

REVIEWS

THE NEW GROVE DICTIONARY OF MUSIC AND MUSICIANS edited by Stanley Sadie, Macmillan Publishers Ltd., London, 1981, 20 vols., 18 000 pp., 4 500 illustrations, 3 000 music examples, £850.00.

I must begin by humbly admitting that I haven't finished reading this yet! But what was required was a brief review of what it offers concerning African music, and it is high time something was done about that — even if factors like time and space (and not actually owning the twenty volumes) inevitably limit us to a ridiculously small and grossly inadequate commentary at this stage.

Anyone who has already sampled *The New Grove* cannot conceivably fail to acknowledge that it has succeeded in bringing a truly stupendous bulk of new contributions to our particular field (among many others), and that the standard of scholarship represented is remarkably high. The immensely vast coverage given to Non-Western and traditional music — involving over 1 million words and an index of about 9 000 terms, so they claim — comes as a most welcome surprise when one considers the miserly disregard for such topics in the previous edition, of 1954. Updating has been so thoroughly undertaken that 97% of the content is new, apparently. Besides this, it is interesting to take note of the extent to which changes in attitude, approach and perspective since 1954 are reflected in it.

The term 'Primitive Music', for example, has vanished without trace, together with P.R. Kirby's previous article under that heading (which can of course always still be consulted in the old edition). An entry for 'Kafir Piano' still survives, however, where it is defined as 'Obsolete term for the African lamellaphone'. 'Folk Music' has shrunk to a minimal entry in which K.P. Wachsmann reminisces upon earlier notions about what this term implied, and gently hints that it is currently out of fashion. Instead of being consigned to a 'musical zoo or game reserve' as heretofore, 'other people's music' (to borrow a vintage Wachsmannism) has now been very appropriately accommodated within a wide range of separate individual entries dealing, in considerable detail, with the music of each different country or region, or in some cases, of distinctive ethnic groups — though coverage is sometimes rather uneven in this respect, perhaps inevitably.

Whereas the 1954 edition was basically a dictionary of European, or Western, music and musicians, *The New Grove* has clearly aimed at being a dictionary of World Music, and the extent to which this aim has been achieved, through the marshalling of such a vast range of resources and expertise (from some 2 500 contributors) sets it apart as a unique and invaluable compendium of universal knowledge and insight about music, its makers, its technical resources, and its cultural contexts — for indeed the long-awaited enlightenment of an ethnomusicological approach has certainly made its mark too. There is in fact an eight-page article under the heading of 'Ethnomusicology'.

To begin our search for African material, we find in volume 1 an entry under the heading 'Africa'. This comprises an extensive article compiled by Klaus Wachsmann and Peter Cooke, occupying some eight and a half pages of tightly packed print. The introductory paragraph stresses the diversity of African languages and cultures, and ends with the injunction: 'For fuller discussion see entries on individual countries'. This is a useful hint, and there are occasionally further cross-references here and there throughout the article, directing us to look elsewhere also — though there could have been a lot more.

But we need to remember that this is a dictionary, and like all the dictionaries I have ever encountered, you must be grateful for what cross-references there are, but must not expect to get very far without shopping around for yourself. One should not be misled at this point, therefore, into believing that after reading through the rest of the general 'Africa' article, everything else that

The New Grove has to offer on African music is to be found just by looking up the entries for each African country.

There is indeed an entry for just about every African country — though Swaziland, Namibia and Western Sahara have been somehow missed out, it seems. But a more generous list of cross-references in the general 'Africa' article would have been welcome — telling us, among other things, that Swazi music is nevertheless actually covered (together with that of the Zulu and the Xhosa) under the 'Nguni Music' entry, of which there is no mention here either; and also that various ethnic groups have been singled out and given individual entries of their own instead of being consigned to countries. This means to apply to the Bushman, Fulani, Hausa, Hottentot, Igbo, Pygmy, Songhay, Tsonga, Tuareg, Venda and Yoruba, and there may be a few more I haven't yet traced. But the choice seems rather haphazard: there are no independent entries for Swahili, or Ewe, and a host of other equally deserving cases, it seems. Upon reflection, one concludes that those selected for individual treatment are mostly, though not always, ones which do not fit conveniently into single countries, apparently.

The content of the entry headed 'South Africa' may come as a surprise because it does not cover indigenous African music at all, but only imported varieties — the argument being that 'many of the black groups in South Africa also exist in other, neighbouring countries; accordingly their cultural traditions are considered ... under separate headings: see Bushman Music; Hottentot Music; Nguni Music; Songhay Music [!]; and Venda Music'. How the Songhay (who are neighbours of the Nigerian Hausa) crept in here remains a total enigma! Obviously 'Tsonga Music' was intended, which belongs here. More explicit naming of the 'neighbouring countries' would have been helpful here, to save readers the bother of searching for two of them which are not there (as we noted earlier), or of looking into 'Zimbabwe', which is a neighbour but throws no light on South African indigenous music. As it stands, coverage is a bit uneven here. Nevertheless, persistent readers who follow up the clues to other articles which yield clues to yet other ones will eventually find that Sotho (but not Northern Sotho) music is dealt with under 'Lesotho', Tswana music under 'Botswana', and Xhosa music under that of the 'Nguni' group; also that some information about South African musical bows is to be found in the general article headed 'Musical Bow'; and that there are some quite substantial entries dealing with various items such as the *gora*, the *ramkie*, and even '*Kwela* [tin whistle] music', if they keep on searching. Regarding an inaccuracy in Fig. 3(a) of the Nguni Music article, where the string of the musical bow appears to be pulled inwards instead of remaining straight, may I add an explanation, on behalf of the contributor of that article, that the blame is to be laid on the artist, who misinterpreted the photograph supplied.

