

# 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 a handbell piece, measures 82-85. The score is written for a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Measure 82 starts with a dynamic marking of *mf* and a right-hand chord. Measure 83 features a pluck technique, indicated by a dot above the note and the text "Pl or Mal." below it. Measure 84 continues with a pluck technique, also indicated by a dot above the note. Measure 85 concludes with a pluck technique, indicated by a dot above the note. A right-hand symbol "R" is positioned below the bass clef in measure 82.

### 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 measures 28-31. The score is written for a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). 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 notes. A bracket above measures 29-31 is labeled '4 and 5 octave choirs double top note 8va'. Measure 31 ends with a 7-measure rest in both staves.

## 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 measures 58-60. The score is written for a grand staff. Measure 58 has a 7-measure rest in both staves. Measure 59 features a complex rhythmic pattern with many notes in both staves. Above measure 59, there are annotations: '\*BD SK' with a downward arrow, and 'RT' with a downward arrow. Below measure 59, there are dynamic markings: 'ffp' and 'ff'. Measure 60 has a 7-measure rest in both staves.

\*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'. An upward-pointing arrow is positioned below the first note of the bass staff triplet. Measure 62 continues the pattern with another triplet of eighth notes in the treble staff, marked 'LV' and '3'. The bass staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked '3'. A downward-pointing arrow is positioned below the first note of the bass staff triplet. A curved line connects the first and third notes of the bass staff triplet in measure 62, with a downward-pointing arrow and the label 'Sw' below it.

### Shake or Sk

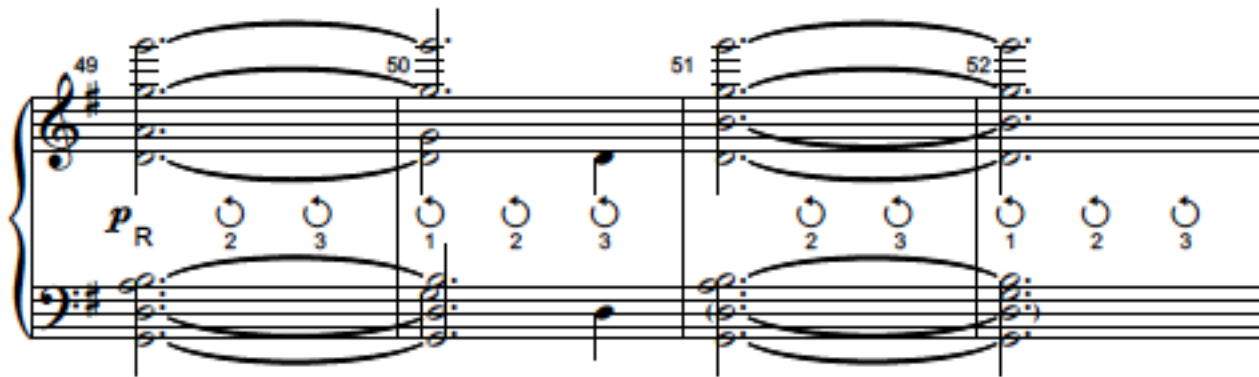
Rapid shake of handbell with the clapper striking both sides of the casting.

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 shows a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff contains a chord of two notes, marked '62'. The bass staff contains a chord of two notes. Measure 63 begins with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff contains a series of notes, marked '63 SK'. The bass staff contains a series of notes, marked 'SK'. Measure 64 begins with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff contains a series of notes, marked '64 SK'. The bass staff contains a series of notes, marked 'SK'. Measure 65 begins with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff contains a series of notes, marked '65 R'. The bass staff contains a series of notes, marked 'R'. Measure 66 begins with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff contains a series of notes, marked '66'. The bass staff contains a series of notes, marked 'ff'. A bracket above the treble staff spans measures 63, 64, and 65, with the text '5 octave choirs double top note Sva' written above it.

