



Carillon Recitals

Century Tower

The University of Florida
Monday, April 14, 2025
6:15 PM

Michael Dixon
Honors Carillon Recital

Sonatine (2001)

Stefano Colletti (b. 1973)

Sonata for Carillon (2005) Stephen Rush (b. 1958)

1. Momentum
2. Flux
3. Variations on *Holy Manna*

Sonata for Violin and Continuo, Op. 5 No. 8

Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713), arr. Gerken

1. Prelude
2. Allemande
3. Sarabande
4. Gigue

Sonata for Carillon (2025)

Michael Dixon (b. 2003)

1. Nocturne
 - 1a. Islands
2. Fugue
 - 2a. Stream
3. Toccata

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Program Notes

Stefano Colletti - *Sonatine*:

Stefano Colletti (b. 1973) is a composer and carillonneur who serves as Professor of Carillon at the Conservatoire Nationale de Région de Douai. Colletti wrote his *Sonatine* in 2001 for the Singing Tower carillon at Bok Tower Gardens, in celebration of its 16th Carillon Festival. This piece is in the three sections, with the two shorter, rhapsodic sections bookending an impassioned theme and variations. This piece showcases the standard carillon techniques of melodic tremolando and “lightning bolt” arpeggiation (named after its unique notation), in which certain notes in the arpeggio are repeated so that it can be performed more smoothly.

(Program notes by Dixon)

Stephen Rush - *Sonata for Carillon*:

Sonata for Carillon was written for Jeffrey Bossin, carillonneur at the Tiergarten Carillon in Berlin, Germany. Bossin premiered the work in Berlin in September of 2005. The *Sonata for Carillon* is in three movements (fast/slow/fast). The last movement is a variation on the Southern Harmony hymn *Holy Manna*. The composer provides verse four of the hymn as an inscription above the movement, clearly marking this work as “in Tempus Bellum.” During the writing of this movement U.S. soldiers were found to be abusing Iraqi prisoners of war at Abu Graib Prison.

Inscription above *Variations on Holy Manna*:

V. 4: Is there here a trembling jailer,
Seeking grace, and fill'd with fears
Is there here a weeping Mary,
Pouring forth a flood of tears?
Brethren, join your cries to help them
Sisters, let your prayers abound;
Pray, O! pray, that holy manna
May be scatter'd all around.

(Program notes by the composer)

Arcangelo Corelli - *Sonata for Violin and Continuo*:

Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713) was an Italian composer and violinist of the Baroque era, arguably the first composer to achieve widespread recognition through his instrumental music alone. While the other pieces on this program are modern compositions written after the “deconstruction” of sonata form, this work was written before the form’s conception. Before the Classical period, the term *sonata* was much more general; it originally meant a piece played by one or more instrumentalists, rather than a piece involving vocalists (known as a *cantata*). As was typical at the time, the *Sonata* was written as a solo melodic line with figured bass accompaniment. Albert Gerken, the carillonneur-composer who arranged the work for carillon, filled out the designated harmonies in a manner that is comfortable to play and well-suited to the rich sonority of the bells.

(Program notes by Dixon)

Michael Dixon - *Sonata for Carillon*:

In the spirit of breaking musical conventions, I’ve decided to write this program note in the first person point of view. You’ve probably noticed that every piece on this program is a sonata; if you’re well-versed in music theory, you may have also noticed that none of these sonatas apply sonata form! This rigid formal structure rose to popularity during the Classical period (ca. 1750 - 1820) and was frequently used in the first movement of multi-movement works such as sonatas, symphonies, and string quartets.

One goal of this program is to examine the options at contemporary composers’ disposal; we can choose to embrace, adapt, disregard, and/or intentionally subvert traditions established by the music that came before us. For this particular piece, I found it musically satisfying to work with abstractions of standard forms. For example, the *Nocturne* doesn’t have a strict exposition, development and recapitulation, nor does it have any specific tonal relationships between sections, but it does have two contrasting themes that interact with each other and exchange certain ideas. The *Fugue* isn’t entirely fugal, as many of the “episodes” break out of polyphony to feature the movement’s central polyrhythm in an arguably post-minimalist style. The overall structure of this sonata is also unconventional. Three larger movements are connected by two shorter, more experimental “interludes” so that the entire piece is performed without pause.

Thank you so much for attending my recital. It is a joy to share my music with you, and your support means the world!

(Program notes by the composer, who is also Dixon)

About the performer

Michael Dixon is a fourth-year music student at the University of Florida, where he is pursuing a B.M. in Music Composition with the intention to graduate in May 2025. He began studying the carillon in August 2022 under Dr. Laura Ellis, and he passed the Carillonneur Exam at the 2024 GCNA Congress. Dixon has written several pieces for carillon and is the composer co-recipient of the 2023-24 Franco Student Composer-Performer Pair Grant. He will continue to perform and compose for carillon as he attends the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music in pursuit of his M.M. in Composition, starting in August 2025.

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Carillon music is performed Monday thru Friday from 12:35-12:50 & 4:55-5:10 when classes are in session. For more information about carillon performances, please visit the carillon website: www.arts.ufl.edu/carillon

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About the Carillon

Century Tower, a monument constructed in 1953 in memory of students killed in World War I and World War II, houses a cast-bell carillon. By definition, a carillon must have at least 23 fixed, finely tuned bells. The Century Tower Carillon has 61 bells, encompassing a range of 5 octaves, and is one of the largest university carillons in the United States. There are fewer than 200 traditional carillons in all of North America, and only four can be found in the state of Florida.

The carillon is played by hand from a clavier or keyboard, with 61 keys (called “batons”) for the hands as well as 25 pedals for the feet, in a small room just below the bell chamber. The carillonneur moves the clappers of the bells with the batons and pedals while the bells remain stationary.

Through the efforts of Professor Emeritus Willis Bodine, the world-class carillon housed in Century Tower was purchased for approximately \$200,000 with funds accumulated from student fees over several generations of students. These funds were earmarked by the Board of Regents and the Legislature for campus improvements in the performing arts. The carillon purchase was endorsed unanimously by the Student Senate in 1976.

The original 49 bells housed on the top floor of the tower were cast in 1978 by the firm of Koninklijke Eijsbouts (Royal Dutch Bell Foundry) of Asten, The Netherlands. The bronze bells were tuned at the foundry by carefully shaving metal from the interior of the bells and will never need re-tuning. The bells are hung individually from stainless steel bolts on a massive steel frame. The largest bell, the “bourdon,” stands five feet tall, is five feet in diameter and weighs about 7,000 pounds.

A \$450,000 gift from the estate of Larry A. Webb of St. Augustine, FL, made possible major upgrading of the carillon in 2002. The renovation, carried out by Eijsbouts, included the installation of 12 additional bells (for a total of 61), improvements in the playing action, and new performance and practice claviers.

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