

Three Modal Processionals



by

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For the past ten years I have been the handbell director at the Shipley School in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. In 2006 I was asked to write a processional for the graduating seniors. I wanted to write a piece that set a majestic, celebratory mood and was musically interesting but not too difficult to learn. I used short ostinato patterns that could be memorized quickly, piled them up in layers, and tried to create some variety by adding and subtracting layers. The result was *Mixolydian Entrada*. The processional was a success and, after three years, has become a graduation tradition.

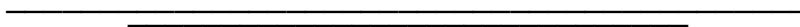
Because of the success of *Mixolydian Entrada*, I wanted to write more processionals, each one setting a different mood and using a different mode. I wrote two more and called them *Dorian Pastorale* and *Lydian Stomp*. Each processional has an alternate title appropriate for sacred settings. As I composed, I began to envision different movement ideas for each piece. I am a firm believer that the ringers should "look like the music." I wanted the movement to enhance the music, not detract from it.

In *Mixolydian Entrada*, my ringers stepped the beat as they rang. In the short amount of time that we had to prepare the processional, this was all they could handle. While their movement was appropriate for the occasion, I realized that there were other possibilities. Before each piece you will find my suggestions for movement. I used three categories: easy, medium and challenging to allow for varying abilities of individual groups.

Ringling and moving at the same time is not easy, but well worth the effort. The combination of handbells and processionals can be magical. My suggestions are only a starting point. Experiment. Be creative. Think outside of the box. Enjoy the music and let what people see enhance what they hear.

Michael Joy
Philadelphia, PA
2008

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Dorian Pastorale

Dorian Pastorale grew out of my love for English country dancing. It could be effective as the opening to the second half of a program, an interesting change of pace in the middle, or a poignant moment in a madrigal dinner or Renaissance feast. The movement should be graceful and elegant. I recommend standing still for the first eight measures and begin moving on m. 9. In all of the processions, ringers may start with either foot unless specifically indicated in the notes. For consistency, the following notes always start with the right foot.

Easy: The ringers step once per measure.

- Beat 1: Step forward with the right foot.
- Beat 2: Keeping the weight on the right foot, bring the left foot forward to join the right foot.
- Beat 3: Stand in place.
- Next measure: Follow the same procedure, but start with the left foot.
- This movement continues until the ringers are at the tables.

Medium: The ringers step every beat. Proper weight distribution is crucial.

- Beat 1: Step forward with the right foot, putting the weight on that foot. The left foot remains in place behind the right foot.
- Beat 2: Step in place with the left foot using the ball of the foot, momentarily shifting the weight to the left foot.
- Beat 3: Step in place with the right foot, shifting the weight back to the right foot.
- Repeat the same steps beginning on the left foot.

In each measure, the forward motion happens on beat 1. The steps on beats 2 and 3 are done in place. As the weight shifts, there is a gentle "forward- back- forward" rocking motion.

Verbal cues: R - L - R; L - R - L. While the entire procession can be done with this step, here are some other ideas to add interest.

- mm. 17-24: Move sideways, turning a quarter turn to the left every 2 measures.
Verbal cues: Step R - L - R, step L - R - L; (quarter turn to the left) step R - L - R, step L - R - L, etc. until the ringers are back in the original position.
- mm. 25-30: Move forward.
- mm. 31-32: Each ringer moves in a small circle to the right that lasts for 6 beats. Begin with the right foot and alternate feet.
Verbal cues: Turn R - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6.

Challenging: The ringers process single file. Each ringer needs to know whether they are an odd or even number in the lineup. The basic "step" is the one used above.

