NIU Percussion Ensemble presents

The Percussive Arts Society
New Literature Showcase

Saturday, November 17, 2018

Percussive Arts Society
International Convention 2018
Indiana Convention Center, Room 120
Indianapolis, Indiana

Northern Illinois University
School of Music
College of Visual and Performing Arts
New Literature for Percussion Ensemble
Saturday, November 17, 2018 - Noon

Percussive Arts Society International Convention 2018
Indiana Convention Center, Room 120, Indianapolis, IN

Presented by the NIU Percussion Ensemble

DIRECTORS:
Gregory Beyer and Ben Wahlund

PERSONNEL:

Tony Broniec    Lindenhurst, IL
Anthony Cable   Crest Hill, IL
Matthew Carter  Cary, IL
Calvin Chao     Hoffman Estates, IL
Roberto De Leon Chicago, IL
Raelyn Erwin    Naperville, IL
Felipe Fernández San José, Costa Rica
Kyle Flens      Baltimore, MD
Alex Fraga      Divinopolis, Brazil
Benjamin Heppner Downers Grove, IL
Eric Johnson    Green Bay, WI
Chris Kenney    Lockport, IL
Justin Leggero  Plainfield, IL
Ethan Martin    Mineral Point, WI
Frederick McClure Chicago, IL
Brittany O’Reilly Fenton, MO
Kyle Parciany   Inverness, IL
Ethan Patterson Rockford, IL
José Piedra     San José, Costa Rica
Cameron Read    Glasgow, KY
Jordan Smith    Sycamore, IL
Matthew Stover  New Lenox, IL
Jon Summers     Chicago, IL
Sophia Svoboda  Lockport, IL
Akeelah Taylor  Maywood, IL
Evan Taylor     DeKalb, IL
Raychel Taylor  Antelope, CA
RJ Ward         Elgin, IL

STEELPAN SOLOIST:
Daron Roberts    San Fernando, Trinidad & Tobago
ABOUT THE NIU PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

The award-winning NIU Percussion Ensemble is the principal vehicle through which NIU percussionists gain critical chamber music experiences and cover a wide variety of genres and musical instruments. In addition to its NIU performances each semester, community engagement concerts include the DeKalb County Hospice’s Transformation Through Rhythm, an annual fundraiser for the Hospice’s sister organization in Knysna, South Africa. NIU has established a proud history of multiple PASIC performances: Percussion Ensemble Showcase (2003, 2009), Focus Day Performances (2009, 2013), World Percussion Showcase (2014). Additional notable performances include the International Festival of Percussion Ensembles in San José, Costa Rica (2008, 2017) and the PAS Illinois Chapter (2005, 2009, 2017).

ABOUT THE DIRECTORS

Fulbright Scholar, composer, educator, and “prodigiously talented percussionist” (Chicago Classical Review), Gregory Beyer is a contemporary music specialist who blends the disciplines of orchestral, jazz, and world music into a singular artistic voice. He is the Artistic Director of Arcomusical, a non-profit organization spreading the joy of the Afro-Brazilian berimbau and related musical bows. Arcomusical released its first album, MeiaMeia, in 2016 on Innova Recordings and has subsequently appeared on WNYC, WBEZ, and NPR’s Weekend Edition Sunday. Arcomusical is a 2016 Chamber Music America Classical Commissioning Grant recipient, working with Elliot Cole to create the 20-minute, four-movement “Roda” as a result. In March 2019 on National Sawdust Tracks, Arcomusical will release its second album, Spinning in the Wheel.

Beyer is Professor and Director of Percussion Studies at Northern Illinois University School of Music, where he directs the New Music, Percussion, and Latin Jazz Ensembles. He is a core member of the Chicago-based new music ensemble, Dal Niente and an inaugural member of the University of Chicago’s Center for Contemporary Composition’s Grossman Ensemble.
Ben Wahlund is a Grammy nominated, award-winning music educator, composer, and performer who lives in the Chicago area. Mr. Wahlund serves as full-time percussion instructor at Northern Illinois University (DeKalb, IL) and the Director of Percussion at the College of DuPage (Glen Ellyn, IL). Published by Bachovich Music, HoneyRock Publications, and Innovative Percussion, his music compositions have won numerous international awards and are performed by professionals around the world.

