

Vol. 9, No. 1  
January, 2022



Houston Bronze Ensemble  
**EXPECT EXCELLENCE**

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

## HOUSTON BRONZE ENSEMBLE

### 2022 Concerts and Performances

While we currently have venues and dates scheduled for the spring, 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.

**Friday, May 20, 2022 7:30 PM**

MATCH

Midtown Arts and Theatre Center Houston

3400 Main St. Houston, TX 77002

Ticketed concert

**Sunday, May 22, 2022 4:00 PM**

Trinity Klein Lutheran Church

5201 Spring Cypress Rd. Spring, TX 77379

Free concert

Houston Bronze Ensemble is currently scheduling events for 2022 and beyond

To schedule a concert, contact us at:

**Email:**

[www.houstonbronze.com](http://www.houstonbronze.com)

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

[info@houstonbronze.com](mailto:info@houstonbronze.com)  
[eventcoordinator@houstonbronze.com](mailto:eventcoordinator@houstonbronze.com)



Wine and cheese, burgers and fries, ice cream and cake are traditional pairings in the food world. Now throw in the dill pickle—definitely a spare. Bill, our artistic director, is creating a concert of pieces in which some work together as a pair but he then adds the dill pickle, a piece that will stand alone. We are going to have some fun this semester within the ensemble figuring out the pairs and spares. You may wish to join in the game as well as we move through the season. Join us on Facebook. We will list our repertoire in early January and you can begin to make your pairings!



**LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!!**

Check out our [YouTube](#) Channel.



*“Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack, a crack in everything  
That’s how the light gets in.”  
—Leonard Cohen*

We want to take this opportunity to send each of you best wishes for a new year filled with light, health and joy. We have already experienced that crack referred to in the quote above as we begin a new year. We usually take this opportunity in the year to say thank you to Trinity Downtown Lutheran Church by offering our music for their Epiphany Services. However, due to some illnesses within the group, we were forced to cancel that performance. Playing for them is something we look forward to each year as a small way to thank them for all they do, not just for us, but for the community.



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

## Your Houston Bronze Ensemble

As our Christmas season came to a close HBE held auditions for new members of the ensemble. We are happy to welcome Barbara Smith into the ensemble. Below is your spring 2022 Houston Bronze Ensemble.

Kathy Beaird, Jimmy Clark, Jerry Conry, Rachel Kortze, DruEllen Duncan, Linda Ellison, Ben Harris, Marvin Havard, Sarah Killingsworth, Diana Montgomery, Karen Ridgway, Barbara Smith and Wilson Van Tine.



## *Houston Bronze “Christmas Light”*

We want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who supported us by attending our concerts in December. We had two fabulous concerts. Tomball UMC provided a beautiful setting for our first concert. We had over 230 people in attendance. Our second concert was held at MATCH. We were excited to have 110 people in attendance. It was 2019, two years ago, that we last held “normal “ concerts in these two venues. It was so good to be back. We were fortunate to have Kim Knudsen join us on flute, playing flute, Irish flute and jingle bells. She made our night enchanting with her elegant playing. Once again we offered beautiful poinsettias grown by our friends at Brookwood. Below are some comments left by people who attended. The first one is a comment from one of the founders of Houston Bronze. It was almost 33 years ago that Jeff Weiss heard the Dallas Handbell Ensemble conducted by David Davidson. When he returned to Houston he gathered friends together and the rest is history.

- *The Christmas program at the MATCH by the Houston Bronze was absolutely amazing. My wife and I enjoyed the entire program. The playing was exceptional and so musical, the narrative was engaging and interesting, and the visual effects enhanced the program beautifully. —Jeff Weiss*
- *It was a spectacular night full of music, love and tradition. —Karen*
- *I drove @1 hour in rush hour traffic to attend last night and was so glad I did — It's a WONDEFUL concert! —Barbara*
- *It was an amazing performance!! —Allie*





### A message from our president, Jimmy Clark:

Happy New Year from Houston Bronze! It was great seeing so many of you at one of our “Christmas Light” concerts, at Lights in the Heights, or at Levy Park last month. We just closed the book on our Christmas season and have already started working on our spring program entitled Pairs and Spares. You will find more information about the concept behind our program in this newsletter. Be sure to check out our Facebook posts in the coming months for a behind the scenes view of our preparation.

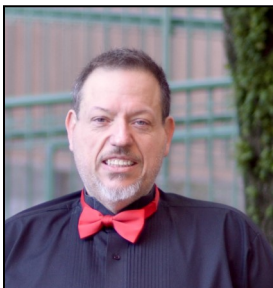
Our Houston Bronze family has grown again! In addition to the three members who joined us last fall we are excited to announce another new member of the ensemble. We will have another round of auditions in the coming months. Check out our website for more information on the audition process if you are interested in joining the ensemble.

Additionally, Houston Bronze continues to participate in national events. Two of our ringers joined handbell musicians across the country in Portland, Oregon last October for Distinctly Bronze West. Five of us are planning to attend Distinctly Bronze East in February. Be sure to check out future newsletters for more information about this event.

I hope to see you at one of our upcoming concerts.



Wilson and Jimmy at DBW in Portland, 2021



### Preparing for Distinctly Bronze

*by Wilson Van Tine*

According to the Handbell Musicians of America’s website, Distinctly Bronze is the premier performance event for advanced musicians. The event is held twice a year, once on the east coast and once on the west coast. Musicians are assigned a part to prepare ahead of time. They then spend four days with a seasoned conductor to prepare advanced literature for a public performance.

