STRATEGIES TO ALLEVIATE THE SHORTAGE OF WESTERN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS FOR PRACTICAL TRAINING AT THE DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS AND FILM AT MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION

I, SAMUEL KEVIN BLICK, do hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been submitted for any academic award to the University or any other academic Institution

Signature:.....

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SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL

I certify that this dissertation presented by Samuel Kevin Blick was written under my supervision. I recommend it for presentation to the Board of Examiners in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Arts in Music of Makerere University.

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Date:.....28/Oct. 2026.....

DEDICATION

I would love to dedicate my research to my Grandmother, Jane Namutima, who has supported and chosen to believe in me in as much as her era of education was not so inclined to music as a course worth studying.

I also dedicate this research to all the people who have financially supported me through university, such as Mrs. Jackie Calnan, Rose and Diana Okotchono, Olowo Sylvester and Jane Okello, Rachel Mijumbi and Dr. Rhonah Mijumbi Deve.

I would also like to thank all the students who shared their comments with me during my research.

I also dedicate this research to my supervisor, Dr. Mercy Mirembe Ntangaare, who patiently supervised me during this process.

ABSTRACT

This study is about strategies to alleviate the shortage of Western musical instruments for practical training at the Department of Performing Arts and Film (DPAF) at Makerere University Kampala, Uganda. Currently (2025), DPAF faces critical shortage of Western musical instruments particularly as student enrolment in music courses increases. Irrespective of the specialization they do, every music student at DPAF must learn to play at least two Western musical instruments during their training. When students don't have the instruments they are expected to study, they can't learn to play them. They can't also master the instruments' multiple playing styles, for example, jazz or blues. Likewise, students can't grow their musical ear, which is a very important competence tool in professional music performance and career development. Since the study was both qualitative and quantitative in nature, I used mixed methods such as interviews, observation, focus group discussion, and experimentation to collect data. My data was analyzed and verified by the same approaches.

The findings revealed foremost that the shortage of Western musical instruments at DPAF led to a reduction in the practice time spent by students on the musical instruments, hence their failure to transform theoretical knowledge into practical skills. Eventually, this resulted in a decline in the quality of musicians being produced by the department. The same situation significantly accounted for increased drop outs especially for students who joined the program to improve on their practical skills and performance techniques. Besides, most students lost confidence and musical expressions overtime as some were unable to transcend limitations of poor musical backgrounds, hence the increased shifting focus to learning and playing African musical instruments instead of their initial passion to study Western musical instruments. Consequently, the study's conclusions and recommendations emphasize pro-active solutions like building closer collaborations with other music educational institutions, constant interactions with industry to give students firsthand musical knowledge and performance experience, and the introduction of course units that teach students how to make and repair Western musical instruments.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this study, I set out to examine strategies to alleviate the shortage of Western musical instruments for practical training at the Department of Performing Arts and Film (DPAF) amidst critical shortage of the same instruments currently (2025). By strategies, I mean those things that can be done or steps and actions that may be taken to address the problem and alleviate the shortage of Western musical instruments used in training at DPAF. DPAF is the only such an educational institution in eastern Africa offering all the three main subjects in performing arts, namely, music, dance, and drama from both the Western and African perspectives. On the other hand, established in 1922, Makerere University is the oldest institution of higher learning in Uganda and, indeed, the whole of eastern Africa and by many standards, the most prestigious. Nationally, DPAF and Makerere University are symbols of excellence for many institutions and practitioners the world over. Hence, a shortage of critical training resources like Western musical instruments should not be allowed to persist where something can be done which this study believes is possible.

Western music can be defined as the music that originated from Europe with both Greek and Roman influences. Western music was mostly popularized by the early Church with chants, hymns and the like. Overtime, the music genre and styles spread across the world, especially through establishments like schools and academies which grew with Western education

It has been argued on the site, **Britannica,** in an article written by Ralph Thomas Daniel (2017) that "Western music encompasses music originating from Europe and its derived forms from ancient times to the present day," Daniel notes that, historically, Western music evolved from the Greeks and Roman influences and was majorly supported by the early church which popularized percussive, wind and stringed instruments." There are other experiences that were picked along the way from the different socio-cultural settings where the music was performed. The new experiences led to the rise of musical genres that pick up both Western and African musics and

brings them fully to life, such as “Kadongo kamu” and the famous Jazz music. The two genres trace their origins to the Western world but have had African influences added to them as well.

Many other Western musical instruments, too, have been created to entertain the world musically. In one particular video on YouTube channel InfoZillen,**100 musical instrument**s (https://youtu.be/rUPjsHD5cTw?si=msZABNDjth8XI058) over 100 Western musical instruments were mentioned. However, this study concretely defined its focus when, during a group discussion on July 19th 2024, a student named Isiah argued that “the piano is the mother of music.” He based his arguments on how musically sound the piano was made, with most if not all of other musical principles being highly applicable to that one instrument. Hence, I also believe that if one studied and mastered the piano, that would suffice. That is, not all musical instruments are necessary for practical training in Western music.

In other words, just four representations of each category of musical instruments are sufficient to cover the practical training, performance and, indeed, professional needs of a student of Western music at DPAF. That is, one needs to study a stringed instrument like a piano or guitar; a woodwind instrument such as a flute or saxophone; a percussion instrument such as drums; and, finally, a brass instrument such as a trumpet, or, even better, the voice itself as an instrument. Generally, however, my study’s concern with studying piano is also because it belongs to multiple categories, that is, as a string or percussion instrument depending on the source and strength of the sound it produces. By studying piano, therefore, the student benefits from many fronts. For a student whose roots are African or those going to build their careers or perform in Africa, studying a piano is advantageous since in performance it has a close relationship with the thumb piano, the harp and percussions.

The study itself entails identifying what Western musical instruments might be available at DPAF but inadequate in number and those available and in poor condition but could be upgraded or refurbished, or even redesigned to create better musical practicality. There could also be other strategies to explore to alleviate the shortage of Western musical instruments at DPAF to enable the department to achieve its training goals for now and the future hence the study's main objective and its specific objectives as listed below

- To establish the kinds of Western musical instruments needed for practical training at DPAF.
- To examine how the shortage of Western musical instruments affects practical training at DPAF.
- To examine the strategies to alleviate the shortage of Western musical instruments for practical training at DPAF.

I hoped that the results from the study will help students, lecturers, and DPAF at Makerere University find the required solutions or strategies to alleviate the current shortage of Western musical instruments at the department to facilitate practical training in music making, professional practice and performance.

While carrying out this study, I used both qualitative and quantitative methods such as interview, observation, focus group discussions, and experimentation as discussed under methodology in Chapter Three. The results obtained are presented and discussed in Chapter Four, and are the basis for the conclusions and recommendations given in Chapter Five

1.2 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Music education has consistently involved the development of both theoretical and practical knowledge, together with instrumental playing. That is to say, theory and practice both play an important role in the development of a musician's Western musical instrumental skill. At university level, students studying music are expected to develop competence in areas such as technique, oral skills, musical expression, performance, and practical application of music theory. At the Department of Performing Arts and Film (DPAF), Makerere University, Western musical instruments form part of the practical training undertaken by music students. The training exposes students to instruments such as pianos, keyboards, and guitars, which are consistently practiced by students to acquire the musical instrumental skills needed. However, in spite of increased student enrollment in music courses, the number of students acquiring musical instrumental skills fully is dwindling consistently due to shortage of Western musical instruments needed for training. This is the key concern of this study, whose main objective is to examine strategies to alleviate the shortage of Western musical instruments for practical training at the Department of Performing Arts and Film.

The situation is due to a number of reasons, including the following: the number of students required to study these instruments has increased while the availability of these instruments has decreased. For example, the Bachelor of Arts in Music program has 60 students in First Year, and 15 in Third Year. All are expected to learn at least one Western musical instrument per year. The number of functional instruments has also decreased yet the environment in which the students practice and grow their Western musical instrumental skills has also deteriorated over time. At the time of this research (2024 to 2025), the department had five pianos, with only one fully functional, two fairly functional, and two completely out of commission. There were also five acoustic guitars.

The problem has not only been about the functionality and accessibility of these Western musical instruments for instructional or training purposes but also the students themselves who were either always not consistently available for lectures or had grown too despondent and almost lost interest in the course. Additionally, students often had to obtain permission and clearance to access certain practical facilities and spaces where these instruments were either stored or could be utilized to play and practice their Western musical instrumental skills. Even for some activities, like the weekly transitions, it could take approximately 6 to 8 weeks before accessing the equipment to be used. The issues for research therefore emerged from the growing need for practical musical instrumental training within the Bachelor of Arts in Music (BMus) program, alongside limited musical instruments, restricted spaces for practice, and limited opportunities for students in programs such as jam sessions. This created a situation where practical training was always insufficient, and the musical instruments in poor condition or not readily accessible whenever students needed to train and practice.

The shortage of Western musical instruments and limited access to them presents a problem because practical musical competence depends heavily on consistent interaction with the Western musical instruments being studied. Inasmuch as a student may understand musical theory, that's to say, notation, harmonies, rhythm, and many other theoretical concepts, without proper practical musical instrumental training, it is most likely that those students will experience a great deal of musical incompetence.

