

A POSTPRANDIAL SPEECH¹

By LEEN 'T HART

Given at the banquet dinner of the 1970 Annual Congress of the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America (GCNA), in Spokane, in the state Washington.



The state Washington in the North West of the USA. – Wikipedia Spokane

Mr. President, Ladies, and Gentlemen:

It is a great honour and a real pleasure for me to be invited to speak at the banquet for this Congress. As a matter of fact, I had no idea what a banquet speech was! I was not certain if it was to praise the food and the cooking or whether I had to warn you to watch your weight so that you would all be slim. After I received more information, I knew more or less what was expected.

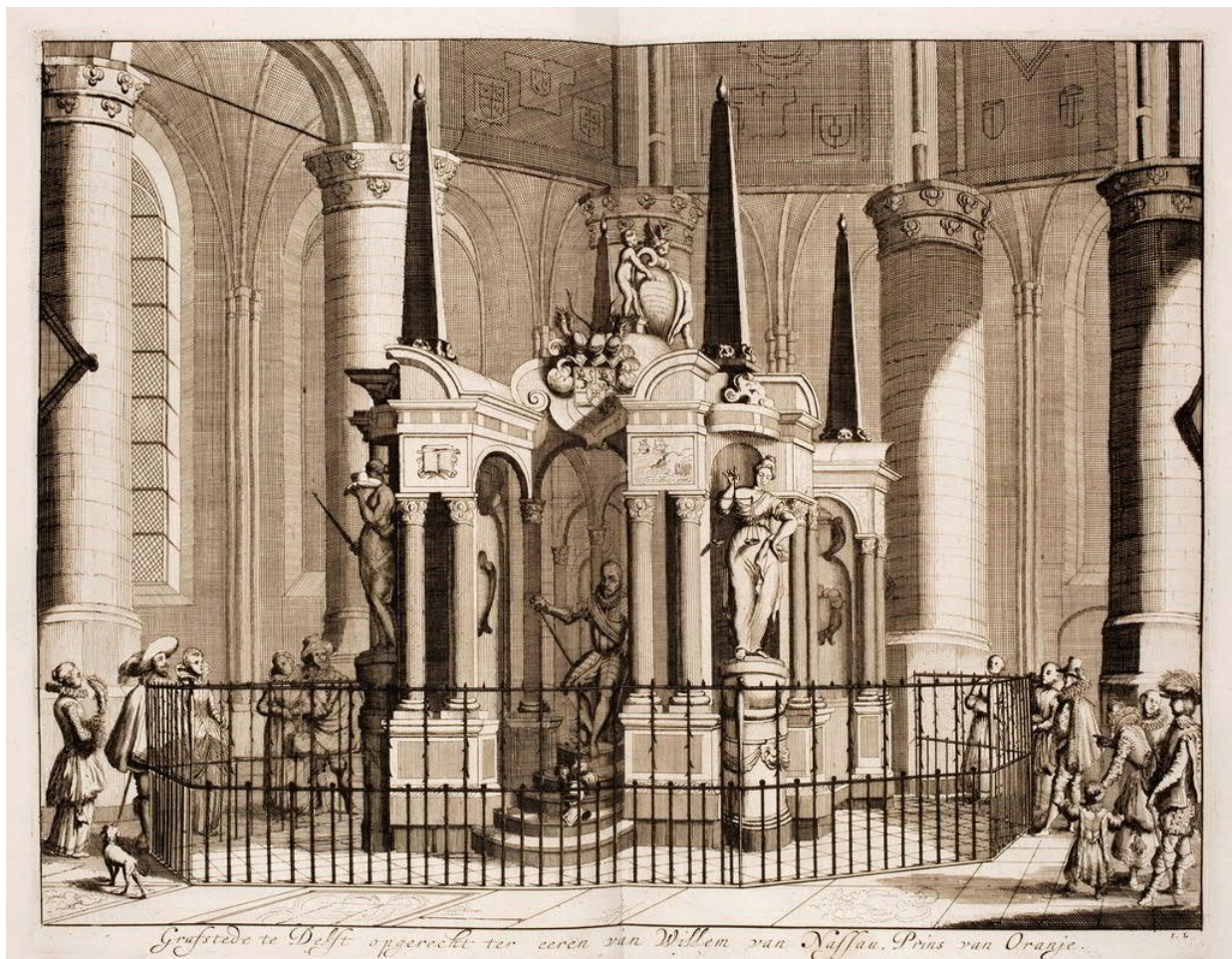
In the invitation Harold Einecke asked me not to be too serious but to be a little bit humorous. I hope you can understand that it is not easy for one to be humorous in a foreign language; however there are times when you may be humorous without knowing it.

