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TWO NEW FILMS ON CHOPI MUSIC

up with anthropological and sociological field: 1972) esis, Trinity College of Music, London, African Institute Bulletin No. 2, 1977)

ds very much on why he does it. You try to superimpose western methods of urglass drum has a stretch of an octave; te all the tones of the Yoruba language the construction of that drum; and you linguistics and anthropology. sic is mainly functional. Since function nd styles of African music by examining al, anthropological, religious, linguistic 1976):

her group of people's ideas about their y manipulate and develop those ideas, c."

ear on the analysis of African music as 'Cognition and componential analysis: 66: 20-28.) The greatest danger to the "think white". I prefer to read white

on invitation of the National Innovation i on methodology in cultural research to amed Ahmed, is himself an outstanding

ld trip with Dr. Amin and his group of seires dam, some 100-150 kms from the plied to the people settled in these hills ted with the Nuba people of Kordofan ns with the ancient kingdom of Funj. hance to work for himself in one of the ics, ranging from oral literature, cultural d Arab traders to music and movement ty in the culture of the "Ingassana", a nguistic entity, but rather as a cluster. ables. No drums were seen among the ed from Arabs. The singing style shows m the Shilluk and Dinka down to the l traits remind the observer of the music and Kutin, living in a similarly isolated

v, P.O. Box 347, Khartoum, is looking 1977 which would contain the individual te area in colour and black-and-white

Gei Zantzinger, Temple University, and Andrew Tracey, International Library of African Music, have made two new films on the Chopi *timbila* xylophone music of southern Mozambique. This brings their film coverage of the Chopi to four.

The first two, "Mgodo wa Mkandeni" (48 mins.) and "Mgodo wa Mbanguzi" (53 mins.), were real-time documentary presentations of two complete performances of the *timbila* dance, filmed in two Chopi villages in 1973. No spoken commentary intrudes, and the words of the songs appear in subtitles in Chopi and in translation. The accompanying book gives complete background information and explanation for study and for use in teaching. Further reference material is provided in "Chopi Musicians", by Hugh Tracey, to whose work these films are seen as an extension and a tribute.

Whereas these two were documentary, "The Chopi Timbila Dance" (38 mins.) written and presented by Andrew Tracey and filmed in 1980, is an analytical demonstration of how this complex African performance is structured and controlled. It goes through the dance movement by movement, focussing in turn on such elements as the instruments used, the cyclical structure of the music (using animation), the simultaneous variations by all the players, the leader's solo introductory cadenza (with slow motion), the technique of the signals, with their answers, by which the leader controls the progress of the dance, the song words, and the phrasing of the dance patterns. One movement (*mzeno*, the great song) is seen right through without any commentary. The energy level, the vitality, the complexity and the enjoyment of the dance are much in evidence.

The film is completely self-explanatory; it has already been shown at several film festivals and ethnomusicological and Africanist gatherings, where it has drawn positive response. The producers hope that it will be widely used to introduce the study of African music, and of the Chopi.

The fourth film, "Ndando ya Wusiwana" (18 mins.), directed by Gei Zantzinger, looks at how an African composer perceived a personal family tragedy and translated it into a private lament, played with xylophone accompaniment. The composer is Venancio Mbande, who is also the leader of the orchestra in "The Chopi Timbila Dance", and was musical adviser to "Mgodo wa Mkandeni" and "Mgogo wa Mbanguzi".

These films, the six others on Shona *mbira* music and religion by Zantzinger and Tracey which were listed in "African Music", Vol. 5, No. 4, and "Dances of Southern Africa" (55 mins.) by Gei Zantzinger, are available for sale or hire from:

The Pennsylvania State University  
Audio Visual Services  
Special Services Building  
University Park,  
Pa. 16802  
United States of America  
Tel: (814)865.6314

or:  
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