I also observed that students had approximately 4 hours of practical classes per week, which becomes particularly challenging, when students are expected to develop competence and musical skill with such a limited period of time to practice on the Western musical instruments. It is worse for the less privileged students who can't afford to buy their own personal musical instruments. They struggled even more, as those four hours are the only hours they get to spend practicing their Western musical instruments.

The situation consistently led to huge challenges; for example, half of the popular music students involved in the practical study of Western musical instruments did not demonstrate the level of musical instrumental prowess as expected at the end of every semester. Inadequacies were most pronounced during exams and performances where students had to showcase their musical skills practically. In another exercise I did among popular music students to identify musical notes by ear, only 20% of the students were able to identify the musical notes correctly by listening; In other words, only a tiny percentage of the students had a well-developed musical ear. Furthermore, the students who performed well during this exercise were mostly from the academic music strand, suggesting there are benefits in prior musical exposure and experience when it comes to studying Western musical instruments.

It should also be noted that during a group discussion, I realized that most students who had limited musical backgrounds experienced slower practical development of their musical skills, especially because the students themselves experienced limited access to Western musical instruments. The fact corroborated a statement that came up in the discussion where one student felt like a guitar beginner despite having spent several semesters learning how to play the acoustic guitar. This could also be associated to limited exposure, hence access to these Western musical instruments at the earlier stages of learning the Western musical instruments and the inadequate time spent practicing the instruments.

The problem therefore goes beyond simply having few instruments to train with and is compounded by the amount of practice, often inadequate, that most students have as they develop their musical ear, their inability to transform theoretical knowledge into practical skill, and lack of confidence during practical performances.

I also acknowledged the rise of African cultural musics at the department as a consequence of the problem at large, whereby most students tended to turn to learning African musical instruments as compared to their Western counterparts. This is due to inaccessibility of these instruments, their affordability, and the strong encouragement students get from lecturers to study African musical instruments instead. In other words, the shortage of Western musical instruments and the difficulty of accessing the very same instruments has created a change in learning priorities of most students, leading to their neglect of Western musical instruments and utilizing their time to learn African musics and how to play African musical instruments. Lecturers have tended to encourage the trend because there is no quick solution to acquiring adequate stocks of the required western musical instruments. Instruments like pianos, keyboards and guitars are themselves imported and are not cheap to buy.

Alleviating the shortage of Western musical instruments at the Department of Performing Arts and Film would therefore create potential to strengthen the practical training of Western musical instruments. The shortage can, in the short run, be resolved by fixing and servicing the available instruments, which would give students more options for Western musical instruments to practice, and improves the ratio of instruments to the number of students. Availability of these musical instruments would further support different activities and programs at the department; for example, jam sessions, instrumental rehearsals, practical examinations, and other performance opportunities like, enabling students to test their theoretical knowledge in practical musical situations, hence growing their Western musical skills. This would also build a collaborative space between Western musical instruments and African musical instruments, especially around students who long to build a portfolio around both musical styles. Indeed, this kind of interaction between both musics gives opportunity for musical reinvention, as already witnessed in musical styles like **BAKISI RAGGA**. Bakisi ragga is a fast-paced, danceable fusion genre from Uganda that mixes both Jamaican ragga with the Buganda traditional rhythms of Bakisimba. This hence ensures continuity of not only Western music but also African musical culture among the students at large. Again, this would easily support activities such as jam sessions, group instrument learning and practice, and would also ease studying during Western musical instruments classes. Students would be given greater access to functional Western musical instruments and have more opportunities to practice consistently and grow their practical skills thus reinforcing concepts taught in class and develop students' instrumental technique

through repetition and practice. In the long run, the Department of Performing Arts and Film will comfortably produce graduates who are not only equipped theoretically but are also skilled players of these Western musical instruments, hence creating competent musicians in the market today and creating a good reputation for the in the music market.

1.3. Problem Statement

There is a shortage of Western musical instruments for practical training at the Department of Performing Arts and Film (DPAF) at Makerere University.

Some of the reasons why this is a big problem include depleting stocks, poor handling and the general state of the instruments. For example, there are 4 pianos and only 1 piano is in perfect health with others either out of tune or totally spoiled rendering them unusable.

The problem is compounded by the growing number of music students at the department, making it extremely challenging to train successfully during practical sessions. Additionally, the department always lacks finances to support the refurbishment or replacement of malfunctioning instruments. However, something can be done to achieve a stable balance and alleviate the pressure on both students and Western musical instruments available. Hence, this study that will examine strategies to alleviate the shortage of Western musical instruments for practical training at the Department of Performing Arts and Film (DPAF) at Makerere University.

1.4. Objectives

1.4.1 Main Objective

The main objective of the study is to examine strategies to alleviate the shortage of Western musical instruments for practical training at DPAF. This will help to enhance the professional readiness of students by providing them with comprehensive, hands-on learning experiences that align with current industry needs and practices.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The following are the specific objectives formulated to assist the overall aim of the study.

1.4.2.1. To establish the kinds of Western musical instruments needed for practical training at DPAF.

1.4.2.2 To examine how shortage of Western musical instruments affects practical training at DPAF.

1.4.2.3. To examine the strategies to alleviate the shortage of Western musical instruments for practical training at DPAF.

1.5. Research Questions

1.5.1. What kind of Western musical instruments are needed for practical training at the Department of Performing Arts and Film?

1.5.2. In what way has shortage of Western musical instruments for practical training at DPAF impacted learning and the students' professional development?

1.5.3. What strategies can alleviate shortage of western musical instruments for practical training at DPAF?

1.6. Scope of Study

This study followed three types of scopes; namely, time, content, and geographical scope.

1.6.1. Time scope

The study has its time scope as the years 2024 and 2025 when I was a third student of BA MUS at DPAF, and research was a partial requirement for the award of the degree upon completing my studies.

1.6.2 Content Scope

While I was interested in studying Western musical instruments available for practical training at DPAF at Makerere University, my content scope only covered the piano as the mother of all

music as explained above already. Sometimes, however, from participants' own comments, I come to mention guitars, the keyboard, and other musical instruments, including the African sets.

1.6.3. Geographical Scope.

My study was limited geographically at Makerere University in Kampala. This is because my desire was located there. That is to say, to find the required solutions or strategies to alleviate the current shortage of Western musical instruments at DPAF to facilitate practical training in music making and performance.

1.7. Significance of the Study

This study is aimed at helping students, lecturers and DPAF at Makerere University find the required solutions or strategies to alleviate the current shortage of Western musical instruments at DPAF and facilitate practical training in music making and performance.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Availability of western musical instruments and students' career development

In the article “CHUSS acquires new modern musical instruments through alumni and staff fundraising,” (20.12.2021) Jane Anyango (20.12.2021) stated “ There has not been a full music and sound set for teaching for a long time.” This points to the reality that before this time the Western musical instruments were not only inadequate but also the complete set required for an actual performance had been unavailable leading to so much struggle among the students. Anyango continues to state that this fundraising began in October 2019 under the headship of Dr. Sylivia Nannyonga Tamusuusa with a team led by Dr. Benon Kigozi then Coordinator of the music section at DPAF. A total of 21 million Uganda shillings was collected. The ceremony was witnessed by the Vice Chancellor Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, who stated: “ What we are witnessing today are people directing their energies to the right things and if we are able to do something like this, we can do even much more once we are focused and put energies where they should go.” The occasion set a trend and a benchmark for other students to take on, hence at least one strategy to alleviate the shortage of Western musical instruments. The strategies are discussed under Chapter Four .

While watching an Oscar award winning documentary, **the last repair shop** (https://youtu.be/xttrkgKXtZ4?si=Inn6z753W_EqkuCRi noticed some students demonstrated a strong connection or disconnect with instruments at a much deeper level either through love or lack of they showed for the instruments. One of them commented: “ Some of them come from a place of love and support and others come from huge dysfunction”. That is, a shortage of these instruments to a student can mean more than just class and studies. This could be true even at a personal level as my reason to study music was because I had found my personal voice in music. In other words, I express myself better in music than any other form. One can say, music is my language or means to communicate. There are certainly other students or people who feel like I do. Therefore, the decline number of instruments at DPAF can easily create emotional insecurity to the students in the long run, hence a decline in motivation to be, play or learn the practical music instrumental skills or any other subject for that matter.

While also watching the documentary "The Last Repair Shop," mentioned above, we shared many stories. One stood out: a male student who loved to play the tuba but was now carrying a sousaphone. He revealed his time at the crossroads when he couldn't afford the instrument yet he was passionate about getting it. He told his father who declared "It's either the tuba or me!" This answer demoralized him. However, he never gave up on his quest. He visited a musical instruments repair shop in their area, where the proprietor kindly gave him an old but perfectly working sousaphone. That was his first musical instrument, and he has never looked back at playing it. His desire changed from wanting to own and play a tuba to now being an expert at the sousaphone.

In relation to this, I'd say that, though it would take time, setting up a musical instrument repair shop could be the starting point for the DPAF at Makerere University to gather stocks of different instruments that would be at the disposal of students interested in studying them. That shop could also save the dreams of some of students who long to learn or own musical instruments but are unable because they can't afford the cost. They would eventually access the desired or alternative instruments and become instrumentalists. The strategy has been adopted in universities like Oklahoma State University, which even created courses to support the initiative. Hence, this is something that can be taken up here at DPAF.

