



HANDBELL MUSICIANS OF AMERICA

ILLINOIS, IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA

QUAVERS NEWSLETTER

JANUARY, 2015

Handbell Musicians
OF AMERICA

JANUARY TRIVIA

1. The January flower is the snowdrop & carnation.
2. January's gem is the garnet & stands for constancy.
3. The zodiac signs for January are Capricorn & Aquarius.
4. January is National Blood Donor Month.
5. January is Braille Literacy Month.
6. January is National Hobby Month.
7. January is National Soup Month.
8. January is National Staying Healthy Month.
9. January 1798 Amendment 11 to the constitution was proclaimed which modified the Supreme Court's powers.
10. January 1896 Utah became state number 45.
11. January 1912 New Mexico became state number 47.
12. Elvis Presley was born in January.
13. January 11 is National Human Trafficking Awareness Day.
14. Martin Luther King, Jr Day is celebrated in January.
15. January 1863 the Emancipation Proclamation was issued by Abraham Lincoln.



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ELECTED	ELECTED	APPOINTED
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	ILLINOIS	IOWA	KANSAS	MISSOURI	NEBRASKA
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Treasurer	Open	Mary Lee Parks	Karla Denton	Suanne Comfort	Janet Chiocchi
Secretary	Beth McFarland	Donna Sprague	Open	Open	Byron Jensen
Web	Garv Dietschweiler	Wendi Calkins-Levitt	Wendi Calkins-Levitt	Wendi Calkins-Levitt	Janet Chiocchi
Other	<i>Events</i> Sharon Schmidt <i>Registrar</i> Kristin Kalitowski-Kowal <i>Handbell Services</i> Debi Robey <i>Chime Coordinator</i> Aimee Legatzke Shelley May Hutchison <i>Food Coordinator</i> Anna Piro <i>Chime Mentor</i> Diane Oster <i>Student Liaison</i> Ben Hafner	<i>Historian</i> Tina Gehrke <i>Chimes</i> Aaron Hansen <i>Eastern Rep</i> Cat Walker <i>Western Rep</i> Yvonne Johnson	<i>Past Chair</i> Cherryl Cox <i>Chimes</i> Shirley Myers	<i>Membership</i> Sherry Boland <i>Chime Chair</i> Anne Miller Kathy Harrison Christie White	<i>Registrar</i> Linda Ashley <i>Chimes Coordinator</i> Nancy Youngman Jessica Kite Vicky Vandervort Joyce Miller Angela Wright Natalie Radcliffe Charles Cohen Deann Nicolaus Mike Allen



The Raleigh Ringers

David M. Harris, Director

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A community handbell choir

Official

We are very lucky to have so many gifted and prolific composers in our midst in Area 8. From all walks of life, and with all levels of years of experience, composers from Area 8 have created music that has brought our instrument forward through the ages, as it were; from a time when bells played music from hymnals to a time when bells are the only medium intended for an original piece. Original composition for handbells is a specialty of many Area 8 composers, and for that reason we have chosen to honor the life of a dear departed board member in a very special way.

Area 8 has commissioned Cathy Moglebust of Eagle Grove, Iowa, to compose an original piece, with compatible versions for 2-3 and 3-5 octaves of bells. The official premier will be during the massed ringing at the Area 8 Festival/Conference, *Ring in the Land of Lincoln*, June 22-25, 2016 in Springfield, Illinois, and will be rehearsed and directed by the composer. This new composition, "Despite the Storm," was commissioned to honor the life of Cheryl Abney, our past Financial Advisor, who lost her battle with breast cancer this past year. The piece will be available for purchase from an HIC member in the coming months, and I encourage you to use it in worship, workshops, concerts, and to begin making plans to join me at the Prairie Capitol Convention Center and President Abraham Lincoln Hotel for an amazing event that brings together the best of our commonwealth for three days of important learning and great music-making.

At the 2014 Festival/Conference in Davenport, Cathy Moglebust led a repertoire reading session featuring the music of composers who live in Area 8. Below is a list of those pieces. Perhaps there is something here that is perfect for your program that was home-grown here in Area 8:

Over the Rainbow—arr. Chris Peck; Hope 2686, 3-5 oct, L3

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel—arr. Susan Geschke; Choristers Guild CGB857, 2-3 oct, L2

Hallelujah from *Shrek*—arr. Joel Raney; Hope 2674, 3-5 oct, 3-5 oct chimes, synth, L3

We Gather Together—arr. Matthew Prins; Lorenz 20/1676L, 3-5 oct, L2

Angels from the Realms of Glory—arr. Laurant Delancy; AGEHR AG35322, 3-5 oct, bell tree, L2

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn—arr. Carolyn Sternowski; GIA G-7085, 3 oct, L3+

