

## NOTES AND NEWS

The Committee of Fine Arts and the Humanities of the African Studies Association was created as a Standing Committee in December, 1960; its purpose, as stated in a letter from the President of the Association, is "to seek out the assistance of Fellows who are interested in these fields and to arrange for more active participation by them" in the affairs of the Association. The membership of the Committee consists of Alan P. Merriam, Chairman; and Willard Rhodes and Roy Sieber, Members. Since its constitution, the Committee has met in Evanston, Illinois; Davis, California; and twice in New York, and each meeting has resulted in a Committee Report, the first of which was published in the *African Studies Bulletin*.

Since its inauguration, the Committee has engaged in a variety of activities, among which the following may be noted. In its first (published) Report, the Committee attempted to assess the position of the fine arts and humanities in African studies as a broad field of research. Its three subsequent reports have been largely concerned with the establishment of an Archive of Research Materials in the African Fine Arts and Humanities, a project which the Committee has considered from many standpoints and in which is keenly interested.

At the meetings of the African Studies Association in New York, October 20-22, 1961, the Committee presented an organized session titled "The Arts, Africa, and Human Behaviour", in which a concerted effort was made to illustrate the relationships between studies of the humanities and the social sciences in Africa. The session was introduced and chaired by Alan P. Merriam, and included the following papers: "Folklore as an Agent of Nationalism", by James Fernandez; "Masks as Agents of Social Control", by Roy Sieber; and "Music as an Agent of Political Expression", by Willard Rhodes. Discus-sants for the session included James S. Coleman, political science; Philip Curtin, history; and William R. Bascom, anthropology.

These papers and discussions will be published in the May, 1962, issue of the *African Studies Bulletin*, which will be devoted to the African arts and humanities; copies for non-subscribers will be available either from the Association or the Committee at a nominal cost. The issue will contain other materials, including a paper by John C. Messenger, "Anang Art, Drama, and Social Control", presented at the meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Nov. 16-19, 1961. In addition, there will be a number of special annotated bibliographies of the African arts: "African Oral Literature", by Daniel J. Crowley; "African Art", by Roy Sieber; "African Architecture", by Douglas Fraser; "African Music", by Alan P. Merriam and similar key bibliographies concerning African dance, drama and philosophy are currently being compiled. Other materials are a bibliography of fiction by African writers, by Dorothy Porter, and a listing of grants and fellowships offered for the study of the African humanities, by Willard Rhodes.

In addition to these projects, Roy Sieber is currently preparing, under the aegis of the Committee and supported by various grants, a compendium of collections of African visual arts, both public and private; the same kind of compendium is currently under way for African music and musical instruments under the direction of Willard Rhodes. Further projects are planned or under way.

The Committee requests and urges the co-operation of all those interested in the fine arts and humanities in Africa. We would appreciate your ideas and suggestions for work that the Committee can profitably carry out, and hope that the Committee can be a vehicle for the furtherance of studies in this area.

ALAN P. MERRIAM, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, United States of America.

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A new writers' and artists' club was founded in July, 1961, in Ibadan. The Secretary writes: "The MBARI was founded by a group of creative artists in Ibadan. It is a social club that is open not only to writers, artists, musicians, etc., but to all interested in the arts. It will engage in the following activities: exhibitions, experimental theatre, lectures and courses, contact with African artists outside Nigeria and publications.

The Mbari Newsletter will be a monthly, eight-page publication, which will aim to present up-to-date information about developments and trends in African art, literature and music. It will consist mainly of news items, photographs and short reviews in any field relevant to the arts, whether on the African continent or about Africans abroad, such as:

Cultural conferences and courses	Music and composers
Art exhibitions	Drama
New commissions	Films
New writers and books	

The publication will be sent *free of charge* to creative artists, art galleries, universities, cultural institutions, publishers and any other interested persons and institutions in Africa and throughout the world.

Address: Diana Speed, Editor, Mbari Newsletter, University College, P.M. Bag 5180, Ibadan, Nigeria.

## AFRICAN MUSIC SOCIETY EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS

"It is a relief to think of Central Africa in other terms than those of conflict, and the exhibition of paintings by African artists now on view at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, in Gower Street, W.C., gives an agreeable impression of the way in which European teachers have sought to foster native talent and of the response in young African painters.

