

Milwaukee Handbell Ensemble

The Milwaukee Handbell Ensemble (MHE) is a community group comprising of auditioned, advanced level handbell ringers from the Milwaukee area.

Our wide audiences appreciate our quality technique and attention to detail in our performances. Martha Lynn Thompson's *William Tell Overture* showcases the treble bells' attention to detail in their quick rhythms. As the featured performers at the 2006 AGEHR National Seminar and the 2004 National Association of Pastoral Musicians in Chicago, MHE was honored to play. The ensemble is heard each year by over 25,000 handbell directors on the AGEHR new handbell music promotional CDs.

With a variety of repertoire ranging from hymn-like pieces, to secular rhythmic pieces, MHE provides an exceptional choice of compositions. The MHE recording of *Down in the River to Pray* by John Behnke was selected to be on the Handbell Musicians of America new sampler CD. Several pieces of our repertoire are on the cutting edge of handbell compositions. *Dance and Air in C*, composed by Arnold Sherman, feels like music from the movies. Encompassing a dueling bells feel, the bass, middle and treble bells each perform their own drum line complete with mallets sounding on music stands and cases in John Behnke's *Rhythmic Rip*.

Dr. Behnke is a frequent handbell clinician, organ recitalist, and handbell festival director. As a Professor of Music at Concordia University, Mequon, he teaches organ and directs the Alleluia Ringers. He is also music editor for the Handbell Musicians of America. He enjoys composing and arranging, with works published by 17 different publishers in the USA, Germany and Taiwan. He has been a recipient of an ASCAP Composers Award each year since 1998.

MHE was established in 2000, is a member of the Handbell Musicians of America and recently became a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. The Milwaukee Handbell Ensemble's mission is "To further the art of handbell ringing by educating, inspiring, and informing others on the art form" by showcasing advanced handbell repertoire while being a musical resource for the Milwaukee metropolitan area and beyond.

Past Engagements

Performances

Milwaukee Symphony Pops

Bel Canto Christmas Concerts

Midwest Vocal Express

International Handbell Symposium 2008

Private Parties

McDonalds Holiday Party

Mequon Library Concert

Handbell Concerts

Bells of 2 cities (joint concert with Madison Area Concert Handbells)

Ring and Dancing the Night Away

Christmas Bellfest, Concordia University, Mequon

Featured Performers

AGEHR National Seminar, Milwaukee 2006

National Association of Pastoral Musicians, Chicago 2004