

Plink! Plank! Plunk!

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Understanding Handbell Design When Using Special Techniques

The fundamental is produced from the lip area of the casting and the 12th in the overtone series is produced predominantly in the waist or crown of the casting. The metal in these areas of the casting is thicker to produce a strong fundamental and 12th eliminating other overtones therefore the center wall of the casting is thinner.

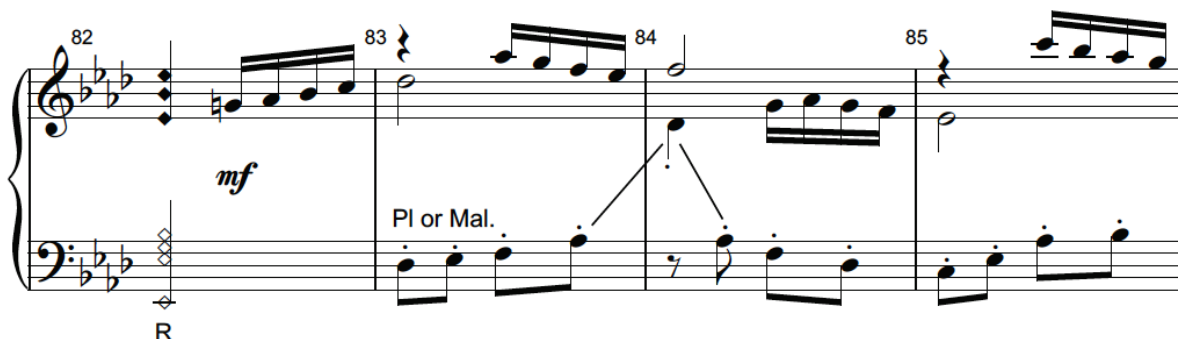
When the vibration of the casting is impeded, the casting then becomes more fragile. An example of this would be when the handbell is lying on the table.

A fixed clapper mechanism strikes a casting with less force than that of the hand and arm.

Stopped Techniques – Pitch Without Resonance

Pluck or PL (•)

Handbells are placed on a padded table and the clapper head is lifted and gently struck into the casting.



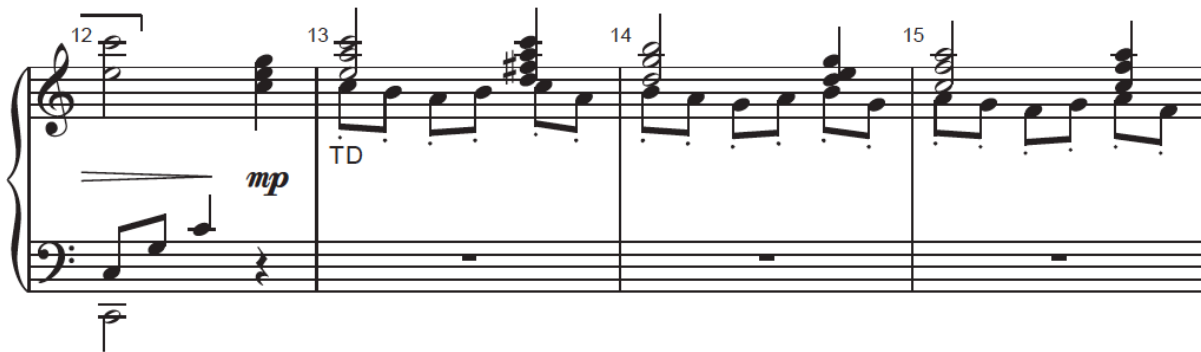
Tap Pluck or TPL (•)

Handbells are placed on a padded table and the clapper head is tapped with the thumb. This technique is often used to produce a softer pluck or with rapid notes in succession.



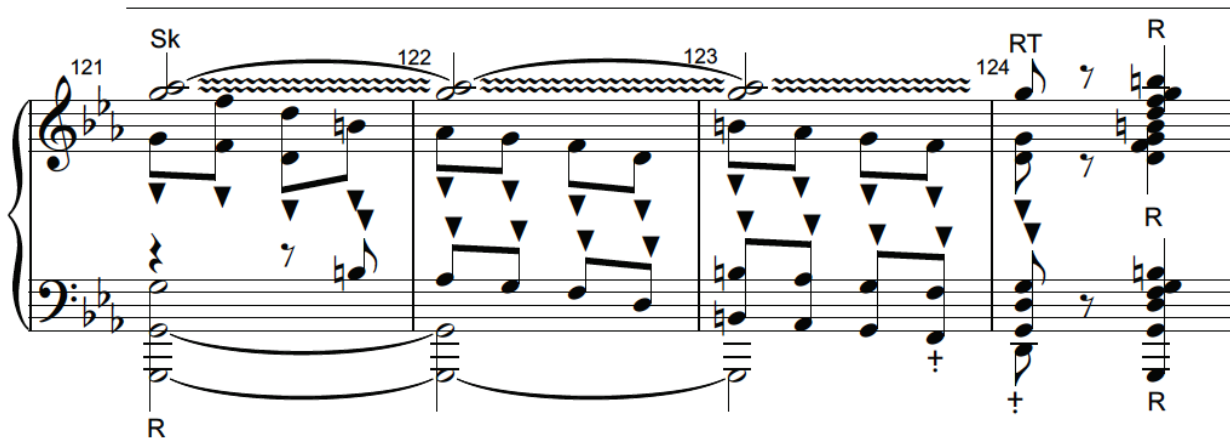
Thumb Damp or TD or HD (•)

The thumb of the hand holding the handbell is placed on the outside of the casting while ringing. Larger castings may require the thumb and one or two fingers. Listen for pitch without resonance. Hand Damp HD is used with large bells when most of the hand is placed on the outside of the casting.



