



# The Peal

The Official Newsletter of the Alberta Guild of English Handbell Ringers



## Summer's Here!

Well, it's about time!! Of course we will be missing those frigid temps as we continue to bake this summer. Wherever you are headed – Spanish ringing tour or just to St Albert for some Saskatoon pie - please don't forget the sunblock along with your gloves, ring responsibly and have fun!!



## Classic Bronze/Copper

Like migrating birds, handbell musicians from across Canada and the US will descend upon St Albert once again this July with a double feature of Classic Bronze AND Classic Copper. With guest conductors, American Michael Glasgow and our own Stuart Sladden, the final concert will definitely please all audiences! Don't miss out – if you're not performing, come support these skilled musicians as they reunite for another 4 days of intense musicianship!

### Save the Date!

#### Currents Concert

June 3, 2019

See the [Bow River Handbell Musicians](#) perform!

#### International Music Camp

July 2019

International Music Camp Handbell sessions  
[IMC Bells](#)

#### Classic Bronze/Copper

July 3-6, 2019

With Michael Glasgow and Stuart Sladden!!

## Presidential Ponderings

Hello Everyone!

I just had a birthday and as a Gemini, I often use my double-identity symbolism as an excuse for my *sometimes* scatter-brained, multi-tasking zombiness. Well, since earlier this year, when I took on the role of your Interim Guild President in addition to my *Peal* Editor and Social Media responsibilities, a funny thing happened – now my absent-minded-professor-ness is now my **ALWAYS** state!!!

All joking aside, while I am pleased to serve our Guild in whatever capacity I may still possess, it really would be wonderful to see more new faces on our Board and volunteer roster so all the important and necessary tasks required to keep us running can continue to do so for another 35 years!

Congrats to all our Albertan youth musicians who participated in various *Youth Festivals* around the province this spring and warm appreciation especially to those tireless event managers, **Wendy Hoskin** and **Anne Hergott** for all their tremendous support of our young ringers.

A huge communal sigh of relief for all those who pulled off yet another season of amazing year-end performances – I'm proud to report that I was able to attend at least 5 different ones in 3 cities!

Kudos to the *Classic Bronze/Copper* committee members who have another great event lined up in St Albert **July 3-6**.

Many thanks to Susan Galloway and her team of Edmonton-area Board members who are hard at work in putting together this year's edition of Handbell Discovery to be held **October 19** in Sherwood Park.

Looking forward to the [19<sup>th</sup> International Handbell Symposium](#) to be held in Hong Kong, **Aug 4-8, 2020?** More information will be forthcoming shortly regarding the selection of the next Canadian Massed Conductor.

As usual, never a dull moment in the life of a handbell musician – don't miss out! And don't let US miss out by sharing photo and news about YOUR events to [peal@algehr.org](mailto:peal@algehr.org). I'm pretty sure there are more than just 2 or 3 ensembles in AB – don't let all the "usual suspects" hog all the limelight!

Here's hoping many many more of you will make it a New Season's Resolution to share more!

Wishing you a safe and fun summer *ringing, singing* and hopefully not too much *dinging* lol...

