



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.

Introduction

Zimbabwean marimba music performance, which began as schoolboy stuff (Jones 2012), has spread widely to the Western world, including Europe (Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom), Australia and the United States of America (Matiure, 2008). In the United States of America, there are hundreds of centres that workshop people to play the Zimbabwe-style marimba, such as Kutsinhira Cultural Arts Centre, Ancient Ways, Kutandara Arts Centre, The Rivers School Conservatory, Eastman School of Music, Zimfest, and numerous colleges and universities. "In the United States of America alone, more than 100 bands play the Zimbabwean marimba. Faulkner



(2007:94) researched a project disseminating Zimbabwe marimba music performance in Icelandic schools, which had run for four years. The workshops involved peer and cross-age pupil teaching in a school community as the primary vehicles for transmitting, assimilation, and disseminating a nationally novel music practice. In this study, Vygotsky's social learning theory about zones of proximal development (ZPD) appeared to provide an exceptional fit with the available data. It was also consonant with the social and communicative roots of musical function. The extent to which learners themselves might be effective in teaching their peers and near peers proved very effective when coupled with that of the teacher, who Vygotsky calls the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO).

Zimbabwean performers of marimba music have also been invited to teach marimba abroad" (Muparutsa 2013; Maguraushe 2018: 02). The reasons vary from academic travel to the movement of marimba music performers to live in the diaspora. The International Marimba and Steelpan Festival in South Africa (Maguraushe 2018) is an annual event that has grown the presence of marimba ensembles in South African schools despite the instrument not being indigenous to South Africa. Joan Lithgow allocates some slots at the festival, during which workshops on marimba performance skills are conducted annually. In South Africa, the marimba is widely used in schools and entertainment. South African people have a shared marimba knowledge and skills from another culture, allowing multiculturalism in everyday life, especially in schooling and education (Gordon 2020). They largely play the diatonic version of the instrument. Nyathi's (nd) article narrates how the inclusion of marimba lessons, workshops and festivals in Thornhill Primary School and the surrounding community in Botswana's capital city, Gaborone, has enhanced the lives of learners and promoted the vitality of music education in this school. The paper shows that most music teachers attending the festivals have learnt new repertoire and styles afforded through the marimba workshops and the final concert performances during the festivals.

Locally, Magwati's (2022) study established the Dzimbabwe Heritage Enterprise (DHE) practical project designed to spur the development of the Karanga musical arts creative cultural industry. This project includes Zimbabwe marimba music performance workshops and indigenous musical instruments. A cultural settlement was institutionalised considering both Karanga cosmologies and modern tourism expectations. DHE's major goal is poverty reduction, which engages and deploys the musical heritage of the Karanga people near the Great Zimbabwe Monuments. This research, informed by indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), is grounded in post-colonial theory. This project was inspired by Applied Ethnomusicology's social mission to solve community problems by creating employment opportunities, which resonates well with Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 policy that emphasizes innovation and industrialisation. Other marimba workshops are conducted at festivals such as the Allied Arts, TIFAZ, RIO-SET and Tambarimba.

My romance with the Zimbabwe marimba started in 1997 at Mutare Teachers College (MTC), where I was a MTC Marimba Ensemble student leader. The ensemble performed at weddings, birthday parties, shows, and corporate and state functions in Mutare City. Together with fellow band members Servious Furumele, Tapiwa Ndemera, Onard Viriri, James Chikodzi, Day Chikarango, and Chipu Mpambo, we performed before entertainment-starved student teachers at college during weekends. My new-found passion for playing the marimba began there, and I went on to teach marimba at Dotito and Wadzanai High Schools in Mashonaland Central Province. I was a Centre Coordinator for the Children's Performing Arts Workshop (CHIPAWO) Centre for Disadvantaged Rural Children. When I studied at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) for my undergraduate degree in 2003, I teamed up with



Isaac Machafa, Tendai Muparutsa, Perminus Matiure, Locardia Mabikahama, and Sheron Masoka to form a marimba ensemble that provided entertainment on campus and at private functions. I went on to teach at Gresham and Mandava Schools in the Midlands Province before joining the Midlands State University Music Business, Musicology and Technology Department as a marimba teaching assistant. Fed up with being confined to on-campus performances during academic conferences, university graduation ceremonies, and research and intellectual expos with the Midlands State University (MSU) Marimba Ensemble, I formed the RRV Ensemble. This was an adventurous community-based marimba ensemble that I could now take beyond the confines of the MSU campus hegemony to conduct workshops to disseminate knowledge in the community (Maguraushe 2018).

