

Chimesmaster's Corner

Linda Li '22, Head Chimesmaster

It has been a hectic and exciting year for the Cornell Chimesmasters! They've shown resilience and found ways to connect with one another and with the Cornell community during the pandemic.

Spring semester began with our annual chimesmaster competition, but this time there was a twist—the entire competition had to be planned around a modified academic calendar while complying with COVID-19 safety protocols. Many aspects of the competition, such as the silent auditions and judged concerts, were adapted to reduce the pressure that competes feel during the competition. The newest chimesmasters from fall 2020 were paired with more experienced chimesmasters so that they could gain coaching experience. Our hard work paid off, and in early May, we welcomed new chimesmasters Vivian Zhao '23, Elisabeth Wang '23, Cameron Carr '23, and Chenchen Lu '23.

Last summer, the campus enjoyed daily concerts thanks to so many chimesmasters in residence. We were allowed to resume duets at the end of May for the first time since March 2020. For me, my most memorable moments from the past year came in the weeks following the return of duets. Not only was I able to play some of my favorite pieces on the chimes,

I also got to re-experience the delight and novelty as the newest chimesmasters played their first duet concerts. Over the next few months, we performed nearly 300 concerts, which included specialty concerts to celebrate Reunion, Juneteenth, and Pride Month, as well as the return of the Summer Sunday Sunset Series.

With the start of the fall semester, we played Orientation concerts as well as our annual Welcome Concert. Chimesmasters in tower costumes handed out chimes stickers. In September, we participated in Cornell ReSounds and performed "Cetus: Life After Life," an experimental duet of whale songs and bells composed by a Cornell music professor. We hosted a Halloween concert (complete with the Great Chord at midnight), and in December, we played Christmas and Hanukkah tunes for the Cornell Chorus and Glee Club's Lessons and Carols.

Being a chimesmaster has taught me the power of music and helped me to realize how important the chimes are to the Cornell and Ithaca communities. I am immensely grateful for the unforgettable experience and the amazing people I've met along the way.

Linda Li graduated in December and is currently completing her MEng degree in the College of Engineering studying biological engineering.



PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

Linda Li '22 has been playing the bells since her first year at Cornell. Linda plays flute and trumpet in the Big Red Pep Band and plays ice hockey.

Connect to the Cornell Chimes All Year Long!

- Instagram @CornellChimes
- Facebook: facebook.com/chimes.cornell
- Join the chimesmasters' private Facebook group or alumni email list. Email chimes@cornell.edu to learn more.



PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

Notes from the Chimes Advisor

Jen Lory-Moran '96, '97

For me, 2021 demonstrated our commitment to finding ways to continue our traditions, adapting them as needed to “make it work.”

- In March, the chimesmasters had a master class via Zoom with Dr. Tiffany Ng and members of the Cornell Music Department. She spoke to us about interpreting and performing new music for chimes. We then observed Kevin Ernste, Annie Lewandowski, Christopher Miller, and Mark Gotham “workshop” with a chimesmaster the pieces they had written for the Cornell Chimes.
- Also in March, we enjoyed hearing Bob Feldman '66, '75 and Jenny Xia '13 play a delightful livestream concert on the 11-bell chime in Newton, Massachusetts.
- In May and December, my family and I sat outside the tower and enjoyed impressive recitals by our graduating seniors. Both events were also livestreamed for distant

audience members and those who were not as ready to sit in the rain and cold!

- Throughout June, the GCNA and World Carillon Federation held their congress remotely. The theme was “Broadening Our Repertoire: Carillon Music for Everyone” and the congress featured concerts recorded at towers around the globe—an exciting bonus to make up for a remote congress.
- This fall I took an eight-week campanology class offered by the North American Carillon School, taught remotely by Luc Rombouts from Belgium.
- In October, we held our second virtual Chimes Advisory Council meeting. We enjoyed the participation of many alumni who are not usually able to make the trip to Ithaca.

