

# Adrian T i e n



yes, it rings a bell!

move

*National Carillon  
Canberra*

**W**elcome to the world of carillon music! In this CD, it doesn't matter whether you are a carillon enthusiast, a professional carillonist, or even if you are only listening to the carillon for the first time, there is something to suit everyone. The title, 'Yes, it rings a bell!' attempts to capture the main purpose of this CD – that is, to demonstrate the variety, versatility and diversity of the carillon as a concert instrument in a way that captivates your imagination. The musical items have been grouped into blocks for your easy reference. On the face of it, this program comprises music from all over the world; however, this CD is by no means only about ethnic music, for the program contains not only folk music but also excerpts from musicals, arrangements of well-known classical works (which encompass everything from baroque to contemporary music), as well as compositions originally written for the carillon. Furthermore, this program is stylistically diverse, as the music may at times be simplistic or virtuosic, homophonic or polyphonic, lyrical or purely rhythmical, traditional or avant-garde. There is even a performance featuring the carillon in a musical collaboration with Chinese musical instruments which is unique not only because it obviously contrasts with solo playing but also because it was the world-first attempt at such a musical combination. In short, you will find something in this program that strikes an accord with your musical inclination.



### American classics (USA)

- 1** The man I love – George Gershwin 2'47"
- 2** Strike up the band – George Gershwin 2'07"
- 3** Rotation – Gary White 3'22"

### From our great German master

- 4** Siciliano, from Sonata in E flat for flute and continuo – Johann Sebastian Bach 2'53"

### Nostalgic bells (British Isles)

- 5** The Bells of Aberdovey – Welsh folk song 2'04"
- 6** Londonderry Air – Irish Melody 4'45"

### Bell extravaganza (Netherlands)

- 7** Ringing Piece from Frans Hals Suite – Piet Kee 4'36"

### Bells of passion (Spain)

- 8** Preludio, from Suite España, Opus 165 – Isaac Albeniz 2'34"
- 9** Preludio, from Cantos de España, Opus. 232 – Isaac Albeniz 7'38"

### Campanella Lingua (Italy)

- 10** Barcarolle, from Serenades I – Ronald Barnes 6'30"
- 11** Sonata L. 33 – Domenico Scarlatti 3'17"

### This is where you find our nation's capital (Australia)

- 12** Home among the gum trees – Australian folk song 2'14"

### Melancholic Bells (Japan)

- 13** Moonlight over the deserted castle – Rentaro Taki 3'52"

### Inspired by Austria

- 14** My favourite things 2'23"
- 15** Edelweiss 3'15"
- 16** 16 going on 17 3'01"

Three excerpts from The Sound of Music by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein

### 'Pictures at an Exhibition' (Russia)

- 17** Old Castle – Modest Musorgsky 5'08"

### Great bells of fire (Belgium)

- 18** Ballade – Jef Rottiers 5'23"

### Ancient bells (China)

- 19** Su-Wu in exile – Old Chinese folk song 4'38"
- Performed by the Su Wen-Ching Chinese music ensemble, with Adrian Tien at the Carillon



## Unique instrument

What is unique about carillon music? To answer this question, it is useful to have some idea of the carillon first: The carillon, unlike bells hung in church towers around the world, is a proper musical instrument which originated in the Low Countries of Europe. A carillon must have more than 23 suspended, stationary bells connected to a manual playing mechanism which can be played by one player. The playing mechanism looks very much like a piano keyboard except that the keys are much larger, longer and heavier than the average piano keyboard. In addition, the keys are not coloured in the same fashion as the black and white piano keys with which we are familiar. Thanks to this mechanism, carillonists don't need to pull ropes—contrary to many a false preconception; all they need to do is to strike the desired bell (or bells) by pressing down the corresponding key on the keyboard.