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring—arr. Phillip Roberts; GIA G-8551, 3-5 oct, inst, L2+

Carol of the Birds—arr. Deborah Carr; AGEHR AG45054, 4-6 oct, L4

That Night In Bethlehem—Charles Peery; From the Top 20406HB, 5 oct, 5-7 oct chimes, hp, fl, L3-

When You Do This, Remember Me—Cathy Moglebust; Choristers Guild CGB866, 3-5 oct

I know I am supposed to pick one composer to raise up and give examples of why they might be my favorite, but I will do something different. Since I just had to open up a file to get to the information above, I also found some information about the "Unpublished" reading session that we offered in Davenport. This might have been my favorite portion of the event: Two veteran composers offering immediate, excellent, helpful, direct, constructive feedback to two younger composers while two full choirs of dedicated "bell nerds" sight read brand new music well into the night. If you stopped to consider the importance of what was happening, it struck you deep: whether we call it Performing, Organizing, Educating, Mentoring, or Socializing, knowledge was passed on to a new mind using POEMS, and that doesn't happen by accident. It is just that thing that your board works so very hard to achieve, and we will be continuing that important work in this and each new year. As we pass into 2015, and since I mentioned POEMS, here is one for you and yours.

Ring out the old, ring in the new; Ring happy bells across the snow.

The year is going, let him go; Ring out the false, ring in the true.

-from "In Memorium," Lord Alfred Tennyson, 1809-1892

Patrick Gagnon ~ Area 8 Chair

Who is your favorite handbell arranger/composer? I always have a hard time deciding on a single answer for questions like this. I decided to poll some of my fellow handbell ringers to see who their favorites are. My handbell choir at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago voted almost unanimously for Cynthia Dobrinski. Here are some of their thoughts on her compositions:

- Her music is interesting to ring, and is visually appealing to the audience
- She has great detail in her music, and her arrangements are fun to play
- Rich, complex, and full arrangements
- Energetic and uplifting compositions

I also polled Chicago Bronze, the ensemble with which I ring. Here are their thoughts:

- Cathy Moklebust—her music is fun, yet challenging for developing handbell choirs.
- Kevin McChesney—for the variety in his approach and treatment of melody lines.
- Joel Raney—for his show stopping music and his use of other instruments with bells.
- Matthew Prins—his original compositions are very interesting and fun to play.
- Jason Krug—for his fresh, beautiful arrangements.

Personally, Fred Gramann is a favorite of mine. His arrangements are elegant, complex, and somewhat mysterious. His transcriptions of orchestral works are outstanding as well. I am also a fan of Hart Morris. His arrangements are both fun to play and fun to listen to. I enjoy the percussiveness of many of his compositions, and I love the added percussion that accompanies many of his arrangements. It's amazing what a simple percussion line can add to a handbell piece. So, who are your favorites?

[Briana Belding-Peck ~ Illinois State Chair](#)



I have noticed that in job interviews I am often asked the following question: What kind of music do you like? Without getting too off topic, my short answer is "good music." If that doesn't satisfy, and strangely enough it usually doesn't, the long answer goes something like this.

- I like music that contains original ideas, that isn't a rehash of the same thing that everyone else has done.
- Music that has a specific point of view about orchestration, melody, counter melody, etc.
- I like music that is well thought out and makes me think.

This is all a long lead into this month's theme of favorite handbell composers. For all the reasons that I listed above, I am in love with the music of Sandra Eithun. Sandra is a graduate of Silver Lake College in, something I can't spell Wisconsin. She is a church musician there and her collected arrangements and compositions are just too numerous to list here. Let me give you a few examples:

This is My Father's World—3-5 oct, opt. chimes, Lorenz L1

Great musicians make a lot out of a little. This innocent sounding and easy to play version of TERRA BEATA is in triple meter not just the traditional common time. The small but elegant twist gives the work a lilting country dance-like feel. You can almost touch the green vistas of Great Britain that inspired the tune.

Ding Dong Merrily on High—3-5 oct, flute, Lorenz L2

One of Sandra's skills is the ability to paint a picture with the bells. This charming setting begins with the bells playing chords against one another on the off beats as if the tolling of church bells is ringing through the country side. The flute part compliments the bells without competing with them.

Fanfare on O Worship the King—3-5 oct, trumpet, Lorenz L3

This was the first piece that made me sit up and take notice of Mrs. Eithun. This is an artisan's weaving of two great themes; the hymn tune LYONS and Handel's *Water Music*. Under Eithun's pen it sounds like these two pieces were made for each other and never does the music feel forced or inauthentic. This is another of Sandra's great skills, intuition. She has an excellent "feel" for the bells and where their musical strengths lie. The trumpet part again pays compliment to the bells without forcing them to shout over the brass.

