

Institute for Regional and International Studies Summer Fieldwork Award
Narrative Report:
Classical Music Education in Mozambique

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My doctoral research examines the relationship between classical-music education and social development. It focuses on the Xiquitsi Project in Mozambique, an emergent classical-music education and outreach project inspired by the El Sistema orchestral training program in Venezuela. The Xiquitsi Project began in 2013 and is based in the country's capital, Maputo, and this is where I travelled to this past summer with the generous help of an IRIS Summer Fieldwork Award.

The Xiquitsi Project provides free musical training and instruments for young Mozambicans and aims to introduce the first classical youth orchestra to Mozambique. Currently, lessons are offered for string instruments, voice (the project also runs a choir), and clarinets. Classes are also offered on music theory, and meals are provided for all participants. The project's long-term goal is to expand the ensemble to a full symphony orchestra, offering lessons and access to all the instruments of the orchestra. I spent my summer observing rehearsals and music classes, speaking to students, teachers, and organizers about their experiences and opinions, and playing with the ensemble.

The opportunity to immerse myself in the project this summer has been excellent preparation for my longer-term goal, which is to help introduce, organize, and teach the brass instrument lessons. My experiences this summer were as insightful as they were inspirational, as I met with the project director numerous times, toured the facilities where the classes and performances take place, got to know how the program works, met the children and teachers, and attended and played in concerts.

While I was able to make contacts in the orchestra and begin preliminary research, this was not without challenges. Despite having travelled briefly in East Africa before, I (perhaps naively) started my summer research expecting to hit the ground running. I had been in e-mail contact with the director for several months prior to my arrival in Maputo, and her responses were encouraging. I assumed that I would be able to push through all my objectives within mere days and forge on from there, just as I would expect to do were I working back in the States. However, as I soon learned, I take for granted every day needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and infrastructure—aspects of life that facilitate my successfully achieving academic and artistic goals. In the US or England, for example, students have access to instruments, there are suitable performance spaces for learning and rehearsing, and we do not worry about cuts to electricity and decrepit public transportation. After observing some of the challenges that people face, I very quickly had to adapt and re-adjust my expectations about the pace of work. The students I have met are capable of simply incredible things, but they have very real concerns that need addressing every day before they can turn their minds to music and learning. Whilst these challenges occasionally caused me to feel frustrated at not progressing in my research as quickly

as I would have liked, what I really enjoyed about my time with the orchestra was watching young people truly lose themselves and find complete freedom through music. The Mozambican audiences, as well, were incredibly supportive of these young musicians, and seeing the students receive pure adulation from adoring audiences was truly uplifting.

Unexpectedly, my summer in Maputo brought about many other musical opportunities. I encountered another music development organization, Sigauque Project, that also offers free music lessons to students, but centered around jazz music. I was invited to teach at the project, and I taught 6 beginner students how to play trumpet and trombone for six weeks. Sigauque Project does not have as many resources as Xiquitsi, but I was able to forge a link between the two organizations, and the students at Sigauque have now been welcomed to attend the classes in music theory at Xiquitsi. Once the Xiquitsi brass lessons start, the Sigauque students will also be offered to concurrently receive instrumental lessons there, thus allowing them to study both classical music and jazz and receive double the experiences and opportunities.

The music scene in Maputo is very small, and so word travelled fast that there was a trombonist in town. Little did I know it at the time, but the moment I stepped off the plane I was the best trombonist in the country by the virtue of the fact that I was the *only* trombonist in the country (the logic follows that I was simultaneously the worst trombonist in the country, but that does not make for as good a story). Within just a couple of weeks, I was being invited to rehearse with various popular bands around the city, and this led to a number of concert performances, as well as recording collaborations. It would appear the trombone, despite its scarcity, is a very popular instrument in Mozambique, and I have many more collaborations in the pipeline for later this year.

Spending time in Mozambique has taught me a very different approach to how I set goals and choose projects. Due to the numerous problems and delays that can occur when pursuing any given task on any given day, I noticed that Mozambicans typically work on several projects at once. That way, there is always at least one project they can be working on whilst waiting for problems or delays to be resolved on other projects. This inspired me to expand my own research to encompass a much broader view of music and music education in Mozambique, as opposed to ploughing one lone furrow and having to endure days of inactivity when something does not run to plan. As such, I was able to be continuously productive in at least one area at all times, and learn far more about music and musical life here.

I am now back in Maputo again, and working with the Xiquitsi Project to start lessons for brass instruments. One big challenge that we are currently facing is how to get sufficient brass instruments to fully support the program. We are hoping to have something up and running by the end of November, with our primary aim to have a brass ensemble ready to perform at the next concert cycle in May 2017. From there, we will start to introduce a brass section to rehearse and perform with the rest of the orchestra. I now plan to stay in Mozambique at least until next summer, and hopefully beyond, before I return to Madison to write my thesis. Once I have graduated, I hope to pursue a career in academia, using my experiences in Mozambique to inform my work in community and outreach projects. I am extremely grateful to the IRIS Summer Fieldwork Award for allowing me the opportunity to travel to Mozambique this summer, which has provided me with the springboard to continue on to so much more.