Steel Band

Saturday, November 21, 2026 at 3pm
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Pacific Lutheran University
The College of Professional Studies and School of Music, Theatre & Dance present

Steel Band

Miho Takekawa, *director*

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Welcome to Lagerquist Concert hall.
Please disable the audible signal on all watches and cellular phones for the duration of the concert.
Use of cameras, recording equipment, and all digital devices is not permitted in the concert hall.

PROGRAM

Steel Rain
Donovan Klega, Darek Solomon, Jessa Delos Reyes, Felicity Waldron, and Benjamin Coats
Joey Perez, *drumset*

Kangding Qingge ..... Chinese Traditional
arr. Darek Solomon

J'ouvert Barrio ..... Roaring Lion (1908-1999)
arr. Josh Quillen

PLU Steel Band
Ashnaa George, Joey Perez, Wu-Yin Lu, Cadence Philbeck**,** Abi Caprye,
Tucker Doering, Logan Keogh, Iris Lee, and Allison Howes

Ayko-Ayko ..... Caribbean Traditional
arr. Jeff Neitzke

Air on the G String ..... J. S. Bach (1685-1750)
arr. Franz Grissom

Jean and Dinah ..... Mighty Sparrow (1935-2026)
arr. Jerod D. Nunley

Wishful Thinking ..... Tracy Thornton
Logan Keogh, *steel pan solo*

PLU Steel Band and Steel Rain

Sokah ..... Nailah Blackman (B. 1997) & Anson Soverall
arr. Benjamin Coats

Program Notes





Slinger Francisco, **The Mighty Sparrow**, was born on July 9, 1935 in Grand Roy, Grenada, and migrated to Trinidad with his family when he was one year old. Thus, followed a run of songs over the decades—from *Mr. Walker*, to *Obeah Wedding*, to the infamous *Congo Man* (banned for 23 years by the BBC!), and too many more to mention here—that are known well throughout the Caribbean. In 1969, Sparrow teamed up with Jamaican musician Byron Lee to record *Only A Fool Breaks His Own Heart*, which was a hit in the UK and in the Netherlands, where it re-entered eight years later, spending a staggering 27 weeks on the charts and peaking at number 2 in the spring of 1978. Throughout the second half of the 20th century, "Birdie" (as he is known to his fans), revolutionized Calypso, taking it from its pure folk roots and injecting elements of jazz and American pop, transforming it into an international, cross-cultural art form. Across seven decades he recorded over fifty albums of his original songs, many of which have become standards among Caribbean performers and recording artists. Mighty Sparrow passed away in September 2026 and tonight's performance of *Jean and Dinah* is being performed in honor of him.

"As far as concept and intelligence and warring with words, Mighty Sparrow was and probably still is the king…His shows are like prize fights and he always comes out on top, all this and a fifteen or twenty-piece band just blasting away…He's fantastic."

– Bob Dylan (biography box set notes)

About the Director

Miho Takekawa is originally from Tokyo, Japan. She teaches at Pacific Lutheran University, where she is head of the percussion studio and directs the school's Percussion Ensemble and Steel Band. Previously, she was an interim professor of percussion at the University of Washington School of Music from 2011 to 2012. Miho began piano at age three and took up percussion at age thirteen, ultimately graduating from Tokyo's prestigious Kunitachi School of Music. She earned both her masters and doctoral degrees in percussion performance from the University of Washington School of Music in Seattle, where she was awarded the coveted Boeing Scholarship, among other honors. Takekawa is a sought-after performer in many styles of music including classical, steel pan, and West African drumming. She performs with Vashon Opera, Pan Duo, and many other groups. She is also a founding member of the Miho & Diego Duo (www.mihodiego.com). Significant awards include a Washington State Arts Commission Fellowship and grants from King County 4Culture. In addition to her own performance career, Miho directed the North Rainbow Steel Drum Group (Sapporo, Japan) and served as an arranger for the Hirosaki Rainbow Steel Pan Group. In 2023, the Miho & Diego Duo traveled to Namibia, Africa to teach marimba at Sunshine Private School and performed with the Ongama Drum Cafe Group. They have also received an invitation to perform with the Hirosaki University Tsugaru Shamisen Group, which is a concert supported by the Agency of Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan. Miho's other significant activities include serving as Vice President of the Washington Chapter of Percussive Arts Society, directing the PLU Alumni Steel Band, and working with the Folk & Traditional Arts Program of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. Additionally, she is a contributing coauthor of *A Composer's Insight: Thoughts, Analysis and Commentary on Contemporary Masterpieces for Wind Band* published by Meredith Music. Miho has worked to foster cultural exchange between Japanese and American youth music groups. Many of Miho's past activities can be found at www.tymusicexchange.com.

History of Steel Pan

The steel pan evolved out of earlier musical practices of Trinidad's African descendants. Drumming was used as a form of communication among the enslaved Africans and was subsequently outlawed by the British colonial government in 1883. While many instruments have experienced some degree of evolution in recent years, the steel pan has the distinction of being the only instrument to be truly 'invented' in the 20th century. The first instruments developed in the evolution of steel pan were "Tamboo Bamboo", tunable sticks made of bamboo wood. These were hit onto the ground with other sticks in order to produce sound. "Tamboo Bamboo" bands also included percussion using biscuit tins, oil drums, and bottle-and-spoon.

By the mid-1930s metal percussion was being used in the "Tamboo Bamboo" bands, the first probably being either the automobile brake hub 'iron' or the biscuit drum 'boom'. The former replaced the bottle-and-spoon, and then later the 'bass' bamboo that was pounded on the ground. By the late 1930s the occasional all-steel bands were seen at Carnival and by 1940 it had become the preferred Carnival accompaniment of young underprivileged men. The 55-gallon oil drum was used to make lead steel pans from around 1947.

– from Carnival Music & Arts-CultureMix Arts