The pictures, a selection of those collected by Mr. Hugh Tracey, Director of the International Library of African Music, are divided into groups of distinct character, the artists of Elisabethville in the Congo, trained in the atelier of the late M. P. R. Des Fossés, being notable for a bold style in oils, other artists, trained in Elisabethville by M. Laurent Moonens, working in tempera and showing a strong decorative sense. In Brazzaville on the north bank of the River Congo, a group directed by M. Pierre Lods, also working in tempera, is both accomplished and indigenous in scenes of everyday life and in imaginative painting. The Cyrene group of painters of the Anglican Mission, near Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia, is represented by naive and elaborate compositions, distinct in style."

Extract from "The Times", January 4th, 1962

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The Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland is planning a Symposium on "Music and History in Africa and Asia" to be held in London, on March 19th to 21st, 1962. It is believed to be the first ethnomusicology gathering to take place in the United Kingdom.

1. Papers and discussions on music and history in Africa. Speakers are Mr. J. H. Nketia, Dr. K. P. Wachsmann, Dr. A. M. Jones and others.
2. Papers and discussions on music and history in Asia. Speakers are Professor Mantle Hood, Dr. A. Bake and others.
3. General discussions.

Address: The Hon. Secretary, Ethnomusicology Committee.

Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland,  
21, Bedford Square,  
London, W.C.1.

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"Some of the songs sung by the gangs were the old war chants of the tribes and in Matabeleland the slogans were often accompanied by the battle-cry shouted by warriors at the moment of clashing with the enemy."

Extract from article on political intimidation gangs, "East Africa and Rhodesia", December 14th, 1961.

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The American Society of African Culture (AMSAC), in May, 1961, presented to representatives of the African countries and to officials of the U.S. Department of State a proposal for the establishment of a Cultural Exchange Program for Performing Artists from African countries and their American counterparts. The program is a further step in AMSAC's work of contributing to an inventory of African culture everywhere in the world and will offer wider participation to this end. Through such an exchange, African performing artists will have the opportunity to see the effects of Africa and her culture on this Continent and the American Negro performer will be able to see the source of his own art.

From AMSAC Newsletter, May 30th, 1961.

Address: American Society of African Culture,  
15 East 40th St.,  
New York City 16,  
United States of America.

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A conference on "The Arts of Africa" under the auspices of the Indiana University Committee on International Studies, was held at Indiana University from 28th to 30th September, 1961. The programme included lectures by Dr. Daniel J. Crowley on "African Oral Literature"; by Dr. Robert Goldwater on "The Sculpture of Africa"; by Dr. Alan P. Merriam on "The Musician in Basongye Society (Congo)"; by Dr. Klaus P. Wachsmann on "Other Folks' Music"; an exhibition and general symposia.

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The sixth annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology was held jointly with the American Anthropological Association in Philadelphia, U.S.A., on November 17th and 18th, 1961. Those parts of the programme concerned with Africa included lectures by Dr. Alan Merriam on "Music and Language"; by Gertrude Kurath on "African Music in Cultural Dynamics"; by Rose Brandel on "Harmony in African Music"; by Nadia Chilkovsky on "African survivals in American Jazz Dance"; by William H. Tallmadge on "Negro Gospel Music"; by J. D. Elder on "Color, Music and Conflict in Trinidad", as well as sessions on general topics.

A new "International Centre for African Social and Economic Documentation" (C.I.D.E.S.A.) has been set up in Paris with the aim of making it possible for research specialists to keep themselves informed on all the latest information being published concerning their own special branch. One of the principles behind its foundation is the fact that, through lack of funds, most of our scientific institutions are unable to maintain a documentation service to keep up with the mountain of issued documents, i.e. briefly, that people write too much.

The general aim of the International Centre is to establish an international documentation with regard to publications, authors and public or private institutions directly or indirectly concerned with development in Africa. This will be achieved through a system of bibliographical card-index files, which will be readily available for consultation.

Other aims are to promote the creation of standardized regional documentation, to facilitate the exchange of ideas and documentation, and to contribute to co-ordinating study plans.

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The Rev. A. M. Jones, research member of the African Music Society, of the staff of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, has recently been awarded a doctorate by the University of Oxford for his work in African music, and in particular his latest work "Studies in African Music" (reviewed in *African Music*, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 84).