In regard to what can be done to alleviate the shortage of musical instruments at DPAF one still ought to look and relate to a few situations, researches, and thoughts that have been shared and researched before. Here are a few of those discussions.

During an open group discussion held on the 19th July 2024 among fellow course mates, we shared ideas about: the number of Western musical instruments available at the department, specifically the piano and the acoustic guitars. We also discussed some of the challenges faced by most of the students in regard to the Western musical instruments where one student mentioned that he felt like a beginner at playing the acoustic guitar yet he was a third-year student. Clearly, this was a big proof to the impact of inadequate Western musical instruments at the department for students to learn and practice with . Yet he, like many of us, could not afford to buy his own sets to use. We agreed to some solutions to the challenge such as, giving students more hours of practice on the timetable, exploring alternative practice opportunities at the

department, purchasing new instruments and making storage spaces accessible to students to get instruments for practice. Many of these have been discussed among the strategies in Chapter Five.

I genuinely agree with Kampala Music School which is by far one of the best music institutions in Uganda having trained some of the best musicians in Uganda for example, the gospel artist Karungi Sheila . In a bid to alleviate the shortage of western musical instruments, the department could adopt Carr's method of support mobilization. An open call is made to the public locally and abroad to donate personal musical instruments they no longer need or use for someone else who might need them, in this case the students at Kampala Music School. The strategy has by all means proven not only resourceful for Kampala Music School but has provided a sustainability plan to the Western musical instrument scene in Uganda. Rose Komugabe (2025) highlights the responsibility of government and schools in acquiring various types of music instruments in a bid to alleviate the shortage of musical instruments for students to use. In her article, she recommends training teachers of music at all levels on how to play various types of instruments including Western musical instruments. This in turn helps in the training of the musical instruments to the students at the department of performing arts and film.

2.2. Effective training for western musical instruments

Western musical instruments are best learned through practical training and rehearsals, and this is not just at DPAF but everywhere in the world today. In this study, practical training refers to the structured and consistent process of rehearsing on a musical instrument to develop and refine musical skills and techniques to develop one's performance abilities. However, shortage of these instruments at the department, practical training for students at DPAF.

Malcom Gladwell (2008) once said, “ten thousand hours is the magic number of greatness,” However, shortage of Western musical instruments has slowed down the learning process of students. The department offers only two working pianos, which are used during practical classes for students and are sometimes hardly accessible to them after the formal classes. Additionally, students continue to learn more slowly due to the few hours of studying allocated on the time table. That’s to say, due to the inadequate instruments in the department, students tend to find it hard to learn different instruments such as the piano, acoustic guitar, and the keyboard in the

given time. Students get only about 4 hours a week to practice the piano. The same hours are further divided between the lecturer and the students. For example, students who number over 60 will only have 20 minutes each during class time, which is far below the standard time as recommended by Gladwell above. With the class of 2023 (now in 2nd year), a student has to learn two instruments, yet it remains the same 4 hours of training a week.

The shortage has also led to reduced practical musical knowledge and the actual physical knowledge of the instruments. Practical knowledge in this sense refers to applied theoretical knowledge that is learned in the lecture rooms as the students study the music course. This knowledge is simply built through "growing muscle memory" where a student is able to play the musical notes relying on what they studied in class. Therefore, there is a relationship between learning Western musical instruments and being able to play what you are learning. However, due to the great inadequacy of Western musical instruments at DPAF Makerere University, this knowledge has surely remained in books, and in turn, students lose out on practical skills acquisition. On their part, lecturers give students the recommended theoretical work to do, but students naturally practice less due to inadequacy of the musical instruments. Eventually, this leads to a big decline in both the practical skill but also theoretical knowledge that is piled atop each other as the semesters come to a close before it is applied hence the big loss on all that musical literacy.

For example, taking a good look at the piano and the acoustic guitar one will hardly notice but there is a major difference that changes the dynamics of the two instruments. The Piano's sound is created from striking strings within the piano, while a guitar is plucked; making the piano percussive and mechanical in nature and the guitar tactile. In other words, if such information is just left in students' notes, some concepts of mastery of these instruments will be totally lost in the long run.

The critical shortage of Western musical instruments at DPAF has also led to stunted musical growth for students. This can be best described when a third-year student, Sayed had this to say: "As a third-year popular music student, the university thinks I play guitar like an advanced student yet still I am at beginners' level." This surely takes place because as a student of the Western musical instruments, one needs excessive access to all forms of instruments such as the

keyboard, pianos and guitars. This situation continuously leads to excessive stuntedness regarding musical growth and practical instrument playing of Western musical instruments

Shortage of Western musical instruments at DPAF has led to decline in the levels of creativity for the students in the department. One very important skill as a music student at the department is growing one's musical knowledge and creativity to the level of improvisation. Personally, looking back at the department during my time as a student, one of the overly emphasized approaches to music creation was *Improvisation.* Improvisation refers to the act of creating something new as a response or spontaneous musical expression without prior preparation. However, this is a skill that can only be achieved through mastery in musical improvisation let alone of a particular musical instrument. The inadequate numbers of western musical instruments therefore lead to fewer hours of practice to achieve mastery of these instruments. Making matters worse, instruments like the acoustic guitars are not available yet still students are expected to get their mastery. This means students can hardly master these instruments and perform or present using the instruments they are learning with any conviction, emotions or feelings. Rather, they just perform for marks and grades

From my observation, the shortage of Western musical instruments has complicated the process of accessing the musical instruments at the department for practical learning. This can surely be elaborated at the department itself, whereby in order to access some of the instruments for example, the piano in the piano room one or even the department keyboard, one has to have received permission to practice either from their lecturer or the department secretary. The same procedures apply to access the university studio at the innovation hub located at CTF 2 (CTF2). It is even harder to access the studio as students need to have their Lecturer to have attained prior permission on their behalf. Furthermore, in the absence of the lecturer the supervisor could easily decline the access because there would be no one directly responsible for the instruments or due to other obligations. This makes it even harder for the students to grow their practical instrumental musical knowledge. However, if the number of Western musical instruments were in big numbers, then the progress would surely be easier in the long run with the most immediate benefit being mastery of these Western musical instruments.

Low levels of motivation experienced at the department in the long run are because the students tend to look at the condition of the musical instruments as too poor to deliver any meaningful learning. Coupled with competition to access the few instruments in a fair working condition surely demotivates many students leading to a big decline in the desire to learn the instruments. The rigid system for students to access these musical instruments described above also plays into the students' demotivation.

2.3. Role of practice in skills building

There has also been a growing reduction in the confidence levels during performances of music students in the department. Due to inadequate amounts of Western musical instruments, most students find it hard to even practice with the few instruments that are available. According to one student, "Because we hadn't practiced enough as students, we found it nerve recking to even perform during examinations." This bitter truth is a reality for many music students at the department.

By implication, this has also affected students in the growth of their musical ear. The musical ear can be defined as the natural or learned ability of an individual to hear, identify and understand musical elements such as pitch or rhythm. Apparently, the problem may have excited for years as one of our lecturers shared with me in private of how she ended up quitting her musical journey after she was told she lacked that skill. Lack of this skill is basically caused by a decline in the sound quality of the musical instruments over time especially the pianos and the acoustic guitars. While some instruments at DPAF might have lost sound quality over time others have ended up out of tune due, largely, to insufficient repairs and learners misuse or unguided practice routine. This has then led to the decline of the biggest and greatest skill of any musician since their musical ear isn't well cultivated over time. It means that one cannot read, write, or perform music without close guidance or reliance on an accomplished musician. In other words, such students, even if they graduate, will never be confident or independent to make their own music, perform, or play an instrument alone. They will always seek a backup or to appear in group performances. The same lecturer argued that lack of musical ear may even affect or greatly curtail one's prospects for musical entrepreneurship since they can't independently supervise the making of music. This challenge is very much alive in Uganda's popular music industry today,

where especially “mimicking,” which is misconstructed as “mime,” and preferences for bands to perform established records are common.

Inadequate musical instruments and limited opportunities for practice have also made it harder for DPAF to have ensemble practice sessions and performances. To bring it all home, I personally have not experienced a musical instruments ensemble throughout my three years of education unless it was an exam. The situation is majorly caused by declining numbers in Western musical instruments at the department. For the same reasons, it is hard to have jam sessions as there are very few students who can play these instruments in an ensemble type of arrangement, or call it a band. In the long run such activities phase out completely and die away. Similarly, full choral ensembles with musical instruments have continued to decline to the point where the choral classes are now more less optional . One could argue that it has all been caused by this great decline in the availability of Western musical instruments at the department.

Decline in the number of Western musical instruments at DPAF has also meant that the department has little technical knowledge to offer which has continually led to stunted technical growth. In as much as western musical instruments are typically musical, they are technical too. What proves this point are two case scenarios. As I interviewed a third-year student, I realized he couldn’t tell the different guitar string tunings. Furthermore, for all the years since 1971 that music has been taught at Makerere University, we are yet to have a piano technician rise from among the students or lecturers to serve in the industry or even just confront the challenges of lack of regular maintenance and repairs of the instruments faced by the department. Hence, some job opportunities are being killed due to the decline in the quality and availability of these Western musical instruments at the department or the lack of courses that directly address basic needs of the department.