An edge to engage in writing about my experiences in the culture of marimba performance workshops has always been egging me on, and I feel that I can put pen to paper now. My achievements and struggles at marimba workshops tell a story about the successes and dilemmas marimba musicians face as they ply their trade in a suppressed economy. Autoethnography enables me, as the author, to share the challenges, frustrations, and glorious moments I have encountered as a marimba musician and ensemble leader (Wall 2006). This autoethnography reflects on my experiences (Ellingson and Ellis 2008) and the realisation of alterity in this six-decade Zimbabwe marimba tradition. A great chunk of what I share about marimba performance practices is about me in the culture. My desire and zeal to discover more about the marimba performance in this exercise is a reflexive critical enquiry naturally rooted in postmodern philosophy. What I went through as a marimba student, teacher, player, lecturer, and band manager are confrontations, shortages, and learning experiences about a culture I am part of.

I took the interpretive research paradigm during the research process. During this study, I assumed a participant observer role that enabled me to tap into community funds of knowledge (Genzuk 2003) and view the marimba knowledge and skills dissemination from the perspectives of the tutors and their students. Consequently, and throughout the study, I gained an insider perspective of the musicians' teaching and learning experiences. A conceptual understanding like this is critical in Zimbabwe in this age of digital technology if the cultural and creative arts sector is to realise growth for its players and stakeholders. There is a need to take cognisance that my experiences as a marimba lecturer could be viewed as a worthwhile knowledge base for the effective accommodation of marimba music performance studies in present-day Zimbabwe. The marimba is one of the indigenous musical instruments that can be used to develop the local curriculum (Nota 2017), and conducting marimba workshops is one way to move in such a direction.

The first section of the paper presents the Rimba Resonance Vibes Band membership. The second section discusses the nature of marimba rehearsals. The third section describes the band's involvement in the Manicaland Folk Music and Dance Festival in Mutare, where we were invited to workshop artists on marimba performance after our outstanding performances at RIO-SET and Tambarimba. The fourth section discusses our skills dissemination at a workshop at Harare International School.

Conceptual Framework

In Zimbabwe, the government is currently thrusting value addition and beneficiation. Emphasis is on innovation, industrialisation, and commercialisation, where lecturers are encouraged to design programmes that empower students to become practically oriented to solve local problems. They should not be mere job seekers but entrepreneurs. Applied ethnomusicology wields a lot of potential because it is already thrust towards applying knowledge learnt in class to the community. Our



department at the university is involved in community engagement with the Prisons and Correctional Services Department by training inmates to learn music theory and run their bands. Community service is recognised when I apply for promotion to encourage the relevance of the applied ethnomusicology endeavour to solve the social problem of crime in Zimbabwean society. What I do with the RRV Ensemble at workshops is applied ethnomusicology because the discipline entails workshops, concerts, and workshops. Applied ethnomusicology responds to community needs and aims to participate in or develop projects that address problems or develop possibilities defined to a considerable extent by the needs and participants. It also addresses musicological questions.

Career prospects for applied ethnomusicologists in Zimbabwean universities are bleak. Tenure-track openings have been very few since the birth of music programmes at Kwanongoma College of Music in the 1960s. The country has no economy worth mentioning, and my job is precarious. Currently, there are only three universities that offer music studies. The University of Zimbabwe has Music Teacher Education in the Department of Teacher Education (DTE). There are two music lecturers in the DTE. Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) has music in the Robert Gabriel Mugabe School of Education and Culture's Department of Technical Education. Their music section is staffed by four full-time lecturers and three part-time lecturers. GZU also has the Simon Vengesai Muzenda School of Arts, Culture and Heritage. There are four music lecturers, one teaching assistant, two instrument instructors and one technician. There is also a Department of Music Business, Musicology and Technology in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Midlands State University, which I chaired from 2020-2022. It has 12 lecturers, one instrument instructor and two technicians.

As an applied ethnomusicology scholar in Zimbabwe, I always pack my bags because there is no job security. The university management in these three institutions always questions the viability of music degree programmes because the student numbers are extremely low. The total number of music lecturer tenure-track posts in these three universities is twenty-five. Both currently employed music lecturers and their music graduates increasingly seek employment in the diaspora because of the dire economic situation the country is experiencing. A university lecturer cannot afford a decent meal at the college canteen because earnings are eroded by daily hyperinflation. Non-academic employers are very scarce: there are a couple of posts in the public service (Ministry of Youth, Arts, Sports and Culture; Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education), and in the private sector, it is a do-or-die situation for arts managers, promoters, performers, composers and agents. Negotiating one's way to an ethnomusicology career in these circumstances always hits the ugly snag of nepotism and corruption, which has engulfed Zimbabwe from the top level to the grassroots.

Rimba Resonance Vibes Band membership

The Rimba Resonance Vibes (RRV) Ensemble is a 20-member Senga community-based cultural ensemble that has been playing marimba and a Karimba/Nyunganyunga hybrid since 2015, with the motive of preserving Zimbabwean music through live performance practice. The members are Progress Moyo Maxwell Muhenyeri, Tafadzwa Chipendo, Mopati Molosiwa, Tafadzwa Matiure, Enock Rugube, Nyasha Kakodzi, Selina Rangarirai, Nyarai Gezi, Takudzwa Matata, Ricardo Charumali, Tafadzwa Gapara, Memory Chitekairo, Chenesai Mutunja, Tariro Mazarura and Prince von Bosha. The band comprises former and current students in the Bachelor of Music Business, Musicology and Technology Honours Degree at Midlands State University in Gweru, Zimbabwe. In the band, most of the members have more than one role. The different roles for band members are organising events, composing/arranging marimba songs, playing marimbas, doing the vocals, and



dancing. The RRV Ensemble plays three soprano marimbas, three tenors, one baritone, and one bass together with a western drum set, *hosho* and *ngoma*.

The instruments were originally designed at Kwanongoma College of Music in the 1960s. All members are vocalists. The mbiras are electrified and use electric guitar pickers to achieve a refined sound. The RRV Ensemble showcases Zimbabwean traditional dance styles and genres. The band intends to release a self-entitled 'Rimba Resonance Vibes' album with bold lyrics that make a social commentary on Zimbabwean life experiences and diversified traditional and contemporary rhythms. The band's repertoire includes traditional Zimbabwean and local and international contemporary songs. They have performed in Gweru, Harare, and Johannesburg, and music fans have well-received their music.

Rimba Resonance Vibes rehearsals

Marimba performance is a social practice since our daily experiences take us through the networks of social life. Our routine contact with marimba music lovers, festival organisers, funders, tutors, and fellow marimba players is an integral part of our associations. The RRV Ensemble practices hard to make an impact through live marimba performances in an urban environment. Performers undergo the mentally and physically demanding experience of preparing for a live marimba performance that has to be staged before an audience. What the marimba ensemble decides to rehearse depends on the ensemble members' notion or concept of what constitutes an entertaining marimba music performance that will be appreciated by the audience for whom they will perform and will persuade funders to delve into their pockets to sponsor the ensemble. It also depends on the marimba music performance talents and capabilities of the ensemble members, as well as their capability to acquire additional performance skills within the timeframe before the date their live performance is slated to be staged. The urban community sets standards for what they deem the best entertainment and their musical taste preferences also determine what the ensemble will showcase.

Musical performance standards are social constructions reinforced by ecstatic cheers from audiences or forced out through jeers and poor attendance. The RRV Ensemble rehearses for hours on end to master their society's best-selling popular song features. This is done to meet the expectations of those who consume their music if their music is to be appreciated. We stretch ourselves so that our act is polished enough to appeal to an audience, and even risk suffering from fatigue and/or strained muscles, which sometimes compromises health. Such a sacrifice might help the ensemble rise to fame and fortune and lead us to master the art of marimba music performance. There is potential to realise financial benefits if our recorded music sales increase, they draw large crowds at live shows, or if rich people offer them lucrative performance contracts either locally (which is very unlikely) or abroad (which is the usual case).

During rehearsals, the band has a disciplined routine followed religiously, starting after working hours and running until deep into the evening when there are no power outages. Teaching and learning the Zimbabwe marimba is done through rote during the RRV Ensemble rehearsals. Rote learning happens when a marimba mentor demonstrates how to play the instrument to a learner. The learner watches, listens, and imitates what the mentor has demonstrated. This method has been used by many marimba tutors in Zimbabwe, where most musicians do not perform music through sight reading. Marimba players interact with seasoned, excellent marimba players to develop playing techniques. These virtuoso marimba players provide the greatest influence through a mentorship relationship that lays a foundation for the learner to manage song compositions and arrangements alone in later life. With time, the learner becomes a tutor in his or her own right, and that is how



marimba teachers are developed through the oral tradition – they learn by doing. When they find their feet, the next step is to build a wide repertoire of marimba songs.

