

Vol. 8, No. 3
July, 2021



Houston Bronze Ensemble
EXPECT EXCELLENCE

Dedicated to HandBell Excellence
Ensuring the future of handbells for ringers and listeners

HOUSTON BRONZE ENSEMBLE

2021 Concerts and Performances

While we currently have venues and dates scheduled for the fall, please know that because of Covid this can change as we move through the season. Please watch our Facebook page and our website for the latest information.

HBE Christmas Concerts

Friday, December 3, 2021 7:00 PM
Tomball United Methodist Church
1603 Baker Dr. Tomball, TX 77375

Saturday, December 4, 2021 7:30 PM
MATCH
Midtown Arts and Theatre Center Houston
3400 Main St. Houston, TX 77002

Epiphany Services
Sunday, January 9, 2022 8:15 AM and
10:50 AM
Trinity Downtown Lutheran Church
800 Houston Avenue Houston, TX

Check out our [YouTube](#) Channel.

Houston Bronze Ensemble is currently scheduling events for 2021– 2022 and beyond
To schedule a concert, contact us at:

P.O. Box 541741
Houston, TX 77254
Phone: 1-866-908-RING (7464)

www.houstonbronze.com

Email:

info@houstonbronze.com
eventcoordinator@houstonbronze.com



Photo by [Danilo Alves](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Hear ye! Hear ye! Christmas is Coming!

On August 10, 2021 members of Houston Bronze will gather for the first time for the fall and begin work on the music for the Christmas season. We welcome two new members to the ensemble and we can't wait to get started. We hope you will start making your plans to be with us in December.

If you are planning a holiday party or holiday event and would like bells to be a part of your celebration, don't forget that Houston Bronze Celebration Ringers are available as well. [HBE Celebration Ringers](#) is a group of 6-8 ringers who play without tables. Our footprint is much smaller making us perfect for holiday parties, tree lighting ceremonies, and other community events. For more information about Celebration Ringers contact us at:

eventcoordinator@houstonbronze.com



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The Passing of the Torch

by Linda Ellison

In August, Lorna Noack will pass on to Jimmy Clark the challenges of leading Houston Bronze Ensemble into another chapter. We look forward to new beginnings under Jimmy's leadership but will miss her gentle but very effective presence on the board. Lorna became president of HBE in August of 2016. At the first planning meeting for that new board she read a quote by Max Depree, "The question is 'Who do we **intend** to be?' not 'What are we going to do?'" As we went through that first meeting, the word EXCELLENCE drove us as we dreamed and planned. She kept that word in our sites for all the years she served as president. That intent has helped us to move toward excellence. One of our goals was to take handbells into the Houston community and beyond. Lorna is a teacher and she led us to make education a focus of the ensemble. With her leadership, we developed our [Build a Bell Workshop](#) program, began to offer Summer Ring, offered 12 scholarships to [College Ring-In](#) participants and began to have open rehearsals. We also worked with several schools taking a workshop to Slocum ISD and playing for students from kindergarten to high school. For many of them this was a first time to see bells and we gave most of the students the opportunity to play them as well. We served as a mentor to two high schools, inviting them to share the concert stage with us for our spring concert. We also began what has become a long lasting relationship with the Brookwood Community, serving as a mentor to their bell choir. Until Covid, we were there each week for a rehearsal and can't wait to get back to our friends at Brookwood. They also shared the stage with us at two of our spring concerts and we played the National Anthem together at an Astros game. Houston Bronze wishes to thank Lorna for all she did to help us move toward what we intend to be, excellent. Perhaps one can never truly achieve excellence for there is always more to be done. Her leadership helped us all to understand "Excellence is never an accident: it is the result of high **intention**, sincere effort, intelligent direction, skillful execution, and the vision to see obstacles as opportunities." -Aristotle



Houston Bronze would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who attended our concert in May. You were a fantastic audience. We always look forward to performing as a part of Trinity Klein's concert series. We thank them for having us once again and for all that they did to make this concert a success. Also a big thank you to Concordia High School for joining us at our concert this year. They were fantastic. Hope to see you all in December.



On May 25, 2021, HBE held auditions for the Fall 2021 Season. We hope you will consider joining us. When the evening was over we invited two people to join our Houston Bronze family.

