



Handbell Musicians
OF AMERICA

| Area 4

Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Puerto Rico, the Bahamas and Virgin Islands

area4.handbellmusicians.org

2025 Georgia Spring Ring Dr. John A. Behnke, Clinician

Saturday, February 22, 2025 - Perry Methodist Church, Perry, GA

The **2025 Georgia Spring Ring** is proudly sponsored by Handbell Musicians of America, Area 4 in conjunction with Perry Methodist Church. This will be a fun day of massed ringing for both groups and individual ringers, under the direction of esteemed conductor, Dr. John A. Behnke. All ringers will need to prepare music before the event, and groups will need to bring their own equipment. Dress is Georgia Casual, or your group's favorite polo!

Registration fee will be \$25.00 per ringer by January 31, 2025. Lunch will be included. Membership in Handbell Musicians of America is not required. No refunds will be issued after January 31.

Location will be Perry Methodist Church in the Family Life Center, 1009 Main Street, Perry, Georgia 31069

Youth choirs are welcome to participate at the proper level of their ability. Underage participants (17 and younger) must be chaperoned (one adult, 21 years and older, per 6 ringers under the age of 17). There may be a need to have Parental Consent and Medical Authorization Forms filled out. Please email chair.area4@handbellmusicians.org for more information.

Individual Ringers - We will try to place orphans in your desired ringing position or as close as possible in a 'host' choir. Please mark 'individual' and the preferred ringing position on the registration form. Spaces for Individual Ringers are limited.

Clinician: Dr. John A. Behnke



Dr. John Behnke has a long and successful record of leading handbell choirs at the highest level. His handbell choirs have been chosen three times to play at Handbell Musicians of America National Seminars - Palm Springs, Dallas, and Grand Rapids. He was the director of the Milwaukee Handbell Ensemble from 2003 until 2019 and he directed The Alleluia Ringers of Concordia University Wisconsin from 1986-2015. These groups recorded many of the music on the demo tapes for AGEHR Publishing.

As the former Music Editor of AGEHR Publishing (Handbell Musicians of America), Dr. Behnke enjoys composing and arranging, having over 550+ handbell, choral, and organ compositions in print with nineteen different publishers in the United States, Germany, and Taiwan. A complete works listing can be found online at www.johnbehnke.com. He recently began his own publishing line entitled JAB Publishing.

Dr. Behnke is Emeritus Professor of Music of Concordia University, in Mequon, Wisconsin, where for 29 years (1986-2015) he taught organ and church music courses, and directed The Alleluia Ringers, Concordia's touring handbell choir. The Master's program he authored and led at Concordia University Wisconsin was instrumental in the education of countless well-known handbell musicians.

Presently, Dr. Behnke is the organist at Trinity Lutheran Church in Port Charlotte, Florida, and is a board member of the American Guild of Organists, Sarasota/Manatee chapter. He was recently awarded the Honorary Life Membership in 2020 by Handbell Musicians of America, and is a proud member of Area 4.

MUSIC SELECTIONS

All ringers will need to prepare music before the event, and groups will need to bring their own equipment.

Massed:

Fantasy on Holy, Holy, Holy arr John Behnke - L2+ - Concordia - CO977972

Joy and Elation by Cynthia Dobrinski - L2+ - Hope - HP2457

Grazioso by Arnold Sherman - L2+ - Red River Music - RRHB0042

Joyous Spirit by Valerie Stephenson - L2+ - Red River Music - RRBL5019

Peaches (Level 2 - 2+):

Remembering by John Behnke - L2 - JAB Publishing - JAB043

Gratitude by Alex Guebert - L2- - Ringing Word - RW8274

Peanuts (Level 3+ - 4+):

On Eagle's Wings arr John Behnke - L3 - Concordia - CO978028

Fancye by Tim Waugh - L4+ - Jeffers - JHS9336

Tentative Schedule

8:15 - Check In and Set up

12:15 - Lunch (Provided with Registration)

