

NOTES AND NEWS

QUARTER-TONES AND ARABIAN INFLUENCES

From DR. HENRY G. FARMER, one of the leading authorities on Arabian music, to whom we wrote on the subject of quarter-tones and Arabian influences in Africa:

QUARTER-TONE. The quarter-tone per se is not, and never has been an integral part of Arabian music, and in any case is no older than the 17th Century. Prior to that a scale of 17 intervals to the octave—in a series of limma, limma, and comma—was in use from the 13th Century, when it replaced a Pythagorean system into which a neutral third had been introduced. Although there are 24 quarter-tones (in the modern eastern Arabian system) in the octave, *the interval itself has no separate existence as a melodic entity.* (italics ours) The quarter-tone is either an addition to, or a subtraction from some other interval, i.e. a tone and a quarter at ca. 250 cents, or as a three-quarter-tone at ca. 150 cents. The neutral third—at ca. 350 cents—is a characteristic interval. The two former intervals mentioned would approximate to the Chopi and Ganda intervals of 170 and 240. You would be quite justified in saying that the quarter-tone is not a vital part of the melodic line of Arabian music. Of course both instrumentalists and singers—by deflecting a string and squeezing the glottis—produce the quarter-tone just as they do in Western Europe, but that is mere decoration.

INFLUENCE. I have but slight acquaintance with African music of the Bantu areas; therefore I cannot speak with any authority of the alleged Arabian influence, beyond the fact that Arabic names and forms of instruments are clearly discernible in some areas. Yet that 'outward visible sign' would not necessarily mean 'an inward spiritual grace'. What I found in the instruments of the N.E. Congo was a relic of early Egyptian culture, which the so-called Arabian influence failed to subdue, although the psaltery type of instrument may have been prompted by that influence. North of the Gulf of Guinea I would be prepared to acknowledge the Arabian or Moorish influence. See my chapter on "Music in the Western Soudan" in *Oriental Studies: Mainly Musical* (London, 1953). Hinrichsen Edition.

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THE MUSIC AT THE THIRD EISTEDDFOD, BULAWAYO

The Third African Eisteddfod, inaugurated and sponsored by the Little Theatre, Bulawayo, was opened by His Excellency The Governor-General of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland on June 13th, 1955. Mrs. Coleman, the chief organiser, commented on the record number of entries in all Sections, which it took nearly three weeks to judge. The adjudicators in the Music Section were Mr. Hugh Tracey, Secretary of the African Music Society, and Mr. Lucas Makhema, a well-known African musician who conducts a choir in Johannesburg.

The set pieces, all in the European style, were sometimes beyond the capabilities of the Choirs, and it was interesting to note how frequently they adjusted chromatic intervals towards the modality of their own scales. On the whole these set pieces had very little in common with African musical idioms, structurally, rhythmically or modally. Perhaps more suitable items might be found for the next Eisteddfod, in Bulawayo or elsewhere in Africa. Many choirs competing at Bulawayo had worked hard, and they gave remarkably good performances of works which must often have seemed strange to them, and which would have stymied many a European school choir.

Generally speaking the indigenous songs offered were disappointing; few choirs had troubled to do much more than fit vernacular words to a well-known tune; many sang songs that were mere dance accompaniments; only a handful sang genuinely indigenous songs with typically African variations.

There were only a few entries in the African Dancing Section, but they were good; a series of Shangaan children's dances done by the Nharira School was indeed outstanding.

Several Concert Parties competed, mostly professional or semi-professional, and here again the standard was high. The majority were clearly tyrannized by microphone technique, so that their actions were restricted and they failed to project their personalities to the audience. It was surprising and perhaps significant that six sophisticated and mostly 'tuxedoed' Concert Party Teams were beaten outright by a group of schoolchildren in an assortment of gym tunics, berets and shorts. This little group from the Phoenix Prince Mine, led by an admirable African teacher, entered for almost every event in the Eisteddfod, carried off several First Class Diplomas and won the Shield for the best all-round work; but nobody could have guessed that this group from the country would have carried off the Shield for the best Concert Party as well. They aimed their songs directly at the audience; they had them wild with laughter and applause, Europeans and Africans alike; there was not one who would have denied that the best entertainers of the evening were these schoolchildren, better than all the sophisticated adults.

