



Ring in the New Year

by Lori Fenton, Area 8 Chair

I've seen a lot of posts on social media about how January feels like the longest month. After weeks (maybe months) of holiday preparations, followed by the actual holidays and related celebrations, January can seem just downright boring. The wind is colder and the snow is less magical (even though there's more of it). I get it.

But for me, January means the return of a "normal" schedule, which I crave. Every day brings a little more light. While I don't make resolutions, the turning of the calendar also feels like an opportunity to start something new. As a handbell and choral musician, this means new repertoire. I get such joy from jumping into music I've not experienced before or possibly revisiting an old favorite. Some music grabs me from the first few measures while others might take several weeks or months for me to appreciate. And occasionally, there's a piece I hope I never have to perform again.

For those of you that are planning to join us in La Vista this June for United We Ring, I hope you are excited about the repertoire that's been chosen, along with everything else that's been planned. You will find links throughout this issue to all the festival information. Registration will open by January 31st so keep an eye on your email for an announcement! Hope to see you this summer!

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**Missed the last *Quavers*
with all of the Festival Info?
Check out the
Festival Website!**



**Area 8 Festival
June 17-20**

Area 8 Elections Held May 29-June 12, 2026

Chris Peck, Past Chair

The nominating committee, consisting of committee chair Chris Peck, Kristin Kalitowski-Kowal, Pat Latshaw, and Tracy Peterson are excited to present the Area 8 slate of officers. Our bylaws require that each office includes two candidates, and with this slate, we know that Area 8 will be in good hands for the next two years. Elections for Area 8 chair elect, treasurer, and secretary will take place electronically from May 29th through June 12th. More information about the voting process is forthcoming. Voting instructions will be sent to the email address listed on your HMA membership. If your membership has expired, renew [here](#). Please review information about the candidates before the election.



Noah Hartsfield, Chair Elect

Noah began ringing handbells in 2nd grade at First United Methodist Church in Kirksville, Missouri and has been ringing ever since. Over the course of 30+ years of ringing, he has rung with multiple church choirs as well as with the Columbia Handbell Ensemble (CHE), a community handbell ensemble. In his 13-year career with CHE he performed with the ensemble at multiple high profile concert engagements including Area 8 in Topeka, Kansas; Area 1 in Amherst, Massachusetts; and the 2011 National Director's Seminar for the Handbell Musicians of America in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In addition to ringing with CHE, he served as the ensemble's business manager and treasurer for many years.

Noah is currently the Director of Handbells at First Baptist Church in Columbia, Missouri. In this role, he leads the Chancel Bell ensemble as well as drives initiatives to introduce new ringers of all ages to handbell music. He has organized ecumenical mass ring events with the Columbia community and worked with local non-profits on special events. Additionally, he has assisted local churches as a guest clinician and helped new ensembles organize and get started.

Noah is passionate about handbell music and is always looking for ways to introduce handbells to new audiences. He has experience as a large and small ensemble ringer, a handbell soloist, conductor, and is an aspiring composer. Noah has served as a faculty member for handbell festivals and conferences teaching classes on bass bell techniques as well as community ensemble management and organization. In 2024, Noah assisted the Area 8 Board by serving as the local liaison for the Festival Conference in Columbia, Missouri. Beyond handbells, Noah has served on the board and as an officer in non-profits around the Columbia area. Noah holds a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies with concentrations in Psychology, Sociology, and Music from the University of Missouri. In his "day job," Noah is an HR professional and currently works as an HR Recruitment Consultant for the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Missouri.



John Klopp, Chair Elect

I am honored to stand as a candidate for Chair of Area 8 Handbell Musicians of America. My journey with handbells began in the early 1970s at St. John's United Methodist Church in Davenport, Iowa, where I was first introduced to ringing by Mike Farrell. Since then, handbells have been a lifelong passion, and today I continue to serve as a ringer at St. John's, and the director of RiverBend Bronze.

My musical foundation began in band as a trombonist, leading to a Bachelor of Music in Trombone Performance and Music Education from The University of Iowa and a Master of Arts in Music Education with an emphasis on conducting from Northwest Missouri State University (now Truman State University). Over the course of my career, I have taught band in three Iowa school districts, working with students from 5th through 12th grade. These years in education sharpened my skills in planning, rehearsal techniques, and leadership—skills that I now bring to the handbell community.

Since joining RiverBend Bronze in 2018, I have actively participated in the Handbell Musicians of America National Seminar, the Area 8 Festival, and numerous area events. Although I have rung most of my life, RiverBend Bronze deepened my appreciation for the artistry of handbell ringing and inspired me to further develop my skills as both a ringer and conductor. I have even ventured into the realm of solo ringing, expanding my understanding of the instrument and its expressive possibilities.