- mm. 1-9: Stand in place.
 - mm. 9-14: Move forward using the step described in Medium above.
 - mm. 15-16: Each odd numbered ringer moves in a circle to the right to face the ringer directly behind them; even numbered ringers step in place.
 - mm. 17-18: Step forward with the right foot on beat 1; bring the left forward to join the right on beat 2; step in place with the right on beat 3. In m. 18, step back with the left foot on beat 1; bring the right back to join the left on beat 2; step in place with the left on beat 3.
Verbal cues: Forward R - L - R; Back L - R - L.
 - mm. 19-20: Walk forward for 3 beats, passing right shoulders with your "partner." In m. 20, turn to the left for 3 beats.
Verbal cues: walk forward R - L - R, turn L - R - L.
 - mm. 21-22: Repeat the movements for mm. 17-18.
 - mm. 23-24: Move to the right in a circle around your "partner" for 6 beats.
Verbal cues: turn R - L - R, L - R - L.
 - mm. 25-30: Repeat the steps for mm. 17-22.
 - m 31: Odd numbered ringers move in a circle to the right for 3 beats, ending up in the original direction. Even numbered ringers step in place.
 - m. 32: All ringers step in place for 3 beats.
-

To Linda Lamb, Sandy Eithun and Judy Phillips

Dorian Pastorale

Grace

Cat. 20219-Dorian
AGEHR Level II

Handbells Used: 3-5 Octaves

opt.

Michael Joy

In a Graceful Dance-like Style $\text{♩} = 112$

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mf LV LV LV LV

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LV LV LV LV LV

16 *p* 17 18 19 20

21 22 23 24

25 *p* 26 27 28

29 30 31 32

* last time only

Mixolydian Entrada

I had my ringers play mm. 1-16 in place before they started moving. If you use 2 ringers for the 4th and 5th octave bass bells, the weight of the bells can become very tiresome for the ringers. I assigned C3 and A3 to one ringer and D3 and G3 to the other. No single ringer has the 2 largest bells and neither is ringing 2 bells at once. I have also provided a less demanding alternative for these bass bells, which will be found at the end of the processional.

Easy: Step the beat. Too many groups who do processions cannot step the beat while they are playing. This destroys the visual impact because the ringers walk at different tempi and are not moving to the beat! Moving in unison to the beat takes a lot of practice.

- Stand in place and play quarter notes. When the beat is firmly established, continue ringing and step the beat in place.
- Ring quarter notes and walk around the room while stepping the beat.
- When that can be done with some facility, ring different note values while stepping and walking the beat.
- Make sure that the tempo is stately enough so that the movement doesn't seem rushed.

Medium: Each step takes 2 beats. This works well when there is a shorter space in which to process. This also helps the movement to look more stately. With this step, think about shifting the weight of the body from one foot to the other. All ringers should start on the same foot. This explanation will start with the right foot.

- Beat 1: Step forward with the right foot.
- Beat 2: Keeping the weight on the right foot, bring the left foot forward to join the right foot. To help keep the weight on the right foot, use the ball of the left foot and "tap" it lightly next to the right. The weight is still on the right foot and the left foot is ready to go for the next beat.
Verbal cues: R, together.
- Beats 3 and 4: Repeat above movement, starting with the left foot.
Verbal cues: L, together.
- Repeat this step combination for every measure until the ringers are at the tables. At that point, stand still and play to the end of the piece.

Challenging: This suggestion is based on the pavane, a courtly processional dance from the Renaissance. It is a combination of the other two suggestions listed above. The choreography consists of 2 singles and a double.

- m. 1: 2 singles- one step forward and a second one to bring the feet together. Repeat.
Verbal cues: R, together; L, together.
- m. 2: A double- 3 steps forward and a fourth step to bring the feet together. Start with the right foot.
Verbal cues: R - L - R, together.
- mm. 3-4: Repeat movement from mm. 1-2, this time starting on the left foot.
Verbal cues: L, together; R, together; L - R - L, together.

An additional option:

I have always thought that the descant in mm. 14 and 16 sounded rather "circular." For an interesting variation, in mm. 14 and 16, each ringer moves in a circle to the right for 4 beats.

- Think of this as walking in a small circle for 4 beats, ending in the original position.
 - mm. 13-14: *Verbal cues:* R, together; L, together; turn R - L - R - L.
 - mm. 15-16: Start on the right foot again. Repeat the movement for mm. 13-14.
-

Written for the 2006 Graduating Class
The Shipley School, Bryn Mawr, PA

Mixolydian Entrada

Triumphal Entry
Procession of the Magi

Cat. 20219-Mixolydian
AGEHR Level III

Handbells used: 3-5 octaves

4 octave groups omit G3 and A3 throughout

opt.

