



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY SOCIETY OF CARILLON ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

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5 STUDENTS TAKE CARILLON LESSONS THIS SEMESTER



Another semester of carillon lessons concluded with all five students playing their final semester concert.



Erin playing *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*.

This semester returning students included:

- Carrie Cunningham, **senior** in Elementary Education
- Erin Reger, **senior** in Accounting

First semester carillon students included:

- Cayla Cunningham, **sophomore** in Elementary Education
- Rachel Hansen, sophomore in Journalism and Mass Communication
- Nathaniel Han, sophomore in Computer Science



Cayla became the 3rd Cunningham sibling to take carillon lessons. Carrie and Cayla played a Christmas Medley duet and then sang together while Erin played *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*.

CHRISTMAS TIME

IOWA STATE DAILY,
DEC 15, 1960

It was in the Christmas Season of 1899 that the 1st Christmas carols were played on the chimes. The campanile was not yet completed, and the carols were played by several men standing by the bells and hitting them with hammers. There were only ten bells then. Every year since that time, the campanile has rung its carols across the campus each day at Christmas time.

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ENJOY THE NOON CONCERTS EVERY WEEKDAY 11:50-12:10 ON THE WEB

www.music.iastate.edu/carillon/webcast/

MARK YOUR CALENDARS
 VEISHEA, Saturday, April 12th
 More details on carillon activities will be announced in the future.

ISU CARILLON FESTIVAL BY RACHEL HANSEN

On September 21, a lawn audience even larger than usual surrounded Iowa State’s beloved campanile for the 2013 Carillon Festival.



Guests on Central Campus for Geert D’hollander’s concert.

The festival kicked off in the morning with a master class at the campanile followed by a lecture on “Writing Music for Carillon” in Music Hall, both taught by guest carillonneur Geert D’hollander of Bok Tower Gardens (Lake Wales, FL). The festival continued into the afternoon with carillon performances by D’hollander on central campus and concluded with tours of the campanile.

Five ISU carillon students gathered in the playing cabin for the master class, which was broadcast live on the carillon website. Erin Reger and Carrie Cunningham, played excerpts of D’hollander’s *Day Dreaming* and *Take a Break* for the master class. All attendees were able to experience both D’hollander’s playing and instruction.

“Geert D’hollander has been playing the carillon since he was 7,” says Cunningham. “He has so much knowledge about the instrument and listening to him play the Stanton Memorial Carillon made me realize how much

improvement I can always make on my playing.”

D’hollander’s first performance of the afternoon was the winning piece of the 2013 Carillon Composition Competition, *Center Panel* by Kyle Shaw of Urbana, Illinois. His recital program included *Anitra’s Dance* by Grieg, *Salut d’Amour* by Elgar, and *Sonata in C Major* by Steibelt. He also played two of his own compositions, *Een Schoon Liedeken* --- a fantasy for carillon based on an old Flemish Song, and *Take a Break*, a relaxed, free ostinato for bells.

Tin-Shi Tam, ISU University Carillonneur and coordinator of the festival enjoys collaborating with guest carillonners, and she knows the festival’s impact, on campus and beyond.

“The Carillon Festival is a wonderful opportunity to introduce our instrument to audience beyond campus, and for students to know more about carillon. That is great for everyone.”



Students at the *Writing Carillon Music* lecture

Additional pictures can be found at:
<http://isucarillon.blogspot.com/>

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EXCEPRTS FROM THE PAST

I visited York Minster Cathedral in York, England last December. Just as in our bell tower here in Ames, the bells of York Minster are Taylor bells. I started researching carillon bells after my visit. It can be quite overwhelming! I found the first article in the Parks Library Archives, which specifically relates to the Taylor bells here at Iowa State. There is no year, nor do I know where this was published! A little Google sleuthing reveals the person in the article died in 1927.

Inventor's Grandson Reveals Bell's History

Ames, IA, March 14

Because they are the first set of bells which the Taylor Bell foundry, Loughborough, England made for installation in the United States, and the first set of correctly tuned bells ever hung in this country, the chimes which hang in the Campanile at Iowa State college are the "pets" of the firm.

That is why Pryce Taylor, who represents the fifth generation of the Taylor family since it began to cast bells in England, is visiting the Iowa State college campus and listening to the chimes which were made in his home town while he was still a boy.

Mr. Taylor, who is in this country on business for his firm, has an interesting story to tell of the making of bells and especially of those which hang on the Iowa State campus.

The bells here, he explained, are the first set imported into the United States which were correctly tuned. The tuning of the bells was, 300 years ago, a trade secret in the family of a Flemish bell founder by the name of Hemony. After the death of the last member of that firm, the secret of tuning the bells, a very complicated process, was lost to the world. It was only in 1895 that the formulas were again worked out by Mr. Taylor's grandfather. These formulas are now known only to the Taylor firm.

The tone which every bell gives out, Mr. Taylor explained, is not a simple tone but one composed of five notes which have to be in perfect tune with each other. And in addition each bell has to be tuned with the other bells.

"Such minute exactness of detail in the contour, design and thickness proportions has now been attained," said Mr. Taylor, "that these five tones can be tuned to the accuracy of a single vibration."

Much more can be found about the Taylor bells, but I thought this section from Ira Schroeder's History of the Carillon filled in a few gaps left by Mr. Taylor!

An English country rector, the Reverend A.B. Simpson, of Fittleworth, Sussex, was following a line of investigation based on the bells of his own church, and the tones of bells cast by the seventeenth century Dutch bell founder, Hemony. Encouraged by his results, he contacted John William Taylor of Loughborough who showed great interest in the cleric's work. There were several meetings between the two men.

In general, Taylor agreed with much that Simpson had to say, but it was over the Hum note that there was discord between them. While Simpson thought that bells should be cast with a longer profile, Taylor preferred to use the tuning machine. The introduction of the vertical lathe for bell tuning took place about 1876. Before that, tonal inexactitude was corrected by hand, using a hammer and chisel— a tedious, noisy, long process.

By 1896, both men were satisfied that they had achieved their objective and had rediscovered the secret of bell tuning as practiced by the earlier bell founders. What should the tuning system be known as? The rector, not unnaturally, designated it "Simpson Tuning." This annoyed Taylor greatly. He by this time was advertising bells tuned on the "Taylor True-Harmonic System." However, being gentlemen, court action over the name was not forthcoming and, as Taylor was the bell founder, he appears to have had his way and, from 1896, all bells leaving the Loughborough Bell Foundry were tuned on the Taylor True-Harmonic principle.

The chime at Iowa was the first set of scientifically tuned bells on the American Continent. What then is "Taylor True-Harmonic Tuning"? It brings the five principal tones of a bell into sympathetic vibration.

The Rev. Arthur B. Simpson wrote later: "And here I desire to say that I am not a bell-founder. Had I been such, no doubt I should have kept any special knowledge to myself, and have made use of it for my own advantage. But having no personal interest to serve, and believing it to be for the best interest of the art that the knowledge I have acquired, and which I hold to be essential to any real progress, should be at the command equally of all the profession, I have preferred to make a clean breast of all that I think I have learned, and let bell-founders take it or leave it as they may think best".

STUDENT CARILLON PLAYER: CAYLA CUNNINGHAM

Being the third child in my family has its benefits. My brother and sister, Craig and Carrie, both took carillon lessons from Dr. Tam. When I heard their music I dreamed of playing, but I honestly did not believe I had the musical background. Dr. Tam emailed me within the first week of school and asked if I was interested in playing. I met with her and was nervous that she would tell me I was not qualified to begin taking lessons. Since I did not have the music background my siblings had, even I doubted my qualifications to take the lessons. I did not think I was capable of undertaking what I thought was an enormous task. Dr. Tam and I discussed the requirements I would have to fulfill to take lessons. She said, "If you are interested, leave the rest to me." When I heard her say this, I knew that was Dr. Tam's humble way of saying I can teach anyone. Knowing Dr. Tam is a world renowned carillonneur, all I had to do was trust her. Taking lessons this semester has not only taught me how to play the carillon, but to not be afraid to accept challenges that might

normally be out of my comfort zone. Taking carillon lessons has been a delightful experience and I am so grateful for the opportunity. Hmm... I wonder if Dr. Tam has her sight set on my younger brother.