As Chair, I would bring:

- Experience as both educator and performer, ensuring strong support for ringers and directors alike.
- Commitment to growth and engagement, encouraging participation across all levels of Area 8.
- Passion for collaboration, fostering connections between ensembles, festivals, and individual musicians.

Handbells have given me a lifetime of joy, community, and artistry. I am eager to serve Area 8 by supporting its members, strengthening its programs, and helping our art form continue to thrive.

Elections for Area 8 chair elect, treasurer, and secretary will take place electronically from May 29 through June 12. More information about the voting process is forthcoming. Voting instructions will be sent to the email address listed on your HMA membership.



Laura Kastens, Secretary

Laura came to handbells as a young adult just out of college with a music ed degree (1979) from the University of Illinois in hand. The church she attended (Prospect Heights Community, Prospect Heights, IL) wanted to start a handbell choir so she volunteered to learn as much as she could about the instrument and set about recruiting ringers. That was more than 40 years ago. Since then, she has served as handbell director at Missouri United Methodist Church (Columbia, MO), and her current position at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church (Iowa City, IA) where she directs several ensembles, including an advanced women's ensemble and an advanced adult choir as well as pick-up small ensembles (duets, trios, quartets). She rang with St. Mark's United Methodist church in Bloomington, IN when she lived in that community and was recently a member of RiverBend Bronze based in the Quad Cities. She attended her first Area 8 festival in 2024 and loved the experience!

Since retiring from the University of Iowa she finds herself agreeing with her parents that retirement is busier than her working years. She is a member of the Chamber Singers of Iowa City, an auditioned vocal ensemble, and sings in her church choir at St Andrew Presbyterian Church. She is a long-time member of the international music fraternity Sigma Alpha Iota, and an honorary member of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia. As an active clarinetist she plays in the New Horizons band during the year and with the Cedar Rapids Municipal band during the summer. In her "free time" she takes Senior College classes at the University, ushers at various venues in the Iowa City area, and enjoys reading and walking.

EmJ Jackle-Hugh, Secretary



EmJ began ringing handbells in high school in a church choir in Geneseo, Illinois, and has been ringing ever since. She currently enjoys ringing bass and low bass bells, although she can be talked into ringing upper bells for small group pieces.

EmJ currently plays with Bells In Motion based in Decatur IL and with the choir at Pana First United Methodist Church in Pana, Illinois. She also enjoys playing duets and trios with her family. In 2024, EmJ joined the Area 8 Illinois Committee and helped organize their first state festival post-Covid. EmJ has attended Area 8 Festivals several times and is looking forward to attending her first National Seminar in 2026.

In addition to playing handbells, EmJ plays bassoon, flute, and clarinet. She keeps a busy music schedule playing in several groups throughout central Illinois. EmJ lives in Pana, Illinois, with her spouse and child where she works part time for the local hospital wellness department. In early 2025, EmJ was appointed by the governor to serve on the Illinois Rare Disease Commission. She has over 25 years of experience with various non-profits. In her free time, EmJ enjoys reading and all things Star Trek. Her favorite food group is chocolate.



Julia Cozad-Callighan, Treasurer

Julia has been a bell player since the age of 8 and began ringing in a church choir in her hometown of Bettendorf, IA with her mother. She was immediately drawn to the low bass and has pretty much stayed down there ever since, though she will play smaller bells if you ask nicely.

Julia currently plays in RiverBend Bronze, a community group based in the Quad Cities, where she resides (Rock Island, IL). She also plays in Bells in Motion, based in Decatur, IL. In October of 2023, Julia participated in her first Distinctly Bronze West under the direction of Hart Morris. In August 2024 she attended the International Handbell Symposium in Hamamatsu, Japan.

Outside of handbells, Julia works at an NPR-affiliate radio station and enjoys board games, making costumes and weightlifting. She shares her home with her spouse named Shaun, two guinea pigs named Moose and Bear, and a crested gecko named Gecko.

Julia is excited about the opportunity to be more involved in Area 8. She currently serves as treasurer for a small local organization and welcomes the chance to stretch her skills further.



