

Bell By Bell

Bell By Bell, created by Tom Peyton, is a lively and atmospheric parade that is accessible to all, and can be performed in any kind of weather. It requires no prior rehearsal or musical training, just some quick pointers from the project leaders before the parade sets out, making it especially great for kids and families.

At the start, organizers distribute dozens of color-coded hand bells to the crowd, one color per note. At the front of the parade, a team of conductors waves corresponding colored flags to lead the group in slowly moving music, written by a variety of composers: for example, when the conductors raise their red and green flags, everyone with red and green bells start ringing, and so on for each color, creating a sonorous soundscape through the streets as people walk.

Most performances last about an hour, and include 6 to 10 compositions, along a walking route of 1 to 1.5 miles. Depending on the terrain, you can perform the pieces while moving, or stand still during each piece and then walk to the next stop.





WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1. A number of sets of color-coded diatonic handbells.** You can perform Bell By Bell with as few as 10 participants, but it's best to have between 25 and 100 (along with five conductors). You'll need one set of bells for every 5 people. Expect to pay between \$20 and \$40 (retail) per set.
- 2. One set of conductors' "flags" that match the colors of the bells.** You can make flags out of fabric and sticks, or glue large pieces of colored construction paper onto foamboard to make posters to raise and lower. If you're using the Rhythm Band Instrument "KidsPlay" bells, you can conduct using a set of Boom-whackers, whose colors precisely match the bells.
- 3. Five conductors at the front of the group.** Each conductor carries a flag in one hand, and a clipboard and a stopwatch (or smartphone) in the other.
- 4. A collection of pieces to perform.** There are six compositions at the end of this PDF to get you started; we encourage you to ask local composers to write their own pieces, too. For the New York version of Bell By Bell, each piece has used 5 pitches, and this handbook assumes that's what you're doing. If someone wants to write a piece using all 7 pitches, that's fine too, but then you'll need seven conductors.
- 5. A place (indoors or out) where participants can gather at the start for about 30 minutes, a walking route, and an appealing final destination.** Bell By Bell will sound and feel very different in a canyon of skyscrapers, on a residential block, or moving through an open field. But each environment can work in its own way.



HOW TO ORGANIZE

Permits

Each city has its own regulations, but chances are you will not need any permits for this event. As long as you are not blocking traffic, you're only using handbells (which are unamplified), and you keep moving, very few permitting requirements will come into play.

Repertoire

We encourage you to ask local composers to write their own pieces for Bell By Bell. It's always exciting – for the players, the public, and the press – to premiere a piece that has never been heard before. It also gives you a new partner (the composer) to spread the word about the parade and get people to come out for it. Since pieces are only 2 to 5 minutes long, there's not much risk in premiering a new piece. (Even if you don't like the music, it will be over soon!)



You can ask for a piece in any format that you'll be able to decipher, and turn into a set of timecodes. Some composers may want to send you a ProTools file, others a piece of sheet music in traditional notation. If they want to write out the timecodes themselves, that's even better. (If not, expect to spend a couple of hours to rewrite each piece as timecodes.) Let the composers know that since all notes are translated to seconds, the de facto tempo of all the pieces becomes some multiple of 60 bpm.

Marketing and Recruiting Players

- When planning an event for the first time, you never know how many people will show up. For your own peace of mind, it's a good idea to find a core group of people you know, such as a class of schoolkids or a church choir, who will all join as a group. If you have a core group of fifteen, that's enough people to do the event on the smallest scale (10 bell-ringers and 5 conductors), even if no one else shows up.
- When publicizing the event, make it clear that this event is participatory. You want people to come ring bells, not just listen.
- Also make it clear that no musical training is required – anyone with hands, ears, and eyes can do it. At the same time, although the execution will be easy, it's not a performance of “Hot Cross Buns” – the music is going to be interesting.
- Be sure to give the ending location in your description, not only the starting point, so people can plan their best transportation options. It's great if you can arrange for something appealing at the end (like hot chocolate!). Consider partnering with a local café or restaurant for refreshments.
- Ask people to show up with their hands free. If it's cold, of course they should wear gloves, but they should leave their shopping bags at home.
- Decide if you want to ask participants to RSVP in advance. On the positive side, this may give you an idea of how many people to expect (and how many bells you'll need). On the negative side, it may discourage people from making last-minute plans to join you, if they think they needed to RSVP and now it's too late.
- Send your event details to aaron@makemusicday.org as soon as possible for inclusion on the national Make Music Winter website and in press outreach.



