

# HANDBELL MUSICIANS OF AMERICA CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

## I. ADVANCED MUSIC THEORY – COURSE C3

Course C3 will ensure a professional-level working knowledge of music theory, both generally and as it pertains to handbells and handchimes. Covered throughout the Course (general): all manner of advanced rhythms, pitch ranges, key signatures/scales, performance markings; also basic modes, and construction/inversion/progressions of triads, sixth, seventh and ninth chords. Covered throughout the Course (instrument-specific): Handbells Used Charts (2-7 octaves), more intricate melodic and accompaniment lines and phrases. Successful completion will entail both written success from an academic knowledge standpoint, and experiential success in ear training and rhythmic dictation situations.

*Prerequisites*      *Course C2, Intermediate Music Theory*  
*Course E2, Arranging I*

## II. COURSE RATIONALE AND OVERVIEW

- A. Members with advanced certification should have a clear knowledge and understanding of all theory and musical construction they may encounter in the handbell repertoire, in order to successfully direct and/or play handbell music with integrity, musicality and artistry. Advanced certification demands deeper understanding in order to remain true to expectations held of an “advanced” musician.
- B. The course can generally handle a large (20-30 students) class, though the needs and questions of individual students may cause pacing to vary. Success of the course will require specific equipment:
  - a. a white board and markers (ideally with lines for a grand staff);
  - b. a piano for the instructor (should bells be used for intervallic training, some type of screen will be required to prevent visual determination of interval – piano would be far less complicated); and
  - c. a screen and LCD projector and appropriate cables to connect a laptop computer for Powerpoint presentation in lecture. (This will lessen, but not mitigate, the need for handouts. It will also allow the pacing of the class to move more quickly, as the instructor may reference areas of a common slide rather than individual handouts.)

## III. STATEMENT OF SPECIFIC COURSE OBJECTIVES

- A. **Concepts, principles and understandings.** *As a result of this course, students will:*
  - a. Know pitch names for C1-C8 (handbell designation C2-C9).

- b. Recognize and identify rhythmic values of notes and rests from thirty-second notes through double-whole notes (including tied notes, compound/composite triplets, and other mathematical tuplets)
- c. Recognize any key signature (and associated scales, including relative-minor equivalencies) in the Circle of Fifths; understand cross-relations at the “turning point” of the Circle of Fifths (e.g., F# Major and G-flat Major).
- d. Have a basic understanding of natural, harmonic and melodic minor scales, pentatonic scales, and the following [modern] modes: Ionian (major), Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian (natural minor) and Locrian.
- e. Understand common advanced performance markings:
  - i. *agitato, anima(to), appassionata, assai, brio, deciso, delicate, dolente, energico, furioso, grandioso, leggiero, lunga, marcato, mezzo, morendo, (dal/al) niente, pesante, risoluto, ritmico, scherzo, seconda(o), smorzando, sotto, tranquillo, triste*
- f. Recognize characteristics and names of major, minor, diminished and augmented chords, as well as sixth, seventh and ninth chords.
- g. Understand chord inversions and why certain bell sets must omit various notes in parentheses, brackets, etc., to preserve continuity of lines/phrases.
- h. Understand simple harmonic analysis and how chords fit within a standard progression.

**B. Habits, conduct and skills.** *The students also will be able to:*

- a. Evaluate a handbell score and create a Handbells Used Chart for a seven-octave piece.
- b. Tap or sing any rhythm which may appear in any handbell score, of any Level.
- c. Demonstrate/describe any of the advanced performance markings and tempi as outlined above (see III.A.e.).
- d. Identify any scale/key (as both Major and relative minor) upon seeing a key signature or eight-note scale.
- e. Write any key signature or scale upon being told its name (major, natural/harmonic/melodic minor)
- f. “Build” any major, minor, diminished or augmented triad, in root position and any inversion.
- g. Evaluate a handbell score and identify recapitulated passages, both verbatim and slightly varied.
- h. Add parentheses, brackets, etc., to a “five-octave” piece of handbell music, to make it appropriate for three or four octaves as well.
- i. Perform simple harmonic analysis of a chord progression.
- j. Transcribe the rhythm of a simple eight-measure passage (or a more complex four-measure passage), on hearing it played no more than three times (e.g., rhythmic dictation).

- C. **Attitudes, interests and appreciations.** *Further, the students will:*
- a. Approach score study with confidence to technically analyze any handbell score, adeptly and thoroughly.
  - b. Convey and speak with friendly authority and absolute competence to ensure correct rhythms/notes and ensure musicality and artistry.
  - c. View complicated passages, rhythms, harmonies, etc., as opportunities to learn and develop their craft; appreciate “solving the puzzles” presented by more intricate scores.

