

school of music

university of florida + college of fine arts

Mitchell Stecker
Carillon

Sunday, May 20, 2018

3:00PM

Century Tower

Program

FLEMISH CARILLON REPERTOIRE

Preludio No. 2 in C Major (18 th c.)	Matthias vanden Gheyn (1721-1785)
Praeludium voor Klokkenspel (1897)	Jef Denyn (1862-1941)
Fantasia I (1989)	Staf Nees (1901-1965)
Hattem Groove (2009)	Kenneth Theunnissen (b.1973)

A TRANSITION...

Bell Canto (2010)	Geert D'hollander (b.1960)
Lake Wales Nocturne (<i>n.d.</i>)	Johan Franco (1908-1988)

NORTH AMERICAN CARILLON REPERTOIRE

All the Pretty Little Horses from <i>Five Folk Songs</i> (1964)	Milford Myhre (b.1931)
Summer Fanfares (1956)	Roy Hamlin Johnson (b.1929)
Image No. 2 (1959)	Émilien Allard (1915-1976)
Lament and Alleluia (1999)	Alice Gomez (b. 1960)

SOME NOSTALGIA

It's you I like	Fred M. Rogers (1928-2003)
Mrs. Robinson	Paul Simon (b.1941)
Pure Imagination from the film <i>Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory</i>	Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newly, arr. Jennifer Lory-Moran

IMPROVISATION

++++++

The Sunday Afternoon Concert Series continues with programs
on June 17, July 22, and August 26.

++++++

The daily recital series will resume on August 22.

++++++

For more information about carillon performances,
please visit the carillon website: www.arts.ufl.edu/carillon
“Like” us on Facebook (search University of Florida Carillon Studio)

++++++

About the Performer

Mitchell Stecker began his carillon study under Laura Ellis at the University of Florida in January 2011. Upon earning the BMus and BA (Linguistics) in 2014, he spent half of 2015 at the Koninklijke Beiaardschool ‘Jef Denyn’ in Mechelen, Belgium, where he studied primarily under Eddy Mariën. Returning to UF for graduate school, Mitchell recently completed his master’s focusing on the American musical tradition of shape note singing. Most recently, Mitchell served as the carillon fellow at Bok Tower Gardens in Lake Wales, Florida. In addition to his carillon activities, he is also an organist, a composer, an avid shape note singer, and is currently the corresponding secretary of the GCNA.

Program Notes

The first two sections of this program serve as an introduction to the carillon art as it has developed in two regions: Belgium and North America. The program opens with Flemish repertoire, as a nod to Flanders’s role in the development of the carillon art. *Preludio No. 1* serves as the prelude to the work. Composed by Matthias vanden Gheyn, the city carillonneur of Leuven, Belgium who has been called the “Bach of the Carillon”, this piece is an excellent illustration of the baroque idiom as adapted to the carillon, particularly in its *moto perpetuo* rhythmic character. Following this, we skip to the Romantic Era, with Jef Denyn’s *Praeludium voor Klokkenspel*. The son of Mechelen city carillonneur Adolf Denyn, Jef Denyn is notable for the mechanical innovations he contributed to the carillon, as well as the prolific consultation he provided for the installation of new instruments; most notably, he founded the Koninklijke Beiaardschool (Royal Carillon School) in Mechelen in 1922, the first and oldest such school in the world. As much of the carillon repertoire bearing his name, *Praeludium voor Klokkenspel* is a transcription of an improvisation by Denyn. It is characteristic of Flemish style in its dramatic use of diminished chords and tremolandi.

Two modern pieces close out the introduction to Flemish carillon music. *Fantasia I* was composed by Staf Nees, student of Jef Denyn and director of the Royal Carillon School during the 1960s. Though in a more modern harmonic idiom, Nees uses dramatic color chords and liberally employs the characteristically Flemish tremolandi. The final piece is by Kenneth Theunnissen, current *stadsbeiaardier* (city carillonneur) of Ghent, Belgium, but written for the dedication of the carillon in Hattem, the Netherlands. Its modern syncopated rhythms are befitting of its title, *Hattem Groove*, while the slower middle section with its *espressivo* tremolandi remind the listener of its Flemish roots.