WHAT TO DO ON DECEMBER 21

1. Arrive early at the starting location, unpack the bells, and arrange them by pitch. Put away any bells with pitches that will not be used during the performance. Handbell kits come with both a high C and a low C – you can decide whether you want to treat these as the same note (conducted with the same flag), or as different pitches.

2. Ask your conductors to come 20 minutes before everyone else. When they arrive, hand them clipboards with their time codes (one page per piece), and distribute the flags. In the same hand that holds the clipboard, each conductor also holds their phone so that both the phone screen and the time code are visible. Ask them to be sure that the screen will not go to sleep during the middle of a piece! (Instead of a phone, they can also use a stopwatch.)

3. Explain the concept verbally, and then try out the first piece with just the conductors (and no bell ringers) to get a feel for starting together, holding everything and raising the flags high.

At the beginning of each piece, one conductor counts everyone off to start their stopwatches at the same time. All pieces begin at :10 in order to create a buffer if any conductor messes up the starting of the stopwatch and also to give some time to settle in before the first flag is raised.



The time code is a list of paired numbers. The first number indicates when the flag should go up and the second number indicates when the flag should go down.

4. Go over the walking route to make sure everyone knows where they are going.

5. When the participants arrive, distribute the bells, with an even mix of pitches that will be used. Once you're ready to go, explain the concept again and do a "sound check" with each conductor holding up their flag one by one. Say something like "Here's the yellow flag. If your bell is yellow, when the flag goes up, start ringing. When the flag goes down, stop."



Remind people:

- Don't be shy. When your color goes up, ring loudly.
- Keep ringing until your flag goes down. Don't stop too early.
- At the end of each piece, everyone will stop. The conductors will pull out the music for the next piece, and do another 10 second countdown. If the pieces use different notes, this is also an opportunity to swap out bells.
- People with the same colored bells don't need to walk next to each other. But everyone should make sure that they have a line of sight to their particular flag.

6. If you are walking through a park or along the sidewalk of a long street, we recommend that the conductors walk slowly at the front of the group, five abreast and facing forward, with people ringing as they walk. When you stop at the end of each piece, it will give you a chance to regroup, and safely cross a street if needed.

On the other hand, if you are walking in a busy area with many streets to cross, we recommend that the conductors face the participants, and lead a stationary performance. Once each piece is over, everyone can walk to the next spot. During the walking, you can ask two or three conductors to keep their flags raised to create a drone. In any case, since people won't need to concentrate on the flags during these sections, they'll be able to walk and cross streets safely.

7. Ask a friend to come along and take photos of the bell ringing group as it goes along – these images will be very useful for future promotion.

8. When you arrive at your final destination, the conductors can help you collect everyone's bells, so you can pack them up and use them again next year!

If you have further questions about Bell By Bell, feel free to contact Tom Peyton at tom.peyton@gmail.com.