Oranges

This reminds me of a story of some years ago in Delft. As you perhaps know, in Delft there is the New Church, built in the 15th century, and the Old Church, which dates from about 1300. All the members of our Royal Family pay their last visit to the New Church. In other words, they are buried there. There is a beautiful tomb and a large crypt in this church.

¹ Edited from the manuscript and illustrated by dr. Laura J. Meilink-Hoedemaker.

Perhaps you are aware of the fact that our Royal Family is from the House of Orange just as the English Royal Family is from the House of Windsor. The original province of Orange was in South-France.



Tomb of Willem van Oranje in the Nieuwe Kerk [New Church] in Delft - Wikipedia

Once, one of our former burgomasters was showing a group of important English guests this New Church and tomb. At a certain moment, he was explaining whom this tomb was for, but he did not tell his guests about the House of Orange. (I hope you can follow me.) Then he said in a serious voice, "Here lie the dead Oranges." (The guests looked all around for oranges, but they couldn't find them anywhere!) That was being humorous without knowing it.

North America

Since I come from Europe, you probably expect that I am going to talk about the European carillons. I might do so, but first I wish to tell you about the development of the carillon in the U.S.A. and Canada. I hope that not everyone of you knows this story.

The art of the carillon is relatively new to the Americas, however, I think that interest in this instrument is continuously increasing.

The only three carillons that were in existence in America before the year 1900 were:

- (a) Notre Dame (Indiana) 23 bells cast by the French bellfounder Bollee (Orleans) in 1866;
- (b) Buffalo (New York) 43 bells from Van Aerschodt (Louvain) in 1870; and
- (c) Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) 25 bells from Van Aerschodt in 1882.

The tuning and tone quality of these carillons were quite poor.

Towards the 20th century

Between 1870 and 1900, the Reverend Mr. Simpson who lived in Sussex, England, carried out some research on several bells. Around 1900, the English bell founder, John Taylor, cooperated with Mr. Simpson to establish rules for the tuning of bells. John Taylor could then make a set of well-tuned bells, and interest in the carillon increased.

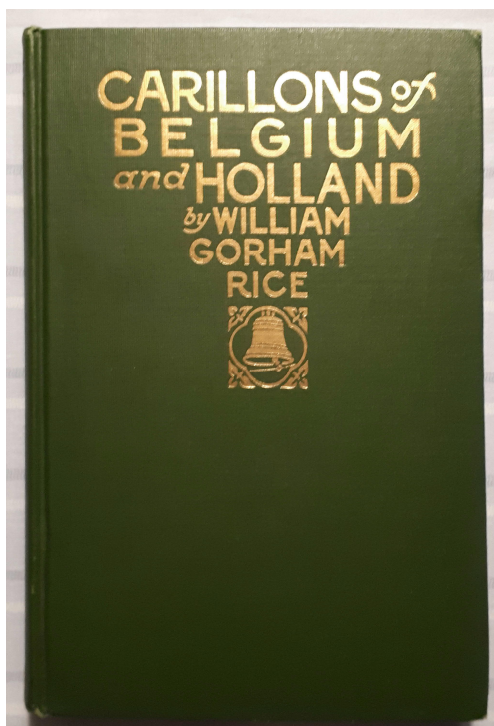
The first well-tuned chime, cast by Taylor, came to America in 1899. It was installed at Iowa State College in Ames, Iowa and was enlarged in 1929 and in 1956 into a fine instrument of 49 bells.

