

Dissemination of Marimba performance skills through workshops: The Case of Rimba Resonance Vibes Ensemble

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Abstract

The Zimbabwe Marimba music performance has been disseminated both locally and globally, transcending national barriers since the Kwanongoma marimba was designed in Bulawayo in the 1960s at the United College of Education. There has been a phenomenal rise in marimba performance activities in Europe and America, while there is relative calm in Zimbabwe where the marimba was designed. This study chronicles my role in the dissemination of marimba performance within Zimbabwe with Rimba Resonance Vibes Ensemble from an insider perspective. The lull in local activity is largely due to the country's socio-economic struggles which have led to marimba instructors, lecturers, tutors, and performers leaving for greener pastures. A yawning gap now exists, and the agency role is critically needed so that there are deliberate efforts to pass marimba performance knowledge and skills to the next generation, and conducting workshops is one way in which applied ethnomusicologists can advocate for the continuity of this culture. This paper is an autoethnographic account of my role in teaching marimba music performance experiences at marimba workshops in Zimbabwe. I conduct a qualitative autoethnographic exploration of Rimba Resonance Vibes Ensemble's marimba workshops, describe the situation in Zimbabwe marimba music performance practices, and reflect on the nature of practice, skills development, and education. The paper reveals the concerted effort that marimba teachers need to invest to ensure the survival of their art in the future. There is a glaring need for action and dissemination to sustain the art of marimba music performance by bands based in Zimbabwe.

Keywords: Autoethnography, Marimba music, Performance, Teaching, Workshops