TOM PEYTON / LADDERS - D

1:07 - 1:42

2:21 - 2:33

2:42 - 2:54

3:03 - 3:13

TOM PEYTON / LADDERS - E

:23 - :43

:52 - 1:32

1:40 - 2:07

2:12 - 2:24

2:33 - 2:45

2:54 - 3:21

TOM PEYTON / LADDERS - F

:25 - :43

:54 - 1:31

1:57 - 2:10

2:15 - 2:27

2:36 - 2:48

3:01 - 3:13

TOM PEYTON / LADDERS - G

:27 - 1:42

2:00 - 2:13

2:18 - 2:30

2:39 - 2:51

3:01 - 3:13

TOM PEYTON / LADDERS - A

:10 - 1:11

1:26 - 1:51

2:03 - 2:16

2:24 - 2:36

2:45 - 2:57

3:01 - 3:21

ERIC BEACH / UNTITLED '11 - D

0:15 - 0:16

0:23 - 0:24

0:37 - 0:38

0:45 - 2:42

ERIC BEACH / UNTITLED '11 - F

0:10 - 0:11

1:24 - 1:25

0:13 - 0:14

1:27 - 1:28

0:18 - 0:19

1:38 - 1:39

0:21 - 0:22

1:41 - 1:42

0:32 - 0:33

1:46 - 1:47

0:35 - 0:36

1:49 - 1:50

0:40 - 0:41

2:00 - 2:01

0:43 - 0:44

2:03 - 2:04

0:54 - 0:55

2:08 - 2:09

0:57 - 0:58

2:11 - 2:42

1:02 - 1:03

1:05 - 1:06

1:16 - 1:17

1:19 - 1:20

ERIC BEACH / UNTITLED '11 - G

0:12 - 0:13

0:20 - 0:21

0:34 - 0:35

0:42 - 0:43

0:56 - 0:57

1:04 - 1:05

1:18 - 1:19

1:26 - 2:42

ERIC BEACH / UNTITLED - A

0:30 - 0:32

0:52 - 0:54

1:14 - 2:42

ERIC BEACH / UNTITLED - Both Cs

0:26 - 0:28

0:29 - 0:30

0:48 - 0:50

0:51 - 0:52

1:10 - 1:12

1:13 - 1:14

1:32 - 1:34

1:35 - 1:36

1:54 - 1:56

1:57 - 2:42

AMY GARAPIC / MAMIHLAPINATAPAI - D

0:10 - 0:14

0:31 - 0:35

0:49 - 0:51

1:02 - 1:08

1:18 - 1:22

1:36 - 1:41

1:54 - 1:58

2:11 - 2:19

2:33 - 2:35

3:06 - 3:11

3:26 - 3:29

AMY GARAPIC / MAMIHLAPINATAPAI - E

0:12 - 0:17

1:57 - 2:07

0:28 - 0:31

2:18 - 2:20

0:34 - 0:39

2:28 - 2:31

0:50 - 0:58

2:34 - 2:38

1:07 - 1:10

2:51 - 2:59

1:16 - 1:19

3:04 - 3:13

1:21 - 1:27

3:27 - 3:34

1:34 - 1:43

AMY GARAPIC / MAMIHLAPINATAPAI - F

0:15 - 0:24

2:19 - 2:25

0:38 - 0:46

2:36 - 2:43

0:49 - 1:03

2:55 - 3:02

1:08 - 1:15

3:12 - 3:19

1:25 - 1:33

3:25 - 3:29

1:42 - 1:50

3:33 - 3:36

1:58 - 2:10

AMY GARAPIC / MAMIHLAPINATAPAI - A

0:22 - 0:27

2:10 - 2:13

0:41 - 0:46

2:18 - 2:30

0:51 - 1:01

2:41 - 2:47

1:11 - 1:16

2:53 - 2:57

1:19 - 1:23

3:01 - 3:05

1:29 - 1:33

3:15 - 3:22

1:36 - 1:40

3:34 - 3:39

1:45 - 2:04

AMY GARAPIC / MAMIHLAPINATAPAI - B

0:25	-	0:29	2:11	-	2:13
0:44	-	:50	2:18	-	2:34
0:59	-	1:05	2:45	-	2:55
1:15	-	1:22	2:59	-	3:07
1:30	-	1:45	3:20	-	3:27
1:49	-	2:05	3:36	-	3:45

ERIC FREDERIC / UNTITLED '11 - Low C

0:42 - 0:58

1:38 - 2:02

ERIC FREDERIC / UNTITLED '11 - E

0:10 - 0:26

0:34 - 0:50

1:06 - 1:14

1:22 - 1:30

1:38 - 1:54

ERIC FREDERIC / UNTITLED '11 - F

0:18 - 0:34

0:50 - 1:06

1:30 - 1:38

1:46 - 2:02

ERIC FREDERIC / UNTITLED '11 - G

0:26 - 0:42

1:14 - 1:54

ERIC FREDERIC / UNTITLED '11 - B

0:58 - 1:22

1:38 - 2:02

MATT MARBLE / THE SHIMMERING DOORWAY - E

0:10	-	0:11	2:16	-	2:18
0:12	-	:13	2:30	-	2:32
0:14	-	0:15	2:42	-	2:43
0:16	-	0:26	2:44	-	2:45
0:30	-	0:55	2:46	-	2:47
1:08	-	1:10	Up every even		
1:12	-	1:14	Down every odd		
1:16	-	1:18	3:36	-	3:37
2:06	-	2:08	3:38	-	3:39

