

Beethoven's Bellmen

From Beethoven's 9th Symphony

Arranged by Jeffrey T. Parthun Sr.

Program Notes

Beethoven's Bellmen uses the classic *Ode to Joy*, which is one of the most well known Beethoven compositions. Combined with a quote from his famous 5th *Symphony*, young "bellmen" have the opportunity to play the music of a master composer in an ensemble of instruments with a very unique sound and function in the band.

Performance Notes

Like many band directors, I have my beginning percussionists work with bell/snare kits. I believe in early mallet training for percussionists and really push solo and ensemble playing. "Beethoven's Bellmen" is an ensemble that helps fill a gap in current pedagogical percussion literature and offers an early mallet ensemble experience with a very recognizable melody. Many percussion sections have students at varying skill levels. This piece takes that into account. The Bells 1 part is for a more advanced mallet player, not so much on a physical technique level but on note reading ability outside of the traditional octave range of grade 1 music. The Bells 2 part is playable by average players and the Bells 3 part uses a fair amount of repeated pitches and easily understandable rhythms for a more inexperienced player.

Students should try to use alternate sticking as much as possible and work on making a wrist stroke that allows the mallet head to "pop" off of the bar. I have found that, even on a lowly bell kit, the difference in tone quality is significant when a player tries to lift the mallet off of the bar instead of playing the bells as if they were pitched snare drums!

Please use hard plastic mallets instead of rubber if at all possible. Brass mallets should generally be avoided on bells except for special effects. Rolls should not be used in this piece as they are difficult for beginners to execute smoothly and are not traditionally played on bells in standard literature.



Jeffrey T. Parthun, Sr. lives in Lafayette, Indiana with his wife Kim and four children. He is a band director in the Lafayette (IN) School Corporation where he currently directs the concert and jazz bands at Tecumseh Middle School and is an assistant director at Jefferson High School. During his 20+ years as a public school teacher he has taught instrumental music at every level from elementary band and orchestra through teaching applied percussion at Purdue University. Jeff holds degrees from Butler University and Northwestern University where he studied band arranging with John P. Paynter, Don Owens and Don Casey. In addition to a busy teaching schedule he is active as a freelance percussionist with many regional jazz and concert groups. He is an experienced adjudicator, clinician and arranger for concert, jazz, marching and percussion ensembles and is a member of the Central States Judges Association. He can be seen (briefly!) as the band director in the Paramount Pictures movie “Blue Chips” with Shaquille O’Neal and Nick Nolte.