

Healing Bells

for carillon



Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra & Jet Schouten



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Healing Bells

**Ukrainian folk song “Plyve Kacha,”
Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra & Jet Schouten**

Bells have long functioned as signals and timekeepers, notifying residents of deaths, commemorations, and celebrations. During the time of the Black Plague, some people believed that bells had powers to ward off the disease. When bells were confiscated by Nazis, melted and repurposed into military equipment during the Holocaust, villagers were haunted by the absent presence or present absence of the bells, which had guided the rhythm of their daily lives.

In 2020, most of us experience social isolation due to COVID-19. The rhythm of our daily lives is skewed. Amidst global suffering, many people long for the beauty found in live music, which signals a certain normalcy and offers the healing power of music.

*In response to the pandemic, we, Dutch investigative journalist Jet Schouten and carillonist and composer Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra, teamed up to create **Healing Bells**. Schouten suggested that the lament quality of the Ukrainian folk tune “Plyve Kacha”¹ was fitting to commemorate those who have suffered and died from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The low, close, parallel harmonies of Ukrainian folk singing find kinship in the deep resonance of the bells. Ruiter-Feenstra arranged “Plyve Kacha” in phrase fragments alternating with viral spirals, in which the carillonists’ hands move in a circular gesture similar to the shape of the coronavirus as it appears under a microscope. The viral spirals represent COVID-19, as well as any social virus such as xenophobia and racism that infects society, spreading as if contagious. Each time more music plays, the virus grows quieter, slower, and less virulent. Three quarters of the way into **Healing Bells**, the low bells pull apart the virus particles one-by-one, and eradicate them through low bell tolls, which are followed by a stately conclusion of the folk tune lament.*

*We acknowledge health care workers, who risk themselves to care for others, despite shortages of testing kits, masks, and ventilators. We grieve over people of Asian descent worldwide who have been targeted in racist and xenophobic attacks. We offer **Healing Bells** to lament and mourn with those who have lost loved ones, as well as for anyone who has suffered social isolation.²*

*Carillonists world-wide are invited to join in a global premiere of **Healing Bells** at noon local time on 21 May 2020, the UNESCO World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.*

*In solidarity and healing via the arts,
-Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra & Jet Schouten*

¹ For information on “Plyve Kacha,” see <https://www.pri.org/node/65044/popout> and listen to the wonderful six-voice *a cappella* ensemble Pikkardyska Tertsya sing the folk tune: https://youtu.be/-KNHAXbH_nY, and see more about the ensemble here: <https://www.ukraine.com/blog/pikkardyska-tertsiya-the-power-of-the-human-voice/>.

The Ukrainian folk song “Plyve Kacha” was widely used in another crisis in 2014, after more than 100 protesters were killed by snipers in Kiev’s Maidan (Independence Square). See Andrea Crossan’s report for *The World*, April 16, 2014, “An old Ukrainian folk song takes on new meaning in the current crisis:” <https://www.pri.org/stories/2014-04-16/old-ukrainian-folk-song-takes-new-meaning-current-crisis>.

² Photo credit of bells: Peter Matthews, at the University of Michigan Baird Carillon, Taylor foundry, 1936.

Healing Bells

Oekraïens volkslied "Plyve Kacha" Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra & Jet Schouten

Klokken hebben lang gefunctioneerd als duiders van de tijd en hadden daarnaast een signalerende functie, die bewoners op de hoogte brachten van sterfgevallen, herdenkingen en vieringen. In de tijd van de Zwarte Pest geloofden sommige mensen dat klokken de kracht hadden om deze ziekte af te weren. Toen de klokken in beslag werden genomen door de nazi's en omgesmolten werden voor militaire doeleinden, raakten dorpelingen hun dagelijkse ritme en houvast kwijt.

Anno 2020 ervaren de meesten van ons een sociaal isolement als gevolg van COVID-19. Het ritme van ons dagelijks leven is verstoord. Te midden van het wereldwijde lijden, verlangen veel mensen naar de schoonheid van livemuziek, die een zekere normaliteit aanduidt en troost biedt.

Naar aanleiding van de pandemie hebben wij, de Nederlandse onderzoeksjournalist Jet Schouten en beiaardier en componist Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra, samen *Healing Bells* gecreëerd. Schouten suggereerde dat de klaagzang van het Oekraïense volkslied "Plyve Kacha" passend was om degenen te herdenken die hebben geleden en zijn gestorven aan de COVID-19 pandemie wereldwijd. De lage, nauwe, parallelle harmonieën van dit Oekraïense volkslied vinden verwantschap in de diepe resonantie van de klokken. Ruiter-Feenstra bewerkte "Plyve Kacha" in fragmenten afgewisseld met virale spiralen, waarin de handen van de beiaardier bewegen in een cirkelvormig gebaar, vergelijkbaar met de vorm van het coronavirus onder een microscoop. De virale spiralen vertegenwoordigen COVID-19, die net als elk sociaal virus, zoals xenofobie en racisme, de samenleving besmetten en zich verspreiden alsof ze besmettelijk zijn. Het virus patroon, de spiralen op de beiaard, nemen geleidelijk aan af en worden langzamer gespeeld. Driekwart in de compositie op de weg naar genezing, trekken de lage klokken de virusdeeltjes één voor één uit elkaar en worden ze afgeweerd door de laagste klok, waarna, tot slot, de lament melodie weer terugkeert.

