

Now in its eighth season, Ring Sarasota, the area's premier handbell ensemble, is making music throughout the Gulf Coast. With a passion for playing, these spirited musicians captivate audiences age seven to seventy-seven with a unique combination of entertainment, education, and community engagement.

Dedicated to bringing ringing prime time, the Sarasota-based group under the direction of former Navy bandleader Rick Holdsworth showcases over 200 bells rung by 30 hands to create a symphony of sound with special effects mimicking the piccolo, percussion, chimes, trombone, even the Tibetan singing bowl. Their music has been described as an inspirational mix of melody and muscle.

Performance history highlights include a news making Veterans Day celebration benefiting 48 hometown soldiers through Manatee Operation Troop Support, a sold out Christmas collaboration with Bay Chorale at Neel Performing Arts Center, debuting director Rick Holdsworth's original transcription of Holst's "Jupiter" from *The Planets*, radio and an invitation to ring as the featured ensemble at the Handbell Musicians of America Florida state festival.

Ring Sarasota's season 8 music explores music as it developed over the 20th Century. Just as the 1900's brought complex events and changes to our world, music evolved equally as quickly. Our concert music this season offers examples from some of these significant eras.

At the turn of the century music paralleled the impressionist artists. Claire de Lune and Moon Over the Ruined Castle are excellent examples of music that allow the listener to conjure mental images of their themes. The development of the jazz era, leading into the blues is represented by Georgia on my Mind.

The post-war era produced happier music for those who wanted to sing and dance. We offer Blue Tango and Fly Me to the Moon as mid-century examples. But no 20th century music retrospective is complete without a song from the Beatles. For us it is Hey Jude, transcribed for handbells by our own Rick Holdsworth. We complete late century pop music with The Prayer, originally performed by Celine Dion and Andrea Bocelli.

Handbell music has also evolved over the last half of the century. Our season includes some of the new music composed over the turn of our current century; pieces written to showcase our exciting instrument.

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