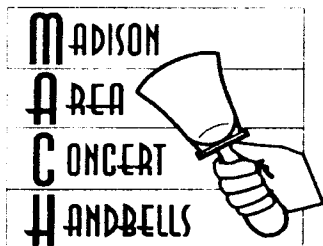


Madison Area Concert Handbells *Messenger*

Spring 2002



www.madisonhandbells.org



Dancing Bells—MACH Spring Concerts

Our Spring concerts, entitled "Dancing Bells," will provide musical treats for the whole family. The opening piece, *Let Them All Dance*, has a mesmerizing effect as repeated rhythms and expanding tunes build layer upon layer of sound. A stately *Allemande* follows and then you can expect to hear a great variety of dance styles and effects. Samba, anyone? That would be found in the carefree Latin rhythms of *Brazil*. Remember Carmen's flirtatious ways in the opera of the same name? You'll find her flamboyance in *Gypsy Dance*. *Pizzicato Polka* will transport you to the grand era of the Viennese waltz, and the piercing chromatics of *Sabre Dance* are reminiscent of the steely clash of Russian blades. These are just a few of the pieces that are programmed for your pleasure. After the dances, the concert will close with two patriotic numbers that include the audience. Come for a relaxing and enjoyable evening as our golden bells set your spirits dancing!

"Dancing Bells"

7:30 p.m. Friday, May 3
Covenant Presbyterian Church
326 South Segoe Road

7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 4
Asbury Methodist Church
6101 University Avenue



Admission: \$10 for adults, \$5 ages 16 and under;
available at Borders Book Stores or at the door

Madison Area Concert Handbells
(608) 271-3514
www.madisonhandbells.org

MACH Receives an Invitation to Perform

MACH has been invited to play the opening concert of the Area VII Festival Conference in La Crosse on Thursday, June 27, at 6:30 pm. The concert will serve to simultaneously close the Young Ringers section of the Conference.

The Area VII Festival Conference will be held from Thursday, June 27, to

Sunday, June 30, and will encompass as many as 100 bell choirs from five states. Several MACH ringers will attend the entire conference, as well as performing in the opening concert.



MACH Is Branching Out

For the first five years of its existence, MACH has performed mostly in the Madison area, but has dreamed of the big time--or at least of performing over a wider area of Wisconsin. This spring, we are taking some steps in that direction.

Through a friend, we located the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts, a new facility in Brookfield, Wisconsin, near Milwaukee. The Wilson Center is a privately funded cultural arts organization which facilitates performance of music, theater, and dance, plus exhibition of visual arts, and arts education. The new facility, which opened in February 2002, includes space for performance and exhibition, as well as classroom space. Partners, including the Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee Ballet, Wisconsin Conservatory of Music, and the Elmbrook school district, will sponsor individual and group classes as well as performing artists.

MACH will present its "Dancing Bells" program at the Wilson Center on Saturday, May 18, at 7:30 p.m., in the performance studio. Tickets for this concert may be purchased through the Wilson Center box office in advance, or on the day of the concert. The Wilson Center is located at Mitchell Park, 19805 West Capitol Drive, Brookfield. For information, directions, or tickets, contact the Wilson Center at 262-791-9470, or check our web site, www.madisonhandbells.org, under "Performances."

How Do I Do That?

If you have attended a handbell concert or heard a bell choir at church, you may have seen ringers employing techniques that create a very short sound,. At the MACH concerts this spring, be sure to look and listen for the pluck and thumb-damp, just a few of the techniques, or articulations, highlighted in various pieces. Both of these articulations allow the ringer to create a short, staccato note.

One way to make this sound is by plucking the bell. In this instance, the bell is left on the table while the ringer holds the clapper between the thumb and middle or index finger, pulls the clapper toward the top of the bell, and throws the clapper toward the table. Two pieces in MACH's spring concerts, *Pizzicato Polka* and *Anitra's Dance*, feature ringers plucking at high speeds.

Another way to create this short sound is with a thumb-damp. Unlike the pluck, the bell is held in the hand while thumb damping. Because of the difficulty in reaching inside the smaller bells to pluck, thumb damping is sometimes used as an alternative to plucking. However, composers often specify thumb damping as the articulation of choice, as you will notice in *Gypsy Song*. For the smaller bells, ringers use their thumb to stop the sound. The lower bells require that a larger portion of the hand be placed on the bell to attain the same shortness of sound as using a thumb on the higher bells. Whether thumb damping or plucking, the effect is a short, staccato sound that adds character to the music. In addition to the pieces mentioned, the thumb damp and pluck can be heard intermittently throughout many of the other selections.

Auditions

If you are interested in auditioning for MACH, please contact MACH's Music Director at 271-3514 to set up an audition. The audition committee asks for a demonstration of handbell techniques, sightreading ability, and general music knowledge.

Auditions will be held by appointment in May and June.

New MACH CDs For Purchase

We are pleased to add two new CDs this spring to the array of MACH CDs available for purchase: *Christmas Bells 2000* includes music by bells and chimes with guest artists on violin, harp and organ. In addition, MACH's own singers add beauty to *Winds through the Olive Trees* and *The Snow Lay On the Ground*, and our handbell ensemble gives an exciting performance of a *Russian Christmas Celebration*. Among other pieces sure to bring out the Christmas spirit in listeners are *O Holy Night*, *Go Tell It On the Mountain*, and *Up On the Housetop*. Santa's gifts for children are epitomized by fun-filled arrangements of *The Ball* and *Chattanooga Choo-Choo*. This CD will make a wonderful gift for yourself or others to hear again and again at holiday time!

