

VILLAGE

Village Welcomes New Carillonneur, Announces Summer Concerts

By RANDY YORK

The Mariemont 2024 Summer Carillon Concert Series will begin on Memorial Day, Monday May 27, at 2 p.m. at Dogwood Park. The summer series will include 17 carillon concerts on Sunday evenings at 7 p.m. from June through Labor Day. A complete schedule that includes the carillonneur and evening program can be found at mariemont.org/lifestyle/living-here/the-mary-m-emery-memorial-carillon.

The Carillon concerts are sponsored by the Thomas J Emery Memorial and this year will feature carillonneur Alan Bowman. Alan Bowman was born in Dayton, Ohio. He played the piano and organ from an early age.

He received a bachelor's degree in systems Analysis with a minor in Piano Performance from Miami University (1988, Oxford, Ohio) and a Master of Music degree with a major in Organ Performance from Florida Atlantic University (2005, Boca Raton, Florida).

Alan lived and worked in Florida for more than 25 years as a director of music in Lutheran, Anglican, and Roman Catholic churches.

In 2021 Alan was introduced to the carillon by Larry Weinstein (carillonneur of the Deeds Carillon in Dayton for 35 years), who gave him his initial lessons and encouragement to study at the Royal Carillon School "Jef Denyn" in Belgium. A student of Koen Van Assche, Alan received his diploma in June 2023 and performed a 16-concert tour in Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Ireland, the U.S., and for the World Carillon Congress in Utrecht (NL) in conjunction with the Utrecht Early Music Festival.

Alan was a 2023 carillon fellow at Bok Tower Gardens in Lake Wales, Florida, where he lived, performed weekly concerts, and studied with carillonneur Geert D'hollander for five months.

Following Larry Weinstein's retirement in March 2024, Alan was appointed Carillonneur of the Deeds Carillon, and now looks forward to playing this summer at the Mary M. Emery Memorial Carillon in Mariemont.

The Mary M. Emery Memorial Carillon was dedicated on November 16, 1929. The Carillon was a gift from Miss Isabella E. Hopkins in memory of her sister who founded the Village of Mariemont.



Mariemont's new carillonneur, Alan Bowman

The original 23 bells and the tower were dedicated in 1929 to the youth of the Village. These original heavy bells, at the lower end of the musical scale, came from the foundry of Gillett & Johnston in Croydon, England.

In 1969, an additional 26 bells were added to create a full concert instrument of 49 bells in a chromatic arrangement, spanning just over four octaves. These 26 additional bells were cast by Petit & Fritsen in Aarle-Rixtel,

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Our historic "Bell Tower" under a double rainbow in early spring. (Photo credit: Bridgett Karlson)






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Netherlands, and installed by The Verdin Company of Cincinnati. The largest bell in the combined group weighs nearly 4,800 pounds and the lightest is 19 pounds. The bell composition is approximately 80 percent

copper and 20 percent tin, an alloy that has been known as "bell bronze" for hundreds of years.

Renovations in 2008 included the addition of a new playing keyboard, a new sealed

ball bearing playing action, and new cast iron ball clappers throughout. There is now also a practice keyboard, permitting the carillonners to practice privately.

No electrical assistance or amplification of any kind is used during regular concerts. The bells compose a true carillon that is completely touch responsive to give the carillonner full capability for every musical expression from a gentle whisper to a thundering fortissimo. The carillonner plays at a keyboard located in a small room below the bells. Each key is a strong wooden lever connected to its bell clapper above by a wire linkage and "bell crank" transmission action. The bells are rigidly mounted on the steel framework and the clappers are pulled against the inner bell surface to create the musical tones. Return springs are used behind the clappers of the smaller bells to return the keys to the up position after striking, while for the larger bells, counter springs (helpers) are used to lighten the touch.

There are just over 180 such true carillons on the entire North American continent. The Emery instrument is one of the very few that is housed in a free-standing tower surrounded by a park area. Ideal listening conditions are found in the park at a distance of three to five hundred feet from the tower base.

Fourteen of the 49 bells are provided with external electric strikers operated from a computer that automatically plays a vesper hymn at 9 p.m. each evening. Four bells are automatically struck with externally mounted gravity hammers to play the Westminster Chime melody at 8 a.m., noon, and 6 p.m. every day throughout the year.

The administration and maintenance of the bell tower is administered by the Thomas J. Emery Memorial. Thank you to Lee Carter, President of the Thomas J. Emery Memorial, for all his efforts in managing the maintenance and operation of the Mariemont Carillon and arranging for carillonners. Thank you to Michael Singer for his dedication to managing the day-to-day maintenance and operational needs of the Mariemont Carillon.



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