## 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 for piano (P) and right hand (R). The right hand part features a sequence of notes with fingerings 2, 3, 1, 2, 3 in the first system and 2, 3, 1, 2, 3 in the second system. The left hand part consists of sustained chords with a wavy line indicating vibrato. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

## 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 for piano (mp) and right hand (R). The right hand part features a sequence of notes with fingerings 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. The left hand part consists of sustained chords with a wavy line indicating vibrato. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

### Echo

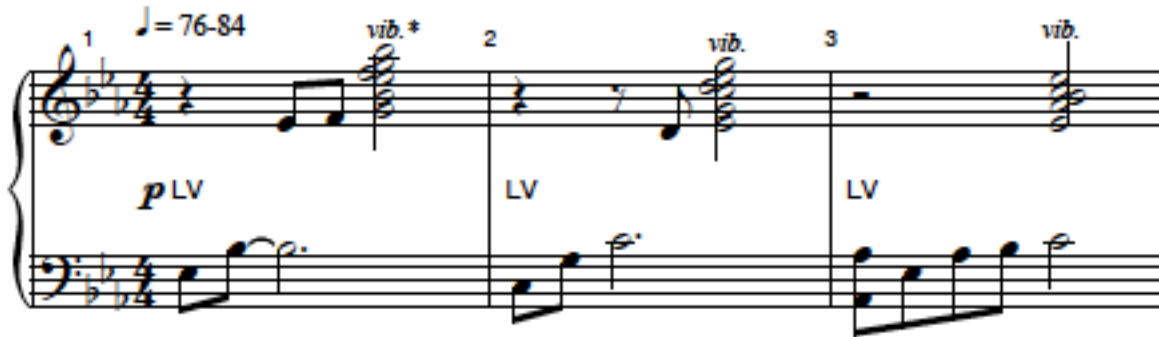
Ring the handbell closer to the table and then lightly touch the lip of the casting to the table on the beats as indicated by the echo sign.



A musical score for a handbell in treble clef, 2/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score consists of four measures, numbered 33 to 36. Measure 33 starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes two upward-pointing arrows labeled '2' and '3'. Measure 34 has a 'LV' (light touch) marking above the staff. Measure 35 has an 'R' (ring) marking above the staff. Measure 36 has a 'LV' marking above the staff. The bass line provides a simple accompaniment with eighth notes.

### Vibrato or *vib.*

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



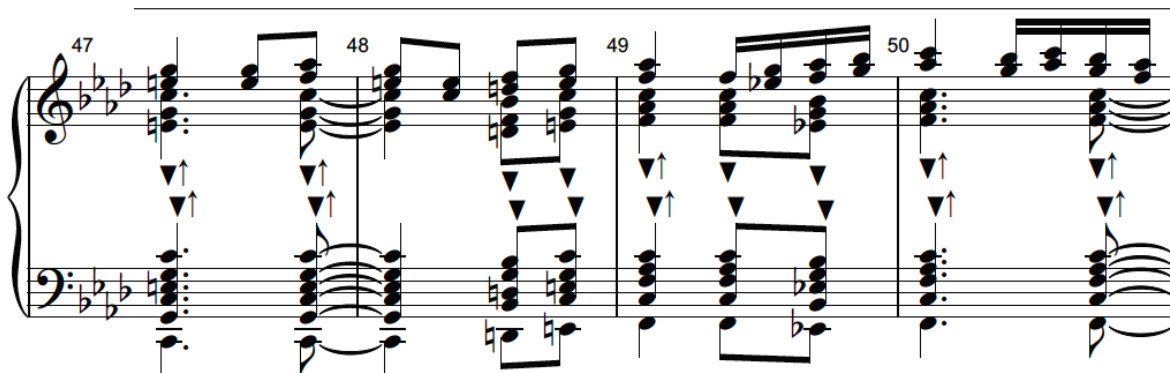
A musical score for a handbell in treble clef, 4/4 time, with a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 76-84. The score consists of three measures, numbered 1 to 3. Measure 1 has a piano (*p*) dynamic and a 'LV' marking. Measure 2 has a 'vib.' marking with an asterisk. Measure 3 has a 'vib.' marking. 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.



A musical score for a handbell in treble clef, 4/4 time, with a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The score consists of four measures, numbered 47 to 50. Measures 47 and 48 show chords with upward-pointing arrows indicating plucking. Measures 49 and 50 show chords with downward-pointing arrows indicating lifting. The bass line provides a steady accompaniment.

### 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 indicating mallet strikes. In measure 26, a right-hand mallet (R) is used. Measure 27 features a 'SK' (suspended) technique, indicated by a wavy line above the notes, where the handbell is lifted from the table. The score continues with further mallet strikes and dynamics.

### 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. Measure 41 starts with a dynamic marking of *f*. Measure 42 includes a '+' sign above the notes, indicating a suspended handbell. Measure 43 continues with the '+' sign. Measure 44 features a dynamic marking of *mf* and a '+' sign. Measure 45 includes dynamic markings of *mp* and *sub. mf*. The notation shows mallet strikes and the use of a suspended handbell.