conductor. By the end of this class, each participant will create their own "method" book complete with exercises and resources to foster a continued growth in creative, thoughtful, conducting.

How Do I Conduct That?

Joel Plaag

Changing meters! Random ringing! Adding percussion instruments! Conducting across giant spaces! How do we lead through these conducting problems? How do we best communicate with our players so that they feel confident and ready to play through the most challenging gauntlets of bell choir mayhem? In this course, we'll look at changing meters, fermatas, and the dreaded "nebula" conducting that comes with random ringing. We'll look at how to lead best when we have to conduct far across the room. Using real-world examples, we will discuss how to handle some of conducting's biggest challenges.

CULTURE

Boomer Bells--Keeping the Passion and Challenge

Sandra Eithun

"Would you like me to bow out of the ensemble, as I'm just not as fast as I used to be?" Many directors are hearing this question from their experienced older ringers. These are folks who are fantastic musicians, not beginners. They've been ringing bells for a lifetime, and don't want to be part of a beginning/level 1 ensemble, as they are used to working beyond fundamentals and love musical challenges. They are just starting to feel the effects of age and their hand-eye coordination might be compromised a bit. They feel like they're losing an "edge" they once had. This class will feature discussion and ringing of repertoire that provides a musical challenge – carefully selected to include level 1-3 pieces that have elements to feed their musicians soul while being a bit more "friendly" to their current challenges. Pieces with challenging syncopated patterns that repeat or return so that they do not need to be learned twice; pieces with a fullness of chordal texture that sound more difficult than they are; compositions where picking up mallets or chimes, etc. have a sort of "built-in" space for that to happen. Older ringers have still "got it!" and this class will help them thrive!

Handbells Are for Everyone - Music Reading Is Not Required!

Diana Montgomery

Learn about adaptive notation, a system of colored letters that allows anyone to make music. This can bring music and its emotional and social benefits to non-readers of all ages. Find out the latest resources available in this specialized format. Try your hand at ringing music in this format.

Noticed, Known and Needed: Creating a Culture of Belonging in Your Ensemble

Suzanne Neafus

Think of a time when you truly felt you belonged in a group; what made that experience meaningful? How can you create that same feeling with the people you ring with? In this interactive session, we'll explore how to build a culture of belonging where every ringer can be themselves and feel noticed, known, and needed. Together, we will explore small, intentional actions that foster trust, connection, and joy. Whether you're a ringer, director, or somewhere in between, you'll identify behaviors that help or hinder belonging and commit to one small change to strengthen your own ensemble.

MARKETING

Handbells and Pop Culture

Mitchell Eithun

"Winston would have loved this" is the most common response to handbell content on TikTok. But who is Winston and how is he related to handbells? This class will provide an overview of some notable culture touchstones between handbells and pop culture. Together we will think about how to explore the of the community's public image online and how engaging with pop culture can grow our reach in new and creative ways. What are our goals when we post about handbells? How can our online activities engage with new audiences and challenge our assumptions about who plays handbells? This class is applicable to anyone interested in promoting the art of handbells!

MUSIC THEORY

A Music Theory Primer

Kathleen Wissinger

Why all the accidentals? How do I count this measure? What was the composer thinking? Music Theory to the rescue! Our ears know what sounds right, but we don't always understand how or why it works. We'll cover the staff layout, notes, scales, modes, meter, note values, intervals, chords, expressions, dynamics, tempos and all the things that make music.....musical!! Become more connected with the music and understand the Whys, Hows and Whats of the music happening in your score.

A Pedagogical Approach to Understanding Rhythm in the Handbell Ensemble

Corbin Rasmussen

Does your handbell ensemble have new ringers who struggle with rhythms? Need an easy approach to making rhythms more accessible for everyone? The class is geared towards directors or ringers who want a new way to break down rhythms for those who are new to ringing in their handbell ensemble. The focus will mostly be for directors, but would also be great for ringers who want to learn how to better understand rhythms within the context of the handbell score. The class will be hands-on and will include handouts and resources that directors and ringers can take home and use with their own ensembles.

BINGO - Theory is FUN!!

Joy Toll-Chandler

Let's PLAY! – BIngo and Theory! Yes, indeed, theory IS fun – and we will use a "Bingo" board to work our way through "Basic Music Theory," including some aspects related directly to handbells. This class is for those seeking a refresher in basic theory, as well as those who have some knowledge of music but have been afraid to delve into music theory specifics. Key and time signatures, all things clef-related, notes on the staff, intervals, dynamics, tempos – this will be theory 101 in 1 hour. We will finish with a quick game of BINGO as we review what we learned (and there WILL be prizes!)

