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Although not an ethnomusicologist, I believe that music is an important part of culture, and became a founding member of the Society for Ethnomusicology when it was organized in 1955 at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Boston. For several years the S. E. M. met at the same time and place as the AAA, and I used to attend as many sessions of the S. E. M. as I did of the AAA. Then the S. E. M. began to meet alternately with the American Anthropological Association and with the Society for Musicology. This seemed reasonable enough.

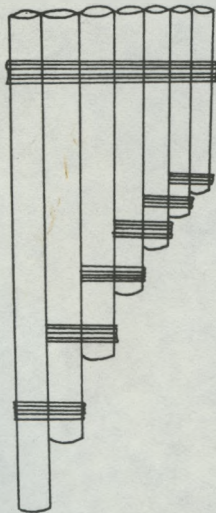
But in recent years the S. E. M. has not met with the anthropologists at all, and the meetings are so scheduled as to be virtually mutually exclusive. This year, for example, the S. E. M. is to meet in Seattle some two weeks before the AAA meetings in San Diego.

As the report states, "there is no satisfactory substitute for the face-to-face discussion, debate and exchange of ideas which are a part of the annual meetings." Ethnologists and ethnomusicologists can both profit from such an exchange. And where better can new members be recruited than among graduate students in anthropology? Some of these students might wish to undergo the special disciplinary training needed for specialization in ethnomusicology. Many more might be inspired to make recordings of music and dance as part of their ethnographic field work, turning over their material to specialists for analysis.

Because of the centrifugal force which seems to drive specialists off in different directions, an effort is necessary to bring the fragments together again to avoid the impoverishment of isolation.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth E. Bacon.



Thomas Johnston writes from the University of the Witwatersrand, African Studies Programme, Jan Smuts Avenue, Johannesburg, South Africa:

"This is to respectfully inform you of the completion of the first draft of a 500-page report, "The Music of the Shangana-Tsonga".

"The Shangana-Tsonga are a Bantu-speaking Southern African tribe comprising about 1,200,000 indigenes within the homeland Portuguese East Africa, and a further 500,000 of immigrant descent within the Northern Transvaal. They are linguistically and culturally distinct from the Tonga (sic) of Rhodesia, Zambia, and the Inhambane area.

"A comprehensive study of their communal vocal music and their instrumental music was undertaken during the period 1968-70 by myself under the supervision of Dr. John Blacking and aided by grants from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research (New York), and the University of the Witwatersrand. I resided among the tribe for considerable periods learning the language, the instruments, the songs, and the social function of the latter. The study includes 150 song transcriptions, 85 instrumental transcriptions, and covers the subjects outlined on the accompanying sheet."

PART I: COMMUNAL VOCAL MUSIC

THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF SHANGANA TSONGA MUSIC:

Geographical location of the tribe, past and recent tribal history, migration pattern. Notes on kinship system. Political significance of institutional music, the power wielded by its organizers. Relationship of music to the agricultural seasons of the year.

KHOMBA (GIRLS' PUBERTY SCHOOL) MUSIC OF THE SHANGANA-TSONGA: Songs, dances and postural symbolism of Khomba rites. Forty musical transcriptions of songs and the socio-political overtones of their texts and teachings.

MANCOMANE ('EXORCISM') MUSIC OF THE SHANGANA-TSONGA: Role and regalia of the 'exorcist', women as mediums in possession dances. The pentatonicism and quadruplet rhythm of mandlhozi songs for 'exorcism' of alien Zulu 'spirits'; the heptatonicism and triplet rhythm of xidzimba songs for 'exorcism' of alien Ndaui 'spirits'.

NGOMA (BOYS' CIRCUMCISION SCHOOL) MUSIC OF THE SHANGANA-TSONGA: Symbolism of ngoma rites. The short, slow, pentatonic chants derived from the neighbouring Pedi; the long, fast heptatonic circumcision songs, possibly of pre-immigration origin.

BEER SONGS AND BEER DANCES OF THE SHANGANA-TSONGA, WITH A SPECIAL SECTION ON MUCHONGOLO: The economic role and nutritional function of beer, ceremony and formality at beer drinks. Twenty Song transcriptions. A history and description of the national muchongolo dance, with ten song transcriptions.

WORK SONGS OF THE SHANGANA-TSONGA: Music accompanying seasonal agricultural activity. The functional nature of both rhythm and text with respect to physical labour.

XIGUBU (BOYS'DRUMMING SCHOOL) MUSIC OF THE SHANGANA-TSONGA: Drum learning rhythms, nonsense syllables, voice and drum conversations, xigubu clap and meter teaching songs.

CHILDREN'S SONGS OF THE SHANGANA-TSONGA: Story songs and game songs; their symbolism and ancient significance. Twenty musical transcriptions.

SPEECH-TONE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SHANGANA-TSONGA VOCAL MUSIC: Speech-tone conformity and non-conformity within Shangana-Tsonga melodic contour. Musical and non-musical factors controlling song composition.

TWENTY-FOUR ORAL TEXTS OF THE SHANGANA-TSONGA: Sample song texts and the tribal customs they reveal. A first fruits recitation and a bone divination consultation.

PART II: INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC OF THE SHANGANA-TSONGA: Description of the timbila hand-piano, mohambi xylophone, xitiringo flute, and nanga whistle.



Shangana-Tsonga nanga herding whistle 1969. Photo by Thomas Johnston.

XIZAMBI FRICTION BOW MUSIC OF THE SHANGANA-TSONGA: Detailed description of the instrument, professionalism and non-professionalism among players. Methods of adaptation of traditional songs, the subjective or 'inherent' rhythms of xizambi duettists. Sixty musical transcriptions.

XITENDE BRACED GOURD BOW MUSIC OF THE SHANGANA-TSONGA: The instrument and its players. Xitende learning rhythms. Use of the natural series and its possible influence on bow accompanied singing. Seventeen musical transcriptions.

MQANGALA AND XIPENDANA BOW MUSIC OF THE SHANGANA-TSONGA: Brief description of the instruments and their players. Eight musical transcriptions.

SHANGANA-TSONGA BOW MUSIC AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SHANGANA-TSONGA COMMUNAL VOCAL MUSIC: The lack of bow-influenced musical characteristics within the melody of Shangana-Tsonga communal vocal music. Musical and non-musical factors controlling both bow music and vocal music.

CONCLUSION: Indigenous melodic and rhythmic characteristics of Shangana-Tsonga music, use of discrete clap patterns and complex formal structures. Distinct bodies of pentatonic, hexatonic, and heptatonic music occasioned by inter-tribal musical acculturation.

From Wilfred C. Bain, dean of the Indiana University School of Music, 306 N. Union Street, Bloomington, Indiana 47401, comes the announcement of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to establish a national Black Music Center at Indiana University.

"The function of the Black Music Center," Dean Bain explained, "will be to document the entire history of this culture, very much in the same manner as our Latin American Music Center has worked in a related field.

"The potential role of this music in future curricular and performance programs in the United States may well be determined by the research and reference activities of our new Center."

Appointed director of the project, which will be launched in September, was Dr. Dominique-Rene de Lerma, bibliographer and musicologist. The associate director will be Prof. David N. Baker Jr..

The Center will develop an extensive collection of books, journals, recordings, and other materials which will document all major aspects of black musical expression. Included will be jazz, concert music, gospel music, rhythm and blues, folk, ethnic, and popular music.