Nancy Youngman, Treasurer

Nancy has been a handbell choir director since 1984, serving two churches since 1991. She is the founder/artistic director of Bell-issimo, Lincoln, Nebraska's auditioned Community Handbell Choir. Nancy has degrees in Instrumental Music and German, and is retired from Lincoln Public Schools where she taught both subjects. Since 1990, she has been a member of the Nebraska State Handbell Committee and has served 2 four-year terms as State Chair. She served on the Area 8 Board of HMA as Secretary from 1996 - 1998, and is currently the Area 8 Chimes Chair. Nancy has taught at workshops throughout Nebraska and neighboring states, as well as at Area 8 Festivals, and has served as guest clinician for several handbell workshops. This past summer, she was honored to be chosen to teach a class at Pinnacle and is also scheduled to teach this January during HMA's Virtual Winter Workshop. As a ringer, Nancy has taken part in several Area Bronze Fests and is a regular participant in the Bay View Week of Handbells. Nancy's adult children, daughter-in-law, and husband (who is a CPA and could be VERY helpful in the role of Treasurer!) are all handbell ringers.

2026 Silent Auction

This summer at the Area 8 Festival in La Vista, we will once again have an opportunity to participate in raising scholarship funds. Our goal is to raise \$2,000 during this year's auction. You will have two ways to participate in this fundraiser:

Donate items!

To have a successful auction, we need items to auction off. That's where your creativity and generosity come in! Examples of past silent auction items are pictured *right*.

Some ideas include:

- A themed basket representing your state, city, or handbell ensemble
- A piece of handbell music signed by the composer
- A service or skill that would be valuable to handbell musicians
- Music or bell-themed ANYTHING

To submit items, fill out the form found on [this link](#) or look for the Silent Auction item submission button on the festival page [here](#). Please email one photo to be included on our Auction site to me at communications.area8@handbellmusicians.org.

Bid on and win items!

Bidding will begin on June 18 in the morning and will conclude on June 20 in the afternoon. Winning bidders can pick up their auction haul in person at the conclusion of bidding.

If you have any questions or ideas, please contact Communications Chair Janelle Flory Schrock at communications.area8@handbellmusicians.org.



If you or someone you know needs financial assistance, they can apply for a scholarship. For more information about scholarships and the Silent Auction, Check out the [Festival Website!](#)



Area 8 Festival
June 17-20

2026 Iowa City Handbell Festival

by Dick Crusinberry, Iowa Chair

We'd love to see you at the 2026 Iowa City Handbell Festival on March 27-28 at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church! We've got a full day of rehearsals lined up, plus a Friday night reading session, time to socialize with fellow ringers, and a massed ringing on Saturday afternoon.

Our clinician this year is Martha Matthews, who's been involved with handbells for 42 years. She conducts the Kalamazoo Ringers, the longest continuously running community handbell choir in the country, and founded Philadelphia Bronze, an advanced ensemble known for their "elegant energy." Martha has directed programs at Csehy Summer School of Music; Proclamation Presbyterian Church in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania; and Coral Ridge Presbyterian in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Last summer, Martha was a clinician at the Worship and Music conference in Montreat, North Carolina, where she was highly regarded for her instruction and her personal warmth.

On Friday night, Martha will lead a reading session using Laban movement principles. This session will also give you a chance to socialize with other ringers over wine, soft drinks, and light snacks. Saturday includes rehearsals, lunch, and the afternoon massed ringing. Individual ringers, partial handbell choirs, and full choirs are all welcome. You can find all the details, including the repertoire, and registration information [here](#). Registration is \$40/ringer for HMA members for the full event, or \$5/ringer if you only plan to attend Friday night.

If you have any questions, just reach out to me (ia.area8@handbellmusicians.org) or Laura Kastens (lkastens@saintandrew-ic.org). We really hope you can make it this spring!

Festival Repertoire

- Ode to Joy, arr. Krug, Grassy Meadow MGMH350028
- For the Beauty of the Earth, Childers, From the Top MFM20414HB
- Amazing Grace, arr. Eithun, Red River Music MRRBL5056
- Acclamation on Azmon, arr. Sherman, Agape (Hope) MHP2395
- Easter Joy, arr. Helman, Lorenz MLC201652L



Dick Crusinberry
Iowa State Chair



Martha Matthews, Clinician
Iowa City Handbell Festival



Amy Knudsen
Kansas State Chair

*... it is only in
your best interest
to take care of
your instrument ...*

Basic Handbell Maintenance

Amy Knudsen, Kansas Chair

Handbells are expensive, and there are several parts that make up both the moving parts and the non-moving parts of the bell. As someone who is using the instrument, it is only in your best interest to take care of your instrument so you can use them for many, many years.

Set up a maintenance schedule

- Every rehearsal, wipe down the castings of any fingerprints or wet spots, whether those are created by sweat, spittle from gum-chewing, or even snot.
- Every month, go through each handbell and tighten any screws to make sure nothing is loose. Ring each bell to be sure the springs are adjusted properly for a nice ringing motion, which will give you the best sound.
- Every six months, polish the handbells with the proper polish, making sure to not get polish on any of the moving parts.
- On a yearly basis, open your handbell cases to air out for two to three days. This will allow for less tarnish to transfer from the case to the casting. Vacuum the cases and inspect them for damage.

