

MUSICA TRADICIONAL E ACULTURADA DOS !KUNG' DE ANGOLA. (Traditional and Acculturated Music of the !Kung' of Angola), Estudos de Antropologia Cultural No. 4, by Gerhard Kubik, translated into the Portuguese by João de Freitas Branco, Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, Centro de Estudos de Antropologia Cultural, 1970, 88 pp., ill.

NATUREZA E ESTRUTURA DE ESCALAS MUSICAIS AFRICANAS. (Forms and Structure of African Musical Scales), Estudos de Antropologia Cultural No. 3, by Gerhard Kubik, translated into the Portuguese by João de Freitas Branco, Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, Centro de Estudos de Antropologia Cultural, 1970, 36 pp.

Gerhard Kubik has for many years travelled extensively through Africa and has studied in considerable depth many different types of African music. In the two publications here under consideration he shares with us an interesting general introductory investigation of African scales and secondly a more concentrated look at the music of the !Kung' people living in Angola.

The !Kung' monograph is especially important since it is an area and a people that have not been studied widely before this time. Kubik nicely shares with us not only the results of his research and analysis of !Kung' music, but also gives us something of an idea of what it is like to try to do research amongst the !Kung' in southeastern Angola. He described, for example, the difficulties one might encounter in even trying to locate groups of these people. According to Kubik, the !Kung' apparently originally spread over great areas of southern Angola but after the invasion of Bantus from the north, the !Kung' were subjugated by them and finally found themselves living in oftentimes extremely poor villages in a semi-dependent relationship to the Bantus. They have adopted many of the aspects of the dominant Bantu culture and apparently it was with some difficulty that Kubik was able to get close enough to these people to learn anything of their more traditional cultures. They are apparently regarded as children by the Bantus and even their language with its clicks is regarded as unhuman. The !Kung' often find themselves treated as roustabouts by the Bantus who visit their villages.

Kubik divides his study up into sections with the general introduction and some of the problems he encountered in the study appearing first. He then delves into some of the instruments of the !Kung' and a detailed discussion of the playing technique of each of these followed by a discussion of vocal music and dance. There is also a fairly complete list of all the recordings made during his stay amongst the !Kung' and the study concludes with sections dealing with his analysis of the !Kung' musical system.

All in all, Kubik's approach is a piece of neat ethnographic documentation of a period of extended fieldwork in one specific area. The information which he provides on the musical instruments is excellent, giving us in great detail the manner of execution for each of several different types of instruments. Most of these are musical bows which he separates into bows with separate resonators, bows with resonators attached, bows using the human mouth as resonator, following a classification earlier described by Bruno Nettl (Nettl and Kemp, "The Musical Bow in Southern Africa", *Anthropos*, Vol. 15: pp. 65-80, 1955). His description of the playing technique of each of these instruments is extremely lucid, showing short examples of the music in transcription along with drawings of the actual structure of these instruments. There are also included detailed descriptions of instruments like the *citara de jangada*. This consists of a strip cut free from a reed stalk and raised up by inserting sticks under each end. Several such reeds are tied together to form a raft zither. It is interesting that it is regarded among the !Kung' as a child's instrument. There is also a good description of the *bavugu* multiple rattle including a description of how Kubik transcribed the rhythm of the *bavugu* using film as a means to assist his transcription. Perhaps more and more ethnomusicologists will come to rely on the use of film as an aid to transcription since it provides much more precise information than can a recording alone. He also includes mention of a number of instruments used by the !Kung' which have been adapted from Bantu peoples.

The section dealing with the theory of !Kung' music is both fascinating and also points out the need for further investigation. Kubik observes that there are two basic types of singing amongst the !Kung'; polyphonic singing in which most often voices are combined using a *hocket* technique, with occasionally one singer breaking away from the group texture and singing a more complicated line than the others. Occasionally also, singing in a more standard leader and chorus or call and response type of pattern. The other type of singing described by Kubik is singing in unison. In this type of singing, the singers seem to enter more or less at once but in slightly staggered intervals and often resulting in harmonic divergencies. What is most interesting about his observations in this regard is that Kubik notices that for each type of singing, polyphonic or unison singing, a different scale type seems to be preferred. He goes on further to investigate the harmonic possibilities of the !Kung' tonal system noting significantly that they seem to grow out of the harmonies available on the bow. He describes in considerable detail the tones which seem to be preferred consonances among the !Kung'. At the end, he gives a list of musical categories known by the !Kung' and compares them with those of the Bantu people nearby. This, of course, is interesting, but perhaps the most important aspect of the work is the basic theoretical understanding which he shares with us of !Kung' music. It is perhaps unreasonable to wish that in a short monograph of this type and one designed for Portuguese readers that he should have devoted much more space to a more detailed analysis of the musical structure of the !Kung'. In any case, it is a fascinating glimpse at this little known aspect of Bushman music and should provide an interesting comparison with Nicholas England's forthcoming study of the !Kung' of the Kalahari. It may be then possible to see the nature and the degree of acculturation manifested among the !Kung' of Angola more clearly.