Emmy

Interim President  
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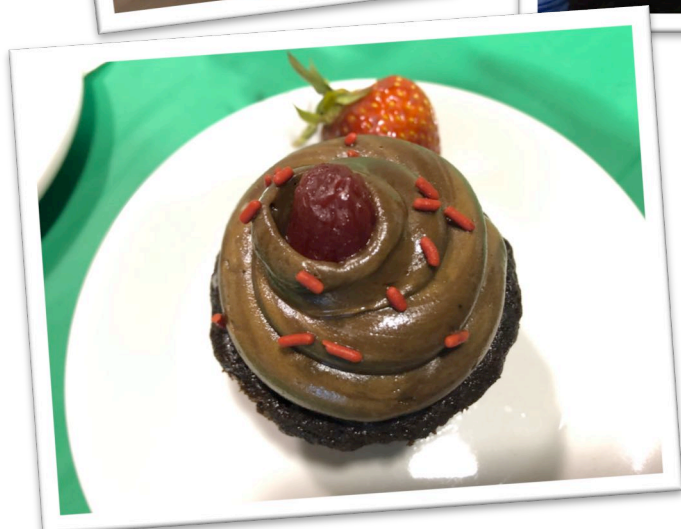
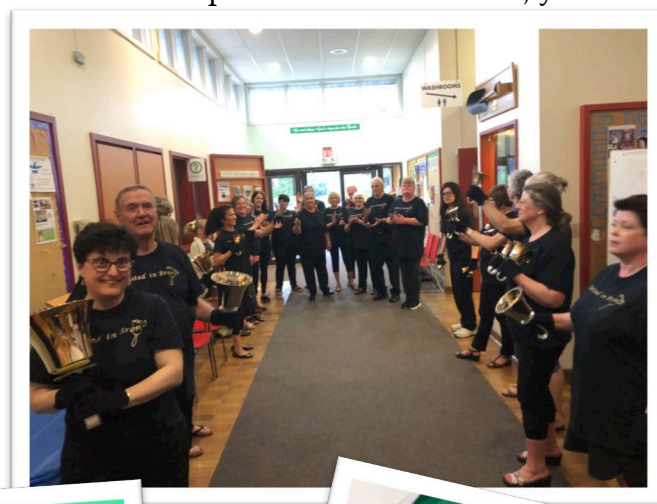




## Spring Stage Stars: Parkland Bells, Robertson-Wesley Ringers, United in Bronze



Did anyone say “dessert”? Being Peal Editor has its perks – one of the best ones is *having* to attend handbell performances and partake of the decadent dessert offerings as part of the unofficial job description – well, how else can one adequately report on such delightful happenings? Not really sure who may have been responsible for this lovely tradition (perhaps Parkland Bells??) , but at any rate, 10 kg later, your intrepid journalist-foodie has done her duty and eaten her way through delicious concerts at Spruce Grove, Robertson-Wesley and St Albert United Churches. If you have never experienced bells like this, you really must!



## A Canadian First – Isabela Ramos (from the Edmonton Journal, April 11, 2019, by Liane Faulder)

In terms of storage, hand bells are among your more awkward instruments. That very awkwardness is part of what makes Edmonton's Isabela Ramos unique among musicians.

The Concordia University of Edmonton student is graduating this spring as the first Bachelor of Arts student in Canada to major in handbells. That singular status is owing, in part, to the fact that handbell collections, and instructors, are uncommon; the \$100,000 collection at Concordia University is the largest in Canada.

The assortment of instruments, made up of a six-and-a-half octave set of Malmark handbells, a six-and-a-half-octave set of Malmark handchimes and a newly-acquired five-octave set of Whitechapel bells, attracts students and community musicians alike to Concordia, which supports ensembles for both groups.

For Ramos, the attraction to hand bells began when she learned she loved to sing. The 21-year-old had always played in school bands, but didn't discover her own voice until she came to Concordia to study. Handbells and voices go together beautifully and performances are often paired. She took up the handbells in 2015, gradually becoming more involved in the handbell community, and loving it.

"It's crazy what you can do with a handbell," says Ramos. "It's such a simple instrument, yet it's also complex and (takes such dexterity)."

Ramos' graduating solo concert is Saturday, April 13 at 7 p.m. at St. Timothy's Anglican Church (8420 145 St.) The free concert will see Ramos playing a tree made of multiple handbells, plus performing with guitar, voice, piano and cello. Members of two Concordia handbell ensembles will also be there.

A second concert, *Shall We Dance*, will be held Sunday, April 14 at 4 p.m. and will star both handbell ensembles — JuBELLation and Jubiloso! Ramos is conducting the ensembles, each with about 15 players, as part of her graduation requirement.

