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EDITORIAL

In the eighteen numbers to date of *African Music*, and in a gradually increasing number of other publications, something of the different approach of Africans and Westerners to our subject must have become clear. The Western predisposition towards inquisitiveness, taking apart and categorising seems to contrast with the African approach, in so far as it can be typified, of intuition, emphasis on music as having meaning only in terms of society, observation of its effects on people, and of its suitability for a purpose. Africans are, *prima facie*, the right people to write about their own music; up till now their writing has often seemed to lay a different emphasis to non-African writing.

The question must arise — do Africans, at this particular juncture, *need* the kind of Western analytical approach which, for instance, has been appearing regularly in *African Music*, one which attempts to set down the structure and discipline of African musics, formulate principles or rules, discover relationships? Or does this approach in fact satisfy a more Western need, that of extending the world of knowledge, of cultural self-enrichment, even of adventure?

More Westerners than Africans are writing about African music, and the proportion does not seem to have changed much over the years. So the second question which must continually arise is what function and criteria Westerners have, or should have, in their concern with African music. One criterion that must certainly predominate, and not only in music, is that of relevance to Africa. Without this, non-African research in Africa will have to be seen as mere collecting, not giving.

Of all the books and articles written about African music, one wonders how many are of use, or *in use*, in Africa?

The programmes in African music and dance at several American universities have certainly given pleasure to people, aided American understanding of Africa, and one hopes have not been unprofitable for the African musicians concerned, but I doubt if they have contributed much to the strengthening of music in Africa itself.

What do Africans say about non-African researchers? While there are of course many viewpoints, one typical view was expressed by Cajetan Lunsonga, the Zambian composer, at the conference on music in education, held in Lusaka in 1971: "I think it is not good for the outsiders to assign themselves the task of developing African music and culture, because what will result will not be African. While I personally suggest that they may help here and there, I should like to beg them not to become involved fully . . . but rather help Africans to go ahead . . . We are not running away from Western music, but we want to establish African music fully also."

Continuing about 'development', a concept heard about not so much from musicologists as from other Westerners involved in Africa, he had the amusing comment: "I am not very interested in hearing expressions such as: To develop African music. How could one develop a developed thing? . . . When someone has composed a new song it does not mean he has developed music. He has only composed a new song. . . . As far as I am concerned there is no developing of music, but only rearranging or composing. A man with a nose at the back of his head is not developed; he has merely had his nose reset."

THE EDITOR.