Another point to note is that not all students can afford to buy the Western musical instruments they need to train. For example, I am yet to hear of a student who owns a piano at the university. To buttress it's training, therefore, DPAF tries to send to students to organizations with the facilities we lack at Makerere for practical training, practice and exposure. Some lecturers also allow students to use their personal equipment once in a while. However, all this is insufficient and unsustainable. Consequently, many students are left with only the option of borrowing.

However, no student can grow their skill or competence on borrowed stuff all the time. In the long run, the practice leads to underdeveloped musical skills. Yet during exams it is assumed all students got the practical training and exposure they needed, and are examined the same way which, to some extent, surely leads to unfair assessment.

The shortage of Western musical instruments has also led to decline in the amount of real-world experience acquired during the students' time at the university. For example, in all the live bands around Kampala City, they require a musician of about 3 years' experience that is not just theoretical but practical with skills such as improvisation. However, due to the decline in the number of Western musical instruments students train with at DPAF, such goals are hardly met especially for a student that is new to the musical space and field at large. During an interview with one of the students, she lamented about how even after 2 years of studying music at the department she still felt like a beginner at the acoustic guitar, yet the curriculum indicates she would be a professional guitarist by that level. The experience that would have been developed over that period of time has been greatly hindered by the insufficient exposure to and practice with Western musical instruments at the department leading to stunted growth among students. In the long run, such students finish university when they are not prepared for the real-life environment of music.

CHAPTER THREE:

METHODOLOGY

3.0. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I discuss the methodology I used for the research; that is, the approach, design, methods, and strategies. I explain how each of these elements was used, the benefits realized, and limitations experienced. In the case of the limitations, I explain what else was done to ensure that I got reliable data, hence results.

METHODS.

The research used both quantitative and qualitative methods. However, due to the fact that the research was more qualitative than quantitative, below are some of the methods I used.

1. **Surveys and questions.**

The interview method was useful for gathering broad statistical data on peoples' opinions, behaviors, and views related to the problem, as it provided a person-based view of a particular topic. The survey method added ideas such as sampling, instrument design, and others. This helped me better understand the acoustically set and tuned instruments, hence giving me extensive knowledge of the musical instruments being discussed. questionnaire interview

2. **Observation method,**

Observation method helped me physically and practically see and identify the musical instruments that were not in very good shape; for example, I noticed that out of 5 pianos, there was only one that was fully functional.

3. **Focus group discussions**

Focus group discussions also helped me identify some of the struggles faced by the students in the department; for example, a student went ahead to mention that he felt like a beginner guitarist even as a third-year student.

4. **Experiments:**

I used this method to test hypotheses by manipulating one or more variables to observe the effects on other variables. Experiments allowed me to establish cause-and-effect relationships between students and musical instruments they could access at the Department of Performing Arts and Film. For example, with the realisation only one piano was fully functional then I concluded that only 20% of the western musical instruments were fully functional.

3.1. APPROACHES

The study uses a quantitative approach to establish the musical instruments covered by the study and ensure reliable data. It also uses a qualitative approach, as most musical instruments that are studied had to be tested for detailed analysis.

With a quantitative approach, the study established that there are 5 pianos, all of which are acoustic, with one that is fully functional. Of the remaining 4, 2 are moderately functional, and 2 are completely non-functional, with one standing on the veranda of the department at the entrance to the administrative office. There are also 2 functioning keyboards, both electric and functioning. One is kept in the store at the department and the other in the studio at CTF 2. Regarding the guitars, there were 5 fully functioning acoustic guitars, and they were all kept by the music lecturer at the Flame Tree. Flame Tree is one of the premises where lectures at DPAF, in particular music, take place.

With the qualitative research, I was able to discuss the research results mainly focusing on acoustic instrumental skills. This is because these skills are foundational for extensive musical growth for the students to learn to play related musical instruments, such as electric guitars, bass guitars, and grand pianos.

3.2. STUDY DESIGN

Since the study was both quantitative and qualitative in nature, I used a combination of descriptive and analytical methods. For example, a descriptive design was used in the description of the 3 main instrument types studied by the students basing on their state and availability to the students, the way they are studied, and the implications of such practices. On the other hand, analytical study enabled me to discuss the data I collected, generating the conclusions and

recommendations I make. For example, the design justifies statements by a fellow student who alleged that he hadn't gained significant knowledge of Western musical instruments to distinguish him from a first-year musical instrument student even when he was in third year.

3.3 STUDY METHODS

These comprise both data collection and data analysis methods. The methods of data collection hence research included observation, experimentation, and group studies, while the data was analyzed mostly using statistical applications. This is how each of the methods was applied

3.3.1. Data collection methods

OBSERVATION METHOD.

While carrying out the research, I used the observation method, whereby with my naked eyes, I saw, captured, and internalized different patterns, actions and reactions of students and their lecturers during the study but also their interaction with the western musical instruments. I also observed the state of the western musical instruments at the department as discussed later in my findings.

Additionally, I visited all the places at the department where Western musical instruments were kept. I observed the way the storage was done and in what state the instruments were. Case in point: I noticed that there are very few Western musical instruments in the department, as already stated above. The 2 pianos in good working condition are stationed in piano rooms 1 and 2 All the other 3 pianos are either spoiled or non-functional, have strings that are out of tune or completely unresponsive, making the process of playing the instruments very detrimental to the students' learning. This surely has, in the long run, led to a decline in the musical skills of many students at the department.

There are also a few musically practical activities taking place at the department, such as the weekly jam sessions and the MUS3214 Course unit that promotes the practice of stage performances. While taking part in these activities as a student and practicing musician, I observed the struggle students go through to access the few musical instruments available to practice and grow their musical skills was too exhausting. Students had to ask for different

permissions and have particular clearances from lecturers involved. For example, students needed clearance to receive access to the CTF2 studio where Western musical instruments such as keyboards, drum sets, and technological equipment such as microphones, mixers, speakers, and more are stored. Furthermore, the weekly jam sessions every semester started with the difficulty of kicking off these sessions; normally, it would take about 4 to 8 weeks before getting permission to even just host the program. Even when given permission, most of these jam sessions tend to begin late due to the need for approval on those specific days or the need to seek keys to access the stores where the instruments are kept. The same applies to the practical exercises of the MUS3214 course unit, where accessing the studio room would take between thirty to forty minutes. This, in turn, demoralizes many students, hence the decline in the demand and attendance of this activity that could have grown the students' confidence and musical skills.

As a student of the Bachelor of Arts in Music program, I got the privilege to be a part of the classes by participating physically in the courses on the program. I noticed that students have at most only 4 hours of practical classes which is far from being enough even for fulltime music students. The experience is worse for beginners and subject students. The four hours a week are nowhere close to adequate and the provision is detrimental to the students' practical skills growth. As a student of Music, practice takes great priority because as Malcom Gladwell (2008) once said "*Ten thousand hours is the magic number of greatness."* Therefore, four hours of classes a week doesn't get the students of music anywhere close to growth especially for students who don't have access to the instruments or own them personally. Consequently, most students lose motivation to the point whereby they are only studying for marks and certificates. This kills their passion, hence turning out as half-backed at the end of their 3 years of study at the university.

EXPERIMENTS

I used experimentation method to acquire several results. I took part practically in activities where I tested by touch and ear some of the Western musical instruments, such as pianos in piano rooms 1 and 2, but also those under storage. I got the opportunity to play a few of these instruments, such as the piano and the acoustic guitar, during classes, but also extra time, open

day hours, and jam sessions. Through this process and the cumulative moments as I performed using the instruments, I realized the following:

I was able to establish the actual number of functional musical instruments at the department. Out of 5 pianos, only 1 is fully functional and is kept in Piano Room 1. The other 2 are fairly functional with some keys out of tune or fully mute. One of these pianos is in Piano Room 2, and the other at the Flame Tree lecture room. For example, the piano called Neumeyer, has all its keys from F5 all the way to C6 muted. They don't play any music while the other two pianos are completely dysfunctional. All this creates the urgency to have new Western musical instruments at the department or get them repaired where that is possible. This is just one example; the other musical instruments like the guitars and key board are in a worse state than all the others in my case study, which surely needs to be addressed.

Through experimentation with the class of 2025 as a student of that very same year, I got an opportunity to test the prowess of fellow students of Western musical instruments by getting them to play songs as I listened. I realized that about half of the popular music students didn't have the amount of instrument mastery needed to perform. Yet, this skill is a necessity to thrive in the popular music industry and comfortably perform at any kind of event proficiently. The Western musical instrumental skill wasn't well mastered a major reason being the reduction in number of Western musical instruments students could access and train by. This coupled with inadequate performance spaces and opportunities for practice, such as jam sessions, have led to a big decline in the standard of students being produced. Jam sessions often happened once a week and it still took about 4 to 8 weeks to kick it off, leading to less exposure to these instruments. The students' poor performance and fear to perform deepened because of the uncertainty in the mastery of the musical instruments.

I have had the privilege of being a part of two classes (2025 and 2026), therefore allowing me to study the trends and take part in them, such as learning African music as an alternative to Western musical instruments. Through experimentation and participation, I realized that there is an increase in the knowledge acquisition of African musics. Due to failure to attain easy access to Western musical instruments, most students have opted to learn the African cultural musics through dance, song, and playing of instruments such as the ngalabi, amadinda, the adungu, and

others. Through the arrangement, I also learned how to play the ngalabi, and even became a part of the imbalu drummers during our final exam performance. This great spike has been reflected in the increased number of students carrying out cultural music research projects at the department, and all this has been caused by the shortage of Western musical instruments.