Setting up and playing the instruments is a bit of a workout for Ramos (whose minor is physical education). The bells, cast from bronze or aluminum, are stored in large cases and must be laid out on foam-covered tables to be played. Some bells, which originated in England in the late 17th century, are tiny; others can weigh upwards of eight kilograms, or 18 pounds. The biggest bell in the Concordia collection weighs about 18 kilograms, or 40 pounds.

Unlike an orchestra or choir, which sees each musician responsible for a specific line of a musical arrangement, a handbell ensemble acts as one instrument. Each ringer is responsible for particular notes, sounding the assigned bell when that note appears in the score. Musicians can swing the bells, or hit them with a mallet. Bells can be strung to make a suspended tree, or rung in multiples by hand.

"In a handbell choir, you are accountable for your own notes, and the people around you depend on you being there," says Ramos. "It's a team effort and I like that everyone comes together, everyone contributes, to make something happen."

Debbie Rice, the conductor of the handbell ensembles at Concordia, has been an instructor at the university for nine years. She remembers reading an e-mail from Ramos, expressing a casual interest in handbells when she first came to Concordia.





“She became proficient at a lot of other instruments anyway, and I thought she just wanted to add this to her inventory,” says Rice. “But she ended up focusing completely on handbells. She was smitten.”

Now, Ramos is the assistant conductor (under Rice) for Concordia’s handbell groups — Jubiloso, an auditioned, community-based ensemble, and JuBELLation, a handbell ensemble for beginning and intermediate ringers. Next, she plans to pursue a Master’s degree in music, specializing in choral conducting. She hopes, someday, to be the director or conductor of a choir. If it was a choir of bells, so much the better.

“There is so much that can be created with a handbell, and it evokes different emotions,” says Ramos.

## How To Help Non-Musicians Become Musicians

It’s wonderful when musicians are interested in ringing handbells – they already know music and it’s often just a matter of introducing handbell technique. But what if there aren’t enough to fill your choir? What if you have enthusiastic people who are interested in ringing but whose musical background is minimal? How do you help them contribute meaningfully in a rapid fashion? How can they play more difficult music so your experienced musicians don’t get bored?

When I restarted the handbell program at Devon United Church in 2003, I had four ringers – all musicians. This was fine for the first year, but then others expressed an interest. We certainly wanted to use all three octaves of our bells. There weren’t enough people to create a beginner and advanced program, so I looked for a way to help beginners learn to ring quickly. As a band teacher, I’m used to starting beginners, but I would see them three or four times a week and had the opportunity to teach theory and technique.

In the beginning I decided to write in the counting and colour the notes. I counted out loud throughout the pieces. After a year, I realized they were no closer to reading music than before – they just looked at the numbers and listened to me. And I was running out of highlighter colours to use. Plus, counting out loud during performances doesn’t add to the music.

First, I made them responsible for the rhythm and counting. We all count out loud when we start a new piece. When I get a new ringer, I spend some time explaining basic counting (whole, half, quarter and time signatures). They join the group and I ask their neighbour to count with them. I don't count out loud anymore, other than for the occasional complex bar, and then only the first few times.

Normally they start with only one bell and I add the second bell when they start looking bored.

I do colour the notes for the non-readers. After several years of trial and error, here's what makes it easiest.

- 1) I keep the same colours for each person
- 2) they get two contrasting colours – one for the left hand and one for the right. Pairs I use are blue and orange, green and pink. Since two people share one copy, those four colours appear on that copy. Yellow doesn't work because it isn't visible in lower light situations (or with older eyes)
- 3) if the note is natural, I use a solid circle a bit larger than the note head
- 4) if it is a sharp or a flat, I circle the note head. Sometimes I use the colour to circle key changes
- 5) the note is circled with the correct hand colour. For G4A4, I use green for left hand and pink for the right hand. therefore G#/Ab will be circled in green if it's G# and pink if it's Ab, even though it's the same bell.