Jimmy Clark and I attended Distinctly Bronze West in October, 2021 in Portland, Oregon under the direction of Beth Judd. She always tries to bring the most musicality out of every piece. It was an exciting 4 days that ended in a virtual concert and many tired handbell ringers. When I finish a DB event, I always wonder if I will do it again because of all the hard work involved.

The time has come for another Distinctly Bronze event. It will be Distinctly Bronze East in February, 2022 in New Bern, North Carolina. I will be attending with four other Houston Bronze members—Jimmy Clark, Jerry Conry, Ben Harris, and Diana Montgomery. Brian Childers ([www.brianchilders.org](http://www.brianchilders.org)) will be directing the group. We will have nine choirs with approximately 100 ringers. There are twelve pieces (3 Level 3, 2 Level 4, 5 Level 5, and 2 Level 6). That is a lot of hard music to learn! Looking through the pieces and listening to the recordings, I realize that many of the pieces go really fast. One of the pieces is even titled “160 BPM” and has 299 measures. I received my assignment of FG5. It is hard to believe I have only 6 weeks left to learn all of this music. I have work to do, but I know it will be worth it. I will get to spend 4 days in New Bern with my friends making amazing music, eating at incredible restaurants, and playing handbells which I love.

Be sure to check the Houston Bronze Facebook page for a link to the virtual concert (if they have one) on Sunday, February 27 at 3:00 pm Central Time. It will be an amazing experience. Maybe one day you will stand next to me at a future Distinctly Bronze event.

Houston Bronze Ensemble  
EXPECT EXCELLENCE

**Build a Bell Workshop**

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

# Build a Bell Workshop

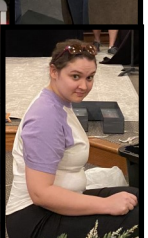
Is your ensemble going to begin ringing again this fall after a long break from ringing due to COVID? If so, you may want to consider building a workshop for your ensemble. There is no need to pack up your bells and travel because we come to you. Plan a longer Saturday workshop or even just a regular 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>

On November 11, Houston Bronze members Lorna Noack and Ben Harris traveled to St. John Lutheran Church in Cypress, TX. to conduct our first Build a Bell workshop in almost two years. The last one presented before the pandemic was to this group as well. We had a wonderful evening with them. The group is directed by Shirley Willingham. We would love to come spend time with your group. This is a design your own workshop so that we cover what you feel your group needs to work on. Below are some pictures taken at the St. John workshop.

### 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.



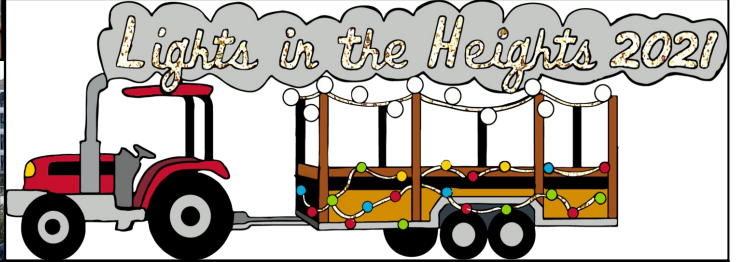


# GINGERBREAD BUILD-OFF

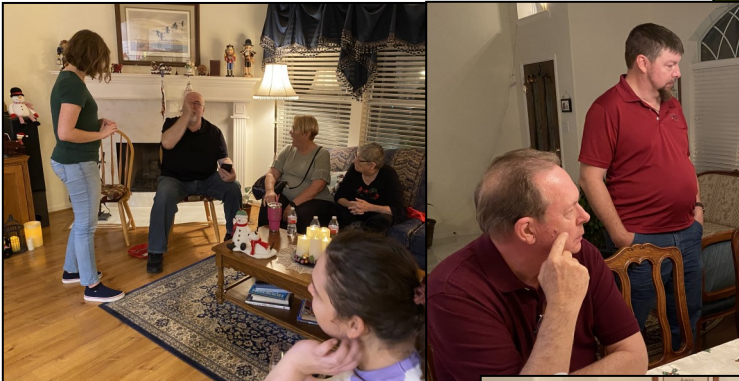
LEVY PARK ARCH  
 DECEMBER 11, 2021  
 AT LEVY PARK

PRESENTING SPONSOR

ACI  
 CONSULTING ARCHITECTS



# GIGS



# Party



## The Houston Bronze Ensemble

Houston Bronze Ensemble is currently scheduling events for 2022 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](http://www.houstonbronze.com)

Email:  
[info@houstonbronze.com](mailto:info@houstonbronze.com)  
[eventcoordinator@houstonbronze.com](mailto: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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Check out our [YouTube](#) Channel!



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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](http://www.houstonbronze.com) for more information about our group and what we offer. Feel free to contact us at [info@houstonbronze.com](mailto: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.**

*Corporate Contributors*

ExxonMobil	HP Inc.	Phillips 66	Shell Oil
	Amazon Smile	iGive	

*Individual Contributors*

January 2019—Present

Stephen Ashurst	Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church, Houston, TX	Sarah and Steven Schlacks
Penny Brehany-Wellman	Ben and Margaret Harris	Michelle Shuman
Judy Clayton	J. Marvin Havard	St. John's Lutheran Church Cypress, TX
Sam and Linda Conner	Phil and Marylyn Hodges	Barbara Szalkowski
Jerry Conry	Dean and Sherry Hunter	Margaret and Bob Tucker
Jimmy Clark and Matt Thompson	Alicia Monroe	Wilson Van Tine
Cheryl Cranford (Bells of Hope)	Ken and Lorna Noack	Mary Voigt
Tim and DruEllen Duncan		
Robert and Linda Ellison		