The carillons of America were primarily from European founders - Taylor and Gillett and Johnston, and later Paccard and Petit and Fritsen. The only American foundry capable of delivering tuned series of bells was Meneely from Watervliet, New York. On Sunday, June 21st, I played the Meneely carillon, cast in 1929, that has now been moved from Trinity Church in Philadelphia to the new Trinity Church in Newtown, Pennsylvania. It is a very fine instrument of three octaves, twenty-five bells by Meneely and the upper octave by Petit and Fritsen, which hangs in an open tower.

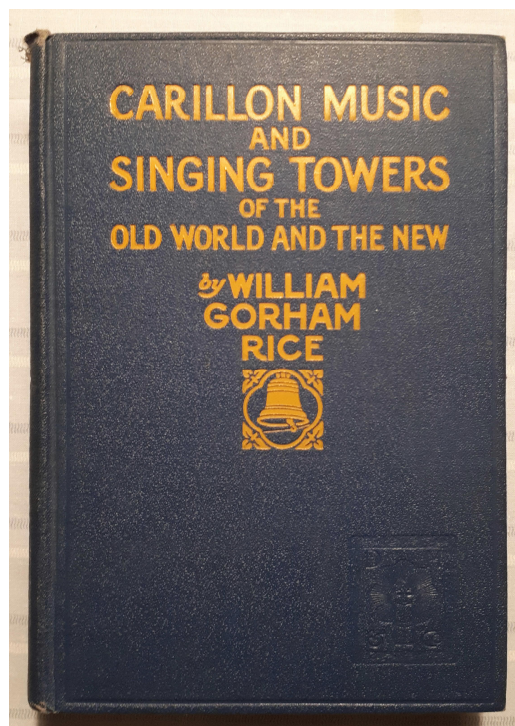
You know the story of Paul Revere and his midnight ride, but do you know that he was also a bell founder? Examples of his work may be found hanging unnoticed in many remote spires and steeples along the Eastern Seaboard.

Interbellum – between the two World Wars

It was not until after the First World War that a well-tuned, complete carillon was installed in America. In 1922, two carillons were installed - one, cast by Taylor, in the Metropolitan Church of Toronto and the other, cast by the other English bell founder, Gillett and Johnston, in the Church of our Lady of Good Voyage, The Portuguese Fisherman's Church in Gloucester, Massachusetts.



Rice 1914 – Collection Meilink



Rice 1935 – Collection Meilink

William Gorham Rice of Albany, New York, was also of great importance in regard to the further development of the carillon. He visited Europe a couple of years before the First World War and was so impressed by the sound of the bells in Holland and Belgium, that he wrote a book which he titled "Carillons of Belgium and Holland." After the war, a second, enlarged edition was published. He titled this "Carillon-music and singing towers of the old World and the New." Since 1922, many carillons have been installed directly or indirectly under his influence.

The second name we meet in the history of the American Carillon Art is Kamiel Lefévere, a Flemisch carillonneur, who inaugurated the carillon of Cohasset, Massachusetts in 1924. This carillon had only 23 bells; but, as a result of Lefévere's playing, 20 bells were added in 1925. In 1928, eight bass bells were also added to bring the carillon to 51 bells.

Both Taylor and Gillett and Johnston installed several carillons in America and Canada before the Second World War. In 1927 and 1928, the following carillons were installed.

In 1927:

Chicago, Illinois	43 bells by Gillett & Johnston
Germantown, Pennsylvania	48 bells by Taylor
Princeton, New Jersey	56 bells by Gillett & Johnston
Ottawa, Canada	53 bells by Gillett & Johnston
Albany, New York	60 bells by Taylor
Toronto, Canada	23 bells by Gillett & Johnston

In 1928:

Lake Wales, Florida	53 bells by Taylor
Indianapolis, Indiana	49 bells by Taylor
Springfield, Massachusetts	48 bells by Taylor

Before the Second World War, there were eighteen small carillons - two octaves or more, eighteen middle-sized carillons - three octaves or more, and twenty-five large carillons of four or more octaves in the U.S.A. and Canada.

After World War II

After 1945, more and more carillons were installed and at the moment [1970] there are more than 125 carillons in the U.S.A. and Canada. In comparison to the Netherlands, however, this is not very much.

There are in our small country, half as big as South Carolina, more than 140 carillons; therefore there is still quite a job for the CCNA to do, to make the carillon a better known instrument.

