ALL THE HEAVENS
WERE A BELL

for carillon solo
The title of *All the Heavens Were a Bell* for carillon solo is taken from a poem by Emily Dickinson called “I Felt a Funeral In My Brain.”

I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,
And Mourners to and fro
Kept treading–treading–till it seemed
That Sense was breaking through–

And when they all were seated,
A Service, like a Drum–
Kept beating–beating–till I thought
My mind was going numb–

And then I heard them lift a Box
And creak across my Soul
With those same Boots of Lead, again,
Then Space–began to toll,

As all the Heavens were a Bell,
And Being, but an Ear,
And I, and Silence, some strange Race,
Wrecked, solitary, here–

And then a Plank in Reason, broke,
And I dropped down, and down–
And hit a World, at every plunge,
And Finished knowing–then–

The scene described by Dickinson is eerily similar to an account given by Janna Levin for TED Talks called *The Sound the Universe Makes* in which she describes the phenomena of gravitational waves emanating from orbiting black holes. Levin describes how space itself can “wobble like a drum” and “ring out.” She goes on to explain, “if you were standing near enough, your ear would resonate with the squeezing and stretching of space. You would literally hear the sound. Now of course, your head would be squeezed and stretched unhelpfully, so you might have trouble understanding what’s going on.” Levin’s team of researchers created a simulation of the sound of a small black hole falling into a larger one. It sounds like a drumbeat that gets faster and faster, eventually imperceptibly rapid at the moment right before the black hole is obliterated.

Even though Dickinson is obviously not talking about black holes, the similarity in imagery is uncanny. This strange correlation inspired the following piece for carillon solo which begins very slowly, speeding up through a series of metric modulations and accelerandos, and concluding with rapid arpeggios. Interspersed within the textures are fragments of the Gregorian chant, *Veni Creator Spiritus.*
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Moderato $\mathcal{L} = 76$

Più mosso $\mathcal{L} = 100$
Meno mosso, molto rubato

Very slow

pp ppp
Tempo I $\dot{=}$ 76

smoothly, no accents

$\text{pp}$ poco a poco cresc.
accel. until as fast as possible

motto rit.
Very slow

Vivace \( \text{\textit{\textbarspace}} = 80-90 \)

mp

pp (echo)

mf
Maestoso (\( \text{q.} = 70-80 \))