The bells are connected to the keyboard mechanism, not by ropes, but by steel cables and wire linkages that join the keys on the keyboard to the hammers—called clappers—which are located right inside the bells. When a player presses down a key, this results in the wire drawing the clapper inwards which then strikes against the corresponding bell. Once

a bell has been struck, there is no way of controlling the resonances and the vibrations and indeed, such an 'overtone' effect is that which characterizes the sound of the carillon. Even though the carillon mechanism is actually quite simple, it still took centuries before carillon builders were able to perfect building techniques in the way they connected bells to the keyboard and putting all the mechanisms inside a tower so that the bells and the playing mechanism are positioned in a logical and artistic manner.

The art of bell-casting itself has always been a focal point of research, and in fact, it wasn't until the turn of this century that the Europeans were really able to cast bells which are scientifically tuned. It was in the hands of an English bellfoundry called Taylors that the first properly tuned set of carillon bells came into being, and a remarkable feat it was indeed, considering that England was a relative newcomer in the world of carillon building at the beginning of this century, especially when compared to the long-established bellfoundries on the continent. England was one of the most industrialised countries in the world and it not only had the scientific knowledge to cast quality bells but also the patronage of the rich and famous to develop such an art form. Even today, English bellfounding and particularly the Taylor Bellfoundry is enjoying the

fruits of success. All bells cast in recent decades may be considered state-of-the-art artifacts because once they are cast, they stay perfectly in tune and never have to be tuned again.

Another interesting preconception people have is that carillons are church instruments. Historically speaking, it is true that the origin of the carillon is very closely linked with the church and, in fact, it was church bells which had paved the way for the idea of putting bells together into a harmonically interesting set. Once this idea had been adopted, the number of bells in a set began to grow from 1 bell to 23 or more bells. In the period of the Golden Age when the Low Countries prospered from triumphs in navigation, trade and colonisation overseas, cities and towns in The Netherlands and Belgium in particular embarked on the race of carillon building and, for some time, the wealth of a city was reflected by the size of its carillon and the number of bells it had. This was because, during that period, there were few items as symbolic and yet as costly as sets of carillon bells which people could use to proudly display their city's wealth and prosperity. Subsequently, the carillon grew out of church bells and evolved into not only an independent musical instrument in its own right but also, more importantly, as a symbol of prestige and affluence. Many carillon bells have been allocated their own

towers which are not connected to a church in any way either physically or musically and which are often located next to a public square. Nowadays the music you hear from a carillon is often secular and played mostly for the general public, usually during market days.

In essence, carillons are more standardized than church bells and are used on secular rather than religious or ceremonial occasions.

## The carillon

I feel privileged to be a resident of Canberra not only because it is a great city to live in but also because this city is home to one of the most beautiful and significant carillons in the world, situated in the heart of our Nation's Capital with a backdrop of willows, clear blue sky and water that glistens in the sun. The tower is lit at night, providing a magnificent landmark in the National Capital.

Located on Aspen Island, Lake Burley Griffin, the National Carillon was a gift from the British Government to the people of Australia to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the National Capital. Queen Elizabeth II accepted the National Carillon on behalf of Australians on 26 April 1970. John Douglas Gordon, after whom the Aspen Island footbridge is now named, played the inaugural recital.

The Taylor Bellfoundry was used because of its worldwide renown and because it was British.

The seemingly delicate but nevertheless sturdy carillon tower is constructed of three enormous columns of ferrous concrete blocks (comprising quartz and opal chips) which form a tripod shape. It is the prizewinning design of a West-Australian architectural firm named Cameron, Chisholm & Nicol who won the international competition which had been held specifically for the purpose of finding a suitable design for the National Carillon. The tower rises up to a height of 50 metres and enables the music of the bells to drift in a 100-metre radius through its surrounding gardens and across the lake.

Inside the tower, there are 53 bells made of bronze comprising an alloy of 80% copper and 20% tin. The lowest bell, called a bourdon, weighs over 6 tonnes. At the other end, the smallest bell weighs 7 kilograms. All 53 bells have corresponding clappers which are made of soft cast iron and suspended inside each stationary bell, approximately 4 centimetres away from it. These clappers are put into action when the carillon is played manually (that is, by fists and feet). A separate system of operation involving the 5 low bells allows the automatic quarter hour striking of the Westminster chimes.