We would all rather meet in person than through our computer screens, but I think that the ways we have found to connect are amazing, as are many of the benefits that have resulted from making these events accessible from anywhere in the world.



An annual newsletter of the Cornell Chimes

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PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

Favorite pieces to play:
“Summertime,”
“Somewhere Over the
Rainbow,” and
“Say Something.”

Student Spotlight

Name: Kayla Shames (KMDS)

Class Year: 2022

College/Major: A&S, linguistics and music double major

Number of Years as a Chimesmaster: 3

Favorite chimes pieces to play: “Summertime,” “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” and “Say Something.” The first two are beautifully simple arrangements that really highlight the different colors of the chimes. “Say Something,” with its slow pulsing high D pedal against crunchy dissonances and flowing syncopation in the melody—every time I play it I’m captivated by the expressivity and emotion in the piece.

Favorite piece you arranged for the chimes: “Doctor Worm” by They Might Be Giants.

As a member of the Big Red Marching Band, this is a favorite of our repertoire, and it really translated well into a raucous and energetic duet on the chimes!

Musical interests beyond chimes: I’m a member of the Big Red Marching Band and the Cornell Chorus and an occasional member of the Klezmer Ensemble. I love music, and I’m always on the hunt for new and interesting musical opportunities. I also compose music and, in addition to chimes arranging, write music for a friend’s podcast.

What drew you to the chimes? I’m a multi-instrumentalist at heart and particularly an enthusiast of odd and unique instruments, so naturally I was drawn to the opportunity to play in a tower. Along the way, during the

competition, I really came to value the opportunity for my music to reach so many people and to brighten people’s day.

You took a leave of absence during the 20–21 year, how did you spend your time?

I did linguistics research developing assistive text-to-speech software. It was a wonderful experience to get to do linguistics full-time after just studying it in the classroom for so many years.

Post-graduation plans: Pursue a PhD in linguistics and eventually go on to do linguistic research as a career—all, of course, while on the lookout for other chimes and carillons to play!

Thank you to our generous alumni and friends for your gifts to the Cornell Chimes this year. Your gift today will make an immediate and lasting impact on the program. Learn more at chimes.cornell.edu/giving.

Practice Stand Refurbishment

Marisa LaFalce '96

Like a well-loved car that needs a transmission rebuild, the practice stand got a much-deserved refurbishment over winter break. It began service in 1999 as part of the expansion and tuning of the Cornell Chimes. Built by Meeks, Watson, and Company, the practice stand is used heavily by chimesmasters and compets.

Visitors passing by McGraw Tower often hear the distant jingle of the practice stand on the third floor of the tower. The stand resembles the playing stand, except that the levers and pedals connect to hammers which strike tuned metal bars—similar to a xylophone.

The practice stand is great for warming up and practicing choreography. However, musicians must also practice silently on the main playing console to master dynamics. Striking equal-weighted hammers against metal bars is a very different feel than striking levers that pull cables and move clappers of varying weights. (The high A bell has a 15-pound-clapper while the low-C-hour-bell-clapper weighs in at 250 pounds!)

In December 2021, the practice stand was disassembled and trailered back to Ohio. While at the foundry, the wooden levers were replaced and more durable mechanical actions were built for the hammer strike. The stand was brought back to campus the first week in February in time to start the annual chimes competition.

The chimesmasters are grateful to have their beloved stand back and stronger than ever.

In Remembrance

Chimesmasters who passed away since the publication of our last newsletter: Elizabeth F. Allen '45, John Hoare '56, '57 and spouse Mary Jane Hoare

Chimes Music Library Highlights

3,203

songs in chimes music library

131

songs added to library in 2021

164

songs propped in 2021*

Notable Categories

2021

arrangement & prop competition

BIPOC composer LGBTQ composer
female composer
easy duets (for chimesmaster & mortal)

Most Arrangements

Fall 2021

27 Chenchen Lu
21 Linda Li
13 Elisabeth Wang

**Before acceptance into the library, a song must be "propped" by the composer/arranger, and chimesmasters must vote it in.*