Other things that would be good to know

- Be familiar with the individual parts of the bell. If you have a question for your manufacturer, knowing the exact part you are talking about will help them assist you better.
- Touching the bell with bare hands will cause stains and tarnish on the castings. Consider asking your choir to wear gloves.
- Always use the proper grip. An improper grip can cause excess tension on the handle and cause cracks.
- Never allow the casting to come in contact with another casting, the hard floor or anything else hard. This will cause the castings to get scratched. This will actually start to change the sound of your bell if it happens too often.
- Always line up the clapper to hit the strike point. The manufacturer has identified the best sound for each bell and marked it with a strike point. If your clapper is not hitting the strike point, you might not be getting the best sound.
- Try to use the same voicing on each clapper head – S, M or H on all bells – it will make a more consistent sound throughout your choir. If your clapper heads start to dry out, changing the voicing might not change the sound, and can actually hurt the bell if struck too hard.
- Always use a lint-free cloth when wiping down your handbells. Handbell manufacturers make special cloths for handbell maintenance (Shino polishing cloths), but groups have been discovering that Sunshine polishing cloths work really well too.

Basic Handbell Maintenance, continued

- Do not store your bells in a damp area or stains will occur on the castings. The damp will cause changes to the moving parts of the handbell and leave oxidation in several places and be hard to clean.
- When polishing, use an up and down motion only from the shoulder to the lip of the bell. Moving the cloth around the casting might loosen the handle or the yoke assembly inside the bell.

The picture top left shows the results of several sweat drips that were left to sit inside the casting. They will turn green over time due to oxidation. They can be cleaned, but the casting will always have a 'scar' or 'etching' inside the casting. The other pictures show where parts got wet and what happens to the parts.

If you want to know more, this information came from two websites:

<https://malmark.com/refurbishment/handbell-care/>

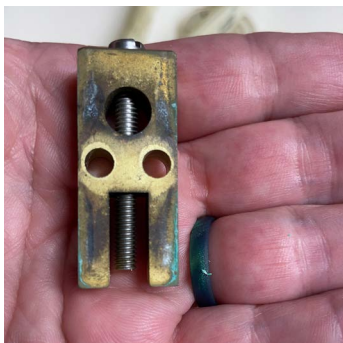
<https://schulmerichbells.com/pages/maintenance-videos>



Sweat marks in a casting



Oxidation on a Schulmerich handle



Oxidation on a Malmark handle block



Old clappers heads



Dirty clapper head



Oxidation around the clapper arm of a Schulmerich assembly

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Byron Jensen
Nebraska State Chair

*That is a
beautiful
vista I'm
looking for!*

La Vista – The View of Giving

by Byron W. Jensen, Nebraska Chair

"La vista" is Spanish for "the view." Imagine the revitalized view of handbells you will have attending this year's Area 8 Festival in La Vista, Nebraska, June 18-20, 2026.

Located in southwestern Omaha, La Vista is easily accessible via Interstate 80 or Highway 275. "United We Ring" pays homage to our country's 250th anniversary and will undoubtedly be as memorable as any semiquincentennial celebration held the following month.

I admit that, although I had already been a member of the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers (now the Handbell Musicians of America) for nearly 20 years, I had never attended a national or regional festival until the Area 8 Festival in Topeka in June 2010. As a music educator, I had attended dozens of workshops, conferences, and festivals, so I knew what to expect when I went to Topeka. What I didn't expect was the opportunity to become more involved with the HMA organization, to be led by outstanding composers and conductors, to gain valuable insights from gifted clinicians in the classroom, walk away with a dozen new titles to share with my choirs back home, and to make friends with ringers who share a passion for the world of handbells. My "vista" on handbells has grown exponentially with every festival.

As I conclude my second and final term as the Nebraska Chair, I volunteered to coordinate vendors for this year's Festival in La Vista. This is something I have never done before, but I'm bolstered by the experience of those who have served in this role. (If you are a vendor and have not heard from me by now, please contact me at ne.area8@handbellmusicians.org.) I mention this new Vista Vendor task for one reason: taking on new challenges gives me a fresh perspective as I develop and refine organizational attributes, interact with a variety of individuals and organizations, and contribute to the Area 8 Festival. I hope my time working with vendors fosters a strong sense of community as we gather in La Vista this June. That is a beautiful vista I'm looking for!

Extra, Extra!

Read all about everything we have planned!

