

## Shimmer/Ascension

for handbell choir

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### Music by Joseph Zitt

*from the book*

#### Surprise Me With Beauty: The Music of Human Systems

*forthcoming from Metatron Press*

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This piece consists of two elements  
that are played together.

**Shimmer** is an ensemble background  
that continues throughout the performance.

**Ascension** is a series of solos and duets  
that involve different players  
throughout the performance.

When you are not involved in playing **Ascension**,  
you should be playing **Shimmer**.

Other elements could be created to be played  
together with **Shimmer**  
or with **Ascension**  
or with both.

The performance proceeds  
without an indicated key or tempo.

A conductor may work with the players  
to help with the balance of the ensemble  
and with the progress  
among the parts of the performance.

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Composed at the request of a member of a local handbell choir (though  
the choir has decided, for now, to stick to more traditional material).

## Shimmer

### Beginning

Starting together,  
ring one of your bells quietly,  
letting it vibrate.

When its sound has faded away, either  
ring the same bell again, or  
ring another of your bells  
that is a half-step away.

(For example, after ringing an A,  
you may either ring the A again  
or ring A flat or A sharp.)

### Continuing

Continue in this way throughout the piece,  
staying with the same bell  
or moving among bells by half-steps  
when you feel that it is time to do so.

### Ending

After a predetermined amount of time,  
at a signal,

or by consensus,  
let your last note fade away  
until all the bells are silent.

## Ascension

### Beginning

Starting with the player  
of the lowest set of bells:

Play a solo improvisation,  
more prominent than the ensemble background,  
sounding your bells  
in any way that seems appropriate,

If you choose not to improvise,  
you may create a part for yourself ahead of time,  
or use a previously created part,  
or play your part of the ensemble background  
more prominently than usual.

The player of the next higher set of bells  
then joins that player in a duet,  
more prominent than the ensemble background,  
sounding the bells  
in any way that seems appropriate,  
interacting with each other.

The lower player then drops back  
into the background texture.

### Continuing

Proceed upward through the players, in order,  
with each

- joining a duet with the next lower player,
- playing briefly solo when that player drops out,
- being joined in a duet by the next higher player,
- then dropping back into playing the ensemble background.

### Ending

The player of the highest bells  
continues in a solo  
when the next lower player drops back  
then drops back into the ensemble background.

## Alternate Method

If the players are positioned  
so that each can see and hear all the other players:

The series of solos and duets  
can proceed in any order,  
except that you may only  
enter into a duet with a player  
if you have not yet played a duet together  
in that performance.

Any player may choose  
to refrain from participating in the foreground  
and remain in the ensemble background  
throughout the performance.

The piece may end  
when all players have returned  
to the ensemble background.

The group may agree upon a signal  
(such as the end of a processional)  
at which time they must  
return to the background and end,  
or they may end by consensus.