Perhaps one of the reasons for so many carillons in the Netherlands is the fact that almost every city of any importance and even smaller villages have a carillon. The carillon is a part of the community, and it is usually owned by the whole community. It isn't just a musical instrument to us. No, it is "Our Carillon".

Repertoire

The carillon is not only used for official concerts but also for so called “market recitals.” On market days, which occur one day each week in each city, everyone expects carillon music as it is a part of the atmosphere of both our old and newer cities.



The Nieuwe Kerk of Delft during a market day

Photo Laura Meilink, 1986

On the evening of May 4th, when memorial-services are held in honor of the people who died in the last World War, the carillonneur often has to play. In this case, he usually plays hymns and solemn compositions; but on May 5th, Liberation Day, he has to play as enthusiastic as possible. On that day, he plays such things as patriotic songs, marches, dances, and so on. The carillonneur has also to follow the liturgical year. In addition, he plays for Santa Claus on December 5th. In some cities, Delft for example, a bride and groom can ask for carillon music when they are married in city-hall or church. So you see, the carillon is used for a lot of occasions. Everybody listens to the carillon when it is played - sometimes without knowing it, sometimes with concentration.

Anecdote - keys

This reminds me that once, when I inaugurated the carillon of Culemborg in the Netherlands, I came down after my recital and found the door of the tower locked. I had no key; so I went up again and played several times, the first line of a very well-known folksong called “In the name of Orange”—yes, again from the House of Orange and not of an ordinary orange. It goes like this, “In the name of Orange, open the gate.” And in no time, the door was unlocked. Keys are sometimes real problems. Think of the ride you have to take to obtain the keys of the Netherlands Carillon in Arlington!

I had another problem with a key when I inaugurated the carillon of the Rathaus in Cologne in Germany. I had no trouble with the official concert in the morning but I promised to play again at night. At that time, the Rathaus, the old city hall, was in restoration; and a fence surrounded the tower. I had only a key for the door of the tower. I didn't have the key for the

door in the fence. This was no problem however. I climbed over that fence, but - a lady, living across the street, saw me climbing and called the police to inform them that a burglar was in the Rathaus. I had only climbed a few steps when I heard the sound of police cars with yelling sirens. Fortunately, my wife was still around, and she could explain what had happened. At the end of my program, I played some well-known German folksongs and everybody sang, including the policemen.

Anecdote – Brasil

Another incident involved the inauguration of the carillon of the Cathedral of Sao Paulo in Brazil in 1959. I had to play the first recital at 7:00 p.m. after vespers. In the afternoon, I went to the tower for a final check of the carillon. When I reached the enormous plaza, measuring about 300 feet by 900 feet, in front of the Cathedral, I saw a big crowd. I asked why so many people were around. “But Sir, don’t you know that tonight in the tower of the Cathedral, 66 bells are going to swing? That will be an enormous sound!” That was around 3 o’clock in the afternoon.

At night, the whole plaza was overcrowded. Several estimates went from 120,000 to 200,000 people. Buses couldn’t run. Cars and streetcars were stopped. I can still hear the “Viva, viva, viva” splashing against the tower when I finished the first item of my program, the Brazilian National Anthem.

After one hour of playing, my official program was over. The crowd did not leave, however; and they asked for encores, encores, and encores. So I played for several more hours. It was the first week of January—a warm summer night; and at the end, I was asked to play “Silent

