

2020 Summer RECITAL SERIES

TUESDAYS AT 7:00 PM, JUNE 2–AUGUST 18

DENNIS CURRY

TUESDAY, JUNE 23
7:00 PM



Dennis Curry has served as Kirk in the Hills's Carillonist for over 30 years and was appointed Oakland University's first Carillonist in 2015. Dennis was honored to be consultant and dedicatory recitalist for the new Elliott Carillon Tower where he performs weekly recitals every Friday at noon. His carillon studies began with Dr. Frederick Marriott, and he advanced to Carillonist member of the Guild of Carillonists in North America in 1989. A past President of the GCNA for 6 years, Dennis has also served on the Board of Directors for over 10 years and as juror on the Guild's Student Examination Committee. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the World Carillon Federation, having served as Treasurer, Secretary and Vice-President.

In 2001, he hosted the GCNA Congress at the Kirk, which honored the centennials of Percival Price and Frederick Marriott. He supervised the formation of the Marriott Memorial Library and the complete renovation of the Kirk carillon – the world's largest (77 bells). In 2011, he hosted the joint GCNA and WCF World Congress in Michigan, celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the GCNA – which was the largest gathering of carillonists in the 500-year history of the carillon instrument. And in 2014, he hosted the Midwest Regional Carillon Conference on the newest carillon in the world at Oakland University. Dennis has performed on every continent, except Antarctica. An advocate for promoting the carillon art and building community awareness, Dennis has premiered and commissioned several carillon works, and established the Todd Fair Memorial Collection for scholarly research and student study at Oakland University.

1. GOD BLESS AMERICA

2. A BACH SUITE

Prelude (Lute, BWV 998)
Adagio (Organ, BWV 564)
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (Cantata 147)

3. A TIME FOR HEALING

Healing Bells (2020)

Chime of the Dawn Bells (2020)

4. HYMN PRELUDES FOR THE KIRK

Be Thou My Vision
Let All Things Now Living

5. AMERICAN GOTHIC (2019)

Wings of the Morning
Call of the Chanticleer
The Gathering of the Nets
Memories of Melrose

6. A MEDLEY OF GERSHWIN SONGS

Somebody Loves Me
Oh, Lady, Be Good
The Man I Love
Fascinating Rhythm

7. ROMANTIC ARRANGEMENTS

Ständchen - *Serenade*
Julia Florida - *Barcarola*
Venetian Gondola - *Songs without Words*

8. POP MEDLEY

What the World Needs Now is Love
Let it Be
Imagine
Stayin' Alive
Hallelujah

IRVING BERLIN

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

arr. the performer

Ukrainian Folksong 'Plyve Kacha'
(arr. Pamela Ruiten-Feenstra & Jet Schouten)
Jean-Francois Maljean

GEERT D'HOLLANDER

Slane
Ash Grove

JOEY BRINK

GEORGE GERSHWIN

arr. John Courter

ARR. MARY JO DISLER

Franz Schubert
Augustín Barrios Mangoré
Félix Mendelssohn

ARR. THE PERFORMER

Burt Bacharach
Paul McCartney
John Lennon
The Bee Gees
Leonard Cohen

Each section will be announced by the striking of bells. The number of strokes indicates the section number. Unless otherwise indicated, all arrangements are by the performer.



MILLENNIUM
CARILLON
NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS



PROGRAM NOTES

God Bless America is an American patriotic song written by Irving Berlin during World War I in 1918 and revised by him in the run up to World War II in 1938. The later version has notably been recorded by Kate Smith, becoming her signature song. This song takes the form of a prayer (intro lyrics “as we raise our voices, in a solemn prayer”) for God’s blessing and peace for the nation (“...stand beside her and guide her through the night...”).

Johann Sebastian Bach was a German composer and musician of the Baroque period. He is known for instrumental compositions such as the Brandenburg Concertos and the Goldberg Variations, and for vocal music such as the St Matthew Passion and the Mass in B minor. Since the 19th-century Bach Revival he is generally regarded as one of the greatest composers of all time. This suite is compiled from a variety of other compositions.

Bells have long functioned as signals and timekeepers, notifying residents of deaths, commemorations, and celebrations. During the time of the Black Plague, some people believed that bells had powers to ward off the disease. When bells were confiscated by Nazis, melted and repurposed into military equipment during the Holocaust, villagers were haunted by the absent presence or present absence of the bells, which had guided the rhythm of their daily lives. In 2020, most of us experience social isolation due to COVID-19. The rhythm of our daily lives is skewed. Amidst global suffering, many people long for the beauty found in live music, which signals a certain normalcy and offers the healing power of music. In response to the pandemic, we, Dutch investigative journalist Jet Schouten and carillonist and composer Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra, teamed up to create ***Healing Bells***. Schouten suggested that the lament quality of the Ukrainian folk tune “Plyve Kacha” was fitting to commemorate those who have suffered and died from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The low, close, parallel harmonies of Ukrainian folk singing find kinship in the deep resonance of the bells. Ruiter-Feenstra arranged “Plyve Kacha” in phrase fragments alternating with viral spirals, in which the carillonists’ hands move in a circular gesture similar to the shape of the coronavirus as it appears under a microscope. The viral spirals represent COVID-19, as well as any social virus such as xenophobia and racism that infects society, spreading as if contagious. Each time more music plays, the virus grows quieter, slower, and less virulent. Three quarters of the way into *Healing Bells*, the low bells pull apart the virus particles one-by-one, and eradicate them through low bell tolls, which are followed by a stately conclusion of the folk tune lament. We acknowledge health care workers, who risk themselves to care for others, despite shortages of testing kits, masks, and ventilators. We grieve over people of Asian descent worldwide who have been targeted in racist and xenophobic attacks. We offer *Healing Bells* to lament and mourn with those who have lost loved ones, as well as for anyone who has suffered social isolation.