9:00 - Welcome and Announcements

1:15 - Massed Rehearsal

9:15 - Massed Rehearsal

1:45 - Peanuts Rehearsal / Classes for Peaches

10:15 - Break

2:15 - Peaches Rehearsal / Classes for Peanuts

10:30 - Peaches Rehearsal / Classes for Peanuts

2:45 - Massed Rehearsal

11:00 - Peanuts Rehearsal / Classes for Peaches

3:15 - Break

11:30 - Break

3:30 - Concert (open to the public)

11:45 - Massed Rehearsal

Registration Information - DUE 1/31/25

Contact Name: _____ Guild Membership #: _____

Email: _____

Church / Organization / Individual: _____

Address and Phone Number: _____

I/we give consent for pictures taken to be used for promotional purposes. Y_____ N_____

I/we give consent for video and/or live stream to be taken for use on social media Y_____ N_____

Ringling Division (choose one): Peaches (L2-2+) _____ Peanuts (L3+-4+) _____

Table Space Required: 2 Octaves/12 feet _____ 2-3 Octaves/18 feet _____ 3 Octaves/24 feet _____

4 Octaves/30 feet _____ 5 Octaves/36 feet _____ Other _____

_____ Yes, we are willing to host individual ringers within our choir. (we will reach out)

_____ Yes, our group would like to perform the following selection in the final concert:

Title: _____ Catalog Number: _____

Composer: _____ Performance Time: _____

For ALL ringers, submit the first and last names of the attendees using their **preferred first name** (for their nametag).

Please list and number all names below. (Example: 1. Michael W. Smith 2. Betty White 3. Mary Poppins, etc.)

Any Dietary Considerations we need to know about ?

Payments:

Registration per person: Number of People: _____ x \$25.00 = \$ _____

Payments can be made via check, Zelle, Venmo or PayPal. We also accept credit cards through PayPal. NOTE - For registrants using PayPal or Venmo, please include an additional \$5.00 **per person** processing fee.

If you have any questions concerning these online payment methods, please contact **Michael Lamb** at treasurer.area4@handbellmusicians.org BEFORE submitting payment.

Please designate the method and type your check number or digital confirmation number, if provided.

Zelle - treasurer.area4@handbellmusicians.org

Venmo - @Area4-HMA

PayPal - [PayPal.me/Area4Handbells](https://www.paypal.com/merchot/x-cmd=showitem&item=Area4Handbells)

Check - make check payable to: **Handbell Musicians of America, Area 4**
(submit one check if registering as a group)

Mail form and check to: William J. Murphy, Area 4 Chair
1120 Fennel Green Dr. Seffner, FL 33584
Chair.Area4@handbellmusicians.org

Please reach out to Steve Coldiron at ga.area4@handbellmusicians.org with any questions.

If you are not a member of Handbell Musicians of America, please consider joining! Your support helps promote the art of handbells through events like this one. Visit www.handbellmusicians.org for more information. Thank You!

Dear Directors and Ringers,

I'm so looking forward to being with you at a great venue in Perry, Georgia. The repertoire selected pays tribute to three composers who recently passed away: Cynthia Dobrinski, Timothy Waugh, and Arnold Sherman. Their contributions to the bell world were immense and they will be truly missed. We will honor them in this festival by playing Joy and Elation by Cynthia, Fancy by Tim and Grazioso by Arnold.

Also included in the repertoire are three of my pieces. A piece written during the pandemic called Remembering, and two new arrangements the Fantasy on Holy, Holy, Holy and On Eagle's Wings. I appreciate the festival committee allowing me the opportunity to share these pieces of mine with you.

I hope these notes below will help you as you prepare these pieces for what I'm sure will be a fantastic time making music together at the Area 4 Georgia Spring Ring in Perry, GA on February 22nd.

See you soon.

John Behnke

MASSED

Fantasy on Holy, Holy, Holy, J. Behnke

Chimes begin this piece - a different sound. Bells play the melody starting in m. 5 with the chime accompaniment. In m. 23 everyone plays bells. In m. 27 please note the bell changes as flats creep in Bb, Eb, and Ab. And then in m. 31 there is a key change to G major with F# in the signature. Measure 49 has modulation to C major. The last stanza of the hymn begins in m. 53 and 5 octave choirs may double the top note 8va. Please note a few bell changes, F# in m. 59 and C# in m. 64. Then at the end Db, Ab, Bb, Eb in m. 70; returning to naturals for the closing two C major chords. Let the shake in m. 72 begin softly and please crescendo. The bass chord does a swing for beats 3 and 4.