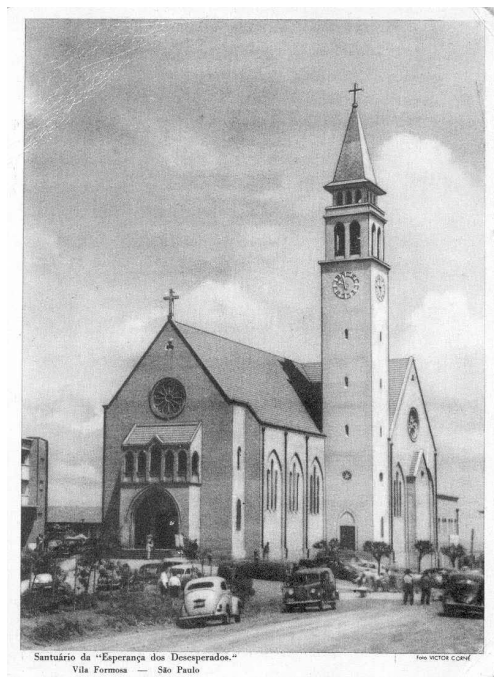


The Cathedral of Sao Paulo and its Plaza

Photo Wikipedia

Night, Holy Night.” I played it as softly as possible on the smallest bells. Everybody, who knows the tone quality of the small Petit and Fritsen bells in Springfield, Illinois, knows how far the tone carries. This enormous crowd was so silent that one could hear a pin drop. When I inaugurated the carillon of Vila Formosa, a suburb of Sao Paulo in Brazil in 1951, there were many listeners, estimated to be between 50,000 and 80,000. I had to play from 3 p.m. till 7 p.m. before the people were satisfied. Even the Archbishop, Don Gonzales de

Vasconceiles Motta (what is in a name), couldn't reach the tower in time. The roads were blocked. Even an escort of the Brazilian motor-police couldn't help him, and you don't know what the Brazilian motor policemen are like.



Vila Formosa 1951 – the church



Vila Formosa 1951 – the crowd

Both pictures from the Leen 't Hart collection

Improvisation

I think the interest of the listeners will definitively increase when the carillonneur comes out of the “ivory tower” and plays other music than just so called “high brow” music. He must remember that he often has listeners with less musical education than he has. This is particularly true in cities where a new carillon is installed and where the public does not know exactly what to expect. I believe that the carillonneur must play some well-known music in his program, too. The most familiar melodies are often folksongs. I think it is important for a carillonneur to improvise on such melodies, bringing them out clearly and simply for all to understand. Sometimes, these should also be played with great virtuosity but, above all, musically. He should not think it is only a folksong or a hymn.

The only stipulation that I would state here is that the melody must have sufficient musical value. I think that we in Europe are lucky that we have a lot of beautiful and musical melodies of high quality. This is particularly true for our old folksongs and hymns which have wonderful melodies. Also of considerable importance is the fact that they are well-known.

American songs

I am afraid that a lot of the real American folksongs are not so well-known here. There are actually several beautiful, original American folksongs of great musical value. I would like to mention the names of a number of them and I would be interested to know if they are well-known to you: “Acres of Clams” (The old settlers’ song), “Black is the color of my true love’s hair”, “Blow candles out”, “Colorado Trail”, “Every night when the sun goes in”, “Haul away, Joe”, “Johnny has gone for a soldier”, “The Riddle song”, “Oh Shenando”.

Some other examples of, perhaps, well-known songs but, in my opinion, of too little musical value, are: "Home on the range", "Down in the valley", "Daisy B" "Old Smokey", "Red River Valley", and "Oh dem golden slippers".

Melodies of great musical value are often found among the Negro-spirituals. These are not to be confused with gospel songs which sometimes are merely commercials. And of course, there are hymns which are often of great value and usually quite well-known. I think Mr. Roy Hamlin Johnson will agree that arranging the hymns for the carillon gives a person great satisfaction.

As a matter of fact, I promised one of my American students that I would start arranging a number of American folksongs. I would appreciate it very much if you would send me melodies of American folksongs, which are rather well-known to the general public, so that I can make a good selection.

Programming

My personal opinion and that of others particularly throughout Europe, based on a tradition of carillon art from over 100 years, is that a well-balanced carillon program for an ordinary recital has to contain:

- a. original carillon-compositions.
- b. arrangements of compositions for other instruments, but only those compositions in which the musical structure must not be changed too much for carillonistic purposes - for instance, the great organ preludes and fugues by Bach, a symphony by Beethoven, or the "Halleluja Chorus" from the Messiah.
- c. folksongs, hymns, negro-spirituals, and, also, newer songs when they have sufficient musical value—for instance, "Summertime" by Gershwin, "Climb Every Mountain" by Rodgers, and even some of the Stephen Forster songs.

