

Recital for February 16, 2014

3:00 p.m.

The University of Florida Century Tower

John Widmann City Carillonneur The City of Frederick

- I. February *from* Calendar Geoffrey Cook (b. 1948)
- II. Hymn tunes
- | | |
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| Old Hundredth | Louis Bourgeois (1510-1560), arr. John Courter (1941-2010) |
| Precious Lord, Take My Hand | George Nelson Allen (1812-1877), arr. Lee Cobb (b. 1967) |
| Lift Every Voice and Sing | J. Rosamond Johnson (1873-1954), arr. Courter |
- III. European carillon originals
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| Jan de Mulder Suite | Jos D'hollander (b. 1934) |
| <i>gavotte – burlesque – adagio espressivo – finale</i> | |
| Preludio No. 5 in d minor | Matthias van den Gheyn (1721-1785) |
- IV. Transcriptions
- | | |
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| Arioso <i>from</i> Harpsichord Concerto No 5 in f minor, BWV 1056 | Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), arr. Carlo van Ulft (b. 1961) |
| Sarabande for guitar | Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) |
| Señor Don Gato | Mexican Folk Song, arr. Cobb |
- V. American carillon originals
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| Image No. 2 | Emilien Allard (1915-1977) |
| Three Dances for Carillon, dedicated to John Widmann | Olivia Margaret Ontko (b. 1947) |
| <i>Habañera, Ballerina's Waltz, Southern Polka</i> | |
| Kortjakje (Theme and four variations on a children's tune) | Courter |
| Prelude II | Ronald Barnes (1927-1997) |
- VI. Suite from *Fiddler on the Roof* Jerry Bock (1928-2010), arr. Richard Giszczak (b. 1948)
- Fiddler on the Roof – Sabbath Prayer – Matchmaker – Sunrise, Sunset
- VII. The Star Spangled Banner John Stafford Smith (1750-1836), arr. Gordon Slater (b. 1950)

Each section will be marked by the ringing of a single bell

John Widmann is the City Carillonneur for the City of Frederick, Maryland, where he plays recitals each month on the first and third Sundays of the month at 12:30 p.m, year round, on the Joseph Dill Baker Carillon in Baker Park. He has now held that position for twenty-two years. Mr. Widmann graduated from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, with a Bachelor Degree in Music Education, and completed his Master of Music degree from Towson University in 2011. In addition to his Sunday recitals, he is employed by Frederick County Public Schools as a General/Vocal Music teacher, and by Geneva Presbyterian Church of Potomac, Maryland as Director of Music and Organist. Mr. Widmann became a Carillonneur member of the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America (GCNA) in 1996. He maintains an active concert schedule, and played recitals last year at the Mercersburg Academy in Pennsylvania and at Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, PA. In June, he played a featured artist recital at the GCNA's annual national congress in Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN. In July he played recitals at the Rockefeller Chapel of the University of Chicago, and at Chicago's Botanic Gardens and Naperville, IL's Millenium Carillon. In the past, he has played recitals on 82 carillons in five countries, including festivals in Springfield, IL; Ottawa, Ontario and Amsterdam in the Netherlands. He lives in Frederick with his wife and sometimes their two college-aged children. Frederick, Maryland was the home to Francis Scott Key, the author of the words of our National anthem. Each recital in Frederick ends as today's recital does, with The Star Spangled Banner.

Program notes, Sunday, February 16, 2014, 3:00 p.m. John Widmann, carillon

- I. "February" is the second movement, of "Calendar", a work with twelve movements, one for each month. Geoffrey Cook (b. 1948) often mixes major and minor tonality themes in each short movement.
- II. "Old Hundredth" is perhaps the most known hymn in Christian hymnody. Written by Loys "Louis" Bourgeois (1510-1560), "Old Hundreth" takes its name from the 100th Psalm, which this was a setting to. As popular as it is, Bourgeois was sent to prison on December 3, 1551 for changing the tunes to the psalms "without a license". This arrangement is by John Courter (1941-2010), the longtime organist and carillonneur of Berea College in Kentucky. "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" was the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's favorite song, and was often sung at his rallies. The lyrics were by the Rev. Thomas Dorsey (1899-1993), and it was set to the music called "Maitland" written by George Nelson Allen (1812-1877). The carillon arrangement of this hymn is by Lee Cobb (b. 1967), the music director, organist and carillonneur of the Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Clearwater, Florida. The third hymn, "Lift Every Voice and Sing", was also popular at Dr. King's gatherings. The text was written in 1900 by James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938), who was the principal at the then-segregated Stanton School in Jacksonville, Florida. He wrote the text to be sung by the music of his brother, John Rosamund Johnson (1873-1954). Over 500 school children sang the tune at its first performance on February 12, 1900, Lincoln's birthday, partially to welcome featured guest speaker, Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) to the school that day. This setting is also by John Courter.
- III. Jan de Mulder (John the Miller) is a Flemish drinking song, set by Jos D'hollander (b. 1934) for carillon as a set of variations in four very short movements. D'Hollander is a Belgian carillonneur, carillonneur emeritus of the city of Ghent. He is also the father of renowned carillonneur Geert d'Hollander (b. 1965). Keeping with the Belgian theme, I play one of the few-extant historic carillon pieces, the Preludio Nr. 5 of Matthias van den Gheyn (1721-1785). Van den Gheyn was the organist and carillonneur of Leuven.
- IV. The transcriptions section of this recital are varied from each other: A baroque piece, a modern classical guitar piece, and a Mexican folk song. The Bach piece is set by Carlo van Ulft, the transplanted Dutch carillonneur who is the city carillonneur for Centralia, Illinois. The guitar piece is by modern French composer Francis Poulenc (1899-1963). Guitar music, in its thin harmonic simplicity, almost universally plays well on carillon with little change in transcription. I play Señor Don Gato for the child in all of us. My elementary music students love the fun song. I print here the English text:

