

# AFRICAN MUSIC

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### A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

As you will have noticed, this number is more than usually late. I offer sincere apologies, especially to all those subscribers who have paid long in advance, or who have been regularly enquiring, where is Vol. 6, No. 1? Well, here it is at last, the first number from its new home at Rhodes University. Most of these articles were written several years ago for a 1977 publication date, and I also apologise to the authors for the delay. I hope that publication will resume at more regular intervals from now, and that you will find this number worth the wait.

Readers should please appreciate, however, the scale of the production side of African Music; the I.L.A.M. is not a large publishing house or university department, but a tiny, private institution struggling to maintain the aims of its founder, Hugh Tracey, and staffed by a staff of one, which is myself, with a secretary. This means that editing African Music has to be fitted in with everything else. Judging by the keenness of our subscribers to see this number, I do know how valuable a source of information on the subject it is, if only because it is unique. Therefore I intend to keep it going, which I can with your support in contributing articles and in subscribing.

Much also depends on the future state of the I.L.A.M. As many of you will know, my father had a vision of what African music was and could be, and a gift for expressing it in such persuasive terms that he was able to raise the support necessary to create this research institution and run it for twenty three years, producing an enormous output, completely independent of any institutional affiliation, or government (please note! ). After his death the prospect of its continued independent existence began to look increasingly bleak. Then the Chamber of Mines of South Africa, a longstanding patron of the I.L.A.M., made a generous offer to support the I.L.A.M. for a period of three years, provided that it joined up with a university. This explains why the I.L.A.M. has now left its long established address at Roodepoort, near Johannesburg, and moved to become affiliated to the Institute of Social and Economic Research at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, some 500 miles to the south, near the coastal city of Port Elizabeth.

Rhodes University is one of the English-language universities of South Africa. The new association does not mean any loss of independence or a change in the *raison d'être* of the Library. On the contrary, I hope it will bring the advantages of contact and collaboration with specialists in other fields, moral support, and the chance of increased use of the Library by students and musicians.

I would add that we have always tried to keep the I.L.A.M. out of polemic and politics. It was founded as a research and resource centre for African music and this is how I would like it to continue. You may wonder why it stays here, in view of the obvious difficulties of the local situation. There have been suggestions that it move elsewhere. The main argument against this, of course, is that the collection is primarily of South and Southern African music and this is, therefore, where it ought to be. My own research area is the same, and I still feel that one can do much more here, with the disadvantages, than elsewhere. As long as you can continue writing here for your subscriptions, you will be helping me to keep the Journal going as a service to all concerned with African music. Also please feel free to offer suggestions, opinions or noteworthy items; I shall appreciate your ideas on how best to serve your interests.

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#### HUGH TRACEY 1903 – 1977

Dr. Hugh Tracey, the founder of this journal and of much else besides in the study of African Music, passed away at his farm, Saronde, Krugersdorp, near Johannesburg, on 23rd October, 1977.

Personal tributes have come to the I.L.A.M. from so many people that I cannot have thanked them all. I would like to do so now.

My father had started to work on an autobiography, which he entitled "A river left for me". We are fortunate to have found a biographer who has undertaken to complete the task in the person of Anthony Trowbridge, a personal friend, author and educationalist.

Hugh Tracey came out to what was then Southern Rhodesia from Devonshire, England after World War I to farm with his brother. Very soon he learned to speak Karanga and sing Karanga songs, and discovered to his amazement that no one in authority believed that there was such a thing as African music or that it was deserving of attention. Thus it was towards these two aims that his life's dedication gradually developed: revealing the extent and the nature of African music, and initiating his own and others' research, in order to establish it in its rightful place in Africa.