The frame that hangs all the bells

is cast from steel and iron – as opposed to wooden beams which characterise the structural composition of so many bell frames found in The Low Countries. The bells are organised in rows on the frame with the larger clapper bells at the bottom and the small high bells at the top. The bell chamber is located directly above the keyboard room.

The keyboard room accommodates both the carillon keyboard proper and the practise console. Both of these and the stool were all made from one single century-old oak beam imported from North America. Being such a large instrument, the playing action can be quite sluggish.

A great range of musical expression is obtainable in the hands of a competent carillonist. Carillon 'schools' are well established in Europe and North America and carillonists regularly participate in international recitals. The carillon can also be played in concert with other instruments, as the last track of this CD demonstrates.

The National Carillon plays a unique role in the community. It is regularly used in local, national or international festivities, such as the renowned annual spring celebration, "Floriade", which attracts thousands of visitors to the nation's capital each year. But the National Carillon is an important landmark and attraction of Canberra in its own right and as such is a must-see for all who visit this city. National



Sydney University), it ranks among the best in the world. The National Carillon is a wonderful asset to our Nation's Capital which is located in one of the most desirable positions anywhere in the world. It has been described as a timeless monument that will endure. The National Carillon is centrally located in the middle of the city on an island which makes it eye-catching and attractive; at the same time, it is embraced by serene surroundings of the lake, the

Carillon recitals are performed throughout the year by local and visiting carillonists. All styles of music are represented, from arrangements of popular songs to compositions specially written for the

carillon. The National Carillon is managed by the National Capital Authority.

Even though the National Carillon in Canberra is one of only two playable carillons in Australia (the other at the

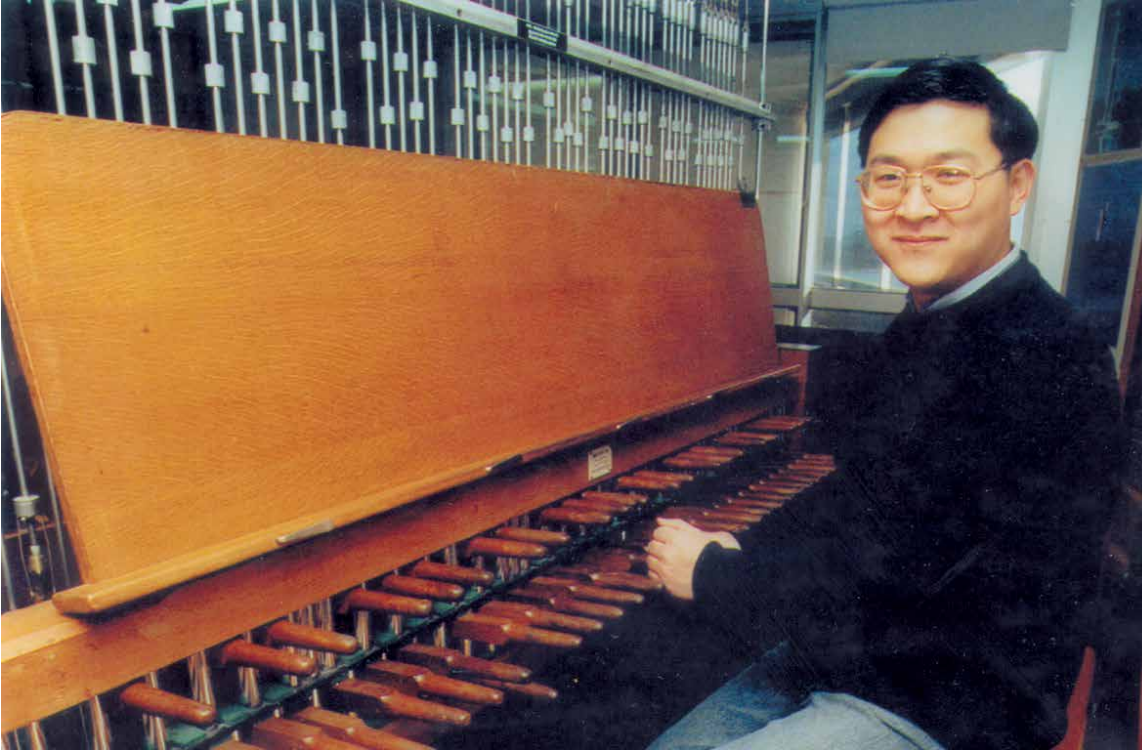
gardens and the hills. Carillon recitals are performed in a noise-free setting and to most overseas carillonists this is one of the most enviable attributes of the National Carillon.

