



**Handbell Music Reviews**  
**January 2019**  
**Camille Ream**

I direct the Resounding Joy Handbell choir at First United Church in Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta. Over this year, I have been focusing on inclusion and the acceptance of diversity. So you are wondering “what does that mean”. Instead of wearing the traditional black gloves, we have started to all wear tie dye gloves – with whatever colours people want. The next this we did was to choose music that was different than what people think of as traditional church music. The ringers loved the music as it was especially interesting and fun to ring! During worship, I introduced each piece and explained that we were using music as a way for people to focus on diversity and inclusiveness and that they would hear different sounds and harmonies than they were used to hearing. After worship, we had mixed reviews from the congregation – comments like “that was an interesting sound” or “I’ve never heard that piece played like that before” and then reactions were filled with enthusiasm and compliments! I look forward to the reactions we get from people about our repertoire over the next few months. I have included these fantastic pieces in the music reviews for you. It looks like we have Ron Mallory to thank for many of these pieces!

**Ritmico Rejoicing**

By Mallory

2345 octaves opt percussion and other hard surfaces

Level 3-

We added the word Rejoicing in the bulletin to make it sound more “sacred”. This is a straight forward piece with, as it suggests, lots of rhythm! Much of it is done with mallets on the table or mallet clicks but then foot stomps are added. The best part of the entire piece is when we break out into only percussion sounds. There are 8 bars

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that can be repeated as much as possible. At the first rehearsal, ringers went around the church to find things that they could hit that would make different sound – these included a cowbell, handdrum, book and bell case (plus hitting binderstands and music). During the rehearsal of this section, we would go until all ringers were moving to the beat and smiling! Soon they got so they would move and smile as soon as the section started and then they moved and smiled throughout the entire piece! I think it was more accepted because the ringers were having so much fun!

### **Good Christian Friends Rejoice**

Arr Mallory

345 octaves opt Choirchimes

Level 2+

We chose this piece because already the name had been changed from the traditional Good Christian Men Rejoice to Good Christian Friends Rejoice. It starts out very traditional and sedate on Choirchimes and then it switches to playing this music in 4/4 instead of 6/8. It is a well known tune so at first ringers kept sneaking back into the swing of 6/8 time. We had to work hard to keep it a straight 4/4 rhythm with no sneaking in a triplet! One person came up after worship and said that the 4/4 rhythm was ok but he kept waiting for it to go back to the 6/8 time that he was used to. I gently reminded him that this was about being inclusive and accepting of our diversity.

### **Mixolydian Madness (Predominant Praise)**

Arr Mallory

345 octaves opt Choirchimes, Tambourine, Windchimes, Fingercymbals.

Level 3-

We haven't played this yet but I expect that in the bulletin we will call it Predominant Praise. The Mixolydian scale is different than the one that we usual here. For example, the A mixolydian scale starts on an A but only has F# and C#. Try playing it on your bells or piano and it sounds very different! Although it is officially written in 4/4, it could easily be written mostly in 8/8. Add the sharpness of the mated treble chords, it has a little "madness" to it. Even the slow part of chimes is based on the Mixolydian scale. My ringers have no idea that they are going to ringing this in the next few months. I am anxious to see and hear their reaction!

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## **Notturmo (Meditation)**

By Waugh

3 or 5 octaves opt Choirchimes, Violin Bow

Level 2+

This piece is an original composition and once again, it comes with two titles – one more acceptable for worship! The piece starts out with the ARCO technique – when a violin or viola bow plays on a choirchimes. It has an extremely eery sound when it is done well. When ringers are learning it, it sounds like a poorly done singing bell filled with squeals and chatters! The ARCO only happens at the beginning and end of the piece so the listener has the chance to enjoy the soft meditative melodies in the middle!

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