

ASU bells chime to connect students with tradition

By Ksenia Maryasova

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Library Catalog Specialist Senior Carl Cross plays the symphonic carillon in the basement of Old Main on the Tempe campus on Monday, Oct. 20, 2014. (Photo by Alexis Macklin)

After the Associated Students of ASU bought the symphonic carillon in 1966, it has survived dusty storage, fire and restoration to become an important part of campus life.

With the help of students and faculty, the carillon turned over a new leaf to give people an opportunity to hear bells chime across the Tempe campus every day and become a part of the ASU spirit.

Goldman Professor of Organ at ASU Kimberly Marshall said ASU seeks to be modern in many ways, but the sound of the carillon playing on campus is a good way to help students and faculty remember the tradition.

“It provides central concept of the unity of the campus, animates the campus and ties it to the tradition,” she said.

ASU's symphonic carillon represents a set of 258 tuned small chimes that create an authentic sound resembling the sonority and quality of a large bell.

Every hour the rich sound of the bells marks time. At 5 p.m., students can hear a concert of several songs randomly chosen out of the vast library of pre-recorded songs.

The concert features classical pieces as well as popular movie themes and music from Broadway shows broadcasted through the sets of speakers installed at the Memorial Union and at the Language and Literature building. During the day, the bells chime quieter than during the afternoon concert to allow students to study undisturbed.

ASU performance senior Jacob Hofeling was introduced to instrument when he was a sophomore. Named Arizona State Credit Union Carillonneur three times, he not only performs at the live concerts but also composes his own music for the carillon.

Hofeling said the instrument produces very interesting colors which inspire him to experiment and mix traditional bell sound with drums and synthesized instruments in his compositions.

“It’s almost like a living instrument,” he said. “It keeps moving and breathing. It’s really interesting.”



Library Catalog Specialist Senior Carl Cross plays the symphonic carillon in the basement of Old Main on the Tempe campus on Monday, Oct. 20, 2014.
(Photo by Alexis Macklin)

Although Hofeling has worked to make the carillon a more prominent on campus, he’d like to record more and leave a legacy behind, he said.

“I’d like to come back (to ASU) sometime and hear something that I recorded at the 5 o’clock concert,” he said. “My essays and homework assignments won’t stay behind, but this could be something that can last for a long time.”

Along with special occasion playlists for Christmas, Valentine’s Day and St. Patrick’s Day, the [ASU Carillon Society](#) holds various events throughout the year. These events include Christmas concerts that invite students and faculty to come sing along with hot cider and the Reading of Names event, which commemorates those who gave their lives in the service of the country.

The Maas-Rowe carillon was discovered in 2002 in one of the storage rooms in the Matthew’s Center by the co-chairwoman of ASU Carillon society, Judith Smith who worked for ASU public relations department at the time.

Smith said she had to learn a lot about fund-raising to be able to restore the instrument, which was a long and difficult process.

