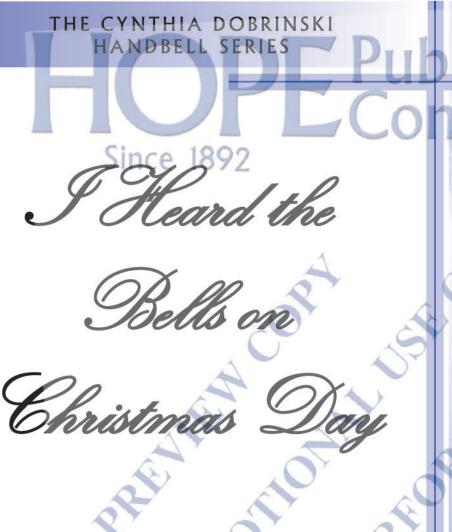
Level



Arranged for 3-5 octave handbells by Cynthia Dobrinski





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This setting of "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" utilizes elements of text painting to musically describe Longfellow's four stanzas. Typical bell patterns are heard in the introduction and later in the transition to verse two. Rolling movement in the melody is heard on the words "rolled along the unbroken song". Verse three is the most picturesque and dramatic. A minor key and tempo changes are used to portray the despair of the reality that there is no peace on earth. The chord on "hate" is strident and clashingly dissonant. Mockery is depicted with the bass martellatos laughing up the scale on "mocks the song". In this stanza "peace on earth" sounds anything but serene. In the transition to the final stanza the bells persist in ringing the good news, first slowly in a minor carol, then gradually faster and louder as more and more bells peal and toll and join in the joyful affirmation that there is a greater reality, that God will prevail. The triumphant final verse looks forward to the day when the Prince of Peace will reign and all the tower bells wildly celebrate their joy.

- 1. I heard the bells on Christmas day
  Their old familiar carols play,
  And wild and sweet the words repeat
  Of peace on earth good will to men.
- 2. I thought how, as the day had come,
  The belfries of all Christendom
  Had roll'd along th'un broken song
  Of peace on earth good will to men.
- 3. And in despair I bow'd my head:

  "There is no peace on earth," I said,

  "For hate is strong and mocks the song
  Of peace on earth good will to men."
- 4. Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: "God is not dead, nor doth he sleep; The wrong shall fail, the right prevail, With peace on earth good will to men."



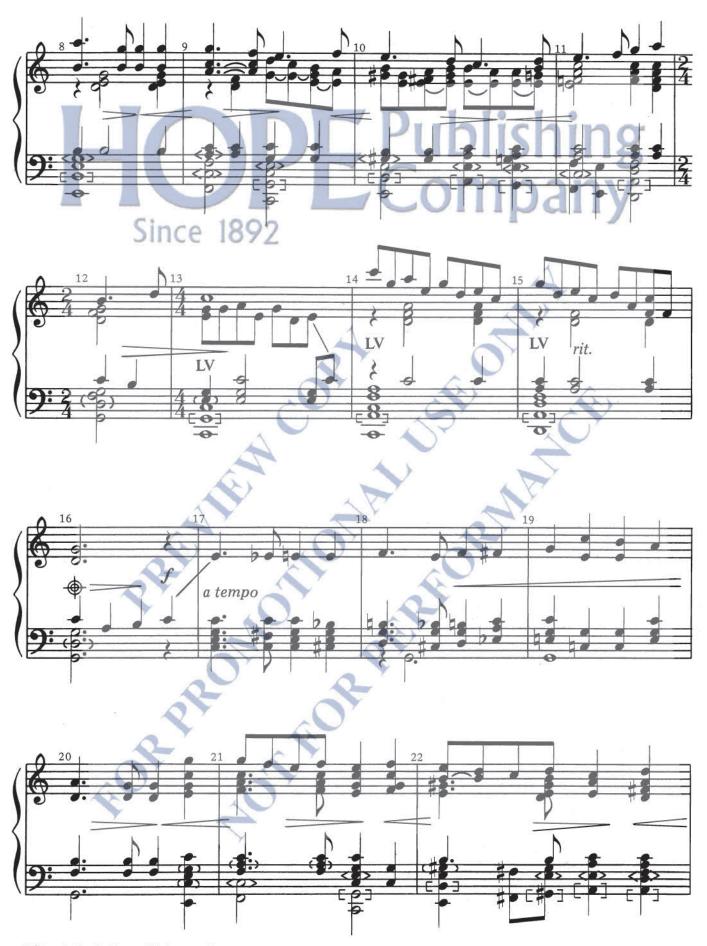
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I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day



I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day



I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day



\*5 octave choirs double melody an octave higher. I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day



\*Ritard so that the bells will have come almost to a complete stop by m. 75. Swing very slowly and let the sound die away.

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

