

Vol. 7 No.3
July, 2020



Houston Bronze Ensemble
EXPECT EXCELLENCE

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

HOUSTON BRONZE ENSEMBLE

2020 TENTATIVE CONCERTS AND WORKSHOPS

While we currently have venues and dates scheduled for the fall, we are also looking towards the possibility of the need to present something totally different. The board of HBE is investigating options that may include virtual/livestream concerts and workshops. Please stay with us and watch our Facebook page and our website for the latest information.



Houston Bronze Ensemble is currently scheduling events for 2020-2021

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
event_coordinator@houstonbronze.com



This has been an unusual spring for HBE and for all of us. This newsletter would normally be filled with pictures and articles from our spring concert season. Instead we have not met as an ensemble since March. We have enjoyed being with each other through ZOOM on a regular basis. The newly elected board has met to discuss a way to the future and ways to protect ensemble members, workshop attendees, and audience members. Unfortunately our Summer Ring 2020 has now been cancelled. We will miss ringing with those who had registered. Auditions for the 2020-2021 season have also been suspended. This is one of those years we all get to practice being flexible! We ask for your patience and understanding as we navigate these rapidly changing waters. We continue to look at our circumstances and possibilities as we try to get back to ringing. We cannot wait until we can safely have bells back in our hands and to share our music with you through concerts and workshops.



HBE AND LEGOS

Check out what one member of HBE has spent some of her quarantine time doing. More on this can be found on pages 3-4 of this newsletter.



Due to Covid 19, Summer Ring 2020 has been cancelled.

Auditions For 2020-2021 Season Cancelled

Due to all the uncertainties of this upcoming 2020-2021 season, the board of HBE has decided not to hold auditions this year. If you were considering an audition, please stay in touch.



NATIONAL SEMINAR

Presented by Lorna Noack

Although we were unable to perform our spring concerts and host Summer Ring events as planned and the fall schedule is still full of uncertainties, Houston Bronze members remain committed to excellence by taking advantage of a unique opportunity this summer to hone their skills.

Each year in July, Handbell Musicians of America presents an event called National Seminar. During this annual gathering, attendees have the opportunity to attend classes covering all aspects of handbell ringing and directing as well as concerts performed by groups and individuals from all over the nation. Bill Nave, our artistic director, represents HBE each year at National Seminar using the time to network with other directors and further his education, which, in turn, raises the musicianship of HBE. Due to COVID-19, this year's National Seminar will take on a whole new digital look. The flexibility of participating remotely through technology is allowing several HBE members to also "attend" the conference this July 16 – 19. The combined learning and wealth of new ideas is sure to be an asset to Houston Bronze when we are able to return together!

If you would like to take advantage of attending the seminar remotely or even in person, you can find information at <http://seminar.handbellmusicians.org/>



BUILD A BELL WORKSHOP

Book a workshop for the fall. We would love to come and work with your ensemble.

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

Comments from our workshops this fall:

- 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.



Cloud's Handbell LEGO Project Houston Bronze Ensemble

by Cloud Wang

What have you been doing to fill your time in quarantine? No matter what you are doing now, I hope you are well and staying safe.

It has been almost 4 months of quarantine due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the time I stay at home. Honestly, I am not used to staying at home that much, so I feel like a college student having an endless vacation. During the first month I still had the same schedule as usual, working a full-time job. After a while, it was so hard to always keep my life and spirits up and I was feeling lazy and bored.

I missed HBE handbell rehearsals. Unfortunately I don't have bells at home. All churches were shut down, so there was no way to practice. Plus, I live in an apartment with a roommate who works from home and has many phone meetings daily. It drove me super crazy and I was very upset that life was missing playing music. One day, I used LEGOs to build mini handbells.

Playing with LEGOs is one of my big hobbies. I enjoy playing LEGOs; it makes me happy and releases the stress. I call it "LEGO Therapy." Besides following the instructions to build a set, most of time I create my own project. In the past I have made a LEGO calendar for my office; Christmas ornaments and custom made gifts for special friends. After watching the competition TV show LEGO MASTERS first season on Fox channel, I was inspired by all candidates. Like Boone Langston said in the finale, "It's time to get your hands on a LEGO set and use your imagination to start building your next creation." That is why I started to create the new LEGO Bells Project.

I miss handbell rehearsals and ringers so I decided to make the Houston Bronze Ensemble and their logo. I found a way to build the LEGO bells and the bass bells. Please take a look the attached instruction. I indicate all names of those bricks that you need to make the regular bells, different size bass bells, and mallets. I was very surprised those handchime charms fit in LEGO mini-figure's hand so perfectly. They are from Handbell Service, Inc.