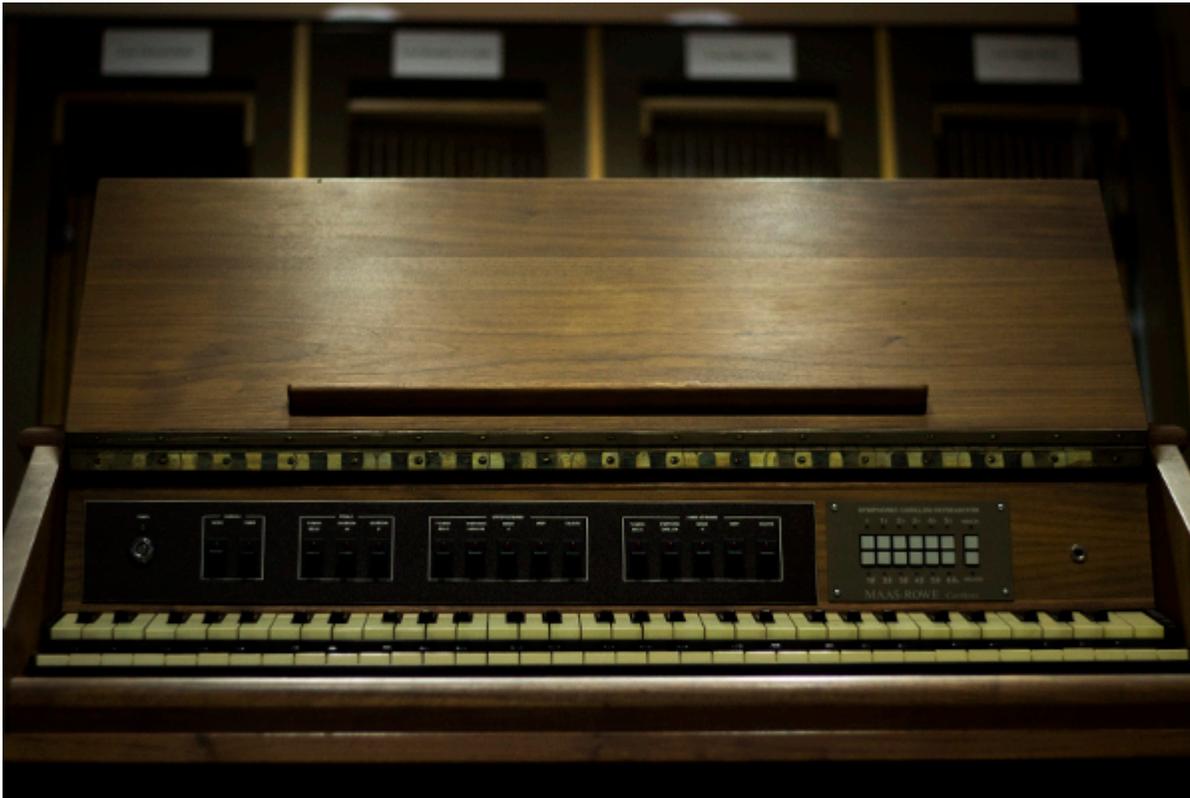
“All right, we found the carillon, now what?” she said. “I couldn’t just leave it there, so we tried to raise money, and it was really, really tough.”

Carl Cross, co-chairman of ASU Carillon Society and ASU librarian, was the one who gave Smith the file with stories about the carillon, which proved the rumors about its existence were true.

Thanks to the fundraising efforts and enthusiasm of the people involved, the instrument was pulled out of the oblivion and installed in the Memorial Union, he said.

“It’s actually been in storage more than it’s ever been out in play,” he said.

The fire that took place at the Memorial Union building in 2007 left the carillon untouched. Later, the instrument’s restoration was complete. It found its permanent home in the lower level of the Old Main building in 2009 and has become a part of the ASU spirit, Cross said.



Every day at 5 p.m., the ASU carillon plays a few of the several hundred pre-recorded songs. After being relocated several times, the carillon found its permanent home in the lower level of the Old Main building in 2009. (Photo by Alexis Macklin)

“That didn’t go to surplus like many other fine things of tradition around the campus,” he said. “It’s just a good thing because we’ve been blessed all the way through by the little things that you can classify as miracles.”

The society hopes to install a new set of speakers on the Wells Fargo Arena to play the faculty march during the commencement and bring the chime to all four ASU campuses, Cross said. All those intentions require a lot of money, so the society is going to keep fundraising, he said.

“Over the Internet, students could be hearing the bells at the other four campuses, but all that takes equipment at both ends,” Cross said.

When the carillon was reinstalled, some students were complaining about the loud sound it made, Cross said. Now, when the carillon was out of order for a few weeks, students and faculty were emailing to find out what had happened to the familiar chimes.

“People are listening, and they’re appreciating it,” Cross said. “So it’s been a whole educational process of getting the student body and the whole campus community. ... They are just so supportive.”

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