The second monograph is an interesting introduction to the concept of scales in African music, bringing forth some interesting new ways of looking at tonal material in African music. It is a very general introduction to the consideration of African scales and yet it seems that just this kind of clear first step to the subject might be very much appreciated also in English. The possible inherent weakness that might exist in such an approach as a result of trying to cover too broad an area of Africa is overcome by Kubik's insistence on placing it all within a tight theoretical framework. He draws examples from various parts of Africa, but always fits them into a clear theoretical structure. His discussion of the influence of the concepts of consonance is interesting. But perhaps most interesting is the concept of the elastic scales and the elastic blocks of tonality. It is a fascinating concept, too difficult and complex to go into in detail here. It deals primarily with the internal logic of what appears to the Western observer a disregard of African musicians for precise intonation. Certain groups of pitches can be altered in a tuning structure without necessarily modifying all of the pitches of the scale.

The discussion of equidistance in African scales is equally fascinating and yet this seems such a complex and many sided subject that certainly an entire monograph could be devoted to this alone since there are so many misconceptions arising out of the use of the term and all of its possible cultural implications. Kubik heads straight into the argument and gives several indications of what is clearly an African tendency toward equidistance. Although it perhaps may appear unnecessary to do so, it seems important still to emphasize that such a concept in African music would of necessity come from a different theoretical basis than that which is familiar to most Western observers.

ROBERT GARFIAS

"STEP IT DOWN. GAMES, PLAYS, SONGS AND STORIES FROM THE AFRO-AMERICAN HERITAGE", by BESSIE JONES and BESS LOMAX HOWES. Harper and Row, New York, 1972. pp. 233, with numerous musical scores.

This is a splendid work which does equal credit to both its joint authors — Mrs. Bessie Jones, whose vitality, memory, wisdom and enthusiasm are apparent on every page, and Mrs. Bess Lomax Howes, whose ability to describe so vividly what she saw is equally clear, not to mention her talent for participation in the songs, games and dances, as well as in the spirit of the thing. Between them they have made perfect collaborators. Bessie Jones has found her 'Boswell'.

The book is intended as an instruction book for the children of this and future generations so that they can share in some of the fun and games which have stood the test of time. It is set out under nine headings: 1) Baby games and plays; 2) Clapping plays; 3) Jumps and skips; 4) Singing plays; 5) Ring plays; 6) Dances; 7) House plays and Home amusements; 8) Outdoor games and 9) Songs and stories.

Although the authors are able to indicate the source of many of the games and plays, the origin of the rest are open to speculation. On looking them through, I estimate that about thirty-five are entirely Negro (Black American) or are so influenced by them that their probable origin is beyond detection; twenty are clearly White American; eleven are credited to British tradition and four appear to be African. This tally of seventy items shows the kind of amalgam which is the present day heritage of Bessie Jones' repertoire, or that part of it which Bess Howes has captured in print.

It is remarkable how many items originated in England and have been handed on through the medium of Negro mothers and children. It surely indicates the sincerity of the rapport between black and white families of early settlers and the plantation employers and employees of the sea islands living side by side that, between them, the Anglo-American heritage of children's games was so successfully absorbed and perpetuated by those of African parentage. They must have been an essential part of family activities in which all shared, an aspect which is not always remembered.

Many of the games and plays (here used in the sense of 'playing' rather than stage 'plays') form a part of my own childish background in a Devonshire village in England and were an essential part of the children's parties I attended.

The introduction by Bess Lomax Howes is a gem of writing, demonstrating the depth of her total recognition and understanding of the many art forms described. She always gives credit to Bessie Jones whose warm and kindly personality evolves constantly throughout the work.

It is a worthy addition to the long list of the Lomax family researches into the social artistry and music of America and Europe. No doubt had the African languages survived, and not been lost en route, it would have reflected still more of the games and plays which still exist on the other side of the Atlantic. but are reflected in spirit and dance movement rather than in the words themselves.

The notes to parents and teachers, who, the authors hope, will make good use of the examples described, is a masterpiece of sound advice ending with:

"Enjoy yourself. This is a beautiful and democratic tradition, full of joy and the juices of life. Don't be too solemn, or too organised; these are for *play*",

and, I may add, a fine example to students and research workers in folk music and traditions anywhere.

HUGH TRACEY