His engaging teaching style has availed him of the opportunity to work for years with the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra as percussion ensemble director, director of a number of regional camps and workshops with high school students – including the NIU Percussion Camp - and university residencies across the country. He performs as part of area orchestras, ¡The Screaming Norwegians! Percussion Duo, the Naper Chamber Players, has performed at a number of state, national, and international conventions, is a member of the Yamaha Performing Artist roster, the Zildjian Artist Program, and endorses Innovative Percussion Sticks and Mallets.
Performing at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention is always an honor and a privilege, and we would never make it to this stage without the help of an extraordinary group of people at Northern Illinois University.

The administration of both the School of Music and the College of Visual and Performing Arts (Eric Johnson, Ph.D., Janet Hathaway Ph.D., and Dean Paul Kassel) understand the importance of participating in PASIC and have collectively supported our mission to deliver an excellent quality New Literature Session for the percussion community.

Thank you to Evan Taylor, Eric Johnson, Frederick McClure, and the other leaders of NIU Student Association-recognized NIU Percussion Club, whose efforts have helped make financing of PASIC trips possible.

We are deeply indebted to two creative artists that are a part of the fabric of wonderful people at Northern: Video and Multimedia Producer Danielle Guerra for her excellent photography of the 2018-2019 NIU percussion studio, as well as Graphic Designer Sophia Varcados without whom this striking concert program would be far less beautiful.

Thanks to all of the composers and publishers who contributed music for consideration. We really enjoyed putting this program together.

We are deeply indebted to the generosity of Matt Jordan at Pearl/Adams, Nick Petrella at Sabian, John Wittman, Dave Gerhart, and Jennifer Vierling at Yamaha, Keith Aleo at Zildjian, and Henry Go and George Barrett at Innovative Percussion. Thanks to you, we are playing on incredible instruments today and every day at NIU. Thank you very much for the support of percussion education!

We would like to thank our own teachers who instilled in us a drive for excellence, a thirst for learning, and a penchant for creativity and curiosity. Mr. Beyer thanks Michael Turk, Vicki Jenks, Dane Richeson, Bharat Jungum, Steven Schick, Christopher Lamb, Duncan Patton, John Riley, Mestre Cabello, and Mestra Alcione Oliveira. Mr. Wahlund thanks Vicki Jenks, Julie Spencer, Orlando Cotto, Scott Prebys, David Eyler, Rich Holly, and Robert Chappell.

And thanks to you for attending this concert. We look forward to talking after the performance and providing further information about the music. We hope these deserving works enjoy rich lives well into the future.

- Gregory Beyer, DMA, and Ben Wahlund
PROGRAM

Yazz (2017)*
Alexandre Lunsqui (b. 1969)

Bright Light - Dark Shadows (2016)*
Caleb Pickering (b. 1990)
Cameron Read, conductor

Root Beer Rag (2016)
Billy Joel (b. 1949)
arr. Steinquest

A Visit to Hell (2018)
Mvt. 4 - Escape from Hell
Liam Teague (b. 1974)
arr. Whitmarsh
Daron Roberts, tenor steelpan

Furioso and Valse (2017)*
Earl Hatch (1906-1996)
arr. Santangelo
Ethan Martin, marimba

Kibo (2017)
Andrea Venet (b. 1983)
Tony Cable, snare drum

Mångata (2016)
Kyle Krause (b. 1991)

Mayhem (2017)
Daniel Montoya Jr. (b. 1978)

Prevernal (2017)
Parker Fritz (b. 1997)

Hot Town in the Old Tune Tonight (2018)
Alex Fraga, xylophone
Dan Moore (b. 1958)

