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### Music of the "Ringing Isle": The Culture of Bell-Ringing and Its Musical Evocations in England, c. 1660-1700

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Nick Capozzoli

Professor Plank

Introduction to Music Research and Writing

3 December 2015

Music of the “Ringing Isle”: The Culture of Bell-Ringing and Its Musical Evocations in England,  
c. 1660-1700

With their melodious peals, resonant clanging, and arresting tones, bells were inescapable instruments that permeated all aspects of late seventeenth-century English life. Appearances in the royal court, cities, and countryside confirm a usage beyond marking hours of the day, for bells were integral to the social fabric of every community. For instance, they could summon the faithful to church or proclaim a royal occasion; these instruments could also warn of enemy intrusion, accompany a funeral procession, or even entertain bell connoisseurs for recreation.<sup>1</sup> With its harmonious sounds, bell-ringing seems to have captured the imagination of those within its radius, evident in literary and musical compositions of this period. Evocations of pealing are found in catches, instrumental music, court odes, and church anthems, demonstrating their pervasive influence in the domestic, monarchical, secular, and sacred spheres. More telling, however, are the ways in which bell-ringing was transcribed or suggested in these works, for bells’ multifaceted connotations shed light on a given work’s meaning to its composer and listeners. Therefore, by tracing the cultural significance of bells and bell-ringing in late

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<sup>1</sup> Of course, these are only some of the many uses of bells in England. This discussion focuses on bell music from approximately the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 to 1700. Christopher Marsh presents a thorough survey of bells in parish churches, funerals, and coronations during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. For this discussion, see *Music and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 454-504. For a dated, yet interesting overview of English bell-ringing’s earliest history to the late eighteenth century, see John James Raven, *The Bells of England* (London: Methuen, 1906).

seventeenth-century England, one gleans a richer understanding of the musical compositions evoking them, implications that range from domestic recreation to political propaganda.

As a public performance, bell-ringing was both a professional engagement and recreational sport in seventeenth-century England.<sup>2</sup> Ringers were employed in a variety of institutions ranging from small parish churches to the Chapel Royal, although their duties of marking important days and occasions were common among posts.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, ringing's growing appearance in publications such as John White's *A Rich Cabinet, with Variety of Inventions* (1677) and Gervase Markham's *The Compleat Husbandman and Gentleman's Recreation* (1695) confirms that it was a common pastime just as much as a professional endeavor. Naturally then, this physically demanding, yet pleasurable activity sparked the formation of bell-ringing societies in late seventeenth-century England. With a structured hierarchy of leaders and officers, these organizations testify to the growing interest in bells among all kinds of English citizens: young and old, as well as male and female.<sup>4</sup>

Such enjoyable activities would have been welcomed at the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, for Puritan supremacy during the Commonwealth condemned traditional English pastimes. In order to improve one's moral character, Puritans denounced amusements such as ringing bells.

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<sup>2</sup> In a diary entry from 1602, German visitor Frederick Gerschow notes a growing faction of pleasure ringers: "On arriving in London we heard a great ringing of bells in almost all churches going on very late in the evening. We are informed that the young people do that for the sake of exercise and amusement and sometimes they pay considerable sums as a wager who will pull a bell the longest and ring it in the most approved fashion." Quoted in William T. Cook, "The Organization of the Exercise in the Seventeenth Century," in *Change Ringing: The History of an English Art*, ed. J. Sanderson. vol. 1 (Cambridge: Foister & Jagg, 1987), 68.

<sup>3</sup> Records from the *Old Cheque Book of the Chapel Royal* reveal the employment of bell-ringers for monarchical use: "Be it Remebered that upon the 26. Day of November 1678 Henry Watkins was by the ffree gift of the Right Reverend Father in God Henry Lord B<sup>p</sup> of London & Dean of his Ma.<sup>ties</sup> Chappell Royal, sworn Bellringer for His ma.<sup>ties</sup> Household at Whitehall." Andrew Ashbee and John Harley, eds., *The Cheque Books of the Chapel Royal*, vol. 1 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 3-4.

<sup>4</sup> Such societies include College Youths (London, founded 1637), Esquire Youths (London, 1662), and the North Youths (London, 1669). For an in-depth discussion of ringing societies, rules, and organization, see Cook, "The Organization of the Exercise," 70-81.