To return to the general 'Africa' article, which we deserted after commenting on its initial paragraph: the remainder of that entry is divided up into a number of sections, under the following headings: Firstly 'History', where we are initially told that 'African musicology began with the invention of the recording machine'; but there is also quite a lot of discussion about prehistory and earlier reports by non-Africans. Next comes 'North Africa', for which there is also a separate entry elsewhere under this heading, dealing with Arab music which is to be found there. The remaining sections deal with 'Sub-Saharan Africa'; 'Society and Musical Form'; 'Instruments'; 'Emotional and Aesthetic Content'; and 'The 20th Century'.

Although the article is restricted in length, a very valuable general survey is provided here, which goes a long way towards helping the inquirer to view the subject in perspective and find his bearings. The Section on Sub-Saharan Africa is subdivided into 'General patterns', where the question of rhythm is especially discussed; 'West Africa', where Rouget's subdivision of the region into three music culture areas is considered, besides characteristics claimed by A.M. Jones and by A.P. Merriam; 'East and southern Africa', where, unless the reader immediately realises that the writers are really considering eastern rather than southern Africa, it seems unfortunate that 'the exalted social position of the drum' has been cited as the 'main musical

feature', because the drumming tradition is actually totally absent in the extreme south (see 'Nguni Music'); and finally, 'Khoisan and Pygmy areas', where there are cross-references to the individual 'Bushman Music' and 'Pygmy Music' entries but not to 'Hottentot Music', which should also have been included here.

In the section on 'Instruments', the bond between instruments and language is stressed, and mention is made of the main published surveys, but there is a disappointing lack of cross-references pointing to further information, apart from just one: 'see Harps, African'. What about the lamellaphone, or the musical bow, to cite at random two items that immediately spring to mind? There is no mention of them here at all. Happily the Dictionary does in fact contain some quite detailed individual articles on these and other important instruments, and on 'Instruments, Classification of', if one seeks them out, but why were we not told of this here? The 'Africa' article ends with a fairly extensive bibliography, though I personally feel that it might have been far more comprehensive, and should at least have listed our present Journal.

Readers who proceed alphabetically to the next entry but one, in the Dictionary, however, will indeed find an informative article about the African Music Society, and its Journal, contributed by Hugh Tracey; though inevitably the old Roodepoort address appears there and not the present new Grahamstown one. Looking elsewhere, Hugh Tracey features deservedly in an individual biographical article, as also do P.R. Kirby, Gilbert Rouget, K.P. Wachsmann, A.M. Jones and A.P. Merriam. There is a small entry for Fela Sowande but none at all for J.H. Nketia, surprisingly. Perhaps there's an age limit!

As I said before, dictionary users must be prepared to do their own searching; though one cannot help wishing wistfully that a geographical and ethnic index had been supplied, in addition to the admittedly very useful Index of Terms, at the end of volume 20, which regrettably lists musical terms only. But the existing Index is indeed helpful in many ways. For instance, if the local name of a particular African instrument has been cited anywhere in the Dictionary, the reference can be located from the Index. If one were seeking to trace specimens of a particular type of instrument, however, the Index entries under 'Drum', 'Flute', etc. are somewhat erratic: the 'Drum' entry merely lists, alphabetically, the name of every drum in the world which can be looked up in the Dictionary; while the Xylophone entry, though referring us usefully to the headings 'Africa', 'Angola' and a few other places, makes no mention at all of 'Mozambique', which seems surprising. By browsing around for oneself, however, a lot of welcome surprises do turn up here and there, such as a page-long entry on 'Highlife', and two and a half pages on 'Congolese Music' (i.e. pop).

To comment very briefly on what *The New Grove* has to offer regarding Afro-American music, we find that by looking up that topic, we are referred elsewhere: to the United States entry, the Latin America entry, and also to Canada, section II.4. But the last reference must have crept in by mistake because there is nothing there at all on this subject. The other two articles cited, however, do yield quite a lot of information. Under 'United States of America', section II,2(iii),7 there is a two-and-a-half page article by Eileen Southern dealing with 'History'; 'Music Structure'; 'Instruments'; and 'Performance practice'. Under 'Latin America', section III, 'Afro-American Music' occupies six-and-a-half pages, beginning from the Colonial Period (16th century). Elsewhere in the Dictionary, there are of course substantial articles on 'Blues' (nearly 7 pages) and on 'Jazz' (19 pages); also a short paragraph on 'Afro-Cuban Jazz', and probably quite a few other relevant entries if one keeps on searching. I was interested to find a small entry for 'Soul Music' and to learn that the term was launched in 1969 by Billboard Magazine as a replacement for 'Rhythm and Blues'.

To conclude, may I add a footnote to my opening sentence in this review by saying that I certainly haven't *stopped* reading *The New Grove*, of course. I shall keep on dipping into it till the end of my days, probably; and anybody who doesn't do likewise will be missing a lot!

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