

Riverside Church in the City of New York

490 Riverside Drive
New York, NY. 10027

Inspired by Olmsted

A Carillon Concert in honor of Frederick Law Olmsted
on the bicentennial of his birth on this day 200 years ago

April 26, 2022 12:05 PM

Charles Semowich, PhD, Carillonneur

Prize winners from the Olmsted200 Carillon Composition Contest

First Prize: Four Miniatures (Bok Tower, US Capitol, Biltmore, Central Park)

Geert D'hollander, Winter Haven, FL

**Second Prize: Four Olmsted Landscapes:
Homage; Niagara Falls; US Capitol Grounds; Biltmore; Central Park**

Peter Paul Olejar, Raleigh, NC

Third Prize: beneath a canopy of trees

Joey Brink, Chicago, IL

Third Prize: Oasis in the City: Change Rings Through

Ellen Dickinson, Wilton, CT

Honorable Mention: Concealed Design

Tom Gurin, Raleigh, NC

“Landscapes move us in a manner more analogous to the action of music than to anything else. Gradually and silently the charm comes over us; the beauty has entered our souls; we know not exactly when and how.”—Frederick Law Olmsted



Olmsted 200 is managed by the National Association for Olmsted Parks, along with founding partners, American Society of Landscape Architects, American Public Health Association, City Parks Alliance, The Cultural Landscape Foundation, The Garden Club of America, The Trust for Public Land, the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, and National Recreation and Park Association.

For more information, tools and resources, visit www.Olmsted200.org. Follow us @olmsted200.



In celebration of Olmsted's legacy, the National Association for Olmsted Parks and Olmsted 200 sponsored a carillon composition competition in 2021, Inspired by Olmsted. An expert jury, chaired by Washington National Cathedral Carillonneur, Edward Nassor, selected five winners. First Prize: Geert D'hollander, Winter Haven, FL, Four Miniatures; Second Prize: Peter Paul Olejar, Raleigh, NC, Four Olmsted Landscapes: Homage; Niagara Falls; US Capitol Grounds; Biltmore; Central Park; Third Prize (tie): Joey Brink, Chicago, IL, beneath a canopy of trees; Ellen Dickinson, Wilton, CT, Oasis in the City: Change Rings Through; Honorable Mention: Tom Gurin, Raleigh, NC, Concealed Design.

Information on the performer

Charles Semowich was appointed the fifth carillonneur at Riverside Church in 2019. He studied the carillon at the University of Michigan, the North American Carillon School and privately with George Matthews, Jr. and Ellen Dickerson. He has been a carillonneur at the carillon at Albany City Hall. He has performed for the inaugurations of two governors of New York State and at many special programs. He has given concerts on carillons throughout the northeast and New England. He has written three books of carillon music and arrangements. He has served as organist at several institutions. He is the author of 6 books and is an exhibiting artist.

Bios of Prize Winners

First Prize

Belgian-American composer Geert D'hollander has studied piano, chamber music, choral and orchestral conducting, fugue and composition at the Royal Conservatory in Antwerp, Belgium, and graduated from the Royal Carillon School, with honors. He has composed more than 80 compositions, mostly commissions for carillon, and has been first prizewinner in more than 30 international competitions. In 1997, D'hollander was appointed University Carillonist and Professor of Carillon at the Department of Music at the University of California Berkeley. In 2008, he was awarded the Berkeley Medal for "Distinguished Service to the Carillon." Before he moved to Florida, he was teaching carillon and carillon composition at the Royal Carillon School "Jef Denyn" in Mechelen, Belgium, and was city carillonneur of the historical instruments of Antwerp Cathedral (1655), the belfry of Ghent (1660), and the Basilica of Lier (1704). In 2012, D'hollander was named Bok Tower Gardens' (Florida) fourth full-time carillonneur. He frequently gives master classes in Europe and the U.S., and performs all over the world.

Second Prize

Peter Paul Olejar has written music for chamber orchestra, brass ensemble, string quartet, theater orchestra, symphony orchestra, large dance bands, chorus, children's plays, children's chorus, solo vocal music, carillon and organ. He has directed pit orchestras for musical shows and has written orchestrations for the same. His music has been published by Morning Star Music Publishers, The Chalice Press, The Chalice Hymnal, The Guild of Carillonneurs in North America (GCNA) and by American Carillon Music Editions and was recorded by the Atlanta Master Chorale. His Photo Credit: Mike Potthast (Winter Haven, FL) electronic compositions are listed in Repertoire International des Musiques Electroacoustiques Nos 2/3. Olejar arranged the musical accompaniment for Danny Aiello's singing in the Richard Dreyfuss feature film "Once Around." Commissions include "Panegyrikos" for the opening concert of the World Carillon Federation Congress 2000, later played at the inauguration of the president of Duke University.