Skeleton Key (2018)
Bakken Overture
Brian Nozny (b. 1977)

Almost Perpetual Torque (2012/2018)
Christopher Deane
(b. 1957)

Nocturne (2015)
Mátyás Wettl (b. 1987)

Tentacles (2016)
John Willmarth (b. 1974)
Cameron Read, conductor

The Wexford Carol (2018)
traditional
arr. Brooks/Madill

Selva Luminosa (2017)*
Francisco Perez (b. 1990)
* Today's performance features an excerpt from the complete work.
**Yazz (2017)**

Alexandre Lunsqui (b. 1969)

www.lunsqui.com / Advanced / 4 performers - requires 8 ride cymbals

Roy Haynes, Jack DeJohnette, Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, Max Roach: five jazz drummer legends that I had the opportunity to see playing in person over the years. In YAZZ, for percussion quartet, I reconcile materials most commonly used in contemporary classical music, with elements of the cymbal ride technique, the rhythmic soul of jazz. In addition to the drummers above, I pay tribute to a seminal percussionist whose music has inspired many of us, Naná Vasconcelos. The idea is not to only suggest ephemeral points of contact between styles, but to delve into a universe of sounds to create a work that has its own identity. -- Alexandre Lunsqui

---

**Bright Light - Dark Shadows (2016)**

Caleb Pickering (b. 1990)

C. Alan Publications / Intermediate-Advanced / 9 performers - requires one 5-octave marimba; drumset player also plays basic electric guitar

Bright Light–Dark Shadows is heavily influenced by the poem “We Must” by Charles Bukowski. While Bukowski’s work tends to cover dark subject matter and uses a mix of pessimistic and realist viewpoints, I choose to view this poem in particular in a more positive light. While bright light casts the darkest shadows when viewed from one direction, it is up to the individual to make light of a dark situation. This concept is reflected through the music’s mood, which sometimes evolves slowly and sometimes changes in an instant.

---

**Root Beer Rag (2016)**

Billy Joel (b. 1949 arr. Steinquest)

Row-Loff Publications / Intermediate-Advanced / 8 performers - Xylo, Vibes, 3 Marimbas (one 5.0), Drum Set, Bass Guitar

A charming arrangement of the Billy Joel classic, Root Beer Rag responsibly blends the pop sensibilities of Joel with traditional percussion ensemble instrumentation. Full of whimsy and clever interplay, this piece is well suited for an advanced high school group or a young collegiate ensemble.
**A Visit to Hell (2018)**

Mvt. 4 - Escape from Hell

Liam Teague (b. 1974)  
arr. Whitmarsh

www.jamiewhitmarsh.com / Intermediate-Advanced / 9 performers feat. tenor steelpan

As a teenager, Teague wrote this piece as a result of experiences he had in a dream in which he descended into Hell. The work is in four movements. In movement IV: Escape from Hell, a battle ensues where the Devil and his cohorts chase Mr. Teague.

**Furioso and Valse (2017)**

Earl Hatch (1906-1996)  
arr. Santangelo

Studio 4 Music / Advanced / 3 performers - requires two 5.0 marimbas and one vibraphone

Furioso and Valse was originally published as a two-mallet marimba solo in the classic Earl Hatch collection of works entitled Challenge I. This arrangement is ambitiously scored by the Italian percussion Claudio Santangelo calling for a significantly more challenging solo marimba performance and two accompanists - one of whom performs on vibraphone during Valse.