Counting....COUNTS!! – or – How do I count thee? Let me love the ways!!

Kathleen Wissinger

Rhythm is the heartbeat of music – and to keep track of the rhythms we feel, we count: most commonly with “1-2-3-4.” But sometimes a different method of counting suits better - perhaps the beats are divided differently, or the meter or tempo of the music requires a different approach. We'll explore 7 methods of experiencing and vocalizing rhythms, weighing the benefits of each: Numeric, Eastman, Gordon, Orff, Kodály, Takadimi and mnemonics (word syllables). Sometimes even mixing them up a little is beneficial. You'll soon have a range of counting options to choose from.

Exploring Symbolism Through Music Theory

Madeline Carey

Why is music able to evoke such intense emotion? Why do certain performances feel life-changing? In this listening and discussion-based class, we will be examining the effectiveness of musical storytelling based on compositional and performance-based decisions. Using music theory concepts as the foundation of analysis, we will discover how tonality, chord progressions, articulation, etc. formulate the listener's journey as well as the performer's artistic choices. Whether you are a ringer, director, or composer (or all three!), this class seeks to bring a higher awareness to the aesthetic experience of music which will help to more effectively shape our intentions when approaching our craft.

Meters Matter

Michael J. Glasgow

The world is messy, but time signatures don't need to be! Most of us understand the differences between 3/4 and 6/8 time (though we'll cover it for those who don't!), but what about 5/4 vs. 10/8? Or 6/4 vs. 12/8? What about "imperfect" or asymmetrical meters like 5/8 and 7/8? Is there REALLY a difference between 4/4, 2/2, and 8/8? (Spoiler alert: absolutely!) And must you conduct the time signature printed in the score? (Spoiler alert: not necessarily!) This course breaks it all down and then builds it back up using an accessible and engaging pedagogy. Participants will learn how to approach all sorts of time-signature building blocks and the jargon that goes with them (so if you're reading this and think all of these terms are "over your head," don't be afraid; this is exactly the course for you!). We'll cover beat groupings and subdivisions ("macrobeats and microbeats"), downbeat stress and secondary accents, syncopations, homorhythms, simple vs. compound time...and then explore how these apply to various meters. Concepts like triplets, hemiola, l'istesso, rhythmic diminution and augmentation will also be covered (again: if it's all gobbledygook to you, or if you "basically get it" but can't really explain it to your ringers or colleagues, COME TO THIS CLASS!).

MUSIC THERAPY

Experiencing a music therapy session with handbells and handchimes

Bruna Marinho de Almeida

This session is designed to engage people in a peaceful and therapeutic musical experience using handbells and handchimes. Participants will be guided through a series of therapeutic activities that promote relaxation, coordination, active listening, and rich sound vibrations. The session begins with gentle and peaceful warm-up activities, helping participants focus on their breathing, posture, and movements. Throughout the session, participants will explore the instruments and their many possibilities, fostering a sense of accomplishment, confidence, and self-awareness. I will lead call-and-response activities and improvisation, encouraging creativity and deep listening. Emphasis is placed on mindfulness, emotional expression, stress and anxiety reduction, enhanced mood, and the enjoyment of sounds. The session concludes with a reflective cooldown, allowing participants to share their experiences, sensations, and emotions. Overall, this music therapy session promotes cognitive stimulation, emotional well-being, and social connection, making it especially beneficial for anyone seeking meaningful and enriching experiences in life.

PROGRAMMING

8 Bells and a Bell Tree

Karen Van Wert

8 Bells and a Bell Tree encompasses a variety of music, including processional, introductory bell tree, BT and ensemble or handbell choir, and challenging music. Whether you are just getting started with bell tree or are looking for a challenge, there is something for everyone in this class. All the music referenced is published. Several videos will be shared along with a link to the current list of 8-bell music.

Bell Tree and Ensemble Music

Karen Van Wert

The Bell Tree community has seen a recent increase in requests for BT and ensemble music (a.k.a. BT and 1-7 ringers). This is a growing genre that addresses smaller choirs, BT ringers who don't want to ring solo, a variation to 12-bell music, and a small number of people who can take the bells to a venue. This class will explore published music for BT and 1-7 ringers.

