

find it extremely difficult to characterize the music. The first side emphasizes vocal music, sometimes instrumentally supported, which the authors consistently describe as strophic; our understanding of the meanings of terms must differ sharply, since these songs are responsorial (sometimes antiphonal Side I, Band 5), often short-phrase call-and-response forms which I would call litanic. Spoken passages are present (Side I, Band 2), and in several selections (Side I, Bands 3, 5, 6) musical pitch seems to be conceived with unusual flexibility. Side II begins with slit gong and whistle signalling (Bands Ia and b), but only loose translations are given, and nothing is said concerning the fairly long spoken passages, one of which appears to be a portion of a folk tale. Also presented are the lamellophone (Bands 2 and 3), xylophone (Bands 5 and 6), and other, supporting instruments. Bands 4 through 7 all include a solo singer whose style is marked by short sung segments followed by long pauses in which the instruments are heard; this kind of 'bardic' singing is known in many parts of Africa.

Neither of these two new releases from Belgium is a strong album, and in both cases, it is the notes which are disappointing. Much more attention must be paid to this crucial aspect of what could be an excellent record series if it is ever to fulfil its considerable potential.

ALAN P. MERRIAM

CONTRIBUTION A L'ETUDE DE LA MUSIQUE SACREE ZARMA SONGHAY by Bernard Surugue, Etudes Nigériennes No. 30, Centre Nigérien de Recherches en Sciences Humaines, Niamey, Niger Republic, 1972, pp. 63, viii, plates, diagrams, maps.

This small book is a thorough piece of work on a restricted subject. It is based around a description of the *bolloy* possession cult dance of the Zarma-Songhay people, who live around Niamey in the south-western part of the Niger Republic, and up the Niger as far as Timbuctoo in Mali. The initial research appears to have been in the form of a 16 mm. colour film made by the author, entitled "Godié", published by the Centre Nigérien de Recherches en Sciences Humaines, Département d'Afrique Noire, Musée de l'Homme, Paris, 1968. The author focuses closely on the organology and acoustics of the instruments used, the *gôjé* one-string fiddle, and the calabash drums (no Zarma name given). The description is admirably detailed, from the invocations used on cutting the wood for the fiddle neck, to the construction itself of all parts of the instruments, considered from an acoustic point of view, to photographs of the fingering, to some impenetrable 'sonagrams' of the sound of the fiddle. An interesting feature of this fiddle is that, while both playing string and bow string are made of horsehair, the former is flat in cross-section and the latter is circular, contrary to the practice in the European fiddle. The typical resulting tone-quality is described. The calabash drums are hollow half-calabashes inverted over a depression scooped in the sand, air-tight but for a small hole left facing the player, the calabash being supported at this point by a stick which passes under the seated player. They are played on top with two 'fans' of seven thin sticks tied together at the end.

Another section of the book gives an account of the genealogical/mythological/religious foundation of the musical repertoire. As in some other parts of Africa, each spirit (about 90 of them) is said to have its own song.

Pages 1 and 2 are duplicated and page 24 is missing in my copy.

ANDREW TRACEY

THE MUSIC OF CENTRAL AFRICA by Rose Brandel. Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, reprinted 1973, original edition 1961.

It is a pity that this book has been reprinted. I refer the reader to the review by Gerhard Kubik of the original 1961 edition, published in *African Music*, III, 1, 1962, p. 116. His conclusion was "... I can only hope for the sake of accuracy that her book will not be taken as a reliable addition to the understanding of African music". I would add that several mistakes that have been pointed out by reviewers have not been corrected.

ANDREW TRACEY