



CENTER FOR WORLD MUSIC

AND RELATED ARTS



Patience Chaitezvi Munjeri

Patience Chaitezvi Munjeri taught and performed Shona mbira music for the Center for World Music in 2019. She is one of the very few Zimbabwean women who grew up playing the *mbira* regularly in traditional ceremonies, a role more commonly held by men in traditional Shona culture. She is also an accomplished traditional dancer and a university-educated Shona culture expert. She toured the United States in 2008 with the all-women *mbira* group Vakaranga Venharetare (“Women of the Spirits”) and again in 2009 with American *mbira* teacher and virtuoso performer Erica Azim. Patience continues to engage in solo tours of the United States every two years.

Patience feels that the ancient repertoire is the most important aspect of *mbira* music, in that, “Our elders associated it with their way of life, a way of communicating with departed ancestors residing in the nether world.” This ancient music invokes the spirits’ powers by asking for rain as well as protection from famine and other calamities. Though women *mbira* players are rare in Zimbabwe, according to Patience, “Women’s empowerment is key in this music. I saw that when I played as a young girl at spirit possession ceremonies because the spirits liked the way I played. For me that was a steppingstone to empowering women through *mbira*.”