Demystifying the Art of Programming

Billy Brandt

Based on the HMA published article of the same title, this session tackles the creation of concert programming. The foundation for any music program, concert programs are one of the fundamental tasks we have as music directors. However, it is one of the hardest topics to find concrete strategies to use. While many consider the concert program an ethereal creation disseminated by the music director, this class examines the building blocks of concerts and encourages participants to expand their own philosophies on programming. Participants will identify the parts of a concert program, begin to dissect musical works, and learn formatting strategies for their concert program. Moreover, participants will collaborate with each other to build concert programs which make sense in their own contexts. Finally, this session is also adapted for those that work in the church music setting who do not have formal concert cycles.

Discovering the Creative Musician Within

Joel Plaag

We are in a creative field, but sometimes creativity can elude even the best of us. What inspires our creativity? What blocks it? How did we get “stuck” limiting ourselves, and how do we get out? In this discussion, we’ll talk about what usually holds us back as creative people and how best to understand and adapt to it. We’ll look how our work as creatives can influence our music-making, and how making music can influence our creative side and connect us with others. We’ll talk about bringing that creativity into handbell concerts and how to make our performances into more complete experiences.

REHEARSAL MANAGEMENT

Organizational Strategies: Ideas & Roundtable

Anne Kelley

Looking for ways to organize equipment or simplify your set up and take down process? Organizational Strategies is the class for you! This session will cover a variety of different ways to organize your ensemble, establish set-up and tear-down routines, promote independence and set your ringers up for lifelong success. This session will give ringers and directors ideas to promote independent musicianship and streamline your rehearsal set-up and tear-down process. Throughout the presentation, participants will engage in an open discussion to share their own organization strategies. This will provide more time for ringing and less time for the other stuff!

The Handbell Rehearsal: Inside the Process and Best Practices

Billy Brandt

As directors, and ringers, it is easy for our focus to be fixed on our culminating performances. However, the work that we do in every rehearsal will directly impact the confidence and musicality our ensemble arrives at the performance having. Advancing our ensemble requires us to look specifically at how we use our limited rehearsal time to get the most out of our ringing experiences. In this session, participants will consider their own rehearsal strategies and attitudes before examining best practices on warmups, score study, goal setting, long-term planning, and more!

Too Many Bells, Too Few Hands

Brian Seemann

You've been here: Too few ringers and hands, and too many notes on the page. Some notes have to be left out, but which ones? Using some basic music theory knowledge and a little score study, this class will cover how to distill a composition down while maintaining its musical integrity. We will also cover some creative assignment techniques to help cover more bells with fewer ringers.

SACRED

Enhancing Worship with Handbells

Karen Van Wert

Handbells are commonly rung during worship as the Special Music, during Offertory, or as a Communion Hymn. Incorporating handbells into other liturgical elements of worship can enhance

the worship experience and add a special element to a service. Together, we will explore several practical ideas for you to use and brainstorm other concepts to expand our common library of ideas.

Handbells - Music or Ministry?

Mark Arnold

Handbells contribute beautiful sound to a worship service, but are we just providing music, or do we serve a greater purpose? This class will explore how we as handbell musicians can be more intentional about our roles as worship leaders, both in and out of the worship service, and how handbell ministry can contribute as part of both individual spiritual development and the overall mission of the church. We'll look at examples from several churches and discuss specifics that can be implemented by our own ringers at all levels of age and experience.

Worship Planning 101

Mitchell Eithun

How do handbells fit into the life of a faith community? What sort of music is appropriate for the congregation, the ringers, and particular days of the year? Together we'll explore diverse ways to incorporate handbells into worship, focusing especially on selecting music and placing it in an order of service. Both theological and practical concerns will be addressed for a variety of church contexts. This class is aimed at ringers and directors in faith-based handbell ensembles.

SCORE STUDY

New Music, Who Dis?

Brian Seemann

You just got a new piece of music – there is a lot to learn before you even pick up a bell for the first time. We will cover some basic score study techniques to prepare, mark, and even get some practice in before starting to ring.

Score Scanning Success

Anne Kelley

Any score is accessible with any type of handbell group! This class will help directors, ringers, and/or aspiring-directors, quickly navigating a handbell score to select repertoire for a traditional or non-traditional handbell ensemble. After attending this class, you'll be able to identify the trickiest parts of a score in seconds to help you select repertoire, figure out the difficulty, plan ringing assignments, and prepare for sight reading success! Whether you're new to ringing, a director, or an advanced ringer, this will be a great review to help navigate handbell scores! Geared at directors or ringers who want to direct, this class will help make any piece of music accessible for your group!

