

61ST ANNUAL ORGAN CONFERENCE: FACULTY RECITAL

**NOT SIGHTED BUT VISIONARY:
CARILLON MUSIC BY BLIND COMPOSERS**

TIFFANY NG, CARILLON

*Tuesday, October 5, 2021
Burton Memorial Tower, Charles Baird Carillon
7:00 PM*

Introduction: The Holy Braille

Sile O'Modhrain, Associate Professor of Performing Arts Technology

Philis Schoone Harderinne

Jacob van Eyck
(ca. 1590–1657)
arr. Jo Haazen

Tango (María)

Francisco Tárrega
(1852–1909)
arr. Mary Jo Disler

The Boy with the Axles in His Hands (1866)

Thomas Greene Wiggins
(1849–1908)

*Arrangement courtesy of the Music by Black Composers project
of the Rachel Barton Pine Foundation.*

Evening (1935)

Roger T. Walker

Sonatine for Carillon

Stephen B. Knight

Allegro
Adagio
Rondo—Allegro capriccioso

Awarded the City of Mechelen Carillon Composition Prize

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Air (1959) Jean Miller
(1916–1964)

Prayer for Peace (1962) Jean Miller

Composed for the dedication of Whatley Memorial Chapel at Colorado Women's College

Ne Regrette Rien (2011) Tom Van Peer
(b. 1975)

JACOB VAN EYCK (ca. 1590–1657) is largely known for his two-volume book *Der Fluyten Lust-hof*, a collection of 143 melodies with diminutions for solo recorder. However, he made much of his career as a carillonneur and organist. He collaborated with the brothers Pieter and François Hemony in a major breakthrough, creating the first well-tuned carillon in Zutphen, the Netherlands in 1644. Van Eyck was born into a noble family, and by 1619 had become involved as a carillon player and technician in consultation with craftspeople and the city organist. The city of Utrecht engaged him to repair its carillon and soon appointed him city carillonneur. He was entrusted with technical supervision of all Utrecht bells, and was also appointed carillonneur of the Jacobikerk, the Janskerk, and city hall. In addition, he taught students at a 30-bell practice carillon. Van Eyck's health declined in his final years. Upon his death, the bells of Sint Janskerk, the Jacobikerk, and the Dom Tower were tolled for three hours in his memory.

FRANCISCO TÁRREGA Y EIXEA (1852–1909) was a Spanish guitarist and composer who had a foundational influence on twentieth-century guitar through his students and compositions. After he injured his eyes as a child, his father enrolled him in music classes with Eugeni Ruiz and Manuel González, both of whom were blind, to ensure he could earn a living. He studied at the Madrid Royal Conservatory and became an internationally acclaimed performer and composer. His compositions for solo guitar comprise approximately 78 works and 120 transcriptions. Among his most famous compositions is *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*, now available in multiple arrangements for carillon.

THOMAS GREENE WIGGINS (1849–1908), known as “Blind Tom,” was born enslaved in Georgia in 1849. The Bethunes, who enslaved the Wiggins family, provided a lively musical life to their children, and soon noticed Wiggins's talent and paid for piano lessons. By the time he was eight, he was performing concerts around the state, and soon across the country, for the Bethunes' profit. At eleven, he became the first African American to be invited to perform at the White House. Wiggins was likely autistic, and honed some extraordinary musical skills. He could play music after hearing it only once, play difficult pieces with his back turned to the piano, and perform three songs in different keys simultaneously: one in each hand, and a third sung. His compositions often evoked the sounds of everyday life, from rain and wind to a sewing machine. Wiggins became one of the most famous American entertainers of the 1800s, but the Bethunes found ways to maintain legal and financial control over him after the Civil War and kept his proceeds from thousands of concerts. (Adapted from *Music by Black Composers*)

On June 3, 1954, *The Boston Globe* published a feature on **ROGER “ZEKE” T. WALKER**, who performed nineteen recitals per year on the Walter F. Tilton Memorial Carillon in Norwood, MA. He studied piano, organ, and piano tuning at the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, MA, graduating in 1919. He continued his piano and organ studies at the New England Conservatory, and studied carillon for three winters with Kamiel Lefèvre at the Riverside Church in New York. “Evening” was transcribed by Robert Kleinschmidt in 1935 from the composer's dictation at the practice carillon, and edited by Ronald Barnes in 1989. Walker's piano tuning career led him to working with luminaries such as Vladimir Horowitz. “I was born with scarcely any sight,” Walker told the *Globe*. “I've had nine eye operations... [Today,] we have our own home, my wife, two daughters and I, at 18 Mt. Pleasant st. in Hyde Park, [Boston].”

STEPHEN BROOKS KNIGHT is a pianist, organist, carillonneur, and composer from Birmingham, AL, and has been Samford University's resident carillonneur since 1974. Knight has received numerous awards and honors, including the City of Mechelen Carillon Composition prize from the Royal Carillon School in Belgium, and the Young Blind Composers Award from the National Federation of Music Clubs twice. He also received the Samuel P. Hayes Award from the Perkins School for the Blind and the Harry R. Wilson Award from Samford University. Knight holds two undergraduate degrees from the University of Alabama and graduate degrees from Samford University, the Schola Cantorum in Paris, and the University of Michigan. He received the Final Diploma “with great distinction” from the Royal Carillon School in Belgium. His transcribed carillon compositions include *Sonatine, Variations on “Schoon lieveken, waar waarde gij,”* and *Old MacDonald's Festival*.

In 1961, **JEAN MILLER** (1916–1964) became the first woman to publish her carillon music in North America. She studied at the Juilliard School, Colorado Women's College, and the University of Colorado Boulder, graduating with a B.M. in composition in 1940. She also studied composition with Bernard Wagenaar, Roger Sessions, Arthur Honegger, and Nadia Boulanger. Adept with languages, she served as a translator for radio programs in Spanish during World War II. Most of her time was devoted to composition for varied instruments and ensembles. At the encouragement of Johan Franco, she contacted Ronald Barnes about composing for carillon. She also obtained a tape demonstrating the range and pitches of a carillon. During her final years before succumbing to cancer, she wrote many carillon works, although she never heard them played. “Air” was written in 1959 and premiered by Barnes at the University of Kansas in 1960.

TOM VAN PEER is city carillonneur of Lokeren and church carillonneur of Our Lady Across the Dyle Church in Mechelen, Belgium. He composes for piano and carillon and has been awarded several composition prizes, and is regularly invited as a performer in Europe and the United States. Tom studied piano and carillon and obtained his laureate diploma from the Royal Carillon School “Jef Denyn” in 1998. That year, he also became the first laureate of the prestigious International Queen Fabiola Competition. SABAM awarded him its prize for best interpretation of a contemporary Belgian work. In 2002, Tom, who is blind, received the Belgian Prize for “Outstanding Young People” in the “Personal Development” category for his musical career.