Another experiment that I carried out at the Department of Performing Arts and Film was rather personal, where I asked the students to try to figure out what musical notes I played on my phone. Only about 20% were able to figure out the notes correctly. The students who did so were those of the academic music strand. The academic music refers to the strand of music that is studied by students who have an academic musical history. For example, these students must have studied music in high school. These were the students who were able to identify what musical notes I was playing by ear. This is a clear sign that the musical ear of most students has not been developed successfully due to their inadequate exposure to Western musical instruments to the degree where they can fully have a well-activated musical ear. At this stage in their training, the students' musical ear can only be attained through consistent rehearsals on the western musical instruments they study. Hence the need to increase the stocks of western musical instruments at the department. Otherwise, the cycle repeats itself, since most students cannot afford own personal sets to use for the same purposes

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Group discussions happened over a lengthy period of time in my second and third year, during different daily and periodic interactions with fellow students and lecturers, both casually but also in class where we were challenged to think outside the box. However, the most noticeable discussion happened at my home with a few students of the class of 2025. For example, on August 15^{th,} 2025, the following ideas were realized in the discussion, hence my findings. We realized that the decline in the acquisition of practical musical knowledge and skill for mastery of the Western musical instruments was expected, since there was reduced numbers of Western musical instruments necessary for the task at hand.

There has been a big decline in students' practical musical knowledge, especially because the bulk of the course content is theoretical. Some of the students even alleged that they were still at a beginner level when it comes to learning their Western musical instrument, especially at the time when, due to a shortage of musical instruments to train on at the department, students had to learn only one musical instrument. However, starting with the class of 2026/2027, where even student numbers have increased, students are required to learn 2 Western musical instruments and a cultural instrument. This means the department struggles even harder to provide more Western musical instruments for students to train and grow their musical skills. Additionally as mentioned before, study sessions remain 4 hours a week. With students required to learn 2 Western musical instruments, this is genuinely not ample time to master the instruments

Through that group's discussions, it also came to our knowledge that most students who join the course with no musical background tend to experience stunted musical growth due to the shortage of Western musical instruments in the department. One of the discussants shared honestly that as a third-year student, he felt like a beginner at the guitar that he had spent over 3 Semesters learning. This was due to limited access to the guitar in his first semester, and sadly he couldn't afford to own one during the entire semester. This meant that for the whole of the first semester of university, he struggled to access a guitar as much as he would have loved. The situation denied him the opportunity to learn and master the basics of guitar, resulting in his failure to catch up hence the stunted growth. This is true for many students who come from humble backgrounds and hope to grow musically through the course. Most of those students are not able to afford the musical instruments, which in turn means that they will struggle to grow their musical skills due to the limited access to these Western musical instruments at the department .

Furthermore, at the same group discussion, one of my classmates mentioned that there was limited musical expression, which was caused by inadequate Western musical instruments at DPAF. He mentioned that the process is sad but simple: students' reduced access to Western musical instruments and their reduced number has resulted in a reduction in musical instrument practices, which in turn leads to a decline in the diffusion of music theory into practical skills. Consequently, students then fail to fully express themselves musically. The biggest example shared was of how during the final practical exam students were scared, and visibly trembling. Sometimes it took more than 3 minutes for them to calm down their nerves to do their best in

these exams. This means that the students find it hard to freely express themselves musically, both privately and publicly, which has surely been caused by the decline in the number and access hence practice of Western musical instruments at the department.

3.4. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected during this study was both quantitative and qualitative, which helped me to understand better the availability, condition, accessibility, and use of Western musical instruments at the Department of Performing Arts and Film.

3.4.1. Thematic Analysis

While carrying out this research, I used thematic analysis to analyze information obtained through observation and group discussions. In the process, I realized recurring ideas such as experiences, opinions, and patterns from the interaction between the students and their training and practice on Western musical instruments. Below are my findings.

While carrying out a small focus group discussion over semesters on these Western Musical instruments, a student mentioned that many of them still felt like beginner instrumentalists despite having studied Western musical instruments over a period of three semesters. This has been caused by a number of reasons, including limited access to the musical instruments and inadequate hours of practice, which is 4 hours to be exact per week. The students furthermore mentioned that the slow progress at learning the instruments on the curriculum was also caused by the decline in opportunities to perform during jam sessions that, unfortunately, also took about 6 to 8 weeks to start off every semester.

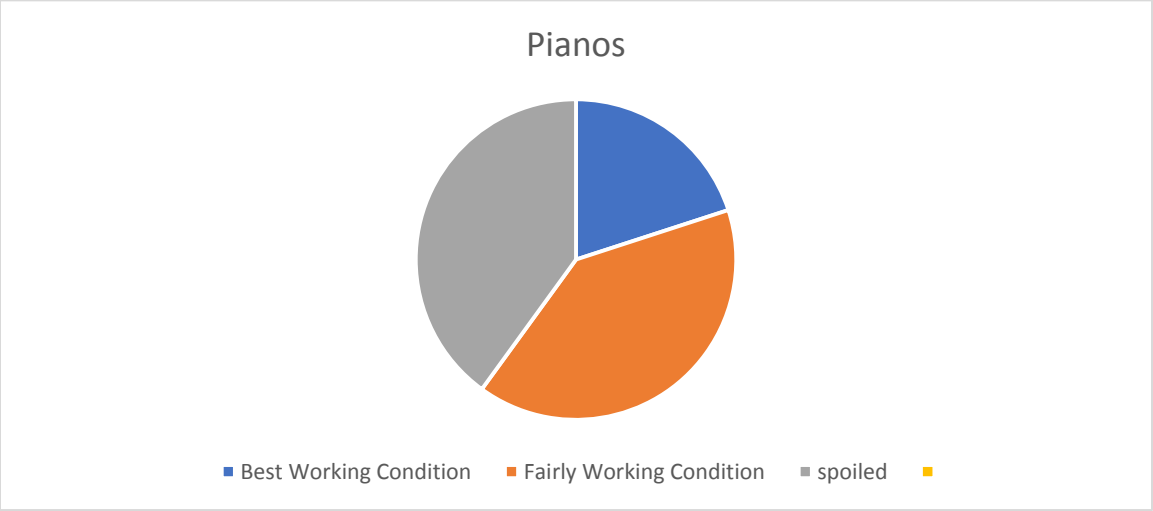
Furthermore, I observed that the increase in students' participation in African cultural music, greatly arose from the increased encouragement of students by lecturers to interact more with African music since the Western musical instruments were not enough to meet their demand. However, despite the good intentions and advantages in the shifting training focus, the inadequacy of Western musical instruments itself demotivates the students from practicing and growing their Western instrumental musical skills. In summary, there has been a slow but consistent decline in the mastery of Western Instrumental music and skills. Therefore, thematic

analysis enabled me to identify the relationships between the shortage of instruments and students' experiences in the practical learning and playing of these Western music instruments.

3.4.2. Descriptive Analysis

While carrying out the research, I also employed descriptive analysis to attain, organize, and interpret numerical information obtained during the study; that is, simple correlations of frequencies, counts and percentages that describe the condition and availability of Western musical instruments in relation to the students' performance during practical experiments. I examined the pianos as a case study and realized that there are 5 pianos available at the department where 2 were fully out of commission, 2 were fairly functional, and one was fully functional. This means that about 40% of the pianos are fully out of commission, 20% are fairly functional, and 20% are fully functional as Illustrated in Diagram 1 below

Diagram 1: State of pianos at DPAF



Furthermore, I challenged a number of students to test their musical ear by playing a number of musical notes and giving them a chance to identify the notes correctly. Only about 20% of the students were able to identify them correctly. Most of these students were from the academic strand, and this was because of their extended exposure to Western musical instruments. These are the students who have a musical background from having studied music in high school, which other students didn't have access to even at the University due to the shortage of these Western musical instruments. Other than relying on students' opinions, these numerical findings

provided measurable evidence of the relationship between students and Western instrumental music learning at the Department of Performing Arts and Film.

3.4.3. Comparative analysis

Comparative analysis gave me the liberty to compare different groups of students but also different groups of experiences, especially with these Western musical instruments. For example, between the class of 2025 and that of 2026, especially since I got the opportunity to study in both classes, but also the experience attained between popular music strand students and academic strand students. While looking at these two strands of students, both popular and academic, I realized that popular music students tend to grow their musical skills a lot more slowly compared to the academic strand students. For example, during the process of learning how to play the acoustic guitar, the academic strand students found it easier to read sheet music, hence easing their mastery of musical pieces, as compared to popular music strand students who only had about 6 to 8 months of exposure to musical language. This slowed down their learning of the Western musical instruments. Coupled with the inadequacies of Western musical instruments and fewer hours of practice and study time, they could not catch up easily, compared to the academic students who had about two years of high school learning these Western musical instruments, and therefore found it was easier to learn and grow their Western musical instrumental skill.

