

Raleigh Ringers

Not your mama's handbell choir

By Mary Lewe
Managing Editor

Known for their holiday concerts, the Raleigh Ringers performed a range of tunes for a large audience in Brevard College's Porter Center on Saturday evening. From an arrangement of Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro," to Foreigner's "Feels Like the First Time," the Raleigh Ringers offer something for everyone.

The performance was as much a visual experience as it was aural. The coordination of the ensemble is impressive to say the least, and the bass bell players heave around bells that weigh nearly 20 lbs with the same grace as the soprano players, their bulky precision reminiscent of a timpanist.

At times, those playing the smaller bells wield two or three in the same hand. You can watch as melodies echo through the ensemble, from one player to the next.

The Brevard First United Methodist Church hosted the ensemble and the group performed a "Dolce," written by the church's Director of Music, Tim Shepard.

Although many of the performers in the Raleigh Ringers do not consider themselves professional musicians, a spot in the touring group is coveted. "We start each January with auditions," Director David Harris said between pieces. "Even if you're already in the group, you

have to pass the auditions."

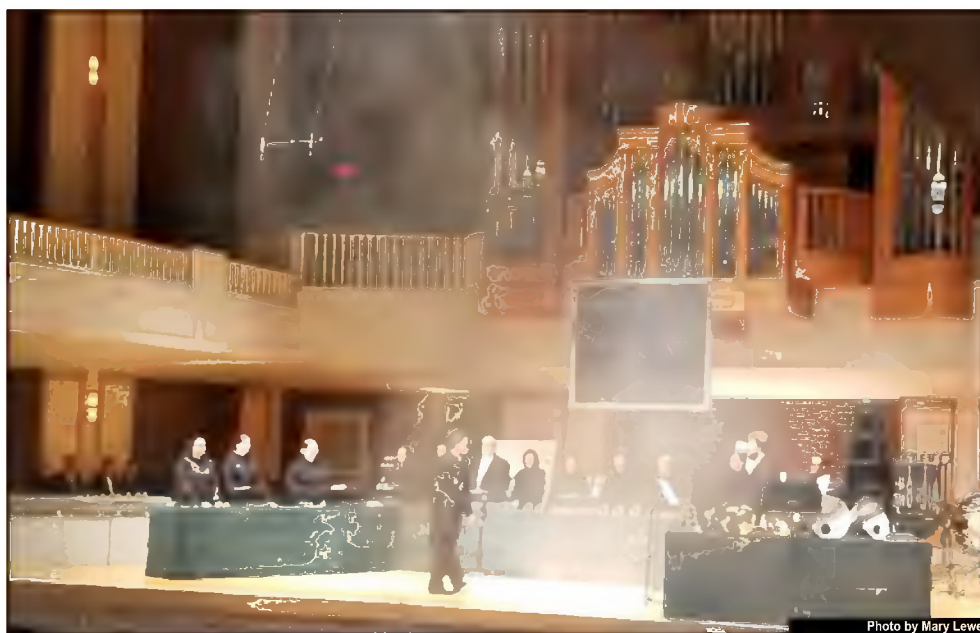
Their show in Brevard is part of one of their Spring "mini-tours," which lead up to a longer-running Summer tour. Toward the end of Summer, the group begins rehearsing their holiday music.

Commissions and new arrangements are typical for the Raleigh Ringers, who have had many pieces written for them. One of their members actually arranged "Feels Like the First Time" for them, and has arranged other pieces for handbell choir.

In addition to many commissions and original pieces of music, the Ringers currently have 494 bells of different styles and materials. From white chapel bells to huge silver bells, each has a specific timbre which can be used in a certain context. Harris explained that the silver bells have fewer overtones, which make them good at supporting chords and serving as a bass note. Meanwhile, choir chimes can fill in the middle of chords for a more droning sound. The light jingle of the small brass handbells are perfect for classic handbell melodies.

The performance itself was incredibly interactive, with regular interjections between songs for questions from the audience and for anecdotes about the group's beginnings. It was clear that the audience was constantly entertained and interested.

And who doesn't love a good fog machine?



The Raleigh Ringers shrouded in fog from a smoke machine onstage at the Ingram Auditorium.

#MeToo

Burke and her journey

By Bry'Kendrick Moore
Staff Writer

I had the pleasure of watching Tarana Burke speak in Asheville on March 14. She is the founder of the #MeToo movement. It was an absolute treat; she is an amazing speaker and a very genuine person.

The #MeToo movement made headlines in Oct. 2017. The hashtag was the catalyst for a conversation that wasn't really talked about openly in recent years. After that it took like wildfire, as stories began to fill the web and make headlines.

This was the attention the movement needed, but this is only the tip of the iceberg. The actual hashtag had been used as early as 2006 with Tarana Burke being the leading lady in the fight against sexual violence.

To fully understand where we are and where we are going, you have to understand how we got to this point. Tarana Burke is from the Bronx, New York and she was deeply involved in history, more specifically black history. From an early age she was interested in a lot of powerful black literature.

Burke was raised with a lot of Maya Angelou who was one of her many heroes at the time of her development. She felt a special connection with Maya not only being a black woman in America but in how they both have been sexually assaulted.

This is when Burke felt it was necessary to hide the pain she was having and to put on a front. The story that spoke to her the most was "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," Angelou's autobiography. Her dilemma while in school was learning how to balance the pain she had and still keep her joy.

That almost shared experience between Burke and Angelou was the spark for what came next. The #MeToo movement was never meant to be a solution to all problems, it was a conversation starter. This was made to let people of all walks of life that more people like them are out there.

It's not a plot to take down powerful men and women across America, it simply aims to put an end to a problem that should have never been a problem to begin with.