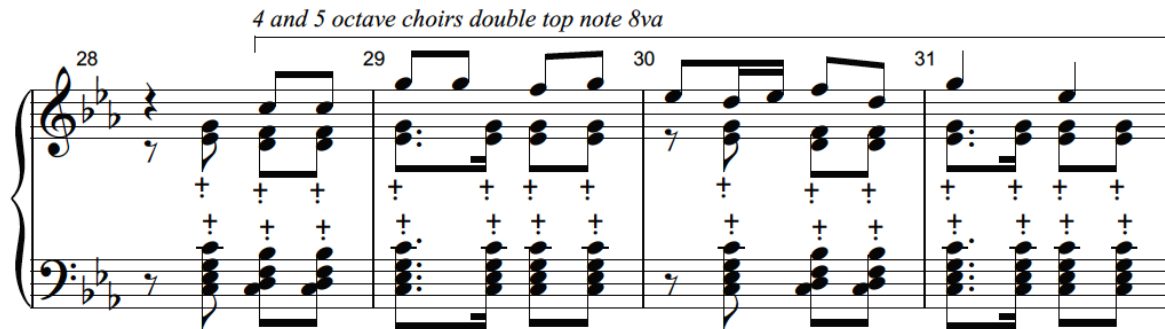
Martellato or Mart (▼)

The handbell is rung into the padded table. Hold the handbell in the ready to ring position horizontally three inches or less over the table and strike the pad with the fist causing the entire body of the handbell to strike the table. This technique should only be used on handbell pitches G₃ and higher. Balance within the musical is important.



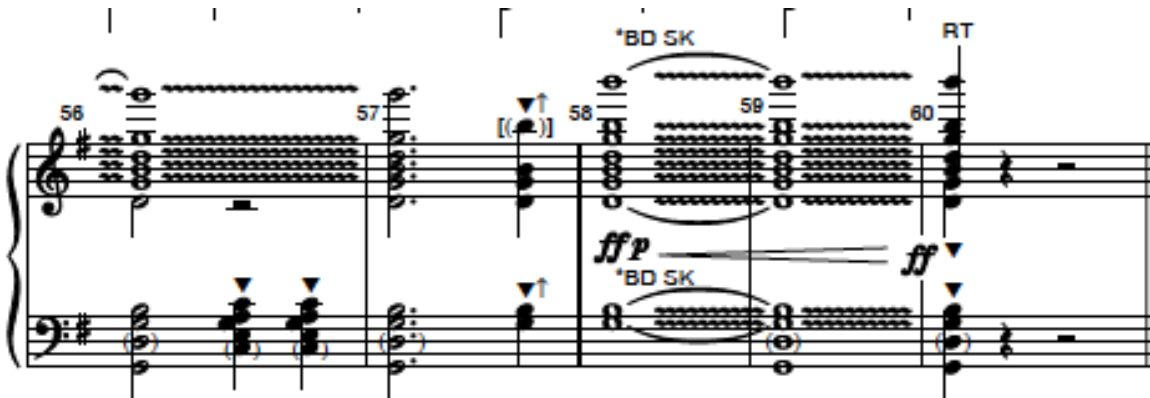
Mallet

Use appropriate mallets. A mallet should produce the same timbre as the clapper head setting on soft. Do not grip the mallet – suspend it between the thumb pad and the first knuckle of the index finger. The mallet should strike the casting closest to the lip as possible on the outside of the casting while the handbell is lying on the padded table. The greatest challenge of this technique is maintaining a steady tempo – alternating hands on repeated notes will help prevent this.



Ring Touch or RT

Indicates that a handbell is rung close to the shoulder with an immediate touch of the handbell to the shoulder to damp or stop the sound.



*BD (brush damp): After ringing the chord *ff*, quickly brush the bell downward against the chest to dramatically reduce the volume. Then begin the shake, raising the bell during the crescendo.

CGB437

Always use caution when using stopped techniques. They should be approached with a lighter touch than ringing a resonating handbell in the air. Musically, these techniques should be used for articulation and the sounds should balance throughout the musical score.

Swing or Sw

Rapid shake of handbell with the clapper striking both sides of the casting.

