



Meet Our Canadian Handbell Composer Erwin Stroobach



Erwin became a regular church organist at the age of 13 and has held positions of Organist and Choir Director in Southern Ontario, Canada and Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is a graduate of Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI, where he majored in both physical education and music, and Queen's University, Kingston, ON. A conductor, performer, teacher and composer, he has directed school, community and church choirs, some of which have toured Central and Eastern Canada, as well as New York City. Since 2001, Erwin has been the Director of Music at Cambridge St. United in Lindsay, ON, where the music ministry has grown to include over 100 participants. The program now includes four choirs, two handbell ensembles, a worship band and two concert series. The Voices of Victory (children and youth choir) from CSU can be heard on the radio and were involved with La Jeunesse Youth Orchestra and Victoria Scholars in a Christmas special in 2013 which is broadcast annually on Vision TV. The handbell programme at CSU was started in 2002 when funds were raised for a four octaves Malmark handbell set. A few years later a three octave handchime set was donated.

As a composer, Erwin has written choral, brass, organ, solo handbell, and orchestral music. Creator of Light (Aurora Borealis) was his first ensemble handbell composition, which won the 2017 Handbell Guilds of Canada Composition Competition and was performed in Cairns, Australia, as part of the 2018 International Handbell Symposium.

Erwin lives in the hills near Bethany, ON with his wife Angelique; they have two grown daughters. They enjoy the outdoors: cross country skiing, hiking, biking and kayaking. Erwin also looks forward to getting back on the soccer pitch with the other "old-timers" when it's safe.

Erwin shares with us the motivation for his latest compositions:

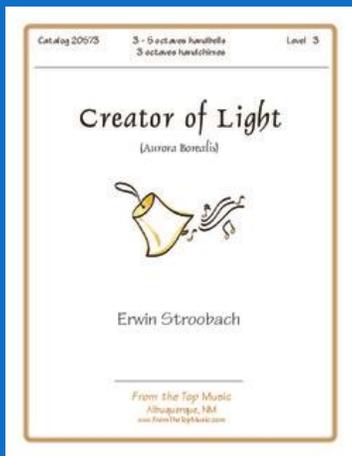
"With the pandemic causing everything to shut down last March, it was September before we were able to start rehearsing again in a very limited and controlled environment. Interestingly, it was handbells that seemed easiest to start following the many necessary health and safety protocols, and who would have thought singing would become an extreme sport! We started three groups, each ringer having their own bells (no sharing) and table. This resulted in two quartets and one group of 6 ringers with family members able to ring at the same table. What became obvious was the limited amount of music available for this type of set up that would work with our ringers' capabilities. So it was back to composing bell music. Our advanced quartet were agreeable to performing on March 31 for our Noon Hour Concert series which is livestreamed, so two pieces for piano and bells were written for the occasion: Hope (for health, reuniting with family and our church community, the quick rollout of the vaccines, and simply better days ahead, including getting back to regular rehearsing) and Alleluias! (focusing on Easter and the many things we can be thankful for).

Creator of Light (Aurora Borealis)

By Erwin Stroobach

345 octaves Level 345

This is an amazing original composition. It is classed as a tone poem that creates music and sounds that represent the extraordinary lights of the Aurora Borealis painted across the sky. This was the winner of the Handbell Guild of Canada Composition Contest and was performed in the massed ringing, directed by Camille Ream in the Australia 2018 International Handbell Symposium. It's use of the Choirchimes, singing bell and other handbell techniques add to the texture of the music and help make the Northern Lights come alive.



Click [HERE](#) to hear and view *Creator of Light* from the

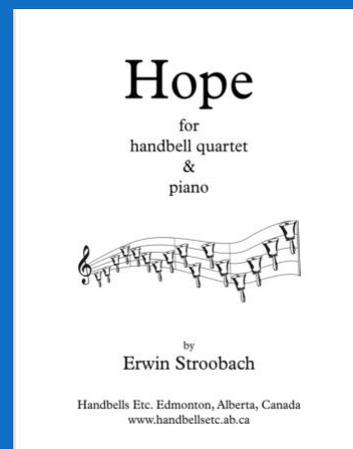
Australia Symposium!

Hope

By Erwin Stroobach

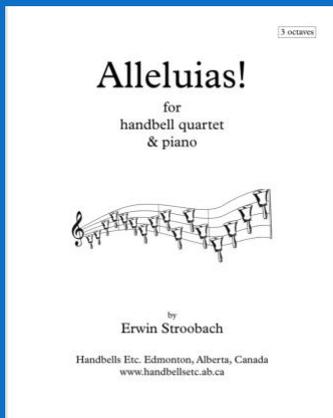
F5 to C7 and piano

We all need hope right now so this is the perfect time for this original composition. It is great to have original quartet music at a level 3 and be written by a Canadian composer with an amazing piano part. The recurring theme is filled with hope and excitement and is contrasted by the ethereal sounds of the piano and LVs in the bells. This is one of those pieces that plays by itself musically with beautiful dynamics and ritards - filled with hope, passion and caring.



Click [HERE](#) to view *Hope* performed by the *Cambridge St. United Handbell Quartet*

Click [HERE](#) for the full score and recording of *Hope* by Erwin Stroobach!



Alleluias!
By Erwin Stroobach
3 or 4/5 octaves and piano

This original composition is truly full of alleluias and rejoicing! At first glance, it appears to just another 12 bell piece of music but on further examination, it is filled with much much more! It feels more like a bell and piano duet than bell music with a piano accompaniment.

The music starts out with high energy shakes and marts! Although the music is written in 4/4, there are sections that feel more like 8/8. In the middle section, all ringers switch from their treble bells to bass bells. Bass bells use the singing bell technique while the piano is featured with a beautiful melodic section. The bells and piano then move to a rhythmic

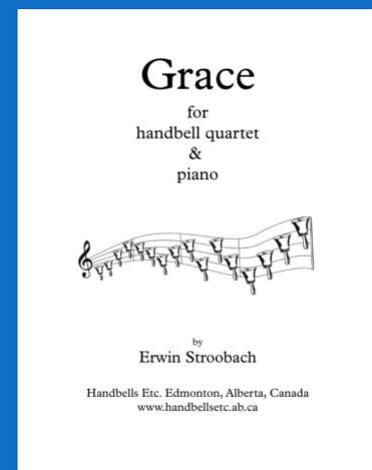
. The piece ends like it began, full of energy and rejoicing.

Click [HERE](#) to view Alleluias1 performed by the Cambridge St. United Handbell Quartet

Click [HERE](#) to view the full score of Alleluias by Erwin Stroobach!

Grace
By Erwin Stroobach
F5 to C7 and piano

This original handbell music can be rung with 4, 5 or 6 ringers. The piece is in 6/8 time - different from his other compositions. The first time Susan listened to the music, she loved it! She was inspired and can hardly wait to share it in worship. The lilt helps the music flow and fills it with Grace. This music fits any occasion, whether it is a sacred or secular setting. Handbells etc is thrilled the Erwin has composed this piece for a small handbell ensemble to ring during these stressful times.



Click [HERE](#) to view Grace performed by the Cambridge St. United Handbell Quartet
Click [HERE](#) to view the full score of Grace by Erwin Stroobach!