## Adrian Tien

Adrian Tien was born in Taiwan but grew up in Australia from an early age. He holds Postgraduate degrees in music (piano and musicology) and linguistics from the Australian National University in Canberra. For a number of years, he has been a regular carillon recitalist at the National Carillon in Canberra. His initial carillon studies took place at the Canberra School of Music with Joan Chia. Adrian subsequently studied with Bernard Winsemius at the Netherlands Carillon School in 1998 and became the only living Australian to have obtained a final diploma from that institution. In addition, Adrian is also a full carillonneur member with the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America.

Adrian's diverse interests are not only in playing the standard repertoire but also arranging and composing for the carillon; his recent works include the 'Three European Legends', "French Suite" and "Three original compositions in the oriental style".

Amongst his list of achievements and awards, Adrian's most recent accolades include: first-prize winner, international



carillon competition at Winschoten (organised by the Netherlands Carillon Guild); Queen's Young Achiever, Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Trust 1997; Recipient, Netherlands Government Scholarship 1997 for cultural exchange between Australia and The Netherlands; Nominee, Young Canberra Citizen of the Year 1997; and recipient, Austrian Government Scholarship 1997 for musicological research in Vienna.

The following passage appeared in the September 1998 issue of the "Klok en Klepel" magazine of the Netherlands Carillon Guild regarding Adrian's performance (in the international carillon competition):

"The first prize was awarded to Adrian Tien. Powerful playing, according to the jury. A technically perfect performance, whereby in spite of the difficulty of the music and the complexity in the contrapuntal structure of many compositions he was nevertheless able to stay focused on the music; the melodic

line, for instance, was always easy to follow. The compulsory work ("Theme and Variations" by Jos Lerinckx) contained well-defined sections each of which was marked by a distinctive musical character, yet at the same time not losing sight of the wholeness of this work. Without doubt this carillonneur has a brilliant carillon career in front of him."

Adrian has been hailed "one of the best and most exciting Australian carillonneurs". In 1998, Adrian represented Australia as its delegate at the World Carillon Federation Congress in Mechelen and Leuven, Belgium.



## Thanks

I would like to thank Martin Wright of Move Records for his interest in the carillon and for undertaking the challenge of producing a carillon compact disc. This CD would not have been possible without the kind support and co-operation of the National Capital Authority, Canberra. Special thanks go to Mr Mike Grace and Mrs Michelle Thomas for their warm enthusiasm and assistance in the project. I would also like to thank the following people in particular:

My mother, Mrs Feng Tien  
Mr Terry McGee, Sound Engineer  
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Carillon School  
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Mr Milford Myhre & Mr William de Turk,  
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Mr Wen-Ching Su, Director, Su Wen-Ching  
Chinese Music Ensemble  
Ir Hylke Banning, Secretary, Netherlands  
Carillon Guild  
Mr Piet Kee (composition)  
Mr Gerard de Waardt (musical arrangement)  
Ms Sally Slade Warner (musical arrangement)  
Mr Marcel Siebers (musical arrangement)  
The late Mr Ronald Barnes, for his inspirations  
Dr Jill Forrest, for her warm support and  
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The Canberra carillonists, for their graciousness  
Marilyn Thomas (Move Records), for her  
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## The music

### American classics

These three compositions are all classics in their own ways. The songs, 'The man I love' and 'Strike up the band' are undoubtedly two of the best known works by George Gershwin, whose music has come to symbolise at least an aspect of the American music culture as we know it today. As for 'Rotation', it is a piece originally written for the carillon and is considered to be one of the most effective and exciting contemporary compositions in this genre to emerge from the North American carillon culture. For this reason, it deserves to be called a 'classic' from a carillonist's perspective. My own interpretation of the title is that the notes rotate and unfold in the air.