**Kibo (2017)**

Andrea Venet (b. 1983)

Tapspace / Intermediate - Advanced / 5 performers featuring rudimental snare drum

Kibo is inspired by the beloved ‘80’s tune Africa by Toto. Kibo is actually the highest point and one of the three volcanic cones on Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. While not my intention to be a “cover” of Africa, the piece has rhythmic cells and harmonic motives so inspired. The first version of this piece was written in 2005 while I was studying rudimental drumming with Bob Becker. At the time he was developing his book Rudimental Arithmetic (2008) which explores conceptual relationships between arithmetic, rudiments, and rhythms while explaining application to things such as sticking permutations, meter, grouping, and polyrhythms. Since that time I have also added to the piece based on inspirations from other rudimental snare drum styles, particularly the Pratt solos and the French-American hybrid rudimental style championed by American composer Joseph Tompkins. Ultimately, Kibo is a synthesis of many influences and my way to “song-write” on snare drum. -- Andrea Venet

www.kylekrausecomposer.com / Advanced / 4 performers

Mångata was written in 2016 for the Milieu Percussion Quartet. The title is a Swedish word used to describe the road-like reflection of moonlight on water. It is scored for percussion quartet and employs one vibraphone, one concert bass drum, two floor bass drums, two gongs, and four egg chimes. The ethereal nature of the musical material is reminiscent of Toru Takemitsu, another composer taken to musical reflections on nature. The work is meant to be played in darkness with a focused beam of light on the calf-skin bass drum. This creates the evocation of the moon perched over the vibraphone’s silvery water as the performer’s shadows slip past like clouds in the night sky.


Tapspace / Intermediate / 8 performers

Daniel Montoya Jr.’s Mayhem is an ode to his newborn baby girl. Composed as an “alternative” to the common lullaby-style pieces composers often conjure up for their children, this medium work for large percussion ensemble lovingly kicks at you right from the start. It centers around a rhythmical theme based on his daughter’s name: “Mara, Mara Mayhem.” While remaining accessible to developing performers, Mayhem navigates many different time signatures while retaining a strong sense of groove throughout. A catchy melody and occasional backbeat give the listener a sense of stability in between kicking sessions. Mayhem was commissioned by Megan Wike & Ridgeview Middle School (Round Rock, TX), in honor of their 2016 performance at The Midwest Band & Orchestra Clinic in Chicago, Illinois.

Prevernal (2017) Parker Fritz (b. 1997)

C. Alan Publications / Intermediate-Advanced / 9 performers - requires three vibraphones, includes piano

I have always felt that the weather and climate can affect our emotions and make us relive past experiences and memories. The four seasons bring us a variety of moods and sentiments: Spring is full of new life, with blooming green in the trees and plants. Summer makes us recall memories of childhood outdoor activity and friendship. Autumn provides a sense of relaxation with its cool temperatures and vibrant color palette. Finally, winter settles the world into a period of rest and reflection before beginning the cycle all over again. Having lived in Michigan my entire life, I have been fortunate to experience all four distinct seasons. Ecologists refer to the term prevernal to describe the period of late winter that transitions into early spring. This is the mood and atmosphere depicted in this piece.

-- Parker Fritz
Hot Town in the Old Tune Tonight (2018)  
Dan Moore (b. 1958)

Row-Loff Publications / Intermediate / 9-13 performers

Hot Town in the Old Tune Tonight is a rollicking fantasy variation based on the melodic theme of There’ll be a Hat Time in the Old Town To-night composed by Theodore A. Metz (1848-1936).

There’ll be a Hot Time in the Old Town To-night remains one of the most enduring American Folk Songs, becoming popular after it was used as a theme for Teddy Roosevelt’s Rough Riders in the late 1890s. Since then it has been used as a Fight Song for many colleges and universities, and can be heard in films from Citizen Kane to Batman. It was used to great comedic effect when performed by the Hooterville Volunteer Fire Department Band in episodes of vintage television shows Green Acres and Petticoat Junction.

The original melody is woven into the fabric of Hot Town in the Old Tune Tonight in many different ways — turned upside down, inside out, and backwards - giving it a slightly “not-quite-right-ness” that also explains the title. Hot Town in the Old Tune Tonight is written with a tongue-in-Cheek irony that makes it a challenge to play.

Skeleton Key (2018)  
Brian Nozny (b. 1977)

Bakken Overture

www.briannozny.com / Beginning / 4+ Performers

Skeleton Key as a collection began out of the need for percussion ensemble repertoire that could be handled by a diverse group of players in a diverse number of situations. The idea is that these pieces are meant to be frameworks that directors adjust to fit ensembles’ needs.

While each piece is written with four parts, the instruments listed are merely guidelines and the number of players used is entirely up to the discretion of the director. This is a collection that can fit just about any situation - or, in essence, a key that can open any lock.

Bakken Overture is named after the Bakken oil formation that spans from Western North Dakota into Eastern Montana, and is dedicated to the students in the Montana Eastern. A Honor Band Festival Percussion Ensemble who premiered the piece.
**Almost Perpetual Torque (2012/2018)**  
Christopher Deane (b. 1957)

*Innovative Percussion / Advanced / 3 performers, requires 5.0 marimba, vibraphone, and features 4.0 xylophone (3.5 ossia available)*

*Almost Perpetual Torque* was composed in the fall of 2012 upon the request of Dr. Susan Powell, professor and director of percussion studies at Ohio State University. The original premier performance was given at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in 2012. Dr. Powell is internationally recognized for her virtuosic musicianship on the xylophone. Though not a strict variation form, this composition does have a similar structure in that there are a series of variation like character studies for the xylophone that are accompanied by the vibraphone and marimba intertwined in patterns that seem to constantly spiral either upward or downward as if in a constant state of tension or “torque”. This piece has finally reached a point of completion in the fall of 2018 largely due to the persistence of Dr. Gregory Beyer, professor and director of percussion at Northern Illinois University, who came to the 2012 premier performance and expressed sincere support for this work. His tremendously helpful advice both technically and musically, along with his assistance in bringing this composition to publication has been invaluable and is deeply appreciated by the composer. -- Christopher Deane

---

**Nocturne (2015)**  
Mátyás Wettl (b. 1987)

*[www.matyaswettl.com](http://www.matyaswettl.com) / Advanced / 4 performers*

Nocturne was composed for and premiered by Slagwerk Den Haag. It is written for 4 percussion players, each having 4 switches in front of themselves what they play on. Each switch turns on a light. It could be any sort of light, floorlamps, desk lamps, street lights, LEDs, plain lightbulbs, etc. The lights can be placed by choice. The piece should be performed in total darkness.
**Tentacles (2016)**

John Willmarth (b. 1974)

*Tapspace / Beginner-Intermediate / 6-10 performers*

Some of the ocean’s most mysterious and elusive creatures possess the flexible appendages known as tentacles. Written for 6-10 beginning percussionists, Tentacles depicts these creatures. John Willmarth’s composition provides a unique and accessible musical setting in which younger players can easily sound mature. Melodic sections bookend non-pitched percussion features allowing keyboard players opportunities to play additional instruments. It is also extra flexible in that it can be scaled to different ensemble sizes through certain parts that are optional. Tentacles is well-suited for concert or festival performance.

---

**The Wexford Carol (2018)**

traditional

arr. Brooks / Madill

*Row-Loff Productions / Medium / 10-12 performers, optional 5.0 marimba*

The Wexford Carol, sometimes known by its first verse “Good people all this Christmas time”, is one of the oldest extant Christmas carols. The song achieved a renewed popularity due to the work of William Grattan Flood (1859-1928), who was organist and musical director at St. Aidan’s Cathedral in Enniscorthy. He transcribed the carol from a local singer and had it published in the Oxford Book of Carols, putting Enniscorthy into most carol books around the world.

A welcomed addition to percussion ensemble holiday collections, this arrangement lightly draws on an Pat Metheny aesthetic while staying achievable for the young percussion ensemble. Our performance today doubles the marimba parts that originally only call for two performers.

---

**Selva Luminosa (2017)**

Francisco Perez (b. 1990)

*C. Alan Publications / Advanced / 4 performers - requires 2 5.0 marimbas*

*Selva Luminosa* – or “luminous jungle” – is my first work for mallet quartet in which I sought out to feature an earthy, almost tribal sound palette in the marimbas against the shimmering and brilliant sound of the vibraphone. Much of the language throughout stems from my daily exposure to a slew of Latin American genres such as merengue, cumbia, and salsa from an early age, as well as my admiration for the music of Michel Camilo. I composed the work for BlueSHIFT Percussion. -- Francisco Perez
ABOUT THE NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY PERCUSSION STUDIO

The NIU Percussion Studio dates back to 1963 and is nearly as old as the Percussive Arts Society (PAS) itself. It formed during a “second wave” of American university percussion programs. The first percussionist to arrive at the NIU School of Music was Ron Fink, who taught both percussion and bands. Fink stayed for only a year, and his departure to the University of North Texas in 1964 created a vacancy filled by Robert Buggert, Ph.D., a thinker, percussionist, prolific composer, and educator. An early leader in our field, Buggert was among the initial fourteen members who formed the Percussive Arts Society in 1961. Buggert constantly wrote new material for teaching and for percussion ensemble. One of his more well-known compositions is “Introduction and Fugue” for eleven players. Buggert is now a visual artist and living in the Good Samaritan Las Cruces Village retirement community.

In 1966 Buggert moved from School of Music faculty to administration within the NIU Graduate School. At that point the School of Music hired Thomas Siwe, an incredibly active freelancer who performed with the Chicago Lyric Opera while simultaneously teaching at NIU, UW-Madison, and Northwestern University. He stayed at NIU for two years before reaching out to his former University of Illinois colleague, Alan O’Connor to take over in 1968. O’Connor was building a family in New York at the time and gladly took the position. A year later their professor at the University of Illinois, Jack MacKenzie, (whom O’Connor referred to as his greatest teacher), made a similar move into administration. He contacted both Siwe and O’Connor to take dual positions at the U of I. While Siwe accepted the offer, becoming the Director of Percussion Studies, O’Connor decided to stay at NIU. He leveraged the MacKenzie’s offer and convinced NIU School of Music Director Paul Steg to provide him with additional summer employment to support his family. O’Connor and much of his family still live right here in DeKalb.

O’Connor was a visionary leader and is responsible for originating and directing what has become our world famous NIU Steel Band. In 1966, while still at student at the U of I, O’Connor became familiar with the sound of the steel pan thanks to a piece of modern music by Sal Martirano. “Underworld” featured dancers and a host of chamber musicians including four percussionists, each with a large set up that included steel pan. In 1967, the O’Connors spent their honeymoon in the Virgin Islands, and happily spent their evenings following around local steel bands. In 1970, when a student mentioned an upcoming family vacation to Aruba, Al secured $500 from Paul Steg for a set of steel drums. The student called from Aruba three days after his departure with news: he’d found a set of drums! Within a week the instruments arrived at O’Hare, where they were held in customs. O’Connor took a truck to the airport and, after some negotiation, the customs agent agreed to call them “bongo drums.” The pans were released and Al brought them to NIU.
As the studio grew underneath O’Connor’s direction he was eventually able to secure a second faculty position. He first filled this post with a bold experiment: a quartet of percussionists called the **Black Earth Percussion Group (Allen Otte, Rick and Gary Kvistad, and Michael Udow)**. Their tenure lasted from 1973-1977. During their initial years, they were housed in a residential structure on Garden Road, adjacent to the current Center for Latino and Latin American Studies Building. Although the cornerstone of the current NIU School of Music Building reads 1971, it finally opened for use only in 1975. Many of the antique drums, tams, and gongs now in our instrument collection date from this period and were played by these wonderful musicians.