All Creation Rings was the theme for our Spring 2001 concert. In this CD, you'll hear the graceful sound of chimes imitating *The Swan (Carnival of the Animals)*, the ragtime rhythms of *Gladiolus* and *Maple Leaf Rag*, the serenity of an *Unclouded Day*, and the frenzy and force of *The Tempest* as a storm grows in power. *Bells-A-Poppin'* elicits laughs from the audience when the Lone Ranger rides across the stage and later three of our members kick up their heels to Can-Can music! This CD provides delightful diversions in sound for its listeners.

The release of these two CDs is especially meaningful to MACH for these were the last CDs produced by our dear friend and supporter, Dr. Thomas Franklin Heighway. After several months in and out of the hospital and rehabilitation centers, Dr. Heighway passed away in February of this year. He had faithfully recorded, edited, reproduced, and designed the jackets and discs for our CDs since 1998. A man of great generosity, patience, and attentiveness to detail, Dr. Heighway will be sorely missed. He leaves us with wonderful musical memories of times past.

Meet an Area Choir: First Methodist Handbell Choir

by Sally Meredith, with thanks to Sylvia Green and Marjorie Meixner

The idea for the handbell choir at First United Methodist Church in Madison was germinated in the mind of long time music director Dale Gilbert about 1980, and helped along by an anonymous donation of 3 octaves of handbells. Gilbert recruited David Maruska, a university student who had previously played bells, to be the organizer and first director. The handbell choir of First Baptist Church, led by Vance Nelson, was invited to play a worship service in March 1981 to inspire support and to help recruit ringers. On Easter Sunday, April 19, 1981, eight ringers inaugurated the new choir, playing two octaves of bells. In January 1982, Maruska left Madison to pursue graduate study.

In the fall of 1982, after several months' hiatus, the choir was reorganized under the leadership of Don Green, a church member and Madison schools' band director. Under Green's leadership, the choir began contributing regularly to church services and playing at nearby retirement centers, for weddings, and Sunday afternoon concerts. An early performance highlight was an appearance with the Madison Opera in a production of Britten's "Noye's Fludde" in September 1986.

The choir has sponsored/hosted traveling choirs from Westminster Choir College, the Twin Cities and Japan. Money raised at these events provided resources for a skills workshop for ringers, and for additional equipment.

In 1999, Scott Foss, the current music director, assumed leadership of the bell choir. Recent highlights include commissioning a bell arrangement by Kevin McChesney in honor of the ministry of the retiring former pastor.

Meet a New Ringer

Karen Paschke was accepted into MACH in January 2002. She became fascinated with handbells at the age of three; her church handbell director allowed her to ring one of the smallest bells after a performance. When she was ten she began to play in her church handbell choir under the same director. She played year round until she went to college at the University of Illinois. After six years of teaching high school mathematics, she moved to Madison to pursue her Master's Degree and discovered MACH. Karen's hobbies include skiing and travel.

In addition, Madison Area Concert Handbells welcomes back Tricia Suess who first played with MACH as a charter member in 1997.

Future Concert Dates:

MACH's *Bells of Christmas* Concerts are scheduled for December 14 (7:30 p.m.) at Asbury Methodist Church and December 15 (3 p.m.) at Christ Presbyterian Church.

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



HOW TO CONTACT US

- ✉ Write to *P.O. Box 14658, Madison, WI 53714-0658*
- ☎ Call our Director, Dr. Susan Udell, at *271-3514*

We're on the Web!
www.madisonhandbells.org

We've Come a Long Way!

Five years ago, MACH gave its first Bells of Christmas concert — to a standing-room-only audience in Asbury Methodist Church's former sanctuary. Since that time, we've presented an average of fifteen concerts a year, entertaining at such diverse places as on the Capitol Square for Wisconsin's Sesquicentennial celebration, the Elvehjem Museum of Art, Jonathan Overby's WHA radio show, *Higher Ground*, and the Civic Center with the Madison Symphony Orchestra. We look forward to playing again with MSO in December 2002.

MACH began as an idea — that some ringers might enjoy playing more challenging music than is generally possible in church bell choirs. The latter usually have a wide range of talents, ideally suited for their purpose of worship. With an auditioned community choir, not only could music include advanced levels of notation and technology, it also could include wonderful secular pieces that have been composed or arranged for handbells. In addition, such a choir could contribute to the community by playing at various events and for special audiences that might not have other opportunities for musical enrichment.

In May 1997, an invitation to help form MACH was issued by Asbury's music director (now retired) Susan Udell. Julie Gray, Susan Horein and Tricia Kalus (Suess) responded. That summer, along with Alice Teter, they mapped out organizational procedures, wrote by-laws, incorporated, and applied for non-profit status. Advertisements brought many ringers to auditions and fifteen charter members were chosen. Over time, changes in occupations and family demands have caused changes in our ringers, but loyalty has remained strong for the camaraderie and challenges that MACH membership affords. You'll find many past members in the audience, cheering us on as they know the intensive rehearsals that have taken place in preparation for full concerts.

In addition to our ticketed concerts this Spring, the full choir will perform at Oakwood Village East and at the Area VII Handbell Festival in LaCrosse and an ensemble will provide music for a wedding in July.

We now invite you to attend and enjoy the entertainment that the Madison Area Concert Handbells will present at its Spring concerts May 3 and 4 in Madison and May 18 in Milwaukee.