Congratulations to Rachel Kortze and Sarah Killingsworth. We are looking forward to ringing with them in the fall.

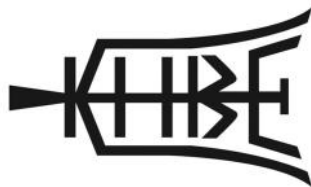
Following are the names of your Houston Bronze Ensemble for the fall 2021 season: Kathy Beaird, Jimmy Clark, Jerry Conry, Rachel Kortze, DruEllen Duncan, Linda Ellison, Ben Harris, J. Marvin Havard, Sarah Killingsworth, Diana Montgomery, Sarah Moore, LeAnn Tromanhauser, Wilson Van Tine.

We hope to see you in the audience at Christmas.

Houston Bronze Ensemble
EXPECT EXCELLENCE

Build a Bell Workshop

<http://houstonbronze.com/build-a-bell-workshop.html>



Due to Covid restrictions, it has been decided to not hold our Summer Ring program this summer. It is our sincere hope that by summer, 2022, we can return to hosting this event. It has become one of our favorites.

Build a Bell Workshop

Is your ensemble going to begin ringing again this fall after a long break from ringing due to COVID? If so, you may want to consider building a workshop for your ensemble. There is no need to pack up your bells and travel because we come to you. Plan a longer Saturday workshop or even just a regular rehearsal time workshop. Choose from topics such as malleting, four in hand, battery bells, rhythms, bell maintenance, problem solving, marking your music, and weaving. Houston Bronze offers these workshops free of charge. If you are interested in talking to us about a workshop for your ensemble, please contact us at <http://houstonbronze.com/build-a-bell-workshop.html>

Comments from past workshops:

- Great skills training with knowledgeable and kind teachers.
- Working out of comfort zone, that's a good thing
- Learned proper malleting techniques.
- Liked dividing the techniques into sections.
- Enjoyed work on dynamics.
- I better understand malleting and thumb damping.
- I feel more confident.
- Wasn't long enough
- Liked the individual attention.
- Friendly, knowledgeable, positive approach.

Thank you to Trinity Downtown Lutheran Church for providing us with rehearsal space and storage space. We are forever grateful to you.





Ringling During COVID

by Jimmy Clark

The 2020-2021 ringing year is complete, and it sure was a crazy one! This time last year we were starting to think about how Houston Bronze Ensemble could return to ringing in the fall. The best case scenario was that we would be able to have at least one Christmas concert. The worst case scenario was not being able to have a concert, but at least have a few weeks making music together again as an ensemble. Luckily we were able to have one live Christmas concert and record another version for our [YouTube channel](#). This past spring we continued the COVID safety precautions we implemented in the fall: ringers did not change positions or share bells, and one ringer to a table. We performed one live concert which will be on our YouTube channel soon. For now you can view it on the [Trinity Klein YouTube](#) channel. Planning for the next ringing year will start soon. Bill Nave, our artistic director, is starting to finalize the upcoming Christmas program. We will welcome two new ringers to the ensemble, and look forward to ringing at some of our favorite locations in December. Our [Celebration Ringers](#) small ensemble will be available to help your club, community group, or family ring in the Christmas season. As a full ensemble we will return to ringing like we did before the pandemic. We will dust off our Petit and Fritsen bells, silver melody bells, and some of the heavy metal our audiences have come to expect during our concerts. Check out our Facebook page and our website for upcoming concert dates. We hope to see you there!

Planning Meeting for 2021-2022

The incoming Houston Bronze Board held their first meeting to begin planning our new ringing season. We talked about the ifs, ands, buts, and the who, what, where, how and when of the new season. We are excited to get back to ringing in a more normal way. New concert dates were confirmed and we will be ready to begin in August. We are excited that we can begin to offer once again Build a Bell Workshop and hopefully will be able add some of those gigs we looked forward to each year.