This is seen in a 1655 entry from *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*, which states that on Sundays, no one “shall hereafter upon the Lords-day use, exercise, keep, maintaining or be present at any wrestlings, Shooting, Bowling, Ringing of Bells for Pleasure or Pastime, Masque, Wake, otherwise called Feasts, Church-Ale, Dancing, Games, Sport or Pastime whatsoever.”<sup>5</sup>

John Bunyan, in his autobiography *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666), recounts his anxiety of such sinful pleasures, although he admits to bells’ alluring and spiritual quality in his later publication *A Book for Boys and Girls: Or, Country Rhimes for Children* (1686).<sup>6</sup> Thus, the loud clanging of church bells and radiant bonfires that accompanied Charles II’s Restoration made the occasion even more meaningful to English citizens; the re-inauguration of the Stuart regime not only signaled political unity and peace, but also a revival of native activities.

Seventeenth-century historian James Heath notes this excitement, reporting that upon proclamation of the monarch, “the numberless number of Bonfires, the Ringing of Bells, and shooting off the Guns, and the joyful Expressions of the People did declare them beyond the Art of any Pen.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Christopher Durston, “Puritan Rule and the Failure of Cultural Revolution, 1645-1660,” in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700*, edited by Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 214. Protestant opposition to bells could have also been triggered by their association with Roman Catholicism. Samuel Pepys reveals that baptizing bells was a distinct Catholic tradition, for on January 15, 1659, he notes: “After that we went to read in the great Officale about the blessing of bells in the Church of Rome.” Henry B. Wheatley, ed., *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, vol. 1 (New York: Random House, 1893), 13.

<sup>6</sup> In his *Grace Abounding*, Bunyan states: “Now you must know, that before this I had taken much delight in ringing, but my Conscience beginning to be Tender I thought such practice was but vain, and therefore forced myself to leave it, yet my mind hankered.” 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Printed for Nath. Ponder, at the Peacock in the Poultry, over against the Stocks-Market, 1680), 12. However, in his earlier poem “Upon a Ring of Bells,” Bunyan gives a spiritual account of bell-ringing: “These Bells are like the Powers of my Soul; Their Clappers to the Passions of my mind.” For the entire poem, see *A Book for Boys and Girls: Or, Country Rhimes for Children* (London: Printed for N.P. and Sold by the Booksellers in London, 1686), 36-37.

<sup>7</sup> *The Glories and Magnificent Triumphs of the Blessed Restitution of His Sacred Majesty K. Charles II from his arrival in Holland 1659-1660 till this Present* (London, 1662), 31. While this quote testifies to the prolific use of bells, Heath’s royalist stance should be considered in light of his reports.

Although a recreational sport, bell-ringing involved tight coordination and musical sensitivity. Up to the late seventeenth century, ringers focused mostly on ringing bells in a fixed order, methods known as raising in peal, lowering in peal, and rounds.<sup>8</sup> A more complicated process known as change ringing emerged, in which ringers systematically varied the order in which bells were rung through a sequence of permutations. For example, in a peal of 123456, two pairs of ringers could exchange places simultaneously, producing 123546. The need to codify methods with which ringers performed this is seen in the publication of Fabian Stedman's *Tintinnalogia, or the Art of Ringing* (1668) and *Campanologia: or the Art of Ringing Improved* (1677). In these treatises, Stedman aims at a higher artistic goal beyond simple changes and rounds: he experiments with mathematical formulas that produce all possible changes without repetition (see Appendix I, Example 1). Such methods were memorized and honed by the readers of these treatises, and compositions were often given imaginative names such as "Grandsire Bob," "The Cheat," and "Topsie-Turvie."

In light of their ability to produce compositions, seventeenth-century bell-ringers would have likely viewed themselves as musicians, an awareness that rationalized the evocation of bells in English vocal and instrumental repertoires. Stedman alludes to the skill and dexterity demanded in ringing when he notes,

The ringing of changes is performed, partly by the ear, and partly by the eye; the ear informs when to make a change, the eye directs the pull in the making of it; but then again the ear guides the string of the note true in its place according to time. So that the ear and eye have each of them its proper object in the ringing of changes.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Bells are given numerical labels that represent a specific scale degree (e.g. 123456, with 1 being the highest note and 6 the lowest). Ringing in rounds refers to a descending scale (123456) in an even rhythm. For an overview of these procedures, see Cook, "Introduction to the Art of Change Ringing," in *Change Ringing: The History of an English Art*, ed. J. Sanderson. vol. 1 (Cambridge: Foister & Jagg, 1987), 1-17.

