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Imitation of Church Bells and Organ, arranged by Henri Albano
(London: C. Wheatstone, n.d.)

Notes by ALLAN W. ATLAS

As Richard Carlin points out in “The Fayre Four Sisters” (pp. 79-88), *Imitation of Church Bells* was still as popular with the “old-time” concertina players that he recorded in London in 1975 as it seems to have been when Henri Albano published his arrangement of it around the turn of the century.¹ Albano, about whom we know little—he apparently played the music halls and, according to the *Church Bells* title page, made a “tour round the world” shortly before the appearance of the publication—tucked his imitation of the Westminster bells into a medley of sorts that also included the imitation of an organ, this based on the well-known song *Abide with Me*. Unfortunately, the one copy of the piece that was available to us (from the library of Richard Carlin) lacks the final page, and we must, then, be content with the bells only.

Although it is not certain if the idea of swinging the concertina through the air while playing the piece originated with Albano or if he was simply passing on a stock-in-trade routine of the music hall concertinists, the practice seems to have become popular. Thus another—and far less elaborate—arrangement of *The Bells*, one that appears in *Dallas' Anglo Concertina Tutor*, appends the following instruction to the melody: “N.B. The Concertina must be waved about to produce chimes,”² while we also have Sylvia Webb’s testimony about her father’s having used the technique.³ In any event, as Carlin points out, the “Doppler”-effect tradition was alive and well three quarters of a century later.

¹Unfortunately, Wheatstone & Co. did not date its publications at the time, and the piece is not recorded in *The Catalogue of Printed Music in the British Library to 1980* (now available on-line, with post-1980 additions: <<http://blpc.bl.uk>>), which, for those pieces that it does list, cites the date of deposit in that institution. Yet the publication must date from 1906 or later, the year in which the firm moved to 15 West Street, the address given at the bottom of the title page.

²The *Dallas* tutor dates from circa 1925 (my thanks to Randy Merris for the date), and its version is reproduced in an unsigned article (by John Townley?), “Speaking with Bertram Levy,” *Concertina & Squeezebox* 18-19 (1989): 26, where Levy adds fingering for the Anglo concertina. For the non-concertinists among our readers: whereas each button on the “English” concertina, for which Albano did his arrangement, produces the same pitch regardless of the direction of the bellows, each button on the “Anglo” concertina (derived from the German *Konzertina*) produces one pitch with the bellows going out, another with the bellows going in.

³See Richard Carlin’s “The Fayre Four Sisters,” p. 82.

I leave to those who have been more attentive than I have to the pealing of the Westminster bells the problem of deciding whether there is an error in either the first or third measure of the section headed "Westminster Chimes": should the sequence of middle notes in those measures be *d'c'* in one instance and *c'd'* in the other? Further, why does Albano suggest that the "Firing" section be played in "rapid arpeggio [*sic!*] style," but then provide a realization that consists of a descending scale? And finally, though it might seem that there is a missing *f#*" at the beginning of the third statement of the descending scale in the measure before the "barrage" (final measure of the penultimate system), the passage at the very end of "Sweet Chiming Bells" omits the analogous *b*" at the head of its third descent. That Wheatstone committed the same typographical error twice is unlikely, and we may no doubt chalk up what seem to be two missing notes to Albano's compositional subtlety!!!

IMITATION OF CHURCH BELLS AND ORGAN

INTRODUCING
"CALLER HERRIN," "SWEET CHIMING BELLS,"
AND "ABIDE WITH ME"

ARRANGED FOR THE
CONCERTINA
by
HENRI ALBANO

(AS PERFORMED BY THE AUTHOR ON HIS TOUR ROUND THE WORLD)

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Price 1/3 net.

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C. WHEATSTONE & CO.
INVENTORS, PATENTEES & MANUFACTURERS OF CONCERTINAS & FOLIAS.
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"CALLER HERRIN"

Moderato

Musical score for "CALLER HERRIN" in 2/4 time, marked *Moderato*. The piece begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The first staff contains the first two measures. The second staff contains measures 3-4, with dynamics *ff*, *pp*, and *f* indicated. The third staff contains measures 5-6.

The BELLS

(Concertina to be played swinging to obtain the effect of the chimes)

Musical score for "The BELLS" in 2/4 time. The first staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second staff continues the melody. The third staff features a *ppp* dynamic with the instruction "(To imitate bells in the distance.)". The fourth and fifth staves continue the piece with various dynamics, including *f*. The sixth staff concludes the section.

FIRING

WESTMINSTER CHIMES.

BIG BEN

(Striking the hour)

Musical score for "FIRING", "WESTMINSTER CHIMES", and "BIG BEN". The "FIRING" section consists of three chords. The "WESTMINSTER CHIMES" section is marked *Example* and features a series of eighth notes. The "BIG BEN" section is marked with a large *f* and consists of a few notes. A note below the first section states: "(The notes in each bar to be played in rapid arpeggiato style)".

"SWEET CHIMING BELLS"

Andante.

The musical score for "Sweet Chiming Bells" consists of nine staves of music. The first staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second and third staves continue the melodic line. The fourth staff features a change in texture with chords and a *pp* dynamic. The fifth staff returns to a melodic line. The sixth staff is marked *ff*. The seventh and eighth staves contain a rapid sixteenth-note passage, with the eighth staff marked *ppp* and including a *loco* marking. The final staff concludes with a *ff* dynamic.

"ABIDE WITH ME."

(Imitation of the Organ.)