



Bass Bells Basics and Beyond *with Daniel Gibby*

Bass Bell Tips for Handbell and Handchime ringing, beyond just playing the correct notes at the correct time.

How to Not Sound Bad

Practice!

Watch the director to play at the right time

Prevent bass bell clinks and clanks dropping mallets, throwing bells

Table placement, mallets, handchimes and bell cradles

Care picking up and putting down

Control

- volume, placement, ringing technique



How to Not Damage the Bells

Cost of bells

Check bells before rehearsal

Hitting them

- proper technique on table

The heavier the bell, the greater the forces

Tightening screws sufficiently, but not over-tightening

Tell your director when something isn't right

- (before/after rehearsal)



How to Not Damage Your Body

Stretching

Holding the bell properly

Weightlifting

Breaks

- Stretching
- Exercise, especially if you go for weeks without playing

Calluses

- Gloves, band-aids and extra padding?

When we learn something new or are nervous, we tend to tense up, which inhibits muscle movement.

Muscles should be relaxed, not stiff. Have fun!

How to Not Have Fun

Hurt yourself

Stress yourself out

Attitude

Tension

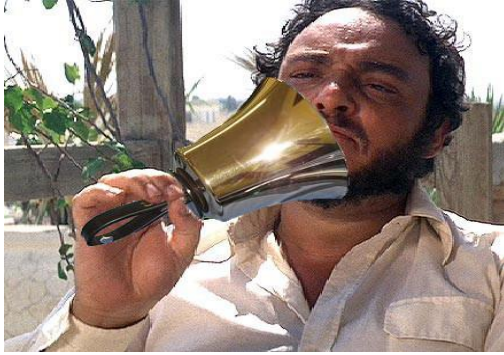
Missing Practices





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Ringling techniques

Ring

- Start ring early to play on beat
 - ring runs by playing notes in your head
- Don't play directly picking up from the table
- small bell vs. large pendulum exercise
- volume control

Malleting

- Draw sound out of the bell, not hit into it
- Volume control (direction of sound)
 - Sometimes mallet instead of ring on fast sections.
 - Malleting is usually louder. Don't over-mallet
- Playing in tempo and correct rhythm
 - play on table if necessary

Martellato

- Careful and precise techniques

Singing Bell

Dampening the Bell(s)

- Large bells may keep ringing on the table
- Change how you dampen to match the mood of the piece.

Large Chimes

- Vibrato, dampening, room on the table

Dynamics

Accenting beats

- *Sometimes* the bass is (or should be) felt, more than heard
- Many times it is the bass bells' job to accent beats and drive the song along.

Watch the melody

- The melody is usually played slightly louder than surrounding notes to bring it out.
- Sometimes the melody comes down into the bass, or even can be a solo there.

Support and fit in with the rest of the choir

- Very low bass bells generally need to be played a little louder in order to carry. But bass bells can be overplayed just like high bells can. Don't overplay!
- Know what the dynamic is for the section you are playing, but also the dynamic for your bells range, or the part you're playing.

Pleasing Audiences

Practice

- enough to be confident
- ask for help on impossible parts
 - from a bell neighbor if they are free
 - from the conductor

Arms and Choreography

- practice malleting and proper techniques with other ringers so you look similar.

Match the mood of the piece

- match dampening on shoulder throughout the choir when the song is slow.

Have a similar look throughout the choir

- bass ringers shouldn't always stand out

Facial Expressions - practice!