- ★ Registration is open for groups and individual ringers.
- ★ Our repertoire celebrates 250 years of the American experience.

Check out the Festival Website!



**Area 8 Festival
June 17-20**

The Past is Prologue: Rezound! Celebrates 25 Years

Laurie Austin, Area 8 Historian

Picture it: Kansas City, May 2001. After several months of internal conflict and massive turnover, a community ensemble called Kansas City Handbells folded. Undeterred and with a fresh outlook, a core group of people from that ensemble wanted to start over again. They hoped to create a new ringer-led organization united by the desire to create handbell music. And they needed to move quickly because they had made a previous commitment to record several songs as demos for Jeffers Publishers. On June 2, artistic director Paul McKlveen assembled a group of ringers in a leased space at 1201 Walnut, a high-rise building in downtown KC, and with the help of recording engineer Gary Onstad, produced the music. Using handbells loaned by member Jane Ann Peters, they played "All Day Long;" "Come, Worship the King;" "Crown and Scepter;" "Prelude;" "Processional and March;" "Rock of Ages Cleft for Me;" and "Sunlight in My Soul." Jeffers later promoted two of these in their 2002 Spring/Summer catalog, credited to a group called Resound! [Jeffers kindly granted permission to post "All Day Long" by Anna Laura Page, MRW8002, if you want to hear it. [LINK:Resound! \(Rezound!\) Jeffers New Music - Spring and Summer 2002 All Day Long Handbell Demo.mp3](#)]

In the very beginning, the organization toyed with the idea of calling itself NuWave, to celebrate its emancipation from the former KC Handbells. They used the name NuWave to rent the recording space, mostly because they needed to be called something. By June 4 they were meeting to discuss basic organizational logistics, bylaws, appointing officers, rehearsal nights, recruiting personnel, performance wear, and the possibility of using a "stage name," which someone suggested as Resound! Over the next few months, McKlveen convinced the group to change the "s" to a "z" and go by Rezound!. When the official paperwork was filed, the "NuWave" idea was abandoned (turns out the name was already used by an appliance company), and it was simply called Rezound Handbells, Inc.

The first concert season Rezound! performed was Christmas, 2001. Besides the artistic director McKlveen, there were 12 original ringers: Jenn Arth, Emma Carter, Jean Darby, Debbie Gibson, Russell Joy, Lorna Koehnlein, Sara Mulford, Jane Ann Peters, Stacey Reynolds, Beth Royer, Sheri Rutten, and Sara Washington. Two of these members, Russell Joy and Sara Washington, are still members of Rezound! today. Their program included seven songs composed or arranged by McKlveen including three Mannheim Steamroller adaptations, plus Arnold Sherman's "Rudolph," Douglas Wagner's "Frosty," Betty Garree's "Stille Nacht," and Hart Morris' "Ukrainian Bell Carol."

Rehearsals were held every Monday evening for three hours, with a break for snacks and a meeting. Practice space was in a high-rise building in downtown KC offered by Copaken, White, and Blitt—an entire floor in a skyscraper all to themselves. The good part was that the equipment could stay out week to week and not be put away between rehearsals. The bad part was that the freight elevator wouldn't always get to their floor. Loading equipment into a pickup truck in a low-ceilinged parking garage was also hazardous. Legend has it someone got a concussion, or at least a very big bump, from hitting their head on a concrete beam of the garage.



The recording session at 1201 Walnut that launched Rezound!. Left to right: Chuck McKay, unidentified woman, Teresa Farley, Lorna Kemper, Paul McKlveen, sound engineer Gary Onstad, Beth Ann Edwards, Kipp Willnauer, Angela Pack, Jean Darby, Debbie Gibson. Photographer: Sara Washington.

In 2002, the group added new members Lisa Burke (now Mills), Sandy Keeney, Kathy Ford, Amy Pierce, and Cheryl Rogers. Lisa Mills and Kathy Ford continue to ring with Rezound!. In the fall they needed to find a new rehearsal space, which was generously provided by Avondale United Methodist Church. Unfortunately, the equipment needed to be stored in closets after every rehearsal. It was around this time when a donation of light weight tables changed their lives.

From the beginning, the ensemble was performing at least 3-4 concerts per season around the greater Kansas City area, sometimes traveling as far as an hour away. In 2003, Paul McKlveen left the ensemble and Kipp Willnauer became its new artistic director. Under his direction in April 2004, Rezound! was honored to perform at the World Conference of the Community of Christ for an in-person international audience of 5800 people as well as an untold number via worldwide broadcast. It continues to be the largest single live audience the group has ever performed for. Also in spring 2004, Rezound! hosted its first handbell clinic featuring Greig Ashurst as the clinician. The group traveled for the first time further afield to play one song at a showcase concert at the Area 8 festival in Cedar Rapids, IA. At this point, the seeds of what were to come had been planted.