My Season on the Bass Chimes

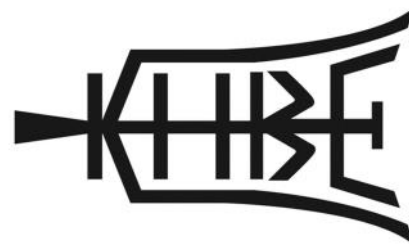
When I joined HBE in January of 2016 I had only seen Malmark bass Choirchimes played in concert. No bell choir or group I rang with owned bass chimes. How excited I was to learn I was assigned to ring them in several pieces we were playing that season. After receiving a how-to from Ben on striking and damping I jumped right in. What a rude awakening I had when I realized they're not as easy to play as it looks. That striking and damping thing can be like rubbing your belly and patting your head until you get the hang of it. And reading those lower ledger lines ... thank you, Jerry, for helping me find my notes! I quickly fell in love with playing the bass chimes, happy to see my name next to the bass chimes when we got our assignments at the beginning of each new bell season.

HBE made the decision to get back to ringing during the COVID pandemic. The Board established stringent protocols and ringers were given the option to ring or not. We rang the fall using just the specific bells and chimes assigned to us. For the spring season we had picked up an additional ringer so were able to add the bass chimes to the mix. Since we were still not changing bell positions and ringing only the bells assigned, Bill asked if I would play the bass chimes. Of course, I said yes!

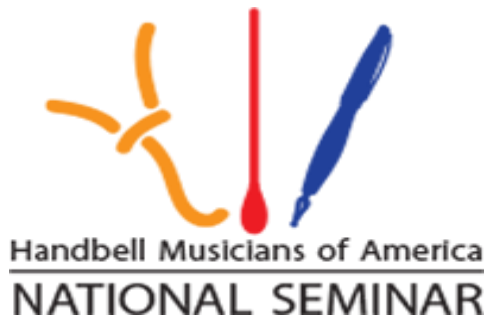
One of the protocols established to allow us to come together to was keeping to the recommended 6 feet distance apart. Instead of two ringers to a table each ringer had a full table to themselves. Because of this we had to move to a larger rehearsal space. In our regular rehearsal room the bass chimes don't have much of an impact because the sound really has nowhere to go. What a wonderful surprise it was to find we could actually hear ... and feel ... the resonance of the chimes during rehearsals.

The bass Choirchimes added so much to each of the pieces we rang this past spring, especially since we weren't ringing the lowest bass bells except in a few instances. My favorite piece was Sandra Eithun's arrangement of "What a Wonderful World". One could close their eyes and picture the string bass being plucked or imagine the sound of the bass trombone. I played baritone saxophone in high school concert and jazz band. I've always greatly appreciated the sustaining deep tones and weightiness of bass instruments. I guess that's where my love for the Malmark bass Choirchimes comes from.

I was asked if I wanted to continue ringing just the bass chimes for our upcoming fall season. I hesitated before answering. As much as I loved my season on the bass chimes, I have really missed having bells in hand. I want to play the bass chimes as often as assigned, but my greatest love will always be handbells. How lucky I am to get to ring in an ensemble that provides the opportunity to do both!



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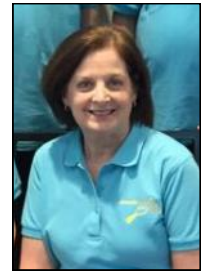
Jerry



Wilson



Jimmy



Diana

When Handbell Musicians of America seminar opens on July 13, 2021 in Phoenix, Arizona, four members of Houston Bronze will be there ringing, attending classes and concerts, and talking with others who share their passion for all things bells. Each was asked what they were looking forward to.

- Jerry writes: "I'm most looking forward to attending the concerts and hearing the different ensembles. It's great to hear new or unfamiliar music performed live and it's also interesting to hear pieces I know well and experience the various interpretations by different performers. As an added bonus I travelled to Phoenix monthly for six years beginning in 2006 and I still know many people in the area so it will be great to have the opportunity to visit and catch up with some of them."
- Wilson is looking forward to participating in ringing tracks. He will spend the seminar with bells in hand.
- Jimmy writes "I'm looking forward to traveling to Phoenix and participating in the ringing tracks. I will definitely check out the groups performing and watching our College Ring-In scholarship winner Nikki Evans perform as a solo ringer."
- Diana writes: "I am looking forward to going to National Seminar. Following Wilson's lead, I signed up to ring in both the intermediate and advanced tracks. This will give me additional opportunities to ring rather than direct. I am also looking forward to seeing/meeting other ringers, including several officers of Area 9, whom I've only met via RingCentral to-date. I am not looking forward to excessively high temperatures, so hope it cools off a bit!"

