

Teague takes pan in new directions

RAY FUNK and ANDREW MARTIN

Today, associate professor of steelpan and co-director of the Northern Illinois University Steelband Liam Teague will give a faculty recital of exciting new chamber works for steelpan. The recital consists entirely of new works commissioned by or for Professor Teague.

Faculty recitals are a rare occasion for Teague, "I don't do them very often. The last one was a joint recital with my colleague Robert Chappell in Spring 2010." In this upcoming recital, Teague will perform the new works and will show off the nation's instrument in the intimate setting of Northern Illinois University's Boutell Memorial Recital Hall. Like the recent Northern Illinois University Steelband concert and the ongoing series of graduate recitals, this recital will be webcast live on the Internet and available to pan aficionados around the world.

The recital programme features new compositions by three living composers. The oldest of this trio of works is *Cadences* by Deborah Teason. This full-length work is scored for pan solo and string quartet and was premiered by Teague and the Vermeer Quartet in 2006. For this recital, he will be performing the last two movements of this challenging work with the Avalon String Quartet.

A young group of talented per-

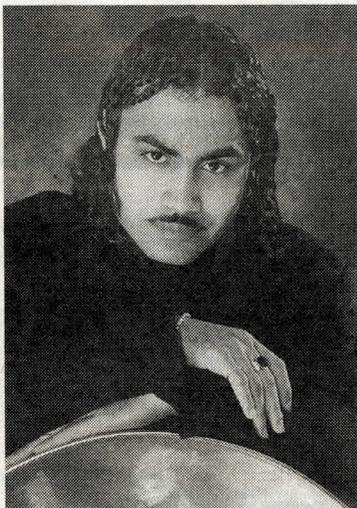
formers, the Avalon String Quartet came to Dekalb in 2007 as Artist Faculty in Residence at the Northern Illinois University School of Music. In addition to a rigorous tour schedule, the Avalon String Quartet also teaches students and coaches student ensembles. Composer Deborah Teason first got involved with pan over 20 years ago as a graduate student at Wesleyan University and pan has since taken over her life.

Teason works out of New Haven, Connecticut, where she has been directing the Yale University steelband, the very active St Luke's Steelband, a church group that records and tours the New England area, and various youth steelbands. In addition to *Cadences*, Teason continues to compose and arrange for pan, having written a concerto for pan and, more recently, the work *Pan Hymnal* featuring 20 liturgical pieces for pan.

The centrepiece of Teague's upcoming recital programme is three new compositions by renowned Indiana University professor of percussion Kevin Bobo. The three works, *Friday*, *Ezekiel's Wheel*, and *Three Rings*, are a contrast of sorts and Teague is eager to perform the works. The first of these three works, *Friday*, is a pan solo composition.

Bobo notes, "Friday is a study, in four movements, of the musical possibilities of the steelpan."

The work is a technically demanding showcase that requires every



Liam Teague's recital will present a range of styles and genres of music.

ounce of Professor Teague's technical expertise and virtuosity. The intriguing title reflects four distinct moods that according to the composer "might take place on a typical Friday"

The other two works by Bobo are conceived for the unique combination of marimba and pan. Bobo is perhaps best known as a world class marimbist and the composer himself will be joining Teague at the recital in a performance of *Ezekiel's Wheel*.

According to Bobo, *Ezekiel's Wheel* "is based on the vision that the prophet Ezekiel had while walking by the river Chebar."

Three Rings considers the many attractions, sights and sounds one would find at common circus. Here

Teague is accompanied on marimba by Northern Illinois University Professor of Percussion, Greg Beyer, who, in addition to his accomplishments as a marimba specialist, teaches and performs on a wide range of classical and world percussion instruments.

The recital will then shift gears for composer Ben Wahlund's work *Grotesques*. The composition was inspired by the striking paintings of modern British artist Francis Bacon and his *Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X*. Wahlund and Teague attended Northern Illinois University together as students in the 1990s and the pair have over the years become friends. In recent years Wahlund has become a noted composer and his compositions are being performed all over the world.

Grotesque is scored for pan and piano and the last movement of the work received its world premiere by Teague in Trinidad in early January during concerts at the Queen's Hall and Naparima Bowl. Here Teague was accompanied by pianist Richard Tang Yuk. At the upcoming recital, *Grotesques* will be premiered in full by Teague along with Northern Illinois University piano professor and chamber music specialist William Koehler.

Teague is no stranger to the expanding the possibilities of pan and as part of a strong commitment to take pan places it has never gone before he has performed with many

of the finest symphony orchestras in the United States and around the world. This includes the likes of the Taiwan National Symphony, Czech National Symphony, and the Panama National Symphony. Teague is a highly-sought-after performer and clinician and his strong touring schedule keeps him on the road both with the Northern Illinois University steelband and as a solo or featured performer in many contexts.

Teague's solo pan faculty recital, like many music concerts at Northern Illinois University, will be webcast live via the Internet. Access is free and open to the public. The recent Northern Illinois University steelband concert webcast on April 7 had hundreds of people watching all over the world with the biggest number outside the US from Trinidad.

Don't miss this opportunity to see one of Trinidad's native sons and virtuosos of pan Liam Teague pushing the boundaries of the music. The webcast will begin at 7.30 pm Trinidad time today and can be found by going to:

<http://www.niu.edu/music/media/webcasts/index.shtml>

Ray Funk is a retired Alaskan judge who is devoted to calypso, pan and mas. Andrew Martin is an ethnomusicologist and percussionist who wrote his dissertation on pan in America and directs a steelband at a college in Minnesota.