

REVIEWS

CONGO EN MUSIQUE by BWANTSA-KAFUNGU S. PIERRE: Louvanium, 1965.(pp. 52).

This duplicated brochure of 52 pages (8 in. by 6 in.) contains a collection of twenty popular Lingala songs recorded by five gramophone record companies in Kinshasa and Brazzaville. At the time of preparing this work, the author was reading for a degree in African Philology at the University of Louvanium near Kinshasa.

Mr. Kafungu introduces the song-texts with some notes on the popular music of modern Congo. He claims that these songs have an important influence on the moral, civic and sentimental education of the masses in the city. They afford a means, he suggests, whereby the younger generation can express its opinions openly on such topics as marriage, the necessity for "bride-price", the over-insistent demands of extended family relations on the earning of workers in the capital.

The texts reflect vividly the attrition of ancestral cultural values in a modern city:

Kinshasa is rotting; children become chiefs . . .

as well as the ubiquity of drunkenness and prostitution:

You drink champagne, I drink beer,

But what's it matter? We both try to get drunk.

Why stay at home when I'm still an unmarried girl?

Where shall I find my clients?

I must dress myself up to catch some fool or other . . .

There is a useful linguistic introduction describing the orthography used for the Lingala texts. The author is to be congratulated on his use of seven vowel signs (for it is impossible adequately to represent Lingala with five only) and also on his tonal notation. It is a pity that he was unable to give us the musical notation of the songs, though one realises that this would have meant a much more expensive presentation. But given the accurate tonal transcription of the texts one would like to compare tonal values with the sung melodies. On this point the author states:

In the song, tones (some tones) are often deformed. Since we know that in some areas of Congo tonal values of semantic elements impose themselves on sung melody so that the latter becomes little more than the sung tonal patterns of the words used, it would be interesting to see a further study from Mr. Kafungu on this point. Perhaps cases where there is little deformation of semantic tone by the melody may be correlated with the geographical area from which the composers come?

There is certainly a marked difference in the grammatical forms of Lingala used in the texts. Some show the strong influence of Kikongo and especially its lingua franca form: Kituba that is noticeable in Lingala-speakers from the capital, while other texts (they are in the minority) are in the Upper River dialect.

J. F. CARRINGTON

"OS INSTRUMENTOS MÚSICAIS DE MOÇAMBIQUE", by MARGOT DIAS in GEOGRAPHICA, Ano II, No. 6. April, 1966.

Margot Dias' article, published by the Geographical Society in Lisbon is a very instructive monography on musical instruments in Moçambique. With detailed descriptions and the help of 23 photographs (six of which are in colour) she introduces the reader to the great variety of instruments in Portuguese East Africa, which is among the musically most active areas in southern Africa. Mrs. Dias' main source is her own research carried out since 1957, particularly among the Makonde in the north as well as among many tribes of southern Moçambique.

Moçambique seems to be an area particularly rich in idiophones of all kinds, i.e. xylophones and mbiras. While in the south instruments similar to the Chopi xylophones are widespread, a sudden change can be noticed after crossing the Zambezi. Northern Moçambique is an area of log-xylophones. Mrs. Dias publishes a beautiful colour photograph of the Makonde *Dimbila*, a typical example. Among the numerous kinds of mbira, board mbiras with a gourd resonator seem to be most widespread. On the other hand the *Libembe* type (an instrument with a box resonator and a characteristic cut section in the upper part of the corpus), so well known from the Congo and adjacent areas, is entirely absent in Moçambique.

Among the chordophones there exist various types of musical bows, three of which are shown by photographs. In the north one can also find the *Bangwe* zither, well-known in the Rovuma and Nyasa regions. The one-string fiddle and the flat-bar zither are instruments particularly well-known on the coast of northern Moçambique.

There exist numerous kinds of drums. Some of the most impressive ones are the small *Singanga* drums of the Makonde, which are pierced in the sand. Margot Dias points to the relative rarity of drums with two membranes in Moçambique.

Among the aerophones there can be found some remarkable kinds of flutes. Especially worth mentioning are the globular flutes played by boys of the Chopi tribe.

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Margot Dias' article makes one very interested to read more about her intensive research accomplished in the last ten years in Portuguese overseas provinces, which are very fertile areas for music research, since — in contrast to many other places — traditional African music is fully alive there.

