

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: Royal College of Music		
Unit of Assessment: 33		
Title of case study: Performing Heritage: Baroque Music in Bolivia		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2003–2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Solomon, Prof. Ashley	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Head of Historical Performance	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 1994–present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 1 August 2013–31 December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		

1. Summary of the impact

The impacts described in this case study of practice-based research on Bolivian Baroque musical heritage are in two areas: **Creativity, culture and society:** enhancements to cultural heritage preservation and interpretation, new ways of thinking that influence artistic quality and audience reach; developing stimuli to cultural tourism and contributing to the quality of the tourist experience; research-led engagement with marginalised and diverse audiences leading to increased cultural participation. **Social welfare:** improved social and educational inclusion of marginalised groups in a developing country (Bolivia).

2. Underpinning research

In 2002, Ashley Solomon's professional ensemble Florilegium performed at the 4th Festival of Renaissance and Baroque Music Misiones de Chiquitos, Santa Cruz, Bolivia. The Chiquitos missions were established in the 1670s by European Jesuits, who introduced Catholic liturgical music and fostered local talent, developing a sophisticated musical culture. The legacy of this period forms a rich cultural heritage. Tens of thousands of music manuscripts from the 17th and 18th centuries (the largest collection in the Americas), most composed by Europeans but some by Indians, was preserved for generations by local guardians, but unknown to the outside world until a process of restoration and promotion in recent decades, led by Dr Piótr Nawrót SJ, a Polish musicologist based in Bolivia. Traces of this heritage had also survived in a living song culture in remote and marginalised Guaraní Indian communities.

Since 2002, with the support of the Prince Claus Foundation (Netherlands), Solomon returned several times per year to work with Nawrót on the restoration of this largely forgotten Baroque music legacy, preparing modern editions, training young musicians in historical performance and reanimating the music in performance. In 2004, Solomon recruited four Bolivian vocal soloists to join Florilegium for their first CD of mission music, recorded in the Mission Church of Concepción. The following year, he formed the Arakaendar Bolivia Choir, made up of singers from across Bolivia, a significant intercultural initiative. Solomon commuted to Santa Cruz during 2005–6 to prepare the choir for that year's Festival and to make a second CD recording together with them; a third CD was recorded in Holland during the choir's first European tour in 2008 and released in 2010. These three CDs include 67 separate works with a combined duration of over three hours, selected from many more that have been reconstructed. They represent hundreds of hours of score preparation, rehearsals, and dozens of live concerts, including 34 since 2014. Meanwhile, in 2010, a Baroque orchestra was formed by Solomon, who initially sourced European-made instruments for the musicians. Several have since been copied by local makers, creating the foundations of a new craft industry (see below). In 2014 the archives team identified fragments of 18c. scores with texts composed in the indigenous Guaraní language, an extraordinary find. They include villancicos for choir and orchestra and possibly an opera that includes vocal, orchestral and dance music. This discovery overturned the assumption that all musical compositions and productions were written in either Spanish or Latin to support the Jesuits' evangelisation efforts and helps explain how remote communities kept their cultural identity intact during and after the expulsion of the Jesuits from Bolivia in 1767. In September 2014, Solomon travelled with Nawrót to the remote Guaraní village of Palmarito to work with its children's choir, who joined the Arakaendar choir, its Baroque orchestra, 12 students from the Royal College of Music, and Norwegian Brass in four concerts of newly discovered music as part of the 10th Misiones de Chiquitos Festival. Further concerts with the Arakaendar choir and

orchestra were led by Solomon at the 11th and 12th Festivals, and highlights from each Festival (2016, 2018 and 2020) were featured in associated CD recordings.

3. References to the research

1. **Bolivian Baroque: Baroque music from the Missions of Chiquitos and Moxos Indians.** Florilegium and Bolivian soloists. Ashley Solomon, Artistic Director. Channel Classics: CCS SA22105 (2005). Sales figures (July 2020): 12,276 hard copies; 512 downloads. CD can be supplied on request.