In the Chinese province of Hubei, the oldest set of bells was discovered and are now conserved in a museum in Wuhan, known for the epicenter of the pandemic. French composer Maljean wrote ***Chime of the Dawn Bells*** as an encouragement to all who have been fighting the spread of this disease.

Hymn Preludes for the Kirk was commissioned to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the carillon at Kirk in the Hills, by Geert D’Hollander. Geert was named Bok Tower Gardens’ fourth full-time carillonist in October 2012. He has studied, among others, piano, chamber music, choral- and orchestral direction, fugue, and composition at the Royal Conservatory in Antwerp (Belgium), and carillon at the Royal Carillon School in Mechelen (Belgium). He was first prize winner in more than 30 international competitions for



carillon and/or composition. In 1997 he succeeded Ronald Barnes as University Carillonist and Professor of Carillon at the Department of Music at UC Berkeley. In 2008 he was awarded the “Berkeley Medal of Honors” for “Distinguished Service to the Carillon.” Currently, he is a carillon composition teacher at the Royal Carillon School in Mechelen in Belgium. He has made five appearances at our International Carillon Festival.

University of Chicago Carillonneur Joey Brink writes: “**Writing American Gothic** for the Kirk has been an exciting and rewarding adventure. Kirk Carillonneur Dennis Curry is a longtime friend and mentor. He and I gathered on multiple occasions in Chicago, over whiskey and wine, to discuss the artistic inspirations for the piece and review musical ideas. Dennis and I share an engineering background, in addition to music, and the idea to focus on the art and architecture of the Kirk was born from these shared interests. Three anniversaries mark the occasion for this commission: the 30th anniversary of Dennis’s tenure as Kirk Carillonneur, the 60th anniversary of the Kirk carillon, and Dennis’s 70th birthday. Thus, the numbers 3, 6, and 7 feature prominently in the music, harmonically with 3rd, 6th, and 7th chords, and rhythmically with 3/4, 6/4, and 7/8 time signatures. Finally, the movements are tied together with hints of Simple Gifts, a favorite folk song of ours. Each of the seven movements reference the tune, though the melody is only fully stated once in the first movement. The tune is intentionally hidden in subsequent movements, not to be difficult, but rather so that each movement would stand on its own and not act as a variation to the theme.

1. **Wings of the Morning** is named after the sculpture by Marshall M. Fredericks, found in the center of the Kirk Columbarium. The sculpture depicts swans in the “unfolding morning”. The organically flowing pattern of the bronze sculpture inspired me to write an opening movement that is peaceful, colorful like the sunrise, and elegantly flows from one idea to the next. Simple Gifts is heard at the end of the movement, the only instance the melody is fully stated in the suite.

2. As the Wings of the Morning subsides, a chancleer has found its perch atop the Kirk tower. **Call of the Chancleer** is derived from birdsong, with its trills and harmonious melodies. After announcing the sunrise, the chancleer takes flight, dancing playfully (‘Tis the gift...), before returning majestically to its perch atop the tower.

3. **The Gathering of the Nets** is a stone carving that faces west of the Kirk Sanctuary that depicts a figure collecting fish from his nets. The quiet and steady rhythm of the waves lapping on the boat provides the setting for this movement. A hint (When true simplicity is gained) emerges among the repeating arpeggios as the harmony develops.

4. The Kirk is modeled after Scotland’s Melrose Abbey, a 13th century gothic monastery that exists today only in ruins. **Memories of Melrose** begins with a lamenting melody in the bass bells. As the music progresses, secrets of the former abbey are uncovered, with two very short hints of Simple Gifts (...where we ought to be. And when we find ourselves in the place just right...). The song becomes a lullaby and ends with a hint of Scottish folk music.”

George Gershwin was born Jacob Bruskin Gershowitz on September 26, 1898 and was an American composer and pianist whose compositions spanned both popular and classical genres. Among his best-known works are the orchestral compositions Rhapsody in Blue (1924) and An American in Paris (1928), the songs Swanee (1919) and Fascinating Rhythm (1924), the jazz standard I Got Rhythm (1930), and the opera Porgy and Bess (1935) which spawned the hit Summertime.

Mary Jo Disler, a charter member of the Guitar Foundation of America, has taught classic guitar privately, and in college classes in the Detroit area for over 30 years. She is also a degreed organist and a member of the Detroit chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Upon hearing the Kirk carillon, she was intrigued by the similarities of stringed instruments to bells and has arranged over 50 classical compositions for the carillon. These are wonderful new additions to the carillon repertoire, which were published by American Carillon Music Editions, based in Naperville.

These **Romantic Arrangements** are especially well suited for the bells.

The popular songs in the **Pop Medley** were selected for their appropriateness during this pandemic and social unrest. Enjoy and sing along ...

For more Carillon information and upcoming summer concert dates, please visit www.napervilleparks.org or www.naperville-carillon.org.



MILLENNIUM
CARILLON
NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS