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Music Workshop, Concert Teach Public About Ancient Zimbabwean Instrument

Winthrop University

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Music Workshop, Concert Teach Public About Ancient Zimbabwean Instrument

Quick Facts

- The mbira is an ancient Zimbabwean instrument known as the "thumb piano."
- The concert is Sept. 5 at 7:30 p.m. in Barnes while the free workshop is Sept. 6 from 9 a.m.-noon in 120 Barnes.
- Both events are free and open to the public.



Erica Azim from mbira.org

ROCK HILL, S.C. — Last year Winthrop University's **Percussion Ensemble** won the top award from the Percussive Arts Society thanks to the innovative use of the instrument **mbiras**, or "**thumb pianos**" from **Zimbabwe**.

Now, students, the Winthrop community and the Rock Hill area can learn more about the mbira through a special concert and workshop. The **Department of Music** will host famed mbira musician **Erica Azim** Sept. 5-6.

Azim will perform traditional Shona mbira music on **Thursday, Sept. 5, at 7:30 p.m.** in **Frances May Barnes Recital Hall**.

On Friday, Sept. 6, Azim will host a workshop covering multiple aspects of mbira music and culture from 9 a.m.-noon in Room 120 in Barnes.

Both events are free and open to the public. They are also approved cultural and GLI events.

Azim was born in California but fell in love with **Shona mbira music** when she first heard it as a teenager. She studied the musical form at the University of Washington and learned how to play the ancient Shona mbira. She traveled to Zimbabwe and, in 1974, became one of the first non-Zimbabweans to study the instrument there with traditional masters, though the Rhodesian government banned her from visiting the rural areas home to the mbira.

She studied with many musicians, including **Cosmas Magaya**, **Ambuya Beauler Dyoko** and **Irene Chigamba**. She has toured the United States with other famous mbira musicians and on her own since 1997.

Azim currently teaches mbira music throughout the United States and Canada. She also began the non-profit organization MBIRA, which supports more than 200 traditional musician and instrument makers in Zimbabwe.

For more information, visit the [Department of Music's website](#) or call the office at 803/323-2255.

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