'The playing from Florilegium is as stylish as always...A fascinating and worthwhile project indeed.' (*Gramophone* – Editor's choice, July 2005)

'Florilegium and their Bolivian soloists perform all these pieces with wonderful verve... with imagination and resourcefulness. An important release.' (*The Guardian*, May 2005)

'The most adventurous release I've reviewed so far this year ... I'm still bowled over by it all and full of enthusiasm for such tremendous enterprise and imagination... The results of this European-Bolivian collaboration are by turns uplifting and moving.' (*International Record Review* 2005)

2. **Bolivian Baroque: Music from the Missions, Vol. 2.** Florilegium and Arakaendar Bolivia Choir. Ashley Solomon, Artistic Director. Channel Classics: CCSSA24806 (2006). BBC Radio 3 Record Review Critics disc of the year, 2007. Sales figures (July 2020): 4,600 hard copies; 235 downloads. CD can be supplied on request.

'This disc is packed with obscure treasures that amply reward the listener' (*Gramophone* – Editor's Choice, March 2007)

'Florilegium at its lithe, incisive best ... this "mission statement" is a must. Spread the word!' (*BBC Music Magazine*, January 2007; Best Choral Recording of 2007)

3. **Bolivian Baroque: Music from the Missions and La Plata, Vol. 3.** Florilegium and Arakaendar Bolivia Choir. Ashley Solomon, Artistic Director. Channel Classics: CCS SA 28009 (2009). Sales figures (July 2020): 3,583 hard copies; 174 downloads. Can be supplied on request.

'The sound is captivating – fresh-toned and inexhaustibly animated... The music is totally absorbing from beginning to end.' (*BBC Music Magazine* – Disc of the Month, April 2010)

'Florilegium plays some chamber instrumental work with customary finesse... There isn't a dull moment during the disc's hour-long duration, and plenty of musical subtleties and novelties to intrigue the ear.' (*Gramophone*, May 2010)

'Florilegium's pioneering Bolivian Baroque series contains some of the most delightful music I've heard in many a year... the directness of their approach, and the purity of their sound, transmits a youthful freshness that never fails to captivate.' (*San Francisco Classical Voice*, 23 Feb 2010)

'a lively, nicely varied sequence, mostly of works showcasing Solomon's excellent Arakaendar choir, interspersed with an anonymous trio-sonatas and organ pieces recorded on a wonderfully gutsy instrument at the mission church of Santa Ana in the Bolivian part of the Amazon basin' (*The Guardian*, 15 January 2010)

'All forces here are equally attuned to the spirit of the music... Heartily recommended as a nice change of pace to any baroque collection of sacred—and sometimes borderline sacred—music.' (*Audiophile Audition*, 17 February 2010)

'The Arakaendar Bolivia Choir is faultlessly neat and crisp, rhythmically very regular, but dramatically irrepressible. Enriching and uplifting.' (*International Record Review*, Feb 2010)

Overall: *Spotify Bolivian playlist* most listened-to tracks (plays):

- 'Bolivian Improvisation' (Vol 1): 706,110
- 'Pastoretta Ychepe Flauta' (Vol 1) 310,866
- 'Sonata Chiquitanas' (Vol 1) 236,852
- 'Exaltate Regum' (Vol 1) 182,269

4. **10th Festival Internacional de Musica Renacentista y Barroca Americana, Misiones de Chiquitos**, Vol 4 recorded between 24/4–4/5 2014; CD released April 2016. Arakaendar Choir & Orchestra, Coro Palmarito, Royal College of Music Baroque ensemble, directed by Ashley Solomon. CD can be supplied on request.
5. **11th Festival Internacional de Musica Renacentista y Barroca Americana Misiones de Chiquitos** Vol. 5, recorded between 22/4–1/5 2016; CD released April 2018. Arakaendar Choir & Orchestra, Coro Palmarito, Royal College of Music Baroque ensemble, directed by Ashley Solomon. CD can be supplied on request.
6. **12th Festival Internacional de Musica Renacentista y Barroca Americana Misiones de Chiquitos** Vol. 6, recorded during 2018 Festival. CD release postponed due to COVID-19.

4. Details of the impact

Enhancements to cultural heritage preservation and interpretation, new ways of thinking that influence artistic quality and audience reach.

