

Northeast Region
Handbell Festival 2025
Mass Notes

Prepare the Royal Highway

I have played with this both ways, but the best way to direct this and keep people together is beating 1 beat per measure. However, please be flexible enough that should we need to count it 3/per measure, we can. How well we all stay together will also determine how fast we take this piece. The key is to have fun with this piece!

Be ready at mm. 94, to switch to chimes – we cannot slow down and stay together. At mm. 110, once you hit beat 1, feel free to switch to bells with mallets – the sound will carry. Be accurate on the counting for the malleting parts so it sounds crisp.

Please watch at mm. 163 to the end. We will not slow, but I will give each beqt of 167-168 so to end together.

Easter Joy

An oldie but a goodie!

The biggest challenge at the beginning is to note the quick key change already at mm.5.

We should be at f through mm. 17, but suddenly drop to mp at mm. 18, then grow gradually to mf as indicated at mm. 26. The watch the tricky key change again at mm. 27. We will not slow down for this, so to stay together.

At mm. 30, upper bells – 1/8 notes – please play softly so the melody can come through on the chimes through mm. 46. We have another key change at mm. 49 – have the mallets at the ready!

At mm. 66 be firm on the accent notes and at mm. 69, start watching, I will give each beat to the end so to end together.

Benediction

This is a lovely short piece. At our church, we did it with bells playing the accompaniment and the piano playing the choral part. Please help keep the steady beat as I will also be assisting the choir with their entrances and cut-offs throughout. At mm. 28, I will begin to slow the piece – during the “Amens”.

Come Thou, Almighty King

Be bold and brave – start at ff! The key to this piece is to be as accurate in counting as possible. If we are successful, there will be segments that will sound like “3 against 2”. There are a lot of ring-taps in this piece, watch for them.

At mm. 10 we come in a little softer, but grow back to ff at mm. 24 and decreasing just a little at mm. 32. I am suggesting that everyone table-damps rather than thumb-damp. Those playing these parts, please do so softly, the lower notes have the floor at this part.

At mm. 47 grow to ff at mm. 48 and quickly drop to mf at mm. 51. At mm. 56, start growing again – and for those malleting, now let the ringing notes have the floor. At mm. 63 get suddenly quiet, then grow note by note to ff at mm. 65, softening again by mm. 69 with the table-damp-lift.

At mm. 80, lower malleting get louder so all are at ff when they come in at mm. 81. At mm. 88 get suddenly softer with the shaking and grow to ff by mm. 90. Please note the C6 does not shake. At mm. 90, the upper four notes shake, the rest play. Upper notes, please be sure to cut off on beat 1 of mm. 91 so the lower notes play that last beat alone.

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

I plan to take this at the marked speed of 112 – faster, if we can. The biggest challenge in this piece is to pay attention to tie-over notes so not to play where not warranted, for example at mm. 1, 3, 5 – no one should strike a bell at beat 3 – and other places in the piece.

The piece is a little repetitive, so we tell our story by paying attention to dynamics and accents. See mm. 7-8 as needing those accents. We start out f, and soften to mf starting at mm. 10. We grow again at mm. 27 to f at mm. 28. Watch for these dynamics throughout. At mm. 72, grow to f and starting at mm. 77 start growing again, noting the accents, and grow to ff by mm. 79. We will not ritard at all to the end. I will hold the last note for a while, to let the sound fade, so just watch for the cut off.

It is truly a pleasure to be your director again – and to serve you as the national chair. Can't wait to see everyone again!

Questions? Text or call me 715-551-0966 or email – traeders@charter.net