GERHARD KUBIK

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"NDWTYO DZECHECHI DZEVU" (HYMNS OF THE SOIL). Music Edition. Edited by John E. Kaemmer. Church Music Service, P.B. 636E, Salisbury, Rhodesia, pp. 56. 1966. 2s.

This is a new publication of the very active ALL AFRICA CHURCH MUSIC ASSOCIATION. The collection comprises 43 samples of African Church Music, given in staff notation together with sol-fa names. The texts are in Shona and, frequently, in its dialect-forms. Eleven of these hymns have already been published in 1963 under the same title.

The specific approach to creating African Church music, chosen by R. A. Kauffman when starting his work in 1961, consisted in arranging traditional tunes for use in church (cf. A.A.C.M.A. Journal, July 1966, p. 3). Such arrangements are found in Nos. 1-3, 11, 15, 18, 22, 25, 26, 28, 29, 37, 41, as far as I can make out myself, even if they are not specified as such. Such a transcription may consist merely of a new text put to an existing tune (No. 25) or of a Western harmonization of such a tune (Nos. 26, 28, 37) but it may show too some originality (Nos. 1 and 2).

Of the compositions proper, those by A. Maraire show the greatest amount of imagination and technical skill. I would regard the Nos. 32, 33, 12 and 24 as successful creations in an indigenous church music style. Others fall short of such expectations, either because they rely too exclusively on traditional and/or Western harmonies (Nos. 5, 10, 16, 34, 36) or because they are based merely on a rhythmic recitation that lacks the subtlety and finesse of its traditional form in "murevereri" parts (Nos. 27 and 42).

In spite of these critical remarks, I would regard this collection as valuable and very useful to all the Christian churches in Africa. Whoever has worked in this field, is aware of the fact that many steps are needed to create a truly indigenous church music, and, in the case of culture contact, the notions of right or wrong are certainly not applicable.

I would like to add two suggestions:

- (1) It would have been more accurate to base the time signature for the Nos. 17, 21 and 34 on quarter notes than in eighth notes.
- (2) It would be very useful to give the duration time of each piece in minutes and seconds to indicate the ideal speed, since a watch is easily available for song-leaders.

J. LENHERR.

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YORUBA RELIGIOUS CARVING. Pagan and Christian Sculpture in Nigeria and Dahomey. by KEVIN CARROLL. Foreword by WILLIAM FAGG, GEOFFREY CHAPMAN. 172 pp. £4 10s.

More than any other mission in Africa, the Catholic Church has tried to understand African culture and has consciously attempted to relate the new religion to local ideas. Father Tempel's famous book *Bantu Philosophy* immediately comes to mind, and Father Haazen's *Missa Luba*. What these Belgian fathers have done in the fields of philosophy and music Father Kevin Carroll is trying to achieve in the field of the visual arts. His purpose is to use local talent and tradition in order to produce a new Christian art in Nigeria that will be adapted to local needs. He takes his lead from the Vatican's *Constitution on Sacred Liturgy* which states that "The Church has not adopted any particular style of art as her own; she has admitted styles from every period according to natural disposition and circumstances of her peoples."

Father Carroll believes that traditional Yoruba woodcarving — though its style was evolved in a pagan setting — is perfectly suitable to be adapted for Christian use. He points out that this is a humanistic art, that much of it illustrates daily Yoruba life and that there is no reason why even a pagan carver could not illustrate the life of Christ if given the stories.

His views have not gone unchallenged, but Father Carroll did create a workshop in which he employed young Yoruba carvers trained in the pagan tradition and used them to produce crucifixes, madonnas, Christmas cribs, church doors, decorated screens and so on. His three main artists all had different backgrounds: George Bandle was in fact a nominal Christian, but Lamidi Fakeye was brought up a Muslim and Otoro of Ketu had never left the pagan tradition. Yet all three were willing to work for the church.

The book is richly illustrated and gives many charming examples of their work, at the same time comparing it to the work of the great carvers of the past, like Areogun and Gbamboye. The new Christian work has been compared unfavourably with the old pagan work; but in fact Father Carroll makes no exaggerated claims for his carvers and points out with good reason that but for his efforts and the contract work supplied by the church, these carvers might not be working at all. Moreover, if they have not produced great Christian art, but merely agreeable decoration, this is still preferable by far to the sentimental imported oleum prints and plaster *kitsch* madonnas that are still found in far too many African churches and which, tragically, are often preferred by the local congregations.