Well, Look at That! Score Study for Ringers

Kerry Johnston

While we may all read music, how often do we read past the notes? Everything on a page of music has a meaning. We will do a deep dive into several music examples, and see how advance study can enhance your learning of a new selection. Participants will analyze and play increasingly complex examples to discover what the music holds beyond the obvious notes on the page.

SIGHT READING

Improving sight reading and score study skills

Christopher Titko

Have you ever wished you could improve your handbell sight-reading and become a more consistent ringer? This class will share, in a creative and fun manner, seven time-tested ways that you can improve your sight reading. Together, the class will learn to study a score and make plans for difficult passages before even picking up a bell. Developing these skills will enable ringers to play more consistently and gain confidence in their overall musicianship. New music, from a breadth of composers and publishers, will be used and ringers of varying abilities are welcome.

SOLO/SMALL ENSEMBLE

Bell Trees – Introduction to the First Branch

Laura Blauch

Bell trees are fun to play and can be used in so many different ways, with or without other instruments. In this class, we will set up the tree stand, put together the first “branch”, learn how to play some simple tunes, and explore various options for using your tree. Please bring mallets appropriate for C5 and up.

Bell Trees Continued – Beyond the First Branch

Laura Blauch

Adding branches to your bell tree opens the door for more exciting repertoire but also creates some new challenges. In this class, we will assemble additional branches using the traditional keyboard setup, learn how to move from one string to the next and how to approach sticking patterns. Please bring mallets appropriate for C5 and up.

Ensembles Beyond the Numbers

Mark Arnold

Ensemble ringing has reached new heights of popularity in the past few years, but it has focused primarily on “standard” 8 bell and 12 bell music. This class will explore the wider range of small ensemble literature, from on-table quartets to various other configurations for less than a full choir. We'll take a little time for why we might need this kind of music, then delve in to some hands-on exercise with examples at multiple skill levels.

TECHNIQUE

Advanced Weaving

Nikki Evans

So you know how to weave. Maybe you're comfortable with several multiple-bell techniques. But can you do both at the same time? Learn how to combine weaving and four-in-hand. Some prerequisite knowledge of weaving is required; some knowledge of four-in-hand is recommended.

All About That Bass - Digging Deeper

Leslie Lewis

In this class we will dig deeper into the realm of possibility by looking at when and how to double down so we can use the expanded sets of bells and chimes with the golden oldies in our libraries. We will also take a closer look at assigning the bass bells (many of the philosophies apply to the entire range of bells).

Basic Percussion Methods

Jack Burdwood

How do you hold a tambourine? What's a vibraslap? Why can't I play the triangle with a pencil? All these questions and more are answered in this crash course on all things percussion. We'll dive into drums, cymbals, tambourines, triangles, shakers, and more while exploring the basic techniques needed to play them within a handbell ensemble. Come ready to experiment, play, and have a blast making some noise!

Bass-ics and Beyond!

Mark Arnold

It's all about the bass! This class will focus on healthy and safe bass bell technique, including equipment, setup, and ringing, with tips and tricks from the instructor's lengthy bass bell career. Topics include ringing options, stopped sounds, mallets, table layout, bell assignment, and how to cheat a few notes without getting caught.

From Clunky to Clear: The Art of Beautiful Chimes

William J. Murphy & Kathryn Jurado

Do you remember when you first played a hand chime? Was it in elementary school when it was good enough that you could make it sound? Or was it later in life and you were told it was just like playing a handbell? This hands-on class will teach participants how to achieve the best sound on hand chimes through the proper technique and performance of music with chimes, and their maintenance. We will also learn how to troubleshoot common issues with chimes. This class is good for both beginners and experienced ringers.

Handbell Science

Karen Van Wert

Harnessing the knowledge of handbell science opens the door to experimenting in sound production. The simple movement of a sustained note or the perfect execution of a technique can add drama and interest to a performance. Ringing the final chord with a deliberate style will close the piece in keeping with the overall mood. Abrupt or slowly fading into the distance, contemplative or exciting, joyous or sorrow-filled – help the music tell the story you wish to convey. Come into my laboratory and experiment with purpose.

Mallets in Motion

Jack Burdwood

Malleting is hard. But it doesn't have to be! Effortless motion comes down to three key components that you can practice anywhere, any time. In this hands-on class, we'll break down the methods of movement used by real orchestral percussionists to improve your mallet playing using simple, effective malleting exercises for solo or ensemble practice.

