

Handbell Music Levels

As per AGEHR Publishing 2016

Level 1

1. **Meters:** 4/4, C (common time), 3/4, and 2/4
2. **Notes and/or Rest Values:** whole, dotted-half, quarter
3. **Rhythmic Elements:** no subdivision of beats, simple use of ties
4. **Techniques:** ring, shoulder damp, Sk, TD, echo, martellato, Sw, RT - all with adequate preparation time
5. **Handbell/Handchime Changes:** none (no accidentals)
6. **Articulation:** see *Techniques*
7. **Dynamic Levels:** all from *pp* to *ff* in homophonic style (all ringing at the same level) with limited use of *crescendo* or *diminuendo*
8. **Tempo:** slow to moderate

Level 2

All the criteria of Level 1, and

1. **Meters:** 2/2, cut time, 3/2, and simple mixed meters of 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4
2. **Notes and/or Rest Values:** eighths, the dotted-quarter followed by an eighth, simple combinations of eighths and quarters
3. **Rhythmic Elements:** syncopation - simple patterns such as eighth-quarter-eighth, anacrusis - pick-up notes or upbeats and their effect on the final measure
4. **Techniques:** table damp, Pl, martellato-lift, malleting, and any combination of two different techniques with adequate preparation time
5. **Handbell/Handchime Changes:** limited number of changes per ringer with adequate preparation time
6. **Articulation:** see *Techniques*
7. **Dynamic Levels:** *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, polyphonic style with simple dynamic contrasts (such as two voices having different dynamic levels)
8. **Tempo:** slow to moderate

Level 3

All the criteria of Level 2, and

1. **Meters:** 6/8, 3/4 (in one pulse per measure), 3/8, 9/8, 12/8, 6/4 and mixed meters of 6/8 and 3/4
2. **Notes and/or Rest Values:** sixteenth, dotted-eighth and sixteenth note patterns, triplet
3. **Rhythmic Elements:** syncopation
4. **Techniques:** ring and damp sixteenth note patterns
5. **Handbell/Handchime Changes:** moderate number of changes per ringer with adequate preparation
6. **Articulation:** combinations of techniques listed in Levels 1, 2, and 3, but not more than two per measure
7. **Dynamic Levels:** accents, more variety in dynamic levels
8. **Tempo:** slow to fast, some changes of tempo within the work

Level 4

All the criteria of Level 3, and

1. **Meters:** 5/4 and irregular meters
2. **Notes and/or Rest Values:** all of previous at faster tempo, triplet over two beats
3. **Rhythmic Elements:** syncopation - more complex, using sixteenth-notes and ties
4. **Techniques:** Brush Damp
5. **Handbell/Handchime Changes:** extensive number of changes per ringer
6. **Articulation:** combinations of techniques in eighth-note patterns at moderate *tempi*
7. **Dynamic Levels:** *subito piano* or *subito forte* without rest, more complex polyphony with more than two independent voices, more rapid shifts of dynamic levels
8. **Tempo:** more changes of *tempo* within the work

Level 5

All the criteria of Level 4, and

1. **Meters:** unlimited
2. **Notes and/or Rest Values:** dotted rhythms in compound meters at fast tempi, duples against triples
3. **Rhythmic Elements:** syncopation - more complex, mixed patterns
4. **Techniques:** ring-hook-damp sequences, handbell passes at moderate *tempi*
5. **Handbell/Handchime Changes:** unlimited
6. **Articulation:** any combination at faster tempi
7. **Dynamic Levels:** rapid shifts between levels with no preparation, more frequent use of *crescendo* and *decrescendo*
8. **Tempo:** more changes of *tempo* within a work including abrupt shifts

Level 6

All the criteria of Level 5, and

1. **Meters:** unlimited
2. **Notes and/or Rest Values:** more than four eighth or sixteenth-notes to a pulse (such as five, six, seven, etc.), thirty-second notes
3. **Rhythmic Elements:** complex rhythms at any tempo
4. **Techniques:** all, any *tempo*
5. **Handbell/Handchime Changes:** unlimited
6. **Articulation:** unlimited combinations at any *tempo*
7. **Dynamic Levels:** no limits on shifts (sudden or gradual) or accents
8. **Tempo:** only those imposed by the nature of the instrument, complex changes within a work