#### IV. UNITS OF THE COURSE

##### UNIT I: NOTES, RHYTHMS AND METERS

- A. **Content description**  
This unit will cover pitch names from C1-C8 (handbell designation C2-C9), complex rhythms, note values and rest values, syncopations, etc.
- B. **Learning activities**
- a. Review/discuss pitch names for C1-C8 (handbell designation C2-C8).
  - b. Discuss various note values (including tied notes, complex syncopations, compound/composite triplets, and other mathematical tuplets) and how they are incorporated into various time signatures.
  - c. Corporately and individually tap/sing various rhythmic examples, both single-line and from handbell literature.
  - d. Working from projection and/or handouts, students will tap/clap rhythms as a full class and individually (or in small groups, depending on the number of students), and strive for accuracy while performing rhythmic patterns simultaneously.
  - e. Students will complete rhythmic dictation exercises by transcribing rhythms as played to them (the meter(s) and number of measures may or may not be known in advance).

##### UNIT II: KEY SIGNATURES, MODES AND SCALES

- A. **Content description**  
This unit will examine all key signatures and scales within the Circle of Fifths, natural/harmonic/melodic minor scales, and basic [modern] modes.
- B. **Learning activities**
- a. Students will be given a Circle of Fifths chart to review. The “turning point” (e.g., F# Major and G-flat Major) will be discussed.
  - b. The concept of natural, harmonic and melodic minor scales will be introduced; students will be asked to write out the notes of several such scales.
  - c. Pentatonic scales and basic modern modes as described in III.A.d. will be introduced. Using a keyboard handout, students will be asked to explore

various whole-step and half-step patterns of these modal scales (i.e., WHWWHW).

### **UNIT III: CHORD INVERSIONS AND PROGRESSIONS**

#### **A. Content description**

This unit continues to explore chord identification and inversion, including chords with added tones, diminished and augmented chords. Beginning harmonic analysis of a standard progression is continued, as are concepts of melody- and bass-line continuity, especially as pertaining to handbells.

#### **B. Learning activities**

- a. Construction of major and minor triads will be reviewed, and the construction of diminished and augmented triads will be reviewed. Augmented sixth chords will be introduced, and seventh chords will be reviewed. Added chord tones for 9<sup>th</sup> (and possibly 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>) chords will be discussed (though 9<sup>th</sup> chords are cursorily introduced in course C2). Suspensions will be explained in a general sense.
- b. Students will be asked to complete individual identification and creation work of various chords.
- c. Students will be shown several examples of why various handbell pieces include optional-note omission brackets/parentheses/etc., and then given a piece of handbell music without such markings and asked to add them (students may complete this exercise outside of the class period, using a piano or set of handbells if desired).
- b. Basic [Roman numeral] harmonic progression and analysis will be introduced, and students will be asked to complete a simple harmonic analysis project outside of class.

### **UNIT IV: BEYOND THE NOTES**

#### **A. Content description**

This unit will review/discuss advanced performance markings, and their implementation in shaping musicality and artistry.

#### **B. Learning activities**

- a. Students will receive a handout with various performance markings and given the opportunity to fill in definitions on their own, individually, for all that they believe they know. The class will then review the document together, each student completing and/or correcting his/her document as required.
- b. As the document is reviewed, brief discussions will be held as to appropriate implementation of various performance markings to reach higher levels of musicality.

## **V. RECOMMENDED EVALUATION PROCEDURES**

- A. Each component will be in written form and will be evaluated “pass” or “fail” by the instructor based on student’s demonstration of working knowledge for each concept. Testing topics shown below may be combined by the instructor.
  - a. Pitch/range (printed recognition) test
  - b. Definitions test
  - c. Key/scale/chord identification and creation test (including “impossible” [theoretical] enharmonic keys, such as G# Major; and the uncommon enharmonic keys of a-flat minor and a# minor)
  - d. Ear-training test: intervals and chords
  - e. Ear-training test: rhythmic dictation
  - f. Printed rhythm test (completing measures, identifying beats, etc.)
  - g. Score navigation test
  - h. Harmonic analysis test
  - i. “Parentheses/brackets” test
  
- B. All written evaluation components must be successfully passed in a way which demonstrates solid working knowledge of all concepts to complete Course C3, Advanced Music Theory.

## VI. RESOURCE MATERIALS

- A. For the students
  - a. Required textbook and other materials
 

Handbell and Handchime Notation. Dayton, OH: AGEHR Music. R101. 2010.

Glasgow, Michael J. It’s Just A+ Theory. Raleigh, NC: Self-published. 2011. Contact michael@michaeljglasgow.com for information.
  
- B. General bibliography (not required; may be recommended)
  - a. Randel, Don Michael (ed.) New Harvard Dictionary of Music, The. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press/Belknap Press. ISBN 0674011635 (4<sup>th</sup> edition). 2003.
  
  - b. Various handbell music as recommended by instructor

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