Grazioso, A. Sherman

This piece was written to remember the death of Norma Taubert Brown a ringer died of cancer in 1988. The piece reflects her struggle and ultimate journey to heaven. We also play this piece in memory of its composer, Arnold Sherman who passed away of cancer on May 20th, 2024. I think the piece also reflects his struggle with this deadly disease.

There are several important control measures in this piece. The first is m. 8, beats 3 and 4. The second is m. 24, again beats 3 and 4. The third is m. 35, beats 2, 3, and 4. The fourth is m. 49. Then m. 60 and 61 with the ritard on the echo rings moving to the new Freely tempo. The tenuto mark on beat 3 of m. 67 means it is its full value. M. 74 is another control measure; then m. 78 and finally m. 85. There is no ritard marked at the end of the piece, but I would like one. Please start a final ritard on beat 4 of m. 88; begin the shake quietly and crescendo to a ff for the last struck chord. Please note that in m. 86-88 the dynamics call for beat 3 to be the strongest. Let's see if we can make those crescendos and decrescendos effective.

There are a few spots where bell changes are needed. m. 19-20 where the Db emerges. And m. 38-39

with the Eb - E natural. If ringers can share bells, the CD6 ringer could play the Eb6. The DE5 ringer will, I think, have to cheat the fourth beat to make the switches. m. 49 has an important C#. Note m. 50-51 is similar to m. 38-39.

Dynamics play an important part in m. 56 and following. It is piano at m. 56, think mp at m. 57, mf at m. 58, f at m. 59, and ff at m. 60. And measure 61 I would count 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &. This will help us slow down and ritard as marked.

This is a wonderful composition always mentioned as a favorite of ringers and a true tribute to the great handbell composer that Arnold Sherman was.

Joy and Elation, Cynthia Dobrinski

Notice m. 1 is played forte, and m. 2 is played piano. Then in m. 3 the dynamic builds with each new shake. Measure 5 when you are shaking the chord move down towards the table so we can all do the mart lift together. In measures 15 through 22 again notice the dynamics. Piano first then forte in m. 17. A new section starts in m. 31 with echo rings. Then stay close to the table to do the mart lifts in m. 32 and 34. The same thing occurs in m. 40 and 42. The original material returns 47. At the end, m. 74, the treble chord should do their normal circle; but the bass chord should alter the circle and prepare for the martellato on beat 3.

Joyous Spirit, Valerie Stephenson

The tempo is marked 120 - 144 which is quite a wide range. We will start conservatively and see after we rehearse it a bit where it will end up.

The dynamic at the beginning is marked forte, but at m. 5 the melody is in the bass and stems down treble. These notes should be louder than the stems up treble. Also when the shakes come in, in measure 13-16, be sure to still hear the descending notes in the bass and stems down treble. They are actually more important than the shakes.

The texture thickens in m. 17 and the melody returns again in m. 21 this time in octaves with marts. Stay close to the table and try to strike together.

m. 33 begins a new section. Notice the pl - Plucking, The hardest thing with plucking is to control the bell so that it does not roll on you. One way is to place a hand on the two bells on the table and pluck with the other hand. If the tempo goes too fast for your hand, then consider a tap pluck where the hand with the thumb strikes the clapper. Again in this section the melody beginning in m. 37 should be a bit louder than the accompaniment.

M. 45 the piece builds as the melody of the B section occurs one more time, this time with shakes added. Plus 5/6 oct. choirs may add the upper notes 8va on the melody.

Page 6 has a great deal of activity. LVs, with mated melody notes. M. 65 be careful that the LV shakes do not become too loud. They are just for effect, so a little goes a long way.

The end is all out. Joy - Joy - Joy. M. 92 we will ritard - mark that measure to control. And then notice the last measure. We ring, do two marts, and then a mart lift which goes to the shoulder to damp. Really practice this. Done well, it's very effective.

