

VOL. 4 ISSUE 2 · FALL 2023

RINGER'S NOTES

Official Newsletter of the Suncoast Bronze Ringers



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

MICHAEL LAMB

Once again, we have started with a wonderful program for our Christmas concerts for December 2023. After a hectic summer that saw us travel to Spain to play four concerts for enthusiastic audiences (many of whom had never heard handbells before), we hit the ground running with a full-day retreat at the Holiday UCC church on September 9th. So we're in full swing now rehearsing our music for December.

For this concert, I've chosen a number of pieces from our new, 'Ring Noel' CD including 'Believe', 'The First Noel', and 'Emmanuel Bell Carol' among many others. We also have some new arrangements including 'We Need A Little Christmas', and 'Sing, Ye Masters'. Throw in a fun arrangement of the Beach Boys 'Little Saint Nick' and a Kevin McChesney arrangement of 'You're a Mean One, Mister Grinch', and I guarantee there will be something for everyone in these concerts. If you haven't yet purchased your CD, there will be plenty on hand for you to buy at the concerts!

This issue:

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR
PAGE 01 & 02

SUNCOAST BRONZE RINGERS
SPAIN TRIP
PAGE 03

INSIDE THE MUSIC: Greensleeves
PAGE 04

BEHIND THE BELLS
PAGE 05

WINTER CONCERT DATES
PAGE 06



"...I guarantee there will be something for everyone [at the winter] concerts. If you haven't yet purchased your CD, there will be plenty on hand for you to buy at the concerts!"

-MICHAEL LAMB

... A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR CONTINUED

We are also looking forward to a number of appearances by our smaller, portable 12-bell group we call the Suncoast Bronze Chamber Ringers. This much smaller group rings with 6 people in more portable settings and much simpler arrangements suitable for background music in a variety of venues. Last Christmas we were represented by Breezin Entertainment and rang a number of days at the Tampa Airport as well as the International Plaza. We also ring at a number of retirement facilities in the area. If you are interested in this group, you can contact us at suncoastbronze@gmail.com. Both the smaller and larger groups are available for 20-30 minute performances (or multiple ones over a couple hours or up to an hour for the full group) for very reasonable fees. It is one of our main fund-raising events of the year.

I hope to see you at one of our Christmas concerts this year. Be sure to stop by and say 'hi' if you are there!



Michael Lamb,
Director

Please visit our website (scan the QR code) and consider a donation to help us continue to round out the handbell sound with low bass bells, purchase new music, and help with our location and business costs.



**SCAN THE QR CODE
WITH YOUR PHONE:**

CONTACT US, JOIN OUR MAILING LIST OR USE THE DONATE BUTTON AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WEB PAGE!



SUNCOAST BRONZE RINGERS SPAIN TRIP

THERESA AGOSTA ROTUNDA & VALERIE BUSH,
SUNCOAST BRONZE MEMBERS

During this summer, the Suncoast Bronze Ringers had the opportunity to bring handbells to Spain for Spanish audiences and to enjoy the sights and sounds, food and drink, and weather and architecture of another country. Led by Michael Lamb and through Witte Travel, eight members of Suncoast Bronze Ringers, plus advanced ringers from the southeast, as well as family and friends including SBR fan and patron, Bob Booth, traveled to Spain in July for a total of 28 enthusiastic travelers. Our tour guide, Pedro, not only led our group through Spain but also translated for Mike at each concert. Our guests were grateful for his perfect translation!

Suncoast Bronze is grateful to Jeanne Jessup, from Englewood, Florida, who has rung in performance groups throughout Europe; Nancy Kindraka who rings with the Detroit Handbell Ensemble, Elaine Turner from Gainesville who has over 50 years of ringing experience, and Hope Garling from Royal Palm Beach who used her extensive musical experience to play percussion. Al Reese, who is director of Virginia Handbell Consort, and his wife Lois traveled from Virginia to lend their ringing expertise, and SBR was fortunate to have Al Reese direct “St Louis Blues” which he arranged and enjoyed hearing come to life. Steven Ledbetter, who rang in Spain and is a member of Ring Sarasota, has agreed to join SBR this holiday season as a ringer as well.



Suncoast Bronze Ringers extend a huge thank you to Mike’s family: daughter Katherine Lamb Chico for her spectacular ringing, son-in-law Winston Chico for managing photos and audio, son David for helping with percussion, and Mike’s wife, Tami for ringing and managing logistics, and also for lending her extensive experience and expertise to SBR permanently.

