LECTURE

On the 15th August, 1957, Professor Melville Herskovits, Head of the Department of Anthropology, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, who was visiting South Africa, gave a lecture at the University under the joint auspices of the Society and of the University of the Witwatersrand. Members of the public were invited to attend, and an opportunity for members of the Committee to meet the lecturer was given at an informal gathering in the Staff Common Room after the lecture, the subject of which was "Music and the Arts in the Scientific Study of Man".

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The Companhia de Diamantes de Angola (Diamang) have placed several recordings of African Music from Angola, the work of Senhor Pinha da Silva, Research Member of the African Music Society, at the disposal of the Lisbon Official Broadcasting Station which has featured several 15 minute programmes. The music has been widely appreciated by the Listening Audiences in Portugal.

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The Rev. A. M. Jones gave a lecture on African Music to the Music Club of the Reading University on November 28th, 1957.

CORRECTION—Journal No. 3

On p. 32, in the article "A Hobbyist Looks at Zulu and Xhosa Songs" Professor Swartz refers to 'John Mseleku.' Mnumzana William J. Mseleku, who is a member of this Society, has asked us to point out the inadvertent error in his name.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From The Rev. David Hawkins, St. Paul's College, AWKA, Nigeria.

... May I congratulate you on the last issue of the Journal? I felt that some of the articles on African Music in Worship were unduly pessimistic, however. I think it is true that there are real signs of development in Ibo Church Music since Wilberforce Echezona returned from England. Ten years ago it was almost impossible to find any young man who could produce an original Ibo tune—what passed for Ibo tunes in Choir competitions were usually jazzed up versions of English tunes (I recall a Benedictus to 'O sing to me, gypsy'); now there are a large number of people at work with greater or less success, and the singing Competitions which go through all the stages of Group Church Competitions through District to Archdeaconry Finals produce a large number of more or less Ibo tunes.

It was of course the usual story that the original ban on dancing (and I'm not suggesting it was altogether wrong) produced a generation of young men who lacked the background of their own music and so could not produce any original Ibo tunes. Now a new interest is aroused, and Echezona has played a very great part in this—thanks also to the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, who got him to put on a series of 13 illustrated talks and took him all over the country to get recordings he wanted.

One particular way in which we have experimented is by the use of an Antiphon in the Psalms. A great deal of Ibo music consists of a short verse sung by a leader with a short and constantly repeated refrain. In a Psalm a part of a verse which expresses the mood of the Psalm is chosen for the refrain and repeated after each half verse, e.g. in the Venite, for the first seven verses the refrain is "for he is the Lord our God" and for the remainder with a different tune and in a different mood "Harden not your hearts."

This method of course adds considerably to the length, and it may be that it is not the best arrangement for the Canticles, but it would enable the congregation to join in the singing of Psalms. Only the Cantor or choir would have to practise the verses, and the congregation would quickly pick up the chorus. Unfortunately Echezona has got distracted on to a lot of other things and the method has not yet been extended to the Psalms.
I have not yet been able to get Echezona—or Fela Sowande—to discuss the question of the modification of Nigerian music by European conventions. Whether it is a reaction from his first attitude, when his music appeared more European than Nigerian, I don't know, but Fela Sowande was very emphatic when I met him a few weeks ago on the importance of preserving 'pure' African music, but was not very consistent when I asked him about the retention of old methods of tone production. For one responsible for teacher training and the teaching of music in schools that is a central practical problem. From the point of view of European standards one would say that practically nothing was being done in the schools about Voice Production, but I am sure that in fact the experience of singing in parts and the emphasis on 'tone' and 'expression' in the judging of European hymn tunes in Singing Competitions has considerably modified the accepted standards of good singing in Ibo.

I am, primarily, a theorist. So, naturally, the theoretical implications of even the bare minimum results of my experiments. An extended article on this subject has already been printed in the Journal of the International Folk Music Council, Vol. IX, 1957, which we recommend to our readers.

In his letter Mr. Seeger states that he would be giving two courses in ethnomusicology at the University of California in Los Angeles during July 1957, and that he hopes some of the students would learn to use the apparatus. He continues:

"You will have received your copy of the Journal of the I.F.M.C. Vol. IX and will have read the brief report I prepared last summer only a month after receiving delivery of the apparatus. I must confess that I have the same kind of troubles that you do. I have more faith in the fundamental frequency analyser (the 'melograph') itself than I have of my apparatus of input—the turntables, tape recorder, and recordings. Test graphs show such imperfections as wobbles, excessive or insufficient speed, slipping pulleys (that make what we call 'wows' etc.) that I sometimes despair of ever giving the thing a really good chance. As to recordings, I find that many do not give a good graph, not because the higher partials are not filtered, but for other reasons such as hum in the electronic circuit, rumble of turntable, mouth too close to microphone, etc. that seem to cause impulses less than an octave from the fundamental frequency. Old aluminium discs and such supposedly 'high-fidelity' recording as that of Riverside's of the Child ballads make graphs strikingly alike. I tried Peter playing on his little Israeli flute (an entirely open end-flute, the sound made by the breath against the edge which is slightly sharpened). The record (Folkways) gives a pretty graph which I enclose. Live playing to a microphone leading direct to the analyser shows a smudgy graph when Peter stood very close. The graph gets better as he moves farther and farther away. This summer, with better acoustic control of the input, I expect to find running on an average 5½—8½ and not seldom as slow as three or four and as fast as ten, our whole concept of music space and music time has to be revised. Distinct pitch levels that we are used to re-

ACCURATE MEASUREMENT OF PITCH IN SONGS

From Mr. Charles Seeger, 1420 East Valley Road, Santa Barbara, California.