In summing up, Mr. Tracey reminded the audience that most African music was learnt by ear; if choirs could listen to recordings of the set pieces as well as study the scores, their interpretations would no doubt be better and the process of learning would be more agreeable to them. It was a pity that the

local African instruments, especially the Mbira, were not better represented at the Eisteddfod, and that there had been little percussion or handclapping in the indigenous songs. Mr. Makhema pointed out that African songs should not be conducted; the choirs should be led. Mr. Tracey also suggested that schools should design their own costumes for dancing, since in Rhodesia it was no longer possible to equip performers with the traditional skins of wild animals. There was a great deal of talent displayed throughout the Eisteddfod, and although some of it was unfortunately misdirected the general standard of performance was high, and groups had been well rehearsed.

An interesting point arose in the Drama Section. At a previous competition in Salisbury some of the competing children had been told to hold their hands still, and preferably behind their backs, whenever they gave a recitation or told a story, either indigenous or European. Their performances were correspondingly wooden. Mrs. Taubie Kushlick, the Drama adjudicator, told them to use their hands as they wished, and there was an electric transformation; the stories and recitations came alive at once. Significant gestures which gave point to the story, liberated the children from the bonds of a pose that is unnatural to their inherent style of dramatic expression. The imposition of an artificial, un-African manner of delivery had frozen both the voices and the personalities of the performers.

This incident emphasizes the considerable power of construction or destruction which is in the hands of those who teach or advise Africans; luckily, in this case, the damage which had been done by one judge was undone by another. The purpose of such an exercise is surely to bring out the innate qualities and talents of an individual without destroying his individuality, rather than to produce a type conforming to a rigidly conceived pattern of the teacher. There were several signs of African originality peeping out from unfamiliar surroundings at the Third African Eisteddfod. This was encouraging; and one looks forward with pleasure to more originality in subsequent years.

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LA MUSIQUE DU RUANDA-URUNDI AUX EMISSIONS AFRICAINES DE RADIO CONGO BELGE

Au cours du mois d'avril, 1954, le gouvernement a envoyé au Ruanda-Urundi une mission chargée de recueillir la musique folklorique du pays. Cette mission était conduite par Mr. André Scohy, chef des émissions africaines, qu'accompagnait Mr. Jean Stroobants, radio-technicien.

Ces travaux ont permis de constituer un répertoire important de la musique du Ruanda et de l'Urundi. Le répertoire, qui vient d'être porté sur disques, comprend 19 chants Batua, 20 chants Watusi, 32 chants Bahutu et 51 morceaux de musique instrumentale, soit au total 122 morceaux caractéristiques.

Ces disques seront incessamment incorporés dans les programmes des émissions africaines de Radio Congo Belge. Chaque mardi, à partir du 7 septembre, à 17h.50, heure de Léopoldville, seront diffusées dix minutes de musique folklorique du Ruanda-Urundi.

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A short account of East African tribal dancing will appear in Mrs. Mercedes Mackay's next novel, "Gold Dust and Ashes", to be published by Heinemann in the late Autumn, 1955.

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THE NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

From Mr. UDEMEZUO ONYIDO, Secretary of the Institute:

The Nigerian Institute of Music, with its headquarters at Onitsha, in Eastern Nigeria, has aroused considerable interest in Nigeria. Founded in August 1949, the Institute has as its primary aim the promotion of Music in general in Nigeria.

