

higher and then in a lower key, alternately on a cadence brought about by the tune, and thus with no difficulty in the transition.

This motet should be well received anywhere in Africa or overseas, since it preserves the African tonality and style throughout and at the same time satisfies the requirements of a fine composition for Western ears.

BROTHER BASIL.

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"MISSA SANDE I", by STEPHEN PONDE, 6 pages, 1962, clapping indicated for practice only; the Catholic Mission Press, Gwelo, Rhodesia. (No price given).

This Mass follows the pattern of the "German Mass", so called because the German bishops pioneered the singing of the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus and Agnus Dei by the faithful in a shorter form and in the vernacular. Here, from the beginning throughout, the *cantor* and *schola* alternate with the *turba* in a more or less canonical form, and a second voice accompanies one fourth or one fifth lower. No attempt is made at polyphony, the flow of the African rhythm superseding it completely.

The theme of the Kyrie is strongly reminiscent of a Gregorian theme in the Ionian mode and it recurs occasionally in the Credo, the Sanctus and the Agnus Dei. The advantage of a free translation of the Latin text allows the author to limit his themes in the Gloria and the Credo, and the congregation cannot but profit by this. The Sanctus and the Agnus Dei are in greater contrast, the one exuberant and triumphant, the other subdued, almost a psalmody.

We recommend this short and easy work to prospective composers of church music as a model of good taste in the right direction. In its modest way it adds up considerably to the meagre repertoire of genuine African church music.

N.B.—These notes were already written when this reviewer was unexpectedly given the opportunity to hear "Missa Sande" sung at two different places near Fort Victoria: first, at Gokomere, when two drums (locally made from the "mukashu" tree) and rattles were used; the congregation packed in the big granite church did not show any sign of being annoyed or distracted; the second time, at Bondolfi Mission, where the young composer, unaware of the presence of visitors, was leading the large congregation, the drums were silent because it was Lent. If church music is meant to assist prayer, as it should, the relaxed yet prayerful attitude of the congregations in both Gokomere and Bondolfi speaks for itself.

BROTHER BASIL.

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RECORDS

"MISSA ZANDE", by FR. F. GIORGETTI, F.S.C. Discoteca Comboniana, Editrice Nigrizia, via Meloncello 3/3, Bologna, Italy. Recorded by the choir of Missione Africane di Rebbio, directed by P. S. Benedetti and (drums) Prof. Bionda Lonello. 7-inch L.P.

"MISA BABA YETU" (Mass "Our Father") by STEPHEN MBUNGA. *Musica Verba*, available at the Benedictine Seminary of Peramiho, Tanzania, where it was recorded. 7-inch L.P.

It would be presumptuous to expect of these small records the perfection and flamboyancy of studio recordings, but the contrasts between the two works recorded are striking; further, they are basically much closer to one another than a first audition might lead one to think, and also to Stephen Ponde's "MISSA SANDE I", reviewed above.

In "MISSA ZANDE", the over-all effect will be pleasing generally to Western ears: the voices have a crystalline quality and the ease with which these Italian boys sing *foreign* tunes in a foreign language is remarkable; the difficulty in drumming African rhythms has been partially by-passed with the introduction of chimes; those who are familiar with "MISSA LUBA" from the Congo might miss here, it is true, the somewhat boisterous accompaniment of the drums, but it should be remarked that in "MISSA LUBA" the drums are, especially in the Kyrie, using rhythms markedly reminiscent of rhythms used in certain African dances whose character and suggestiveness are far from leading to Christian worship. All in all, the performance might be a simple confirmation of the appraisal this reviewer made of Fr. Giorgetti's Masses in this Journal some years ago: "Were it not for their appellation they could easily be mistaken for any odd product of our times or for another anonymous X-century author, while a gregorianist would be puzzled yet delighted". But we added, "The fact is that Zande themes are pervading all through", and we concluded: ". . . if a demonstration were ever needed to show the affinity of African music with Gregorian chant, Fr. Giorgetti's Masses would be it". (Journal of AMS, Vol. 2, 1959, p. 91). Still, the crisp, spontaneous rendition proper to an African group of singers is missing and this does not do justice to the music itself. If, as it has been so pertinently said, "to make Bantu sacred music without Bantu rhythm makes no sense whatever", (Dr. S. Mbunga, in "CANON LAW AND BANTU MUSIC", p. 157), likewise to sing or play Bantu music, sacred or otherwise, deprived of its proper rhythm is to deprive it of its essential character.

Father Mbunga's "MISA BABA YETU" follows the pattern of the "German Mass", where the congregation sings, in response form and in the vernacular, the paraphrase of those parts which in a Missa Cantata are usually left to the schola. Although it is anterior to his book, this Mass seems meant

to illustrate the author's credo as expressed in his "CANON LAW AND BANTU MUSIC" where he writes, in part, "... although polyphony has its basis and origin in the Gregorian chant it wanders away from it towards the direction of modern Western music. For this reason a special Bantu polyphony would be easier for them. By the term "Bantu polyphony" we mean the combination of two or more melodic strands originating from Gregorian chant developing towards a Bantu tinge without employing any musical instrument and according to the requirements of sacred polyphony". (p. 136). The author is faithful to the restrictive norms he established and so, the singers sing *a capella* and the "melodic strands originating from Gregorian chant" are manifest, specially when the second voice follows in horizontal thirds, and in several cadences; no less evident is the "Bantu tinge": the freshness of the treble voices, the rhythmic development, trochaic cadences and, what may sound in another pitch to a Western ear, the duplicating melodic line in the men's voices one fourth lower than the treble voices. The "German Mass" fits admirably well the African mentality, and Dr. Mbunga makes the most of it as also does Stephen Ponde in "MISSA SANDE I", but in a freer vein. It might be difficult for the composer to "forget" about Gregorian chant and give more confidence to his innate originality but with all his training behind him and applying the norms on sacred music he knows so well, the outcome would be the real contribution African Music can make to the treasure of existing Church Music.

The text and music of these two Masses being available at the addresses given above, students of African music especially should not miss the opportunity to listen to the recordings scores in hand.

BROTHER BASIL.

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