STUDENT CARILLON PLAYER: NATHANIEL HAN

I didn't expect to take carillon lessons my first semester of college. In fact, I didn't really know what a carillon was until Erin Reger, my Freshman Honors Program section leader, encouraged me to look into it. I'm definitely glad I did. I have greatly enjoyed my lessons with Dr. Tam, and even got an extra, unexpected lesson from the experience.

When I had my first lesson in the campanile, a key that was fairly critical to my piece got completely stuck due to the cold weather. With no way to make sure it didn't happen again on concert day and feeling like everyone on campus was listening, I started to panic. The incident was almost a deal breaker for me, until I realized that playing the carillon was not only an opportunity to broaden my experiences and make music in a new way, but also to conquer an inhibition. I now see carillon as a way to practice letting go of my dependency on control and predictability, a part of my character I'm sure will be challenged many more times in the future.

It has been a privilege and a great learning experience taking carillon lessons with Dr. Tam, and I hope to continue learning carillon whenever my schedule permits.



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ISU CAMPANILE AND CARILLON ON TWITTER

I started a Twitter account for the Carillon @ISUCarillon on behalf of the Carillon Society. Unfortunately, I don't have a lot to say. Luckily, some unanimous person in the ISU community started a Twitter account @ISUCampanile. The twitter account tweets updates from the point of view of the Campanile. Great tweets in the last year include:

- Congrats to all walking the stage this weekend earning their degree from #IowaState Be sure to come back and visit...I'm not going anywhere!
- Get out and enjoy the day! I should see many of you studying (or acting like you are) and playing frisbee on central campus today.
- It's slick out there, Cyclones. Walk carefully. And to the few on your bikes, mad props! Perfect snow for a snowman OR a snow Campanile!
- Just had a great chat with @ISUSquirrels about some GREAT acorn hiding spots near me. Lots of digging to be done with the ground not frozen!

Others mention @ISUCampanile in their tweets quite often to comment on Dr. Tam's Friday selections:

- The fact that @ISUCampanile just played Roar by @katyperry just made this rainy day so much better
- Shout out to @ISUCampanile for playing an excellent line up today! #thriftShop #SuperMario #OneDirection

Many others include pictures with their tweets.

- It is an amazing, summer like day on campus! Wonder if the @ISUCampanile remembered sunscreen



WRITING CARILLON MUSIC

Many past carillon students have written music or adapted music for the carillon as part of their final carillon class projects. I think many students could have benefitted from hearing Geert D'hollander's lecture on Writing Carillon Music. I took notes on some of his entertaining and educational comments.

- When writing music, you need to write something that will be played—not sit on the shelf.
- You cannot make the player “jump like a monkey on the bench”.
- When starting, Geert D'hollander's starts on the piano. He holds down the sustain pedal and also makes sure to only play with his 2 index fingers to mimic playing with his fists.
- Use open chords and avoid octaves.
- Put the melody in the lower bells—especially when writing for the ISU Carillon.
- Less is more on carillon—don't write too many notes.
- If your audience falls asleep—you did something wrong—wake them up with effects.
- Why composing for bells is complex—you have to consider: Type of carillon, size, type of bells, age of instrument, temperament, keyboard, height of bells from the ground, closed or open tower, what the clappers are made of, the occasion and it is an outdoor instrument.
- Remember your audience has to listen to your music even if they don't want to, because the carillon is a public instrument.

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