



# Music and Worship Arts Week

## Lake Junaluska, North Carolina

### June 20 – 25, 2010

#### Annotations and Articulations

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Handbells, by their nature, are considered a percussive as well as a melodic instrument. Because of their adaptability to bridge these percussive and melodic components, a variety of techniques have been invented and modified over the years. Experimentation and development continue for our unique musical idiom. Handbells' development as a viable instrument, the enthusiasm of its' ringers, vision of its' directors and imagination of its' composers will continue the quest for discovery of new sounds, effects and the articulations necessary to produce the result.

These articulations, commonly known as stopped techniques, are created and modified to best emulate the shortened sounds composers "hear" in their compositions. The definition of *staccato*, according to Webster: "with distinct breaks between successive tones; usually indicated by a dot placed over or under each note to be so produced."

In handbell compositions, stopped sounds are indicated by this staccato dot or specific symbols that have developed over the years. Countless hours of notation conferences have been held to establish the standards we see used in handbell compositions today. An excellent resource that illustrates these special symbols and describes their recommended execution is found in the AGEHR booklet: *Handbell and Handchime Notation, Difficulty Level System, Solo and Ensemble Notation, 2006 Edition*. The *Notation* book states the definition of the techniques as well as recommendations to the composers. For example, "the staccato dot applies to all notes on a common stem and only to those notes.....composers should specify which stopped-sound effect(s) the staccato dots represent." (p. 17)

As in all techniques with any musical instrument, there are correct and safe ways in which to execute them. Methods, when taught without regard to cause and effect or carelessly executed, can damage not only the "instrument" but the individual as well. This class will examine the annotations, the standardized symbols, created by the AGEHR and adopted by the music publishers. The execution of stopped techniques, the articulations, will be demonstrated, with consideration given to the manufacturers' recommendations. Through discussion, hands-on participation, specific drills and compositional examples, class participants will discover the "secrets" to attain successful responses and consistent sounds for articulations found in today's repertoire.

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