Playing music by ear is a characteristic feature of rote learning used by Zimbabwe marimba musicians. A marimba player can listen to recordings, or an ensemble playing and base his or her practice on listening and playing. They experiment with the sounds on the marimba until they can play the lines well. Several traditional songs have been arranged to be played on the marimba in this way. Where there are *kushaura* (lead) and *kutsinhira* (response) lines, the marimba player ought to be artistic enough to bring out the different but complementary lines while playing by ear.

Improvisation is a key aspect of Zimbabwean marimba musicking. Zimbabwean music is similar to jazz music in how it is improvised. Traditional song modes have been performed on the marimba for over five decades. Each song mode has room for improvisation within the chord progression of its modes. When a tutor demonstrates a basic line and masters it, the learner is later encouraged to play variations of that basic line. In Zimbabwean schools and colleges, marimba teachers allocate more marks to learners who produce variations to the basic line than those who only play what they are taught. This is done to motivate the learners to experiment with lines and to help develop their musicianship. Most distinctions are awarded to learners who can add value to what their mentor has taught them. This gives freshness, interest, and challenge to the performance of a known traditional song; hence, playing it over and over again never becomes boring since it carries prospects of new inventions.

While improvisation on the marimba is encouraged, it must come out of a learner's creativity since it is not taught. The basic lines of a song are taught through rote memorisation; improvisation comes to a player's imagination when the player hears parallel lines to the basic melody, which they must find on the marimba keyboard. This comes with a lot of practice and experience, guiding the learners on where and how to locate the imagined sounds on the instrument to add these new sounds to the basic line gradually. Specific variations are inspired in the learner by sounds produced by more experienced players. I have observed that some of the sounds are lifetime tunes heard from the period before one is born (yes! ancestral connections and genetic lineage!), enacted through the marimba performers' present and future actions.

Producing variations is doubling or substituting notes of a basic melody with other notes, which can be useful at higher or lower registers. Accomplished marimba players listen deeply to the music as they play in an ensemble. They are immersed in the music. When the sounds sink into their subconscious minds, they just improvise through reflex action. The way one improvises derives from the way one hears the sounds associated with the resultant harmony produced when one plays a song with many lines in an ensemble. Resultant harmony comes from the interlocking lines characteristic of most traditional Zimbabwean songs and jazz compositions. Improvising while playing the marimba is synonymous with weaving patterns into an existing fabric.

The Manicaland Folk Music and Dance Festival 2016

Rimba Resonance Vibes Marimba Ensemble was also featured at the 2016 Manicaland Folk Music and Dance Festival held at St Dominic's High School in Mutare as the guest group, to motivate high school students to appreciate music as a subject of study. The Manicaland Secondary Schools Folk Music and Dance Festival is annually held in the City of Mutare. It is organised by Bempera Arts Ensemble in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Heads (NASH) in Manicaland



Province and supported and funded by the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust in partnership with the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the European Union (EU), and the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) (T. Moyo, pers. comm, 27 Feb. 2016).

The programme is the first in Zimbabwe at the secondary school level since traditional dances, mbira, and marimba competitions are only common at primary and tertiary colleges and universities. This programme advocates for gap bridging and continuity of arts performances from primary schools to secondary schools and tertiary institutions. The programme aims to promote and preserve Zimbabwean culture through marketing, preserving and developing musical talent amongst secondary school students, thereby motivating them to pursue professional arts in years to come and, above all, to make secondary school pupils patriotic citizens able to maintain their Zimbabwean cultural identity through music.

Over a dozen secondary schools attend the Manicaland Folk Music and Dance Festival annually. The secondary schools benefit from music training, which the festival organisers conduct before the competition. They compete during the last week of the first school term. The schools compete for first prize in three categories: (1) marimba music, (2) *mbira* music, and (3) traditional dance. In 2016, the dance set piece was the *Isitshikitsha* dance from Matabeleland. In marimba and *mbira*, the schools played the traditional song “*Nhemamusasa*”. The festival’s theme was “Investing in women in arts empowerment and enterprise: Rethinking the role of arts development in Zimbabwe and promoting gender equality”. “*Nhemamusasa*” is a traditional hunting song traditionally played with mbira accompaniment. The hunters warn each other to prepare their shelter for the night before the sun sets because danger lurks in darkness. “*Nhemamusasa*” is another warning song meant to alert fellow hunters to find poles and thatching grass to construct a temporary shelter to hide from the dangerous animals of the forest at night. Several lead singers have also produced their lyrics, which are sung in *Nhemamusasa* mode. I transcribed the version below (Music Example 2) from a recorded performance by Madziwa Teachers’ College Marimba Ensemble at the September 2015 RIO-SET Competitions.

Table 1: Music Example 2

Text	Meaning
<i>Iwe nhema musasa usaringe zuva nhamo ichauya</i>	Cut poles for a shelter before trouble comes
<i>Hanzvadzi yamai vako zvaisingarime</i>	Your mother’s brother is a lazy man
<i>Kuroora roora mukaranga murume</i>	Marry a second wife man
<i>Hoo ha hoo musango mune nyama</i>	In the forest there is meat
<i>Roverera museve roverera museve</i>	Shoot the arrow

The Manicaland Folk Dance and Music Festival organisers invited the RRV Ensemble to participate and perform in its third edition, held at St Dominic’s High School in Mutare, Zimbabwe, from 26 to 27 February 2016. The RRV Ensemble was invited as the guest group to entertain guests during this marimba competition event. The Festival Director, Taurai Moyo, aimed to build a mutual relationship with Rimba Resonance Arts. This was a glorious opportunity for the RRV Ensemble to showcase the



virtues of musical performing arts to secondary school children. We filled the entertainment slots allocated to the RRV Ensemble with contemporary Zimdancehall song arrangements.

Our participation in this event provided encouragement, inspiration, and motivation to students and teachers who linger in the musical performing arts but do not consider the arts a life career. The RRV Ensemble served as a beacon of innovation in the arts for young people. Performing at this event as a guest group helped educate secondary school students and close the gap between primary and secondary school involvement in arts and cultural activities. Since the ensemble was from an institution of higher learning, their performance created a zeal for the arts in all participants at this festival. It encouraged secondary school students to study music degrees after A Levels.

Tarirai Zimbabwe Day Commemorations 2017

The RRV Ensemble was invited in September 2017 to conduct a workshop at Harare International School with pupils from various parts of the globe. I seized the opportunity to equip the band members with skills to simplify lines and teach beginners to master chord progression. The band held a plenary session with all the pupils to introduce the instrument and prepare them to play marimbas. We played the song "*Chamutengure*" first. During this session, we handled warm-up exercises that are essential when playing the marimba. Pupils were taught to prepare technically, physically, and mentally because playing marimbas is physically demanding. A couple of warm-up stretches enable a performer to play for hours because it prepares the mind and body for the act. Proper posture on soprano, tenor, baritone and bass is vital for proper breathing so that the performer can finish his performance enjoyably. A mallet produces Quality sound by hitting a key on the centre. After the plenary session, we grouped the pupils into different learning groups, which ran concurrently due to time constraints.

Group A taught the basic grip of mallets for playing marimba, which should set the mallets free for easy movement. The grip for handling marimba mallets should have wrists that are extended 15 degrees up and tilted 15 degrees towards the little finger. This facilitates free finger movement and optimal action of the deep muscles that support the hand. The sticks should be placed in hands with proper fulcrum, and keys should be struck correctly at the centre of keys to spread the vibrations evenly on the transverse key. The thumb and the index finger oppose the mallet shaft, and the other fingers curl naturally around the mallet shaft. The little finger does not hold anything in this grip but comes along with other fingers naturally to give stability and support to the grip. The hands should be set palms down at a distance not higher than an inch from the keyboard, which makes striking possible in the wink of a wrist. Some stroke heights must be kept to two or three inches, which produces a good quality and fairly audible sound. Mallets have to start in the up position so that they are winked down to the key and make a sound on the key. Mallets should be flexible enough at a considerable height that one wants to play each stroke of the exercise to produce the desired sound. The left hand should always lead when playing double notes.

The other groups handled playing techniques. Group B taught single stroke. This is when a marimba player hits a note once and moves on to another note. It is typically used when a player articulates a song's melody line, especially on the soprano. Still, there are other songs whose main melody may be sounded on another marimba and not necessarily on the soprano. Single strokes can be learnt using notes of a scale. They familiarise the learner with the spacing of the wooden marimba keys. Single strokes can also be practised on short melodic lines, which a marimba player can practice by repeating several times until they master it well. Many main melodies of different songs will require a marimba



player to master and play various single-stroke combinations for them to come out perfectly. Single strokes ought to be practised by marimba beginners to teach them the basics of articulating song melodies. At this beginner stage, stick control is particularly important for drilling. The player must hit the centre of the wooden key, which is directly above the hole of the resonator, for the sound to come out clean. The mallet should be allowed to bounce off the key freely but not uncontrolled and not be rigidly pressed down unnecessarily.

