

## NOTES AND NEWS

### ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY FOR ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

We had three days of very interesting meetings and there were several papers that I note would be of interest to Africanists: "Some Speculations on a Drum Chime Tradition in Buganda", by Klaus Wachsmann; "Musical Instruments of Madagascar", by Norma McLeod; "Ubakala Dance: A Special Festival", by Judith Lynne Hanna; "The Musical Instruments of Equatoria, Sudan", by Roxanne McCollester.

One afternoon was spent in an interesting symposium: Music, Dance and Anthropology: Ten Years of Co-operation, and we paid visits to two notable collections of musical instruments, The Stearns Collection at the University of Michigan and the Freeman Collection, a private one, in Detroit.

Other papers presented at the Meetings ranged from Oceania to the American Indians in their subject matter, but the number of papers on African music and dance indicates the high degree of interest in that part of the world as shown by the research of members of the Society.

David McAllester.

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### TROPICAL AFRICAN STUDIES

The International African Institute in conjunction with the University of Ibadan, held a Conference on Tropical African Studies, from the 5th to the 11th April, 1964. One section of this Conference was devoted to the Arts in African Studies, and the following report is taken from their published report on the Conference in Volume 35, No. 1, of *Africa*, for January, 1965.

The subjects under discussion were the scope and development of studies in the visual arts, music and literature; their relation to other fields in African studies and further needs in research and teaching. The Chairman: M. A. Diop, Rapporteur: Mr. A. Drayton, Opening Speakers: Prof. J. H. Nketia, Prof. A. Merriam, Mr. D. Williams.

In his contribution to the discussion, Prof. J. H. Nketia stated that: "This was a time of stylistic or idiomatic change, with both traditional and contemporary forms of artistic expression coexisting. Study of their interaction should particularly interest students of culture change. But a pre-requisite for this was the systematic collection and study of the traditional forms themselves and, as these were closely integrated with social life, both artistic and other cultural factors had to be considered. Traditional artists had been and were concerned with African life from at least three angles: through the visual arts; oral literature; and dance, drama, and music. Hence the student of the arts in Africa was closely concerned with the way of life that found expression in the objects of his study.

Problems of meaning, significance, and value had to be studied, since the traditional artists were also concerned with the meaning and significance of events, the expression of philosophical ideas, concepts of divinities, and their awareness of social and moral values.

Since occasions and objects of almost any kind could provide avenues for artistic expression, the arts were linked with all institutional aspects of culture. Values and ideas affected the arts just as they affected other aspects of culture. Hence the importance of complementary approaches to their study. Even the African scholar who had not lost touch with his own society should rely on more than his own background of experience to achieve understanding of the cultural matrix. This dependence on relevant disciplines was an indication of the breadth of training and orientation needed by the student of African arts and the kind of collaboration he should seek from other scholars.

In emphasizing the importance of the "cultural matrix" and the contribution that anthropology could and did make to studies in the arts, he was not suggesting that the study of music, art, literature; dance, and drama in Africa should be confined within departments of Anthropology and Archaeology. Nor was he minimizing the importance of formal stylistic studies through which specialized scholars made their own contribution. There was a place for comparative studies as well as for systematic study of regional or local styles. There was also a place in musical studies, for example, for the comparative study of African and non-African forms. But stylistic studies should not be carried out in a vacuum. They should be related to the cultural experiences of those associated with the styles. It was equally necessary for the teaching of the arts not to be too rigidly departmentalized. The traditional arts of Africa had been practised as interrelated or interdependent forms, and this interdependence should be reflected in research and teaching. The collaboration which this pre-supposed was easier of achievement within an institute or a school.

He wished also to stress the importance in universities of the arts of Africa as practical, creative subjects.

Not only theory but also practice was needed; not only musicologists who would collect, analyse, and write about African music, but also performers with theoretical understanding, composers and teachers of African music; not only scholarly books and articles contributing to musicological knowledge but also suitable music in an African idiom for performance as well as textbooks on the music of Africa for all levels of music education, including musical training at the university level. Similarly texts of traditional literature were needed for courses at African universities, as well as sound-recordings, films of dances, ceremonies, and rituals that could be used in teaching programmes or in creative and production programmes by composers, writers, dramatists, and choreographers.