### From the Great German Master

'Siciliano' is a 'classic' in every sense of the word: It is one of the favourite musical gems from the Baroque era, composed by one of the all-time greats in music, Johann Sebastian Bach. A 'siciliano' is an old dance probably of Sicilian origin. This particular composition displays all the characteristics of a 'siciliano' – it has a slow, swaying tempo; it is set in a minor key, and there are six beats (or two dotted beats) in each bar.

### Nostalgic Bells

Even though 'The Bells of Aberdovey' has generally been thought to be a Welsh folk song, it is in fact not so, for a man named, Charles Dibdin had composed and published it in 1785. Incidentally, it might interest listeners of Celtic background to know that the art of Celtic bellfounding dates as far back as the year 432. On the other hand, 'Londonderry Air', or 'Danny Boy' (as it is also commonly entitled), is apparently a genuine folk melody, and it has been dubbed, arguably, "The most beautiful tune in the world". Its popularity is reflected in the fact that it is sung throughout the world, especially the English-speaking countries, and it has been arranged and performed on every musical instrument.

### Bell extravaganza

'Ringing Piece' was composed by the Dutch composer and organist, Piet Kee in 1990 to celebrate the occasion of the International Frans Hals Exhibition held that year. When listening to this piece, it is suggested that the listener tries to immerse his/herself in its exuberant rhythms and the overall festive atmosphere, rather than attempting to identify its melody and/or other musical elements which are probably not there. In particular, listen out for the typical 'ringing' effect which is central to this work, because as the composer himself pointed out, the

majority of motifs had been inspired by the English 'change ringing'.

### **Bells of passion**

One of the features that both preludes share is that they both demonstrate an affinity to Flamenco dances and the guitar in particular. The first prelude is a tonal realisation of Flamenco dance, beginning with the melancholic male voice, followed by the stirring combination of clapping, the castanets and the guitars. The second prelude begins with a rather long guitar-like introduction, followed by a solo voice whose melody flows as though it were a recitative. The piece then returns to the guitar section and concludes with a short coda which consists of two short, contrasting sections.

### **Campanella Lingua**

These compositions are both, in one way or the other, connected to Italy. A 'Barcarolle' is a boat song of Venetian origin, and is often in compound time, like this one by Ronald Barnes. Originally composed for the carillon as one of a group of compositions called 'Serenades I', this Barcarolle must be one of the most delightful pieces you would hear on the bells. The Sonata is by the Italian Maestro, Domenico Scarlatti who composed numerous virtuoso keyboard sonatas like this one.

### **This is where you find our nation's capital**

As the title suggests, Canberra is situated in the midst of tree covered mountains, which is why it has been dubbed the 'bush capital'.

### **Melancholic Bells**

The origins of the song, 'Moonlight over the deserted castle' (which is a free translation), is no less intriguing than 'The bells of Aberdovey'. This piece has been composed by one of the best loved Japanese song writers, Rentaro Taki, at the turn of the century. Its huge popularity over the years has made it more like a folk tune than a composed song. A second section to the tune which appears as the theme of this set of variations is not as well known. I find some Japanese songs quite effective on the carillon because of their poetic and melancholic quality. Note especially the use of bass bells that mimic the sound of temple bells.

### **Inspired by Austria**

'The Sound of Music' was a Broadway musical and Hollywood movie with a story set in Austria. The selection in this block covers some of the most memorable songs from the musical.