Majestically ♩ = 80

Michael Joy

f

f LV

LV

* For an easier version of the first 4 measures, see footnote on p. 4

7 8 9 *f* Sk

LV LV R LV

10 11 12 Sk

LV LV LV R

13 *f* Sk 14 LV 15 R Sk

LV Sk LV LV LV LV Sk

* Measures 1 - 4 may be simplified as follows and repeated until m. 17.

** Measure 17 - 20, each set of eighth notes from C3-A3 may be played as one quarter note.

Lydian Stomp

Lydian Stomp is raucous, fun, and full of rhythmic energy. The movement should be lively and celebratory. Feel free to use percussion to add to the "joyful noise!"

Easy: In this processional, the meter alternates between 6/8 and 3/4. Take 2 steps in the 6/8 measures (1 step for every dotted quarter note) and 1 step in the 3/4 measures. (Move forward on beat 1, bring the feet together on beat 2 and stand in place on beat 3.) This processional may begin with either foot. This explanation will start with the right foot.

- mm. 1-2: The body weight shifts as the ringer moves forward, R - L - R, with the weight ending up on the right foot. Keep the weight on the right foot.
Verbal cues: R - L - R, together, pause.
- mm. 3-4: Same step beginning with the left foot. By the beginning of m. 4, the weight is on the left foot.
Verbal cues: L - R - L, together, pause.
- This pattern continues until the ringers are at the tables.

Medium: The big change here is in the 3/4 measure. Instead of standing still on beats 2 and 3, stomp on those beats!

- mm. 1-2: Starting with the right foot, take 3 steps forward (R-L-R), with the third step occurring on the first beat of the 3/4 measure. Keep the weight on the right foot, and stomp loudly with the left foot on beats 2 and 3.
Verbal cues: Forward R - L - R, STOMP! STOMP!
- mm. 3-4: Same pattern starting with the left foot.
Verbal cues: L - R - L, STOMP! STOMP!
- This pattern continues until the ringers are at the tables.

Challenging: Using the basic movements described above, experiment with moving in other directions.

- Instead of always moving forward, step to the side.
- Move forward for 2 measures and move backwards for 2 measures.
Verbal cues: Forward R - L - R, STOMP! STOMP! Back L - R - L, STOMP! STOMP!
- Create visual interest by doing different things with odd and even numbered ringers. Odd numbered ringers start with the right foot. Even numbered ringers start with the left. Step forward diagonally. Odd numbered ringers move diagonally to the right; even numbered ringers move diagonally to the left. To move back in place, ringers begin with the opposite foot. Odd numbered ringers move diagonally to the left; even numbered ringers move diagonally to the right. This will create an interesting visual as the line "expands and contracts."
- Do a "rhythmic turn" 180 degrees for 3 steps and do the 2 stomps. Reverse this back to place.
- Here's one last idea: There are 4 different ostinati (layers of sound) in this processional. Layer 1 includes C3 to C5; Layer 2, D5 to A5; Layer 3, B5 to A6; Layer 4, B6 to C7. (If the same ringer plays A5-B5, have that ringer with the Layer 2 group.) Have the ringers for each layer start at different parts of the room. Give them each a specific movement - one that looks like the music!

Experiment and combine ideas. All of this movement can create a kind of "organized chaos" and will help the ringers to "look like the music!"

For Tim Waugh; Mentor, Friend and Kindred Spirit
He IS a Joyful Noise!

Lydian Stomp

Make a Joyful Noise

Cat. # 20219-Lydian
AGEHR Level III

Handbells Used: 3-5 Octaves

4 octave groups omit G3 and A3 throughout

Michael Joy

Very Rhythmic ♩ = 100

13 14 15 16

LV LV

17 18 19 20

f LV LV

21 22 23 24

LV LV

25 26 27 28

f LV Sk LV Sk

* Top staff notes may be doubled from m. 25 to end

29 LV 30 Sk 31 LV 32 Sk

33 LV 34 Sk 35 LV 36 Sk

37 LV 38 LV 39 R 40

molto rit.

LV LV LV *molto rit.* R