By fall of 2004, the baton was passed to Amy Pierce, who directed the group for the next seven years. It was at this time when the group started playing in the Marjorie Powell Allen Chapel at Powell Botanical Gardens for eight seasons. Almost without fail, it snowed for that show. There was one year where the roads were so bad the truck and trailer got stuck and two of the members were almost run over trying to push it free. The group continued steadily until 2008, which proved to be a big year. First, the group moved its rehearsal space to Platte Woods United Methodist Church. Using the Platte Woods bells for rehearsal meant no longer needing to set-up & take down all of the equipment each week. What a luxury! While Rezound! was still borrowing some bells, the group invested in 5 octaves of chimes and 4.5 octaves of White Chapel bells. Also that year, a chance to perform at the Area 8 festival in Peoria, IL, provided the opportunity to turn the trip into a small tour, stopping to play in St. Louis along the way. The purchase of a trailer soon followed in 2009. That tradition of touring has

continued—not every year, but as circumstances allow. As of today, the group has performed in 16 states: Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Colorado, Indiana, Kentucky, North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming.

For the fall 2011 and spring 2012 semesters, after Amy Pierce's departure, Rezound! tried a new approach. A committee of Lauran Delancy, Kathy Ford, Kimberly Michaelis, and Sara Washington shared the artistic directing duties. In fall 2012, Lauran Delancy officially became Rezound!'s artistic director, its longest-serving so far, a position that she held until the end of 2021.

The 2010s saw rapid growth for Rezound!. This era marked the start of its collaboration with the Kansas City Symphony that lasted for 11 seasons. Tours went further afield, including an important appearance in 2015 at the Handbell Musicians of America's Pinnacle conference in Dallas, TX, after winning a YouTube challenge. HMA also selected Rezound! to appear in concert at the National Seminar held in St. Louis, MO, in 2019. To finish that show, Rezound! played Lauran Delancy's spirited arrangement of "YMCA," which was changed to "HM of A" for the occasion. They also had to move rehearsal spaces twice during this decade, first to Blue Springs First United Methodist Church, then to Lutheran High School in Kansas City. And finally, Rezound! purchased its own set of Schulmerich bells in 2015.

Things seemed to be going very well for the group as 2020 began. The artistic director, who for 19 years had been an unpaid volunteer, was finally paid a small stipend. The group was already making plans for celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2021. A tour to Colorado was anticipated in 2020, and an even bigger tour to the East Coast was planned in 2021.



In 2020, Rezound! did its own version of a certain famous chocolate commercial. Link: [Happy Holidays from Rezound!](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Unfortunately the COVID-19 global pandemic brought all of those plans to a screeching halt. Rezound! did their best to create music virtually, releasing three videos showing members playing separately, then edited together.

The post-COVID world brought several changes with it for Rezound!. When Lauran Delancy left the group in 2022, Janet Carter became its interim director. Joshua Hearn became Rezound!'s next artistic director for the fall of 2022. He stayed for one year, at which point Janet again became the interim director. Janet finally made it official in 2024 and she continues to serve as artistic director today. Again they had to move rehearsal spaces, this time to First Christian Church in Independence. With a permanent artistic director and a new place to call home, the group has resumed its pre-COVID pace. They were honored to be invited to play at the Area 8 festival in Columbia in 2024 and the national Pinnacle conference in Wichita in 2025.



The window crafted by Rezound! at Russell Joy's Stained Glass Studio for the Salvation Army chapel.

Most members of Rezound! will tell you that their favorite performance of the year is the one given at the Salvation Army. This tradition was carried over from the Kansas City Handbells and continues until this day. For 18 out of the last 25 years, Rezound! has gathered at the Salvation Army on an evening in December to play a private concert for the residents who are going through their recovery program. They are gracious hosts, offering a meal and helping to carry all of the equipment in and out of the facility. They are enthusiastic listeners, easily the most engaged audience of the season. And they are willing participants when they are invited to ring the bells for themselves and sing along. In honor of their special connection, members of Rezound!, led by stained glass artist Russell Joy, created a stained glass window for the Salvation Army chapel in 2007. The imagery for the window is a lighthouse, a beacon to those needing the Salvation Army's safe harbor.

