



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

Proceedings
of the
International Society for Music Education
34th World Conference on Music Education: Online*
3rd -7th August 2020



*The 34th World Conference on Music Education was to have been held in Helsinki, Finland. The conference was cancelled owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, replaced by some online sessions and these Proceedings representing the original conference programme.

Proceedings of the International Society for Music Education
34th World Conference on Music Education

Online
3-7 August 2020

Editor: Andrea Creech
Editorial Assistant: Mariane Generale

Proceedings of the International Society for Music Education
34th World Conference on Music Education
Online 3rd-7th August 2020
Papers submitted for originally scheduled conference in Helsinki, Finland, 2nd-7th August 2020

Edited by Andrea Creech (Editor) & Mariane Generale (Editorial Assistant)

ISBN 978-1-922303-01-1

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Published in Australia in 2020
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Malvern, Victoria 3144
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The full papers submitted to the 2020 International Conference were double blind refereed by members of the conference scientific committee before inclusion in the Conference Proceedings.

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Introducing the orchestra: Expanding musical horizons in three rural communities in Ceará, Brazil

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Abstract

This paper describes a project focused on reinforcing the importance of local music traditions through the presentation of orchestral music formation and music education opportunities to three rural communities in the northeast of Brazil. In Ceará region, many rural areas have very little access to instrumental music learning possibilities compared to those available in urban settings, and orchestral music is little known or even unknown for most of the residents. This gap in people's knowledge also indicates that many of them are not aware of opportunities to study music in a university setting. This is especially unfortunate given that the Federal University of Ceará in Sobral accepts students into the music program without any previous experience of playing an instrument and without charging any fees to its regular students. The music program's unique pedagogical approach supports beginners who enter the program, and yet despite this provision, local people who are not familiar with the program or orchestral music are unlikely to take up this opportunity to engage in music learning. How could the orchestra members help residents of Ceará's isolated communities value their own culture? This project will allow to increase awareness of these opportunities by promoting social and musical interactions between people from these communities, and the students and professors involved in the Symphonic Orchestra of the Federal University of Ceará in Sobral (OSUFC Sobral), valuing the artistic culture of each community. The project will provide opportunities for local communities to learn about the study of music at the university through musical experiences of current students in the program, at the same time they share their own culture with the orchestra's musicians. This paper describes the program as well as the experiences of students and community members to be developed on this project. The Orchestra will visit the three communities on two occasions to build relationships and share different artistic traditions. The analysis of outcomes of the project focuses on the human, musical and cultural sharing carried out between people of the communities and OSUFC's musicians. This will be achieved through interviews and a rich description of the experiences as they unfold over time. Our goal is to provide reciprocal learning opportunities that will encourage young people's engagement in music education through the sharing of musical skills, knowledge and music-based interactions with the residents of local rural communities, contributing to preservation of each community own artistic culture.

Keywords: music tradition, rural communities, orchestra, sharing.

Introduction

This project was born from the need to take music education into communities located in the countryside of the Brazilian northeastern state of Ceará, where this type of education

is either absent or poorly available, encouraging residents to share and nourish their own artistic culture. To address this demand, we developed a project involving the Symphonic Orchestra of the Federal University of Ceará (UFC) in Sobral, which is staffed by students and professors from the music department.

The aim of the project was to foster social and musical interactions between residents and musicians from communities located in the countryside of Ceará and members of the Symphonic Orchestra of the University. How could we help residents of these isolated communities to value their own culture? Throughout the years, we came to realize that daily concerns push people away from their own cultures. In Indigenous communities or fisherman villages in our State, young people are commonly losing interest to know and maintain their ancestor's customs and traditions alive. To avoid total oblivion of their own cultural values, we planned three sets of actions to take place between May 2018 and April 2020 (period to be reviewed due to the COVID-19 pandemic), to present the orchestral culture, the possibilities to study music, instigate locals to learn and share about their own artistic culture. We will be calling these steps A, B and C. Step A will consist of reciprocal sharing of musical knowledge between the orchestra's musicians and the people from each community; in step B, we will conduct artistic and knowledge-sharing presentations; finally, in step C, communities' residents will share with us their own traditional artistic culture. It is important to highlight that, nowadays, Brazilian universities have been receiving scant funding, especially the campuses located in rural communities, which makes it impossible for such projects to be carried out without external financial aid. In the same way, the communities chosen for this project are, like many others in the region, rather poor, economically speaking. This project, which was funded by a grant from ISME, was therefore able to address a need in the community by covering key expenses such as travel costs, room and board for members for community visits, in addition to an assisting student in charge of the production efforts associated to the project.

