4 STUDENTS TAKE CARILLON LESSONS

Fall semester students taking lessons included:

- Sarah Reger, freshman in Music
- Casey Cunningham, junior in Pre-Business
- Macklin Derscheid, sophomore in Electrical Engineering
- Patrick Keep, senior in Mechanical Engineering

Besides regular lessons, students this semester participated in a field trip to Lincoln, Nebraska to see the carillons at First-Plymouth Congregational Church and Saint Paul United Methodist Church. Each student provided a write up of their experiences on the field trip. (See pages 4-5)

APPRECIATING OUR CARILLON

Field trips give students an opportunity to see how lucky we are at Iowa State to have such a beautiful lawn for listening to the carillon. I found this description of the Albany carillon from an email discussion by GNCA members on “non towers and carillons as part of other buildings” interesting.

Of course, the problem at Albany is that it is situated on a street corner, where two major thoroughfares cross. Many of you probably know the story about the dedication. William Gorham Rice, politician, statesman, and tireless advocate for the carillon worldwide (but especially Albany), posted himself in the tower with red and green flares. He signaled to traffic police below when there was a break between pieces, so alternately, Jef Denyn played a piece, then there was a break to let traffic go by, then traffic was stopped again for the next piece and so forth. That was probably done only that one time. Many of us remember the 1989 congress there, where really the only listening place (if memory serves) was a little courtyard behind the City Hall. ~ John Gouwens

DID YOU KNOW?

The Carillon Society has decided to sponsor the #3 D Bell on the Campanile Model (page 2 for details). If you are interested in being part of this exciting project, you can help fund the bell.

A final concert was held on Dec. 9th.
Back: Sarah, Casey Macklin
Front: Patrick

ISU Carillon on a fine day.

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www.music.iastate.edu/carillon/webcast/
CAMPANILE MODEL by AMY BRANDAU and PATRICK KEEP (CURRENT CARILLON STUDENT)

Can I leave the model here in the building? I keep getting weird looks on the bus and I’m worried it will break. ~ Ryan Cazin, ME 466 presenter.

Dr. Tam and her team of campus faculty and staff are continuing the work on the campanile model that began last spring. This semester the ME 466 mechanical engineering capstone project class working on the campanile-carillon model. The team was given the project: continue design of an 1/5 scales portable model of the Iowa State University Campanile which can be used as a recruitment tool and instrument.

On December 7th, the students gave their final presentation to Dr. Tam. Ryan’s quote was just one of many unique comments referring to the 3D printed model of the model displayed. It’s quite exciting to see the model Ryan is referring to, but it is rather fragile! When Prof. Heise, the class instructor walked in and looked at the model, he said, “Oh, you have a roof on it today. That’s cute. Oh, and there is music there too.” Dr. Tam countered: “I’m a musician, not an engineer, but you created the keyboard wrong. It should be groups of two and three black keys, not two and four.” Needless to say the students were rather embarrassed.

Seven students choose to work on this project over other projects including football helmets, an automatic communion wine filler, and building a small vehicle to take pictures of soybean plants. “I thought it was going to be easy, but it’s really hard combining engineering with the music and arts”. ~Mohamad Aqeel Izani.

The team was able to revise and update the previous semester’s 3D models, plan for transportation, and linkage connection system. The team performed a wind load analysis to determine whether the structure would be able to withstand average Iowa wind gusts given the porosity of mesh facade material. Also accomplished was the building of a 3D printed tabletop display of the lead concept.

They also “outsourced” the new scissor lift to the ME 419 class. ME 419 is a computer-aided design class that focuses on computer graphics, computer simulations to test the strength of components, and rapid prototyping (aka 3D printing). Nate Scheirer was part of both groups and his 419 class needed a project to design and run some analysis techniques on.

For next spring, another group of mechanical engineers will be collaborating with civil engineering and industrial design students for structural analysis, appearance, and acoustics. They will also be working with bell founders to generate a more detailed design.

If fundraising goes as planned, the project should be completed in Spring 2018.

Visit the website for more campanile model details.

