

## Eric Galm Final Report for CTL Fellows Experience

It has been a pleasure serving and learning as a CTL Fellow for the 2017-2018 Academic Year.

While my project was challenging in ways I hadn't even imagined, it was so rewarding, and continues to grow in new directions now that the "event/semester" is over, and yet, as a result of the planning and strategizing that I experienced as a CTL fellow, the project continues to move forward, even though my project timeframe has ended.

While my original proposal was focused on revising my Toca Brasil hands-on Brazilian music survey, it grew into a comprehensive interactive/immersive experience with my Music and Human Rights and Samba Ensemble courses, which made it difficult to focus solely on the initial Toca Brasil course. As a result, I was able to explore these issues in many more dynamic ways than I initially envisioned, and I believe that all of my students underwent a transformative process that has helped them to appreciate the value of learning directly from cultural practitioners. As a result, I humbly admit that this process enabled my students to see that I as a professor only convey a small part of the comprehensive complex of music and identity. For example, when students had a good time playing the exact same rhythms with me on buckets, they exploded with excitement and insecurity when learning directly from people their age (and younger), as well as from people in their 70s, who are from multi-generational families who have practiced this tradition. What an experience!

As a frame of reference, I provide this general overview about the Samba Fest and what has transpired since:

The international and intercultural exchange of this year's edition of Samba Fest continues to reverberate in Hartford and Brazil. For Samba Fest 2018, I received a research grant from the Latin Grammy Cultural Foundation to explore the Congado Mineiro, an Afro-Brazilian drumming processional whose tradition spans several hundred years. During the era of slavery in Brazil, these processions served as coronation ceremonies to inaugurate a leader who was responsible for the immediate community and also served as an intermediary between the enslaved population and the plantation owner. Today, there are an estimated 3,000 neighborhood processional groups solely within the state of Minas Gerais. In addition to looking at the "tradition," my research is also focusing on recent adaptations of this tradition in the form of youth social service projects, such as the Meninos de Minas (Youth from Minas Gerais), which began as an independent after school project to teach youth growth and citizenship skills through the drumming rhythms of this tradition. While they learn the musicality of the tradition, they are not connected to the historical, cultural, or religious aspects of the tradition. My principal focus is assessing what of the tradition is being maintained in these new forms, and what is being left behind.

Samba Fest 2018 highlighted these two musical groups, and explored them in detail through the conference “Rhythmic Reflections: Exploring Community Through Brazilian Music,” with participation from Trinity College, the Consulate General of Brazil in Hartford, the State Secretary of Culture of Minas Gerais, and the City of Itabira, Minas Gerais. In addition to the conference, workshops and promotional performances, we all collaborated to present a “Missa Conga” drumming mass at the Trinity College Chapel, most likely the first recorded event of its type in the United States. Over 30 Brazilians participated in the Samba Fest events and activities, some of whom traveled beyond their region for the first time, and celebrated their birthdays here in the US (76 and 72 years). A photographic exposition of this tradition also accompanied the events.

The repercussions of this success are continuing in Brazil. In late May, 2018, the City of Itabira will re-inaugurate their Museum of the City, and will replicate my “Rhythmic Reflections...” conference, and they have invited me to come present their research. They have also invited Monica Jorge (who took photos on Trinity’s behalf) to include some of the outstanding photos of these events that she captured while photographing for Trinity, and to document the events in Brazil. When the Samba Fest participants returned to Itabira, they received awards of recognition from the City Council of Itabira, and the State of Minas Gerais has allocated funds of tens of thousands of Reais (around US\$15,000 in Brazilian currency) to help the Associação das Guardas do Congado de Itabira, and the Meninos de Minas to purchase and maintain musical instruments, travel to performances, etc. This is an outstanding sum, considering that the monthly minimum wage salary is currently around US\$ 250.

The planning sessions of the CTL Fellows program enabled me to take the time to design and implement pedagogical implications that helped me to transform a multi-faceted concept into an action plan that moved well beyond the classroom. Perhaps the most dynamic example of this was at 11:00pm the night preceding the Missa Conga drumming mass in the Chapel, when I had to convince the priest that this would not be a sacreligious experience, and that this would be a transformative and dynamic event. I told him that the song lyrics were literally human rights through music, and that it was imperative that this event be allowed to transpire as envisioned. As a result, we forged new ground, and as my students watched the event unfold, including other students being drawn to the sound and spectacle of the procession, sat on their windowsills, and came out to join the event. It’s truly an experience that began in the classroom, but has now expanded into international communities.

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