Mastering Handbell Tone and Style through Laban's 8 Efforts

Phoebe Yeung

Want to add more style and expression to your handbell ringing? In this fun and practical class, we'll explore how Laban Movement's 8 Efforts can help you create different tone colors and musical styles using your physical ringing techniques. You'll learn how movements like Dab, Glide, Punch, and Press can completely change the way your handbells sound whether you're playing soft, lyrical melodies or exciting, upbeat pieces. We'll practice movements that make ringing feel natural and musical, helping you control your sound and express emotions through physical motion. Through hands-on exercises and real musical examples, this class gives you simple tools to connect your movement with your music, making it easier and more fun to bring out the artistry in every piece you ring or lead. Perfect for ringers and conductors at any level!

Ring with Confidence: From Notation to Motion

Marie Loeffler

Whether you are new to handbells or looking to strengthen your foundation, this session offers a hands-on exploration of the fundamental techniques every ringer should know. Together we will walk through basic ringing motions and special techniques, learning not only how to execute each one but also how to recognize the notation that represents it. Using materials from the Back to Bells Workshop Curriculum and the Handbell and Handchime Notation Guide, you will increase your confidence through guided exercises, demonstrations, and plenty of opportunities to ring. Designed to be interactive and encouraging, this class provides practical tools and clear explanations that help transform notation on the page into confident, musical sound.

Six-in-Hand Methods

Nikki Evans

For treble bell hogs and soloists! Learn a variety of six-in-hand techniques, and applications for each one.

Techniques: A-Z

Kathleen Wissinger

Our beautiful, sparkling bells can make music in so many ways! We'll explore myriad techniques – the popular ones and the obscure ones – and learn the symbol attached to each. You'll learn how to echo, sing, roll, shake, gyro, vibrate, shimmer, twinkle – and much more. Copy the handout and bring to class with your binders, mallets, singing sticks and gloves!

Weave Me Alone

Nikki Evans

Looking for a way to handle all those bell changes? Want to try ringing a solo? Start with weaving! Recommended for bell hogs.

When the Bell You Need Is Not in Your Hand: Creative Solutions from C(3) to Shining C(8)

Erin Gerecke

We've all been there. The bell you need next is lying on the table, not in your hand where you need it! In this class, we will explore various techniques to help keep the music (and your confidence) moving along smoothly when bell changes are required. From picking up accidentals, to weaving, four-in-hand, bell shifts, and much more, there are many ways to solve your choreography challenges. (Some might even involve your neighbor!) The importance of marking your music will be discussed. Grace notes of specific advice for bass and upper treble ringers will be sprinkled

throughout the session. Individual trouble spots may be used as examples, so bring your music if desired. This class features hands-on opportunities to try out different ideas, so grab your gloves and get ready for problem-solving fun!

TECHNOLOGY

Crash Course in Recording and Videoing Handbells

Matt Gender

A crash course on everything one needs to know to successfully record their handbell ensembles, including different types of microphones, audio recorders, interfaces, editing, video systems, lenses, and video editing.

Dorico Music Notation Program for Handbell Composers

Paul Kinney

Music notation program Finale is no longer supported. It's designated successor is Dorico and is quite different. This class will discuss those differences and demonstrate how a handbell composer could use Dorico. Topics to include Dorico's names for things; screen layout and major program components; entry of notes and all the other symbols; preparing how the music looks on the page; symbols and notation specific to handbells; bells used chart; handbell templates; where to go for help; an overview of the manual; ringing compositions from Finale into Dorico. The class will also cover why a person should switch to Dorico and when not to.

Marking your Digital Music: ForScore For Handbells

Susie Amos

There's no point in using technology if it makes things harder. By the end of this session you will be able to use your tablet as an organizational, practice, and performance tool to work with digital copies of your music. Using the iPad app ForScore, you will learn how to add music to your tablet, how to organize it, annotate it, add links, buttons, and other features using the ForScore app. Most importantly, you will unlock the power of how handbell musicians can use ForScore features specific to our practice, including tips and tricks on making the iPad do what handbell musicians want it to do.

RINGING TRACKS

Repertoire lists, ringing track session descriptions, and audition information (for All-Star Choir) will be provided at a later time.

Advanced Ringing Track (A)

Celia Chan Valerio, conductor

Advanced Ringing Track (B)

Stephanie Rhoades, conductor

All-Star Choir

Brenda Austin, conductor

Intermediate Ringing Track

Joe Galyon, conductor

Beginning Ringing Track

Kimberlee Strepka, conductor