<sup>9</sup> *Campanologia: or the Art of Ringing Improved* (London: Printed by W. Godbid for W.S., 1677), 29.

He also notes that like other musical instruments, bells must be in tune with each other, and it is the bell-ringer's duty to regulate this: "Then, that he may be complete, it is convenient, that he understand the Tuning of Bells; for what is a Musician, unless he can Tune his Instrument, although he plays never so well?"<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, in an introductory poem "On the Ingenious Art of Ringing," the unattributed poet relates the ringing of changes to the movements of a dance suite, a common instrumental form in seventeenth-century England:

But when they chance to change, 'tis as a dance, They foot a *Galliard, a' la mode de France*. An Eightenscore's a figure dance, but Grandsire hath the Jig-steps: & Tendrings Peal doth answer The manner of *Corants*: A plain Six-core, is like a *Saraband*, the motion flower.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, bells could evoke musical ideas and concepts beyond ordinary ringing. Their clanging did more than simply mark hours of the day or proclaim a joyful occasion, but inspired professionals and amateurs to perfect their creation of organized sound. As seen in treatises of the time, notions of melody, tuning, concords, and discords were the foundations of bell-ringing training, commonalities shared with other kinds of music that invite speculation, namely contemporary English vocal and instrumental pieces.<sup>12</sup>

Although the extent to which other English composers were familiar with ringing techniques is unclear, the melodious peals and change ringing patterns evidently captured the imagination of other musicians. Explicit bell evocations can be found in amateur anthologies, pointing to an awareness of bells in the domestic sphere. One such genre is the catch, a composition featuring a canon at the unison. Late-seventeenth century catches are filled with

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<sup>10</sup> *Tintinnalogia*, 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, A3.

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of consonances and bell tuning, see Stedman, *Tintinnalogia*, 3-4. This is similar to contemporary musical training, for treatises stress the importance of counterpoint (playing concords and discords against pre-existing material). For such an example, see Christopher Simpson, *The Division-Violist, or an Introduction to the Playing upon a Ground*, a facsimile of the first edition (London: William Godbid, 1659; New York: Performers' Facsimiles, 1998), 10-17.

images of drinking, dancing, love, amusements, the contemporary political scene, and even the sound of bells.<sup>13</sup> John Blow's "Ring, ring the Bells" from John Walsh's *The Catch Club* bears obvious traces of text painting, especially the repetitions of a downward scale on the word "ring" that musically depict the ringing of rounds (see Example 2).<sup>14</sup> Using a different musical figure, Henry Purcell evokes the ringing of two bells through eighth-note oscillations in his catch "Call for the Reck'ning," a unique gesture that again highlights the word "ring" (See Example 3). Both catches, while employing superficial techniques of bell imitation, testify to the familiarity of these sounds in English domestic life; whether celebrating the return of a monarch, mourning the deceased, or simply reveling in merriment, bells were instruments of public expression.<sup>15</sup>

Like Blow and Purcell's catches, the anonymous work "Bow Bells" from John Playford's keyboard anthology *Musick's Hand-maid* (1663) bears obvious allusions to bell-ringing (see Example 4).<sup>16</sup> The downward scale in the left hand and its right hand cognate (mm. 5-6 and 6-7,

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<sup>13</sup> In the preface to *The Musical Companion* (1673), John Playford notes the popularity of catches among musical connoisseurs: "This kind of music hath for many Years past been had in much estimation by the most Judicious and Skillful Professors of Musick, for the Excellency of the Composition and Pleasant Harmony; no late Musick that I have met with affords so much Delightful Recreation, though some fond Ignorant Novices in Musick have cry'd them down, because the height of their Skill is not able to understand them." *The Musical Companion in two books* (London: Printed by W. Godbid for John Playford, 1673).