I buy a lot of music in reproducible books where I have permission to photocopy songs for my program. But I also buy original music, and what I do for originals is cover each page with a clear page protector (trimmed to size and taped at the bottom) and use permanent markers instead of highlighters. Even though they are permanent, you can erase it with hand sanitizer. However, make sure your ringers know when to use which markers!

I make them accountable for their own counting, and with this colouring method, they're paying attention to the notes and actually catching errors in my colouring (not that I do that on purpose....)

I've been using this method for about 8 years now, and I my choir is now playing level 2+ with ease, and I'm introducing level 3 so they have a challenge. One of my ringers said she was very happy that I chose easy music for Christmas this year – and didn't believe it when I told her it wasn't easy – she was just ringing that much better!

I've started phasing out

the colours on easy music – first by only marking the first time the note appears in each line of music and when there's a key change. But I'm careful to challenge only the people who are comfortable with the challenge – I don't want to scare anyone off!



I know, as a music teacher, I never allowed my students to write in fingerings on a regular basis. But my goal here is to get my musicians excited about and performing great music – and with this method, we are. And I have to keep correcting them when they say they aren't musicians!

~ Sharon Vogrinetz, ALGEHR Director (and French Horn player extraordinaire)

## Youth Festival - Edmonton

We held three youth festivals this year at three Edmonton Public Schools. We had 17 choirs participating involving 11 schools from the Public and Catholic school districts. Susan Galloway was a wonderful adjudicator. She did an amazing job of workshopping with each choir and had lots of positive comments. We used the piece 'New Day' by Brenda Austin for our mass ring. It was a fun selection using lots of techniques which came together really well. I thoroughly enjoyed listening to all the solo pieces and am impressed with the level of ringing our music teachers are reaching. Thanks to everyone who participated.

~ Wendy Hoskin, Festival Coordinator



## Stan Morris Excellence in Teaching Award

Stan Morris was committed to developing handbell artistry and instilling the joy of music making in his students. In its second year, the *Stan Morrow Excellence in Teaching Award* has been presented to music teacher, **Lorna Walker**. Lorna has been either ringing or directing handbells for over 20 years. As a music teacher with Edmonton public Schools, she has been blessed to be teaching in 5 different schools, all of which have had 3 octave sets of handbells.

Lorna began her ringing career with Camille Ream, at St Albert United Church. Lorna credits Camille for giving her the confidence and the skills to introduce her students to handbells in her music classroom. Lorna remained a ringer with St Albert's United in Bronze for many years, eventually taking on the role of Director until the arrival of current Director, Kathie Zalasky.

In her classroom, Lorna has utilized handbells as an amazing tool for teaching concepts of melody and harmony. With the addition of handchimes she has been able to introduce all her students, grade 1-6, to the art of ringing. As well Lorna has directed many extracurricular school groups. Highlights over the years, include having her student handbell ringers play along with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra at the ESO's education concerts and directing her school groups at the Edmonton Public Schools' Night of Music on two different occasions.

Lorna has been an active participant in the Guild's Youth Handbell Festivals and appreciates the unique opportunity this gives students for massed ringing. Lorna is honoured to receive the Stan Morris Award and thanks the Guild for this recognition. She will receive a \$150 award, a free one-year ALGEHR membership, and the opportunity to lead a workshop at our next Discovery in Sherwood Park on October 19, 2019! Congratulations, Lorna and thank you for all you do for your students!!



## From our Members' Gloves

This is a section dedicated to those creative minds that live amongst us – thanks to them for sharing their thoughts and “feel-good” stories....hope to hear from many others soon!

### It's Rehearsal Day

It's rehearsal day

What a joy

Two hours with my favourite team

I have my binder ready

I've air-belled all week

I can't wait to show everyone

I've remembered the repeat

It's rehearsal day

I hope no one calls in sick

Greta better have a coffee for me

If she runs in late with one

Where is my baton

Did I remember to eat

I hope they remember the darn repeat!