Historically, Rezound! has sought out opportunities to create music with other non-handbell musicians. For 11 seasons the Kansas City Symphony invited Rezound! to join them onstage at the Lyric Theatre and Helzberg Hall to perform for their Christmas Festival and corporate concert series. It was during 2004 that Rezound! performed for the first time with a choral group, the Raytown Community Choir. In the years to come, Rezound! collaborated with the William Baker Festival Singers, the Jacomo Chorale, and last season, with the St. Joseph Community Chorus. Rezound!'s membership has also been a source of non-handbell musical talent, using percussion, recorder, flute, pennywhistle, bass, harp, piano, and vocals to augment handbell performances. Additionally, guest musicians have performed with Rezound! on French horn and trumpet.

While Rezound! has primarily focused on its large handbell ensemble performances, a 6.5-octave handbell choir isn't always appropriate; for those occasions, poco Rezound! was born. Playing everything from quartet to septet music with piano accompaniment, the poco group has made appearances at distilleries, rehabilitation centers, schools, weddings, town squares, shopping centers, museums, Christmas teas, religious services, concert series, and holiday light festivals. Throughout its history, members of Rezound! have also come together to perform small ensemble music—one performance in spring of 2023 featured a sextet playing five octaves of bells on Pharell Williams' "Happy."



Rezound! performs at First Christian Church, December 2025.

Rezound!'s mission also includes education and outreach, which has taken a variety of forms over the years. It has participated in numerous local, regional, and national festivals and conferences during its history, and members have served as clinicians at these events. For several years, Rezound! hosted the Show Me Ring (a skill building workshop) and Resonate (an advanced ringer program) to reach out to all aspects of the handbell community in the region. More recently the group has hosted sight-reading workshops and in 2026 will launch its newest short-term ensemble for intermediate-advanced ringers, called echo!. After its concerts, Rezound! invites audience members to come and see the bells and speak to the ringers to ask questions or try ringing for themselves. Outreach has also included visiting schools to do handbell ringing demonstrations and to allow students to participate.

The initiative to record a Rezound! CD began in 2003, when the ensemble learned the hard way that recording in a church located near train tracks was not ideal. Recording sessions in other locations continued over the next three years, until enough songs were ready to produce Rezound!'s first CD, *Rezounding Joy*. Released in 2006, it included a mix of Christmas and non-Christmas music, and sold out in 2011. For the next

two CDs, Rezound! used a couple of studios to make the recordings, releasing *The Sound of Rezound!* in April 2010, and *Christmas with Rezound!* in December of that year. The fourth CD, *Rezounding Impressions*, was released in 2013 and includes some live performances. *Rezounding Impressions'* cover, a work of art featuring two White Chapel bells, was painted by the grandmother of Rezound! member Amy Hall. The group's only DVD was a live performance at Manchester United Methodist Church near St. Louis; it was released in December 2009 and has since sold out. In recent years, as CD and DVD players are becoming a thing of the past, Rezound! is sharing more of its music on its YouTube channel. Rezound! hosted its first live stream performance in December 2019.

To celebrate its 25th year in 2026, Rezound! is looking to its past for inspiration. The April concerts will include a variety of music that has appeared in its programming as far back as 2003, plus new favorites. In June there will be a special gala concert, again focusing on old favorites, and centering on a brand new composition that Rezound! commissioned for the occasion. All 80 living Rezound! members and directors past and present—each of whom helped to create and grow the ensemble we see today—will be invited to take part in the celebration.

We have a new schedule this year that includes an opening dinner and BronzeFest concert as well as a free evening and optional offsite event.

Check out the Festival Website!



**Area 8 Festival
June 17-20**

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Chris Peck

Western IL Rep

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Beth McFarland

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Amy Knudsen

Chimes Chair

Amy Knudsen

Does Your School Qualify?

Area 8 offers a handchime loan program to schools in Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. *Qualifying schools will receive:*

- 3-octave set of handchimes for one semester (approx. 4 months) with teaching materials
- support network and/or mentor
- one-year membership to Handbell Musicians of America.

To check availability of handchimes for loan or to submit an application, please contact Nancy Youngman, Area 8 Chimes Chair.

To learn more about the Chime Loan Program, visit the [Area 8 website](#).

A video featuring Nancy Youngman describes in detail the Area 8 chime loan program and can be found [here](#).