In order to stimulate public interest, the Institute organized an All-Eastern Nigeria Music Festival at Onitsha in October, 1952, at which most of the best choirs in E. Nigeria took part. This Festival proved such a success that in the following year Music Festivals were organized in all the three regions of Nigeria (in the East, at Onitsha; in the West, at Ibadan; and in the North, at Zaria): in October, 1954, an All-Nigeria Music Festival was held at Enugu, under the auspices of the Institute. The success of these Festivals, the most outstanding features of which are the indigenous music performed, has induced the Institute to organize Annual Music Festivals for the whole of the Federation of Nigeria.

Membership of the Institute is open to all. Its President is the Rev. Father B. Kelly, C.S. Sp., D.D., D.Litt., Catholic Supervisor of Schools, Enugu; and its Secretary Mr. Udemezuo Onyido, Anglican Supervisor of Music, Agbor. The Anglican Bishop of Lagos, The Rt. Rev. A. W. Howells, O.B.E., is Vice-President, and Mr. W. W. C. Echezona, A.R.C.M., the Director of Music of the Anglican Niger Diocese, is the Director of Research. Patrons include the Premier of Eastern Nigeria, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe; His Grace the Most Rev. Charles Heerey, C.S.Sp., D.D., Catholic Archbishop of Onitsha; and His Highness Okosi II, the Obi of Onitsha.

The temporary address of the Institute is at Ozarra, Via Agbor, Western Nigeria.

CHRISTIAN DANCES AMONGST THE AZANDE

From an article by FR. F. GIORGETTI, F.S.C.J., in *Missions*, a bi-monthly magazine of the Sons of the Sacred Heart (Verona Fathers):

The Azande, like all primitive people, dance to express their joy and sorrow, to celebrate their hunts and social events, to fight magic, to remove danger and evil, to mourn their dead. In accordance with the mind of the Church not to suppress the good things that can be found in the customs of the Africans, I began to interest myself in the Zande dances and I tried to give them a technique similar to the classic dances of the ancients in order to use them for religious purposes.

I found it easy to teach these dances to the Zande children and composed a "Christmas dance", based on pastoral motifs of African taste, played on an accordion.

On Christmas Day, after the sung Mass the people gather in the square before the church. The Angels announce the mystery of Redemption. The announcement causes pandemonium in hell. Two devils come out to claim their dominion over the pagan world, but when they see the statue of the Child Jesus they are paralysed with terror. The witch of evil eye comes out to boast her power, but at the sight of the statue of the Child she falls to the ground. The devils, made a laughing-stock of the people, rush back to hell, dragging the witch among the shouts, boos, shrieks, roll of drums and rejoicing of all present. The representatives of the Zande people, followed by those of other tribes, come forward, kneel before the Child and offer Him their gifts. Last of all the Angels who are escorting the Bambino (which lies in a small basket balanced on the head of one of the elders) come forward and dance their answer to the message of Redemption. Their movements express joy, adoration, prayer, reverential fear, hope and the universal happiness brought by Redemption. The apex of exultation and adoration is reached when all the faithful join in the singing and dance to celebrate the triumph of Christ, and hundreds of arms are raised to heaven to greet the newly born Saviour.

All present are moved. The dance has produced feelings of love for the Child Jesus much better than any word could do.

Lately I changed this dance into a ballet with accompaniment of band and accordion. Pagans, Protestants and Moslems came from far away to see it and there was general enthusiasm among them all.

We repeated the Christmas dance on the feast of Corpus Christi. When the procession of the Blessed Sacrament was on its way back to the church, the Priest stopped, put the monstrance on the throne under a canopy, all the faithful knelt and the dance was carried out as before. The finale was changed into a eucharistic hymn, solemn and respectful, to the Great Chief of the world really present there. It was clear that the faithful felt the real presence of God, for they behaved as when at the court of the Chief.

I also composed a dance in honour of Our Lady, as devotion to Her is understood and deeply felt by the people of my mission. Developing motifs of native songs I composed the music with accompaniment of accordion. The dance was performed on the great feast of the Rosary before the statue of Our Lady when the procession was returning to the church. The dancers then began their rhythmic movements expressing their filial love, veneration, trust and joy, and sang together with all the faithful the praises of Her whom all peoples, in their own ways, shall call blessed.