MATT MARBLE / THE SHIMMERING DOORWAY - F

0:10	-	0:11	2:32	-	2:38
0:12	-	0:13	2:42	-	2:43
0:14	-	0:15	2:44	-	2:45
0:17	-	0:26	2:46	-	2:47
0:31	-	0:46	2:53	-	2:54
0:48	-	0:52	2:55	-	2:56
0:58	-	1:02	2:57	-	2:58
1:10	-	1:14	Up every odd		
1:15	-	1:17	Down every even		
2:08	-	2:12	3:37	-	3:38
2:18	-	2:26	3:39	-	3:40

MATT MARBLE / THE SHIMMERING DOORWAY - A

0:10	-	0:11	2:04	-	2:12
0:12	-	0:13	2:14	-	2:26
0:14	-	0:15	2:28	-	2:38
0:18	-	0:26	2:42	-	2:43
0:32	-	0:46	2:44	-	2:45
1:00	-	1:08	2:46	-	2:47
1:12	-	1:13	3:01	-	3:02
1:14	-	1:16	3:03	-	3:04
1:18	-	1:24	3:05	-	3:06
1:25	-	1:32	Up every odd		
1:34	-	1:41	Down every even		
1:42	-	1:50	3:37	-	3:38
1:52	-	2:01	3:39	-	3:40

MATT MARBLE / THE SHIMMERING DOORWAY - B

0:10	-	0:11	1:54	-	2:01
0:12	-	0:13	2:42	-	2:43
0:14	-	0:15	2:44	-	2:45
0:38	-	0:40	2:46	-	2:47
0:42	-	0:44	3:08	-	3:09
0:58	-	1:01	3:10	-	3:11
1:10	-	1:12	3:12	-	3:13
1:19	-	1:24	Up every even		
1:26	-	1:33	Down every odd		
1:36	-	1:41	3:36	-	3:37
1:43	-	1:51	3:38	-	3:39

MATT MARBLE / THE SHIMMERING DOORWAY - High C

0:10	-	0:11	2:42	-	2:43
0:12	-	0:13	2:44	-	2:45
0:14	-	:15	2:46	-	2:47
0:56	-	0:58	3:17	-	3:18
1:08	-	1:10	3:19	-	3:20
1:20	-	1:25	3:21	-	3:22
1:27	-	1:34	Up every odd		
1:35	-	1:42	Down every even		
1:44	-	1:52	3:37	-	3:38
1:53	-	2:41	3:39	-	3:40

NAT EVANS / LAMENT - E

0:10 - 0:40

0:47 - 1:05

1:09 - 1:56

2:05 - 2:59

NAT EVANS / LAMENT - G

0:12 - 0:15

0:17 - 0:24

0:26 - 0:47

0:56 - 1:09

1:14 - 1:17

1:19 - 1:29

1:36 - 1:39

1:46 - 2:03

2:05 - 2:14

2:21 - 2:33

2:42 - 2:45

2:47 - 2:52

NAT EVANS / LAMENT - A

0:19 - :24

0:26 - :56

1:05 - 1:17

1:19 - 1:29

1:32 - 1:36

1:42 - 1:46

1:58 - 2:04

2:05 - 2:14

2:17 - 2:21

2:24 - 2:38

NAT EVANS / LAMENT - B

0:35 - 1:17

1:19 - 1:56

1:58 - 2:04

2:05 - 2:24

NAT EVANS / LAMENT - High C

0:30 - 0:35

0:40 - 0:53

0:59 - 1:14

1:22 - 1:29

1:39 - 1:42

1:49 - 2:14

2:29 - 2:33