Jef Denyn is given credit for founding the first school of carillon performance. The Royal Carillon School “Jef Denyn” in Mechelen, Belgium was founded in 1922 and is still training carillonneurs today. Denyn was the first to give performances on the carillon in which audiences were treated to a full hour of a variety of pieces including his own compositions—his summer evening concerts were well attended and contributed to the modern renaissance of the carillon. Through the Royal Carillon School, Denyn encouraged composers to write for the instrument and he established a defined curriculum for the study of the carillon.

At the age of 25, Antonio Vivaldi was ordained in 1703 and became known as Il Prete Rosso (the Red Priest) due to his red hair, a family trait. In the same year he was appointed Master of the violin at the Pio Ospedale della Pietà (Devout Hospital of Mercy), an orphanage in Venice, where his orchestra became well-known in Italy and abroad. Best known for his Quattro Stagioni (Four Seasons), Vivaldi wrote many concertos for various instruments. This Concerto was written for lute and has been adapted to the modern classical guitar. The ethereal middle movement is flanked by first an allegro in 4/4 time and lastly by a giga in 6/8.

Isaac Albéniz was a child prodigy performing worldwide piano concerts by the age of 15. He is best known for his piano music which has been transcribed for the classical guitar. Leyenda is the 5th movement from his Suite Española Op. 47.

New compositions for the carillon are among the many contributions made to carillon art in the 20th and 21st. When Jef Denyn was founding his carillon school, he recognized the need to develop a performance repertoire for this instrument. Since then many composers have written for the carillon; so many, in fact that one could say that the instrument is enjoying its third Golden Age. Through publications by the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America and several other publishers of carillon music, a vast and varied repertoire has emerged. Thornock’s Sonatine Archaïque was published in 2007 by the GCNA which offers many new titles every year. The GCNA also encourages new compositions for the carillon by sponsoring a bi-yearly competition.

Wendell Westcott dedicated many new carillons in his long career. A well-respected teacher and performer at Michigan State University from 1941-1987, Westcott is also well-known for his arrangements and compositions. This Toccatina was written to showcase the new highest treble bells at the Kirk in the Hills, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan which houses a carillon of 77 bells (16 bells more than Century Tower’s respectable set of 61).

A Polish folk dance in triple meter, this Mazurka is imbued with the artistry which Chopin brought to all of his compositions. Likewise, Chopin elevates the Valse (Waltz) through his works for solo piano. In 1847 Chopin wrote this short waltz, giving it the title petite chien (little dog)—presumably depicting a dog chasing its tail. His publisher labeled it “minute” to mean “small”. Although its tempo marking is molto vivace it was never intended to be played in 60 seconds. This is good news to the carillonneur since it is neither practical or artistically appropriate to play it at such a speed on the carillon. Never the less, it is an exciting way to end a recital.
Lee Cobb - Biographical Sketch

A native of Atlanta, Georgia, Lee Cobb’s interest in the carillon began while he was a student at Indiana University where he played the 11 bell McShane chime on the historic campus. Lee graduated in 1989 from Indiana with the bachelor’s degree in organ performance.

In the late 90’s, Lee received instruction in carillon from Stephen Knight of Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama, and later from Dr. Linda Dzuris of Clemson University, in South Carolina.

In 2003 Lee received the Master of Music in organ performance from the University of Florida. In 2004, Lee passed his advancement examination with the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America, becoming a full voting member. Currently, Lee is the Assistant Carillonneur and Librarian at the Historic Bok Sanctuary in Lake Wales, Florida, where he plays daily carillon recitals and oversees the Anton Brees Carillon Library. Additionally, he is Parish Musician at The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd in Lake Wales. In Florida, Lee has made numerous appearances with the Gainesville Civic Chorus, the Willis Bodine Chorale and the Lake Wales Chorale as a tenor soloist.

In 2006 Lee was awarded 2nd prize honors in the Johan Franco Carillon Composition Competition sponsored by the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America for his Sonata for Carillon. A commissioned and published composer, Lee has many choral and organ compositions to his credit. Lee’s Suite for Carillon and Valse Capriccio are available through American Carillon Music Editions.

Carillon Music from Century Tower

The Sunday Afternoon Concert Series continues with programs on June 15th, July 20th, and August 17th at 3:00 p.m. Currently on summer hiatus, the daily carillon series is performed while classes are in session from 12:35 – 12:50 p.m. The series will resume Monday, August 25th.

For more information about carillon performances please visit the carillon website: www.arts.ufl.edu/carillon

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A Carillon Recital

Lee Cobb, Carillonneur

Sunday, May 18, 2008
Century Tower
3:00 PM