His carillon piece “et inspiravit” was a winner in the competition for and played at the opening of the Festival for the Arts in Perpignan, France in 2014. Two of his prize-winning pieces were premiered at the GCNA Conference at Yale University in 2016. In addition to his musical activities, he was a Consulting Systems Engineer for the IBM Corporation.

Third Prize

Joey Brink is the sixth University Carillonist at the University of Chicago, where he performs on the 72-bell Rockefeller Memorial Carillon and directs a carillon studio of twenty students. Brink began his carillon studies at Yale University with Ellen Dickinson in 2007; graduated with greatest distinction from the Royal Carillon School in Mechelen, Belgium in 2012; and studied further with Geert D’hollander at Bok Tower Gardens in 2015. He received first prize at the International Queen Fabiola Carillon Competition in Mechelen in 2014, and performed the inaugural recital at Salisbury University in 2017. He has released two albums of carillon music: “Letters from the Sky” in 2016, and “Ripple Effects” in 2020. An award-winning composer for carillon, Brink’s works have been described as “impressionistic,” “shimmering,” and of a “quiet hypnotic power” - Chicago Classical Review. Within GCNA, he co-chairs the Johan Franco composition committee to commission and promote new works for carillon.

Third Prize

Ellen Dickinson is director of bell programs at Yale University, and College Carillonneur at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. More than thirty of her students have completed the exam process to become Carillonneur members of GCNA. In 2020, Dickinson was commissioned by a consortium of colleges to write A New Carillon Book, a beginning carillon lesson book featuring diverse music from many people and places, as well as original music. She has served the GCNA in many capacities, currently as chair of the Sally Slade Warner Arrangements and Transcriptions Competition. Including the recent virtual Congress, Dickinson has hosted three GCNA congresses. She was awarded the GCNA Certificate of Extraordinary Service in 2017. She attended the Summer Academy at the Netherlands Carillon School in Amersfoort, Netherlands, where she studied with Todd Fair. Dickinson has been responsible for commissioning 65 new pieces for carillon, including the largest new music project in the history of the carillon art: “50 for the 50th,” 50 new works in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Yale Memorial Carillon. She holds the Master of Music in organ performance from the Yale School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music, and the Bachelor of Arts in music from Yale College.

Honorable Mention

Tom Gurin, a graduate of Yale University, is a composer and performer whose interests include public music and urban space. At Yale, he earned a degree with honors in music composition studying with Kathryn Alexander and co-chairing the Yale University Guild of Carillonners from 2017-18. Upon completing his degree, he became a U.S. Fellow of the Belgian American Educational Foundation, with whose support he earned an artist diploma “with great distinction” from the Royal Carillon School in Belgium. Afterwards, he became Duke University Chapel Carillonneur. In May 2021, he performed the dedicatory recital of the new carillon at North Carolina State University. Gurin has been a full member of GCNA since 2017. He has performed on carillons around the world, including guest recitals at Princeton University, Longwood Gardens, the University of Michigan, Yale University, and dozens of churches and universities across North America and Europe. Recent carillon composition honors include a Performance and Publication Award through the Johan Franco Composition Competition, as well as first prize in the carillon composition contest of the Festival de Musique Sacrée de Perpignan, both in 2021.

About Frederick Law Olmsted

Frederick Law Olmsted, the visionary father of American landscape architecture, was born on April 26, 1822. 2022 marks the 200th anniversary of his birth. Throughout the anniversary year, the Olmsted 200 national campaign is celebrating Olmsted's life and legacy as author, journalist, city planner, public official, activist and creative genius who transformed the modern American landscape.

The Bicentennial includes national and local events, advocacy and educational outreach across the country. For more information, go to www.olmsted200.org.

Olmsted's philosophy and designs influenced the development of landscapes of beauty throughout the nation, including national, state, and local parks, parkways, college campuses, cities and planned communities, estates, cemeteries and recreation areas. Olmsted and his successor firms designed thousands of landscape projects across the country. His vision of universal access to public parks, open space, and resilient landscape design is more relevant than ever.

Frederick Law Olmsted is widely known as the innovator of the landscape design in the United States. He was responsible for the design of Riverside Park, Central Park, Prospect Park, and many across the country. His sons were involved the design of Sukara Park and the landscaping of Riverside Church.

Many of Olmsted's landscapes or those by the Olmsted Firm are graced by Carillons, including Bok Tower Gardens, Washington National Cathedral, Trinity College (Connecticut), the University of Chicago, and Riverside Church in New York City.