ME 466 Members this semester: Patrick Keep, Mohamad Aqeel Izani, Nor Alia Izwani Roni, Ryan Cazin, Nate Scheirer, Ethan Henry, Muhammad Omar Raghib.
Alumni Spotlight: Mike Ulm

Again, a random conversation at a work meeting led me to Clayton Johnson’s carillon experience. Clayton recalls his experience taking carillon lessons with Dr. Tam as an undergraduate.

I really had no intention of ever learning to play the carillon, however, my love of music changed that fate. This has been a long time ago, so I’m sure my memories have faded, but as I recall, I took a music history class in the Fall of 1977 with Dr. Richard von Grabow. I truly enjoyed the class and I’m sure Dr. von Grabow could see that. Consequently, he asked if I had ever taken piano lessons or could at least read music. Upon my affirmative response, he asked me if I’d be interested in learning to play the carillon. I don’t think I hesitated for one minute, what an opportunity!

I’m sure that after a few lessons Dr. von Grabow realized that my passion was vocal music, most instruments and I don’t get along too well. However, he let me continue with the lessons, and I’m sure I ended up playing in several student concerts, although it’s been too long ago to really remember them. What I do remember are things like, the carillon was a good instrument for me because I only had to read one note for each hand and an occasional one for the feet. Remember, I wasn’t very good at this so Dr. von Grabow gave me easy music, I think. And I also remember that concerts were good because at that time, no one could see me playing. It was as if I were all alone while playing, which really helped with the nerves.

I could go on and on about things like playing Christmas tunes at 10:00 at night while it was snowing, or adding that extra strike at midnight, or startling co-eds coming out of the gate late at night, but I’ll stop here. I graduated in 1981 with a computer science degree and with many fond memories of ISU, but none as great as being able to say that I learned to play the carillon.

Alumni Spotlight: Clayton Johnson

Again, a random conversation at a work meeting led me to Clayton Johnson’s carillon experience. Clayton recalls his experience taking carillon lessons with Dr. Tam as an undergraduate.

I was a Performing Arts (Theatre) student during my undergraduate work here at ISU. During my Sophomore year, a new music class was developed for all Theatre majors that incorporated basic musicianship, sight reading, foundations of theory, and foundational keyboard skills geared specifically for Theatre majors. This combination proved to be quite daunting for many of the students in the class, especially those without previous musical experience. However, my lifelong experience with vocal and instrumental music made the class unfairly easy for me, but it did give me the ability to actually enjoy the experience!

The class was initially developed and taught by Dr. Tam. Going into the class, I did not know a lot about Dr. Tam, except that she was the Carillonneur for ISU. The experience turned out to be fantastic. Dr. Tam was a great teacher, very patient to the students with little musical experience, but still providing challenges for those of us who did.

During the semester, Dr. Tam gave us a tour of the Campanile, and that is when she broke the news to us: for our final for the class, we would be playing a duet for piano with her… on the Campanile. Needless to say, we were all pretty shocked, and extremely nervous! We all worked hard and practiced our pieces for weeks, frightened of making a mistake in front of the entire campus. When the big day came, we all went one-by-one, and sure enough, we all got through our duets, with the support Dr. Tam. One of my fondest undergraduate memories is serenading the entire campus with “Till There Was You” with the help of Dr. Tam.

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FIELD TRIP REFLECTION BY CASEY CUNNINGHAM

This year I was fortunate enough to attend a field trip to Lincoln, Nebraska where we visited a 57-bell carillon and a 10-bell chime. I remember my siblings going on these trips and absolutely loving them the whole time, so I knew I could not pass this one up. Prior to the 3.5 hour trek to the capital of Nebraska, we were instructed to do background research on the carillon as well as bell foundries. I was able to research the Whitechapel Bell Foundry which provided me with great insight and facts that I was in awe reading about. Who knew that the same company cast the Liberty Bell and Big Ben? Well, I certainly would not have guessed that. If not for doing research, I also would never have known. During the drive to Lincoln, all three students presented their topics and we were able to learn a lot about what we were going to see.

When we arrived the First-Plymouth Congregational Church we all got to play the carillon, which was interesting because it has more bells than our carillon here at Iowa State. It is also being transposed, which made it slightly difficult to play because you knew how the notes should have sounded but the bells produced another. After climbing in the bells, taking pictures, and playing the carillon we called it a night.

