

# AFRICAN MUSIC

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### EDITORIAL

African music has now reached a critical stage where appropriate action must follow discovery if it is to play its proper rôle in the future of the spirit of its owners.

An increasing number of students are beginning to take a lively interest in this subject, though, at present, it would appear that a large proportion do so only in order to expedite the acquisition of a degree or to further the propagation of some non-musical message to African people.

This is not enough. The music itself demands both an understanding of its structure and fuller recognition as one of the more valuable social assets of this continent. The evolving styles of genuine African composition should not only be studied in theory but put to good use in practice in schools, colleges and "places where they sing". Without this positive activity, those who still consider Western or other non-African music the criterion of intrinsic musicality, aided by the arbiters of the commercial value of broadcast programmes, will yet destroy the sense of taste and originality in the present generation of pupils and radio audiences.

Many educationists still appear to be unable or unwilling to consider this vast field of human artistry as a legitimate subject of study with its own disciplines apart from, and in addition to, the criteria of Western or oriental musics. Research has shown that prejudice of this nature is no longer justified. The answer lies in co-operation between all students of African music, whatever their private ambitions may be, to contribute something of their knowledge towards the assembly and publication of the first reliable textbooks. Future generations of African musicians will rely increasingly upon present-day discoveries to retain a proper hold upon their folk traditions which are still in force. These they should be able to inherit as their sure foundation in the face of certain eclipse by stronger cultural and commercial interests if the work is not done now.