

# Ringling Articulations

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## Understanding Handbell Design When Using Special Techniques

The fundamental is produced from the lip area of the casting and the 12<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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.

A musical score for handbell pluck technique. The score is written for a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The tempo/mood is marked *mf*. The score consists of four measures, numbered 82, 83, 84, and 85. Measure 82 shows a chord in the bass clef with a diamond symbol below it labeled 'R'. Measure 83 has a pluck symbol (a diamond with a dot) above the first note. Measure 84 has a pluck symbol above the first note. Measure 85 has a pluck symbol above the first note. The label 'Pl or Mal.' is written below the first note of measure 83. Arrows point from the label to the pluck symbols in measures 83 and 84.

### **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 G<sub>3</sub> 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.

4 and 5 octave choirs double top note 8va

Musical score for mallet technique, measures 28-31. The score is written for a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). Measure 28 starts with a 7-measure rest in both staves. Measures 29-31 feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the treble clef and chords in the bass clef. Above the treble clef, there are plus signs (+) indicating specific mallet strikes. A bracket above measures 29-31 is labeled '4 and 5 octave choirs double top note 8va'.

## 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.

Musical score for Ring Touch or RT technique, measures 58-60. The score is written for a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one sharp (F-sharp). Measure 58 has a 7-measure rest in the treble clef. Measures 59-60 feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the treble clef and chords in the bass clef. Above the treble clef, there are plus signs (+) and a bracket labeled '\*BD SK' (brush damp) over measures 59-60. A vertical line labeled 'RT' (Ring Touch) is at the end of measure 60. Dynamics markings include *ff*, *p*, and *ff*.

\*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.*

## Resonating Techniques

### Swing or Sw

By swinging the handbell after it is rung, a change in pitch will occur. The arrows indicate on which beats the movement occurs.

CGB955

The musical score for 'Swing or Sw' is written for piano in two staves. It consists of two measures, 61 and 62. Measure 61 begins with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked 'LV' and '3'. The bass staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked '1' with an upward arrow. Measure 62 begins with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked 'LV' and '3'. The bass staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked 'Sw' with a downward arrow and '3'. The score is labeled 'CGB955' at the bottom left.

### Shake or Sk

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

5 octave choirs double top note Sva

The musical score for 'Shake or Sk' is written for piano in two staves. It consists of five measures, 62 through 66. Measure 62 begins with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked 'SK'. The bass staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked 'SK'. Measure 63 begins with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked 'SK'. The bass staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked 'SK'. Measure 64 begins with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked 'SK'. The bass staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked 'SK'. Measure 65 begins with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked 'R'. The bass staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked 'R'. Measure 66 begins with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked 'R'. The bass staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked 'R'. The score is labeled '5 octave choirs double top note Sva' at the top center.

## Gyro

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



Musical score for Gyro, consisting of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system covers measures 49-50, and the second system covers measures 51-52. The music is written in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a right-hand (*R*) instruction. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1, 2, and 3. The second system continues the piece with similar fingerings.

## 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.



Musical score for Singing Bell or SB, consisting of two systems of piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Somewhat free" with a quarter note equal to approximately 66 (♩ = c. 66). The music is written in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The first system begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and a right-hand (*R*) instruction. The second system includes a right-hand (*R*) instruction and a left-hand (*SB\**) instruction. The score is divided into six measures, numbered 1 through 6.

### 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.



Musical score for Echo technique, measures 33-38. The score is in treble and bass clefs. Measure 33 starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes a '2' and '3' with upward arrows. Measures 34, 35, 36, and 37 each feature an 'LV' (Lightly Vibrate) instruction above the staff. Measure 35 also includes an 'R' (Ring) instruction above the staff. The bass line consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

### Vibrato or *vib.*

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



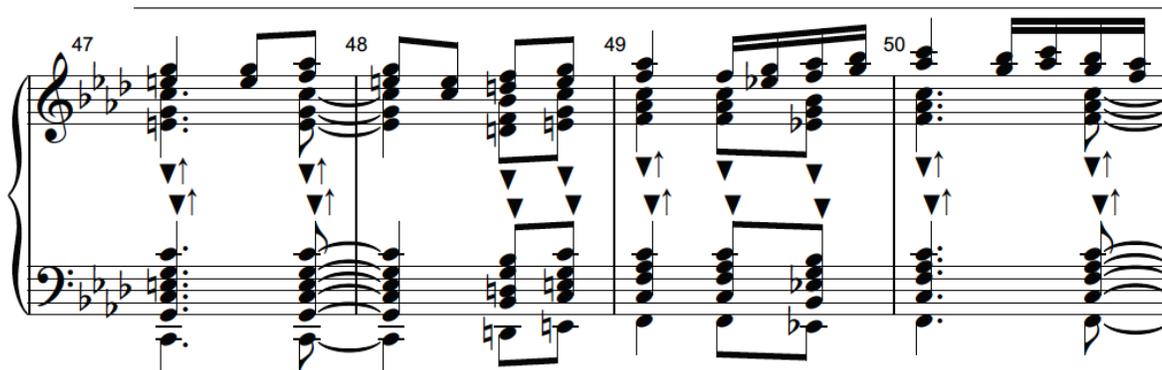
Musical score for Vibrato or *vib.* technique, measures 1-3. The tempo is marked as  $\text{♩} = 76-84$ . Measure 1 includes a piano (*p*) dynamic and an 'LV' instruction. Measure 2 includes a 'vib.\*' instruction above the staff. Measure 3 includes a 'vib.' instruction above the staff. The bass line features a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

### 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.



Musical score for Pluck Lift and Martellato Lift techniques, measures 47-50. The score is in treble and bass clefs. Measures 47, 48, 49, and 50 feature complex chordal textures with many notes. The bass line includes a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 48 includes a 'vib.' instruction above the staff.

### Mallet Lift

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

The musical score for 'Joyful' is written for piano and features several mallet techniques. The piece begins at measure 25 with a dynamic marking of *f*. The notation includes downward-pointing triangles above notes, indicating mallet strikes. A 'y' symbol is placed above notes in measures 26 and 27, signifying a mallet lift. The right hand (R) and left hand (L) are clearly marked. A 'SK' (sustained key) marking with a wavy line is used in measures 27 and 28 to indicate sustained notes. The score concludes at measure 28.

### Mallet (+)

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

The musical score for 'Mallet (+)' spans measures 41 to 45. The right hand part features notes with a '+' symbol above them, indicating a suspended handbell. The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte) in measure 44, *mp* (mezzo-piano) in measure 45, and *sub. mf* (sub-mezzo-forte) in measure 45. The score concludes at measure 45.