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THE COWELL AWARD FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF AFRICAN MUSIC

Mrs. Cowell of Vancouver (formerly Miss Jean McCrindell), who was closely associated with the foundation of the African Music Society, has very generously offered to give an annual award to the African man or woman who is considered to have done most during the year to advance African music, by composing, performing or encouraging others.

A Sub-committee of the African Music Society will select, from the recommendations submitted by responsible persons or organisations, the candidate who merits the award. He or she will receive a Certificate, and either records, books or instruments to the value of £10, to assist in further studies.

The first Cowell Award for the Advancement of African Music will be given in 1956. Organisations and individuals are invited to submit to the Hon. Secretary of the African Music Society the names of any who may be considered as candidates for this Award, together with a detailed account of the work accomplished.

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RECORDINGS OF EGYPTIAN POPULAR MUSIC

Under the direction of Dr. H. Hickmann of the 'Institut d'Egypte', Cairo, more than 200 tape-recordings of Egyptian folk-music were made in the summer of 1955.

This is the most complete collection of its kind. It includes songs and pieces of instrumental music from various provinces of Lower, Middle and Upper Egypt, Bedouin and Nubian songs, a general review of the music of the Northern and Southern Sudan (Shilluk), as well as a complete Ethiopian Mass.

A catalogue of the recordings and a preliminary report concerning the scientific results of this work are being prepared.

EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AND TEXTILES

The African Music Society held its first Exhibition from the 14th. November to the 3rd December, 1955, in the Foyer of the Public Library, Johannesburg.

Outstanding collections of original African Paintings were exhibited from the Potopoto group at Brazzaville, French Equatorial Africa; from Romain Desfossés' and Moonens' groups at Elisabethville, Belgian Congo; and from the Cyrene Mission School of Painters at Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia. Also exhibited were some Leopoldville street paintings; paintings, sculptures and craftwork from the Jan Hofmeyr and Polly Street schools in Johannesburg and the Indaleni School of Arts and Crafts, Natal; textiles from the Makerere Art School at Kampala; photographs of musicians from Ruanda Urundi, and a representative collection of African Musical Instruments.

Several pictures were sold on behalf of the various groups of artists, and great interest was taken in the work of the African Music Society by the numerous visitors.

From *Rand Daily Mail*, November 16th, 1955:

. . . These Congolese are given paint and the other necessary materials, and with very little guidance, turn out these incredible gems. And that is the only way to describe the jewel-like, luminous paintings of Ossali, Iloki, and Okala, members of the group known as the Brazzaville Painters in the Potopoto studios, of which M. Lods is the director.

The composition, drawing and colour handling emphasise the natural talent and technique which lies in these artists. No teacher could have taught such technique; it is something from inside the artists.

From *The Star*, Johannesburg, November 14th.:

The most startling discovery at this exhibition is the work from a Brazzaville studio . . . the painters have evolved several distinct styles—not derived from books or pictures, which are withheld from them by their European art director . . . one has painted a dancing figure which might be the work of a modern stage designer. Hair lines in brilliant colour on a darker ground, with dots like jewels to accentuate the swirl of the dancer's skirt, . . . demonstrate one of the forms of technique that these African artists have originated . . .

Desfossés found that the natural way of painting (for his Elisabethville students) was in short strokes, or sometimes in dabs with a finger.

The Cyrene Mission is represented by some of the ornate allegorical paintings which first took shape under the direction of the Rev. Ned Patterson and drew world-wide attention.

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UNE EXPOSITION D'ART INDIGÈNE A JOHANNESBURG

Une exposition d'Art Indigène, groupant les travaux des centres de Brazzaville, d'Elisabethville, de Cîrène (près de Bulawayo en Rhodésie du Sud) et de Johannesburg, se tient actuellement avec un vif succès d'estime dans les salles de la Bibliothèque municipale de Johannesburg.