Context and methods

The Symphonic Orchestra of the Federal University of Ceará is an extension project created in 2015. Since then, it has been performing in the city of Sobral and surrounding areas, with the purpose of disseminating orchestral culture. It does so by playing a diversified repertoire during educational concerts, where the members of the orchestra present their instruments and the pieces that are being played. The orchestra counts on musicians from UFC, from other educational institutions and from the overall population, provided that they master any one of the instruments that are part of the orchestra. The current project focuses on social and musical interactions between OSUFC musicians and residents of communities located in the countryside of Ceará, which have little or no access to formal music education. In order to do this, we will count on the support of the Music Teaching Department from the Federal University of Ceará (UFC), *Campus* of Sobral, as well as on the help of those who participate on OSUFC-Sobral.

Three rural communities located in the northern portion of the state of Ceará and within the UFC-Campus of Sobral's radius of action were selected to participate in the project. Members of the Geography department of the UFC Fortaleza are working on this project to select these places according social researches done in rural communities in Ceará region, which showed the needs of this communities. The criteria for selection was

that no music classes were offered as a school subject and that no music schools were available in such towns. In this way, the orchestra's visits would contribute to relationship building and musical collaborations, while encouraging a deeper and more expansive awareness of musical culture among the residents. This is important, since recent research data based on Nascimento & Nascimento (2017) indicates that local musical activities are vanishing in certain areas of Ceará. According to this research, young people are not motivated to sustain local music traditions, while traditional musicians are getting older. This project is, thus, an opportunity to highlight, share, spread and perpetuate the musical culture of each community.

During our visits to such communities, the project will engage in six steps.

During the first visit:

1. OSUFC Sobral performs free of charge: explaining how an orchestra works, as well as its role within society, and presenting the instruments which form the orchestra;
2. Presentation of the musical traditions of each community by the residents for the orchestra musicians;
3. The OSUFC musicians, in their turn, will present music pieces, instruments, and techniques that they learn/play in class or with the orchestra.

During the second visit:

1. Hold roundtables on Music Education Advocacy regarding the presence of music in these cities, and on the existence of a Music Teaching Department at UFC-Sobral, which is intended as a way to support local music education and expand the existence of qualified local music teachers to work in such communities (WEBSTER, 2018, 145);
2. Create opportunities for community residents and the orchestra to play music together;
3. Dialogue with community members about the value of local cultural identity and how to preserve and perpetuate their own artistic culture.

The intended duration of the project is of two years. The OSUFC Sobral will make a total of two visits to each of the three selected communities. Throughout those two years, besides the above-mentioned actions, data collection will take place through interviews and documentation of the visits to assess the impact of the musical activities shared between the orchestra members and the residents of the communities.

We have already made our first visit in the first community, before the pandemic period, and we are waiting the other visits to organize the results and measure the impact of our interventions on the valorization of the artistic culture of the communities visited.