<sup>14</sup> For the full catch, see John Walsh, *The Catch Club or Merry Companions being a Choice Collection of the most Diverting Catches for Three or Four Voices Compos'd by the late Mr. Henry Purcell and Dr. Blow*. London: Printed for J. Walsh, n.d. (1700s). A similar evocation of bells based on a downward scale can be found in the catch "Ding ding ding dong bell," whose text draws on funereal connotations of bells. See Playford, *The Musical Companion*, 19.

<sup>15</sup> In 1649, when Parliamentarians destroyed the bells at St. Michael's Mount, royalist John Taylor alluded to this notion when he recounted, "the Bells being ropelesse, the people are hopeless." Quoted in Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England*, 468. While this pertains to a specific event, Taylor's thoughts resonate with the pride each English community and church had for their bells, which were symbols of their welfare.

<sup>16</sup> "Bow Bells" refer to the distinct curfew bells of St. Mary-le-Bow Church in Cheapside. On February 11, 1660, Samuel Pepys refers to such bells: "In Cheapside there was a great many bonfires, and Bow bells and all the bells in all the churches as we went home were a-ringing... But the common joy that was every where to be seen!" Wheatley, ed., *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, vol. 1, 38. Frank Traficante proposes that this keyboard work was composed by John Jenkins. For a list of bell works by Jenkins, see Introduction to *John Jenkins: The Lyra Viol Consorts*, ed. Frank Traficante, *Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, vol. 67 (Madison: A-R Editions, 1992), xxxix-xl.

respectively) imitate the ringing of rounds. However, upon deconstructing the piece, it is possible to view its structure as a suggestion of bell-ringing. Change ringing is essentially a symmetrical procedure, for the entire process begins and ends with rounds. Balance in “Bow Bells” is suggested through its four, four-measure strains, with the first and third ending with a half cadence, while the second and fourth return to the tonic. In addition to symmetrical phrases, the work is divided equally into two strains of common meter and two of 6/4 time. Although symmetry and balanced forms are common to dance and keyboard music of the period, the work’s construction suggests the very nature of the sound implied, namely bell-ringing.<sup>17</sup> Thus, this keyboard work from an amateur anthology, like the aforementioned catches, not only delineates the ways in which composers transcribed well-known sounds into their music, but also testifies to bells’ broader awareness in seventeenth-century England.

A more refined musical depiction of bell-ringing techniques can be found in John Jenkins’s lute consort work “The 5 Bells,” VdGS 56/7. Although he flourished in the earlier part of the seventeenth century, Jenkins was still active at the time of the Restoration, serving as a lutenist and theorbo player in the court of Charles II between 1660 and 1664. Furthermore, the fact that this work survives in many later sources attests to its ensuing popularity among English musicians and audiences.<sup>18</sup> The cunning evocation of familiar sounds seems to have delighted its seventeenth-century listeners, for in his essay *Memories of Musick* (1728), Jenkins’s friend and pupil Roger North notes its success:

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<sup>17</sup> Of course, “Bow Bells” is one of many keyboard evocations of bell-ringing. For an earlier example, see William Byrd’s “The Bells” from *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*.

<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of Jenkins as lutenist for Charles II, see Matthew Spring, “Jenkins’s Lute Music: An Approach to Reconstructing the Lost Multitudes of Lute Lessons,” in *John Jenkins and His Time*, ed. Andrew Ashbee and Peter Holman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 311. Frank Traficante suggests that Jenkins wrote about nine works based on bells. This specific piece survives in many later sources, including GB-Lbl Add. MS. 31427 (partbooks), as well as GB-Lbl Add. MS. 63852 and GB -Och MS. 1175 (keyboard transcriptions). It was also published as “The Lady Katharine Audly’s Bells” in John Playford’s *Courtly Masquing Ayres* (1662). For a complete listing of sources, see Introduction, xii-xiv.