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#### AFRICA INTERESTS AMERICAN READERS

Chicago—The American Library Association's year-end nationwide survey indicated that Americans are reading more books than ever, and that there is a great interest in Africa. The survey shows that reader emphasis was shifted to art, music and political affairs." Extract from: *American News Digest*, Dec. 28th, 1961.

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#### PYGMIES RETREAT INTO THE CONGO FORESTS

"In the early part of 1960 Mr. Colin M. Turnbull, the anthropologist attached to the American Museum of Natural History, New York, predicted that the pygmies of the Belgian Congo could not survive as a race for another ten years. The nomads were leaving the forest to work on the white man's new roads, hunting okapis and bongos for zoos, and interbreeding with the Bantu to become pygmoids or pygmy crosses. But according to recent reports, this state of affairs has been changed since the coming of independence to the Congo, in a way few anthropologists anticipated.

The forces which drew the pygmy from the forest—the white man as an employer of labour and the negro as a supplier of vegetables, metal artefacts and beer on a barter basis—have ceased to act, at least for the present. The white man has gone and the negroes no longer require the forest game formerly obtained from the pygmies, since they are slaughtering all they require on what used to be the sanctuaries of the plains. Tribal interrelationships are undergoing rapid change.

In many ways this change justifies the central philosophy of the Ba'mbuti, the pygmy tribes or, more accurately, family hunting groups which inhabit the great Ituri forest to the west of the Mountains of the Moon, the Ruwenzori. They are forest worshippers; their songs reflect the belief that though men fight, though pestilence and famine kill, the forest is the great provider and the eternal refuge of the chosen people, the Ba'mbuti.

Little is known about the life of the Ba'mbuti before the perimeter of their forests was invaded by warring Bantu and Sudanic tribes some three or four centuries ago. At first the pygmies fled from the large black men, and then they cautiously mixed with them. Gradually, the little people established a symbiotic relationship with the Mangbetu, the Mabado, the Babira and the Balese. The negro got game which he was unable to hunt for himself (the forest is impenetrable to all but pygmies) and the Ba'mbuti, who grow virtually nothing, got some food and drink in return. But they could, if necessary, do without it. In latter years, the pygmies have been bullied and exploited by their tall black overlords, who called them "clients" but despised them.

The feelings were reciprocal. When the pygmies gather for their nightly sing-songs, the low trails from the forest to the nearest villages are carefully closed by pulling branches or logs across them. Forest ceremonials are a matter only for forest people. Today, it looks as if the Ba'mbuti have gone back to their "eternal refuge" and maybe they have saved themselves in the process."

Extract from "Science-Afrique" No. 23, February, 1961, published by the Commission for Technical Co-operation in Africa South of the Sahara, and the Scientific Council for Africa South of the Sahara, Watergate House, York Buildings, London. W.C.2., England.

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#### CULTURAL CRISIS IN UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES

In an article entitled "The use of audio-visual media for the education of adults in a changing world" in the International Journal of Adult and Youth Education (UNESCO) Vol. XIII, 1961, No. 1-2, J.C. Mathur writes:

"The problem of the preservation of the spirit and forms of traditional culture while allowing them to be presented through the modern media of communication, is a matter of deep concern in Asian and African countries. In America where the traditional heritage may not be so strong a factor or in Europe where gradual historical developments over centuries have brought about a complete transition in values, the media of mass communications are the mouthpiece of widespread cultural experience. And even if they concentrate on the cheap or raucous elements of that culture at the expense of its more abiding values, the media employed are at least those which have grown and developed with the community itself.

