

Vol. 9, No. 2
April, 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.

Saturday, April 30, 2022 6:00 PM CT

Live Stream of Composer Masterclass Concert

<https://youtu.be/IrdbDclcmIQ>

Friday, May 20, 2022 7:30 PM CT

MATCH

Midtown Arts and Theatre Center Houston

3400 Main St. Houston, TX 77002

Ticketed concert

Sunday, May 22, 2022 4:00 PM CT

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

P.O. Box 541741
Houston, TX 77254

Phone: 1-866-908-RING (7464)

info@houstonbronze.com

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. Our repertoire is listed within this newsletter. Can you find the pairs?



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Check out our [YouTube](#) Channel.

Test Drive



We invite you to join us at one of our rehearsals to see how we rehearse and to get a feel for the ensemble. You can ask any questions and decide if you are interested in becoming a part of our ensemble. We rehearse on Tuesday night from 7 -9 at Trinity Downtown Lutheran Church located at 800 Houston Avenue. If you want to join us for rehearsal, please send us a quick note to let us know your are coming.

Send to info@houstonbronze.com.



Auditions for Houston Bronze Ensemble

Fall, 2022

May 24, 2022 7:00 - 9:00 pm
Trinity Downtown Lutheran Church
800 Houston Av. Houston, TX

As a new auditioning member, the first part of your audition will consist of an interview and demonstration of an understanding of rhythm and proper handbell techniques by performing a few short exercises for the audition committee. This committee is made up of our artistic director and members of the ensemble. The music for this part of the audition will be sent to you the week prior to the audition date. If you successfully move through this first part of the audition, you will then be invited to ring with other people auditioning and with current ensemble members in small and large groups. During this part of the audition you will sight read and be asked to ring in different positions — upper/lower battery, bass bells, 4 in hand. The entire process may take as many as two to three hours. You will find the application for the audition at

<https://www.houstonbronze.com/become-a-member-of-houston-bronze---audition.html>



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.



A message from our president, Jimmy Clark

We continue to talk about our favorite pairings in this edition of the Houston Bronze newsletter as that is the theme for our upcoming spring concert series. One of my favorite HBE pairings is *concerts* and *community*. You probably know us for Christmas and spring concerts but giving back to the larger handbell community is an important part of the HBE mission. Grab your Girl Scout cookies, your pairing drink of choice and read articles in this newsletter that highlight our handbell community involvement from free education workshops, our participation in the Handbell Musicians of America Virtual Master Series and Distinctly Bronze event to our scholarships for the College Ring-In International event to be held in Nashville, Tennessee this summer.

April is also the time we start thinking about ensemble membership for the next year. HBE will hold auditions this coming May at our rehearsal location at Trinity Downtown Lutheran Church. More information about our audition process can be found in this newsletter and on our website, www.houstonbronze.com. Be sure to check out the article *Bronze for the Beginner* to hear more about life in HBE as a new member. Please consider joining our HBE family.

On behalf of the entire HBE membership I want to thank you for your support. We hope you will join us for our Pairs and Spares concert series.





College Ring-In International Scholarships 2022

The Houston Bronze Ensemble is happy to announce that we will once again be granting three \$100.00 scholarships to college students who are attending the Handbell Musicians of America College Ring-In International 2022 to be held in Nashville, Tennessee on July 30-August 1, 2022. This is our fifth year to offer these. This event is designed for young adult ringers, ages 18-30, to ring music at an advanced level under the direction of one of the handbell world's most acclaimed conductors. Participants will prepare music over 2.5 days that will be performed at the opening concert for the International Handbell Symposium! The scholarship is intended to cover the cost of registration. Each scholarship will be granted in the form of a reimbursement once the event and requirements of the scholarship are met. For more information about the event go to: <https://www.internationalhandbells.org/nashville-front/college-ring-in-international/>

Requirements for Scholarship:

- Be accepted by Handbell Musicians of America into College Ring-In 2022. Register for the event.
- Be a student at a college or university.
- Submit scholarship application to Houston Bronze Ensemble by June 1, 2022.
- Post on the Houston Bronze Ensemble Facebook page while attending the event. Pictures are encouraged.
- Recipients are expected to submit a brief follow-up report of their experience at College Ring-In International 2022 with permission for HBE to use this information on our website and on our Facebook page.

To apply for one of these scholarships, please go to <https://www.houstonbronze.com/college-ring-in-international-2022.html>

Scholarship winners will be announced by June 15, 2022.



COMING SOON!!

Information will be posted soon about a composition contest to be hosted by Houston Bronze. We will be looking for an arrangement or an original piece of music to premiere at our Christmas concerts in December, 2022. Keep checking our website and Facebook page for more information about this composition contest.