But of all his conceits, none flew about with his name so universally as the small peice called his *Bells*. In those days the country fiddlers were not so well foddered from London, as since, and a master that made new tunes for them, was a benefactor; and these *Bells* was such supply, as never failed to pass in all companys. It was a happy thought, and well executed, and for the variety, might be styled a sonnata; onely, the sound of bells being among the vulgaritys, tho' naturally elegant enough, like comon sweetmeats, grows fulsome, and will not be endured longer than the humour of affecting a novelty lasts.<sup>19</sup>

The work is separated into contrasting movements, each evoking the sound of bells in their own way: *Almaine*, *Coranto*, *The Bells*, *The Mourners*, and *The Ringers*. Jenkins was surely familiar with change ringing techniques, considering his appointment in 1662 as General of the ringing society, the *College Youths*.<sup>20</sup> “The Bells” movement recalls the process of ringing changes, in that a given set of pitches (or in this case, a D major scalar pattern) is permuted. As seen in Example 5, no pattern is repeated in exactly the same way, and like bell-ringing, all notes (except for the final ones) are played in equal and moderate durations. Jenkins, however, does not abide by a fixed algorithm in “The Bells,” suggesting that he mimics, rather than replicates exactly, the process of change ringing.<sup>21</sup>

At the end of this movement, Jenkins alludes to the process of ceasing, a ringing procedure outlined in Stedman’s *Campanalogia*. He notes that changes are brought down to silence in a gradual manner “until they are brought into a chime, which is a grateful conclusion of a peal.”<sup>22</sup> Similarly, in a section entitled “The seasing of the Bells,” Jenkins eliminates

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<sup>19</sup> John Wilson, ed., *Roger North on Music: Being a Selection from his Essays written during the years c. 1696-1728* (London: Novello, 1959), 345-346. Charles Burney quotes North’s remarks and provides an excerpt of “The 5 Bells,” followed by a discussion of the bell-ringing techniques described in *Tintinnalogia*. See *A General History of Music, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period*, vol. 3, a facsimile of the original edition (London: Payne and Son, 1789; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 408-413.

<sup>20</sup> Cook, “The Organization of the Exercise,” 73. In fact, it is this society to whom Stedman dedicates *Tintinnalogia*.

<sup>21</sup> For an outdated, yet interesting analysis of this work, see Raven, *The Bells of England*, 238-243. In his book, Raven provides musical excerpts of “The 5 Bells” and compares them to the bell composition, *Grandsire Doubles*.

<sup>22</sup> *Campanalogia: or the Art of Ringing Improved* (London: Printed by W. Godbid for W.S., 1677), 27.

eighth-note activity and writes a downward D major sequence displaced between the upper and lower parts; this suggests the calm euphony of ceasing (see Example 6).

In “The Mourners,” Jenkins alludes to bells’ funereal connotations, musically evoked by the plaintive leaps of a minor sixth (see Example 7). Tension is suggested through chromatic motion in the treble viol part and is heightened through Jenkins’s performance direction “drage.” As Frank Traficante notes, however, the inclusion of this minor mode section does not have any obvious extramusical significance; perhaps then, Jenkins merely hints at a bell’s use as a death knell.<sup>23</sup> This doleful movement is juxtaposed immediately with “The Ringers,” whose triadic figures, antiphonal echoes, and D-major drones signal the return of bells’ joyous connotations (see Example 8). Considering the obvious rhetorical gestures, seventeenth-century English musicians would have likely recognized bell evocations in Jenkins’s lyra viol consort piece. Furthermore, the very act of ringing finds resonance in consort music, for both ensembles require tight coordination and musical sensitivity, notions which are made apparent in this music’s makeup (a union of multiple instruments) and the extramusical sounds it suggests.

As discussed in the previously mentioned works, bell music often permeated the domestic sphere, pointing to bells’ popular and recreational uses in Restoration England. However, given the prolific documentation of bells at royal occasions, such as coronations, arrivals, birthdays, and holidays, it is possible to view bell evocations in the music composed for such events as another layer of the political propaganda embedded within the work. Charles II’s procession into London on May 29, 1660 was clearly a visual and aural spectacle as much as a royal ritual. In his diary, John Evelyn elucidates the elaborate pomp of this event:

This day came in his Majestie Charles the 2d to London after a sad, and long Exile, and Calamitous Suffering both of the King and Church: being 17 yeare: This was also his Birthday, and with a Triumph of above 20,000 horse and foote, brandishing their swords

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<sup>23</sup> Traficante, Introduction, xii.

and shouting with unexpressible joy; The ways straw'd with flowers, the bells ringing, the streetes hung with Tapisry, fountaines running with wine.<sup>24</sup>

