

Autoethnographic memoirs of Rimba resonance vibes ensemble festival performances

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Abstract

Marimba music performance practice has emerged globally in hundreds of marimba ensembles since the Kwanongoma marimba was designed in Bulawayo in the 1960s. The purpose of the study is to explore, the situation of marimba performance within Zimbabwe from an emic perspective. The country has a fledgling economy which is a push factor leading to the problem of about eighty-five percent of the population intending to relocate to other countries. This has not spared the marimba music industry as numerous marimba builders, performers and tutors have already, or intend to migrate. In this autoethnography I present perspectives on my marimba music performance experiences at local and regional festivals in Zimbabwe and South Africa. I conduct a qualitative autoethnographic exploration of Rimba Resonance Vibes Ensemble's performances, describe the culture of Zimbabwe marimba music performance practices, and reflect on various permutations of the practice in which the art has been kept alive in Zimbabwe in the wake of a brain drain. The findings show multiple challenges that we face as marimba musicians. There is a glaring need for agency and advocacy to sustain the art of marimba music performance by bands based in Zimbabwe.

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