It's rehearsal day

What a chore

Where are my gloves

Oh I shouldn't leave without

My reading glasses

Rush hour traffic

I'm going to be late

~ Joanne Wong

### Teacher and Student Reunited by Handbells!

Jubiloso's spring concert this year was saw the happy reunion of teacher and student. Jacob Walkhouse attended JA Fife school from Grade 1-Grade 6. While at Fife, his music teacher was Lorna Walker. Jacob was introduced to Handbells in grade 4 by his music teacher, Lorna, and joined the school handbell choir in grade 5 and 6. Jacob is now in grade 9, and has continued ringing with JuBELLation, a community group at Concordia University. At the Spring concert Jacob and Lorna, who was subbing, were surprised to realize that they were both performing. They were even more surprised to realize that in the joint piece, ring by both Jubiloso and JuBELLation, they were ringing the same position-C4 D4. In Jacob's words, "It seems like the circle has come right around".

~ Lorna Walker, Substitute Ringer Extraordinaire

...and perhaps the most generous of news of all....

Did you know that Lethbridge handbell musicians are offering the proceeds from their concert "Let the Bells Ring Out", \$306.75, to be donated to the John Nelson Award??

Wow – congratulations and thank you to Lethbridge for this generous gesture!!



## *Jubellation ~ Three Hills*

JUBELLATION HANDBELL RINGERS enjoyed presenting a SPRING PROGRAM to 3 senior citizen facilities in Olds and Didsbury. It was an added joy to see the pleasure on the faces of the seniors as they listened to the music and then to be graciously invited to return! Also, we recently became the new owners of a BELL TREE and look forward to adding bell tree repertoire to our Fall and Christmas 2019 programs!

~ Rhoda Murray, Three Hills



## **Symposium Endowment Fund (SEF) Grant**

This year, the ALGEHR Board awarded \$600 to each of the following applicants chosen to receive a SEF grant:

*Wilson Middle School (Lethbridge)*

*Huntington Pioneers (Calgary)*

*Classic Bronze (Edmonton)*

*Congratulations to all ensembles and all the best in your endeavours!*

## **Fred Merrett Award for New Compositions**

The ALGEHR Board is pleased to announce the following winners of the Fred Merrett Award for New Compositions:

Category C (any # of oct, Level 3-6) ~ Betty Radford, “

*Congratulations to all composers who submitted their work and thank you for contributing to the growth and*



And if you think this next piece of news feels like “déjà vu”, well, you’re not imagining things – ALGEHR’s very own Betty Radford has done it again with yet another winning composition, “Mosaic”, that was selected as Canada’s Massed Ringing Composition by the Handbell Musicians of Canada for the 19<sup>th</sup> International Handbell Symposium to be held in Hong Kong, Aug 3-6, 2020!!!

**CONGRATULATIONS, BETTY!!**

## Handbell Music Reviews

### **Bell Tree for Worship**

**By Lamb**

This is book full of Bell Tree Music! It is arranged for the beginner to the advanced – the more advanced ringer would play the verse with the variations and the beginning ringer would take the optional cut with less variation. Music is all sacred and will work for many different church seasons. Hymn tunes include Beach Spring, Blessed Assurance, Kingsfold and more! If you are looking for a WOW factor for your worship, consider Bell Trees! I have used an IV pole but if you are planning to do more, then give us a call and we can guide you on what you need to purchase that work best with your needs.