Upcoming Area 8 Events

February 2026

February 27: 7:30 pm St. Olaf Handbell Choir: Winter Wonder Tour
St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Eden Prairie, Minnesota

February 28: 7:30 pm St. Olaf Handbell Choir: Winter Wonder Tour
Plymouth Congregational Church, Des Moines, Iowa

February 29: 7:30 pm St. Olaf Handbell Choir: Winter Wonder Tour
Grinnell United Methodist Church, Grinnell, Iowa

March 2026

March 1: 4:00 pm The Agape Ringers Concert
First Congregational Church of Western Springs, Western Springs, Illinois

March 8: 4:00 pm The Agape Ringers Concert
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Downers Grove, Illinois

March 12: 4:00 pm The Agape Ringers Concert
Oswego Presbyterian Church, Oswego, Illinois

March 27: 6:30 pm Reading Session with Martha Matthews
Iowa City Handbell Festival
St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, Iowa City, Iowa

March 28: 8:40 am - 4:30 pm Iowa City Handbell Festival with Martha Matthews
St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, Iowa City, Iowa

March 30: 3:00 pm Bells of the Lakes Spring Concert
Faith Lutheran Church, Coon Rapids, Minnesota

April 2026

April 12: 4:00 pm The Agape Ringers Concert
Oswego Presbyterian Church, Oswego, Illinois

April 18: 3:00 pm St. Andrew Presbyterian Church
Handbell Choirs: Melodious Harmonies Concert
St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, Iowa City, Iowa

April 24: 7:00 pm Rezound! Spring Concert
Life Connection Church, Independence, Missouri

April 25: 7:00 pm Rezound! Spring Concert
Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Prairie Village, Kansas

April 26: 3:00 pm Rezound! Spring Concert
North Oak Christian Church, Kansas City, Missouri

May 2026

May 1: 7:00 pm River City Ringers, America at 250: A Musical Journey
All Saints Episcopal Church, Omaha, Nebraska

May 2: 7:00 pm River City Ringers, America at 250: A Musical Journey
St. Timothys Lutheran Church, Omaha, Nebraska

May 2: 7:00 pm Bells in Motion Presents: Rock Around the Clock
Faith Lutheran Church, O'Fallon, Illinois

Publishing in Quavers

4 publications per year,
published once each season.

Articles

Articles are due on the
10th day of January, April,
July, and October.

Advertising

[Click here](#) for more details
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6 ads for the price of 5!
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Events & Concerts

must be submitted by the
25th of January, April, July,
and October to be included
in *Quavers*. To submit
a concert or event for
inclusion, click [here](#) or
go to the A8 Website,
Events page.

Questions?

Please send all questions
and comments about
this and future *Quavers*
publications to Beth Ann
Edwards, Editor:
[newslettereditor.area8@
handbellmusicians.org](mailto:newslettereditor.area8@handbellmusicians.org)

*Please check
websites for
the most
up-to-date
calendar
and event
information.*

Upcoming Events, continued

May 3: 4:00 pm Bells in Motion Presents: Rock Around the Clock
St. James Lutheran Church, Vandalia, Illinois

May 3: 4:00 pm River City Ringers, America at 250: A Musical Journey
Trinity Lutheran Church, Omaha, Nebraska

May 17: 4:00 pm The Agape Ringers Concert
Spring Creek United Church of Christ, Rockford, Illinois

May 29: 7:00 pm Des Moines Concert Handbells Spring Concert
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Urbandale, Iowa

May 30: 7:00 pm Des Moines Concert Handbells Spring Concert
Plymouth Congregational Church, Des Moines, Iowa

June 2026

June 6: 6:00 pm Rezound! 25th Anniversary Concert
The Auditorium at Woodneath Library Center
8900 NE Flintlock Road, Kansas City, MO, 64157

June 15: 4:00 pm The Raleigh Ringers in Concert
Bicknell Family Center for the Arts, Pittsburg, Kansas

June 17-20: Area 8 Festival, including ringing, seminars, classes, and concerts
La Vista Conference Center, La Vista, Nebraska

National Events

Visit <https://handbellmusicians.org/events/> for more information

February 26 - March 1, 2026

Crescendo and Distinctly Bronze East, New Bern, North Carolina

July 9-11, 2026

Conducting Masterclass, Cincinnati, Ohio

July 14-18, 2026

National Seminar, Sharonville, Ohio

August 3-11, 2026

International Handbell Symposium, Aberdeen, Scotland

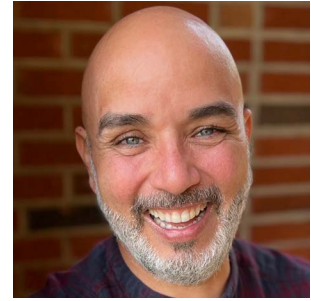
August 17-19, 2026

Solo Ringing Masterclass, Charlotte, North Carolina

August 20-22, 2026

Into the Forest, Charlotte, North Carolina

Learn more about our Festival Clinicians!



Carlos E. Rivera Aponte

Chair-Elect, Area 4



Kathryn Jurado

President-Elect,
Handbell Musicians of America

Visit the

Festival Website!



**Area 8 Festival
June 17-20**