Working with Piotr Nawrót, who made transcriptions from the fragmentary manuscripts at the Mission Church of Concepción, since 2014 Solomon has prepared more than 30 performance scores of sacred and semi-sacred 17th and 18th-century Bolivian Baroque music [5.1]. David Mollinedo, the mayor of Concepción, commented 'The music forms a part of our identity. It may have come from Europe originally, but we have made it our own' [5.2]. Building on the work of the past 17 years, during which he established and developed two performing ensembles (the Arakeandar Bolivia choir and Baroque orchestra) to sing and play according to principles of historical performance practice and established them on the international stage, Solomon has introduced this music to international audiences, both at the biennial Festivals of Renaissance and Baroque Music Misiones de Chiquitos, and across the world through concert tours, recordings and broadcasts. He directed 15 concerts in Bolivia in 2014, 2016 and 2018, and on tour in the US in 2015 [5.3]. Each run of performances is preceded by intensive periods of rehearsal and skills development sessions. For example, in 2017 and 2018, Solomon co-taught four training workshops for Baroque string players with the internationally renowned Chilean violinist, Raul Orellano. As a result, Bolivia now has its first Baroque orchestra and choir in a position both to perform examples of the Bolivian musical heritage at a professional standard, and also to provide a training ground for future generations of musicians.

This has created the basis for some to establish careers as professional musicians and teachers. For example, Simón Aguape spent two years playing baroque violin in Arakaendar Baroque

Orchestra, auditioning at the Musikhochschule in Frankfurt whilst on tour with the orchestra, where he was accepted to study Baroque violin, returning to Bolivia to teach in his home community in Urubichá. Cristina Zankis, a bank administrator and gifted violinist, was inspired to pursue her ambition to become a professional musician after becoming involved in Arakaendar projects. She completed a master's degree in violin performance at San Diego State University in 2010 and is currently studying at El Alto Public University for a Bachelor's in Music. Zankis is now leader of the Santa Cruz Symphony Orchestra, as well as Arakaendar Baroque Orchestra [5.4]. Meanwhile, Idebero Armoye, a carpentry instructor who has a workshop in Urubichá builds copies of Baroque string instruments from local cedar and mahogany; as he explains: 'They were the only woods that could withstand the tropical heat'. There is now a thriving historical instrument-building industry, that exports within Latin America, and also to Europe and the US [5.5].

Research-led engagement leading to improved social and educational inclusion of marginalized and diverse audiences in a developing country. The most recent project undertaken by Solomon and Nawrót is the restoration in performance of some of the extraordinary discoveries of music with texts in the Guaraní language, described above. As part of this project, Solomon worked with the youth choir in the remote and marginalized community of Palmarito, that is serviced only by dirt-track roads and lacks the most basic infrastructure. A local music-teacher, Adelina Anori, who was in the original Arakaendar Bolivia choir while still at school, is now the director of music in Palmarito [5.1]. Under her supervision, 60% of the children can read music although many do not otherwise read or write. In 2018, Solomon rehearsed with them in Palmarito, subsequently directing them together with Arakaendar and international musicians in concerts at various mission churches of works in Spanish and Guaraní, as part of the Festival de Chiquitos. Jose Ignacio Sanz, Director of Total E&P Bolivia which sponsored the project, commented: 'Total is active in the Guaraní territory and when I had the chance to premiere music sung in Guaraní within the framework of the international Baroque festival, it seemed like a great opportunity to publicize and give visibility to the language, the culture and the Guaraní people' [5.1]. A member of the audience in Santa Cruz said: 'It adds to our lives a spiritual dimension through words and history of our people in Chaco': another member of the Latin American Guaraní diaspora, interviewed by local television, agreed: 'I come from Argentina, it's a long trip but it was worth it. I am very delighted and emotional. I am very excited as well'. Among those from Palmarito who took part, Arturo Cuellar said 'I hope we do more and have more choirs like this', while Viviana Zapata explained the importance of the wider impact of the event: 'this work will magnify our Guaraní people'. [5.1] As a result of these performances, in 2019 the Palmarito choir and Urubichá instrumental ensemble were invited to Rome, where they sang in the Vatican at pontifical mass, and gave further concerts in Poland and Tuscany [5.6].

