

## Bell Towers world-wide respond to COVID-19 on May 21

Carillonists in fourteen countries on six continents will collaborate to perform a world premiere from global bell towers in an artistic response to COVID-19. The composition, *Healing Bells*, was created by American composer and carillonist Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra and Dutch journalist Jet Schouten.

According to old folk wisdom, bells can ward off disease and doom. Schouten and Ruiter-Feenstra composed *Healing Bells* with this in mind. Schouten, an investigative reporter with AVROTROS, a Public TV network in The Netherlands, studied carillon with Ruiter-Feenstra as part of her research as a Knight-Wallace Fellow at the University of Michigan. The two explored how to translate the process and narrative form of investigative journalism into musical narratives as another form of storytelling. The carillon, as perhaps the most public of instruments, has the depth and resonance to reach whole communities, much like the power of strong journalism.

On May 21, the UNESCO Day for Cultural Diversity, Dialogue and Development, *Healing Bells* will be performed at noon local time in Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, and the U. S.

*Healing Bells* opens with ominous-sounding viral spirals. Carillonists' hands move in a circular gesture on the keys, similar to the shape of the coronavirus under a microscope. The corona motif alternates with a haunting Ukrainian folk song lament. The virus gradually grows weaker as the song grows stronger. Three-quarters into the composition, a heavy low carillon bell kicks away the corona motif, one particle at a time.

To search for and upload livestreams, video and audio uploads, and more information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/259764665217187/>.

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**Jet Schouten** is an award-winning investigative journalist based in the Netherlands and a Knight-Wallace Fellow (class of 2019–2020). Schouten is forging the intersection between journalism and carillon studies, biking across the Netherlands to each of the 199 carillons, where she will visit carillons and interview performers and listeners.

A GRAMMY™-nominated international performer, prize-winning composer, and pedagogue, **Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra** is author of six books, performer of five CDs, and editor of *Global Rings*. In 2019–2020, she served as Visiting Carillonist and Carillon Instructor at the University of Michigan, where she collaborated with Jet Schouten and other Knight-Wallace Fellows to create Collaborative Investigative Compositions.

YouTube:

Richard de Waardt Hemony carillon (1660) Laurenskerk, Rotterdam.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUNJ-gk7114>