Members of the Society will be interested to hear of the original research work being done by one of our members in the United States of America, Mr. Charles Seeger, in the difficult field of the exact measurement of modality in musical performances by means of an electrical apparatus which he calls the "melograph".

The proper understanding of the modality of African music and the tolerances which must be allowed form an increasingly important part of musical research on this continent and we wish Mr. Seeger every success in his experiments. An extended article on this subject has already been printed in the Journal of the International Folk Music Council, Vol. IX, 1957, which we recommend to our readers.

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As you can see from the preceding paragraph, I have spent very little time working with the device. I am, primarily, a theorist. So, naturally, the theoretical implications of even the bare minimum results (of which the IFMC report is a sample) have occupied most of my time during the past year. Before I spend much time working along such lines, I naturally find myself concerned with the reading of the graphs I have made. This has led to a rather drastic revision of my theory of the melodic line itself. For even the little I have done shows beyond possibility of doubt what I had already expected, viz.: vibrato and rubato are the rule and are continuous in most song. Furthermore, they overlap. That is, pitch-levels perceived by us as distinct entities may occur up to ten per second or more. With vibrato running on an average 5½—8½ and not seldom as slow as three or four and as fast as ten, our whole concept of music space and music time has to be revised. Distinct pitch levels that we are used to re-


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From Mrs. J. M. Shaffer, M.M.C.C., Wembo Nyama, Belgian Congo.

"I just received my copy of the Journal and was most interested in reading the articles on church music in other areas and to find that most of the problems we have encountered here, are practically the same everywhere. I noticed that in the Separatist Churches there seems to be more willingness to sing African-composed music. It has been my feeling that as long as the missionaries remain the head of the African Church, there will be little chance for a major change in the use of African church music. As Christianity becomes more and more their own religion, and not just that of the white missionary, they will begin to express it in their own way. At least that is a hope."
In this book I have classified the songs as follows: Mixed action songs and games; Boys' action songs; Girls' action songs; Games for Boys and Girls; Ceremonial Songs; and under General—in which will
appear all unclassified items akin to their Tribe which can only be properly known here by giving you a practical demonstration.

There are many reasons for making my collection, and primarily because there were lots of songs and games, which I sang when I was a child with my friends, and which you rarely hear sung nowadays and, yet, there are no new compositions.

I have successfully taught these in school, and surprisingly enough, all teachers are showing amazing interest in these because they have now realized how much we have lost. On the other hand the children may not show interest because of the precedence given to foreign songs by teachers who do not encourage the teaching of vernacular songs, because they looked upon them as having no value. Furthermore their Training Colleges did not then encourage them as they do now, ever since the Conference on Vernacular Teaching which was held in 1955 in this Territory, when the teaching of Traditional African Songs and games was officially recommended. Prior to this conference a certain amount of teaching was done in this field but it is not incorrect to say that the majority of Teachers looked upon them as inferior songs and so now you see the result, in that Teachers left their colleges with a heap of translated European Action Songs and Games which, though very well taught, did not appeal to the children so much as the traditional songs would; but, of course, they serve their purpose.

I feel that African Songs must surely be enjoyed by all African children, and they are. Their Bemba songs and games are not just songs and games to them, for you will appreciate the fact that they contain more than we think, for instance traditional customs, history, totems and enrichment of vocabulary, to mention but a few, in other words, they contain African Culture.

The teaching of modern Physical Training in schools is very much in conformity with traditional African games and songs. I have tried them myself for this purpose and have found them excellent. They contain just what modern physical training masters would need for Primary schools.

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From THE REV. FATHER FILIBERTO GIORGETTI, V.F. Mission, Yambio, Southern Sudan.

The Missa Zande was sung in the vernacular at the V.F. Mission on the 7th October this year. It was performed by a whole assembly of people accompanied by drums and bugle.

Father Giorgetti is now writing a Zande Grammar for Italians including tonal indications.

The Society's Library has also received copies of the latest publications by Father Giorgetti of the Catholic Church, V.F.M. Mission (Equatoria Province), P.O. Yambio, Sudan, Africa. They include "Ninna Nanna Zandu", "Kundi Sa Natale", "Yambio Yambio" and "Missa Zanda", and are available for inspection by Members at the Society's Headquarters.

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From THE REV. FATHER CH. V. RYTHOVEN, Lubushi Seminary, P.O. Kasama, Northern Rhodesia.

Father Ch. v. Rythoven was specially transferred to the Lubushi Seminary for the special study of African Music and to have Pupils directed in the right way for the Priesthood.

This School, the Lubushi Seminary, is devoted to the training of future African Priests and in other parts of Africa many of these Priests are working along the same lines on African Music.

Recently a new "tam tam" Mass was sung at Quagadougou Cathedral, composed by Father Robert Udraenge, an African, in Messis style, with drums and African instruments in the Church.