When the Black Earth Percussion Groups left for Cincinnati, O’Connor tapped one of his first students, **Jeff Kowalski** (1977-1983) to continue in the position. Kowalski was one of four percussionists studying with Tom Siwe when O’Connor first arrived in 1968 and had gone on to earn a MM in contemporary music at SUNY Buffalo where he studied with Jan Williams. When O’Connor became the Assistant Director of the School of Music in 1983, Kowalski intended to move into his position as the Director of percussion studies, thereby opening a search for a second percussion instructor.

That search led to the hiring of **Richard Holly** in the fall of 1983. Yet, during the search process, Kowalski decided to move his family to Israel, and this opened up another search for the position of Director of Percussion Studies. **Robert Chappell**, who had toured with the Paul Winter Consort, joined the faculty as the Director of Percussion Studies in the spring of 1984. He brought a wealth of diversity to his position, teaching tabla and amadinda xylophone to the percussion area and he even taught jazz piano. Chappell’s tenure is the longest of any percussion professor at NIU, teaching for nearly 30 years and creating a rich history. During that time, the fast friendship between Holly and Chappell allowed them to work together to develop a beautiful balance and a solid foundation for NIU’s percussion program, catapulting its rise to national eminence. So close were these two that their individual recitals eventually merged, an annual standing-room only event that became lovingly known as the “Rich and Robert Show.” A heady mixture of humor and music, this “show” continued until 2000.

In 1986, steelpan builder, tuner, arranger, and performer **Clifford Alexis** was recruited to join the NIU School of Music as the Director of the NIU Steel Band. During his tenure, Steelpan became its own studio and NIU became the first university in the United States to offer a major in Steelpan studies. The NIU Steel Pan Studio quickly earned an international reputation for excellence, which brought a young virtuoso, **Liam Teague**, to study at NIU in 1993 and then to join the ranks as faculty in 2001. Liam Teague is now the Director of Steelpan Studies at NIU and maintains
a robust performance schedule around the world. Upon Cliff Alexis’s retirement in 2017, NIU alumnus Yuko Asada assumed the role of Co-Director of the NIU Steelband and Musical Instrument Technician.

In 1995, when Holly first became Assistant Director of the School of Music, a part-time position was assumed by Jeff Stitely (1995-2000) who taught undergraduate studies and drum set. When Holly eventually became the Associate Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts in 2001, a full-time position again became available and NIU found Orlando Cotto, who spent three years (2001-2004) at NIU. During his stay, Cotto founded the NIU Latin Jazz Ensemble.

Upon Cotto’s departure in 2004, Dr. Gregory Beyer began teaching alongside Robert Chappell. Their close relationship began another episode of foundational stability with exciting changes in the studio. Beyer brought a renewed passion for contemporary music, founding the NIU New Music Ensemble in 2008. And not unlike O’Connor’s fascination that founded the Steel Band, Beyer brought to NIU his unique vision for a contemporary approach to world music. This manifest in his non-profit organization Arcomusical and its student and professional ensembles, the NIU Bau-House and Projeto Arcomusical.

It is also at this time that Rodrigo Villanueva joined the NIU School of Music as a professor teaching Jazz Studies, Drum Set, and Directing the NIU Jazz Lab Band. Rodrigo Villanueva continues to teach at NIU and maintains an active international performance and education schedule.

After serving for many years as the Assistant Director of the School of Music and the Associate Director of the CVPA, Holly would become the Dean of the CVPA in 2008. In 2015, he took his career one step further and is now the Executive Director for the Arts at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC.

When Robert Chappell retired in 2012, Michael Mixtacki (2012) came to stay at NIU for four years, bringing a depth of knowledge and talent in the areas of Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Cuban music. In 2016, Mixtacki began teaching at the University of Texas at San Antonio, and Ben Wahlund, who had been teaching at NIU during Beyer’s sabbatical in 2015, has remained on to teach alongside Beyer upon his return from a year in Brazil.
NIU BRINGS WORLD-CLASS ARTS EVENTS HOME

Experience our wealth of talent in theater, dance, art and music.

Be the first to know about upcoming events and interesting stories: go.niu.edu/artsblog