### **Where Waters Flow**

**By Mallory**

**23 octaves**

**Level 1**

Many choirs shy away from level 1 music as they are deemed “too easy”. This original composition, although is “easy”, it is filled with musicality and truly flows like water as the name suggests. It sounds more like a level 2 than a level 1 so is an excellent piece to have in your inventory. When you need an additional piece for a concert or worship, it is easy to ring and direct and it sounds great

### **Advent Passacaglia**

**Arr Lamb**

**Level 2**

**345 Octaves Optional Choirchimes**

Based on “Savior of the Nations, Come”, this music starts with the grounded and steady bass line which is typical of a passacaglia. The intense yet mournful melody lets us know that we truly want the Savior of the Nations to Come! Before I became a handbell director, I had actually not even heard of this piece of music. It was not one that I remember ever singing at church so when I came upon this melody a few years ago, I fell in love with it. The melody stays in 4/4 time throughout but moves from the treble to the bass like a canon. The addition of the chimes fills out the sound in the middle section. I always like it when I am rehearsing with my choir and the dynamics just work intuitively so ringers play them without even realizing it!

### **Good Christian Friends, Rejoice**

**Arr Mallory**

**Level 2+**

**345 Octaves Optional Choirchimes**

This arrangement is based on the traditional German Christmas Carol Good Christian Friends, Rejoice. Mallory has thought outside the box from tradition and instead of the music being in 6/8 time, he has written it mostly 4/4! The music, although familiar, no longer has the lilt of 6/8. The malleting in the 4/4 brings a wonderful intensity and joy to the music. It’s always a good idea to have some music that is very different for each season – one that the ringers or congregation are not sure about. Accepting diversity in our music can be transferred to helping people with diversity and acceptance in other parts of their lives.

**On This Day Earth Shall Ring****Arr Sherman****Level 3****3456 Octaves Optional Percussion (tambourine, finger cymbals, muffled drum, conga drum)**

I like to choose music for worship that is familiar but that the congregation doesn't usually sing. I played this arrangement at a conference and decided at that point, it was a perfect music for Resounding Joy. This very old, yet familiar, tune come to life with this arrangement. The rhythmic bass line and additional percussion is vital to the energy of the arrangement. The additional of a few 2/4 or 3/4 measures helps to drive the music even more so the congregation will truly feel that "On This Day Earth Shall Ring"!

**Advent Fantasy****Arr Phillips****Level 3****3456 Octaves Optional Choirchimes Optional Percussion (triangle, tambourine)**

Advent music is often hard to find for bells. This is wonderful ethereal arrangement that combines the tunes GENEVAN 42 (Comfort, Comfort Now My People), PICARDY (Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence), NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND (Savior of the Nations, Come) and PUER NOBIS (On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry). In addition, it has a variety of time signature which may challenge ringers but it gives them a flavor of what can be done by adding or deleting a beat in a measure to add to the intensity of the music. Rehearsal works well by learning each section well and then putting them altogether.

**Fantasy on Ukrainian Bell Carol****Arr. Childers****Level 4****345 octaves with optional brass quintet (or organ) and timpani**

Looking for a challenge that will WOW the congregation and the ringers? This arrangement can stand alone if you want to just show off the bells! The music starts out grand at what seems like a sensible pace and then it takes off – just as it should. Ringers will definitely need to have all the sixteenth note runs in their muscle memory to make this work and just when they do, the rhythm changes to some syncopation. Remember, although it is difficult because of the speed, it is a definite challenge to ringers and will bring joy to all who watch and listen!

**Beginnings****By McGlasson****4567 octaves with optional Choirchimes****Level 4**

This original composition is filled with drive and purpose! It combines Choirchimes, rhythmic techniques and patterns to make every measure of music exciting! This is marked as a level 4 but it is well worth challenging for your level 3 ringers.

~ Camille Ream, Handbells Etc



## Editor's Encore

Well, looks like I finally made it to the last page and I'm all talked out, having already shared my pearls to you as your interim fearless (well, most of the time) leader! All that is left to say is to sound like a broken record and BEG you to share all the news about your summer adventures when we meet again in the fall.

~ Photos credits Wendy Hoskin, Rhoda Murray, Juanita Pickerl, Sharon Vogrinetz, Emmy Okazawa-Bortolin



## Happy Summer!



### Contact your Board!

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**Next Peal deadline!! August 15, 2019 ~ Please send me your submissions by this date!!!**