Savior of the Nations Come—5-7 oct, chimes, opt. Petit & Fritzen Bells, percussion, Jeffers Handbell Supply L4

Finally, if the Raleigh Ringers come knocking at your door for a commission, you know you are doing something right. This sophisticated and inspiring work is a challenge worth taking. Never does the music feel cheap or contrived but all of Sandra's gifts are on display: feel, story telling, orchestration, and each transition from section to section is a clinic on melting music together to form a cohesive and stunning whole.

John Cook ~ Iowa State Chair

Did you hear about the bell ringer that fell
into the swimming pool?

She was ringing wet

Composers? We all have our favorites. The few that popped into my head when I was contemplating this thought were Kevin McChesney, Kathleen Wissinger, Linda Lamb, and Michael Glasgow. As I was talking with other directors, the “oh yeah!” factor hit: Sandra Eithun, Joel Raney, Cathy Moglebust and others were mentioned. But what I found interesting was why they were favorites. Many of the directors I visited with said that, yes, they have their favorites, but they don’t usually pick a piece according to who composed or arranged it. They pick a piece based on their need. So why do we tend to fall back on a McChesney, Lamb, or Eithun piece? Because they are trustworthy and they sound good. If you require a piece that your choir needs to work up fairly quickly, you tend to gravitate toward a composer that you know and like. We can trust that, in a pinch, Joel Raney or Cathy Moglebust will give us something that will sound full and rich, or quiet and reverent. Those favorite composers can be trusted to give us the familiar hymn we need for a Sunday morning, but maybe with a fun twist. If we need an original piece, we can turn toward our favorite composer to give us something that is daring and exciting. These names have become household—no—handbell names! As directors, we have come to rely on those familiar names as a security blanket of sorts. Yes, we try out different composers from time to time, (we have to to keep our choir growing!) but coming back to those familiar names feels like coming home. We know that if we need a level 1 piece, Linda Lamb will pull through with a full, yet simple piece to complement our choir. We can rely on composers like Glasgow or Wagner or Sherman to challenge us up through the levels.

And what about those of us who ring? When we see those favorite names placed in front of us, we inwardly sigh with relief. We know what to expect. We think, “Ok, a piece by McChesney. I can do this!” or “Oh, this will be pretty. It’s arranged by Sandra Eithun.” Or even, “Chris Peck? Great! I’m up for the challenge!” Seeing our favorite composers name on the page in front of us elicits a welcoming feeling inside of us. A familiarity. A comfort. A sense of excitement. A sense of peace. We tend to jump into the piece with confidence. When we see a name we might not recognize, we are not sure what to expect. We might approach the piece apprehensively or timidly. But sometimes it can be fun to venture into the unknown. You never know when that composer may become one of your favorites!

As we put away all the Christmas music and start preparing for what is to come, take a look at who wrote the piece. As the music is placed before you and you begin to look through before sight ringing it, look at the composer/arranger. What feeling do you get when you see the person’s name? Is it one of your favorite composers? Have you heard of this person before? Do you feel unsure about the piece, or do you feel a peace wash over you as you see a familiar name? Whoever the composer may be, approach the piece with confidence. Don’t let an unfamiliar name give you an unsettled feeling. You may just wind up enjoying the piece and find a new favorite composer!

[Staci Cunningham](#) ~ [Kansas Chair](#)

What do you call a dance given for handbell ringers?

Missouri handbell directors really like the music of Cynthia Dobrinski and Cathy Moglebust! Those are the two names that came up most often when asked to name a favorite handbell composer. Other directors told me that they had a difficult time naming just one favorite—there are so many to choose from. But the most frequent comment was that directors and ringers like to play pieces that are musically and rhythmically interesting, fun to ring, and have good bass lines.

Here is a sampling of comments from Missouri handbell directors:

"Two of my favorite composers are Arnold Sherman and Cynthia Dobrinski, both of whom are still active composers. It is rare that one or both of those names not appear on a program. Of the up and coming composers it is hard to decide who the favorite might be as they have not stood the test of time! Having said that, Matthew Prins incorporates fresh ideas into his compositions and my groups have enjoyed his compositions."

"My ringers' first favorite composer in the early days was Cynthia Dobrinski because she always wrote interesting bass parts and kept the bass players busy when most handbell music didn't. Now I really like Cathy Moglebust's things; exquisite quiet sections contrasting with crashing dynamics."

"Over the years I have enjoyed Cynthia Dobrinski's pieces. They are usually challenging, adhering to a nice ringable form, good bass line and interesting. Hart Morris is another favorite. His pieces are interesting, challenging, rhythmic, varying in format. In particular, we love the pieces he wrote based on Trans-Siberian Orchestra scores: Christmas Eve Sarajevo and Wizards in Winter. They are wonderful, staying close to the original, using bells and chimes in unusual ways with percussion accompaniment. Fun pieces to ring, challenging but obtainable."