- a. Oh Señor Don Gato was a cat,
On a high red roof Don Gato sat.
He went there to read a letter,
Meow, meow, meow
Where the reading light was better,
Meow, meow, meow
T'was a love note for Don Gato.
- b. "I adore you," wrote the lady cat.
Who was fluffy, white, and nice and fat.
There was not a sweeter kitty
Meow, meow, meow
In the country or the city
Meow, meow, meow
And she said she'd wed Don Gato.
- c. Oh, Don Gato jumped so happily,
He fell off the roof and broke his knee.
Broke his ribs and all his whiskers,
Meow, meow, meow
And his little solar plexus,
Meow, meow, meow
"Ay carrambal!" cried Don Gato.
- d. Well the doctors all came on the run,
Just to see if something could be done.
And they held a consultation,
Meow, meow, meow
About how to save their patient,
Meow, meow, meow
How to save Señor Don Gato.
- e. But in spite of everything they tried,
Poor Señor Don Gato up and died.
Oh it wasn't very merry,
Meow, meow, meow
Going to the cemetery,
Meow, meow, meow
For the ending of Don Gato.
- f. As the funeral passed the market square,
Such a smell of fish was in the air. Though his burial was slated,
Meow, meow, meow
He became re-animated,
Meow, meow, meow
He came back to life Don Gato!

- V. In this section of American original carillon works, we start with a work from Emilien Allard (1915-1977), who was for many years the carillonneur of St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal. He was appointed the Dominion Carillonneur for Canada, playing the carillon at the Houses of Parliament on Ottawa starting in 1975, just before his death. Olivia Margaret Ontko (b. 1947) wrote these three dances for carillon in 1997, and dedicated them to me. She is a pipe organ builder, located in Charleston, South Carolina. John Courter follows in a long line of composers through the centuries to write Themes and Variations on children's songs. Ronald Barnes' "Prelude II" is one of his last compositions, written in 1995. Although for much of his life, Barnes wrote in beautiful hand-written script, by 1995, his eyesight had failed so much that deciphering the beauty of this work from the written score was difficult.
- VI. Jerry Bock's "Fiddler On the Roof" was one of the most popular musicals ever. As with many Jewish tunes, much of "Fiddler.." was written in a minor tonality. Minor music fits that carillon better than any other instrument. Enjoy the familiar tunes on an instrument that is very favorable to them! These arrangements are by Michigander carillonneur Richard Giszczak (b. 1948).
- VII. Francis Scott Key was a lawyer, and he was from Frederick, Maryland as I am. He was in the employ of the United States government as a negotiator, tasked with securing the release of a United States citizen, Dr. William Beanes, from the British. He dined on the British ship HMS Tonnant with British officers during the war of 1812. While Key was successful in his negotiations, securing the release of Dr. Beanes, he had become familiar with the British position, and the British plans to attack Baltimore, Maryland during the negotiations, so he was forced to remain on the HMS Tonnant with Dr. Beanes until the British had completed their attack on Baltimore. The attack went on through the night of September 13-14, 1814, and Key was unable to do anything but watch the British bombardment of Fort McHenry from the British ship. When he awoke on the morning of the 14th, he found that, thankfully, the British had been unsuccessful in their attack, and the United States flag remained flying over Fort McHenry, which was blocking the British's way through the Chesapeake Bay to Baltimore. Key wrote the poem, which he entitled "The Defense of Fort McHenry", that morning. He always had in mind the tune to one of his favorite bawdy drinking songs, "To Anacreon in Heaven" (which we now know popularly as "The Star Spangled Banner"), written by Englishman John Stafford Smith (1750-1836) when he wrote the Star Spangled Banner's lyrics. The song did not become our National Anthem until 1931, when President Herbert Hoover signed it into law. Poetry writing was one of Key's favorite pastimes, and there are many other poems written by him. At one point he even wrote his wife's grocery list into a poem! In the spirit of international cooperation, I play this Canadian setting of our US national anthem, which is an English tune, today.