Organisée sous les auspices de la Société de Musique Africaine, cette exposition groupe près de 70 tableaux et quelques pièces de sculpture ainsi que des tissus imprimés. Les peintures de l'école de Potopoto, à Brazzaville, sont les plus remarquables. Cette école, plus que toutes les autres, s'attache à éviter les influences européennes sur les artistes indigènes, dont l'oeuvre procède, en conséquences, entièrement de leurs propres sources d'inspiration et de techniques inventées par eux. On y remarque la facture toute spéciale, à traits fins et à points colorés brillants. Certaines scènes de Bandila (de l'école de Potopoto) rappellent fortement l'art Boshiman des dessins rupestres de l'Afrique du Sud.

On note d'ailleurs dans toutes ces oeuvres, sauf dans celles des centres sudafricains, des variantes du pointillisme qui s'est développé sous des formes différentes mais qui semble être un trait d'union entre toutes ces régions. Pour qui connaît l'éclairage de la grande forêt primaire ou de la brousse ce trait d'union est compréhensible ainsi que ses variantes locales.

La pureté des couleurs est également remarquable, ainsi que l'emploi de tons juxtaposés violents, mais de goût sur et dont les masses sont équilibrées. Parmi les artistes les plus remarquables il convient de citer Bandila de Brazzaville, Bela (ancien ordonnance de Romain Desfossés) et Mwunzedu, Studio Romain Desfossés à Elisabethville, Mutunda et Kaluzu du centre Laurent Moonens, également d'Elisabethville. (AFP)

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From *Africa*, Volume XXV, No. 4, October 1955:

The African Music Society . . . has now started a journal, the first number of which appeared in May this year . . . While some of the articles are specially written the number contains a rather high proportion of reprinted articles. This, however, will no doubt cease to be the case when the journal becomes established as a forum for the discussion of African music and related subjects and recognized as the only periodical concerned entirely with this richly rewarding field of study. It is largely due to Mr. Tracey's enthusiasm and devotion that the serious study of African music, combined with the analysis of its form and structure and of its role in society, has developed so rapidly in recent years. The journal of the African Music Society should be warmly welcomed.

OSBORN AWARDS FOR 1954

The African Music Society, in cooperation with the Tom Osborn Memorial Foundation, has pleasure in announcing the names of the winners of the 1954 Osborn Awards for the best African recordings of the year.

Entries were submitted during 1955 and were judged by the Committee of the Society.

Two Awards of £7 10s. and six Awards of £5 were presented:—

£7 10s. each:

1. Ngingi Léon et son ensemble. BELGIAN CONGO (Mundibu)
"Ka tumonana diako ko". *Song with zither and bowed lute.* Firme Jeronimidis, Ngoma 1465, 78 r.p.m.
Recorded by Firme Jeronimidis, Leopoldville. (Published)
2. Malongansomi et son groupe. BELGIAN CONGO (Lingala)
"Tembela" (composed by Malongansomi). *Song with likembe, rattle, accordion and double-bass.* Opika
1790, 78 r.p.m. Recorded by Opika, Leopoldville. (Published)

£5 each:

1. Mampouya. MOYEN-CONGO, FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA (Lari)
"Poto-poto bouka monéné". *Song with Kisanzi mbira.* Recorded by Radio-Brazzaville. (Unpublished)
2. Shehu's Personal Band. NORTHERN NIGERIA
Orchestral item with drums, reed instruments and horns. Recorded by the Nigerian Broadcasting
Service. (Unpublished)
3. Emir of Ilorin's Personal Band. NORTHERN NIGERIA
Orchestral item with drums, reed instruments and horns. Recorded by the Nigerian Broadcasting
Service. (Unpublished)
4. Muntano Gomez o Feliciano. MOÇAMBIQUE (Tonga/Hlanganu)
"Swanzi hlamaliso". *Song with raft rattle.* Recorded by the International Library of African
Music. (Unpublished)
5. Gande Antonio. MOÇAMBIQUE (Ndau/Danda)
"Kombo". *Song with Mbira.* Gallotone G.B. 2178, 78 r.p.m. Recorded by Gallo (Africa) Ltd.
(Published)
6. Constance Magogo. SOUTH AFRICA (Zulu)
"Ngimthanda nje Muhle". *Love song with Ugubu bow.* Recorded by the International Library of
African Music. (Unpublished)

