

RELIGIOUS MUSICAL PLAY

"MAZUVA EKUPEDZISA" by ABRAHAM MARAIRE. (Old Umtali, Rhodesia)

During the year an innovation in religious musical plays was introduced at Old Umtali, Rhodesia, using exclusively indigenous music.

An African critic of the play commented:

"The work is entirely original and all the subtleties of Shona thought forms and patterns are lavishly conspicuous right through the play. The overtones, the undertones, the idioms, the expressions and all in all, it was African.

"Deserving special merit is the fact that while this Holy Play was purely African, the music, contrary to fears, was appropriately devoid of any popular music element. This gave it due reverence, and specialness with exceptional grace and dignity. Those who feared that African music could not be used for Church worship were proved wrong by the Nyadiri group which performed the play."

The group of actors and choir was drawn from 50 students of the Nyadiri Teachers' Training College.

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REVIEWS

THE STUDY OF FOLKLORE, edited by Alan Dundes: Prentice-Hall, Ind., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. 482 pp. with 35 illustrations and drawings, six musical illust. and 15 comprehensive maps. No price given.

In this selection of thirty-four essays, many of which "appeared originally in professional journals and periodicals that are not widely available to-day, even in university libraries," no less than five essays expatiate on the definition of folklore; seven on its origin; seven on its form; five on its transmission from individual to individual, from culture to culture, from generation to generation; five on its functions, and five are selected studies offered as models of research work to the folklorist. So much diversity could lead to tedious repetitions if not to some confusion, but diversity here becomes a kind of catalyst to produce a greater unity, and it opens so much broader a view over a field that is almost limitless. Summed up, these essays expound a general theory and the methodology of folklore, occasionally debatable on lesser issues, giving credit to the past but always excitingly modern in spirit and approach.

The scope of this Journal does not warrant an extensive review of this excellent book, but one contribution, however, deserves to be singled out; the more so that, in the five Selected Studies illustrating some of the issues faced by the folklorist this same contribution likewise singles out an example in African music research, Dr. Hugh Tracey's "Tina's Lullaby" (pp. 369-73). We can do no better than quote the editor of *The Study* in his introduction to Dr. Tracey's:

"In this brief study, Hugh Tracey, an authority on African ethnomusicology, attempts to track down the origin of an American Negro lullaby. In order to hypothesize even an approximate location in Africa from which the lullaby may have been brought, Tracey had to take both tune and text into account. The complete study of folk music requires considerable knowledge of both music and language. The working back from the American Negro folksong to a possible East African child's song shows, in miniature, the problems, and some of the techniques employed in solving them, found in the historical study of folksong. Tracey's study also demonstrates the remarkable stability or oral tradition in that 'meaningless' words were transmitted from one generation to another with surprising accuracy."

The reader may find both text and tune of "Tina Lullaby" in Vol. 2, No. 4 (1961) of this Journal, where it was originally published.

BROTHER BASIL.

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1. LE KALINGA, Tambour Enseigne du royaume et de la dynastie des rois Banyiginya du Rwanda, by Marcel Pauwels, W. F.; pp. 221-256, 17 illustrations and one map.
2. LA MUSIQUE ET LES INSTRUMENTS de la Musique des Noirs de la région de Baudoinville (Congo), by Joseph Weghsteen, W. F.; pp. 85-112, 25 illust. and 15 songs. Both reprints from *The Annals of the Pontifical Missionary Museum of Ethnology*, Vatican City, Vol. XXVI, 1962, and Vol. XXVIII, 1964, respectively. No price given.

Although Father Pauwels' extensive study of the royal drums of Rwanda is strictly confined to the field of ethnology, it should be welcome by any student of African music if only to understand better the importance of the drums in the organization of the life—and by way of consequence, in the music life—of the African of Central Africa. Suffice it to say that, according to the author, the word 'Rwanda' is a corruption of 'Rwoga' whose origin may be traced back to a royal drum of the 13th century rulers; that the word 'drum (ingoma) may alternately signify king, or reign, or kingdom; and that the royal drums are hused even to-day in special quarters of their own, under the care of the royal drummers. Six fine photographs and eleven line drawings illustrate the text. The text, however, would have gained considerably had a greater attention been given to punctuation throughout.