We began our Spain tour in Barcelona with a tour of La Sagrada Familia, a beautiful cathedral that has been a work in progress for 125 years, followed by our first concert at Parroquia Sant Ramon de Penyafort, a beautiful neighborhood church right on the streets of Barcelona.

After the heat of Barcelona, we were ready to head into the hills of Burgos. Our second concert was held in a village of 640 inhabitants, Covarrubias. The church, Parroquia San Cosme y San Damian, was a beautiful setting for a gathering of curious villagers to hear handbells from America.

Continuing our adventure, we toured Pradorey Vineyard where we enjoyed a wine tasting and an afternoon of tapas. Our third concert was held in the Cathedral Vieja de Salamanca with enormous, vaulted ceilings which contributed additional depth and brightness to our music.

Continuing toward Madrid, we visited a medieval castle from the twelfth century, the Alcázar of Segovia, with suits of armor, ancient weapons, and lavishly decorated rooms. The outdoor Patio del Hospital-Santuario de Nuestra Señora de la Caridad de Illescas in the province of Toledo was the location of our final concert. During Brenna Lehman’s arrangement of “Shenandoah”, birds added to the mood with song until the audience applauded and they flew away.

We spent our final day in Segovia and Toledo. We toured Segovia and saw the majestic Roman aqueduct, built in the first century and supplied surrounding cities with water into the 20th century, and appreciated Toledo’s architecture and art from multi-cultural influences throughout its lengthy history including the art of El Greco.

Suncoast Bronze Ringers will always hold dear the sounds of our bells ringing made brighter in cathedrals with the great acoustics, the large appreciative Spanish audiences, and the seamless logistics provided by Witte Travel. Finally, the Suncoast Bronze Ringers are deeply grateful to Mike Lamb, our director, for bringing about our Spain performance tour and making it a memorable experience.





Greensleeves illustration by Walter Crane

INSIDE THE MUSIC: Greensleeves

BY THERESA AGOSTA ROTUNDA,
SUNCOAST BRONZE MEMBER

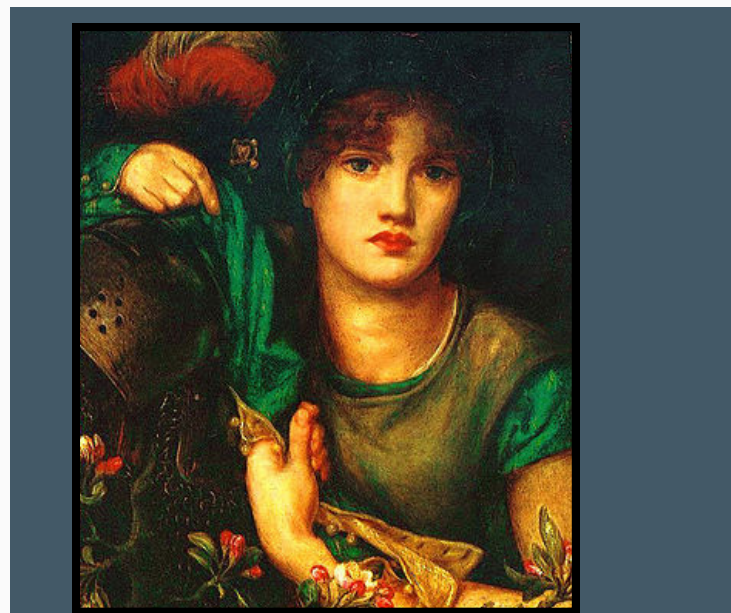
“Greensleeves”, from the Raleigh Ringers Series of handbell music, is the most haunting and romantic piece on Suncoast Bronze Ringers’ Ring Noel CD and one SBR is performing this holiday season along with “Emmanuel Bell Carol”, “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree”, “Believe”, “Winter Wonderland”, and “The First Noel”. Beginning with thirty-second note runs performed expertly by Tami Lamb, on the cymbells, the introduction is followed by the well-known minor melody played on handbells with running arpeggios in the bass and then in the treble with the bass playing the melody on handchimes. “Greensleeves”, arranged by Cathy Moklebus, builds to a richly harmonized climax and includes triangle and wind chimes as well as handchimes. Moklebus’s arrangement of “Greensleeves” captures the emotion of Christ’s birth behind the lyrics of “What Child is This?”, which has made the tune of “Greensleeves” into a popular Christmas selection for centuries.