As seen in Evelyn's and other diarists' reports of national occasions, the spirit of triumph, peace, and restoration was conveyed through remarkable sights and familiar sounds. Naturally then, the Stuart taste for magnificent pageantry (already evident in masques and semi-opera) reverberated through the ringing of bells, for the bell towers were further resources with which the monarchy could turn London into a stage for spectacle.<sup>25</sup> Thomas Rugg gives further insight into this, recording the jubilation surrounding Charles II's proclamation on May 8, 1660: "All the bells in the Citty range...numberless of bonfiers, great gunes playing from the Tower, great store of wine give[n] by many and at bonefier beere, where they drank his Majesties health, plentifull."<sup>26</sup> Therefore, bells were vital indicators within the context of national pride, for their loud clanging would have signaled the royal presence to all within their radius.

Not only do bells' documented accounts convey notions of political harmony, but the ringers' own views of bell-ringing echo the monarch's agenda to restore peace and unity after 1660. In a poem prefacing Stedman's *Tintinnaloga*, the poet argues that the orderly nature of ringing teaches listeners how to cooperate: "when Bells Ring round, and in their Order be, They do denote how Neighbours should agree." The poet later equates ringing with military practices when he writes:

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<sup>24</sup> John Bowle, ed., *The Diary of John Evelyn* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 182. Evelyn also recalls the sound of bells at Charles II's coronation and the proclamation of William and Mary. For the full entries, see Bowle, 189 (April 23, 1661) and 369 (February 22, 1689). For a discussion of the political uses of bells in late Stuart England, see *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 171-189.

<sup>25</sup> This is confirmed by reports in Heath's *The Glories and Magnificent Triumphs* (1662). N.H. Keeble discusses this notion of elaborate displays, arguing that it was another tool with which the Stuart monarchy signaled the end of Puritan dictatorship. For eyewitness accounts of these occasions and a discussion of their significance, see *The Restoration: England in the 1660s*, *History of Early Modern England* (Malden: Blackwell, 2002), 40-46.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Keeble, *The Restoration*, 40. Many other sources testify to the ringing of bells on such occasions, although as Keeble suggests, there was much uncertainty surrounding the monarchy's durability. For an in-depth discussion of public opinion, see *The Restoration*, 46-53.

Like as a valiant Captain in the Field, By his Conduct, doth make the Foe to yield; Ev'n so, the leading Bell keeping true time, The rest do follow, none commits a Crime: But if one Soldier runs, perhaps a Troop Seeing him gone, their hearts begin to droop; Ev'n so the fault of one Bell spoils a Ring, (And now my Pegasus has taken Wing.)<sup>27</sup>

Considering the failure of his father's reign, religious nonconformity, and rise of sedition, Charles II required a strong political image, one that communicated to the public a sense of legitimacy, unity, and power.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the Stuart appetite for dramatic spectacle was fulfilled through the politically-charged artistic genres of the Restoration (e.g. court odes and semi-operas), whose notions of harmony reinforced an agenda for solidarity and peace. As an analogy, one finds similar mentalities in the aforementioned poem, for bells' harmonious pealing, communal nature, and orderliness underpin the same goals as other Restoration music. Thus, if bells rung for monarchical occasions adopt patriotic significance, then the re-creating of such sounds in music for royalty further accentuates these works' political undertones.

The court ode was one such genre, distinct for its politically charged text. As a public demonstration of loyalty and pride, odes often made allegorical allusions to the monarchy, referred to contemporary events, and offered prayers for a long and healthy reign. Such ideas are apparent in Henry Purcell's ode "Swifter, Isis, Swifter Flow" Z. 336, written for Charles II's return to Whitehall in 1681.<sup>29</sup> The anonymous author refers to the ringing of bells, lighting of bonfires, and discharging of guns, familiar imagery which Purcell illustrates musically in

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<sup>27</sup> Stedman, *Tintinnologia*, A3. Although it is unlikely that government officials were familiar with this poem, this excerpt articulates the orderliness of musical (and political) harmony.