"My ringers love the music of Michael Glasgow. His musical ideas and rhythmic variety make his pieces so much fun to work on and perform. I really like his creative contrast of chimes and bells. His arrangement of Keep Your Lamps has been a hit with our ringers and our audiences."

"Cathy Moglebust is my favorite handbell composer. Her compositions are fresh and feature awesome, lush, chord progressions. She consistently graces the handbell world with music that enables the director and ringer to go beyond the notes to feel and share the emotion of her ingenious writings. Her mixed up meter and added percussion continually add interest and excitement. From Christmas favorites of Comfort Comfort, Greensleeves, and The First Noel to Easter gems Ah! Holy Jesus, Meditation on Beautiful Savior, and timeless titles like It is Well With My Soul, Jerusalem, My Happy Home to her clever classics, Prologue and Rhythmic Dance, Festival Sanctus, Carillon Festiva, Cantabile and Scherzando, she keeps the notes flowing for all levels! Check out the wealth of her music."

Cathy Benton ~ Missouri State Chair



To Area 8's very own
community ensemble:

REZOUND! Handbell Ensemble

Who won the YouTube challenge
and will be performing at
Pinnacle this summer in Dallas,
TX!

I could spend all day pondering the question of my favorite composer and not be able to come up with just one. We are so fortunate in our art to have so many talented writers. So many who understand the instrument and what it is capable of doing.

I posed this question to the members of our Nebraska committee, of which two represent the colleges in our state that have handbell choirs. I also asked members of the River City Ringers, the community group with which I have the privilege to ring, and the church choirs I direct. I enjoyed reading all of their contributions and will share them with you here.

- John Behnke: For his hymn arrangements.
- Cynthia Dobrinski: She knows how to bring out the best that handbells have to offer. She has the ability to emphasize the unique sounds of handbells throughout her pieces.
- Fred Gramann: Because of the way he can intertwine different tunes into one musical thought.
- Michael Hellman: He writes bell music that is very playable and musical. It is music the audience enjoys. He understands the musical instrument so his pieces reflect that understanding.
- Jason Krug: was mentioned by several students. They have enjoyed several of Krug's recent compositions because they provide a challenge and interest to the college ringers.
- Kevin McChesney: He uses rhythm in a very unique way that brings life to all his music.
- Cathy Moklebus: Her music is exciting, challenging, and each piece is different from the next. You never get bored playing or listening to her extremely beautiful melodies.
- William Payn: His music is very creative and spiritually-connected. He has a proclivity for disconnecting the 7's from the 6's, thereby opening up more space between melody and harmony, which is refreshing. Finally, he blends the tone colors of bells and chimes in unusual ways that tend to take the perceived notion of a bell choir beyond expectation. Most of his music, however, is difficult to play.
- Arnold Sherman: his music is very pleasant to the ear of the listener.

Reading these comments reminded me of the most moving experience I had as a listener. I was attending the National Seminar in Tucson (2009) and had the privilege of hearing the Desert Bells Bronzeworks and the Tucson Symphony perform Arnold Sherman's *Grazioso* (with orchestra) and William Payn's *Heart Melodies*. I was so moved by this performance that I could not even form words to describe it.

As a ringer, I have had many moments when the music has moved me to what I call my 'happy place'. There are too many of these to mention here.

It reinforces to me that it is not just a marvelous composer who puts those notes and techniques on the page for us, but also the talents of the conductors who teach us to reach inside and give life to those notes.

[*Linda Ashley ~ Nebraska State Chair*](#)

2015	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
1/23-26	Master Series 2015	Cincinnati Airport Marriott	Handbell Musicians Of America
2/7	Racing to Ring Various clinicians	Grace UMC Naperville, IL	Illinois
2/21	Handbells, Handbells, Handbells The Agape Ringers	Holy Cross Lutheran Cary, IL	Illinois
2/21	RingFest 2015 Dolan Bayless	Ladue Chapel Presbyterian St Louis, MO	Missouri
2/28	Ring in the Spring 10th Anniversary Lauran Delancy Jason Krug	Church of the Resurrection Leawood, KS	Kansas
4/10	Spring Ring—Director's Workshop David L. Weck	St Mark's UMC Lincoln, NE	Nebraska
4/11	Spring Ring—Ringer's Workshop David L. Weck The Agape Ringers	St Mark's UMC Lincoln, NE	Nebraska
5/2	Resonate! with Rezound! Handbell Ensemble	Faith Lutheran Church Prairie Village, KS	Rezound!
7/15-19	Pinnacle (a National Seminar event)	Hilton Anatole Dallas, TX	Handbell Musicians Of America

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