While comparing the class of 2025 and 2026, it came to my notice that both classes had a great fondness for African instrumental music and African music culture in general. While most students joined the university expecting to learn more Western musical instruments, through discussions with most of these students, especially towards the end of the study program, I realized that most of them had progressed in African music compared to Western music. For example, they had more experience playing African traditional instruments as compared to their Western counterparts, creating a contrast that was very unexpected. Most of this was caused by less exposure to Western musical instruments due to their limited availability to the students, leading to fewer hours of study and practice of the instruments. Therefore, content analysis helped me systematically interpret these responses to establish the common experiences shared by students

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

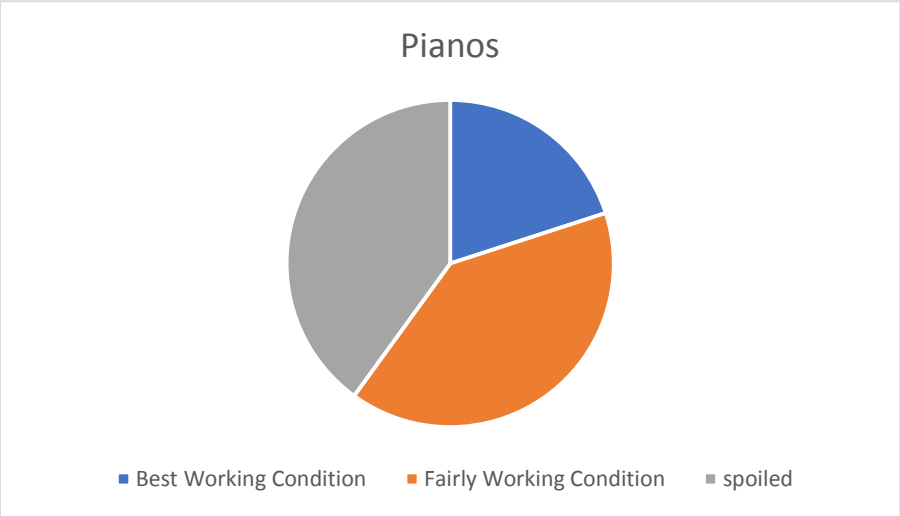
4.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of my study, especially on the effects of inadequate Western musical instruments on students' practical musical skills at the Department of Performing Arts and Film. The discussion focuses on the availability hence accessibility of the musical instruments to the students and the condition of the instruments, but also investigates the implications of reduced numbers of Western musical instruments at the Department of Performing Arts and Film to the overall training of a music student.

4.1. Availability of the musical instruments.

The availability of Western Musical instruments at the Department of Performing Arts and Film is closely linked to their condition and, therefore, their functionality. The reality is that the stocks of these instruments have dwindled continuously. Using pianos as our case study, the department has only five pianos: one fully functional, two fairly functional, and two completely dysfunctional. In terms of percentages, as portrayed in diagram 1 replicated here below, 20% of the pianos are fully functional, 40% of the pianos are fairly functional, and 40% of the pianos are completely dysfunctional. These findings therefore indicate that although the department has multiple pianos, the number of fully usable instruments is considerably lower than the total number of instruments physically present and those by which students can train

Diagram 1: Stocks of pianos at DPAF.



This implies that students actually use about 20% of the pianos which are also always fully occupied, further straining the instruments as well as the students. Those that manage to access the good pianos surely grow their musical instrumental skills to perfection while those that use the 40% of the pianos in a fair working condition might experience crippled learning which affects their musical growth and experience as Western musical instrumentalists.

4.2. Students' accessibility to Western musical instruments

Poor or non-accessibility of Western musical instruments by students at the Department of Performing Arts and Film was another finding for the research. While there are several musical instruments such as pianos, acoustic guitars, and many more, accessing these very same instruments proved challenging for most students during training. Various reasons are responsible for this, but mainly the challenge revolves around the fact that the instruments are few and kept in places inaccessible to the students, but also on which DPAF has no control. Students consistently complained of excessive permissions and clearances required to access the instruments, including facilities where they are stored or housed, which neither belong to DPAF nor to its home school or college. Additionally, the procedure to access the instruments or venues where the instruments are kept is not well stipulated by the administration at the Performing Arts and Film Department. Students consistently observed delays in the process of accessing these musical instruments; For example, to access the studio room at CTF 2, students should have

gotten permission from the lecturer, who also needed to have informed the supervisor at CTF 2 about the students' need. Sometimes, the custodian is not available at the time students need to use the instruments, which is mostly for practice in the evenings. Usually, students are also required to access the studio in the company of the lecturer, who should stay and sign the instruments back into the store. For the custodian and even the lecturer, that would be outside stipulated working hours and could require an allowance to be paid, especially to the custodian. But lecturers, like the students or the custodian, may each have different schedules that don't blend easily with the requirements. While students are full-time, most are privately sponsored and so certainly need to work in the evenings and weekends to make ends meet. Such constraints and bureaucracies demotivate students from utilizing these different spaces fully, let alone the Western musical instruments they need that are stored there.

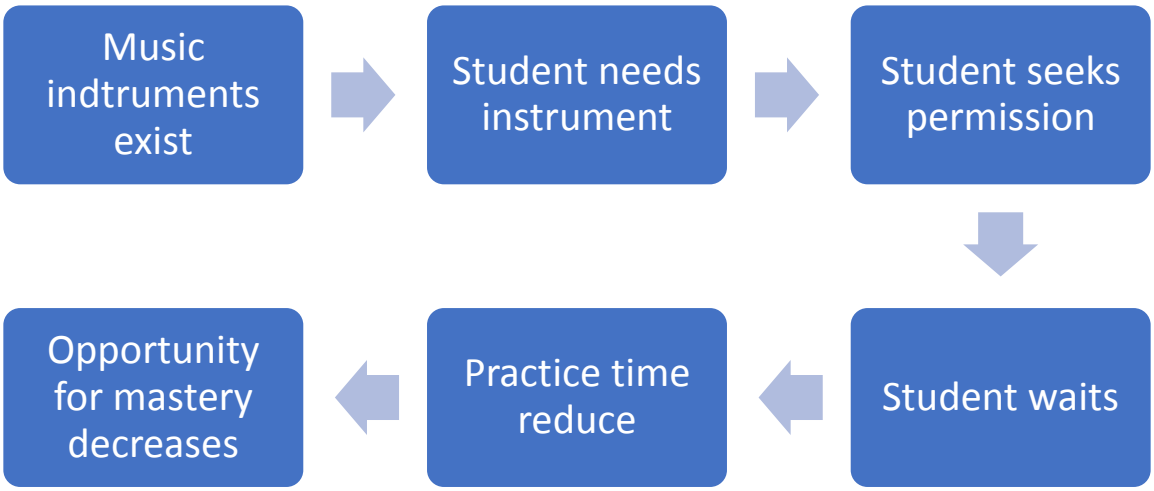
4.3. Inadequate opportunities for students for practice and exposure

Furthermore, there are always delays in arranging for and actually conducting practical sessions during the semester. This may not be a complete fault of the department. The practical nature of the course at DPAF is something not fully appreciated, so there is no space provided by the university where students can do their practice, like music practical or performances. When they perform at DPAF grounds, occupants of neighboring buildings complain of noise. This creates a practical dilemma for students but also the department. The restrictions naturally impact practical performance training sessions and schedules. For example, the jam sessions that follow a collaboration model bringing together students and seasoned artists in a single performance space, took somewhere between two and six weeks before being allowed to run. While not officially on the music timetable, such activities as Jam sessions give opportunity to students to grow their practical skills and also seamlessly facilitate interaction between students and practitioners and their mentors out in the industry.

The strings of requests and permissions sought negates learning and complicates the training, including transfer of knowledge and mastery of skills. It is a cycle of detractions that looks something like this:

Instrument exists → Student needs instrument → Student seeks permission from lecturer → Student waits → Practice time reduces → Opportunity for mastery decreases**.**

Diagram 2: Flow Chart of the process to access Western musical instruments at DPAF



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Furthermore, the effects of inadequate numbers of instruments for students' practical skills development were another great finding during the process of carrying out my research. For example, I found out that approximately half of the popular music students demonstrated a low level of musical instrument mastery due to a couple of reasons, and as discussed here below

- Most students in the popular music strand had a hard time playing songs, or what we call musical pieces. Learning these songs was one thing; however, being able to retain and reproduce the same pieces for performance was another thing altogether
- Most popular music students also found it hard to learn chords. Even just the basic chord structures were a little harder to learn, as most of the students didn't have prior exposure to these instruments before reaching the university level
- Performing without assistance was one thing; however, performing by the ear was another. Most popular music students struggled to participate in various popular music activities, such as band and jam sessions, because they hadn't mastered the instruments to the point where their musical ear was actively engaged.

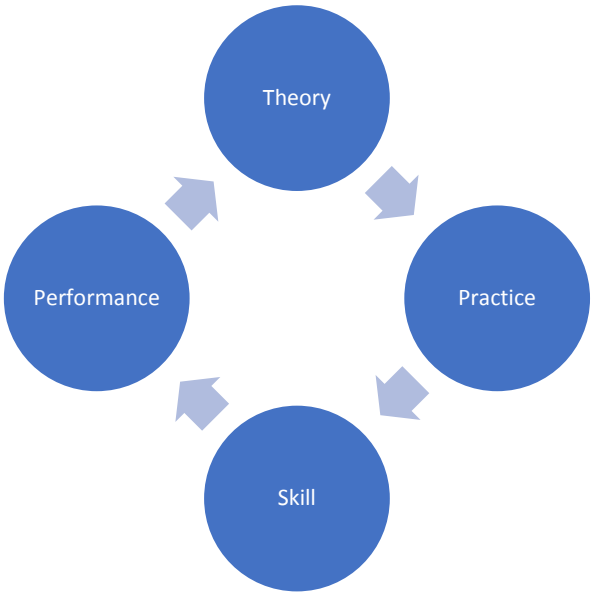
In conclusion, I can state concretely that the reduced access to Western musical instruments and opportunities for repeated practice continually led to the decline in the musical skills of popular music students.