Project Outcomes

Based on our teaching experience and previous research done at the Music department of UFC/Sobral, we have ascertained that, in Ceará, especially in rural communities, there are gaps regarding access to formal musical education (Nascimento, 2015, p. 238). Such gaps are due to, among other issues, the challenges faced while attempting to introduce music classes in schools, in addition to the lack of availability of orchestral musical instruments. It is clearly acknowledged that communities located far away from large cities have low access to music education, as well as lower access to orchestral music and to the instruments belonging to an orchestra. The lack of access to artistic education

reinforces residents, specially youth members, lack of interest on knowing and preserving their own artistic culture. This project, according to ISME's philosophy of promoting the development of music education around the world, aims at sharing knowledge on symphonic orchestras through verbal exchanges, concerts and roundtables which will aim at learning, becoming acquainted and encouraging music culture in this part of the country, besides offering insights about the basic formal aspects of music education to communities with little or no access to any of this. We have drafted this project inspired by the ideals of democratizing the access to music education and highlighting the relevance of music education in promoting social transformation within communities. In our perspective, the mission of OSUFC goes beyond performing stand-alone musical repertoires for orchestras: it has to fully undertake its role as an engaged agent in promoting deeper social and cultural changes. Through musical exchanges, joint activities and knowledge-sharing sessions, the OSUFC can teach and learn from local musical cultures while, at the same time, encourages and contributes to their development. We believe that valuing local musical cultures, especially when it comes from professionals and musicians linked to a locally renown teaching institution such as UFC, will help encouraging local musicians to continue playing and deepening their musical knowledge. Furthermore, this incentive will be amplified by the roundtable session, that has two main goals: 1) to emphasize that UFC's Music Undergraduate Course occurs in a public free-of-charge University, and applicants to the music program are not required to do admission tests requiring a demonstration of previously-acquired musical skills; 2) to discuss the importance of music education as part of a more holistic and meaningful human education, as well as raising awareness of the Brazilian law that establishes students' right to music classes in schools (music is mandatory in the curricula) (Brazil, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2008).

Target Groups Reached/Involved in the Project

The project and the research associated to this initiative will be led by coordinator Adeline Stervinou (PhD) and professors Marco Toledo (PhD), Rita Gomes (PhD), and Israel Victor (MA), with the institutional support of ISME, UFC and of the musicians belonging to the OSUFC Sobral. The target audience shall consist of members of three communities with no access to formal musical education and to orchestral culture within the territory of Ceará. Such communities were chosen based on the criteria set forth in the description of this paper. We estimate that 100–300 people will benefit from the orchestra's performances in each community. Furthermore, the project will also offer 50 seats for the roundtable and verbal exchange sessions, as well as classes and masterclasses to be held in each community, amounting to a total of 150 people benefiting from such actions throughout the two years of the project's duration in each chosen city.

Given the project's characteristics, the target audience will be comprised of people with limited access to formal music education, with no age restriction. It is worth emphasizing that professors, researchers and members of the OSUFC Sobral will explain at the first contact with community members that the participation in the project's activities does not require any kind of previous musical knowledge. Such clarification will be emphasized as often as necessary. Once we invite the locals to participate in the proposed activities, our intention is to welcome everyone who has interest in taking part

of the project and to clarify that their own cultural and musical knowledge is an essential component for the development and success of our program.

We are currently in the process of visiting the selected communities and organizing the intervention in each place. Until now the project was received by the community with a lot of enthusiasm and curiosity surrounding music and the orchestra. On the other hand, orchestra musicians are looking forward to meeting the community and learn about their musical culture. To carry out this project, we are organizing activities where communities will get to know the music and the orchestra, and the orchestra participants will learn about the musical practices and traditions of each place. This exchange of knowledge is a strong point of this project, allowing all participants, both orchestra musicians and communities members, to enrich themselves through experiences sharing.

During the visits, we will investigate the musical style and customs they practice in their own communities to record and keep their musical traditions alive. All these experiences they will share with the orchestra will be presented at the end of this project. We will invite all the participants of each community and the musicians of the orchestra to play together during an event we will organize in Sobral. It will be the project's final presentation, showcasing all the knowledge that has been shared among all the participants and highlighting the importance of music education in bringing people together. With this event, we intend to expand the seminal idea of the project, inviting several communities, with different cultures, to make music and share their own artistic cultures through common musical activities.

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