### **From 'Pictures at an Exhibition'**

As a member of 'The Five', Modest Musorgsky's compositions are typically Russian. This piece, 'The Old Castle', is not an exception. It comes from a piano collection entitled, 'Pictures at an Exhibition' made famous by the orchestral arrangement of Maurice Ravel. This effective arrangement for the carillon by Jacques Maassen brings out the bass bell harmonically by means of repetition. This carillon arrangement also captures the qualities of tranquility and tension in the original composition.

### **Great Bells of Fire**

This Ballade by Jef Rottiers radiates energy, passion and excitement in its unmistakably Flemish romanticism. Jef Rottiers was a champion of Flemish carillon music and this is one of the best examples of his works.

### **Ancient Bells**

Unlike the rest of the program, this track was performed and recorded on 6 March 1997 by a visiting Taiwanese-Chinese music ensemble together with the National Carillon. As far as we know, it was the world's first attempt ever at bringing the carillon together with traditional Chinese musical instruments and so, in a sense, the concert itself may be considered experimental. However, most would probably agree after listening that the

carillon and Chinese instruments really work remarkably well together – which is probably not surprising, considering that bells have been an inseparable part of Chinese music-making since ancient times. The folk song, 'Su-Wu in exile', is an ancient tune which has been passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years. It depicts the tragic life of a Chinese patriot, Su-Wu, who was sent into exile because of his political views. The song relates to the misery and the suffering that Su Wu had to endure during the nineteen years he was in exile.

## Credits

- 1** The man I love 2'47"  
George Gershwin, arr. by Gerard de Waardt
- 2** Strike up the band 2'07"  
George Gershwin, arr. by Gerard de Waardt  
Items 1 and 2 recorded with the kind permission of Mr. Gerard de Waardt
- 3** Rotation 3'22"  
Gary White (Donemus)
- 4** Siciliano, from Sonata in E flat for flute and continuo 2'53"  
Johann Sebastian Bach, arr. by Ronald Barnes

Recorded with the kind permission of the Library of the Bok Tower Gardens, Florida, USA

- 5** The Bells of Aberdovey 2'04"  
Welsh folk song, arr. by Sally Slade Warner
- 6** Londonderry Air 4'45"  
Irish Melody, arr. by Sally Slade Warner  
Items 5 and 6 used with the kind permission of the Guild of Carillonners in North America
- 7** Ringing Piece from Frans Hals Suite 4'36"  
Piet Kee (Donemus)
- 8** Preludio, from Suite España, Opus 165 2'34"  
Isaac Albeniz, arr. by Marcel Siebers
- 9** Preludio, from Cantos de España, Opus 232 7'38"

Isaac Albeniz, arr. by Marcel Siebers  
Items 8 and 9 recorded with the kind permission of Drs. Jacques Maassen on behalf of the publication of the music commission of the Netherlands Carillon Guild and the Netherlands Carillon School

- 10** Barcarolle, from Serenades I 6'30"  
Ronald Barnes
- 11** Sonata L. 33 3'17"  
Domenico Scarlatti, arr. by Ronald Barnes  
Items 10 and 11 recorded with the kind permission of the Guild of Carillonners in North America
- 12** Home among the gum trees 2'14"  
arranged by Adrian Tien
- 13** Moonlight over the deserted castle 3'52"  
Rentaro Taki, arr. by Adrian Tien
- 14** My favourite things 2'23"  
**15** Edelweiss 3'15"  
**16** 16 going on 17 3'01"  
Items 14–16 from "The Sound of Music" by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, arr. by Adrian Tien
- 17** Old Castle 5'08"  
Modest Musorgsky, arr. by Jacques Maassen  
Recorded with the generous, personal permission of Drs. Jacques Maassen who is director of the Netherlands Carillon School Amersfoort and city carillonneur of Breda (NL)
- 18** Ballade 5'23"  
Jef Rottiers (Sabam)
- 19** Su-Wu in exile 4'38"  
Old Chinese folk song, arr. and performed by Wen-Ching Su and Adrian Tien  
Recorded in association with the Su Wen-Ching Chinese Music Ensemble

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