We wish them all a safe trip and look forward to hearing all about their adventures upon their return.



CLEAN-UP TIME



June 19, 2021 was clean up day at Trinity Downtown Lutheran Church where we rehearse and store all of our equipment. After having our things in two spaces due to Covid, we consolidated once again and cleaned. After the final concert, rehearsal, and auditions we threw stuff in the storage space, said "Bless this Mess!" and closed the door. To clean up, we took most everything out of the room, vacuumed, and put things back with the general outline of what we will need this year. The foams were all stripped so that the covers can be washed and handles repaired. It felt good to see it all clean. Thank you to Wilson, Kathy, Jerry, Linda, and Jimmy for being there to get us ready for the fall.



Concordia Lutheran High School



Houston Bronze Ensemble

Bill Nave, Artistic Director

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO!

Trinity Klein Lutheran Church

Guest Artist:

Concordia Lutheran High School

Margaret Harris, Director

5201 Spring Cypress Road Spring, Tx

Date: May 23, 2021 Time: 4:00 pm

Free Concert

Concert will be live streamed.



The Houston Bronze Ensemble

Houston Bronze Ensemble is currently scheduling events for 2021 and beyond. If you are interested in hosting the entire ensemble or perhaps just a small group for a full concert, party or wedding, please get in touch with us at:

P.O. Box 541741
Houston, TX 77254

Phone: 1-866-908-RING (7464)
www.houstonbronze.com

Email:
info@houstonbronze.com
eventcoordinator@houstonbronze.com

Houston Bronze Ensemble also loves conducting workshops for handbell organizations throughout the Houston area. We would love to do one for your group. <http://houstonbronze.com/build-a-bell-workshop.html>



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About the Houston Bronze Ensemble

The Houston Bronze Ensemble is a professional, auditioned, handbell ensemble made up of musicians from the greater Houston area. Known as Houston's premier handbell choir, the ensemble performs regular concerts in the winter and spring as well as at community events, regional and national handbell events, weddings, and private parties. In 2014 HBE had the honor of performing with the Houston Symphony. The group plays a wide variety of musical genres, always with the goal of EXCELLENCE.

Founded in 1988, Houston Bronze Ensemble was started as an avenue for Houston area handbell directors to have a place to ring. A lunchtime meeting with Jeff Weiss, Christine Anderson and Hart Morris in attendance and with only a napkin to write the names of those who might be interested is what started it all. The rest, as they say, is history. In the fall of 1988, Hart Morris became the first director of Houston Bronze. After Hart moved to Tennessee, the ensemble rang under the direction of Margaret R. Tucker. In the 1995 season, the group rang ensemble style with various ringers, including G.W. Shepherd, Andrew Bowen, and David VanderMeer, directing the ensemble. Conductors since then have included David VanderMeer, Dolan Bayless, Ben Harris, Ruth Seiwel and James Roberts. Bill Nave was appointed the artistic director in August, 2014.

Houston Bronze recognizes the importance of investing in the future of handbell ringing. We offer a variety of educational opportunities designed to meet the unique needs of churches and schools who wish to build or improve their handbell program. Workshops designed to meet the specific needs of a choir, mini concerts, and petting zoos are a sample of what we provide to the Houston area handbell community. Houston Bronze also offers scholarships to students wishing to attend College Ring-In, an event sponsored by Handbell Musicians of America.

Whether it is through a concert, playing at your wedding, party, private or community event, conducting a workshop for your ensemble, or presenting an educational program for your school, we would love to share our art with you! Please look at our website, www.houstonbronze.com for more information about our group and what we offer. Feel free to contact us at info@houstonbronze.com with any questions or requests. We look forward to working with you to provide handbell excellence to meet your needs!



Thank you!

Houston Bronze Ensemble would like to thank our contributors for their donations during this past year. In the past you have helped us to send our director to a national handbell event, purchase new music and equipment, offer scholarships to students to attend College Ring-In, and so much more. It is because of you that we are able to continue to bring you our dedication to

EXCELLENCE.

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