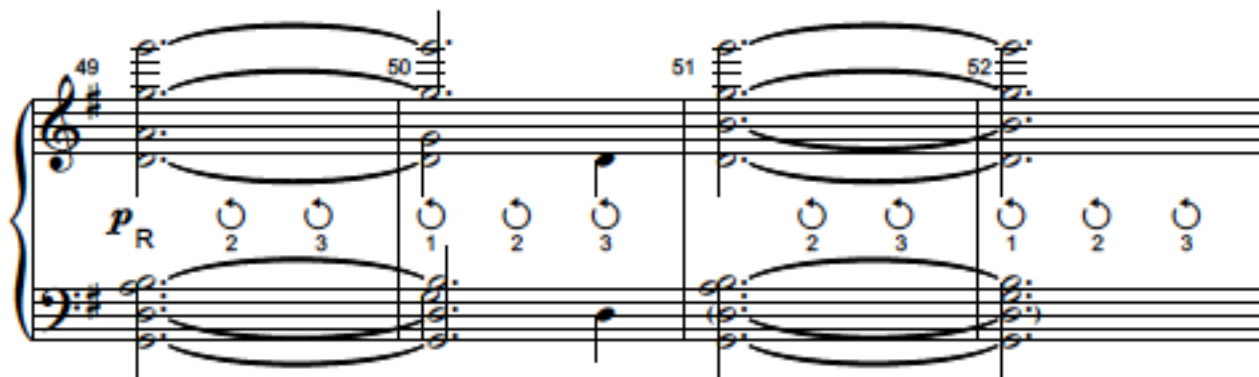
5 octave choirs double top note *Sva*

62 63 SK 64 SK 65 R 66

SK SK *ff* R

Gyro

Ring the handbell in a vertical position and immediately revolve it in a horizontal plane.



Singing Bell or SB

Hold the handbell away from the body so that the casting will vibrate freely. With a wooden stick, a dowel approximately 1 to 1½ inches in diameter and 6 to 12 inches long, rub the outside rim of the handbell in a circular motion, keeping an even pressure. Gently increase the speed until the casting begins to vibrate. Once the sound is producing, the speed of motion may need to be varied.



Echo

Ring the handbell closer to the table and then lightly touch the lip of the casting to the table on the beats as indicated by the echo sign.



Vibrato or *vib.*

Ring the handbell and gently move it from side to side using the wrist to create a wavering sound.

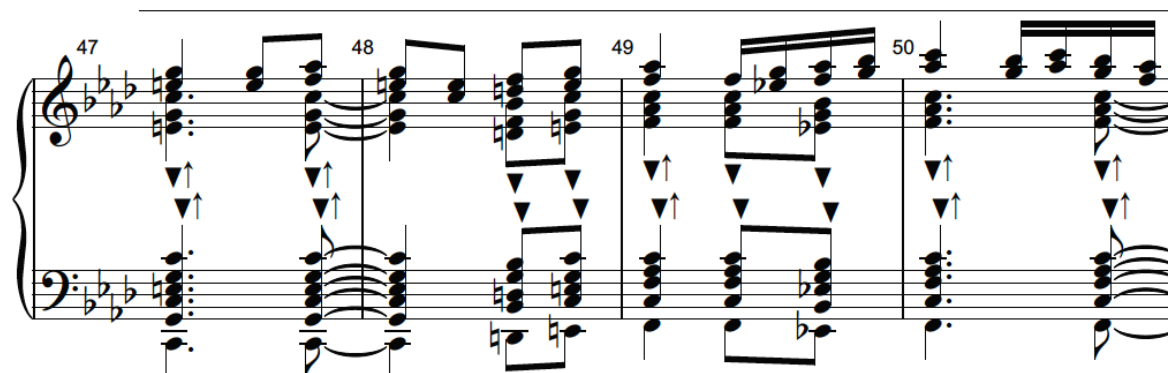


Pluck Lift

Pluck the handbell in normal fashion and immediately lift it from the padded table so that it continues to sound.

Martellato Lift or Mart Lift

Mart the handbell in the normal fashion and immediately lift it from the padded table so that it continues to sound.



Mallet Lift

Mallet the handbell in the normal fashion and immediately lift it from the padded table so that it continues to sound.

Joyful

This musical score for 'Joyful' spans measures 25 to 27. It is written for a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. Measure 25 begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and features a series of chords in the right hand, each marked with a downward-pointing triangle and a plus sign (+). The left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. Measure 26 starts with a rest in the right hand, followed by a right-hand entry (marked 'R') in measure 27. Measure 27 contains a sustained chord in the right hand, indicated by a wavy line and the letters 'SK', while the left hand continues its accompaniment. The piece concludes in measure 28 with a final chord in the right hand.

Mallet (+)

A + indicated that a suspended handbell is held by the hand and struck with a mallet.

This musical score spans measures 41 to 45. The right hand part features a melody of quarter notes, each marked with a plus sign (+) to indicate a suspended handbell. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment. Measure 41 starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Measure 42 has a crescendo hairpin. Measure 43 is marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. Measure 44 has a decrescendo hairpin. Measure 45 begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic, followed by a 'sub. *mf*' (subito mezzo-forte) marking, indicating a sudden increase in volume. The score concludes with a final chord in measure 45.