

STEELBAND SHOP HOLLAND

Steelband Shop Holland was founded in April 2007 by four friends who love the Steeldrum.

Three of them, Digna, Gerjo and Miranda, played lead pan with a Marching Band. This band dissolved and they lost touch with each other. After a few years, Digna was searching for a second hand steel pan on the internet and her advert was seen by Gerjo and Miranda who made contact as they were also looking for a steel pan. Their friendship was rekindled and having bought steel pans they traveled to the North of the Netherlands to meet Joel Huybregts and watch his band Tropical Steelbands practice. Digna, her husband Alfred, Gerjo and Miranda loved the music.

After discussing the state of affairs with information concerning steel pans in the Netherlands with Joel, they concluded that the lack of information had to be addressed with some urgency owing to the vast amount of interest showed in the art form. There was also a lack of information about where to purchase a new Pan Instrument, tuning etc. After their meeting, Digna made a firm decision to do something about it and suggested the creation of the first Dutch Steelband Shop for steel bands, pannists, and steel pan music lovers.

Gerjo and Miranda's enthusiasm about the project was overwhelming; resulting in them joining forces with Digna and Alfred to set up the Dutch Steelband Shop. Their decision was followed by

months of investigation and meetings with Matthias Kauer of Switzerland, German steel pan manufacturer/tuner, Eckhardt Schulz, Nostalgia Steelband and Ebony's manager, Pepe Francis, from England. They also spoke to the Dutch Marine and Police steelbands. They made great efforts to speak to everybody who is involved in the steel band art form in the Netherlands and the wider steel pan community including Tony Charles of London about selling his pan instruments in Holland, Andy Narrell about selling his CDs, Sune Borregaard from Denmark and Auke Eshuis about selling their musical score sheets, Panyard Inc in the USA, Steelpan manufacturers in Trinidad et al.

The Trinidad and Tobago embassy in Brussels and the Dutch embassy in Trinidad assisted them in locating reliable shops in Trinidad so that they are now able to offer a wide selection of souvenirs from Trinidad. Their intensive investigation has led to the creation of their price lists and choice of merchandise to market. **Their main aim is to provide the Dutch communities with current online information about the steel drum and bands. Interested parties can then purchase steel pan instruments of their choice. At present they do not have a show room but their dedicated and diligent work coupled with their commitment in planning**

future steel pan workshops for both children and adults will result in the acquisition of permanent premises. In the mean time, they keep themselves busy by speaking to the wider steel band community with Matthias Kauer and Tony Charles as their advisers.

All their members are self taught pannists. Digna started playing the mars drum at 8 and still plays in the local drum band. She also plays at a xylophone and other percussion instruments. Miranda also played the xylophone. Gerjo also played the mars drum and trumpet. He was the first of group to play the steel drum. Alfred plays the trio drum and bass pans but now spends most of his time babysitting their 4 year old son as Digna is always busy with the music and shop.

They are hoping to introduce the art form to the rest of the Netherlands and give people the opportunity to enjoy the great music of this wonderful instrument. They all have full time jobs and Digna created their website. They actively canvass the internet in search of world wide news on the steel drum ensuring that the Dutch people are informed of events and steel band performances all over the world. For more information visit www.steelbandshop.nl

By Digna Broek



BOOK REVIEW ●●●



UNHEARD VOICES

By: Myrna Nurse - Published by iUniverse Inc.
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Unheard Voices: The Rise of Steelband and Calypso in the Caribbean and North America traces the history of this unique percussive invention of the twentieth century. The author of *Unheard Voices*, Myrna Nurse, artfully describes the origin and innovators of the steelpan, the controversies surrounding its music and leaders, and the violence that shaped the movement.

Nurse's portraits of the Caribbean artists describe both their unending struggle against poverty and violence, and their natural will to create. Her discussion of the American musicians is a compelling presentation of the drive and determination involved in furthering "the musical journey of the pan."

Unheard Voices relates the experiences of two of the movement's fathers: Elliott "Ellie" Mannette and Neville Jules. Nurse also considers the women who have broken into this art form, as well as Calypso. *Unheard Voices* is a welcome addition to the small but growing body of literature on the musical inventions of the West Indian Diaspora. Myrna Nurse was born in Trinidad and immigrated to the United States in 1975. A naturalized citizen, she earned her PhD in 1999 from Temple University and is an assistant professor of English. Nurse lives with her husband, Keith, and has two children, Miranda and Alex.



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