

# MUSIC THEORY.aargh©

## Where's the Melody? (Session 10)

By Dr. Ona Pinsonneault

At the Duluth Convention this past summer I attended a session given by Morna-June Morrow titled "Guide to Making Notations on your Handbell Music." She covered technical marking for the score such as Damping, Stopped Staccato, Martellato, Mallet, etc. (m-jmorrow@shaw.ca). This session advocated marking the score in pencil so that these could be erased when the music is filed. I also attended a session by Sharon Schmidt called "Stem Direction DOES Count!" She gave clues on how to separate the melody from the harmony (sksbrr@gmail.com). This session suggested that some markings be highlighted: "Play just your melody notes (highlight?)". I also have had a conversation with John Behnke about a standard marking for melody notes. He said that the only marking that is standard is the "line" that shows when the melody goes from one staff into another.

I would like to ask for a standard marking of scores by the handbell choir director or members that will show recognition of melody notes. There is no better time to begin this than in the Kids Ring repertoire. I will choose the score "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus." This is a melody that I didn't know and my first reading of it was confusing until I found the melody. Here is the melody as it appears in all octaves:

Choral conductors use different colored pencils to mark interpretation of the score. Your handbell choir director could decide what color to use for the melody, but circling melody notes with red would seem to work.

The importance of this is manifold, but mostly is that melody notes need to be heard. "If you can't hear the melody, you are playing too loud," is the old adage. For young ringers, you will be able to instruct them as to different functions of the notes on the score, i.e., melody, harmony, rhythm. Once the score is marked, it can stay that way. Rehearsal of melody notes alone will help the whole choir know the tune.

Until next time,

**Dr. P**

[ona.pinsonneault@normandale.edu](mailto:ona.pinsonneault@normandale.edu)

January 2013