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SIX-IN-HAND

AN ARTICLE BY CHRISTINE ANDERSON



SIX-IN-HAND

by Christine Anderson

What is the purpose for ringing 3 bells in each hand?

This technique is basically for solo/ensemble ringing, and has little place in a handbell choir.

1. Processionals (made more stunning when tying flowing ribbons around your pinkies!)
2. Substitute for handbell tree
3. Ringing fast notes, complicated passages
4. Just for the fun of it

How to notate six-in-hand clusters:



(these clusters will be used on the following pages to demonstrate how to set up for each hand)

How to set up each cluster:

Left hand:



Lay out three bells, lowest to highest, left to right. Number bells lowest to highest, 1-2-3.

Turn bell #1 to the **right** and insert the handle into the handle of bell #3, then turn it upright, as in the shelley configuration.

Turn bell #2 to the **right** and insert the handle through the handles of both bells #1 & #3.

Example: G=1, A=2, C=3 – G goes into C, A goes through both G & C handles.

Bells #2 & 3 ring like the “interlocked” 2-in-hand method, and bell #1 cannot ring. To ring bell #1 alone, turn your wrist so the clapper of bell #3 is facing downward; tip your wrist back toward your body, and ring bell #1 with a gentle tap.

Right hand:



Lay out three bells, lowest to highest, left to right. Number bells lowest to highest, 1-2-3.

Turn bell #3 to the **left** and insert the handle into the handle of bell #1, then turn it upright, as in the shelley configuration.

Turn bell #2 to the **left** and insert the handle through the handles of both bells #1 & #3.

Example: D=1, E=2, G=3 – G goes into D, E is in the middle through both handles.

Bells # 1 & 2 ring like the “interlocked” 2-in-hand method, and bell #3 cannot ring. To ring bell #3 alone, turn your wrist so the clapper of bell #1 faces downward, tip wrist back toward your body, and ring bell #3 with a gentle tap.

The right hand is the mirror image of the left hand.

Helpful hints:

Left hand: Hold this cluster with thumb on the far right, first finger between #2 & 3, 2 fingers between #1 & 2, and rest your pinky along the side of bell #1, along the handle block. Do not wrap pinky around the handle.

Right hand: Hold this cluster with thumb on the far left, first finger between # 1 & 2, 2 fingers between # 2 & 3, and rest your pinky along the side of bell #1, along the handle block. Do not wrap pinky around the handle.

Middle bell in both hands: Rings straight forward, as though it was the only bell in your hand.

Remember to tip your wrist back toward your body whenever starting the ring stroke; never let the weight of the bell cluster strain your forearm by holding the bells out straight. Let the weight rest on your elbow; let the power of the bell stroke come from your shoulder.

Damping: “Ring where you damp”: Whether damping at the table, waist, or shoulder, bring your hand close to the damping place and ring from that space. Use as much motion as possible – part of the beauty of six-in-hand ringing. It's not necessary to observe strict note-value damping. Overlapping of sound is actually desirable, and LV is often a good sound.

There are video clips of all the various multiple bell-in-hand methods on www.voicesinbronze.com

Questions? Email Christine at vbronze@yahoo.com