The only problem is that the carillonneur must not only be capable of playing his instrument but must also have enough musical education to be able to distinguish the musical value of a melody. It is true that this is difficult, but one has to draw the line somewhere. This line will not be the same for every person so we will get a little bit of variety. As a result of this, don't shoot the person who doesn't think exactly as you do! Also, respect the opinion of a colleague when you can't convince him that your opinion is much better.

Public Relations

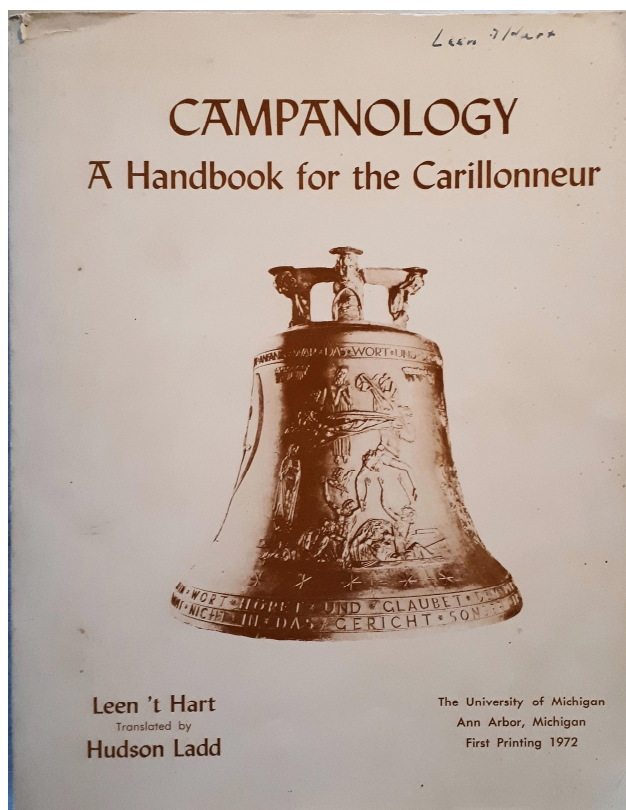
In conclusion, I should like to call your attention to these items of information:

The Netherlands Carillon School has published a catalogue with about 100 carillon-compositions, about 150 arrangements for carillon, and about 150 arrangements of folksongs, hymns, etc. I will send a copy of the catalogue to anyone who is interested and gives me his address. Then, you can order the compositions you like.

CATALOGUS VAN GEELICHTDRUKTE BETAARDWERKEN, ARRANGEMENTEN VOOR BETAARD EN VOLKSLIEDJES. NEDERLANDSE BETAARDSCHOOL, AMERSFOORT. November '71				
Nummer	Componist	Bewerker	Titel	Octaaven
An 1	Anonymus		Fishers Hornpipe	2
And 1	Andriessen J.		Aria all' Aria "Allen moeten samenzweren tegen de oorlog" (Erasmus)("Mankind must conspire against war")	4

Catalogue of November 1971, detail of page 1. – Collection Meilink

Also available in a few months will be the English translation by Dick Ladd of the Campanology Course of the Netherlands Carillon School. If you are interested, mention this also. The compositions of Johan Berghuis, now in the City Archives in Delft, will be published in the near future.



Leen 't Hart / Hudson Ladd - 1970/1972
Collection Meilink

I hope that as many as possible of the American carillonneurs will join the coming World Congress for Carillonneurs in Rotterdam (1972). Included will be interesting concerts, exhibitions, visits to bell foundries, excursions to important carillons, and, of course, sightseeing too.

In conclusion

Well, this is about the end of my speech. I hope I didn't bore you too much. It is my opinion that the Congress, thanks to the organizers, was again a success. My personal thanks for all the kindness and hospitality shown to me and my wife particularly by Dr. and Mrs. Gaiser and Dr. and Mrs. Einecke as well as by Dean and Mrs. Coombs and the Reverend Mr. and Mrs. Parsons. I thank you all for your attention.

I wish you all a pleasant year with much success and well being until the next Congress where, if God will, we all hope to meet again.



GCNA Congress Photo - Spokane 1970.
Arrows: Leen and Rie 't Hart. – Collection Leen 't Hart



Leen 't Hart at the keyboard in Delft - Newspaper 1971