



News from the City Hall Carillon Committee

Minneapolis, Minnesota

<http://go.to/bells>

Spring 2005

Summer concert series begins May 6

The landmark bells of Minneapolis City Hall will ring again this summer in a series of noontime concerts of popular standards. The concert series runs each Friday from May 6 to October 7. This series has long been a favorite of downtown employees and residents. The City Hall Carillon Committee once got a fan letter from a resident of the Crossings Condominiums, 121 Washington Ave. S., who made a point of having lunch on her balcony on concert days. Unfortunately, that's an option only for a few. But many people sit on the plazas of the Hennepin County Government Center and the U.S. Courthouse to enjoy the music. The private park across from the Star Tribune has been cited as a good listening venue.

The plaza of the U.S. Courthouse is an interesting place to hear the bells since it receives both direct and reflected sound, and listeners can experience the differences and also hear a combination of the two by moving about the plaza.

After four Friday concerts the previous year, the City Hall Carillon Committee began producing a regular Friday series in 1991.

This will be the first full concert season in which the new light rail transit line is open. We hope we can attract some new listeners among the many people who will ride past our chime during the concerts or detrain at Government Center station.

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City Hall Carillon Committee to mark 15th anniversary

This year will mark the 15th anniversary of bell concerts at Minneapolis City Hall under the guidance of the City Hall Carillon Committee. Tony Hill and Les Block produced their first concert on May 11, 1990, in tribute to Irving Berlin, who had died the previous September, on the 102nd anniversary of his birth.

That concert was played by Block, Anita Ruth, Jerry Rubino, Frank Oliveri, and JoAnn Funk. Concert producer Tony Hill hadn't planned to play, but he did get one song in. "The electrical circuit the bells were plugged into short-circuited during the concert," Hill recalls, "so I went downstairs to the control room and found a working outlet. Then I came back up, and to make sure the keyboard was working, I played a song myself. I remember the song was 'Marie.' I only played one song in each of the first three concerts."

Hill still tries to get other people to play whenever he can. "I only schedule myself to do about five of our 57 concerts a year," he says, "and if I play more than that, I feel like I've failed as a producer because my job is to recruit other people to play." Two of the concerts Hill usually keeps for himself are Reformation Day and New Year's Eve. He played the entire concert on December 31, 2004-January 1, 2005. "I set my watch to the Naval Observatory's atomic clock so I would be able to start playing 'Auld Lang Syne' at exactly the stroke of 12," Hill says.

Hill was prepared to play the bells

Anniversary, continued on reverse.

Anniversary, continued from p. 1.

with a mallet in case the threatened Y2K crisis on January 1, 2000 had resulted in a power outage. "I was really glad when it came to nothing, because I didn't want to climb the bell tower in the dark just to play 'Auld Lang Syne.'" Of course, the Y2K scare is now remembered as a scam, and Hill even assigned someone else to play the bells that night.

When Hill and Block sketched out their Berlin tribute 15 years ago, they had no idea it would lead to an annual schedule of nearly 60 concerts. But people enjoyed that first concert, and Hill and Block held three more that summer, in tribute to composers Cole Porter, Richard Rodgers, and George Gershwin. Soon they started producing the traditional holiday concerts played by the late Edward Auld, and the next year held their first series of regular Friday concerts. They formed the City Hall Carillon Committee in 1993, and Hill and Block are still its executive officers, along with former Sheriff Don Omodt.

Sponsorship opportunities for bell concerts

The City Hall Carillon Committee has some opportunities available for corporate or organizational sponsorship of its bell concerts. For a tax-deductible contribution of \$100 or more, a business can sponsor a bell concert. These sponsorships are mentioned in press releases about the concerts and are noted in reports to our patrons and to the city and county officials who control the building.

Some concerts currently available for corporate sponsorship are Christmas (5 concerts), Jewish holidays (3 concerts), St. Patrick's Day, Syttende Mai, Svenskarnas Dag, Columbus Day, Reformation Day, Thanksgiving, and New Year's.

Please call Tony Hill at (612) 673-5311 if your business or organization is interested in cosponsoring one or more concerts. It's a positive way for your business to make a visible (and audible) difference in our community!

New keyboard donated in memory of Edward Auld

Marjorie Auld, widow of Edward R. Auld, who played the bells from 1924 to 2000, recently donated \$2500 to the City Hall Carillon Committee for the purchase and installation of a second keyboard. The City Hall Carillon Committee has acquired a fine keyboard from Kirk in the Hills in Bloomfield Hills, Mich., which has one of the largest carillons in the world.

In addition to serving as a memorial to her husband, Auld wanted the committee to have a second keyboard so the bells can be played in concert pitch. When the bells were electrified in 1972, they were wired to the keyboard a step higher, much like a clarinet or trumpet is a step higher than a piano. This makes the bells more readily playable, but it can be frustrating to a player who wants to play in concert pitch. The new keyboard solves this problem, and also makes the playing of several extra keys more simple.

The City Hall Carillon Committee hopes to have the Edward R. Auld Memorial Keyboard ready for dedication this summer. More information will be available as the time comes.

Carillon Committee needs volunteer chimes players

The City Hall Carillon Committee is always looking for volunteer chimes players to add to our roster. Playing the bells is fun and rewarding and an all-around good experience for people who like making music. Anyone who can read music and play melodies on a piano-type keyboard is welcome to apply. Simply express interest to concert producer Tony Hill via email (thill@nyx.net) or call the City Hall Carillon Committee at (612) 673-5311. It's easier than you think!

The City Hall Carillon Committee is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation not affiliated with any government.