The poem “What Child Is This?” was written in 1865 by William Chatterton Dix, and begins with a rhetorical question, painting a picture of the nativity with the Christ child on Mary’s lap and angels greeting Him and shepherds watching over the infant Jesus. The next stanza asks the question “Why lies He in such mean estate /Where ox and ass are feeding?”, then foretells the anguish that Christ would suffer in the words “Nails, spear shall pierce Him through/The cross be borne for me, for you.” Finally, the poem ends on a joyful note alluding to the tenet that not only kings brought Him incense, gold and myrrh but peasants equally rejoiced in Jesus’s birth. Upon a spiritual awakening after surviving a near fatal illness, the William Chatterton Dix was moved to write this poem and used the English folk song, “Greensleeves” to put it to song.

Some say Greensleeves was written by Henry the VIII as a love song to Anne Boleyn; however, it is unlikely that Henry VIII who died in 1547 wrote the song as it first appeared in publication in 1580. In addition, Greensleeves is written in the Spanish romanesca style which didn’t reach England until well after Henry’s death. Nevertheless, it was well-known by 1597 when Shakespeare mentioned it in his play “The Merry Wives of Windsor”.

The “Greensleeves” melody has been interpreted by many artists from Johnny Mathis to Elvis to Leonard Cohen to John Coltrane using a variety of different lyrics. Obviously, the tune and not the lyrics is the reason “Greensleeves” has lasted for centuries; Greensleeves is all about the music, and Suncoast Bronze Ringers do their best to portray the melancholy sweetness of Cathy Moklebus’s arrangement of “Greensleeves”.

As decades turn into centuries, the popularity of this song will stay fresh and novel for generations to come.



My Lady Greensleeves by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Suncoast Bronze Ringers

Under the guidance of our Music Director, Michael Lamb, SBR is an advanced community handbell ensemble based in the Tampa Bay area. Formed in 2012, we play a repertoire that delights audiences and promotes the art of handbell ringing through concerts, community events, and educational opportunities. We are members of Area 4 Handbell Musicians of America, a professional society dedicated to the education of ringers and expansion of the art of handbell ringing throughout the United States.

BEHIND THE BELLS

TERI MICHAEL

Teri began ringing handbells when her church at the time acquired a new set of handbells. As music was a big part of her growing-up years she gave handbells a try, and was hooked! When her working years were complete she began looking for a way to stay busy and a friend encouraged her to audition for Suncoast Bronze. And yes, she stays busy!

If you see her before a concert PLEASE don't tell her to "Break a Leg." Teri missed out on the 2020 Christmas concerts due to a broken ankle on dress rehearsal day and 2022's Christmas concerts due to a pinched nerve in her shoulder. As this goes to press, Teri is ready to perform this year with no broken bones!

Interested in Suncoast Bronze Ringers performing for your event OR in auditioning for Suncoast Bronze Ringers?

Contact Michael Lamb, Director, at 217-685-9212 or email at suncoastbronze@gmail.com



CONNECT WITH US:

WWW.SUNCOASTBRONZERINGERS.COM



More Pictures from our trip to Spain 2023!



DON'T MISS OUR WINTER CONCERTS!

Suncoast Bronze Ringers Presents...



**Ring
NOEL**

Suncoast Bronze Ringers

DECEMBER 2, 2023 | 7PM
ADVENT CHRISTIAN VILLAGE
For Tickets call 386-658-5343
10680 Dowling Park Dr. Live Oak, FL 32060

DECEMBER 5, 2023 | 7PM
BELL SHOALS BAPTIST CHURCH
Free Will Offering
2102 Bell Shoals Rd. Brandon, FL 32511

DECEMBER 16, 2023 | 4PM
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Free Will Offering
4826 Bartelt Rd. Holiday, FL 34690 *

DECEMBER 17, 2023 | 4PM
LAKE MAGDALENE CHURCH
Free Will Offering
2902 West Fletcher Ave Tampa, FL 33618

The Suncoast Bronze Ringers are gearing up for the holidays with an exciting lineup of songs including "Greensleeves", "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch", "Little Saint Nick", and "Believe" from The Polar Express. Get in the holiday spirit and join us for a festive performance!

www.suncoastbronzeringers.com