

Dear Committee Members,

I have had the pleasure of working with Andrew Simonette since the outset of his project titled *Global Experiences: How Locality and Space Shape Pedagogical Practices and Experiences between Western Institutions and Ghanaian Musical Centers* and have served as his faculty mentor throughout the duration of the research process. This study merges both Andrew's background in music education with his current studies in musicology as he examines ways locality and space contribute to and shape pedagogical practices within the study of Ghanaian music. In order to explore this, Andrew conducted research in the United States at West Virginia University and in Ghana at the Bernard Woma Dagara Music Center and the Dagbe Cultural Institute and Arts Center, using these locations as case studies for this research investigation. This study is particularly groundbreaking in the ways it analyzes the dynamics of each location, highlighting overlooked factors of context and place and their contributions to learning processes.

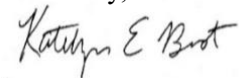
This project is grounded in ethnomusicological modes of investigation. As such, I guided Andrew through fieldwork preparations, which included Andrew's submission of an IRB form. As he worked on the IRB process of approval, Andrew completed research ethics training, meticulously planned out and detailed every level of the study, and also more carefully examined the role and impact he would have as a researcher. Through these experiences, Andrew became more familiar with processes relating to investigations involving human subjects while also strengthening the framework of his study.

My mentorship involved meeting with Andrew weekly, or as needed, as he developed this project. We began by discussing his research interests, exploring literature that might contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the current field of study, and developing a thesis to frame the research investigation. As the project unfolded, the research Andrew gathered and analyzed demonstrated the impact of space and ways it shapes musical instruction from factors based on architecture to climate. His examination of locality brought to light different dynamics involved when learning a style of music from an outside perspective within the culture it is practiced. Within this context, his research highlighted how components of these practices are embedded in everyday life while also examining how they are recontextualized and experienced within Western institutional settings.

Throughout the duration of my mentorship, I have witnessed Andrew's journey as a scholar. I have watched him overcome unexpected challenges and observed ways this further strengthened the development of his project while providing him with more tools to navigate future studies. Andrew plans to submit a proposal to present his work at the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the Society for Ethnomusicology based on the call for papers that I shared with him. This will give him the opportunity to discuss his findings with other scholars in his field.

Ultimately, this work reconsiders musical instruction by examining overlooked elements in the form of locality and space, as shaped by different cultural contexts, that are pedagogical in nature and contribute to learning processes beyond the instruction itself. This work has the potential to have a significant effect on pedagogical theory as understood through an ethnomusicological lens. As such, this work is deserving of recognition for its potential interdisciplinary impact. If you have any questions or if I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out and contact me.

Sincerely,



Dr. Katelyn Best
Teaching Assistant Professor of Musicology
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