For Asian and African society, the film, both in the cinema and on the television, usually constitutes an audio-visual and aesthetic experience which, in many respects, is far removed from what those communities are familiar with. Not being the vehicle of traditional artistic forms in those societies, the film and its associated forms seek to overpower the people and succeed in doing so because they are novel, exciting and exotic, thus offering an easy escape into the land of fantasy. I need hardly mention that films made in Bombay, as much as those made in Hollywood, often have stories and subjects quite unrelated to the life of the audiences over whom they hold such unquestioned sway. But the problem is not merely one of film content. Even where the content of a film is entirely drawn from the life of the people for whom it is intended, the style of presentation has very little to do with local traditions of drama. The so-called international form of films and associated media has had some unhappy results. Communities are fast discarding their traditional artistic forms and, what is worse, the modern film discourages them from any form of participation to replace those familiar forms. In any adult education programme community participation is an important activating element, and this deficiency must therefore be made up. It is true that the film with its great power of suggestivity does not always need the stock characters of folk drama, the chorus, the repetitive songs and the lingering over the sentiments of pathos or love or horror. And yet, is it not a fact that, perhaps without intent or design, many Asian films manage to introduce some of these elements though in a distorted way and in inappropriate settings? That being so it might possibly be more consistent to give a fair trial to the traditional forms, so that their popular appeal, their directness, their capacity to elicit response, could be fully exploited. In other words, the media of mass communication ought to be used not only to preserve the traditional forms of cultural expression but also to promote them, as a current and contemporary experience. If carried out successfully, this would restore the confidence of such communities in their own cultural values and would arrest the emotional disintegration that takes place whenever a community begins to consider its own forms of drama, music and dance as inferior to what is shown in films and television programmes. Indeed, this is a most urgent task, for otherwise the power and force of the film can be ruthless and tragic in its effects. But for communities and for individuals, the psychological need for restored confidence is one of its challenges that the modern world must face."

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#### KWANONGOMA COLLEGE, SOUTHERN RHODESIA

"The new venture sponsored by the African Musical Development Fund of the Academy has gone into action. The last News Letter was written when the short 11-week course of training for adult Africans was about to commence. Now this course has been completed and it is possible to take stock of the position.

Some 18 persons in all were enrolled for Classes that took place at week-ends and on Wednesday afternoons for a total of 10½ hours' tuition-time per week. Not all the students attended all the classes all the time. They were people with jobs to do that sometimes got in the way. The average attendance was about 12 per session. The subjects studied were Basic Theory of Music, Voice Production, Choral Singing, Musical Appreciation and African Tribal History in relation to musical customs.

The principal lecturer was Mr. Leslie Williamson, who dealt with the first three subjects. Mr. A. R. Sibson dealt with Musical Appreciation, which later expanded into actual performance on various indigenous instruments. Finally, Mr. Roger Summers, Director of the National Museum, very kindly offered his services for lectures on African Tribal History.

Amongst the positive outcomes of the course was the performance—possibly for the first time in the Country's history—of pure indigenous music which had been transcribed into staff notation and then learnt and performed by singers of other tribes, initially quite unfamiliar with it. The nucleus of a first-class choir has been established and this will be one of the permanent results of this short course.

The development in singing quality in the short period of 11 weeks under the guidance of a qualified Voice Production teacher was almost miraculous, while reading from staff notation—previously a closed book to the students who, if they have had any music training at all, have learnt only tonic-sol-fa has been expanded to include not only singing but performances on the mbira, the marimba and the flageolet. A dozen of Mr. Hugh Tracey's improved mbiras were purchased and found to be the most popular instrument amongst the students, who delighted in improvisation on an instrument purely African in origin. The majority of the students have expressed a strong desire for some continuation classes to be organised, and this is being studied in relation to the time that will be available when the much more intensive full-time course starts in the first term of 1962.

It was a very great pleasure to welcome the Governor-General and Lady Dalhousie when they

visited the college on the 28th November, having had their interest aroused by the preceding News Letter. They were very appreciative indeed of the work that was being carried on.

Enrolments for next year's course—which is aimed primarily at training the future African Music Teachers of the Country—are at present being made and the full class of 20 is practically complete. The students will come with a minimum Junior Certificate education from the Secondary Schools and those who are successful in the course will be recognised as qualified teachers by the African Education Department.

Finally, the name "Kwanongoma College" was selected by the students themselves after lengthy inter-tribal discussions. Kwanongoma means "The place where music is made" and is a word likely to be understood by people of many different tribal origins.

A. R. Sibson, Director, Rhodesian Academy of Music.

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#### AFRICAN MUSIC DRAWS INCREASING AMERICAN INTEREST

*New York, December 21st, 1961.*

African music is gaining an ever-widening audience in the United States, according to the Magazine "Africa To-day".

Colin Turnbull of the American Museum of Natural History wrote on African recordings for the October issue of "Africa Today" published ten times a year by the American Committee on Africa, whose purpose is to promote understanding between the United States and Africa.

Mr. Turnbull noted that even before Americans generally became concerned with Africa a number of "dedicated individuals" were studying African music. Now, he said, a number of commercial companies had built up substantial Libraries of authentic field-recorded vocal and instrumental music from Africa.