Spring Retreat—2022



On a very cold (by our standards) February 4-5, HBE held their spring retreat at the Brookwood Community. It was great to be out there once again but, due to Covid restrictions, we missed the opportunity to visit with the resident handbell choir members. We were able to accomplish a lot towards preparing our music for the spring concerts and we enjoyed being together. We want to thank The Brookwood Community for allowing us to be there for our workshop. We look forward to the day when we can return to be with the residents. We also want to express our gratitude to Gary Harris for coming out and taking some pictures for the ensemble. Below is one ringer's experience at our retreat.

Bronze for the "Beginner"

My First Retreat and Year with Houston Bronze



As spring rolls around, the youngest ringer in the choir is now in her second semester with Houston Bronze Ensemble. That's right, I survived the Christmas performances and am coming up on my second concert weekend! I say that jokingly of course, but for every starting ringer, there is a moment where you feel like a deer in the headlights, where you don't think you can keep up with the other experienced and educated members of HBE. And I mean every ringer - I can back that up after talking to others in this handbell choir. So how do we get past that?

The answer: Practice and Peers.

Our retreat to Brookwood a few weeks ago exemplified this perfectly and was eye-opening to the dedication that bells requires. It was about 10-12 hours of practice in two days! I thought all that ringing would wear out my arms, but really my legs are what felt the most sore by the end of the weekend. However, all that repetition drills the music into your mind and muscles. Every member of HBE puts in some individual practice time throughout the week (which does go a long way), but going through the music with the whole group is really ideal to get the full feel for any piece. And taking that weekend to have that experience helped each of us tremendously.

But of all the parts of retreat (and of ringing with Houston Bronze in general), the camaraderie has been the most beneficial. Everyone you ring next to is ready to answer questions, offer their help, and give advice on how best to juggle notes or which ones to pass on to a neighbor. I've learned the most by listening to the group. I usually carpool with two advanced HBE ringers who provide insight to what's been done in the past and give tips on how to improve. On the other side of the coin, I roomed with another new ringer over retreat and was able to talk with her about some of the challenges and benefits of being new to the group. We've found that balancing work with bells can be a hurdle at times, yet the ensemble is very understanding and ready to step in and cover when needed. That flexibility and availability of backup goes a long way.

I went into the retreat feeling like the music was conquering me and came out the victor instead. Pieces that seemed impossible are now my favorite to play. I can honestly say this year with this group has improved me, both as a ringer and as a musician overall. The time and energy are certainly a commitment, but one that pays off in creating the highest caliber music. I can't wait to show-off my newfound knowledge, and we all can't wait to share our performance in May!

VIRTUAL HANDBELL MUSICIANS

master series

We are excited to announce that Houston Bronze has been invited once again to participate in the Virtual Composition Master Class sponsored by Handbell Musicians of America. Up to eight composers will have the opportunity to work one-on-one with Jason Krug to hone their skills in composing and arranging. This master class is primarily for directors and musicians who may not be experienced composers/arrangers, but now find themselves in a situation where they need to arrange music for their ensemble. We will be excited to receive the music submitted by the composers. Once received, we will record the compositions allowing the composers to hear this music performed on bells. The composers will then have some time to edit the music and make any changes. On Saturday, April 30 at 6:00 pm CT, there will be a live stream concert of their compositions performed by Houston Bronze Ensemble on the Handbell Musicians of America YouTube page. We hope you will tune in. <https://youtu.be/lrdbDclcmIQ>



DISTINCTLY BRONZE EAST

New Bern, North Carolina

In late February, four members of HBE journeyed to New Bern, North Carolina to attend Distinctly Bronze. Ringers travel from all over the US and beyond to ring some very challenging music. After several long days of rehearsal under the baton of Brian Childers, the ensemble of almost 100 ringers presented a concert. We look forward to traveling to New Bern each year to see friends, play bells, and to enjoy all the wonderful restaurants in this small lovely, North Carolina town.



Houston Bronze Ensemble
EXPECT EXCELLENCE

Build a Bell Workshop

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

Build a Bell Workshop

FREE Workshops For Your Handbell Choir!!

Is your ensemble ringing again 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 absolutely **FREE**. 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.



Can you find the pairs in our program?

Listed in alphabetical order

Aquarium arr. by Sondra Tucker

Canticle by Arnold Sherman

Down by the Riverside arr. by Arnold Sherman

Down the River by Jason Krug

Fossils arr. by Sondra Tucker

Free Fall by Jason Krug

From Everlasting to Everlasting by Julie Turner

Kyrie by Cathy Moglebust

The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want by Alex Guebert

Love Will Keep Us Together arr. by Charles Peery

Rondo Passacaglia by Cynthia Dobrinski



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

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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January 2019—Present

Stephen Ashurst	Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church, Houston, TX	Sarah and Steven Schlacks
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