

38th Annual Summer Carillon Series at Middlebury

August 11, 2023

6:00–7:00 PM

Middlebury Chapel and surrounding lawns

Charles Semowich

Carillonneur, The Riverside Church, NYC

1. Arirang traditional Korean arr. Daniel Guo
2. Eighteen “Variations on Chopsticks” for Carillon Albert Gerken
3. Music for Carillon #3 John Cage
4. The Swan Camille Saint-Saens, arr. Arie Abbenes
5. Fields of Gold Sting, arr. Joey Brink
6. City of Stars from La La Land Justin Hurwitz, Benjamin Pasek, Justin Paul arr. Joey Brink
7. Summer Concerto, Op. 8 No. 2 Antonio Vivaldi arr. Arie Abbenes

Each selection will be identified by the ringing of a single bell.

Biography



Charles Semowich holds a BA from the University at Binghamton, an MFA from Catholic University of America, and a PhD from International College. He studied organ privately and at the University at Binghamton, and studied carillon at the University of Michigan and privately with George Matthew Jr., Carlo Van Uft, and Ellen Dickinson. He performs at the carillon at Albany City Hall, including performances for three governors' inaugurations and other special events, and has performed concerts in New England, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. He has composed many pieces for carillon, some of which have been published by Fenwick Parva Press, Friends of the Albany City Carillon, SheetMusicplus, and DeLaetsburg Press. In 2019, Charles was appointed the fifth carillonneur at The Riverside Church (NYC) which is considered to be the largest carillon in the world. He was appointed Grand Organist for the Grand Lodge of Masons in the State of New York in 2022. He is an active visual artist and has exhibited widely. Charles is the author of six books and has been included in Who's Who in America.

About the Carillon

In the late Middle Ages, life was regulated by one large town bell tolling the hour. Over time, several small bells were programmed to play a melody alerting the people that the hour was about to strike. Many towns became competitive with increasingly beautiful melodies announcing the hour, and they were frequently changed—a laborious process of setting pins in a large rotating drum. In 1510, simultaneously in Oudenarde, Netherlands and Lubeck, Germany, a keyboard was added to the rank of little bells—voilà, a carillon! Now the town could have an unlimited number of melodies.

A carillon comprises at least 23 tuned bells arranged in a chromatic scale; less than 23 bells is a chime. A “full carillon” denotes at least 47 bells/four octaves. A “grand carillon” denotes four and a half octaves/ 53 bells or more. Middlebury’s carillon is 48 bells, a harmonious mix of American and French bells installed in 1985. Today there are about 750 carillons in the world; 178 of those are in the US.

Visit go.middlebury.edu/carillon for more information.