To transition between the two sections, there are two pieces by composers who have bridged the continental divide in their own lives. Both Geert D’hollander and Johan Franco were born in the low countries – D’hollander in Flanders, Franco in the Netherlands – and emigrated to America. D’hollander spent most of his life in Belgium, before being appointed as Singing Tower Carillonneur at Bok Tower Gardens in 2012. A suitable conclusion to the European section of this concert, *Bell Canto* was commissioned by the *Vlaamse Beiaard Vereniging* (Flemish Carillon Guild) in 2010 to commemorate the 500 years of the carillon art. Subtitled the work “A Ravel-esque Waltz in Rondo Form,” the title is a play on words insofar as each of the melodies featured in the piece is a folk song about the carillon. These include the Flemish songs “Dan mocht de beiaard spelen” and “Als de groote klokke luyd”, the Dutch song “De klokken van Haarlem”, and the northern French song “Het Carillon van Duynkerke”.

Lake Wales Nocturne is one of many “geographical nocturnes” composed by Johan Franco. His style is thoroughly modern – lyrical but angular, demonstrating a strong preference for perfect consonances. Unlike the other, more popular nocturnes of Franco’s, such as the *Blue Ridge Nocturne* and *Cranbrook Nocturne*, available through the GCNA, *Lake Wales Nocturne* is unpublished. An American folk lullabye follows this nocturne. Milford

Myhre was a predecessor of Geert D'hollander at Bok Tower Gardens, serving as carillonneur from 1968 through 2004. *All The Pretty Little Horses* combines a modern, midcentury harmonic idiom similar to Franco's with a foundation in folk musical materials. *Summer Fanfares* espouses perhaps the most progressive harmonic idiom of the pieces presented here. Playing on the harmonic strengths of the carillon, composer and professor of piano Roy Hamlin Johnson developed a highly effective technique composing for the carillon, and the result is a simmering, sizzling harmonic idiom. The phenomenal success of this piece attests to Johnson's artistic intuition for the carillon: it was the first piece he composed for the instrument.

Émilien Allard was a French Canadian clarinetist and composer who spent much of his career at the Oratoire St-Joseph in Montréal. In addition to studying at the Royal Carillon School under Nees and Jef van Hoof, Allard also went to Paris, where he studied with Messiaen, Duruflé, and others. His impressionistic harmonic language combined with his idiomatic mastery of the carillon produced some of the finest contributions in the carillon repertoire, of which *Image No. 2* is a prime example. Concluding the introduction to the North American carillon art is Alice Gomez. Representing the modern, more diverse face of the carillon art, Gomez is a percussionist with a Hispanic background; the influence of both of these aspects of her identity shine through in the intricate, captivating rhythms of the piece.

About the Carillon

Century Tower, a monument constructed in 1953 in memory of students killed in World War I and World War II, houses a cast-bell carillon. By definition, a carillon must have at least 23 fixed, finely tuned bells. The Century Tower Carillon has 61 bells, encompassing a range of 5 octaves, and is one of the largest university carillons in the United States. There are fewer than 200 traditional carillons in all of North America, and only three can be found in the state of Florida.

The carillon is played by hand from a clavier or keyboard, with 61 keys (called "batons") for the hands as well as 25 pedals for the feet, in a small room just below the bell chamber. The carillonneur moves the clappers of the bells with the batons and pedals while the bells remain stationary.

Through the efforts of Professor Emeritus Willis Bodine, the world-class carillon housed in Century Tower was purchased with funds accumulated from student fees over several generations of students. These funds were earmarked by the Board of Regents and the Legislature for campus improvements in the performing arts. The carillon purchase was endorsed unanimously by the Student Senate in 1976.

The original 49 bells housed on the top floor of the tower were cast in 1978 by the firm of Koninklijke Eijsbouts (Royal Dutch Bell Foundry) of Asten, The Netherlands. The bronze bells were tuned at the foundry by carefully shaving metal from the interior of the bells and will never need re-tuning. The bells are hung individually from stainless steel bolts on a massive steel frame. The largest bell, the "bourdon," stands five feet tall, is five feet in diameter and weighs about 7,000 pounds.

A gift from the estate of Larry A. Webb of St. Augustine, FL, made possible major upgrading of the carillon in 2002. The renovation, carried out by Eijsbouts, included the installation of 12 additional bells (for a total of 61), improvements in the playing action, and new performance and practice claviers.