We erkennen de gezondheidswerkers, die zichzelf riskeren om voor anderen te zorgen, ondanks de tekorten aan testkits, maskers en ventilatoren. Wij rouwen om mensen van Aziatische afkomst wereldwijd die het doelwit zijn (geweest) van racisme en xenofobie. We bieden *Healing Bells* aan om naast diegenen te gaan staan die dierbaren hebben verloren maar ook om van ons te laten horen aan alle mensen in isolatie.

Beiaardiers wereldwijd worden uitgenodigd voor de wereldwijde première van *Healing Bells* op het middaguur, 12.00 uur, lokale tijd op **21 mei 2020**, de UNESCO Internationale dag van de Culturele Diversiteit, Dialoog en Ontwikkeling.

In solidariteit en genezing via de kunsten,
-Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra & Jet Schouten

For meantone carillons

Healing Bells

Carillon

Viral spirals

Plyve Kacha

Ukrainian Folk Song;

Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra & Jet Schouten

Grave, with singing rubato

The healing power of bells

A musical score for two voices. The top voice (Soprano) starts with a sustained note followed by eighth notes. The bottom voice (Bass) has rests until measure 4, where it begins a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The music is in common time, key signature of one flat, and includes dynamic markings like mp and mf.

Musical score for piano, page 10, measures 10-11. The score consists of two staves. The top staff uses a treble clef, has a key signature of one flat, and is in common time (indicated by a '4'). The bottom staff uses a bass clef, has a key signature of one flat, and is in common time (indicated by a '4'). Measure 10 starts with a dynamic of *mf*. The melody consists of eighth-note pairs followed by quarter notes. The bass line consists of eighth-note pairs. Measure 11 begins with a dynamic of *mp*, indicated by a bracket over the first two measures. The melody continues with eighth-note pairs and quarter notes. The bass line consists of eighth-note pairs.

Call (improvisatory)

14

f

p *drone*

2 3 4

Musical score for piano, page 19, measures 19-20. The score consists of two staves. The left staff uses a bass clef and a common time signature (indicated by a '4'). The right staff uses a treble clef and a common time signature. The music features eighth-note patterns, sixteenth-note chords, and grace notes. Measure 19 concludes with a forte dynamic. Measure 20 begins with a forte dynamic and continues the rhythmic pattern.

24 *Response*

Musical score for measures 1-2. The top staff shows a tenor melody in treble clef, dynamic *mp*, with a melodic line consisting of eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff shows a basso continuo in bass clef, dynamic *mf*, with sustained notes and vertical stems. A bracket labeled "Tenor melody" spans the first two measures.

Healing Bells

27

2

7

2

Viral spirals

30

mf

accelerando

rit.

Grave, with singing rubato

34

f *The healing power of bells*

p *Call (improvisatory)*

7

39

44

Response

f

mf

f

47

mp

Musical score for piano, page 10, measures 50-51. The score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef, B-flat key signature, and common time. It features a single melodic line with dynamics *mp*, *mf*, and a crescendo line. The bottom staff is in bass clef, B-flat key signature, and common time. It features harmonic chords with dynamics *mf* and *mp*. Measure 50 ends with a fermata over the bass note. Measure 51 begins with a dynamic *mf* and continues with a melodic line and harmonic chords.

Viral spirals

A musical score for page 57. The key signature has one flat, and the time signature is 2/4. The melody consists of eighth-note pairs followed by grace notes. The first measure starts with a dynamic of *mp*. The second measure begins with a dynamic of *p*, followed by a *ritardando* instruction. The third measure starts with a dynamic of *f*.

Grave, with singing rubato

Musical score for piano, page 10, measures 61-62. The score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef, has a key signature of one flat, and is in 3/4 time. It starts with a dynamic of *mf*. The first measure contains six eighth-note pairs connected by a curved brace. The second measure contains four eighth-note pairs connected by a curved brace. The lower staff is in bass clef, has a key signature of one flat, and is in 3/4 time. It starts with a dynamic of *mp*. The first measure shows a bass note followed by a fermata. The second measure shows a bass note followed by a fermata. The third measure shows a bass note followed by a fermata. The fourth measure shows a bass note followed by a fermata.

A musical score page featuring two staves. The top staff uses a treble clef and has a key signature of one flat. It contains a series of eighth-note patterns: a pair of eighth-note pairs followed by a sixteenth-note pair, then a pair of eighth-note pairs followed by a sixteenth-note pair, and finally a pair of eighth-note pairs followed by a sixteenth-note pair. The bottom staff uses a bass clef and has a key signature of one flat. It consists of four pairs of quarter notes.

Healing Bells

75 ***ff***

hurriedly

The low bell kicks away the viral particles one by one

allargando

p

87 ***Stately and Slower***

Stately and Slower

mf

pp

91 ***bring out outer voices***

bring out outer voices

f

f

96

p

mf

101

allargando

mp