

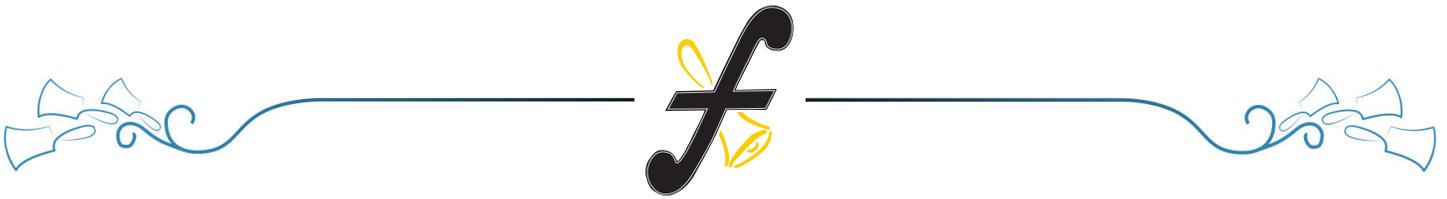
GETTING STARTED WITH BELL TREES

Resources & Equipment Needed:

- Bells (any with handles that can string together)
- Bell Tree Stand
 - From [Jeffers](#) (\$349*)
 - From [Malmark](#) (\$349)
 - Free article with instructions to build your own stand from [Sonology](#) (materials ~\$60)
 - Use a lighting stand from [Amazon](#) (\$37.99 for this one)
- Clips/Separators
 - Acrylic separators from [Heitz](#) (1 for \$10 or 3 for \$25) or [Jeffers](#) (3 for \$25)
 - Plastic separator rings from [Heitz](#) (\$0.95 each)
 - Wire clips from [Heitz](#) or [Jeffers](#) (5 for \$17.50)
- Mallets
 - Generally, rubber mallets for higher bells, wrapped mallets for lower bells, just like playing in a full choir. Mallet choice will depend on the range and feel of the song and the size and acoustics of the room in which you're performing.
 - Some of our recommended rubber mallets:
 - › Malmark MH40 Grey Rubber from [Malmark](#) or [Heitz](#) (\$14 per mallet)
 - › Schulmerich AS6 Blue Rubber from [Schulmerich](#) (\$28 per pair)
 - › TruTimbre 4026 Black Rubber from [Jeffers](#) or [Heitz](#) (\$18 per mallet)
 - › TruTimbre 4006 Brown Rubber from [Jeffers](#) (\$18 per mallet) or [Heitz](#) (\$14.95 per mallet)
 - Some of our recommended wrapped mallets:
 - › Schulmerich AS5 Blue Poly from [Schulmerich](#) (\$37 per pair)
 - › Schulmerich LS5 Red Yarn from [Schulmerich](#) (\$38 per pair)
 - › Older Schulmerich pink yarn if you have them already or can get them from another program (they're no longer in production)
 - Also consider double-ended mallets from [Schulmerich](#) ("Duo Series" DUO56 Blue Rubber and Blue Poly, \$50 per pair) and [Malmark](#) (Grey Rubber and Red Crochet, \$27 per mallet)

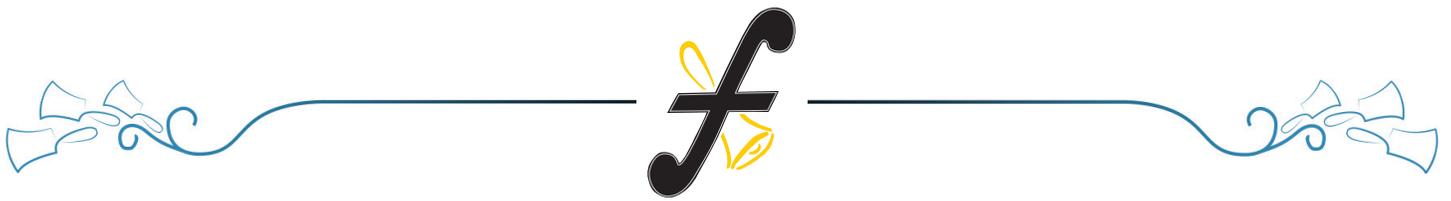
* all prices listed are subject to change – they are accurate as of September 2020





Getting Started:

- Introduction
 - Uses for bell tree
 - > Solo performance (with or without accompaniment)
 - > Small footprint handbell offerings where there's limited space
 - > Duet/ensemble: multiple bell trees together or one bell tree with people playing from both sides
 - Music selection
 - > [Heitz Handbells](#)
 - > [Jeffers Handbell Supply](#)
 - > [Sonology Music](#)
 - > Church service: melody line of hymnal
 - > Play by ear if you're comfortable, including peals
 - > Ideas and written-out simple melodies on the [Bell Tree Repository](#)
 - “Bell Tree Keyboard Manual” by Barbara Brocker, from [Heitz](#) or [Jeffers](#) (\$24.95)
 - > We strongly recommend this resource for the beginning bell tree ringer. It details the step-by-step process that we go through in our class. It also includes pictures of the setup and snippets of music to try out as you follow along, creating the strands of your bell tree and beginning to play.
- Setting up and starting out
 - Ideal height of stand to start out: bell hanging from tree, casting approximately at forehead level
 - Setting the first bell strand
 - > String C6-C7 naturals and hang them on the bell tree stand.
 - > Add clips/separators if you need them (will depend on your set of bells).
 - > Be consistent with your setup (whether you use the keyboard layout or not) so that you don't have to re-learn where the bells are every time you get the piece out to play it.
 - Trying the trees
 - > Look at where the clapper hits the casting on the inside of the bell and then aim for that same spot on the outside of the bell when you strike.
 - > When you strike, bounce the mallet off right away (if you swipe “through” or let the mallet rest on the bell after striking it, the sound will not be as good).
 - > Make your movements match the piece, stand a comfortable distance from the tree, and allow yourself to move your feet to get to where you need to be.



- Play some music
 - > Joy to the World (starts on C7)
 - > Kum Bah Yah (starts on C5)
 - > This Little Light of Mine (starts on G6)
- Set at least one more strand
 - > C6-C7 sharps and flats (switch D# and F# in the order when stringing) / C5-B5 naturals / C5-B5 sharps and flats (switch D# and F# in the order when stringing) / 4s and 7s as needed
- Make beautiful music!
 - > Dynamics: mallets can help, but also be aware of dynamics just like you would in any other type of music making.
 - > Cuing: practice with the people who are going to perform with you and make sure you're confident on entrances, tempo changes, and other non-verbal communication you will need to employ when performing.
 - > Damping: use a mallet or your hand, and practice doing this so that it becomes part of your muscle memory for any piece where you need to stop any sounds (otherwise, accept the LV nature of the bell tree as an instrument).
 - > Learning how to comfortably hold two mallets in each hand can help smooth out your performance if there are multiple notes at a time.

Other Resources/Links:

- Bell Tree-L, an email discussion Google Group
 - Send an email to BellTree-L+subscribe@googlegroups.com to join.
- ["Bell Trees"](#) by Barbara Brocker (a resource from the Handbell Musicians of America)