The next morning we woke up and headed to the First-Plymouth Church again, little did we know the excitement and wonder we would experience that beautiful Saturday. Dr. Tam played a concert in celebration of the 85th anniversary of the carillon and the bell tower, and amazed the 100+ parishioners who showed up for the concert. After the reception, we ventured over to St. Paul United Methodist Church where we played the chimes and stood in the bells while they were being played. This was quite an experience because due to the large space these bells were in as well as the low number of bells, there was plenty of room to walk around and hear the bells up close. This was my favorite part of the bells because little did I know but I was the first person to ever ask to go into the bells, therefore we were the first group of visitors to experience the bells in this new way. You could say we are pioneers of the McKinley Memorial Chimes! The bells were cast and placed in the church in 1902 in memory of the late President McKinley, with the same bells still there today. After all the fun we had in that church, it was now time to head home to Ames. Reflecting back on this trip, I realized the rarity of the whole trip. How often do I have the chance to play different carillons or chimes? Well, not very often. So that is why I thank Dr. Tam and all of the other people who made it happen, for providing this opportunity to the other students and myself. I am truly grateful and look forward to many more opportunities that lie ahead.
FIELD TRIP REFLECTION BY MACKLIN DERScheid

Our recent trip to Lincoln, Nebraska, was a very interesting and enjoyable learning experience. Visiting the carillon at the First-Plymouth Congregational Church was an important memory, as it is the first time I had ever played a real carillon. However, perhaps one of the best parts was listening to others played the instrument. It was very interesting to be able to hear how the sound of the bells changed depending on where you stood. From just outside the cabin, the bells were very loud, but not overwhelming. Standing around the bells was my favorite place to listen to the music. From below, you got a more light sound. The difference was very subtle, but apparent nonetheless.

The highlight of the second day was the concert at First-Plymouth Church, which was wonderful. It was nice to be able to assist with handing out programs, and being able to talk to the people attending the concert.

Also on the second day, we visited Saint Paul United Methodist Church, which is home to a 10-bell chime. This was definitely a highlight, as I really enjoyed playing the chimes. I had the opportunity to play three different songs, which was really fun. It was also nice to be able to walk around the bells, as they were all on one level and you could see each one up close. Being cast by a different bell foundry, by listening closely one can hear the difference in tone.

Overall, I had a great time on the trip. Learning about the John Taylor, Whitechapel, and Meneely bell foundries was very interesting. It was also great to learn about the First-Plymouth Church. I really enjoyed doing research on the John Taylor bell foundry for the presentation I gave on the way there, as that really got me interested in more than the music itself, but also in the differences in the instruments.

FIELD TRIP REFLECTION BY SARAH REGER

This was my first visit to a carillon other than Iowa State, and there were many differences between the two! The main things I learned on this trip were the differences between chimes and a carillon, and the difference in the quality of sound when listening on the ground compared to being next to the bells. I didn’t know that a true carillon had more than 23 bells, and anything less than that are called chimes. I also thought it was very interesting that the First-Plymouth Carillon had bells from two different bell foundries, which really makes a difference in the overall sound, especially between the lower and higher bells. In my opinion, it was easier to hear the difference when listening on the ground. The lower bells had a darker, more mellow sound, while the “tinkling” bells had a tone that rang out very clear and precise. I am wondering if the casting process has something to do with that. I also thought it was interesting that Whitechapel bells had a history of cracking, yet they were in business longer than John Taylor & Co.

Although we didn’t get to hear the chimes from the ground at Saint Paul United Methodist Church, being in the lower room where the console was made a big difference than being right up next to the bells. It was also nice that all the bells at the chimes were original to the instrument! One of my favorite parts about this field trip was being able to be right up next to the bells at the carillon and the chimes. Since I haven’t seen the bells at ISU carillon, this was my first time actually seeing how the carillon works up close. At the chimes, I could see the clapper struck the bell up close, and I didn’t realize that there actually wasn’t a lot of space between the clapper and the inside of the bell. I used to think there was 10 inches of space or more, but it makes sense that there would not be much space in between, so the strike would be more precise.