While conducting the research, I also found out that there was a great effect on the practical application of music theory due to inadequate stocks of Western musical instruments against the student numbers. The Bachelor of Arts in Music program is rich in essential music knowledge, like music theory, community music, and other related course units studied at the department. But most students struggled to reapply this theory to their practical musical journeys because they lacked the time and facilities to practice to achieve that goal. Ideally, the students' learning process should be something like this.

A student is given a piece of theory which they then practice, and as they practice the skill is grown and reproduced during performances, as demonstrated in Diagram 3 below.

Diagram 3: The ideal music skills learning process

Theory → Practice → Skill → Performance



However, students consistently missed out on such practice due to the inadequacies of

Western musical instruments during training. Their process of learning skills, chords,

rhythms, notations, and musical pieces was greatly curtailed hence limiting their

growth and opportunity to repeatedly apply these theoretical concepts during performances.

4.6. Students' loss of confidence and musical expressions overtime

During my research, I found out that students' confidence and musical expressions consistently dwindled over time. This was mainly discovered during my interviews. Most students experienced anxiety, especially before performances and practical exams, leading to a lot of mistakes during the actual performances and practical exams. Additionally, they exhibited a lack of confidence, reduced musical expression and general difficulty performing before audiences due to limited rehearsal time on the Western musical instruments they presented. This helped me realize that practice does more than develop technical ability; it builds musical confidence as a whole.

4.7. Students' inability to transcend limitations of poor musical backgrounds

I also found out that inadequate Western musical instruments had an effect on students from different musical backgrounds. That is to say, academic strand students, who naturally had a strong musical background, were not particularly affected by the inadequate instrument axis as these students had their own instruments which they had played at high school and experienced the basics before university. However, students with little to no musical background consistently struggled as, first, they had to learn music and then use that knowledge to develop and master musical skills. This was always impossible due to limited time in training sessions, insufficient exposure to musical practice, and inadequate musical instruments at DPAF, where they had no personal resource to buy their own sets. This created unequal opportunity and a void room for growth for each of the students in their musical journeys. Sadly, students who couldn't afford personal Western musical instruments ended up struggling the most with little to no progress in their practical musical instrument learning process. Inevitably, this led to a widening skill gap between the different groups of students during the process of learning how to play these Western musical instruments. Hence, I could feel with the student who desperately proclaimed that he felt like a beginner on the acoustic guitar after several semesters of studying this same musical instrument.

4.8. Insufficient time for practical skills acquisition and mastery

I also realized that there was a need for an increase in the hours of Western musical instrumental practice because the adequacy of the practical learning time is lacking. By the required standard as stipulated in the curriculum, there are only 4 hours per week of study and practice, which is certainly inadequate for the two groups of students, experienced or not. However, students at a beginner level may struggle not only to learn music and the musical instruments but also to keep up with the pace at which the lecturer teaches, especially considering situational challenges such as lack of instruments to play, multiple practical classes, individual and group practice assignments, and personal limitations. Inevitably, this causes a decline in attaining the necessary musical skills to grow the students' knowledge or round off their practical skills. Furthermore, in the new curriculum, there is an increase in the number of instruments to learn; while, as discussed above, there is an astronomical decline in the number of Western musical instruments at the department, as well as the time to learn and master even the few that are available. In the circumstances, therefore, it's hard for students, especially music beginners, to attain any form of progress when it comes to practical skills training without adequate stocks of the western musical instruments they have to learn.

4.9. The shifting focus to learning and playing African musical instruments.

The persistent lack of Western musical instruments at DPAF has seen a decline in Western instrumental practice and a rise in cultural music practice. I observed that most students increasingly turned towards African cultural music because of the difficulty of accessing Western musical instruments, besides the increased encouragement of students by lecturers to learn African music. Instruments such as Ngalabi, Amadinda, Ndingidi, Adungu were intentionally promoted to substitute and or complement Western Musical instruments. This particular process had two outcomes, both positive and negative. Positively, students developed a greater love for African music and African traditional musical Instruments, hence increased students' knowledge of music and acquisition of deeper musical knowledge and expertise in African music and traditions. This is good because the students are, first and foremost, Africans, almost exclusively living and practicing music in Africa. However, negatively, as is the concern of the study, the trend has led to a decline in the knowledge and practice of Western instrumental

music that would otherwise be a good thing for a blended socio-cultural space as is found in Uganda today. A Ugandan in the 21st century cannot live exclusive of the rest of the world, including Western Europe, America, or other global cultures. The decline in the number of Western musical instruments consistently demotivated students from learning, or rather growing, their Western instrumental musical skills for a sustainable music career.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Conclusions and Recommendations

Throughout the previous chapters, I have presented and discussed the different challenges faced by DPAF as regards inadequate stocks of Western musical instruments and the implication this has had on the students' musical knowledge acquisition and performing abilities hence preparations for their future careers. In this chapter, I will elaborate on the probable practical strategies that could be used to alleviate the shortage of Western musical instruments at the Department of Performing Arts and Film, but after presenting the conclusions as summarized below.

5.1. Conclusions

These have been highlighted right from the background to the study but mostly discussed in the methodology and the preceding chapter four above. Hence, I am only listing them down as follows:

5.1.1. Declining number of Western musical instruments

From observation I noticed that there is a declining number of Western musical instruments and if not worked upon the situation might get worse. For example, there are five pianos in the Department against a student population in its hundreds. Further to this shortage, two of the pianos are totally spoiled, two are partially operational, and only one is fully functional. The situation is due to poor storage of the musical instruments, non-replacement or replenishing of stocks and inadequate maintenance but certainly urgent intervention needs to be done hence the strategies discussed above and the recommendations in 5.2 below..

5.1.2. Decline in the quality of musical skills being produced at the department.

Conclusively, there is a decline in the quality of musical skills being developed, especially when it comes to Western musical instruments. During a group discussion, a student mentioned how they felt like beginners, yet they were finalists when it came to the acoustic guitar. This was

further seen especially among the Popular Music strand students who, through an activity, couldn't recognise musical notes due to underdeveloped musical ears. Hence, the conclusion that the musicians being sent off into the industry are not fully prepared and equipped musically for it.

5.1.3. Increase in love for African musics

There has also been an increase in the love for African musical instruments due to the inadequacy of Western musical instruments, especially because there is great inaccessibility to the available instruments yet, for many students, they are expensive to purchase personally. The lecturers also encourage students to learn how to play the African musical instruments as a stop gap measure, leading to a great embrace of African musics but great neglect of Western music and their musical instruments.

5.1.4. Opportunity for new course units and course practices in music and across DPAF

There is an opportunity for the department to set up new course units for new professions such as Western musical instruments repair or even making or manufacturing of the instruments. Also important are course practices such as group studies between different years of study, where students in higher years can help tutor or train students at lower levels. What cannot be achieved in formal study in class can be realized through joint productions that could also involve the other disciplines of dance and drama at the department.

5.1.5. More exposure to Western musical instruments.

Many students complained about the few hours of practice due to the inaccessibility of these Western musical instruments because of the lengthy process of attaining permission from lecturers just to receive access to the studio at CTF2. Ironically, accessing instruments at the department also required a long process. Similar procedures governed other training opportunities like jam sessions shrinking further students' skills development prospects at the department. The procedures all have almost a common result: demotivating the students to the

extent that some feel like giving up the course altoether. Naturally, even when the students' stay and finished the course they do so mechanically and not as confident professionals ready for work.

5.1.6. Students losing interest in Western musical instruments.

Students are consistently losing interest in learning the Western musical instruments at DPAF. This has been caused by the very imbalanced ratio of musical instruments to the number of students at the department, the consistent inaccessibility of students to the Western musical instruments, the few hours of practice, and very limited opportunities to showcase the skills learned by the students, hence consistently demotivating the students at the Department of Performing Arts and Film.

5.1.7. Students' underdeveloped musical ear.

Most students, especially the popular music strand students, had completely underdeveloped musical ear. This was caused by few hours of exposure to these Western musical instruments, very few hours of practice, limited opportunities to showcase their attained skills, and this consequently led to the decline in the quality of the students' musical ear at the Department.

5.1.8. Students drop out.

Students continuously dropping out was another interesting finding, especially among the popular music strand students at the department. This was mainly caused by the students' expectations of learning these Western musical instruments not being met, especially because of how they are taught at the department, loss of interest in the Western musical instruments, and the limited number of Western musical instruments for students to learn at the department.

5.2. Recommendations

Just as has been highlighted variously in this study, several strategies can work to alleviate the shortage of Western musical instruments at DPAF. I present what I consider the most feasible here below.