The listing of priorities was important. It was necessary to have planned programmes of research geared to the immediate needs of African countries. And, if these were organized on a wide continental basis, there could be a series of surveys by teams of research workers for the music of Africa on the lines of the Ethnographic and Linguistic Surveys of the International African Institute, volumes of anthologies of African oral literature along the lines usefully started by the Clarendon Press, and a series of good studies of African dance forms. If programmes in the arts were started in the various institutes of African Studies in Africa and were co-ordinated to provide not only for local training but exchange of recorded material, visiting scholars, and visiting artistes, a great deal could be achieved within a reasonably short time.

Professor Fortes, recalling that Professor Nketia had stressed the importance of studies on the meaning and significance of artistic products and the central position of field ethnography and anthropology in these investigations, suggested that specialists in the various fields of art could help in the education of ethnographers by providing advice and guidance, perhaps in the form of handbooks, indicating the material to look for and the questions to follow up in their field studies.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The African Music Society thoroughly agrees with these conclusions, as for many years it has demonstrated the prime necessity for field workers to undertake the discovery, recording, and selection of authentic examples of African music, so that the text-books can be written and published. These are urgently required for study at all levels, from the simplest African school up to honours degree status at Universities. Without this foundation work, little effective progress is likely to be made in the study of African arts, and in particular, music.

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The Rev. Father P. v. Thiel, w.f., hopes to return to Uganda soon. He will probably be given the opportunity to do some research work, not only in the field of African Sacred Music but also in the domain of African Traditional Music.

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Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kauffman, who have been well known in Rhodesia for their work on African music and for the development of African Hymnody are leaving Rhodesia in March to return to America. We understand Mr. Kauffman is going to take up a course at the University of California in Los Angeles for his Doctor's Degree. The Society wish him all success and a speedy return to Africa.

The work he started is going to be continued by the Rev. John Kaemmer and the Headquarters will be transferred from Panalonga to the Nyadini Methodist Centre near Mtoko, which is about 80 miles northeast of Salisbury. It is considered that there will be more opportunity for music teaching at that centre. He will continue the various workshops and the production and sales of musical material. Mr. Abraham Maraire, a young talented composer, will be working full time with Mr. Kaemmer, combining music study with composing and teaching of new music. Correspondence should be addressed to:

CHURCH MUSIC SERVICE, P.B. 636 E, SALISBURY.

Before leaving, Mr. Robert Kauffman announced the appearance of three publications, the outcome of his work:

1. DRUMS IN THE CHURCH. A new 7-inch gramophone record featuring Shona hymns including many of the compositions of Abraham Maraire.
2. A book of traditional songs for use in schools, called NDWIYO DZETVU DZEFCHIKORO. This book is intended to give teachers-in-training some African songs to teach their pupils and includes the words of the songs though it should be used together with a tape-recording which can also be supplied.
3. A new Methodist Hymnal under the title of NGOMA (not to be confused with the booklet of the same name published by the African Music Society). This Hymnal includes 21 new hymns in African Style together with translations.

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#### AFRICANS' CULTURAL DILEMMA

by JOHN NKOSI

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Africans almost invariably prefer Western culture — Western dress, manners, usages and speech — to their own. Western culture is associated with economic advantage as well as with status.

But this preference places the African in a dilemma. He has a seemingly desperate choice of becoming a forlorn imitator of the Whites or of retaining his African identity and abandoning all the symbols of progress.

What is he to do?

A good many of us think it possible to take the best out of our Africanism, adapt it and build it into our future. Traditional dress may not be suitable for workaday purposes, especially in town. But it has an unusual splendour, it fits the climate and at least can be retained for ceremonial purposes. This could be done a great deal more easily if politicians did not make a kind of capital out of the use of traditional dress in an attempt to prove that Africans are still barbaric.