Continued on next page



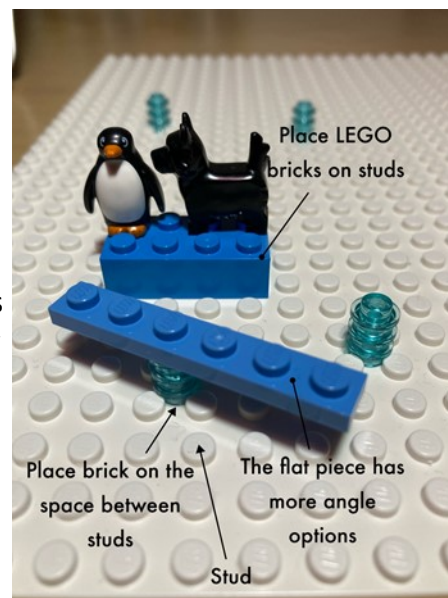
Cloud's Handbell LEGO Project (continued)

You might notice there are a lot of people or characters in LEGO sets called mini-figures. Each one has own hair or hat, face expression, body, pants, along with accessory, and the personality. When I see the particular hair, or face expression, I directly think about a particular friend. That is how I find the right piece for each HBE ringer mini-figure. There are 16 people in the HBE. It takes time to look for the right hair, face and outfit to match each ringer. If you play with a lot of sets and are familiar with characters, then it will help you to find the piece you are looking for more quickly. For example: Linda mini-figure's hair is original from the Harry Potter character Tina Goldstein. You may also need to spend some money to buy particular pieces. Pieces from the retired sets and rare bricks are pricier as usual. I usually get individual pieces via Brick Owl.com.

After finishing all mini-figures, then I made the HBE logo. As you see the HBE logo is a bell shape outside the letters "HBE". It was easy to make. For the logo, I used the "illegal way" to build. Check out the attached photo on the right. Usually you put the brick on the stud, but I put the brick on the space between two studs, it creates different ideas to build the angles of the bell shape.

In this project, I also had some craft work to alter some of the LEGO pieces. For example: I used pliers to cut the clip piece to make bell handles; for Bill's hair, I used silver and black marker to paint it; for the name tag, I used glossy clear sticker project paper to print out each ringer's name to help you to recognize who is who. When I took photos, I also learned how to adjust the lighting and using different apps to edit them. It was a lot of fun work and I really enjoyed it. Now I am looking for the appropriate display case to put it in. We will display it at future concerts.

I hope you like my LEGO project and get some inspirations from it. If you are bored and having some LEGOs at home, what about building your LEGO handbell choir and make your own story?



About Cloud Wang



Cloud is originally from Taiwan. She began playing the piano when she was just 6 years old. Her musical journey includes playing the recorder, piano, accordion, percussion, pipe organ, handbell and carillon. Influenced by jazz vibraphone virtuoso Gary Burton, she decided to come to the United States. She was awarded a scholarship to Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA where she studied jazz vibraphone, percussion, and jazz composition. In 2010, she received the second prize for vibraphone in the Italy Percussion Competition.

Cloud began playing handbells in 2014 at Suncrest UMC Handbell choir in Morgantown, WV. She studied solo ringing with Donna Kinsey. Bells makes her feel God's love and joy! As a bell enthusiast, her handbell experiences include the following: solo ringing concerts in WV, PA and FL area; received scholarship to 2016 National Handbell Seminar; member of Ring Pittsburgh ensemble; participated in handbell festivals in FL, OH, PA, NJ areas; participated in the Big Ring (hosted by The Army Salvation and The Handbell Musicians of America where 664 ringers met at The Mall of America in Bloomington, MN to break the Guinness World Record becoming the largest handbell ensemble in the world). She is now an active member in Handbell Musicians of America Area 9. She has plans to attend her first Distinctly Bronze West in the fall.

Cloud lives in Houston, TX as a freelance musician. As a new resident, she loves the city life here. She is currently the organist at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. Besides music, she enjoys cooking, traveling and playing LEGOS when she is off the work.



**HOUSTON BRONZE
COLLEGE RING-IN 2020
SCHOLARSHIP
WINNER PUBLISHES
ARTICLE IN OVERTONES**

We had the pleasure of getting to know Nikki Evans in January when she attended the College Ring-In 2020 held in Houston, Texas. She was one of our scholarship winners. We heard about her project as she posted about it on Facebook and were delighted that she shared it with the handbell world by submitting it to *Overtones*, the official publication of Handbell Musicians of America. Nikki, who graduated in May from The University of Texas at Tyler, was a math major with a minor in music. She had a math project where her knowledge of music and use of handbells “saved the day”! She begins the article in *Overtones* with these questions: “What if math and music are a lot more alike than we tend to believe? What if we could use math to explain and create art and even music?” To read the article in its entirety go to <https://handbellmembers.org/article/bells-save-the-day/>. Below are pictures of Nikki from the January 2020 College Ring-In.

Nikki gets to try her had at conducting during rehearsal!



Houston Bronze College Ring-In 2020 scholarship winners



Bill, our artistic director, already has a working list of possible songs for the Christmas season. We can’t wait to be with you again.

Tentative Christmas Dates:

Friday, December 4, 2020 7:00 PM
Tomball United Methodist Church
1603 Baker Street Tomball, TX 77375

Saturday, December 5, 2020 7:30 PM
MATCH
Midtown Arts and Theatre Center Houston
3400 Main St. Houston, TX 77002
Ticketed concert

Check out our [YouTube](#) Channel.



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The Houston Bronze Ensemble

Houston Bronze Ensemble is currently scheduling events for 2020 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 to Trinity Downtown Lutheran Church for providing us with rehearsal space and storage space. We are forever grateful to you.



Thank you!

Houston Bronze Ensemble would like to thank our contributors for their donations during this past year. 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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