

- etnomusicologia*, Anno II, No.3, 1983, 47-92.
2. See Gerhard Kubik: "Extensionen afrikanischer Kulturen in Brasilien", in *Wiener Ethnohistorische Blätter*, 21/22, 1981.
  3. Waldeloir Rego: *Capoeira Angola — Ensaio sócio-etnográfico*, Editora Itapua, Salvador, 1968.
  4. See Gerhard Kubik: "Die 'brasilianische Sanza' im Museum für Völkerkunde, Wien", in *Archiv für Völkerkunde*, 1980.

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THE MANDINKA BALAFON: An introduction with notation for teaching, by Lynne Jessup, illustrated by Mary McConnell, Xylo Publications, La Mesa, California, 1983. Including two cassettes. pp 191, photographs, music.

Tape 1 provides an aural guideline to learning the music with right and left hand parts presented separately, then together with voice, whilst Tape 2 offers a representative sample of Mandinka repertoire for listening.

This book, conceived as the result of Lynne Jessup's work as an ethnomusicologist for the Oral History and Antiquities Division of the Vice President's Office of the Government of the Gambia, is intended to serve as a practical guide for those wishing to learn and teach the *balafon* and, according to the author, the project enlisted the help and cooperation of virtually every *balo jali* in the Gambia.

Ch.1 defines the instrument, discusses its origin and associated legends, then takes a look at its construction and tuning, the latter in some detail, with the conclusion that it is indeed equidistant heptatonic, while "not as incredibly accurate as some have stated". Ch.2 describes aspects of the notation used, of rhythm, and of elements such as *kumbengo* (basic pattern), *birimintingo* (variation), *donkilo* (vocal parts) etc, based on the core repertoire, similar to that of the *kora*, which became apparent from the fifty two tapes made by the author during her obviously extensive research. Ch.3 discusses teaching approaches and methods, and, in tone with the author's apparent overall aim, is pitched towards the Western classroom, and the difficulties to be expected there with the African basics.

Ch.4, which is nearly half the book, presents thirteen songs, the last, "Sunjata", in six versions, all with notation for each hand separately and combined, words, description, teaching ideas, and the history attached to each song. This chapter certainly represents a large contribution towards making an African musical style accessible to all. The book ends with some forty pages of very useful appendices, which would be indispensable to anyone wishing to further his knowledge of the *balafon*, e.g. performers in the Gambia, the known *balafon* repertoire, recordings held in the Gambia government archive, how to make a xylophone for the classroom (using American materials and the author's design, not Gambian), a glossary of Mandinka terms relating to the instrument, bibliography, discography and index.

The book has a whole-hearted practical approach, and I would like to see many more such grace the shelves of Afro-musicology. The notation bothers me, however. Not that it looks inaccurate, or is impossible to puzzle out into practical playing, especially with the back-up tapes, but that I find it hard to know why the author decided not to go the whole way and adopt one of the existing and very adequate African pulse-based systems, as used for instance by Roderic Knight for the same area, and by several others elsewhere. She attempts to justify this on p.54: "Ethnomusicologists often wrestle with a variety of notation systems usually discarding Western notation as being, at best, misleading... Yet it is just as misleading to invent a new system when an old system, adapted, can be more clearly understood by more people." More, in my opinion, is not necessarily better, and misleading remains misleading. Perhaps she thought a pulse-based system would not be comprehensible to school teachers. This seems a pity, as I

would like to think that once you have a school teacher who is interested enough to want to teach an exotic music you automatically have someone who will be prepared to take a little extra care in elucidating a new system that is far clearer than something that is neither one nor the other. To get this book's notation across in the Gambia itself, for instance, would probably be a hard task, as it requires an underlying knowledge of staff, yet only goes a short way towards using the rhythmic concept of pulse or (or density referent, or whatever it may be called by different writers), which is a principle actually understood by African musicians.

One of the great points about pulse notation is that it totally avoids rests, as well as all the other useless rhythmic and durational clutter of staff. I find it hard to read this music, because it is not quite one thing or the other. It might even have been better to stick consistently to standard staff. For instance the two pieces on pp.71 and 74 look almost identical to me in rhythm, yet they are written differently, one with rests, one without. Because pulse lines (or boxes) are not used it is difficult to know exactly where to put the variations, which are given for some pieces, into the main pattern, such as on p.129 where only the notes to be varied are given. A numbered notation from Roderic Knight is given on p.78 which is fine, but its readability is wasted because it is not printed, as Knight does himself, with equal space per pulse.

Just a few other quibbles — when the two hands play separately, this is shown by the different direction of the tail, up for RH, down for LH. But when they play simultaneously the two notes are joined with one common up-tail, and suddenly it looks like a chord played by the RH. Confusing! No indication is given at the beginning of any piece of its metric shape or length; the poor reader has to count through the varied symbols to find out. On p.69 symbols are given for anticipation and retardation of the pulse, which the author uses in three of the songs. Firstly, given that we are reading from left to right across the page, it seems to me that the arrows on the symbols are pointing the wrong way, but more importantly, are these really "flams" or "grace notes" as she claims? I doubt it; listening to the recordings these notes seem to fit exactly into the pulse system of the song in question, i.e. they do have a definite position.

These comments do not invalidate my overall admiration for the book; I can think of little else comparable that has been done in our field. It touches on many interesting ethno-musicological questions, which would well repay exploring further, but resists straying from its aim, which is as the author says, to introduce *balafon* music to the classroom, and to "broaden understanding and respect for the complexity and diversity of the music of the Gambia in particular, and Africa in general." This I think it does; we shall eagerly await Jessup's next word on the subject. My favourite bit of the book is the two cover photographs in colour. My pleasure in seeing the small boy (6 yrs) on the back was only increased when I discovered that he is already one of the Gambia's *jalolu*!

ANDREW TRACEY

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TRADITION AFRIKANISCHER BLASORCHESTER UND ENTSTEHUNG DES JAZZ, by Alfons Michael Dauer, 2 volumes, Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt Graz. Volume 7 in the series Studies in Jazz Research edited by The International Society for Jazz Research and by The Institute for Jazz Research at the College of Music and Performing Arts in Graz, Austria, 1985. Text section: 240 pp, music, photographs and drawings. Notation section: 204 pp, 68 transcriptions of 51 music examples.

Since the beginning of the seventies, a change has occurred in research methodology concerning the early history of Afro-American music forms in the USA. This situation was only partially caused by general changes in field research techniques in Ethnology, Ethnomusicology, Africanistics, Sociolinguistics, as well as in the acquisition of usable historical field materials; it has been determined especially by a change in the European-American perspective concerning Africa. A culture world appeared from the "dark continent", whose history can be reconstructed