

GOD REST YE MERRY, GENTLEMEN

for 2-3 Octaves Handbell Choir

Handbells used: 2 octaves (21 bells)
3 octaves (31 bells)

optional

Two octave choirs omit notes in (); three octave choirs omit notes in <>.

TRADITIONAL

Arranged by LINDA R. LAMB

♩ = 100-108

mf *f* *rit.*

mf *a tempo*

* Staccato notes may be played throughout by plucking, thumb damping or malleting the bells on a well-padded table unless otherwise indicated.

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8 *mp* 9 10 11

R *mp*

This system contains measures 8, 9, 10, and 11. The music is in a minor key. Measure 8 starts with a piano (p) dynamic and a forte (f) dynamic marking. The melody in the right hand features a sequence of notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. The bass line consists of a sustained chord of F4, Ab4, and C5. A 'R' (ritardando) marking is placed above the first measure, and a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic is indicated below the first measure.

12 *mp* 13 14 15

R *mp* R

This system contains measures 12, 13, 14, and 15. The melody continues with notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. The bass line features a sequence of chords: F4, Ab4, C5; F4, Ab4, C5; F4, Ab4, C5; and F4, Ab4, C5. A 'R' (ritardando) marking is placed above the first measure, and a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic is indicated below the first measure. A second 'R' marking is placed above measure 13.

16 17 18

f

This system contains measures 16, 17, and 18. The melody continues with notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. The bass line features a sequence of chords: F4, Ab4, C5; F4, Ab4, C5; and F4, Ab4, C5. A forte (*f*) dynamic marking is placed below measure 17.

19 20 21 ()

ff *f* R

This system contains measures 19, 20, and 21. The melody continues with notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. The bass line features a sequence of chords: F4, Ab4, C5; F4, Ab4, C5; and F4, Ab4, C5. A fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic marking is placed below measure 19, and a forte (*f*) dynamic marking is placed below measure 20. A 'R' (ritardando) marking is placed above measure 21.

Musical notation for measures 22-25. Measure 22 starts with a *mf* dynamic marking. Measures 23 and 25 contain a fermata over the final note, labeled with an 'R'.

Musical notation for measures 26-28. Measure 27 is circled and contains a fermata over the final note, labeled with an 'R'. Measure 28 also contains a fermata over the final note.

Musical notation for measures 29-31. Measure 30 contains a fermata over the final note. Measure 31 contains a fermata over the final note.

Musical notation for measures 32-34. Measure 34 contains a fermata over the final note.

35 36 37

Musical notation for measures 35, 36, and 37. Measure 35 is circled. The music is in a piano style with chords and some melodic lines in both staves.

38 39 40

R

Musical notation for measures 38, 39, and 40. Measure 38 contains a fermata over a chord, labeled 'R'. Measure 40 has a sharp sign on the bass line.

41 42 43

cresc.

Musical notation for measures 41, 42, and 43. Measure 42 includes the instruction *cresc.* (crescendo).

44 45 46

ff *decresc.*

Musical notation for measures 44, 45, and 46. Measure 45 includes the instruction *ff* (fortissimo) and *decresc.* (decrescendo). Measure 46 has downward-pointing triangles above the notes.

47

48 49 50 51

R *f*

This system contains measures 47 through 51. Measure 47 is circled and contains a circled number 47. The music is in a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature has one flat. Measure 47 starts with a dynamic marking of *f* and a *R* (ritardando) marking. Measures 48-51 show a sequence of chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand.

52 53 54 55

R *R* *R*

SK

This system contains measures 52 through 55. Measure 53 features a slur over the right hand with a wavy line underneath, labeled *SK*. Measures 52-55 show chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand. There are *R* markings in measures 53, 54, and 55.

56 57 58 59 60

This system contains measures 56 through 60. The music consists of chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand.

61 62

R *R* *R*

SK

63

This system contains measures 61 through 63. Measure 61 features a slur over the right hand with a wavy line underneath, labeled *SK*. Measure 63 is circled and contains a circled number 63. Measures 61-63 show chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand. There are *R* markings in measures 61, 62, and 63.

64 65 66

Musical notation for measures 64, 65, and 66. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). Measure 64 features a complex chordal texture in the right hand with a melodic line in the left hand. Measure 65 continues this texture with some chromatic movement. Measure 66 shows a slight change in the right-hand accompaniment.

67 68 69

Musical notation for measures 67, 68, and 69. Measure 67 has a more active right hand with some sixteenth-note patterns. Measure 68 returns to a more chordal texture. Measure 69 features a prominent melodic line in the right hand.

70 71 72 73 74

Musical notation for measures 70, 71, 72, 73, and 74. Measures 70-72 show a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand. Measures 73 and 74 feature a more complex, dense chordal texture in the right hand.

75 76 77 78

cresc. R R R *ff*

Musical notation for measures 75, 76, 77, and 78. Measure 75 is marked with *cresc.* and has downward-pointing triangles above the notes. Measures 76 and 77 are marked with *R*. Measure 78 is marked with *R ff*. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen is a festive arrangement of the beloved English Christmas carol for 2-3 octaves handbell choir. It will delight all who hear it rung during the Christmas season.

As your ringers first look at this piece, have them check the music to see where the melody notes appear with relation to the accompaniment. Since the melody moves around throughout the texture, the ringers can use this piece to develop their skills in making the distinction between melody and accompaniment.

Following the four measure introduction, the melody begins in the treble while the accompanying line has staccato notes. You may pluck, mallet or thumb damp these staccato notes, and strive for absolute precision in executing the articulations. Remember when executing a martellato (measures 45-46 and 75-78) keep the bell casting close to the well-padded table to avoid damage to the bell.

Strive for precision throughout, ring musically, and listen to each other for an exciting, energetic performance.

Linda R. Lamb received a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology from Carson-Newman College with a minor in music. She is the Music Director at the Lexington Park Baptist Church in Lexington Park, Maryland.