Group C handled the dead stroke. If the mallet head remains on the bar, it is known as a *dead stroke* and used as a special effect. The mallets are held with the palm facing downward. The low notes require strong attacks to set the large bars vibrating. One mallet is held in each hand so that each player uses two mallets. One or two people can play the soprano and tenor marimba since there are two octaves of the C major scale and one octave of the G major scale.

The rolling technique was taught in Group D. This is when a marimba player repeatedly plays on one note for two or more strokes, depending on the number of beats the roll should occupy rhythmically or its duration in time. Zimbabwe marimba players roll on a note that is supposed to be sounded for a prolonged, sustained duration, such as a dotted crotchet, minim, dotted minim, semi-breve, or breve. A single stroke on a note to articulate such rhythms would fallaciously produce an undesired rest and distort the melody. One stroke does not suffice, so the player keeps striking the same note for the required duration. Marimba players just have to roll on the long rhythms to produce the intended notes accurately. On other musical instruments, such as the piano, a performer can press the note once and sustain the sound through pedalling or keep on pressing the note to get the intended prolonged duration. Marimba players roll to achieve the same effect when articulating a song's main melody. Marimba tutor T. Gapara (pers. comm, 28 Apr. 2019) says that chordal technique, handled in Group E,

is when a marimba player hits two marimba keys of the same chord simultaneously and moves on to play the next two keys of the next chord and continues in the same manner throughout. Zimbabwe marimba performers use two mallets (one in each hand) when playing marimbas. Playing two notes at the same time produces different chord combinations. The player plays dyads but can also move on to the different combinations or inversions of the same chord depending on the song's movement and the number of beats spent on a particular chord. Most Zimbabwean traditional songs move from chord one to chord four, back to chord one, to chord five, and back again to chord one, in the keys of C and G major in which the Zimbabwe marimbas are mostly made (a few workshops are now designing chromatic marimbas that can play songs in any key).

Group F taught the splitting technique, which is when a marimba player strikes notes of the same chord one after the other in varying patterns. Students can be introduced to the splitting technique when they have mastered chord progressions, say in simple quadruple time. One crotchet beat can be split into two strokes in which the notes of a chord are played as quavers one after another. After that, players can try more complex splitting combinations, such as double splitting the notes of a chord to be played as semi-quavers sounded during one crotchet beat. This all depends on the nature of the song being played. Usually, this technique is used by the tenor player, who most often articulates the song's rhythm. The chords can be played as arpeggios in their different inversions according to the wishes of the marimba player, who has room to improvise around the basic line to be played without straying out of the song's time and rhythm. The marimba player must quickly visualise the dyads, triads, and chords to demonstrate virtuosity during the song's beat.

At the end of the day pupils gathered again and we concluded the programme. I noticed that the band members were trying to teach too many skills too fast and as I moved around, I reminded them to slow it down and operate at the beginners' level. The challenge was that in each group there were fast learners mixed with slow learners. They progressed at different levels.



Figure 1: RRV Ensemble performing live at Harare International School during Tarirai Zimbabwe Day celebrations (Photograph by author).

Conclusion

This paper has focused on disseminating Zimbabwe marimba music through workshops held at the Manicaland Folk Music and Dance Festival and the Tarirai Zimbabwe Day. More workshops need to be conducted regionally and nationally. The Zimbabwe marimba has become one of the country's national instruments. For this reason, I think the Ministry of Education, Arts, Sports and Culture, through the National Arts Council, should ensure that marimba music workshops are conducted nationwide. Giving marimba music broadcast time will also help reach out to most people in the country so that it does not remain an art for Harare festivals only. Radio tends to be more accessible to outlying remote areas in Zimbabwe than television, and programs should be introduced where marimba music is featured. While Radio Zimbabwe has a program where *mbira* music is played, it has yet to have a platform for featuring marimba music. On all other radio stations, marimba songs are featured very rarely. About eighty per cent of Zimbabweans live in rural areas, and they are being marginalised from exposure to marimba music.

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