PEANUTS

On Eagle's Wings, J. Behnke

Please observe the TVs in the first 12 measures. In m. 1-3 it is for all notes; in m. 4-12 it is for bass and stems down treble notes. The hymn begins at m. 13 with Stanza 1. Between measure 16 and 17 there are bell changes to Db and Ab, plus a Gb on beat 4 of m. 18 and in m. 19. In m. 21, really try to get effective dynamics between mf and the forte. Same in m. 23. Measure 29 and following begins the use of your mallets first in the low bass and then in m. 33 for bass and stems down treble clef. The mood should definitely change here. Even though you are malleting the same notes, try your best to play the accents and the dynamic increase from mp to mf. The top treble notes with the pickup to m. 34 ring defiantly. Everyone rings again in m. 39. Please circle m. 42 - it's a measure to control and watch the director. Please note the key change from Bb major to C major beginning with the modulation in m. 53. And yes for the stems up bass clef notes please observe the LV. Let all those notes blend together. And please circle m. 62 - again a measure to control and watch the director. Measure 63 the five octave choirs may add the upper octaves (7s) for the top note melody. Measure 71 starts the coda using the same motive as heard in the beginning. Control m. 74 and 75 - another measure to circle. At measure 76, let's build the sound like mp to forte. Watch the molto rit at m. 77 - beat 4. In m. 78 each fermati will be directed. A pulse will begin again at m. 79 with time for everyone to grab their mallet for the last chord which is a suspended malleted chord. And just gentle on the last strike.

Fancye, T. Waugh

The first thing to make note of is that the value of the eighth note is constant throughout the piece. Whether in 10/8 or in 4/4, the eighth note is the same value.

I will be conducting the 10/8 in 4 with the first and second beats having three eighths notes and then the third and fourth beats having two eighths notes value. You can count it - 1 & a, 2 & a, 3 &, 4 &.

Mallets are used in the beginning, but be ready to do a martellato on beats 3 and 4. I would suggest getting used to marting with the mallets in your hands. You won't have time to drop them and pick them up again.

Notice the dynamics start soft and build with each measure in the beginning, until it reaches a forte at m. 7 for page 3.

Page turns can be a problem and from p. 3 to 4, might be one spot. Experiment with solutions for yourself. At the festival I'll show you a trick with cutting the page which allows you to turn part of the page at a more convenient time.

The B section begins on p. 5 and I would ask you to play the melody (stems up treble) a bit louder than the accompaniment. And notice the LV which is for all bells in the measures and beats marked. There are not many bell changes in this Level 4+ piece. C#s and B naturals are it.

The A section returns at m. 49 and the texture here is fuller than in the beginning. There is no dynamic marked but I would suggest that beginning in m. 50 we can play fortissimo to the end. And even though it is marked "High Lift!" we will need to control this mart lift in m. 61 to end together with the mart on beat 3.

This will be a fun challenge piece.

PEACHES

Remembering, J. Behnke

This piece was written during the 2019-20 pandemic but the haunting melody allows us to remember all the special people in our lives that have passed away. Please note the swings which occur. I will direct them. We put a dynamic marking in a measure, but the question I always ask my ringers is "Are all the bells really the same dynamic?" In m. 5 the melody notes - stems up treble certainly need to be stronger than the accompaniment in the bass and stems down treble. There are a few bell changes - not too many in this piece, but m. 18 is the first, a B natural. Don Allured used to say when you play the bell for the last time, damp it on the foam. Bb is played at m. 15 and can be damped there, picking up the B natural at that time. Please observe the crescendos and decrescendos in the piece. At the end of the piece, the swings return and are very important. These swings are for all bells, even those not rung. If your bells do not ring, I would suggest turning your bell a quarter turn so the clapper will be horizontal and will not double ring. And we will damp on our legs not the table at the end.

Gratitude, Alex Guebert

We begin with strong forte chords in phrases of 4 measures. Maintain good damping between chords. In measure 13, stems down bass chords are malleted. This dynamic is mf and please notice the accents on main beats. This should be continued through the section. In this section Bbs and Ebs emerge for bell changes. Measures 34 - 47 have numerous dynamics to be aware of. The bracket at m. 52 means that everyone does the echo rings in that measure. Measure 54, 55, and 56 provide an opportunity to do a brush damp to take volume off the first struck chord before the quiet second chord. And please notice the dynamics at the end. It ends quietly.