<sup>28</sup> According to N.H. Keeble, Charles II was aware of seditious plots and rumors. Furthermore, he notes that the 1660s was an age of religious dissent and sedition, resulting in political maneuvers to restore unity (e.g. the Act of Uniformity). For a discussion of Charles II's political image-making and religious policy, see *The Restoration*, 58-64 and 132-158, respectively.

<sup>29</sup> There are several theories regarding the exact performance date. Ian Spink believes that it was performed in the spring of 1681, but admits that it could have been done later in the year. On the other hand, Bruce Wood argues that it was performed in August 1681. For further discussion of this, see Spink, "Purcell's odes: propaganda and panegyric," in *Purcell Studies*, ed. Curtis Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 151-152; Wood, Preface to *Royal Welcome Songs: Part I*, in *The Works of Henry Purcell*, vol. 16, ed. Bruce Wood (London: Novello, 2000), x.

Example 9. Similar to the right and left hand figures in “Bow Bells,” Purcell writes downward scales that are imitated among instrumental voices. He also uses triadic figurations in the countertenor’s phrase “let bells ring,” a gesture seen previously in “The Ringers” from Jenkins “The 5 Bells.” Not only would the images of bells, bonfires, and guns signal this occasion as a day of commemoration, but the monarchical agenda for political harmony is made explicit through these popular forms of entertainment. Thus, both the sound and political connotations of bells are highlighted in Purcell’s ode, shedding light on these instruments’ importance for royal occasions.

Similar evocations are found in Purcell’s verse anthem “Rejoice in the Lord Alway,” Z. 49. First, the inclusion of an instrumental prelude, as well as imitation of French dances, associate the genre with Charles II, for in his preface to *Services and Anthems* (1716), Thomas Tudway recounts that this “brisk & Airy Prince” ordered composers of the Chapel Royal to “add Symphonys &c with Instruments to their Anthems.”<sup>30</sup> In this particular work, Purcell includes an instrumental prelude evoking the pealing of bells. Like “Bow Bells,” descending scales are present, a motive that first appears as a ground in the bass line. The upper voices eventually join, although imitative entries are displaced, creating harmonious parallel sixths. In addition to evoking rounds and peals, Purcell suggests the circularity and repetitive euphony produced by ringing through the dominance of C major in almost every measure of the prelude (see Example 10).

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<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Ian Spink, *Restoration Cathedral Music, 1660-1714*, Oxford Studies in British Church Music (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 436-437. Andrew Walkling argues that while reading political connotations in anthems is difficult, scholars should discuss the “intertextual links” in Purcell’s church music. He states that the Gostling Manuscript (US-AUS HRC 85) contains many annotations above anthems that refer to specific political events. For more information on the Gostling Manuscript, see “Politics, Occasions and Text,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Henry Purcell*, edited by Rebecca Herissone (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), 218-220.

Although extant manuscripts do not suggest an extramusical meaning behind the “Bell Anthem,” the instruments’ consistent use in political ceremonies and celebrations suggest a possible linkage. This can be supported by the fact that local records ordered the ringing of church bells during the king’s visit. In addition, “God Save the King” was one of the most commonly inscribed phrases on bells during the later half of the seventeenth century.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps the pealing in Purcell’s anthem, combined with the work’s French style and form, signaled some sense of a monarchical aura. Regardless, the simulation of bells was indeed obvious, for above the anthem, one manuscript’s scribe writes, “Rejoice in the Lord, Contr. Tenor & Bass with a Symphony, imitating Bells, (it was originally call’d ye Bell Anthem).”<sup>32</sup> As Lionel Pike observes, this particular work survives in numerous sources outside the Chapel Royal, and many cathedral institutions must have been aware of this piece; he argues that the attractiveness of the opening bell ostinato resulted in its prolific transmission throughout England and Ireland.<sup>33</sup> Thus, bell-ringing was recognized in liturgical settings far beyond the Whitehall palace, and some degree of royal presence, accentuated by pealing bells, would have resounded wherever the anthem was performed.

The diverse genres evoking the sound of bells demonstrate bells’ attractive allure to late seventeenth-century English musicians, and composers’ transcriptions of ringing techniques are commonalities that transcend any one instrumentation or style. Whether ringing for recreation,

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<sup>31</sup> For example, the bells at Dorchester were rung in 1666 and 1672 “when the king came through town.” For other accounts of bell-ringing in the royal presence, see Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, 72-73. For a discussion of bell inscriptions, see Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England*, 479.