5.2.1. Intentional boosting of stocks of Western musical instruments at DPAF

The university should increase the procurement of Western musical instruments for the Department of Performing Arts and Film hence alleviating the shortage of Western musical instruments. The university ought to always allocate funds, say annually, to buy new musical instruments, particularly pianos, keyboards, and acoustic guitars. These three are the baseline instruments that would ease learning of Western music for the music students at the department.

However, other Western musical instruments such as drum kits, bass guitars, and electric guitars could also be procured, hence relieving the pressure on the few types of instruments currently being used for practical training of students. This will reduce the number of students learning one instrument at a time by spreading them across the variety of Western musical instruments available at the department. Increase in the number of Western musical instruments will also cause students' love for music to skyrocket, as every student will find an instrument they best identify with to learn and master. In turn, the impact of such training in and mastery of Western musical instruments will be felt strongly across Uganda's entertainment industry, flagging DPAF's name and that of Makerere University high nationally and regionally.

5.2.2. Instituting mechanisms for constant repairs and good management of available instruments.

Rather than replacing every damaged instrument at the department, routine maintenance and repair of these musical instruments should be done. This can be done in a way that those that are still functional are routinely checked and serviced while those that are completely out of commission can be repaired or restored progressively by qualified technicians. This can even be taken a step further by adding a musical instrument mechanics course unit that trains students to not only properly handle the musical instruments but also repair them. This will increase the longevity of the Western musical instruments and also enhance the value of these musical instruments to the students learning them. Additionally, this will create new job opportunities for the students professionally and hence alleviate the shortage of Western musical instruments at

DPAF and, indirectly, in the country and the industry generally, including schools that teach music.

Relatedly, innovations could also be explored when looking for strategies to alleviate shortage of Western musical instruments at DPAF. This is what Martin Meincken, Hannaes Jacoba, Thomas Neisler and Gerhard Roux (2015) suggest in their article, "Alternative wood for the violin making in South Africa." They were literally using African tone woods as substitutes for the European raw materials to give an African tone. Adopting such a strategy would reduce dependence on musical instruments made in and imported from the West by making them more accessible and affordable locally. I believe that as DPAF, we could take it a notch higher and redesign Ugandan or African cultural instruments and fuse them with their Western counterparts to create the musical fusion of both cultures. This will lead to the rise of newer musical instruments in Uganda and Africa at large, making musical instruments accessible to all the students at the Department of Performing Arts and Film at Makerere University.

5.2.3. DPAF should seek to establish mutual partnerships across different sectors

The Department of Performing Arts and Film should also establish mutual collaborations and partnerships with government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and Private Organizations at the national and international level. The partnerships could be in the area of training, funding, research, and exchanges. The department should seek for financial assistance from the Government of Uganda or development partners. For example, in the financial year 2025-2026, the Government released 28billion Uganda towards the creative fund alone which means it has the capability to support the department to meet some of its needs, especially those related to its core mandate of teaching, research, and outreach. However, DPAF could also forge collaborations like co-teaching or co-productions with NGOs, cultural organizations, embassies, music academies, and private organizations interested in arts education. Such collaborations and partnerships would help to support the purchase of musical instruments, cover maintenance costs, and even support music development projects at the department.

5.2.4. DPAF should initiate a musical instrument lending and borrowing program.

The DPAF can also develop a musical instrument lending and borrowing program. This can be done both internally and externally in partnership with other universities. Internally, the department could introduce a formal borrowing system that allows students to sign out Western musical instruments for personal practice outside class hours. This would help students who can't afford to buy their own musical instruments to have the opportunity to learn and practice consistently. Historically this would increase the hours of practice used by students drastically, hence affording them an easier and more convenient option for learning and mastering instrumental musical skills. Externally, the university could also partner with other universities and create a program where musical instruments could be shared across, especially for performance or preparations for big music productions and public shows.. This would evolve an increase in the number of instruments the university could have at a time, hence alleviating the shortage of Western musical instruments.

5.2.5. Intentional timetabling to students' practical learning hours.

The DPAF could also increase practical learning hours for students. The Bachelor of Arts in Music degree curriculum should be given more hours of practical musical instrument training. As discussed earlier, four hours a week isn't adequate for proper instrumental mastery. This can be done through open access hours of the week per class for instrumental practice, where students learn either with or without the guidance of the lecturer. It can also be taken a step further and engage multiple classes during this time, for example, Year 3 and Year 1 students. This will informally pass instrumental knowledge to the students by fellow students, and promote the peer learning model. Besides alleviating the shortage of Western musical instruments as students partner in education with one another, the occasion also doubles creation of musical communities and life-long learning.

5.2.6. Makerere University should improve access to practical facilities for DPAF.

While the department needs to improve access to practical facilities, the university could also facilitate DPAF to have facilities of its own for storage hence easier access to musical instruments by the students. The process of accessing Western musical instruments at DPAF

needs to be organized in such a way that it is easy to access these instruments. The process needs to be easy, short, and precise, with passes, permission slips, and requests attended to in real time to minimize losses of time and interest among the students. This will give students extra time to practice their musical instruments personally, hence relieving the few musical instruments of the pressure that comes with multiple students using fewer instruments at a time. This will alleviate the shortage of Western musical instruments indirectly.

5.2.7. DPAF should create more opportunities for student performances

The department also needs to strengthen students' performance opportunities both within and outside the department and university. Within Makerere, the department needs to support programs such as jam session by creating easy access to music instruments but also increasing practice time and opportunities for collaboration with artists and groups in the larger industry thus enabling students to apply theoretical knowledge, master performing skills, initiate and build networks that will facilitate their practice in future. Externally, students should be connected to other performance spaces such as the Uganda National Theatre and concert halls where they can continue to grow their musical skills. Such collaborations may also help students to access and get to work with better Western musical instruments while achieving the initial goal of hence alleviating the shortage of Western musical instruments at the department.

5.2.8. DPAF should involve its alumni in financing some of its training needs

The department should also engage former students to take part in financing musical instrument purchasing and servicing. Some students have been successful in life both musically and in other spheres of life, such as musicians, church leaders, recording studio producers, or even businessmen. These could be called back to the university and encouraged to finance the restoration and purchase of the Western musical instruments. This would alleviate the shortage of Western musical instruments in the department.

5.2.9. DPAF should integrate digital music technology in its practical courses.

The Department of Performing Arts and Film could also integrate digital musical technology into the practical training of Western musical instruments. With software today such as FL Studio, Ableton Live, Logic, GarageBand, and others, the world is more technological when it comes to Western musical instruments. Taking it a step further, there are accessories and applications like MIDI controllers that can even be added to the instruments, leading to students acquiring both instrumental and technological knowledge. This will ease the number of instruments needed for students' personal practice time but also increase the storage space since MIDI keyboards are small, and students will always carry their laptops with recording software on them, hence alleviating the shortage of Western musical instruments at the department.

5.2.10 DPAF should restructure its curriculum to integrate fundraising events for itself and Makerere.

The department could also organize charity productions for the university to attain funds to facilitate the placement of multiple facilities at DPAF. These programs would engage the entire department as a whole, that’s to say, music, dance, drama, and film students together. These events can help in acquiring funds through paid entry, internal and external sponsorships, and partnerships with the different industries nationally to portray different messages to the youth at the university. With participation made as part of the curriculum, students would be mandated to take part in some way, shape, or form. The funds attained can then be used, among other outstanding training needs, to purchase the required western musical instruments, hence progressively alleviating the shortage of the western musical instruments at the department.

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APPENDICES

OBSERVATION GUIDE

QN1. How many Western musical instruments are at the Department of Performing Arts and Film?

QN2. What condition are the Western musical instruments in?

QN3. Where are the Western musical instruments stored at DPAF?

QN4. How many opportunities do students have to perform on their Western musical instruments?

QN5. How many hours do students practice?

QN6. How often do students access these Western musical instruments?

QN7. How many musical instruments are being taught at the DPAF

QN8. How do students react to the different opportunities to perform with the Western musical instruments?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

QN1. What is your name?

QN2. What Western musical instrument are you learning?

QN 3. What level of learning this Western musical instrument are you at academically?

QN4. What level of learning the Western musical instrument do you think you are at?

QN5. What have been some of your favorite memories at DPAF?

QN6. What are some of the challenges you have faced at DPAF?

QN7. What have been the challenges faced while learning how to play the Western musical instrument?

QN 8. Do you see yourself putting to use the Western musical instrument skills learned?

EXPERIMENTATION

QN1. How many western musical instruments are there at DPAF?

QN2. In what shape are these Western musical instruments?

QN3. How are these Western musical instruments stored?

QN4. Where do students practice their Western musical instruments?

QN5. How many opportunities do students have to practice these Western musical instruments?

QN6. How many opportunities do students have to showcase their Western instrumental skills?

QN7. How easy is it to access these opportunities?

SURVEYS

QN1. What is you take on Westen musical instruments at DPAF?

QN2. How many Western musical instruments are at DPAF?

QN3. Can you mention the categories of Western musical instruments at DPAF?

QN4. Why are there very few Western musical instruments?

QN5. Where are these Western musical instruments stored?

QN6. How accessible are the Western musical instruments?

QN7. What are some of the struggles faced by students during the learning process of these western musical instruments?

QN8. While sampling the pianos find out what notes on the pianos are not functional?

QN9. Share a few workable solutions to the problem?