In addition to the winners of Awards the judges also commended the following entries:—

1. Emboulou. MOYEN-CONGO, FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA (Bakoukouya)
Marriage song with Kisanzi mbira.
2. Obili. MOYEN-CONGO, FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA (Bakoukouya)
Unaccompanied drinking song.
Both items recorded by Radio-Brazzaville. (Unpublished)
3. Ngingi Léon et son ensemble. BELGIAN CONGO (Mundibu)
"Yambule ku ngwand'e ana". *Song with zither and bowed lute.* Firme Jeronimidis, Ngoma 1465,
78 r.p.m.
4. Groupe Akusu. BELGIAN CONGO (Akusu)
"Tombotongola ngunga". "Lokombe kolame". *Songs with drums.* Firme Jeronimidis, Ngoma
1424, 78 r.p.m.
Items recorded by Firme Jeronimidis, Leopoldville. (Published)
5. Malongansomi et son groupe. BELGIAN CONGO (Lingala)
"Mputulu" (composed by Nzingoula). *Song with Likembe, rattle, accordion and double-bass.* Opika
1790, 78 r.p.m.
6. Dreilma, Lamene et ensemble. FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA (Senufu)
"Lakle". *Song with Drums and Xylophone.* Opika 002, 45 r.p.m.
Both items recorded by Opika, Leopoldville. (Published)
7. Mutondi. SOUTH AFRICA (Venda)
Venda Folk Tunes with tshigwana bow. Recorded by the South African Broadcasting Corporation
(Unpublished)
8. Samsoni and the Zandamela orchestra. MOÇAMBIQUE (Chopi)
"Mzeno for 1954". *Song with Timbila xylophone orchestra.* Recorded by the Radio Clube de
Moçambique. (Unpublished)

 CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL FOLK MUSIC COUNCIL

The Ninth Annual Conference of the International Folk Music Council will be held from July 12th to 28th at Trossingen, Württemberg, by invitation of the Internationales Institut für Jugend- und Volk-musik, Trossingen, and from July 29th to 31st at Stuttgart, by invitation of the Institut für Auslands-beziehungen, Stuttgart.

The following themes have been selected for study and discussion:

- (a) Myth and Ritual in Folk Song and Folk Dance.
- (b) The Migration of Melodies.
- (c) Folk Music (Song and Dance) in the present day with reference to problems of its survival, revival and adaption.

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We hear from Kasama, North Rhodesia, that Joseph Kyagambiddwa, of the Catholic Parish of Kitevu, P.O. Masaka, Uganda, has been studying music for five years in America and has written a book on African Music, "African Music from the Source of the Nile". He has been charged by the Church authorities to reform the music of the Catholic Church in the style of traditional Uganda music.

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FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT IN NYASALAND

While working at the William Murray Institute in Mkhoma, I suggested that African Music should be adopted as a special subject in the English Grade Teachers' Training Course: my syllabus was accepted by the Department of Education. Since then I have been moved to Kongwe, and a new member of the staff at Mkhoma is carrying on the work which I began.

Here at Kongwe there are perhaps not the same possibilities, but the African master in charge of the Boys' Brigade is interested in doing with them the sort of work that I suggested in my syllabus, and there is also a chance of founding an African Music Club such as I had at the Blantyre Secondary School. The fact that we now have Stds. 7 and 8 also at Kongwe makes this undertaking more likely to be successful. At least one thing I can report as a good result of the attempt made at Mkhoma is that one teacher has now encouraged the children in the out-school where he teaches, to make, collect and play African Musical Instruments.

Johan K. Louw, Dutch Reformed Church Mission,
Kongwe, Nyasaland.
