

His article on 'Structural Levels of Rhythm and Form in African Music' tends to reflect the inadequate 'education of the African geared towards the Western European system not only in methodology but also in content and subject matter'. I wonder what the article tells the average African or non-African about the 'Musketeers' Song' apart from the casual mention that it was collected at Awkuzu. The article as it stands demonstrates mere academic sophistry. As much as his contribution in question is a brilliant scholarly curiosity in isolation, the world outside Awkuzu and the author of the article requires in addition to that, some pertinent operative background information in order to meaningfully appraise what the musical example as well as the relevance of the entire article are about. Why the song is worth any mention or analysis at all; why its simple nature needs to be subjected to such tedious structural prescriptions. Who are these 'King's Musketeers'? Are they male, female, bonded musicians, subsistence musicians in a society that does not prescribe artistic practice as an occupation, warrior group, etc.? Why is their music of human interest in a way that the croaking of frogs (which could be and is often symmetrical, and structurally of rhythmic as well as melodic-harmonic quantity) is a nuisance erroneously classified as noise? What social, emotional and environmental forces could be responsible for the origin, meaning and form of the song? What is the current contextual relevance of the song in its changing society? and so on. Is it of more credit and dignity to African music at this stage of its research that it should be slotted into the fascinating theories propounded by Heinrich Schenker? Surely only the African traditional music practitioner can provide the actual and reliable theories about his music.

What the African does in his music – traditional or contemporary – is implicit in the sociological and anthropological circumstances of his creative and performance genii, and therefore primarily deducible and inductible from his own perspectives. Composition and performance are more of shared communal experiences than individualistic idiosyncrasy of the literary compositions of any nationality or period. African music is not yet a study in morbid anatomy. The African traditional musician is an important study as a creative personality as well as a man in society. Inseparable from such an approach are the character, content and context of the music he produces with his society.

However, there is little controversy. Ethnomusicologists who have the benefit of traditional in addition to literary music education have a duty to inform on where and how African music derives its character and message, potency and technique, as a matter of pride to African culture and personality. We must never attempt to patronise or prescribe for the African traditional musician. He is an intelligent, logical, and creative human being. He is the best authority to tell what he is doing. Our assignment should be to help him document it after we have grasped its thought and practice. Musicologists as well as ethnomusicologists are interested in the theoretical framework/principles of traditional music. While some musicologists tend to see them as abstract musical phenomena, most ethnomusicologists in addition investigate the totality of the music and its production as human and social principles.

However, all hands on deck with sincerity of purpose and objectives, also some open minded tolerance.

*From:* Samuel Ekpe Akpabot, College of Education, Uyo, Nigeria.

I wish to take issue with a couple of statements made by your Guest Editorial writer, Laz Ekwueme, in Vol. V/4 of *African Music*. Ekwueme talks of "establishing at the highest level, the form and structure of traditional African music, its melodic peculiarities and scale patterns, principles of traditional African harmony, rhythmic organization, theories of instrumentation and general aesthetic criteria".

He continues: "African musicological research . . . should now embark on a (theoretical) analysis to discover and explain *what* the African does musically instead, merely, of *why* he does it. The little study that has been done in this field has been rudimentary if not superficial".

The impression one gets on reading Ekwueme is that he is a comparative *newcomer* to the field of ethnomusicology who needs a few more years to study and digest some excellent studies that have been made in the areas he mentions.

Blacking, Jones, Brandel, Gbeho and King on rhythmic organization; Tracy Schneider, Jeffreys, Brandel, Blacking on scales and melody; Euba, England, Hornbostel, Rycroft on harmony and

counterpoint; Merriam, Nketia on how these theories tie up with anthropological and sociological backgrounds.

May I inmodestly add some of my contributions in this field:

"Theories on African Music" (African Arts, Autumn, 1972)

"Instrumentation in African Music" (Fellowship Thesis, Trinity College of Music, London, 1967)

"Anthropology of African Music" (International African Institute Bulletin No. 2, 1977)  
Ibibio Music in Nigerian Culture (MSU Press, 1975)

The truth is that *what* the African musician does depends very much on *why* he does it. You cannot look at African music purely as music sound and try to superimpose western methods of music sound analysis on it. For example the Yoruba hourglass drum has a stretch of an octave; *why* it is tuned that way is to enable the players to imitate all the tones of the Yoruba language which fall within that octave. That is the "theory" behind the construction of that drum; and you can only understand that theory if you go into the areas of linguistics and anthropology.

European music is put to many *uses* but African music is mainly *functional*. Since function constrains *form*, you can only find out about the forms and styles of African music by examining their functions; and this means examining the sociological, anthropological, religious, linguistic aspects of the music.

Let me quote Marcia Herndon (Ethnomusicology XX/2 1976):

"What I may think does not in any way affect another group of people's ideas about their music. What they think of as music, and how they manipulate and develop those ideas, however, affects the form and substance of that music."

Bringing European orientated theoretical principles to bear on the analysis of African music as Ekwueme implies is sheer hocus pocus. (See Burling: "Cognition and componential analysis: God's truth or hocus pocus", *American Anthropologist* 66: 20-28.) The greatest danger to the progress of African music scholarship is black men who "think white". I prefer to read white men who "think black" any time.

From: Gerhard Kubik, Vienna

In January 1977 Dr. Gerhard Kubik visited the Sudan on invitation of the *National Innovation Centre for Popular Creativity*, Khartoum. He gave lectures on methodology in cultural research to the students of the Centre, whose Director, Dr. Amin Mohamed Ahmed, is himself an outstanding sociologist and cultural field worker.

Later during the same month Dr. Kubik went on a field trip with Dr. Amin and his group of students to the Ingassana hills situated west of the Er Roseires dam, some 100-150 kms from the Ethiopian border. "Ingassana" is a designation that was applied to the people settled in these hills by Arab nomads. It appears that they are somehow related with the Nuba people of Kordofan (further west) and that there are also historical relations with the ancient kingdom of Funj.

During the field work each participating student had a chance to work for himself in one of the traditional settlements. There was a wide coverage of topics, ranging from oral literature, cultural change, social relations between the Ingassana people and Arab traders to music and movement styles. The results have confirmed the diversity and variety in the culture of the "Ingassana", a people to be considered not as a singular cultural and linguistic entity, but rather as a cluster.

Musically it is a country of lyres and reed-pipe ensembles. *No drums* were seen among the "Ingassana", except in a marriage dance, obviously adopted from Arabs. The singing style shows traits similar to what is heard among Nilotic peoples from the Shilluk and Dinka down to the Acooli. The tone system is pentatonic. Some other musical traits remind the observer of the music of peoples in northeastern Nigeria, such as the Chamba and Kutin, living in a similarly isolated mountainous area.

The *National Innovation Centre for Popular Creativity*, P.O. Box 347, Khartoum, is looking for funds to publish a book on the Ingassana field trip 1977 which would contain the individual reports of all participants and a documentation of the area in colour and black-and-white photographs.