"One of the reasons for this change," Mr. Turnbull said, "is that when really good, full-length field recordings became available, largely through the tapes of private collectors, the superficiality of the snippets of some early commercial recordings became apparent, and a whole new wealth of material was exposed. This material is not only of great musical significance, it is also proving of great significance to our understanding of diverse African cultures . . . a new tool with which we can create a deeper understanding is vital. Music is proving to be such a tool."

Mr. Turnbull wrote of the "infinitely wide variety of musical forms and techniques" in Africa and how much can be learned there about the history of the development of musical instruments.

He also found valuable lessons for anthropologists in African music: "In fact this is proving to be a new and exciting gateway to the deplorably misunderstood African system of values, helping us to comprehend better not only their way of life but also their way of thought, their religious practices, and their deepest beliefs."

Hundreds of Americans had a chance to learn more about the sound and meanings of African music during the five-day conference on "Africa and the United States: Images and Realities" held last October in Boston, Massachusetts, and sponsored by the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO.

In sessions on the arts in Africa, American and African experts on African music played tape recordings and discussed the role of music in all phases of African culture.

Earlier, American scholars and Professors of African Studies in the African Studies Association held a session on African music at their annual meeting in New York.

Although other study sessions were being held at the same time, the session on music drew an overflow crowd.

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"The National Theatre Organisation plans to establish a full-time theatre for Bantu by Bantu, according to press reports. A musical play, *George's Journey*, has already been produced and will soon go on tour.

Players from this company will take part in the National Theatre Organisation's programmes and will probably form the nucleus of trained players constituting the Bantu national theatre.

The Bantu Theatre Company aims to develop a modern Bantu theatre form, based on the cultural heritage of song and dance and on urban Bantu life today."

Extract from "Digest of South African Affairs" April 14th, 1961.

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M. Herbert Pepper, well-known for his ethnomusicological and recording work in Central Africa, who worked for many years in Brazzaville, was recently appointed Head of the Gaboon branch of the "Office de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique Outre-Mer" (O.R.S.T.O.M.) in Libreville.

*Address:* B.P. 301, Libreville, République Gabonaise.

## MUSIC IN EAST AFRICA

The East African Shell Company's calendar for 1962 is entitled "Music in East Africa", and consists of six colourful full-plate reproductions of East African musicians, respectively, military, Indian, Arab, Ganda, jazz and Chuka. The appeal and interest of this calendar would suggest that music would also be an ideal subject for companies in other African countries to take up in calendar form.

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## PUBLISHERS PLEASE NOTE

Father Jean Jacques Corbeil W. F., a missionary of many years' standing in the Bemba area of Northern Rhodesia and founder of the Moto Moto Museum, has recently been working on a comprehensive book on Bemba music and musical instruments. The book is planned in three sections of which the first two are already complete: (a) musical instruments; (b) games and plays; (c) dances. Through lack of financial support Fr. Corbeil has not been able to have this work published, and we draw this to the attention of our members, and publishers or any others, particularly in the Rhodesias, who might be interested in the publication of such a valuable and educational work.

Address: Mulilansolo Mission, P.O. Isoka, Northern Rhodesia.

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## COURSE ON AFRICAN ARTS AND MUSIC

Prof. Willard Rhodes, of the Department of Music, Columbia University, New York 27, is conducting a course in the present semester on African Arts and Music, in conjunction with Prof. Douglas Fraser of the Art History Department. Prof. Rhodes has recently done research on Southern Rhodesian music (see "*African Music*" Vol. II, No. 2, 1959).

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## DIPLOMA

The Institute of African Studies of the University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, has instituted a Diploma in African Music. The course will consist of two years' residence, and is intended for those who wish to deepen and extend their knowledge of African cultures through music, or those who wish to equip themselves for the teaching of African music, for research or for creative work in music. Subjects in which teaching will be provided are these:

The cultural and historical background of African music.

Form and structure in African music.

Ethnography and musical styles of selected areas.

African music and related arts (oral literature, dance, drama and sculpture).

Comparative musicology, with particular reference to Africa, the Middle East and Indonesia.

The course is also designed to include field research and practical performance on at least two African musical instruments.

The first course starts in September 1962, and students wishing to apply for admission are asked to write to the Secretary of the Music and Arts Division of the above Institute.