



HANDBELL MUSICIANS OF CANADA
2023 ELECTIONS

Candidate Statement



Position: Director at Large
Name: Emmy Okazawa-Bortolin
City, Prov: Edmonton, AB

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Since 1984, Emmy has enjoyed handbells in several capacities from ringer, soloist, director, clinician, adjudicator, massed conductor and has been heavily involved in all levels of leadership and event management roles in provincial, national, and international handbell associations. She was Co-Coordinator of the Fifth International Handbell Symposium in Edmonton in 1992 and has since organized the 2011 Ringing Link in Calgary as well as several provincial events and youth festivals. She served on the International Handbell Committee (IHC) between 2004-2014. Most recently, she was the Past Chair of the Interim Board of Handbell Musicians of Canada (HMC) and currently is Past-President of the Alberta Guild of English Handbell Ringers (ALGEHR). A professional fundraiser, she is also the Director of ALGEHR's Fundraising Committee, managed the recent acquisition of Canada's largest handbell collection, and has also been Editor of ALGEHR's quarterly newsletter since 2016. As a clinician and adjudicator, Emmy has been a regular guest musician across Alberta, Canada, and internationally in Australia, Japan, Singapore, the UK, South Korea, and in the US. She represented Canada as its Massed Conductor at IHS Liverpool in 2012 and was guest conductor of the 2012 SingBellz Festival in Singapore and the 35th English Handbell Festival at the Riverside Church in NYC in 2013. A long-time handbell consultant with both Calgary school boards, she is also the founding director of C3, a community ensemble of music teachers and Quarter Notes Handbell Ensemble, a quartet. Currently, Emmy performs with Jubiloso, an advanced, auditioned community ensemble in Edmonton.

Statement: A life-long musician and educator, I started piano at 8 and teaching piano at 13. It seems these two passions have followed me through my various careers and life experiences as I lived in four provinces. Perhaps becoming a stay-at-home Mom/telecommuter entrepreneur (way before it was a cool thing to do thanks to Covid) due to frequent family transfers planted the seed for volunteerism and organizing things. I got involved in governance in the early days of ALGEHR, as Secretary, one of its first Peal Editors and helping to organize the first Handbell Discoveries. Then came my stint as Stage Mom with the Calgary Stampede during which I worked bingos, casinos and led annual fundraising campaigns of \$350K+. In the early 2000s, I returned to volunteering with ALGEHR as their President as well as Treasurer, Chair-Elect and then Chair of the then Handbell Guilds of Canada (HGC). My motivation to serve with ALGEHR, HGC and ultimately the IHC was not only to offer my leadership and volunteerism, but to work towards developing consistency in policies, setting goals and achieving them. With HGC, I worked towards creating an improved, more relevant national guild, one that would not only represent the positive reputation that Canada enjoys in the global handbell community, but one that would be meaningful to members and make a difference in handbell education and standards.