Developing stimuli to cultural tourism and contributing to the quality of the tourist experience. International awareness of the music of the Baroque era Jesuit missions has brought new audiences to Santa Cruz and its region and made a significant contribution to the growth of cultural tourism [5.7, 5.8]. This in turn has stimulated the development of tourist infrastructure ranging from improvement of roads and provision of basic services such as electricity supply in remote villages, to new hospitality industry on the 'Missions Route'. In 2015, the mayor of San Julián, whose population consists mainly of recently arrived immigrants from the impoverished Bolivian highlands, threatened to set up roadblocks if it was not allowed to participate in the following year's festival. 'Since the first music festival began, we have been recovering our music and our culture', says Ronald Chinchí, 28, a music teacher in San Ignacio de Velasco, the largest of the mission towns; 'Now, in all the towns, there are music schools, and the people are beginning to value their culture. It is growing all the time.' [5.2.] Ana Luisa Arce de Terceros, current President of *La Asociación Pro Arte y Cultura* (APAC) noted that the impact of the long

collaboration with Ashley Solomon has included 'significant improvement in the tourist infrastructure of the missionary peoples and important tourist influx.' [5.8] Of a concert in 2014, Charles Driskell wrote in *international Travel News*, 'This fine musical evening was a highlight and the perfect ending to the festival's offerings for our group...Nobody wished the concert to end.' [5.9] A 2018 study of tourism on the 'Missions Route' in the Chiquitos region by Juan de Dios Paramos Gomez, University of Mexico, included an analysis of why international visitors choose to visit the region; the Baroque music festival, spread across five mission church sites was by far the main reason (26.3%); he cited attendance figures for each Festival at c. 50,000 people per year [5.10]. In May 2020, Guillermo Mariaca Iturri, President of the Board of the Cultural Foundation of the Central Bank of Bolivia (FCBCB), announced that immediate plans to help the Santa Cruz region cope with the economic consequences COVID-19 include 'the Baroque music of Eastern Bolivia', stressing its importance to advancing Bolivian interculturality [5.11].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 5.1** Documentary film about the project, including statements by Dr Piotr Nawrot, SVJ; archivist; Jose Ignacio Sanz, Director of Total E&P Bolivia; audience members; Adelina Anori and other members of Palmarito choir; articles in *Gramophone* and *The Compass*
<https://tinyurl.com/8rk8z73n>; <https://tinyurl.com/xsh4zw6p>; <https://tinyurl.com/9paykrb8>;
- 5.2** Statements by David Mollinedo, mayor of Concepción, the mayor of San Julián, and Ronald Chinchí, reported in Benedict Mander, 'Bolivia's 'jungle Baroque' music sees revival', *Financial Times*, 26 October 2015 [full text available]
- 5.3** Tour of US: *El Día*, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, 25 February 2015; Celia Wren, 'Bringing historic Bolivian music to light', *The Washington Post* 27 February 2015; Review article in *Bolivia.com*, 16 March 2015 <https://tinyurl.com/unv2xfzk>; <https://tinyurl.com/2xyfc4ct>; <https://tinyurl.com/52k28cnb>; <https://tinyurl.com/msbeykkk>
- 5.4** Simón Aguape: report 'The world of the Guarayo violinist', *La Region*, 5 April 2018 <https://www.laregion.bo/el-mundo-del-violinista-guarayo/>; filmed interviews with Cristina Zankis, March 2019 <https://tinyurl.com/3ws694bj>; <https://tinyurl.com/4h65d5t6>
- 5.5** Musical instrument building reported in: Nicholas Casey, 'Jesuit Legacy in the Bolivian Jungle: A Love of Baroque Music', *New York Times* 8 May 2018 <https://tinyurl.com/5mcanaec>
- 5.6** Performance at the Vatican: 'Llevarán la música de Chiquitos al Vaticano', *Opinión* 18 October 2019 <https://tinyurl.com/2m8vp2wu>
- 5.7** Report on tourism impact of Jesuit Missions route by the Ministerio de Culturas, Vice-Ministerio de Turismo [full document available]
- 5.8** Testimonials from present and former Presidents of *La Asociación Pro Arte y Cultura* (APAC) [emails]; impact report on 12th Festival (2018) [full texts available]
- 5.9** Charles Driskel, 'Report of the 2014 Festival of Renaissance and Baroque Music Misiones de Chiquitos', *International Travel News*, June 2015, p. 6 <https://tinyurl.com/9uskx6ux>
- 5.10** Juan de Dios Páramo Gómez, 'Desarrollo Turístico Integrado en el Circuito Misional de la Chiquitania, Bolivia' (Master's diss., University of Mexico, 2018) <https://tinyurl.com/y2649n2f>
- 5.11** Statement on COVID-19 by Guillermo Mariaca Iturri, President of the Board of Directors of the Cultural Foundation of the Central Bank of Bolivia (FCBCB), 13 May 2020 <https://tinyurl.com/4nzysfm3>