<sup>32</sup> This inscription can be found in the British Museum MS Add. 31445, f. 42. Bruce Wood proposes a date of composition around 1684 or 1685 (the end Charles II’s reign). He also notes that the “Bell Anthem” and “I Was Glad” (Z. 19) are the only anthems in Purcell’s output to employ rounded instrumental movements. For further discussion, see ““Only Purcell e’re shall equal Blow,”” in *Purcell Studies*, ed. Curtis Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 115.

<sup>33</sup> For a discussion of transmission and later manuscript differences, see “Purcell’s ‘Rejoice in the Lord’, All Ways,” *Music & Letters* 82, no. 3 (2001): 391-420.

mourning the deceased, or honoring on a monarch, bells were an unavoidable feature of the English landscape, earning England the nickname “The Ringing Isle.”<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, although practiced by a fraction of society, bell-ringing was a familiar activity, and the peals were sounds that united an entire community. Natives of all social ranks, travelers, clergy, and monarchs were aware of bell-ringing’s crucial role in the social fabric of communities, evident in the aforementioned catches, keyboard piece, consort work, ode, and anthem. Such compositions are outgrowths of this public consciousness, for upon inspecting their musical borrowings, they seem to echo the same feelings of jubilation, sadness, expectation, religiosity, and patriotism that the actual sound of ringing expressed. In other words, these works were vehicles through which “ding dongs,” tolling, and pealing gained a greater sense of immediacy in Restoration England. Thus, a richer understanding of bell music in late seventeenth-century England can be gleaned by examining the dynamic culture surrounding these remarkable sounds.

I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment. Nick Capozzoli

Appendix I: Musical Examples

bells	changes.
2	2
3	6
4	24
5	120

Example 2: John Blow “Ring, ring the Bells” from *The Catch Club*. mm. 1-18.

30 *Lessons for the Virginals.*

*Bow Bells*

Example 4: “Bow Bells” from *Musick’s Hand-maid* (1663).

40      3                      4                      5

Example 5: John Jenkins “The Bells” from “The 5 Bells,” mm. 40-45.



[The seasing of the Bells] [← d. =

This musical score consists of four systems of staves. The first system is a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, containing a melodic line with a repeat sign and a tempo marking. The second system is a vocal line with lyrics: 'e r a r e a e a e r a f e r a a a'. The third system is a multi-staff arrangement with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, featuring a melodic line and a bass line with chords. The fourth system is another multi-staff arrangement with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, featuring a melodic line and a bass line with chords.

Example 6: John Jenkins “The Bells” from “The 5 Bells,” mm. 72-75.

This musical score consists of two systems of staves. The first system is a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, containing a melodic line with a repeat sign. The second system is a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, containing a melodic line with a slur and the word 'drage' written below it.

Example 7: John Jenkins “The Mourners” (Treble viol part) from “The 5 Bells,”  
mm. 76-80; 82-86.

This musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system has a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The second system has a bass clef and a key signature of two sharps. The third system has a bass clef and a key signature of two sharps. The score shows a multi-staff arrangement with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps, featuring a melodic line and a bass line with chords.

Example 8: John Jenkins “The Ringers” (Harpisichord and bass viol parts) from “The 5 Bells,” mm. 1-3.

let bells ring, ring, ring, and great guns dis -

This image shows a single line of musical notation in treble clef. The lyrics are written below the notes. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some slurs and ties. The lyrics are: "let bells ring, ring, ring, and great guns dis -".

280

This image shows a multi-staff musical score. It includes a vocal line at the top, followed by two staves for a keyboard instrument (likely harpsichord or spinet), and two staves for a string instrument (likely lute or viol). The score is in common time and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The number 280 is written above the first measure of the vocal line.

Example 9: Henry Purcell "Swifter, Isis, Swifter Flow," Z. 336, mm. 259-264; 277-282.

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10

This image shows a multi-staff musical score for a prelude. It includes a vocal line at the top, followed by two staves for a keyboard instrument (likely harpsichord or spinet), and two staves for a string instrument (likely lute or viol). The score is in common time and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The number 10 is written above the first measure of the vocal line.

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